

An Interview with Kelsey Roberts

How old were you when you began singing with Spirito?

I was 14 and a freshman in high school when I started singing with Spirito in its inaugural year.

Why did you decide to join Spirito?

I decided to join Spirito because of the Lindberg family! I became dear friends with Julie Lindberg in middle school, and her mom (THE Molly Lindberg) told me about the all-girl choir she was starting. At the time, I loved singing, and I especially loved singing in choirs, so I was immediately interested.

What is one of your earliest memories of being a Spirito Singer?

When I walked into my first Spirito rehearsal, I was overwhelmed and intimidated by the incredible talent that was being assembled in one choir. I was handed our folder of repertoire, and I was a little concerned over my ability to sing at this level. However, when everyone began warming up together and singing together for the first time, I knew I had joined something truly special and unique. I had never sung in a choir with such a pure, mature sound before, and I was in awe.

Tell us about your favorite Spirito performance experience. What made it so special?

When I was a junior, Mrs. Lindberg approached a few of the sopranos (nicknamed “The Squeakers” at the time) with an opportunity to perform Randall Stroope’s “Sanctus” at the 2010 Winter concert. I listened to the song and thought there was no way I’d be able to hit those notes, let alone perform the song at a concert! Sure enough, after plenty of practice and rehearsals around the piano, the five of us got to perform the piece from the loft of Saint Francis Xavier Church in La Grange accompanied by the organ. That performance really stands out to me because it epitomized my love for choral singing: the combination of preparation, dedication and hard work leading up to the performance with the acoustics, musicality and joy of the live performance. I still hold that performance so close to my heart.

Who inspired you most when you were a Spirito Singer?

When I was a Spirito Singer, the people that inspired me most were the girls who were a few years older than me. When I was a freshman in high school, there was a group of juniors who were my absolute idols: they were talented, kind, hard working, and incredibly generous--not to mention, so cool! Those girls were the reason I joined Spirito and continued to sing.

Where did you attend high school?

I went to York High School in Elmhurst, Illinois.

When did you graduate Spirito?

I graduated Spirito in 2012, the same year I graduated from York.

Where did you attend college?

I originally attended the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign to study engineering, until I decided to change paths and pursue an education in musical theater at Syracuse University. I graduated with a BFA in Musical Theater in 2017.



Did you sing in college?

When I attended the University of Illinois, I was singing at every opportunity I could! I joined a couple of choirs, including the Women's Glee Club, which is an all-female choir that I took for class credit. I also joined an extracurricular a-cappella choir called the Illinois Rip Chords, which was also an all-female choir (clearly I wanted a little bit of Spirito with me at college!). My a-cappella group became my incredibly close friends, and we did a ton of performances throughout the year, including competing in collegiate competitions and travelling to various middle schools and high schools to perform.

When I transferred schools, I became a full-time singer! I was taking voice lessons, ensemble singing classes, and song performance classes, all part of my Musical Theater curriculum at Syracuse.

What are you doing now?

I currently live in New York City where I remotely teach a couple of Spirito performance classes. I am continuing to keep up my acting and singing as the pandemic is raging.

What is the most important thing you learned from being in Spirito?

A community of women is the most powerful thing you can find! If I hadn't found Spirito so long ago, I don't think developing friendships with groups of women would be such a priority for me. With the current state of the world, I am so incredibly grateful for learning this early in my life.

What advice do you have for current Spirito Singers?

This is a really tough time to not be able to sing in person with your friends. Singing with a chorus of voices can be such a transformative experience, and I want current Spirito Singers to know that choir is not dead! It will come back when this is all over. And to hop right back in and pour your soul into your friendships and your singing because it is a rare opportunity to be able to come together with singers from all over the Chicagoland area and share your gifts with one another. One day soon, you will get your weekly Spirito fix and be with the ladies you love and make music together!

What else would you like to tell us?

I want girls to know that it is possible to have a career in the arts! And it's also possible to continue singing no matter what your career path is. If this year has taught me anything, it's that there's nothing like making live music with talented, hard working professionals, so soak up every opportunity to make something beautiful out of thin air. Keep going back to the things that bring you happiness, joy, and peace. If you're honest with yourself about those things throughout your life, you will always find a way to sing!