

Meet the Actor: Nathaniel Niemi

Where were you born?

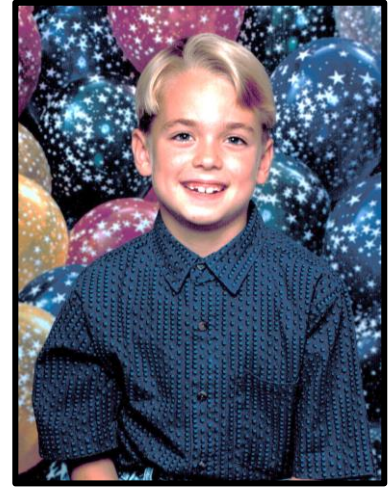
I was born in a suburb of Chicago. I quickly moved to Michigan and am very much a Midwest boy at heart.

Where did you go to school?

I went to a small private school in Michigan for my elementary years. I loved having friendships with most of my classmates and have memories of building huge snow forts and ice statues during recess. We also sang and played a lot of music. We put on a school play at the end of the year which was my favorite event.

Who was your best friend?

My best friend growing up was my sister. We are close in age and enjoyed building forts in the woods, playing make-believe adventures and playing dress up. She and I are very different. I'm more creative and she is much more logical.



What were your favorite stories as a kid?

Adventure stories like Swiss Family Robinson and Tom Sawyer. I loved the idea of how a team of people could come together to survive and eventually thrive in tough circumstances.

When did you start acting?

I was performing ever since I remember. Any movie I saw or book I read had to be performed for my parents. We would build sets, make costumes and put on a show. I studied acting in school and took classes in music and theatre all through my young years but the most important part of learning to perform was by doing it. I did as much community theatre as I could and learned to read music, speak out, play a character and work as a team.

Why do you like theatre?

I love performing because I love being a storyteller. I love showing other people's experiences on stage. I think we can learn and understand each other more by knowing each other's stories, what we have in common, what tough things we've endured and what we hope for the world.

What's the most challenging part of acting in *Elephant & Piggie*?

The most challenging part of *Elephant and Piggie* for me is the music. Some of those notes are high! I'm practicing connecting my breathing to my singing to make sure every note is supported by breath and I'm not straining anything.

