

Press Clippings - 7/18/2024

- Daily Herald - U-46 music teacher hopes to take crown at pageant in Rosemont

By: Christopher Placek

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Justine Izewski is among the contestants in the Petite USA Pageant later this month in Rosemont. She was named Ms. Midwest Petite in the competition for women 5'6" or below.

Justine Izewski — a music teacher at a Hanover Park elementary school by day who gives private music lessons by night at a Schaumburg coffee shop — hopes to have a homefield advantage on the hundreds of other competitors who will descend on a Rosemont hotel later this month for the Petite USA Pageant.

Izewski, 29, who grew up in Wayne, is Ms. Midwest Petite in the competition for women 5'6" or under. Standing at 5'2", she hopes to be crowned Ms. Petite USA in a category of about 20 other contestants, who are unmarried women ages 18-44.

She's coming off an appearance in May at the Miss Illinois USA pageant at Illinois State University, where she represented Chicago and the suburbs as Miss Metro Chicago.



Justine Izewski competed as Miss Metro Chicago at the Illinois USA pageant in May.

“I’m nervous and I’m also looking forward to it, only because I’ve never done a national pageant like this,” Izewski said of the Petite USA Pageant, which will be held July 31-Aug. 3 at the Loews Chicago O’Hare Hotel. “I’m excited to meet everybody and get to know everybody.”

Izewski, who entered her first pageant at age 14, said she’s always been fond of the platforms contestants choose and what they represent. It’s no wonder the music educator and singer will be stressing the ideals of arts in education on the pageant stage.

“That’s what I’m passionate about doing,” she said.



A music educator and singer-songwriter, Justine Izewski is bringing her arts in education platform to the Petite USA Pageant July 31-Aug. 3 in Rosemont.

Izewski — who doubled majored in music education and vocal performance at the University of Illinois — teaches K-6 music at **Ontarioville Elementary School** in Elgin Area School District U-46. She previously taught at Queen of the Rosary School in Elk Grove Village.

She also teaches private lessons at Vintage Cafe in Schaumburg, where her students have ranged from thespians preparing for auditions to a 68-year-old in a band who wanted to brush up on his vocals.

She's also a budding singer-songwriter who released two pop songs and music videos on YouTube and is working with a record label to do more.



Justine Izewski released two songs and music videos, including “Wild Life” in 2021 and “Free” in 2023.

You can see her most often performing as a soprano with The Lira Ensemble, a professional performing arts company specializing in Polish music, song and dance.

Izewski has been taking private lessons herself for the last 15 years taught by a singer in the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

“I’m passionate in little bits of everything that I do,” Izewski said. “The operatic style I really love because how dramatic it is and how powerful it is. The pop stuff I love because it’s very relatable to the days now. I don’t necessarily think I have a favorite, only because there are just so many different things about every style that I relate to.”



A soprano classically trained in operatic music, Justine Izewski sings with The Lira Ensemble, a professional performing arts company specializing in Polish music, song and dance.

There is no talent or performance segment in the upcoming pageant — most pageants are getting away from that, she says — but contestants will be expected to interview with a panel of judges, sashay down the runway in swimsuit and evening gown contests, and answer the all-important onstage question.

There are five divisions — Teen, Miss, Ms. Mrs. and Elite Ms. — and winners of the first three will go on to the Universal Petite Pageant.

Online voting is now open in a People's Choice contest at petiteusa.com/vote, in which the winner automatically secures a spot in the top 11. Judges ultimately decide who gets crowned.