

A-State theatre senior prepares for life on the professional stage

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LIFE EDITOR

For this Arkansas State University senior, theater is not just his major; it's been a part of him for the past decade, now he's ready to face the acting world with everything he has learned at A-State.

At 13 years old, Zane Brewer was in his first-ever production. Held in a small church basement, Brewer played Aladdin in "Aladdin." Since then, he has been hooked on all things theater. Now, he's a senior theatre major and has been a part of more than 20 productions, including seven leading roles in productions at A-State.

From actor to director to costumes to stage manager to producer, he's been able to learn and gain experience at both A-State and within the community to help prepare him for whatever role he might be in after graduation.

"The way we do shows is very similar to the way the professional world is, because some of these professors, most of them, actually, all of them have worked professionally. So they have, they know, you know how things roll and they just try to prepare you for what is going to be expected of you when you graduate," Brewer, from Conway, Arkansas, said.

Brewer first met DayDay Robinson, professor of theatre at Arkansas State University and one of his mentors in the department, over Zoom while auditioning for a scholarship before his freshman year. Robinson said

Brewer immediately stood out. "My immediate reaction was, wow, this dude has a lot of energy. When I finally met him in person in fall 2022, I realized that energy came from genuine excitement. He was a student who truly wanted to be here, and it showed in every class and every time he stepped on stage," Robinson said.

While musical theater is his favorite genre, he's had the opportunity to be in many different types of shows during his time at A-State.

Since coming to A-State in 2022, Brewer has not slowed down. During his time at A-State, he has been in five shows and will be in two more before the semester is up. While in these seven shows, Brewer played one of the main characters, he's also helped with several others, always looking for a way to stay involved.

"Zane has so much ambition that he sometimes wants to do everything," Robinson said. "Learning how to choose what truly serves his growth has been a huge step forward for him."

In Summer 2025, Brewer worked for the Texas Outdoor Musical theater company, where he and others would put on a production in Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Brewer was able to put things he learned in classes to practical use and realized how similar the skills were.

"I knew how to do certain things. I knew how to paint boxes to look like wood. I learned how to clean a shop. I learned how to build things. I



Photo by Rebecca Worthington

(Left) Luke Holt and Zane Brewer playing Noel Gruber and Ricky Potts, respectively, in the fall 2024 Arkansas State University Theatre Production "Ride The Cyclone."

learned how to sweep the stage, you know, get everybody where they need to be. I've learned how to be helpful. I've learned how to be where people need me to be, and also have multiple tasks at once, and be able to handle those without having a panic attack," Brewer said.

Robinson said his experience over the summer marked a turning point in Brewer's growth, not just as a student but also as a professional actor.

"When he returned in the fall, he was the same yet vastly different. His drive became more focused, his work more professional and his goals clearer. Watching him lock in and rise to the professionalism

needed to make it in this field has been incredibly rewarding," Robinson said.

In addition to performing and working professionally, Brewer found a way to help others gain experience. While at A-State, he founded Spotlight Theater, a student-run project that provided students and community members with opportunities to work onstage and behind the scenes. Through the company, Brewer helped put on shows like "Steel Magnolias," "Misery" and "Who's Holiday."

The group produced "A Charlie Brown Christmas" in partnership with the Fowler Center for their last show. "So we paired with

them, they let us use their space. We got to let the kids step in and get the experience of what it's like having to sign a call sheet, having to work with a professional choreographer, having to perform in a professional space and getting to be in professional makeup rooms. It was just fun getting to see the kids get excited about the things that I get excited about and that other performers get excited about," Brewer said.

Although he keeps very busy with classes, rehearsals and professional work, Brewer still makes time to make and maintain close relationships with those he cares about. Libby Wills, a junior musical theatre major

from Russellville, Arkansas is just one of those people.

"We met in our Stage Makeup class my freshman year, and he decided to sit by me. After talking for a bit, he said something along the lines of 'We're going to be great friends,' and all I could think was 'Who is this guy?' It turns out he was spot on," Wills said.

As his time at A-State begins to come to a close, Brewer is looking ahead to auditions, getting more professional acting credits and whatever else it takes to "be seen by everybody and be everywhere all at once."

Herald staff ranks every Freshëns smoothie



HERALD COLUMN  
STAFF REPORTER

Along with the rice bowls, salads, wraps and quesadillas Freshenëns also offer 15 different smoothies. But the question is: which one are you going to get? With each smoothie costing about \$7 and the line always being incredibly long at lunch rush, if you get a smoothie you end up not liking, you're out of luck, try again tomorrow. After tasting every smoothie, here is the ranking to help you pick your next favorite.

#1 Orange Sunrise With just four ingredients, pineapple, strawberry, bananas and orange it is not hard to love this smoothie. If you tasted an orange creamsicle and then this smoothie, you would not

be able to tell a difference. #2 Lucky 7 As the smoothie with the most fruits the Lucky 7 comes in at a close second. This smoothie tastes the most different from all the others, besides the ones that use ingredients other than fruits and is even a little sour.

#3 Super C Immune Support Though it has the same ingredients as Orange Sunrise, plus an immunity boost, the orange does not overpower this smoothie as much and although you can't taste the immunity support it makes you feel better just knowing it's there.

#4 Tropical Therapy This drink tastes like you are at the beach relaxing under the sun. With pineapple, coconut and kiwi lime, it tastes

exactly like its name. If this were not a group ranking this smoothie would be number one.

Now these next several all taste very similar, so it was a little difficult to rank them.

#5 Caribbean Craze Your regular, run of the mill smoothie. Strawberry and Banana is a classic and for good reason but it's just not quite as good as the ones in spots one through four.

#6 Maui Mango While this smoothie is very refreshing, the mango just takes a little something away that its counterpart Caribbean Craze has.

#7 Peach on the Beach Another go-to, the peaches,

strawberries, bananas and orange really leaves nothing to complain about. While the flavors blend together a little too well it's still pretty tasty.

#8 Banging Berry While it is very different from many of the other smoothies, the difference is not good. If you don't like blueberries you will definitely not like this smoothie.

#9 Berry Burn While strawberries and bananas do work well together, strawberries, bananas and metabolizer boost do not. Again, this one is very bland and leaves much to be desired.

#10 Mango Me Crazy Yes pineapple is good and yes mango is good, once you mix the two together it's not

only bland but bland and bad. Now that we've gotten away from the bland ones, these next ones range from bad to worse.

#11 Wild Strawberry If you loved taking medicine as a kid then you will love this smoothie. The first sip is ok and you think you're going to like it but then the aftertaste hits and you need to take a drink of anything else.

#12 Lime Berry While not the worst, it still isn't that good. Personally, I would never put strawberries, pineapple, kiwi-lime and orange together. There are much worse combinations.

#13 Going Green If you like the way grass tastes then you will 100% like this

Photos by Amelia Young | Life Editor smoothie. With fresh kale, spinach, mango and pineapple at first it's very grassy, then a little fruity, then grassy again. I do have to be honest, it was not quite as bad as I was expecting.

#14 Super Fuel Nasty. Orange, pineapple, strawberry, apple and four organic veggies should not be in a smoothie together. This tastes like baby food in the worst way possible.

#15 SB Protein Chalky, nasty, and just not good. While I did have hope for this one, because of the peanut butter, I was very disappointed to discover this is just not good, at all.