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This article appeared in the Spring 2009 issue of the Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, in which Evan Kasprzak speaks about his first audition for "So You Think You Can Dance?" in 2008. Kasprzak auditioned again in 2009, this time advancing further.

Kasprzak thinks he can dance — and proves it on reality TV show

By Amelia Benner



Kasprzak finds inspiration in dancers of the past and present.

You might not guess it from watching his hip-hop-inspired “Truffle Shuffle,” but Evan Kasprzak loves the great dancers of the 1930s and 1940s. His fondness for the genre even landed him on national T.V.

Kasprzak’s audition for the Fox TV reality show “So You Think You Can Dance?” was a clear homage to his idols. The piece, which was choreographed by his brother, is reminiscent of an extended dance solo from a mid-century musical — think Gene Kelly or Fred Astaire.

The decision to try out for the show was “kind of spur of the moment,” he says. “One of my friends mentioned it and said, ‘You should totally go!’”

So Kasprzak went. His initial audition took place in Milwaukee over spring break. He advanced to the final cut in Las Vegas, where nearly 300 contestants were evaluated and eliminated. He made it down to the final 40 dancers. “It was a breath away,” he says ruefully.

“So You Think You Can Dance” pits 10 pairs of dancers against each other, learning and performing different dance styles each week and competing for the votes of viewers and a panel of judges.

Although he didn’t make it onto the show itself, his entire audition solo from Milwaukee was shown on an early episode. “There was also a tiny little clip from Vegas. It was me going like this,” he says, swinging his arm and grinning.

“It was an amazing experience,” says Kasprzak, “getting to be around so many incredibly talented people who were passionate about the same things.”

He first started dancing at age 6 in emulation of his older brother, who is now a professional choreographer in New York City. “It was kind of a little brother looking up to an older brother,” he says. While he says he hated dance lessons at first, he eventually gave it another chance, learning tap, jazz and hip-hop.

Kasprzak hopes to turn his love of dance into a career. “I’d love to get into film, but I know that’s a hard industry to break into,” he says. “I’ll pretty much go wherever the work takes me.”