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Talkington fuels performance background into national Halloween attraction

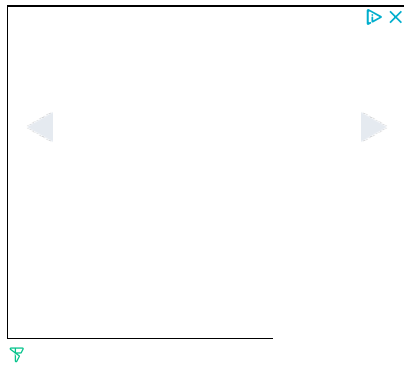
By Freddie Bourne Messenger-Inquirer
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Owensboro native Elliott Talkington is taking his theatre skills and the Halloween spirit to new heights portraying the role of Ichabod Crane in “The Sleepy Hollow Experience” attraction at Old Fort Harrod State Park in Harrodsburg.

And so far, he finds it to be a great fit.

“I think that Halloween is a holiday that any theatre lover or any performer loves, and would even claim to be their favorite holiday,” Talkington, 30, said. “I’ve always loved dressing up in costume, becoming a different character and transforming in that way.”

Talkington, who comes from a dance background, took up performing at the age of 5 and eventually moved into musical theatre and traditional plays.



After graduating from Daviess County High School in 2012, Talkington received his bachelor’s degree in theatre from Western Kentucky University in 2016 and has been performing in a professional capacity ever since.

Talkington first got involved with “The Sleepy Hollow Experience” — a one-hour retelling of Washington Irving’s 1820 short story, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” most known for the Headless Horseman — after finding an open casting call for the presenting company, the Florida-based Brian Clowdus Experiences, looking for cast members for the experience’s 2022 run at Mount Rouge Farm in Roseland, Virginia.

He was eventually cast in the role of Ichabod in his debut year with the production.

Talkington, who also serves as an associate producer for Brian Clowdus Experiences, is happy to portray the role for his second time, while also having the opportunity to perform in his home state.

“I find it absolutely incredible,” he said. “When I first did the show in Virginia, I thought Kentucky audiences need to see something like this because, unfortunately, there’s not a lot of opportunity for professional, high-quality entertainment in theatre to come into many areas of the Commonwealth.

“I felt that it was so important that, if I could, I would love to bring something like this — a fully immersive production where as soon as you set foot in that site, you are a part of the story automatically,” he said.

The experience debuted this year at Old Fort Harrod State Park on Sept. 28.

Talkington said the location serves as a good place for the narrative.

“We’re able to use the cabins there. We’re able to use that whole space to be able to tell the story and allow our audience members to move throughout the park to tell that story,” he said.

Though the origin story is rooted in freights, Talkington said the experience is “spooky, not scary” and is a family-friendly event sprinkled with humor and light-heartedness, with audience participation being highly encouraged.

“We don’t chase you with a chainsaw down the road or anything like that,” he said, “but it’s the perfect production if you want to celebrate Halloween and you love spooky, fun and a little creepy but not ‘pop out at you’ scary.”

Talkington finds the attraction is accessible to all.

“I like to describe this experience as if a haunted house and a play had a baby. It’s that sweet middle spot,” he said. “It’s a fun time to get out there and enjoy the Halloween season; but at the same time, it’s high-quality, live entertainment.”

“The Sleepy Hollow Experience” runs at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. each Thursday through Saturday and 7 p.m. Sunday.

It will also run during the week of Halloween at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Monday, Oct. 30 and Tuesday, Oct. 31, with the latter being the final night.

For tickets, VIP packages and additional information, visit briancrowdus.com/performances/the-sleepy-hollow-experience.

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