

all in

Kabi Ramadhani '25 commits fully to the interests that inspire him.

For Kabiona “Kabi” Ramadhani '25, passion for the things he loves runs deep. Whether it’s filmmaking, theatre, or soccer, the Mount Union junior puts 110% into all he does, and his motivation comes directly from within.

“I think it is self-motivation,” says Kabi. “I don’t know where else it possibly could come from. I try to look back to where I began, and I’ve just always wanted to do something cool. So, I just do it.”

Kabi, a theatre and French double major, came to Mount Union primarily for theatre and to continue playing soccer after high school.

“I’ll be honest. I didn’t really look at many colleges,” said Kabi. “I saw Mount Union, and it was the members of the theatre program and soccer coaches who convinced me to come. I’m happy I did because it feels like a second home. I’ve made a billion friends here, and my teammates feel like brothers.”

behind the camera

Kabi’s passion to create and produce short films started at a young age. He was born in a refugee camp in Tanzania and moved to Cleveland just before his ninth birthday. While

living in Tanzania, Kabi didn’t have access to a television in his home. When he first moved to Cleveland, his family got a TV, and he would binge-watch television all hours of the day. In 2014, he first saw “The Flash” and was inspired.

“I watched the first episode,” Kabi said. “And then I just had to recreate that super speed. Ever since then, I have been creating more things over and over. I couldn’t stop recording stuff. I got started literally on my phone. That’s where I shot most of my videos. It’s only now, when I’m in media classes, that I’m starting to use professional equipment. Props to Dr. [Adelina] Cooper, because I guess she thinks I’m good at what I do. She’s taught me a lot about equipment.”

Pairing the experience and guidance Kabi has received at Mount Union with his vision, his short film “Happily Ever After” earned him Best Actor and Best Director nominations at the 2023 Akron Independent Horror Short Film Festival. While he is used to working alone on most of his personal projects, Kabi tries to get his family and siblings involved, though he joked that he does not often leave them much of a choice.

“My family and siblings almost never want to get involved, but I always convince them,” Kabi said, smiling. “I’m always



like ‘I’ll get you pizza after we’re done,’ and that usually works. Usually, I’m alone but sometimes I need certain shots for certain moments, and I’ll ask them to help.”

in the spotlight

Though he has gained significant technical prowess directing his own projects, Kabi’s love for theatre began before he moved to the United States.

“My mom would take me to the theatre that was local,” explained Kabi. “Because we did not have a television, that is how we would find entertainment – in live shows or plays.”

Kabi credits his mother for sparking his interest in theatre at an early age. By taking him to the theatre, he found a love for the music, the acting, and the production of it all. His direct involvement in theatre started during his junior year of high school at Lincoln West High School in Cleveland as Scrooge in “A Christmas Carol” and has grown from there. Last academic year, he made his Mount Union stage debut in “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.” Kevin Kern, professor of theatre, sees the hard work that Kabi puts into his craft.

“In his first year with us, we recognized Kabi’s strong work ethic,” Kern said. “His desire to perfect the craft of storytelling and his performance in our production of ‘Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat’ was sensational and a crowd favorite.”

Both theatre and filmmaking share a lot of processes and artistic expression, but Kabi has learned a lot about the differences between acting on the stage and in a short film.

“In film, you have to do things like you do in theatre, but a lot smaller,” Kabi said. “In theatre, you have to overexaggerate a lot because there’s a big audience somewhat far away, so they’ve got to see and hear what you’re saying and doing. In film, the camera is closer to you, and your acting can be a little more realistic and smaller in a sense.”

on the field

While Kabi isn’t certain what the future holds for him after he graduates, one thing he hopes is that soccer, in some form, is part of it.

“I don’t know where I’ll be, but I know I’m only going to be young for so long...only going to be able to run around for so long,” said Kabi. “So, I want to play soccer and then focus on filmmaking and acting. Maybe I’ll act in films.”

Kabi admits that balancing soccer and theatre with filmmaking and classes can be difficult, but he’s learning how to manage his time and still do the things he loves.

“It’s hard. It really is. Sometimes, I’ll go six months without making a short film because I’m doing school things,” says Kabi. “This year, I’ve done a better job at it. Any time I have a break, I’ll make a short film or come up with one. I’ve learned to write down a bunch of ideas when I have them so that when I do have time, I can quickly look at those ideas. Also, I’ve grown more patient. I’ve learned patience because some things you can do in a couple of days, but other projects can take weeks or longer.”

Above all, Kabi credits his Mount Union soccer teammates for being his best support system on campus as they know all the different things he is doing.

“My teammates support me in everything I do,” said Kabi. “Whenever I tell them I am doing something, they show up and support me. When I was doing ‘Joseph,’ the whole team basically showed up to watch me. They even help with filmmaking stuff too.”

Though he’s lived across the world, Kabi found another home in Alliance on Mount Union’s campus. Getting the opportunity to explore his passions and being recognized for the success of his work is the cherry on top of finding a community that supports his relentless pursuit of making his entertainment and athletic dreams a reality.