

A VERY PRODUCTIVE LESSON

It is getting very close... about a month and a half (of course, February is a VERY short month!!!!). However, I am very, VERY pleased with where I am at this point in the process. After all, I have never before embarked on an adventure quite like this... from infancy to finish, my OWN creation but I would be lying if I did not tell you that I am really excited! K told me that we are definitely where I need to be just going through each piece one by one over and over again. I see two of my list are more challenging than others for reasons that are very apparent to both of us! Definitely will be focusing on those this week.

I was thrilled by one of her comments today! It seems that her family was listening to one of the songs I will be performing (one of my top picks... one that HAD to be on the program). She informed me that my interpretation outshines the artist who performed the song in the OBC (Original Broadway Cast for those of you not in the know). Let me reiterate that this will be an extremely family-friendly show with no questionable songs or staging (I'll save that for my grand 20th spectacle). In fact, I would not be surprised if I incorporated a bit of audience interaction throughout. Not to worry, I would know who **NOT** to call upon. St. Patty's Day weekend... I have a spot to fill perhaps a nice Irish tune.

It seems that I have been a walking billboard for my terrific coach. Not one but two people have asked me how to get in touch with her. My cousin, who is in a band, told me that she has been trying to find a good vocal teacher and was unaware that there was one in the immediate area.

In other production news, it seems that "the other me" has made quite an impression. The promotional photo for the theatre's redux of *Escanaba in da Moonlight* features a gentleman who just happens to share names with me but bears

little resemblance. Numerous people around the area have come up and asked me how the play was going. At times, I have forgotten what they were talking about and inform them that it is not me in the cast. I have worked on stage with J2 but not this time.

Coming Soon to the Great White Way

Seems like spring is the beginning of the new Broadway season.

Guess they have to get in to hit that Tony deadline. In any case, I see a gaggle of revivals, hollywood turned stage productions (for better or worse), and one-man shows among the already established shows.

It appears that there is a new revolving door musical aiming to hit a certain demographic (in this case screaming adolescent females). Daniel Radcliffe ended his employ at the World Wide Wicket company back in early January. Darren Criss (from Glee) Succeeded him for a two week run. And now, Nick Jonas is in the Business until July. Hope that this does not become the next Chicago with every teenage heartthrob stepping into the role of J. Pierpont Finch. A good show should stand on its own. On a side bar, Radcliffe and Criss have more in common than H2\$. Darren's production company (began at all places at the dreaded school up north) created the internet sensation "A Very Potter Musical."

Opening soon for a limited run is the newest entry in Disney's production juggernaut. *Newsies*, a little movie musical from the 80s that starred a young little-known actor named Christian Bale. I do not think it was a major hit but has

legions of cult fans ☐

Ghost: The Musical. The less said the better. Sounds like a mess and I don't mean because of the famous clay scene.

In the new revival scene there is a play and a favorite musical about to hit NYC. Phillip Seymour Hoffman is going to fill Willy Loman's shoes along with Andrew Garfield (the *Amazing Spider-Man* not the musical the new reboot of the cinematic saga) in *Death of a Salesman*.

Now for the show that I have had my eye on ever since the news arrived. Lord Lloyd Webber's masterpiece is coming back!

~~*Starlight Express* that WONDERFUL engine that could will be skating back into the heart of theatre goers in March.~~ *Jesus Christ Superstar* enjoyed a new production in Canada last summer and is making its way to the Neil Simon Theatre in March. I just hope that this production is better than the 90s offering that was dreadful and they had the audacity to film it for all to see (not that the 1973 version was the work of genius but King Herod was much more interesting).

Finally... for a very limited run, the performing wunderkind known as William Shatner will be gracing the stage for the first time in 50 years in a one-man production all his own. I can only imagine...

A Great Dane

Weekday mornings (except for Mondays) I go to my "sister"'s house at 7:45 to watch the youngest kids she sits with while she takes the older ones to school. One of the younger ones is an extremely cool little dude named Dane who goes to pre-school later in the morning. The kid is just a ball of fire!

Every time he is there he asks Charnel... "Where is Jamiah?!" There was a spider in the laundry room the other day and he asked if she was going to call and have me come and take care of it. Over Christmas break, Dane and his mother came into the grocery while I was working and upon entering he exclaimed, **"THERE'S THAT GUY!"**

Wednesday morning after coming back from pre-school, he was absolutely not himself. The poor guy had a tummy ache and a temp of 102° ☐ Charnel called his father and he was on his way. Until he arrived, Dane sat on my lap, cuddled with me, and we watched *The Flintstones* which drew a few chuckles but he really did feel warm. Shortly after, Dane's Dad arrived and took my newest little pal home. This morning they were both sick! Get well soon, little buddy ☐

Enough Excitement For One Day

At least of this kind. The grocery was the place to be Saturday afternoon around 3:30. A seven-year old young man and his mother came in and grabbed a cart. As they are usual customers, I know how rambunctious the young lad can be. My co-worker even politely warned him to settle down a teeny bit.

As I was working on my list of things to do I could hear the little one running up and down the aisles pushing the cart. A sort time later, I hear someone shout **"OH, MY GOD! OH, MY GOD!**

I NEED HELP!" By the time I got over to aisle 4 (of 4), my co-worker had the two of them up by the window. I found an overturned cart and blood trailing up and down the aisle.

What really got me was the absence of a loud crash to announce the accident.

So I got the phone, called 9-1-1, and had the ambulance there

in short order. The child's finger was cut down to the bone. Understandably, he was quite inconsolable. After getting off the phone with the dispatcher, I call the manager who told us to make out a report and get the party's information for our records. Since I knew the two of them, the report could wait until the situation was under control.

After the paramedics transported the little guy to the hospital, I set about cleaning up the area. Amazingly, there was a glass jar of spaghetti sauce that was unharmed. I then grabbed a pair of gloves and bleached water and scrubbed the trail of blood. The cart itself had no evidence of the mishap. Strange...

Yesterday, the boy's father stopped in and proclaimed me a "hero" (SHEESH! and I wasn't even wearing my Superman t-shirt ;)). Honestly, I was more interested in the welfare of his son. Apparently, he had broken his finger and had to go to the surgeon to have it taken care of.

And who said that life in a two traffic light town was dull?

Creative Block

Call it a New Year's resolution if you like, but I am embarking on a new, exciting creative venture. Details will be coming as they progress. Let's just say that I am planning to put my gifts to good use here in the near future. As I have been pondering how best to use these gifts, I have been brainstorming A LOT but am having a bit of an issue with actually turning these ideas into something concrete and worthwhile.

On my other ongoing pursuit, my voice lessons continue to

prosper. As I expected, one of the hardest pieces (ok... THE MOST difficult) is one that is quite deceptive. Literally beating my head over it ☐ Rather reminiscent of that little School House Rock show I was involved in a few years ago.

Songs you grew up with but when you are faced with performing them, they present quite a challenge. However, whoever said that I did anything easy? I'm always up for a challenge.

Otherwise, everything else seems to be passing for whatever is normal for my family. No one has been checked into the "Hilton" since New Year's Eve and he Jeff was released Monday in time to watch the Buckeyes flounder. Now thanks to some great decisions made by a previous coach and members of the team past and present, OSU will not be eligible for post-season football for another year.

Hope everyone has rung in 2012 safely, healthy, and lovingly.

What I Did To Ring In 2012

Quite an eventful day, really! I checked out Facebook around 9 to see that my oldest brother had been in the B-town Hilton (more commonly known as the Hospital) for the past 4 hours and Mom had caught whatever has been making its way around for the past week (glad I am only battling a stuffy nose). Dad was in true for as of late by dragging a bunch of his treasures out from their trove and piling them out around the house. I see that he has finally started to put his carport together.

We'll see if he can get it together before the snow hits.

While at work, I got a call asking if I could sit with Jeff's kids while their mother worked 3rd shift. I thought that I could beat Joshua at Harry Potter Scene It but he was too busy in the recesses of his fortress of solitude so I spent the

evening watching Dick Clark's 40th ball drop. The entire evening event featured a countdown of the 40 top musical performances over the years (I guess they did not say 40 "Best"). Seeing J-Lo prancing around in a skimpy 1 piece was not my idea of Best **MUSICAL** performance but, I did not get a vote. Noah, bless his heart, tried so hard to stay awake for the ball drop but with about 15 minutes to the event he was off to lala land. Fifteen minutes later when that new unfit for anyone's eyes and ears group took the stage, it was time for the little ones to bid good night.

I thought I was done for the night and could relax. I was mistaken. About 2AM, I heard the heavenly choirs announce that "Noah threw up in Daddy's bed!" Up the stairs, strip the bed and toss one in the washer and the other in the shower. I believe that I put each where they needed to go because at 7, I heard another deluge. And at 8, Rachel returned to take command.

What a way to end the year! HAHAHHA! The night could be turned into a modern day Marx Brothers feature which I was hoping to find on the box last night, but...Hope you all had a safe, fun, and eventful start of the new year!

Believing IS Seeing

NEVER THE OTHER WAY AROUND! Isn't that what this season is all about? The ability to believe in something bigger than ourselves must FIRST begin in our hearts or that belief is sure to fail.

Believe in what your heart is saying

Hear the melody that's playing

There's no time to waste

There's so much to celebrate

Believe in what you feel inside

And give your dreams the wings to fly

You have everything you need

If you just believe.

We wrapped up our Christmas celebration at the home of my mother's sister. The last few days have seen sickness, some frustration, and I believe a LOT of love. Christmas Eve, we had our immediate family celebration. Alyssa was not feeling well but by the time the celebration began, she was well enough to eat a pickle and a deviled egg. Not my first choice after having a sour stomach but she kept it down. Alex also was feeling under the weather but came later and opened his gifts by himself.

Something new this year (prompted by the craziness of Santa's busy schedule) was the exchanging of names to fill each other's stockings. Some of us grumbled not knowing what to get each other but in the end, I think it worked out well and I hope the tradition continues. People just had to use their imagination (if they have one). I was pleased with my stocking stuffers choices.

Christmas Eve mass was even earlier than the 11PM of years past. I was pleased to see some more male voices come up to the loft as Chad and I are typically the sole men in the choir. Cousin Dan from Sandusky, JJ (a wonderful tenor), and a few others joined us. Really glad for that because some of the rafter reachers would have drowned us out for sure. Apparently, what must have been a traditional piece in years past was revisited. "The Bells of St. Mary" hopefully will become another fitting tradition along with "For Unto Us A

Child Is Born.”

After Chad dropped me off after mass, Mom came out and told us that she had to take Dad yet again to the ER. Complaining of stomach and chest pains and diarrhea. So we all headed to the hospital. I won't say “fortunately”, but it could have been worse than dehydration. He had to have two units of IV fluids pumped into him. This year has been just a BIT scary and hopefully soon, we can get some answers as to what is going on. But until then, I personally need to really focus on stepping back when things get out of control.

After getting 4-5 hours of sleep, I had planned on attending services at the church being ministered by my pal who just continues to amaze me. I was so psyched that I did because he seemed to be surprised that I did. As an added present, he sang the beautiful “Mary, Did You Know?” Chris has such a tremendous voice that when he uses it gives each listener a extraordinary gift! It is also so inspiring to see how much he has personally come to accept his savior...a beautiful sight.

I was so thankful that I got to see the people I choose to include in my extended family on one of the most joyous days of the year.

Dinner Christmas Day was served at Jeff's kitchen. Before that however, Shelby sprained her ankle pretty badly when she climbed the stairs at my house in the dark. She had to be taken to have it checked out for severity.

Today, the celebration continued at the Maxwell Country Estate where both of Mom's siblings and their families gathered. I always enjoy being regaled by stories of their youth and today was no exception. Jeff, Alicia, and I played Words With Friends via iPhone or in my case iPod. My oldest brother CHEATS with an app that actually says “Cheats With Friends.”

Later, Dan and Carla tried to teach some of us how to play Mah'Jong. If I had been lucky enough to draw some good tiles in the three rounds we played... Of course, if we had had more

time to play I might have caught on.

I hope you all are having a beautiful holiday season full of love and true belief.

A Break From The Chaos

So glad that I got to take in 2 SUPER shows last weekend amid all the hectic goings on otherwise. As I pointed out in my last post, *Nuncrackers* was hilarious, kudos once agin to to Mare for going the extra mile by steppin out on stage to fill the role of Sister Amnesia as well as serving as director!

Yesterday, I was lucky enough to take in my other home away from home's production of one of MY favorite holiday gems LIVE ON STAGE! I know that I have mentioned my family's extreme love of *A Christmas Story*. Each year to get a viewing in, I have to stay up after mass and catch one of the showings during TBS' 24-hour marathon while everyone else is all settled in for a long winter's nap. This year, Christmas Eve mass is even earlier so I should be able to catch the midnight show!

Seeing the show on stage ALMOST made up for that one viewing!

Things have been crazy around the house the last few weeks so I was not able (or did not take the time) to make reservations before all 6 performances were sold out. This has not happened for a scheduled WCCT show since the 1978 production of *Fiddler on the Roof!* I know of at least one NON-scheduled show that was a sell out, but I won't go there (something about a karaoke). In any case, my vocal coach who played Ralphie's mother made arrangements for me to attend. They had to turn 20 people away who had called the reservation line.

Almost everything from the movie was brought to wonderful life

in front of our eyes. The tire changing episode, the rattle trap furnace battles, Randy's mummification with the arms that would not stay down, the "Fra-JEE-lay" leg lamp, the Bumpuses' dogs (unseen but heard), the "triple dog dare," and of course the *"official Red Ryder, carbine action, two-hundred shot range model air rifle! With a compass in the stock and a thing which tells time."* My only qualm was the absence of the original soundtrack as Ralphie and friends are being chased by the notorious Scut Farcas. Everyone on stage perfectly captured the essence of the characters being portrayed from the adult Ralphie down to little Drew. But I have to make note of the two brilliant actresses. Tiff was her typical showstopping brilliant as Ms. Shields with her margin marking quill. Seriously, anytime she is on stage the audience is in store for a treat!

I had never before seen Kathrine on stage; however, she was extraordinary! Her total presence on stage was wondrous! Her facial mannerisms, her voice, each little quirk and nuance MADE Mrs. Parker a delight to see. Her chemistry with The Old Man was one of many highlights of the show!

Now here is a bit of some of my favorite scenes in the movie or the complete theatrical trailer which I have never before seen:

A Day of Performances

I was fortunate enough to take in two musical performances today. It began as I attended the dress rehearsal of my nieces's elementary Christmas program. *A Bug's Christmas* was adorable. 2nd Grader Alyssa had a speaking role as a wood nymph. Before the show began, she caught a glimpse of my from the risers and waved to me. Although it was at times difficult to understand what the 70+ kids were singing, it was quite fun. My favorite segment was the "12 Bugs of Christmas."

Tonight, I had promised Mare Mare that I would man the ticket table for the Village Players' production of [Nuncrackers](#). I had the opportunity to see and participate in a production of the original *Nunsense* back I still can't believe **20 years ago!** **on my high school senior trip!** I did not know that I would be making punch and setting up for the opening night after party as well. While taking the money from a couple and hoping they enjoyed the show, a gentleman commented in a rather gruff, opinionated tone: "We'll try." I said that sounded like a comment Mr. Potter would make.

I must say if you want to continue your holiday celebrations with a good hearty laugh then this show is for you. Nuns singing a grab bag of tunes. A scatter-brained amnesiac sister. A Julia Child-inspired cooking segment. A version of Tchaikovsky's classic ballet not to be missed. VERY strong singing! BRAVO Mare (who doubled as director and last minute actress), cast, and crew! A phenomenal production all around!

Soon, very soon. Fourteen months is FAAAAARRRRRRR tooooo L0000000000NG for me to be off stage. I hear that *The Sound of Muc (err...) Music* is coming for next holiday season.

But it was totally enthralling to settle down with many of my friends after the show and meeting some people that I have heard a lot about! Just walking into the theatre made me realize that I have been away too long. The Huber really is the gem of the area!

Say... FART

No.. honestly, the photographer for our big Jamiahsh family portrait used that in an attempt to get a few of the more rambunctious models to cooperated. A certain young man chose to say "gingivitis" instead (bad teeth, Noah?). In any case, today was the big family portrait day. It probably has been a good 10 years since the last one. Looking at the old one, there are a few people it was deemed necessary to delete for one reason or other and Alex for one had those monkey ears hanging out and I still had a reasonable amount of hair on my head plus a few extra pounds (now it is the opposite on both counts). There have also been a few additions to the family so it all balances out. The last picture was more a photo of the children for the parents' Christmas present. This one included all 17 (or is it 18?) of us.

The day began at mass. I was not aware that the choir sang this morning (it is not the third Sunday of the month. Guess I should look at the schedule a bit more closely). The choir master came down and told me to come up to the loft. I was shocked to see Chad (who had just had gall bladder surgery on Thursday up there. Better than expected but he did not do much. I KNOW that the next time the choir sings is Christmas Eve at 9:30PM mass. A half-hour earlier than normal (hope the Children's mass at 7 is quick since we sing carols at 9).

Then it was off to break the camera. It actually went quacked than I thought i had. We arrived around noon and were finished by 12:20. I think the most troublesome one was my 15 year old godson who really was not appreciative of being torn away from his Fortress of Solitude. We asked him if he would do better if we showed him a picture of his girlfriend. Still amazes me that he has found the time to be social enough for a girlfriend. Guess there is someone for everyone. Rather humorous with about 10 photographers offering placement suggestions. Not me... I just went with the flow. Wonder if she can photoshop a bit of hair to cover the glare that is sure to come. ☐

Today was also the combined three-store Christmas party. Not for me... not that I am not a sociable person, someone needed to stay behind and run the store. We now have Noble Romans pizza at the store. The sign out front says "Made Fresh Daily."

Apparently, we had a customer who took the sign a bit too literally as he called to place an order. We are NOT a pizza parlor and do not deliver. You have to buy and bake at home ☐

Kind of reminded me of the customer who called and inquired on our availability of breasts. As reward for staying behind, a pizza, 2 liter, and leftover cookies were delivered to me to take home. We also have a stand up mascot of Noble Romans at the front of the store to greet the customers. I do recall back in the day that there was a Noble Romans in the Fort and vaguely remember said mascot in television ads. I remember the tag for Godfather's Pizza which was the apropos "Pizza You Can't Refuse" but that is another chain.

Well... off to bed. Early start tomorrow.