

Some REALLY Last Minute Choreography

I guess it could be worse. Tonight, the Smith family octet blocked the movements for “Whenever I’m With You.” With only three rehearsals to go (Sunday’s tech rehearsal is that alone... a day for tech... getting light and sound cues, rented costumes distributed and hoping they fit, etc. no run through Sunday), the routine is going to be fun... if IT KILLS ME and even easy... coming from a certifiable Redwood.. But it is a good thing we got it blocked because without the choreographer, we were just ambling around the stage looking lost. I think the choreographer has been at a total of 2 rehearsals (tonight being the second). But somehow, the other choreographed numbers are going really well and look good. The dance guru also commented on one of my many costumes. She was jealous and I told her that it would be hard to put away after the show’s run. We also saw a copy of another press release from Hicksville’s hometown newspaper. There is a website, but it has not been updated to include this week’s headlines. I’ll keep checking and post a link. I also realized once again tonight how much I LOVE to sing. Guess that is a good thing since I am in a musical?

Here I Go Again

I dunno... the past day or two I have just had this burst of creativity or energy or excitement as the days count down. Tonight, we actually went through the entire show start to finish for the first time without stopping only for notes between the acts. All in all, it went pretty well. We started

at 7 and got done around 9.30. To me in my vast experience, two and a half hours for the first full run through is very good. The director was impressed. The last time we did ACT I alone, it ran an hour and a half. Tonight, it went an hour and ten minutes. Another run through awaits Thursday night with the dreaded tech rehearsal Sunday and then the adrenaline-filled, excitement of dress rehearsals and finally the THREE performance run will soon be upon us!!!

Grandpa's notes were decent. My energy for the opening title song were great. Full of energy, perfect characterization. A round of applause from the cast. I'm not sure how many shows this makes me on my resume. I will check that out in just a second. Only my twelfth since 2002 and my first since last summer... MUCH TOO LONG A BREAK FROM THE STAGE!!!

Not to sound (not sure what the word is but really negative), but I really hope that some of my best [friends](#) will be able to come and Meet Me in St. Louis but I know that if [C](#) is doing well every effort will be made. Hope you get well soon, pal. And once again, to [J](#) and the rest of the cast of *Lion in Winter*... Break a Leg!

It Takes A Village... Well Almost

Although there is just as much excitement and hard work involved in producing a non-musical, there is simply nothing like the thrill I personally get when involved with a BIG musical. Not only is there lines to memorize, character to establish, blocking to perfect, and everything else involved there is the added excitement of song (ok... and dance... there I

SAID IT... I don't have to like it, but have to ACT like I like it). The cast of *Meet Me in St. Louis* is composed of stage veterans but also a lot of stage newcomers even in the major roles. The young man playing John Truitt (the male lead) has never before stepped on stage. The head of the Smith family also has had no previous stage experience. Perhaps one of the youngest actresses (age 12) has SOME of the most experience behind her. "Agnes" has had roles in *The Music Man*, *Aladdin*, *Schoolhouse Rock, Jr.*, and *Hicksville, the Musical*. The gentleman playing Lon stated that his favorite role has been as Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors* (hmm...) plus he has directed *M*A*S*H* and [Murder by Poe](#) (sounds interesting... right up [j's](#) alley).

Tonight, before rehearsal began, we were shown a copy of The East Allen Courier (a small-town publication of Northeast Indiana) with the first press release from the show. Here is what my portion included:

JS(Grandpa Prophater) has done a lot of shows with the Williams County Community Theatre, but this is his first production with the Village Players. He majored in theatre at BGSU. His favorite roles have been Rooster in Annie and Morat Notborat Nichkor (honestly, I wrote the name out for her when I was interviewed and she still didn't get it correct) in Idol Night at the Karaoke Place. He is enjoying playing a character much older than himself and looks forward to the makeup that will surely be used to age him. He will be heard singing in the title song (and its many reprises), "Whenever I'm with You," and "A Day in New York."

Actually, with a cast full of newcomers as well as many stage veterans, we have come a long way since the middle of January. I'm sure that within the next week and a half we will have a fabulous musical in a gorgeous theatre. But after coming to see this production, be sure to check out WCCT's production of [Lion in Winter](#).

Nice Try, Santa

Apparently there is no clause protecting Santa Claus from being ticketed just like every other joe in the world. Back in November, 60 year-old Chip Cafiero was given a citation for being double-parked on a Brooklyn street. His horse-drawn carriage full of treats for good little boys and girls was parked near his SUV. Mr. Cafiero recently had his day in court to contest the ticket by claiming he was illegally parked to protect the children and carriage from traffic. However, the Jolly Elf paid the \$155 fine but said that the grinch would not take away his Christmas spirit.

By Caitlin Millat
NBCNewYork.com

The NYPD just landed on the naughty list.

Kris Kringle will have to pay a \$115 double-parking ticket he received last Christmas while handing out toys to kids in Brooklyn, the Daily News reported.

Chip Cafiero, 60, parked his horse-drawn carriage – ahem, sleigh – in Bay Ridge last year as he delivered goodies to bright-eyed area kids.

Grinchy cops promptly slapped Cafiero's carriage and the Chevy Suburban next to it with fines for occupying more than one space.

"The agent saw me handing out toys to kids and walked over and slapped me with a fine anyways," St. Nick told the Daily News. "Has this city lost its heart?"

St. Nick tried to appeal to the Department of Finance but lost his battle with the city today despite public outcry

that the ticket be overturned.

"Obviously not even Santa is exempt from traffic enforcement here in New York City," state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge) said.

The Fifth Avenue Merchants Association told the Daily News it would pick up Cafiero's tab.

Cafiero said the ticket wouldn't zap him of holiday cheer.

"The city can take my money," Santa said, "but they can't take my Christmas spirit."

Oscar's New Style

In an apparent move to tighten the length of the ceremony, certain things were absent from this season's Academy Award ceremony. The thing I noticed most was the absence of the clips shown periodically throughout the night showcasing the nominees for the big award: Best Picture. Also gone was the full performance of Best Original Song nominees by the artists who either originally performed or wrote the song.

One new addition to the show was the way in which the acting awards were presented. Normally, the winner of the previous year's award presents. This year, groups of past winners stood on stage and announced each nominee in turn. I thought this was a nice touch to pass the torch.

As always, we had the somewhat needless montages centering on various film genres of the past year: Love, Comedy, and Action to name a few. They seriously do get old.

I really enjoyed the showmanship of Hugh Jackman as host. Anyone who knows him only as Wolverine or from his other cinematic roles got a treat as he performed in two very cool musical numbers. He even poked fun at his own flop at the box office, *Australia*.

With A Little Bit O' Luck

One of my best [friends](#) posted on his blog that readers would get “bored” with his posts about his family and his love of it. However, I think it would be highly entertaining. I hope I don't bore anyone with my occasional posts about my awesome friends. Tonight, a bunch of us met at their house for an Oscar party. I must say that I was shocked after the final tally in which I was the winner. I usually don't do too badly at these things... I am pleased if I get a quarter of the categories correct. I do have a system that mainly involves paying attention to the news a week or two before the awards and I go from there. Luckily, *Slumdog Millionaire* did not let me down for the most part. In fact, I think I went against the movie a few times and lost.

There were a few sure things. I honestly thought that Heath Ledger MADE the Joker his own. An interesting point was made tonight. Does anyone recall the villain falling to his death in the theatrical release? If so, it was apparently edited out of the DVD release. Definitely a bittersweet victory. The Clown Prince of Crime was the best part of *The Dark Knight*.

Also, who would not vote for *Wall-E*? While I am a fan of two-d animation of old, I think studios like Pixar create very fun, noteworthy work.

I have often thought that costume pieces are the way to go when choosing which Costume Design movie to pick. Thank goodness *The Duchess* kept that belief alive.

As for the rest, many of them were pure pull them out of the hat guesses... some good... others not so good. Guess I was just lucky.

Psalm 41 According To Me

I once again served as song leader at mass today. Between the first and second readings is the responsorial psalm. The leader leads the congregation in the main verse and then chants the rest of the psalm... hopefully, correctly. This morning was not the case and one word mispoken made me wince.

The 3rd verse is supposed to be read as follows:

*The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed
and restore him from his bed of illness.*

Honestly, it would have been perfect except for one word. Instead of "sustain," I said "The Lord will KEEP him on his sickbed." One would hope that God would not intentionally keep someone on his sickbed. When I made my face after the psalm was complete, the organist asked what was wrong and I told him what had happened. Apparently, he did not notice.

I also sang "Amazing Grace." This is one of my favorite pieces. However, I did not realize how many verses there are: 6. I did a bit of sight reading since we rarely get past verse 4. I have always been fascinated by the first verse. A lot of hymnals include the words : "saved a wretch like me." I always learned that the sound "saved and set me free."

There seems to be a lot of that word changing going on in our hymnals that change seasonally... generally, in songs that seem un-politically correct. Our chief organist has a fit every time the choir practices a song and the words are not the same as in the past. But we have to sing the most up-to date words or the congregation will be lost.

Ok... off to rehearsal.

Just When You Thought It Was Over...

BAM!!! Winter returned earlier today with another blast. Not that we were expecting anything less since it is only approaching the end of February. I had rehearsal from 1-4 (4 being rather optimistic since I had to leave at 4.45 to be at work by 5). The drive over was rather problematic: snow covered road the entire 10 mile journey, but I did make it (did you expect anything less?). I arrived around noon to complete my costuming... THANK HEAVEN THAT IS DONE! Now, we just have to wait for my final outfit to arrive from the costume shop in Toledo opening week (hopefully it fits). But Grandpa is now fully clothed. The costume mistress made a wonderful, very astute comment. She told me that she knew that I had been a theatre veteran for two reasons: (1) my talent and (2) my security in dropping my pants without hesitation to try on costumes. Well... my security in the latter is limited to the costume room. I have yet to be cast in a role in which I have been required to drop my drawers (quite frankly, at present, that would cause a moments pause).

One of the highlights of today's rehearsal was the trolley.

It is really going to be something. Not quite complete, but enough that it could be moved on and off stage. I must say that I was quite impressed with the organization and pace at which it was pushed on and off for one of the signature numbers of the show.

Grandpa's songs must have impressed... well, I was told that I could be heard. Unfortunately, the part that could be heard was harmony that was supposed to be mixed with Tootie and Agnes' melody line. I have often been told that one should never work with children or animals on stage. Funny thing is, I have never had reason to believe it. Wonder why?

Happily, the road back was snow clear for the most part although the wind was horrendous. But, who knows what tomorrow will bring.

Conan's Last Stand

Tonight at 12.35 eastern time will be Conan O'Brien's final late show before he takes over the once coveted 11.35 slot from Jay Leno. I'm not sure how coveted the slot is but can well remember the battle between Leno and Letterman after the late great Johnny Carson retired. Fascinating that I do not see either host lasting nearly as long as the King of Late Night. Of course, Jay will soon be coming to Prime Time in some form. I prefer Dave when I feel so inclined.

I do have a connection to Mr. O'Brien. During my first adventure in New York City, a group went on the NBC studio tour. One of the other members of my group knew one of the writers on the show personally and we went to his office and scored tickets to that night's telecast. I do remember that Dennis Miller was one of the guests and I sat in the middle of

the third row. Tonight's guest list does not seem to make me want to sit up and watch. The guide lists The White Stripes as the performers. Unless it is a group of performing zebras, I think I will pass.[poll id="17"]

An Unexpected Song And Dance

Sunday afternoon is the annual All County Band and Chorus concert. While in high school, I always looked forward to this event. Not only did it mean two days out of school to practice, (I went for both groups all four years), but it also meant being surrounded by fellow students who shared a passion for music. However, one of the schools in the county, until recently, never chose to participate. During my junior year, we had the privilege of having R.D. Mathey as the guest clinician for the choir. It featured, among other pieces, a medley of Andrew Lloyd Webber pieces. I was among the brave souls who tried out for a duet of "Unexpected Song" from [Song and Dance](#). Unfortunately, I was not chosen to sing the duet. I do remember the performance of Jester Harrison's "Amen" which was a staple of the BGSU Men's Chorus under Mathey's direction. I tried to find a youtube video but they must not perform it anymore.

Another common occurrence was the typical winter storm that would either cancel the concert or postpone it for a week. One year, it was delayed twice before it was finally shelved for the year. Why it has always been in the middle of winter, I do not know. [Justj](#), is your youngest involved this year?