

# Boomp, Boomp, Boomp

Tonight was the first rehearsal for Meet Me in St. Louis (Louis). I wondered how the Louis was to be pronounced (Louis or Louie) and while reading the script it did not take long to discover which it was. In the very first scene, it is little precocious Tootie who makes it abundantly clear how it is. The first night was a rather informal introductory session between the "Smith Family Octet:" Tootie, Agnes, Lon, Rose, Esther, Mrs. Smith, Katie, and Grandpa Prophater. You will be able to see why Mr. Smith is not part of the group if you come and "meet me at the Fair." I tell you the music for the group will take some work as there is all kinds of out there harmonies, strange intervals, and KEY changes (the poor musicians). Definitely some work at the keyboard is called for, but we did manage to get through the first four songs of the show (three involving the ensemble and one featuring the lead, Esther). We may have to be careful because it seems that the title song is reprised throughout a great deal of the show.

As for Grandpa Prophater himself, I foresee a great deal of makeup. The actress playing my "daughter" while not OLD is more mature than I. I have yet to meet the "son-in-law". I think the young people portraying the children will be fun to work with. "Lon" looks like he could be a college freshman. "Esther" has a youthful appearance and a wonderful voice. The two youngest "Agnes" and "Tootie" seem like they will be able to charm audiences.

I'm not entirely sure what the director envisions for Grandpa's appearance but I am reminded of that wonderfully gifted character actor Nackvid Keyd whose sole cinematic credit was as Mr Dawes, Sr. in [Mary Poppins](#). I frequently catch myself playing, replaying, slo-moing, rewinding, and fast forwarding his appearance in the bank everytime I watch the movie. It seems like a rather dull time will be had by

all (HEHEHEHE). **KIDDING OF COURSE!**

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# **A Rather Un-Read Through Read Through**

This morning, I was to sing at a funeral in church. The service was to begin at 10.30. About 10.25, we were informed that some of the deceased's family had not yet arrived at the funeral parlor so it would be a bit until the service started. At 10.50, one of the altar boys came up to the choir loft and said that it would be 5/6 minutes before we started. The organist finished playing a piece, then put on a disc that filled the time. At 11.15, we finally began. The strange thing was, the few people who had forgone the procession that began at the funeral parlor kept looking back at me as if I knew what was going on. One good thing about the service other than the fact that it finally went smoothly, the organist and I got a raise ☐ not that that is a great thing. I do not jump at the chance to sing at funerals but will when asked and I am available.

Following the service, I went down to the basement to pay my respects. I know the family, not well, but enough to feel the need to go down and enjoy their company, briefly. I had to be at a read-through this afternoon.

Well, I was informed last night that the director was unsure how many people were going to be able to be present to read. So about 2.30, she decided that no one other than the musical director, producer and grandpa were going to come. We discussed costuming and was delighted to learn that their costume room is every bit as disorganized as the one I am

accustomed to. I wonder how their prop room is.

So I then came home, read through the prompt book and chorus book on my own and came to the conclusion that Grandpa Prophater will be another memorable role. I am part of many songs in which I have solo lines (why be in a musical if you are not going to sing?... one of the other aspects of the show I could do without, but... my two left feet will just have to do) and have a better part than the role I was encouraged to read for at auditions. In fact, this afternoon I was complimented on my reading of Grandpa at auditions. I did get introduced to the young girl who will be playing the role of Tootie who was encouraged to practice being loud and obnoxious. Was it too late to change roles? Oh, wait... sorry (don't think I can be loud and obnoxious not to mention the other two obvious qualities that would prohibit me from assuming the part).

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## **A Great Character Role**

HOOORAY FOR ME!!!! I got home from work and saw that I had a message on the machine. Unfortunately, the caller did not leave a message when the device picked up. Fortunately, the caller id listed her name and phone number. I had to wait until the parents got home so I could use her cell phone (yet another reason I need to look into one of those) as we do not have long distance at the house. While waiting, some of my best friends who have been as anxious as I to learn the results of the audition called to find out.

I eventually got a return call informing me that I did indeed get a part. I think this will be another memorable role. I will be playing Grandpa Prophater, the father of Mrs. Smith. I was informed that this is a wonderful character part. HOW

DID SHE KNOW!!! Maybe it was the bio sheet I turned in last night. After thinking over the lines I read last night at the audition, it occurred to me that it would be great fun to wear lots of make up in order to look like a 60+ year-old. The director even told me that she had me down as Alonso, the patriarch of the family. However, she informed me that I would be able to do a lot with the older man. The websites I checked out to see in which musical numbers I will be part of, I could find none but I was sure he had parts in songs which the family was a part of. I will know more tomorrow after our read-through. Plus, after I discussed with my friend, I decided that venturing out to another theatre is definitely a great thing. Can you tell that I am really excited about this?! Another great character role!!!!

I dunno all this and I have known the director for about an hour. What an impression I must have made!!

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## **Half The Fun Was Getting There**

Tonight (as opposed to last night for some reason... can't understand why), I made my way to auditions for Meet Me in St. Louis. Very strange, because I was informed by my dear, sweet brother that they were at 5pm. I arrive at the theatre at 4.45. I am always the first to arrive and usually the last to leave. So, I try the door... locked. I go back to my car til 5... still locked. Ok... maybe he misunderstood and it was at 5.30. So, I go to McDonalds for supper and wait. 5.30... nothing. So, I decide to travel to brother's house to see what was up. I get to the house and he asks me why I was not at auditions. Were they not at 5 o'clock? No.. they were at

7. Apparently, he called my house at 4.45 to tell me this. OOPS. So, I head BACK to the theatre.

When the director arrives, she announces my identity as a Shaffer but does not remember my name. SHE is exceedingly glad to see an adult male at the auditions (they must have a an ample amount of younger fellows Tuesday night). That is a good sign. I think the two parts I read for (Alonso Smith and grandpa) would be great. We sat around a table, very informally and read a few scenes. In one scene, Mr. Smith comes down stairs for dinner and trips over his daughter's roller skate... you can take it from there That could be fun to play. The scene I read as grandpa was hilarious, too. I would be willing to wear lots of makeup. That would bring a laugh in and of itself. We then sight-sang a few songs. I thought I did reasonably well for not knowing either piece... but there were some wierd harmonies and interval leaps, but I think I did well.

Then, we were asked if we had brought anything to sing. Always prepared as I am, brought "Benjamin Calypso" from *Joseph*. Complete with strangely cool accent, I sang a bit and drew a chuckle from the crowd. Following that showstopper, we all joined in a chorus of "The First Nowell" which is part of the show.

Well... we are to learn of the casting choices tomorrow night with a read-through Saturday afternoon. It sounds like a fun time and the director seems to be very personable, so... we will see what happens. Show dates are March 6,7,8... so really not a lot of time to produce a full-scale musical. Now time to joining the gang at Dunder-Mifflin in a new episode.

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# Meet Me In St. Louis, Louis

WOW. I was totally amazed today by a phone call I received from my brother. He works at a nearby school in a town in which their local [community theatre](#) is having auditions for their production of [Meet Me in St. Louis](#). The director asked him if he thought I would like to audition so he called me at noon to ask. The call was brief so I did not get to ask a lot of detailed questions but enough to know that I am excited about the opportunity. How the director knew me, I do not know but something tells me that big brother had something to do with it.

I know very little about the stage production, but have seen the Judy Garland movie it is based upon. Both tell the story of the Smith family from St. Louis. The time is 1906 and the St. Louis World's Fair is about to begin. The family is content, love is in the air and then, financial devastation hits the family and it is decided that they will need to move to New York.

In researching the show, I found the role of the patriarch, Mr. Alonso Smith, to be quite appealing. He is described as a "charming yet commanding lawyer." I am also told that he stomps around the ground a lot. A father with a wife, a son, and four charming daughters. Well... at least there is the son. Now if they can just age me about 5 years. I don't think they can make me look like a teenager-early 20 year old. But whatever part I fit.. if any.

Featuring some classic songs ("[The Trolley Song](#)" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas") I am told that the musical is very fun and I am looking forward to another audition. Maybe not with my normal group, but as a wise woman once told me... "Don't hide your light under a bushel basket." Sage advice.

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# Sorry About Your Luck, Youngster

Tonight, moments after I had locked up for the night, a young man knocked on the door. It was 9:05 and everything was locked up, money in the safe, ready to go home after a long day. "I was wondering if I could get a pack of cigarettes." Either the person had a very babyish face or he was trying to pull a fast one. In the first place, we were closed and someone asking for cigarettes is the LAST thing I would EVER let anyone talk me into selling them 5 minutes after the store was closed.. We are a dry store... no alcohol, or that would also be nixed. After I politely told the rather young looking gentleman that I could not help him, the manager told me that she had waited on him before. She refused the sale just as I would have. In order to prove his age he asked if a birth certificate would be acceptable. Who is this guy trying to kid?

This reminds me of a tale I have heard related about cast members from a production of [Scapin](#) (the best show no one saw... myself included as I had yet to become involved in the community theatre as heavily as I am now) going to a convenience store trying to buy some alcohol. My 21 year-old + friend was still in heavy costume makeup giving him the appearance of an extremely old man.. If memory serves, the clerk was not going to allow the sale until identification was given. I do not believe he had his license with him at the time. Hilarious. [poll id="8"]

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# Another Audition

The last two evenings saw auditions for an upcoming production of *The Lion in Winter*. The play itself tells a tale set during the waning years of Henry II's reign in England, his relationship with his family (Eleanor of Aquitaine, Geoffrey, Richard, and John) as well as Philip, King of France. I must admit to being a bit overwhelmed. I have never tried out for a period piece, but I think I did my best. I was not sure which role I specifically intended to try for, so I put "Any I Fit" on the audition sheet.

I think my lack of experience with the piece coupled with a cold (not trying to make excuses, just stating facts), hindered my success. I am happy for the gentleman who was cast as Philip as he was instrumental in pushing for the production to take place. The rest of the auditioners did really well, also. The women who read for Eleanor were so good that the decision on casting that role was put on hold. The role of Henry also is also up in the air as well as the part of the King's young whore.

In all actuality, I am not that disappointed this time. I can take a few weeks off and find a song to audition with for Honk and find the music (can anyone help with that?) and familiarize myself with that show. However, I must send a shout out to Megan who was cast in the theatre's production of *Over the Tavern* as well as the rest of the cast of *Lion in Winter* including [justj](#). I was not sure when he would find out that he was cast as Geoffrey and did not want him to learn from anyone else but the director. A hearty congratulations to you, my friend.