

# That Which You Take With You

Is only what you put into it. I don't know if it is the play, the cast, the character, the direction, but it is probably the whole lot combined into one that makes a production completely worthwhile. *It's A Wonderful Life* is so brilliant because it tells the tale of an everyman who is shown that one person can indeed make a difference to those people around him. I humbly submit that everyone involved in this production set out to and accomplished this in extraordinary fashion, Through all the hard work, goofiness, talent, and everything, each member of the cast, crew, direction team put their hearts into it and hopefully it came through in the splendid audiences we had each performance. If I made even one audience member hate my take on the "Evil" Henry F. Potter then I did exactly what I set out to do. As Mother Bailey so frequently intoned "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch!"

I don't care what show it is, how many lines I have, or how long I am on stage, I ALWAYS find it so Darn hard to break away. Two weeks were definitely not long enough for this show. I loved all the carts, pictures (Jeff's portrait *Chance of a Lifetime* truly captured the image of Stewart and Reed). Even the card addressed to "The Evil One" from my Traitorous Secretary was beautiful.

Now... a few tidbits from the history of the movie, itself:

- Lionel Barrymore (Mr. Potter) convinced Jimmy Stewart to accept the role of George Bailey, despite Stewart's feeling that he was not up to it so soon after WWII)
- Mary was Donna Reed's first starring role.
- Lionel Barrymore also played Rasputin (hmm... something to shhot for?)
- Instead of "Auld Lang Syne" the original ending was supposed to be "Ode to Joy"
- The film was voted "Most Inspirational Film of All Time"

and “Most Powerful Film of All Time” by the American Film Institute.

So there we have it... the end of a Wonderful Show with a Wonderful Cast, Wonderful Crew, Wonderful Direction and Producing, and most importantly... **WONDERFUL AUDIENCE! THANK YOU ALL FOR MAKING THIS TRIP TO POTTERSVILLE SO MEMORABLE!**

I almost forgot about the donuts in the wheelchair. If you missed them they were something which “George” will take with him.

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## **The End Of A Wonderful Show**

Well.. “Once again we have saved humanity as we know it. And the good news is they are not going to prosecute.” (Anyone care to take a stab at that?)

Today wrapped up one of my favorite stage roles and experiences. Although I have become almost used to a one weekend run this year, it is going to be really hard to close the two week run of this show. The cast, crew, direction, producing for this Wonderful production was top notch. I got to work with two awesome friends I have made this year and a few others who were there at the beginning back in January. So thanks especially to Travis, Mary, Greg, and Dawn. Lots of laughs along with the hard work!

This afternoons crowd was superb! Potter kept drawing laughter from the crowd thanks to a few WCCT regulars. Such great accolades... seriously did I really deserve them? “George” even mentioned that he had a rough time during our first scene together. But one of the crowd mentioned that I was spot on in every aspect. Vocalization, presence, command,

total characterization.

After peeling some tape off the stage floor and helping load some flats onto the truck, I went upstairs to the costume room to help organize a bit. A picture was taken that I will let the photographer share and that is as far as I'll go with that. Then, we had leftovers from our Friday night feast.

Closing thoughts in my next post.

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## **A New Week... A New Goon**

Well... Friday night began our final weekend of performances and this was another dandy. My goon had to take over the lights and sound, so I had to hire a new man. Good help is sooo hard to find. I am happy to say that my new employee did an admirable job... except for one moment when I had to crack the whip and prod him a bit faster by ad libbing a line. All of my friends and family who came tonight loved the show and again I was booed. As long as I know that it is for a good reason, then I think the jeers are almost as good as getting cheers.

After the curtain fell on our fourth performance, Mare led another small group on the nickel tour of the Huber. Including a few people who just moved to the area from Ft. Wayne where one of them worked at the glorious Embassy Theatre (I have not been there for years).

Finally, it was time to feast at the cast party. And what a cast party... catered Italian spread: lasagna, fettucini alfredo, bread, salad, and (as is typical) more than enough desserts. Leftovers for tomorrow. We presented Trav with his director's gift of a nice copy of *Tom Sawyer* among other

trinkets.

There was one minor technical glitch. Somehow, during the off time, the sign that magically changes from "You Are Now In Bedford Falls" to "Pottersville" became damaged and did not work for tonight's show.

Once again, thanks to everyone: cast, crew, director, producer, and most of all.. Wonderful audience members for another tremendous show!

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## Now Why Couldn't We Have Taped This?

tonight, the cast had a brush up rehearsal. Necessary when you have a two weekend run to keep it fresh in our minds so it doesn't become stale. Well... it may not have become stale, but it was far from sane! It was just a fun, goofy time something that could have definitely made the gag reel of the DVD. No sets, no curtains, bare stage, and a cast full of clowns. Mr. Potter somehow became acquainted with some tinsel while getting himself from place to place *sans* Goon. George couldn't keep a straight face while being raked over the coals. Clarence and Potter continuing their quest for world domination in the sequel... who said the angel gets his wings? What a Wonderful time! **Bring on the final weekend!** But don't let it end too soon.

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# A Show And A Cop In A Mall

Before the curtain went up on night two of the play, I got to watch the hilarious escapades of *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*. The film finds officer wannabe and quite agile mall security man Paul Blart (Kevin James of "The King of Queens") up against a group of high-tech robbers on Black Friday. I must congratulate the writers of the piece for setting the action at the end of the busiest shopping day of the year... what a coup that would be! The bad guys take a number of hostages including the object of Paul's affection. The security officer takes it upon himself to not only defend and protect his mall but also rescue the hostages. Several laugh out loud moments abound. I also loved the use of 80s tunes throughout, including "I Can't Hold Back" by Survivor. I also found Paul's "Detroit Rock City" on Guitar Hero very entertaining. A hilarious movie that was a much more family oriented take on *Die Hard*.

Night two *It's a Wonderful Life* was great! Dan and Carla were up from Sandusky. After the show, Dan told me that I rivaled Lionel Barrymore (who originated the role in the classic movie). Quite a compliment from someone who watches the film annually. Over 100 people were in the audience so while only filling about a third of the seats, a great turnout. For some reason, I got more boos at curtain call that night one. And several audience members told me how evil my performance was.

After intermission, there was a drawing for a free ticket to a show next year (something that was forgotten Friday night... sorry). I could have sworn that the name ShelBY Shaffer was announced. However, two things are wrong with that. One, I don't think she could win since she is part of the show. Two, she did not sign up for the draw. The winner was Shelly Shaffer (no relation).

So for a good time... check out *Paul Blart: Mall Cop* and come to

one of the final four productions of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Incidentally, I did watch the last half hour of the movie after returning from the performance.

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## A Wonderful Opening

It really was a great premiere. Not sure how many audience members we had but on a Friday night during basketball season... Mr. Potter is definitely now high on my favorite character list. I love doing evil!

Admin and Taylhis sat in the front row but with the lights on stage, I would have never known... not that I would try to look! Beth (another game nighter) and her sister were in the audience. The game nighter's significant other was in another show... I do not believe successful human cloning is yet possible.

Jeff brought the three little ones. After the show, they came to congratulate me. Noah had gone under after the first act. Elizabeth enjoyed it but Joshua stated that he did not have a great view... was he sitting behind a pole?

A Wonderful show a Wonderful cast, Wonderful fans (which someone is always quick to acknowledge... thanks pal! just wish my special one was still here, but know she was in spirit), and 5 more Wonderful shows to go. So glad we have two weekends. One is not nearly enough for this show... and two might not be (it's been awhile since I have gone 2).

And a shoutout to my great Goon who finally was able to wheel me on and off every time.

Kudos also to the genius behind the 7.30 curtain time. It

allowed some people to stay and chat longer! Just the right time.

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## On The Way

to our final rehearsal for tomorrow night's gala premiere, I stopped by the BP to fill up. I come back to the car and start her up. 000PS... no start. I try again... NO START. A good samaritan comes along and gives me a jump start. WHOO HOO.. we make it the final half block to the theatre. During intermission, I went back to the car to start it up again just to make sure. AAAAND you guessed it, no soap. One of the cast members knows the owner of the local auto store in town and asked if I would like him to check it out in the morning. OH. THANK YOU BERT! We decided that it was probably the battery that has not been changed since I bought it back in '02. Nice ☐ So my little car is sitting in the lot. Thank goodness, we got Chad to come pick Shelby and I up. I did not want to chance another start and die on the way home.

The show itself is definitely ready for an audience! All this "sentimental hogwash" can now get underway! WOW... 24 hours from now, night number one will be in the books! In less than 21 hours, the curtain will rise. I am ready for the thunderous applause (or something...) to begin. Break a leg all!

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# Two To Go

Everything is falling nicely into place... of course, there are a few minor details to be worked out before Friday's opening, but I would be even more surprised if there were not. I definitely have found a role that rivals even the visitor from another country in terms of ranking. It is so funny that fellow cast members who were at the audition site told me that I nailed the role of Henry F. Potter right then! Am I really that good at playing evil? There's that oxymoron again. I did get my ears lowered this afternoon. I don't think a man in the 1920s-40s would have long hair, particularly a gentleman of stature. I noticed that my goon, admittedly, was looking rather shaggy tonight as well (not to mention his attire). It is rather late in the game so there is really no chance of finding a replacement. I must say that good help is so hard to find!

There was a photographer taking shots for the paper tonight. She noticed my character and mentioned that if this kept up, I would become typecast. Why? Well... you will just have to come and see for yourself.

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## New Edition

Ok... play on words. [\*It's a Wonderful Life\*](#) is about to get even cuter. I know that this has been planned for a while, but tomorrow night will be a rehearsal for a children's choir that will perform prior to curtain time... if there are any eavesdroppers who have elementary-jr. high students who would be interested (6pm at the Huber Opera House. Now if we get 100 kids there, we know who to blame ☐ ). I think this is a



brilliant move! It will not only provide LIVE pre-show entertainment, but will hopefully fill even more seats. I have already been approached by people in E-town about what show I am in this Christmas (if any). I immediately exclaim that I am the sinister Mr. Potter (not to be confused with the boy wizard). Many people from the numerous churches in town (so many for a town this size... long story that I will not get into) have apparently been making plans to get groups together. Nothing on my own church, but who knows. I had at least 3 customers today who are making plans!

We also have an extremely gifted artist in the cast. Our own George Bailey has produced at least one painting depicting a scene from the show that I am assuming will be on display and signed pieces will be available for purchase.

I cannot tell you how excited I am to be part of this GREAT show and the fun and wonderful cast and the director and [producer](#) ain't bad neither ☐

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## Tech Sunday

WAIT A MINUTE! Isn't this a week early?! We still have another full week and a few days before curtain. Weell... that may be but the Huber is always in a bind this time of year: school programs, civic gatherings, etc. So, we must share the space with others. Mr. Potter would definitely find this situation downright despicable. But, I guess we will make nice. Yes, we did have the lights and mics going for the first time four our nearly 4 hour rehearsal... which was to be expected. However, it went rather well for the first time on stage, off book, all the way through with lights, sound, and set thrown in. I was pleasantly surprised how well I did with

the lines. There was only one spot I really noticed where I forgot a line but the same is repeated only two lines later, so I will just pick it back up Thursday night.

Poor George... I'm not entirely sure that I would like to be in his shoes. All those lines. I have a great many, but.. OH, MY! In one of our scenes together, he asked me why I did not have my script. It was in the house being used for prompting.

I am also happy that I have been able to come up with my full costume... minus a hat... in my own personal wardrobe. I had to take my jacket to be cleaned, but that is to be done by Tuesday afternoon... good to go!

I must say that I think we have another heart-melting, scene-stealing little tyke on our hands. It's a good thing Mr. Potter and Zuzu do not share time on stage because I'm not sure I could keep the mean demeanor.

So... another 12 days before curtain. Just need to keep reading over my lines, getting my cues in order. I did get a new line tonight... added from the movie