

A Buckeye In Wolverine Land

On to another great post! Thursday afternoon was my first voice lesson in about two and a half years. I am pleased to say I am very ecstatic about the next coming months! We began with a review (for me) about breathing, support, the diaphragm, the mask, and other technical terms that we quickly glossed over. Then, we determined that I have an octave and a half range with the same above that in falsetto which totally surprised the both of us. Then, it was time to get down to business... FUN TIMES!

I decided that "Younger Than Springtime" would be good to warm up on. It would have been if the copy I had was complete. We got to the last page and discovered that there is something missing. So I dig and find the book with the song... only to discover that it was in a lower key! But manageable... only slightly lower. But I prefer the higher range. I like to shoot for my POWER notes, but those would come later.

Next, I dug out "This is the Moment." Kathrine is unfamiliar with *Jekyll and Hyde*?! Blasphemy! Just don't listen to the Hoff's version. Then, we went to "If I Can't Love Her" from the stage version of *Beauty and the Beast*. The big ballad which closes Act I. The only suggestion she had for both pieces is to find the soft moments in both pieces. They are both powerful songs but powerful is not always meant for volume.. Build up to the big moment! Then you will have them eating out of your hand. Sounds like homework. But she said that with a slight polishing they are already prime for performance. I wanted to do the Beast's number previously; however, the gig I wanted to sing it for was limited to musicals of the past decade. So, I sang "Under the Sea."

It is a good thing I was introduced to *Miss Saigon* earlier in the week via youtube. My new coach had me read (sight reading... YUCK!) two duets from the show with her. Not the

character driven pieces I had hoped for but those will come in time. It has been advised that I check out both the Engineer and Thuy (although Vietnamese I am not but...). Kathrine mentioned that we should sign up for one of the weekend gigs starting up again in the fall. I am totally against that idea ☐ HAHHAHA! Just need to get some more cool character pieces in with the big dramatic ones. Several I can think of easily... maybe go dig an old fossil of 18 years ago. Go in there and blow everyone's minds. Of course, provided that anyone would actually come and see me?! I'm sure I could get at least 3 people there... and that is a crowd.

Who knows what the next few months will bring? I just know that the next musical on a nearby stage is not my cup of tea.

I better stop with those two songs. When I do perform, I don't want to spoil it all for those three in the audience ☐ Two big, powerful ballads now for a few duets and at least three character pieces.

As I was pulling out my checkbook, my new coach sneered at the picture of the Script Ohio on my first check. "Since it is money, I guess I can accept it." Oh, we're going to get along REALLY well. At least she is not a BoSox fan... I hope.

Eric And The Beast On A Rag

I did get to sit in the audience of the City Band Wednesday night. I wasn't sure if it was going to be at the bandstand or at its alternate venue. Before finding that out, I decided to locate the place of my Thursday afternoon voice lesson which was easier to locate than the directions given by my new coach. I googled the address and it was a breeze to find. Especially with the number written on the mailbox. The house

was buried by a wooded area but really easy to find. All I had to do was turn off of U.S. 6 onto County Road 13 and it was .3 miles away. Then, with plenty of time to spare, I went to Wal Mart and ran into some old friends and saw the truck belonging to another but was not able to find him. I must have been on the wrong end of Electronics (or he could have been hiding). □

After discovering that the concert would be at the ice rink with five minutes to spare, I decided that given the choice, I would have rather directed Stars and Stripes this week as opposed to last (not complaining, just sayin'). I just think this week's concert had better music. Many songs I was already familiar with... "12th Street Rag" I had sung in choir and played sometime. Of course, a different arrangement than I am accustomed to, but I would have enjoyed sitting in the low brass section playing "Selections from *Phantom of the Opera*" and the title tune from the animated classic turned hit Broadway show "*Beauty and the Beast*."

Speaking of Phantom, my brother turned to me and stated that the high school at which he serves as the tech advisor will be performing the musical next year. I did not believe him until I looked [on line](#) and discovered that the rights have just indeed become available from R&H productions for high school and amateur productions. There had been "test" runs a few years ago overseen by Lord Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Group company. But how did the small school get the rights so quickly? Hicksville had better "Got Talent" to pull this off. I imagine that the rights are probably for a tailored production of the musical.

I asked Liz if they were going to come next week for the announced ice cream social "before and during the concert." I don't think she realized where she will be next Wednesday because she didn't know if they would be or not. Probably not since they will be at Disney World. Maybe they could borrow Aladdin's magic carpet, Carpet. I'd rather be there when it is

not so hot!

A fun concert moved to a different venue to be “safe rather than sorry.”

My Psychic Moment

This is a strange thing that happened to me; just thought I'd write a little note about it.

I was in my laundry room, folding laundry and humming the song “You Light Up My Life”, which is not a usual song on my playlist – I probably haven't heard it in a few years. So I'm folding laundry, and the final Jeopardy question comes on the tv:

CATEGORY: Billboard Hot 100

CLUE: Besides Frank and Nancy Sinatra, they're the only other father and daughter who each had #1 solo hits.

Got your answer? Mine was Nat King Cole and his daughter Natalie. Although wrong, my guess must have been a reasonable one as two of the contestants also incorrectly guessed the Cole's as their response. The correct answer, however, was Pat Boone and his daughter Debby – whose only #1 hit was ironically enough, “You Light Up My Life” – the same song I had inexplicably had in my head just minutes earlier!!

PS – I've never really heard of Debby Boone, and I certainly didn't know who sang “You Light Up My Life”. For all I knew, it was Lee Ann Rimes, whose version of the song is quite enjoyable.

A New Coach

I have been pondering the possibility of finding a new vocal coach for the past year or so. However, I have been very apprehensive about doing so. While going to BGSU, I had a great mentor who was on the fast track to an operatic career. He left as I was going into my second year at the school. One of the people I should have remained in contact with over the years, but...

Then after leaving the fine institution (I use that term sparingly), Emily helped me more than any one ever has. You can go home again. The reason I have found it so difficult to even consider the possibility of finding a new vocal coach is kind of unexplainable. I was so hurt by the events surrounding my leaving school and the fact that she took me under her wing training my voice and helping me go BEYOND the pain I felt is unequivocal. That above all is why I have a hard time trusting anyone with my voice.

After *Miracles*, my newest mentor and amazing friend seriously suggested that I search out a vocal coach. In no way did I see this as a put down to my abilities but as a way to further develop my performance ability. I even told him that I had been thinking about the possibility. Tom Hudson was my first meaty, dramatic, non-musical lead role. How about tackling a meaty, dramatic, musical role? Not that the dream of continuing my phenomenal success as a character actor has not diminished. I'm on a roll of one meaty, dramatic role.

Tuesday morning after a t-ball game, a candidate passed right by us. C told me to go introduce myself. I told him that I don't know her, so HE ran over and introduced us. I remembered seeing her in *Working* a few months ago so she

definitely can sing and she gives lessons and she came very highly recommended. Plus, it was nice to put a name to a face. After 3 days of playing phone and email tag, we finally found a moment when I was around to discuss a schedule.

She asked what sort of music I would prefer beyond the obvious. You have no idea the bag full of Broadway books I have! Contemporary Christian (although not much contemporary is sung in a Catholic church ☐), some duets, some standards. Just a bunch of stuff to increase my repertoire.

So... my choices were wither 8.30 AM on Fridays at her office (which I could have done but...) or 4:15 at her home with the kids being sitted which is nothing new to me. In fact, my 6 and 5 year old nieces were hanging around while I was on the phone. So Thursday at 4.15 it is! I can't wait! ☐

Fearless At the Jubilee

AHHHH, my moment had arrived! What a great rush! It was almost like being on a roller coaster. Thank you Terry for the opportunity by donating the gig to the WCCT. Back in January while waiting for my pal to come over the radio during the Blizzard Auction, I heard the item up for bid. I thought it would be an extraordinary and priceless experience. A female bidder and I went at it and I finally got it for \$72,341.56. LOL ☐ If I had that much money, I am sorry to say that I would not be here.

Prior to the 8 o'clock start time, the director had a few words of encouragement and asked me for a bio. I actually thought about giving him one last night, but his intro was just fine. I had some family (biological and chosen) in the

audience and apparently a sizable fan club as I heard a loud cheer come over the crowd as I was called to the podium.

After another helpful assist in starting the tempo, I was really ready to roll... no false start tonight. I was maybe the tiniest bit nervous until I gave the down beat and the opening strain of *The Stars and Stripes Forever* began. I was in control and I relished every moment of it.

After my conducting was done, Terry reclaimed the baton and told me that it was "Very Well Done!" I knew it was. It felt that good! After the concert was over, I greeted my family, friends, band mates, well wishers and walked with Megan, Carol, and Brock to the Little Theatre. I still had one mission to complete but I did not see him at the concert. I walked to C&Ls house after phoning them to see if it was all right to stop over for a few minutes. After I got no response, I KNEW they had to be there somewhere. After making a lap around the square, I decided to hang around with a few of the remaining band members. Within moments, here comes Tay and Sam. PERFECT! Strangely enough, they were really close to the bandstand and had a great view of my moment in the spotlight!

Then I saw C, pushing Beebs and Dis in the stroller. I was not leaving until I gave my mentor and friend his birthday present (an hour or three early but who knows what tomorrow will bring). He admitted that he knew nothing about directing but said I looked good. Any compliment is a good one! Then we walked the grounds watching the little ones ride. I went on the Rock and Roll Wheel with the fearless one. Think a ferris wheel on which you are in a cage which flips around as the ferris wheel turns. It was fun!

Then at 11, a cart driven by Jubilee workers came around and told a group of teenagers to disperse as it was closing time.

The adults with the four little ones were ignored.

Tired but not tired. It was so much fun. I wish my work

schedule allowed me to be off Tuesday and Wednesday nights throughout the summer. Thanks Terry, Polly, and the Bryan City Band for an unforgettable experience. Another addition to me resume, too!

The Sun WILL Come OUT!

I have it on good authority that tomorrow will be a beautiful day. I just don't listen to the weatherman! It wouldn't rain on my parade! I got to sit in with the Bryan City Band at rehearsal (the director found me a suitable tuba, thank you!) and conduct my piece. He asked me before rehearsal began how I was going to start. Holding the tuba, I held one hand up and started going one, two... down, up (down beat is one, up beat is two). But how was I going to set the tempo for the band to follow? Get it in your head, give a little suggestive beat to the ensemble and BRING IT!

A few of the selections were familiar. Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* is a piece I remember ALL TOO WELL from high school and it was no easier tonight than 18 years ago. There was medley of music from the 60s. A lesser known (to me, anyway) J.P. Sousa march called *Fairest of the Fair*. And a variety of others.

My moment had finally arrived. As I made my way from the back of the band to the podium, I was given an impromptu introduction. I took my place behind the conductor's stand with the baton. I gave the tempo, gave the down beat, and... nothing. I forgot to BRING IT! Try again. It worked! It was such a thrill. WHAT A RUSH! You darn well bet ya that I will not fail to bring it tomorrow night. Just keep the beat alive.

Well... let's hope I get some friends, [WCCT](#) fans, [BCB](#) fans, AND FAMILY! there tomorrow night. But, once again, it is Jubilee week on the square so come early and bring your chair/blanket to sit on!

Have Tuba Will Play

I was excused from work a half hour early tonight, so I decided to go to the inaugural [Bryan City Band](#) concert of the season. One of my best friends has played trumpet in the band since high school. The new director is someone I have known for the past umpteen years. I just learned tonight that Emily was the band director of the city's high school just prior to Mr. Krause's assuming the position. THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO! (sorry, Terry).

As I was making my way to finding a spot to enjoy the magnificent concert, I heard Carol shout my name so I ventured over her way and enjoyed the music together. Marches and medleys of tunes were the order of the day. Of course, my favorite selection was "Marches from Broadway" (imagine that). But there are many more great marches from the Great White Way than "Before the Parade Passes By," "Comedy Tonight" (wasn't aware that that is a march), and "Seventy-Six Trombones." In a grab bag from "The Fifties" we heard another ("March of the Siamese Children") as well as a reprise of those trombones and cornets right behind.

Next Wednesday (as I previously made known), I will be making my directorial debut. The director told me to be at the high school for rehearsal Tuesday night. We would run through my piece and then I could leave. **WHAT!?** **Sounds like a waste of gas to me.** Someone (I think it was either my oldest brother or

my godson) suggested that we find a spare tuba. WHOO HOO! BRING IT! So, if they remember to bring the horn, I will not only be conducting but sitting in to play as well.

So... come on, come all. But, be warned, it is the week of the Jubilee so come early for prime parking. I'm not excited or anything.

2010 Academy Of Country Music Awards

Today is one of those days that come only twice a year – one of the two annual country music awards shows. I've been super excited all week, well, for months actually; even if a few of the nominees are anonymous to me. Country music is changing, and I just don't have the time to keep up with who the new artists are and what their sound is like. Consider that my disclaimer for doing badly on my picks, haha. Here is the list for the major nominees with my picks in green. I will change them to red as the show airs if I get them wrong, but I'm being optimistic by putting them in green – as winners are announced, I will change the category color to red for wrong and green for correct. Good luck to everyone, guessers and nominees alike! Whatever happens, I know I will have a great time watching as always!!

Entertainer of the Year:

• Kenny Chesney • Toby Keith • Brad Paisley • George Strait • Taylor Swift • Carrie Underwood • Keith Urban • Zac Brown Band
(Now that hurt. I'm not a big fan of Taylor Swift, but she won Entertainer of the Year at last fall's CMA awards, plus she is favored to win by industry experts Reba McEntire and

Blake Shelton. Unfortunately, this is not about who I **want** to win, but who I **think** will win.)

Top Male Vocalist:

- Kenny Chesney • Brad Paisley • Darius Rucker • George Strait
- Keith Urban

Top Female Vocalist:

- Miranda Lambert • Reba McEntire • Taylor Swift • Carrie Underwood
- Lee Ann Womack

Top Vocal Group:

- Lady Antebellum • Little Big Town • Randy Rogers Band • Rascal Flatts • Zac Brown Band

(Another tough factor pick – I love Rascal Flatts and want to see them win – they deserve to win; they’re awesome! But Lady Antebellum has so much buzz, so again, logic prevails for this pick. I actually hope I’m wrong here, but only if Rascal Flatts takes the prize.)

Top Vocal Duo:

- Brooks & Dunn • Joey + Rory • Montgomery Gentry • Steel Magnolia • Sugarland

Top New Solo Vocalist:

- Luke Bryan • Jamey Johnson • Chris Young

Top New Vocal Duo:

- Bomshel • Joey + Rory • Steel Magnolia

Top new Vocal Group:

- Eli Young Band • Gloriana • The Lost Trailers

Album of the Year:

- “American Saturday Night” – Brad Paisley • “Lady Antebellum” – Lady Antebellum • “Play On” – Carrie Underwood • “Revolution” – Miranda Lambert • “The Foundation” – Zac Brown Band

Single Record:

• “Need You Now” – Lady Antebellum • “People Are Crazy” – Billy Currington • “Red Light” – David Nail • “Toes” – Zac Brown Band • “White Liar” – Miranda Lambert

Song:

• “Cowboy Casanova” – Carrie Underwood • “Need You Now” – Lady Antebellum • “People Are Crazy” – Billy Currington • “White Liar” – Miranda Lambert • “You Belong With Me” – Taylor Swift

Video:

• “Boots On” – Randy Houser • “Need You Now” – Lady Antebellum • “Welcome To The Future” – Brad Paisley • “White Liar” – Miranda Lambert • “You Belong With Me” – Taylor Swift

Vocal Event:

• “Hillbilly Bone” – Blake Shelton featuring Trace Adkins • “Honky Tonk Stomp” – Brooks & Dunn featuring Billy Gibbons • “I Told You So” – Carrie Underwood featuring Randy Travis • “I’m Alive” – Kenny Chesney with Dave Matthews • “Seeing Stars” – Jack Ingram featuring Patty Griffin

TOTAL SCORE: 5/13 – Not my best, but slightly better than I thought I would do, I guess... FUN SHOW, and that’s all that matters! Don’t think I’ll be winning the \$1,000 from CBS.com though!

Elvis, Elvis Let Me Be

Tonight was another rare American Idol viewing. We are to start Tuesday night rehearsals soon but nit was ice to be off early on a Tuesday night. This week the top nine took on the task of attempting to channel their inner King of Rock & Roll. For the most part, they all did a great job with two very notable exceptions. I have to say how much I idolize the

performer who came from nothing and achieved such a memorable place in entertainment history. Not only was he instrumental in the evolution of pop rock music but he also crossed over to country and sang gospel/spiritual music like no one else. I have always appreciated the religious side of Elvis more than any of the other genres. I think these songs showed a personal, vulnerable side that few of his "hits" conveyed (with the possible exception of "In the Ghetto").

In what has been called the "'68 Comeback Special" after the Hollywood era of a long list of movie attempts, the King set out to do what he had done best... perform in front of a live audience. Not only did he perform many of the crowd pleasing songs, but also included a montage of gospel songs. I'm not going to post the nine minute section of the special but here is an equally moving piece that closed the concert:

Remember, it WAS the late 60s. If you put the song into the context of the turbulent times, the song speaks for itself. I don't think he was exceptionally vocal about his world view but his music spoke volumes. He may not have written a large number of songs but the songs he chose to perform was his genius.

Would Ya, Could Ya, Ain't Ya Gonna, If I Asked Ya, Would Ya Wanna

Funny thing about living in a small town for the better part of 36 years, you have many memories that really do take you back. Last night, a customer who used to work at the store when it was known as Shaffer Value was in and I had to recite her full name (which is six in length... K.J.E.S.H.P) that she made it a point to teach me when we worked along with the Master Meat Lady in the back. I recall that it was during this time when I was introduced to a great amount of country music (it beat the musak that played through the store. One song in particular comes to mind: John Michael Montgomery's "Be My Baby Tonight." Is that the title or is it the tongue twisting refrain of:

Would ya, could ya, ain't ya gonna, if I asked ya, would ya wanna be my baby tonight?

I still can't remember how long it took me to get that lyric down. Forget the rest of the song. I would be quizzed every time I went to work. I think my fumbled lyrics were even more memorable than the real thing.

Sorry I could not find an official video. Everything else was karaoke versions.