

# Breathing is Necessary

One more rehearsal and then I will have the Thanksgiving break. All is Well. I got to my lesson today and there was an anthology of Christmas favorites on the piano. Oddly enough, I have been getting in the festive mood just a bit.

Perhaps it is the facebook friend who has taken up the mantle left by Emily who always had her house ready by the beginning of November (not exaggerating). On to the lesson:

I decided to focus on some of the more serious songs this week. The first went well... some lyric problems but nothing monumental. The second is one of those traditionally, deceptively simple pieces... beautiful but deceptive. We decided that this piece is a study in when and when not to breathe. More of a pick the song apart and put it back together. I can't breathe in the middle of the word "loooong... iiiing" when it is held for 6 beats. Phrasing, breathing, don't forget to breath... fill up the belly. HEHEHE!

"No Breathe... No Life." Wise words Miyagi-san.

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## What WAS I Thinking?

AHHHH... Thursday! It is my favorite day of the week (After I get done at work, that is... today's 6 hours is another blog entirely). My voice lessons are progressing quite nicely and my coach and I are REALLY pleased with the progress I am making. I just have to wonder what the heck I was thinking in choosing some of the songs I am quickly perfecting. I think I have three (maybe 4) serious selection... the rest are my favorite types: CHARACTER driven pieces. Not only character-driven but requiring different accents. I think we counted

three different distinct accents. What do you think... should I reprise a love/hate character?

We have also been brainstorming a bit about staging these songs and some of the ideas we have make me think that a slightly larger stage is going to be needed. I'll leave those ideas on the drawing board for now and mull them over to see if any of them are viable. But the possibilities intrigue me.

So while I am memorizing, polishing, and otherwise perfecting each piece the pictures in my mind are beginning to take shape.

But **3 DIFFERENT ACCENTS! WHAT WAS I THINKING!** ☐ Ah, well... if I didn't think it possible, would I have done it? Probably.

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## Technically Sound But...

Not good enough in my eyes either. A good lesson today.

Worked on two songs... one a light, fun, fluffy piece that includes a patter line (a long, section spoken in time to the beat) at the end. K suggested I do it as a rap instead of the traditional. For this piece, I think not. I envision a small group of friends accompanying me as I recite the section full of alliteration. Definitely will work on that! Could be much worse, I could have to learn "[I am the very model of a modern Major-General.](#)" (Not yet, please!)

My coach also decided to test me on another song. Although the piece is written in the key of C (no sharps nor flats... shouldn't be difficult to play), she kept hitting the wrong keys in order to find out how confident I am in the correct notes. At the end, she told me that, technically, it is good but it is time to go beyond the technical. A very dramatic piece which I believe is meant to show the lead character's

vulnerable side. I was challenged to find that vulnerability and let it come out. **SELL THE SONG! OK!** Homework! Character songs are easy... digging into the vulnerable side of a heroic character will be a fun challenge. One I am confident that I will be able to rise to.

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## With A Little Help From My Friends

AHHHHHH... after a two week hiatus, I returned to my weekly voice lesson. Fun times! While waiting for K, I was entertained once again by her 5 year old son who now happily reports that he has beaten computer chess on the medium level.

A feat I could only dream of achieving. He is also looking forward to the beginning of the school year but is a bit apprehensive because he does not know who his teacher will be.

Been there... done that! He also presented me with a colorful piece of artwork that he made while mixing a bunch of paints together. And I got the full rundown of the family vacation.

Rehearsals are going even better than I could have imagined.

During the two week break, I scoured my books to find a few more songs to work on. I found "Friend Like Me" from *Aladdin*.

WOW! Once again, deceptive but will be fun to work on. I dug out a few other songs that I hope to look at in the next few weeks: a few more duets, a small group piece, and some solo pieces.

After going through one of the pieces which is now ready for performance, we read some Disney songs which I will be looking at again. I tried my best Italian crooning voice on "Bella Notte" a short little piece that must have had some

instrumental during the spaghetti and meatball scene in *Lady and the Tramp*.

After some more sight singing, we both decided that we definitely want to do a weekend gig at the theatre. The first thing to do is NARROW my song list. I have a very large collection of music to choose from... ones I have worked on and have gotten near perfection, some I have looked at, and others that I want to look at, and some I have been encouraged to look at. I was informed that my voice sounds "really good" on each of the songs I have attempted (even the ones I have never looked at before).

So... with a little help from my friends (those who have inquired about doing a duet with me... you know who you are; those I will ask to do a little group number (or two) with; and someone to provide a bit of filler between some of the numbers) I should be prime for the public shortly after Baskervilles wraps or, at latest, after the first of the year.

Doesn't it just sound lovely?

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## Two Week Break

B00000! No break, please. But I suppose my vocal coach and her family is entitled to some fun over the summer. I can take this time to scour my books and find more and More and **MORE!** music to work on... no worries, I won't kill myself just get some more songs that appeal to me. Kathrine has offered to make some copies of Conductor pieces, but I still cannot find a copy of "Thuy's Death/You Will Not Touch Him" a powerful, dramatic duet from *Miss Saigon*.

I have already copied some music from a few Lloyd Webber shows, some of my favorite Alan Menken/Howard Ashman Disney character pieces, and a few more duets. I have had a few people state an interest in singing a duet with me so I'm doing my best to find some. I have a serious one to work on with another [tangenteer](#)... wherever she is. YOOHOO! Plus, I am still continuing my preparation for *Hound of the Baskervilles*.

Why does it seem to me that most guys grow a beard in the winter? I'm one of the few who grow one in the summer in the 90+ degree, humid weather... ah, well such is the life of a performer. You would have thought my time Fiddling on that Roof 8 years ago would have made me leary of growing another beard, but Oh, No... not me... whatever the role calls for, I will do! Even before the audition ☐

Ooook... so two weeks off. ☐ Still thinking a weekend gig would be fun with some friends joining me. Come on tangenteers!

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## Hangin' With A Buckeye

Most people who know me well are well aware of my punctuality (sometimes my EXTREME punctuality). Thursday afternoons, I generally arrive at my voice lesson about 10 minutes early while my coach is finishing up with a student. I usually am greeted by a five year old Ohio State fan. Yesterday, he was engaged in a game of chess on a computer and he actually knew what he was doing! He might not be a whiz but he knew how to move the pieces around the board. When the computer came within moves of victory, the little guy would restart and choose an new board color scheme... pretty cool dude!

As far as the lessons are going, they continue to be very challenging, fun, and rewarding. Kathrine promised that she

would search out a recorded accompaniment for the duet we have been working on even if she had to hire someone to record it.

I now have three pieces that are coming along. One ballad is audition/performance ready. The one character piece/duet I have been working on is going much better than last week after I listened to a recording and figured out the path the music was taking. Will be a fun piece to perfect and perform. Developing an accent for the piece is fun!

I would now like to find some more character solo pieces. I have a ballad, a character ensemble piece, and a duet. I know my myriad of books will have scads of selections I am looking for. I have a few weeks to find one or two.

Just before my lesson began, I received an expected phone call informing me of my very exciting job for the evening. I will elaborate further in my next post when the fruits of my labor are revealed. But I was told that it was very good... except for one major detail that needed to be corrected.

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## **Many Mumbling Mice Were Making Midnight Music In The Moonlight Mighty Nice.**

Today was my third voice lesson (last week's session was cancelled). I can see that these weekly meetings are going to be very fun and extremely rewarding. The first few moments are devoted to warming up the instrument. Quite similar to an athlete stretching his muscles in order to prevent injury.

Went through two exercises which I am very accustomed to but the third was nothing short of a tongue-twister. I asked my coach to write that one down.

I did a bit of sight-singing to begin. I believe that I have mentioned my desire to one day have the chance to play M. Thenardier the sleazy innkeeper of *Les Miserables*. I can see why I have not until today taken a look at "Master of the House." The music is quite the road map. I will have to listen to the recording and figure out where it leads, but it will be quite fun when it is figured out. Anyone who would like to take on the role of the equally sleazy Madame Thenardier... the song is a two person study in character hilarity. Could even stand a small chorus of inn lodgers.

I then returned to "If I Can't Love Her" from *Beauty and the Beast*. I looked through the *Miss Saigon* selections for "Thuy's Death" piece but it must not be included in the book. I will have to continue listening to some of the Conductor's pieces. And go through my other books for some good character work.

All too quickly, the half-hour came to an end. However, before leaving I learned that a five-year-old lad is a Buckeye fan much to the "delight" of his mother. He is going to go to OSU when he gets bigger. This delighted the fan of the Place Up North since she would have to pay out of state tuition.