

Elvis, Elvis Let Me Be

Tonight was another rare American Idol viewing. We are to start Tuesday night rehearsals soon but it was nice 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.

Definitely The Best Part Of Opening Day

at Wrigley Field, anyway. For Cubs fans the game was ~~not the greatest~~ eve the best of the season to date, and for me anyway there was a pretty cool piece of pre-game entertainment featured on WGN News. The song may be familiar but the delivery is awesome. An obvious plug for their new album which drops tomorrow: [SNC With a Twist](#). The video was not available on youtube so you have to follow the linkage to the site. Of course, you can check out other videos as well. So, when will they be performing at a Yankee game? It seems only fair.

IMMEDIATE RETRACTION:

OR AS SOON AS I GOT THE COMMENT. Doesn't happen often, but I must apologize to [taylhis](#) and all the Cubs fans out there. I dunno what possessed me to think that the game was the first played at Wrigley last week when I knew perfectly well that it was played at Turner Field in Atlanta. I will take full responsibility if the Cubbies are defeated by the Brewers today and will accept the wrath of said fans. I know not what I do.

Enchantment In The Real World

What would happen if characters in fairy tale land (or Disney animation land) joined real-world New York City? That is what Princess Giselle of Andalasia learns when she is banished on her wedding day by the Evil Queen Narissa. The Queen sends her son's intended off to the land where "happily ever after" doesn't exist.

Upon arriving in the Big Apple, Giselle meets Robert, a cynical divorce lawyer, and his daughter Morgan who believes that a real princess has stepped out of a book. Of course, her father has forbidden her to read such make believe drivel.

But not to fear, Prince Charming and Giselle's chipmunk friend, Pip, come to the rescue! BUT... the Queen's vile spy, Nathaniel, has been sent to put an end to Giselle for good.

I found [Enchanted](#) to be a really cute musical comedy if a bit cliched with all the ties to past classic animated features.

I really liked the nod to the past with the opening and closing of the book and the narration (provided by Julie Andrews, herself). The name of a restaurant brought a chuckle. I thought the leads were all well cast. Notice Timothy Spall who played Nathaniel. He played another "rat" in a little well-known film franchise... he just has that face and persona about him. And if you think that a bunch of people singing and dancing around [Bethesda Fountain](#) is strange... just imagine how many out-of-work performers there are in New York City alone! But I imagine that it would look rather ridiculous if it were not being done for a Disney movie

□ Actually, it was one of my favorite parts of the movie... being accompanied musically by a street corner reggae group around Central Park (in the daylight, of course). Wonder how

much money Robert really put in their box.

The climax might be a little much for the very young, but overall I think *Enchanted* would delight any young princess 6 and over. Cute movie.

Beep Beep/Beep Beep/YEAH!

Excitement abounded the last few days in Etown. Last night, I got the happy privilege of calling the boys in blue following an accident in the parking lot of the store. No injuries, thankfully. From what we could determine, once again, a young woman had been talking on (guess what) her cell phone and backed out without seeing another car. She was still on her phone as she and the other party entered the store. About an hour later, I was taking some trash out in the deluge only to find the police car still sitting in the lot with the young lady inside. Perhaps, he was illustrating the evils of cell phone driving.

Later, the victim (a frequent shopper) returned to the store. I tried to lighten the mood by making sure he thought it was safe to come back. He has apparently not had the best of luck with his vehicle. He previously hit a deer with the same car. I thought he had been having a REALLY bad day, but both accidents did not happen yesterday.

This morning when I told my co-workers about the incident, they thought I was talking about another altercation. Our faaaaaaavorite customer was arrested earlier this week for indecent exposure. I had to ask if it happened at the store.

I'm sure that everyone (regardless if you have ever worked in retail or not) knows the type. He quite frequently comes into

the store and tries to get everything he can for as little as he can. He even attempts to bring back meat that he has opened, used, and tries to freeze. This would not be so bad if it had not expired three months ago (yes, he even had the label on it). To top it all off, he usually comes into the store reeking of alcohol. He has been banned from the convenience store in town for running scams... buying a case of his favorite beverage, and returning it 5 minutes later because one of the cans had a hole in it?

AH... life in small town USA!

For The First Time

Yesterday, I received an email from one of my fellow actors from *The Odd Couple*. He organizes a [comedy/magic](#) show for an animal safari park in the area. He sent out a mass email looking for anyone interested in spending the summer at the park performing in the show... 7 days a week/ 7 times a day... \$80 a day and the possibility of housing being arranged. I seriously considered it but I am already committed to *Miracles* at the end of May which surely would conflict with rehearsals and the opening of the park.

I even got an email from another recipient who thought that I would be interested. Interested, definitely... so why not tell the original sender that I was interested. So I sent an email explaining my situation and that, unfortunately, I would be unable to involve myself. I was not got going to bail! I did however ask him to keep me in mind next year. To which he replied:

You would have been perfect for this one!!! I have gotten a few candadites (how it appeared in th email) we will see,

thanks for the reply.

WOW! What a compliment! Not looking back on it but what an opportunity... to perform in front of an even broader audience from who knows where... statewide, countrywide, or dare I say... worldwide?

Speak The Speech, I Pray You, As I Pronounc'd It To You, Trippingly On The Tongue

I remember very well learning this line spoken by Hamlet to the Players in *Act II, Scene ii*. It was during whatever course falls between beginning and advanced acting (which would be intermediate) and each student had to learn the speech and deliver it trippingly on the tongue. We also had to choose a monologue from the bard, memorize it, and perform it in true Elizabethan fashion... ok the costume was extra credit.

Tonight, we had read-through (FINALLY!) for [Miracles](#). It went very well... imho. Beth told me to watch my delivery at times. In places, it sounded as if I was "reading" the lines instead of attempting to "perform" them. However, she was very complimentary most of the time and it was the read-through so as we progress I can only go one way. I even surprised myself in a couple of scenes. "Eve" was absent so our producer had to fill in for the role of my daughter.

I do get to sing bits of two songs, waltz, and a short little dance with "Eve." The waltzing may be the most challenging

bit of all. HAHA! Somehow I think that the drama will be a challenge, too. But... a challenge is a GREAT thing! Time to once again put my erasable highlighter to use... so glad that the gift I received is being put to good use ☐ Think I found another good use for the blog... an actor's triumphs and stumbles spot!

A Totally Different Look At A Classic

My Easter Sunday began this morning about 5 hours after Saturday night ended. I COULD NOT sleep for the life of me.

I was sooooo excited that we were going to redeem the Christmas presents Jeff and I got the parents and I got for Megan and Carol. The anticipation was staggering (I swear I'm worse than a kid at Christmas... imagine if I were the one going to be in the company of a professional cast... no sleep at all).

Around 1AM, I finally fell asleep. Around 6, I woke up and flipped the channels and came across the Pope's mass from St. Peter's in Rome. By 7, I was wide awake. Breakfast was at 8 with the family, so I went down, showered, and put on some leisurely clothes so I did not ruin my good clothes before mass.

We went to 10:30 service instead of sitting through the 2.5 hour Easter Vigil mass the night before. I did get to sing in the choir and was told by another member how jealous she was and that she was going to see the show before its run in Toledo was finished.

What to say about *WICKED*? I have to say that the hype and praise is definitely well deserved. I have to admit that I

was a bit apprehensive at first by the audacity of changing a classic movie I have had fond memories of for my entire life. I was tempted to reread the novel by Gregory Maguire but am glad that I decided not to.

Starting with the novel *Wicked*, Maguire has turned several fairy tale legends upside down and told familiar stories most people know from the eyes of the antagonist. He has also penned two sequel novels set in the Land of Oz.

Wicked begins seconds after the liquidation (eh) of Elphaba (aka... The Wicked Witch of the West). From there, Galinda/Glinda takes the story back through the life of her "friend" the green one. We go from birth to school at Dear Old Shiz University to the life changing appearance of a flying farm house which falls from the sky. Traditional concepts such as acceptance, popularity, and the effect of rumors are put on great display.

Along the way, we meet several new characters created in the novel:

- Doctor Dillamond (the last remaining animal teacher at the university)
- Boq (a Munchkin who has eyes for Galinda... incidentally, he was played by a Northwest Ohio native)
- Fiyero (a student who is the love interest of Galinda and Dances Through Life)
- Madame Morrible (a teacher who if you change the first letter of her name describes her character perfectly. Rue McClanahan played the role on Broadway)
- Nessarose (aka The Wicked Witch of the East... wheelchair bound... cared for by Elphaba)

I just wish that I could go on forever about how great this show is! It really did challenge everything and provided insight into one of the most sinister characters ever created. The performances, sets, and music were all spectacular.

Elphaba herself herself definitely was the star... WHAT A VOICE and she was an understudy!

I must admit that I splurged just a bit on the souvenirs but I did get a nice jacket to do my walking in and a colorful program!

Then we went to NICKS for dinner! Always a filling delight... but I did bring some cherry cheesecake HOME! It was already in a take home container which makes sense because none of us ate everything. But once again the ribeye/shrimp combo was worth every penny of the \$14.00.

And the YANKS are... winning 2-1 in the top of the 4th in Boston!

Here is a shot of the Wizard, himself who has a very interesting role in the show:



A Happy Easter Weekend

My weekend kicked off to a great start! On Good Friday after singing at services, I was dragged (□) by a crowd of no less than 5 kids to see *How to Train Your Dragon* in 2D. I didn't find the idea of paying the extra money for the added thrill of three dimensions too appealing... THIS TIME! I am pleased to announce that both the movie and my band of 5-14 year olds were excellent! The story and the humor in the animated feature are enough to entice both the young and adult viewer. After taking someone's "shortcut" to their mother's house, I returned home. Note to self... never listen to a 10 year-old's directions no matter how many times she has been to

the destination or how “easy” this way is... but it was fun.

Tomorrow after mass, the family (yes... Megan & Carol, too) are heading out to see *WICKED!* My oldest brother has already seen the show and the fact that he wants to again and suggested that we get the parents tickets for Christmas tells me something. At least it doesn't look like we will be driving home in a snowstorm at 11 PM as was the case 2 years ago when Megan, [Carol](#), and I went to the Stranahan to see *The Lion King*. Not forgetting Nick's after the show!!!

Finally, tomorrow night will see the Yanks begin their bid for championship number 28! We won't elaborate on their preseason record because high or low it doesn't really mean a great deal. But why does the season opener have to be **THERE! UGH!**

In the midst of all these fun, exciting events, let's not overlook the reason for the season. The ultimate sacrifice of the One who died to save us all from our sins. As Father stated in his homily yesterday, how fickle is man. Jesus entered Jerusalem amidst cheers and celebration. Five days later, he was crucified upon the order of the same revelers. Then to complete the prophesy, he rose from the tomb saving all of us.

May you all have a Blessed and Happy Easter weekend!

Fatal Error Has Been Fixed

Thank goodness. I would hate to think that one of our annual April the 1st glitches actually stuck! I love April Fools Day! I got the three co-workers today. I got the boss

although she promised that I would need to find another place of employment if I had.

Because I had to work this morning, I recorded The Price is Right. Not something I usually do but since inheriting the microphone, Drew has had brilliant shows on April first and today was no exception. Last year, "Mimi" served as a model on the show. This year, she was the new "Executive Producer" and promised to keep an eye on the host to see if he made any mistakes. She was very helpful in particular with his trouble with names.

A few of the games were hysterical: In Plinko Pat had to determine the correct number for a Snuggie (sorry, not \$50+), a Club (one of those anti-auto-theft devices), a chia pet, and (what else) THE CLAPPER! She only missed on the snuggie and ended up winning \$11,000.

Pick-a-Pair saw Pat needing to pick the two grocery items that were priced exactly the same. Halloween ready to bake cookies, Christmas Ziploc containers, St. Pat's Day garland, Valentine conversation hearts, New Years party poppers, and Count Chocula.

And finally, the showcase saw Pat and Pat going for two fabulous showcases. And not to spoil the surprise, but... PAT WON! Of course, they both could have gone over.

It Takes A Village

Or at least 8-10 actors on stage and some behind the scenes performers. My review of The [Village Players](#) opening show of the 2010 season will be brief so as to not give away to those who have yet to see it. And if you have not then definitely

try to make the final performance tomorrow afternoon! Most assuredly an ensemble piece led by the hilarious Mary as Mrs. Savage.

I have to say that another actress on stage (who I take full credit for) also was fabulous. Courtney, who played Mr. Potter's little seen secretary in *It's a Wonderful Life*, amazed me as Mrs. Savage's greedy daughter.

A real life father/daughter duo whom I have worked with before also had fine chemistry especially in one bit! I saw a lot of built up emotion in that ironic moment ☐

A fine job by all that I got to share with my brother and his kids!

Also fun was a survey the audience was asked to fill out.

- Is this your first time seeing a VP show? (No, but I've been in more than I have seen).
- How did you hear about the show... check all that apply. (An X on each line including "Other"... cast members forced me to come... HAHA!)
- Finally, the shows you would like to see on the stage... (No less than 10, two provided by Joshua. *Our Town* and *Twelfth Night* both of which he has read in his 7th grade gifted class. The rest were 8 that I have wanted to be in. Including one that will probably be tossed. But if another group can attempt to persuade their board to do a show full of blood and gore then why can't another do a show based on real people that actually has some intelligence behind it? Just a suggestion...)

A good way to kick off the season and a chance to sit back and be entertained. But not too long... three months is too long to be off stage ☐