

# New Venue... Same Drama

The other night before rehearsal really got started (before it was supposed to begin), I got a chance to become further acquainted with some of the people involved in the up-coming production of *Meet Me in St. Louis*. While the theatre and people involved may be different, one thing remains the same: the drama involved in operating a community theatre. The director for the musical described how she became the board's president after the previous head stepped down. She then made it known that she is the thorn in many a side. If I had not known better, I would say WCCT had changed faces and buildings. Then, "Lon" passed around invitations to an up-coming membership drive ("No thank you, one is enough for now... thanks" ☐ ).

We also discussed more on things that would be needed for Grandpa; particularly, the necessity of having multiple versions of the same item. A different one for each scene he is in (which is quite a few). How's that for cryptic? But for being the first week of rehearsals, I think it is going well... of course, we have yet to add an orchestra. I suggested that we do as a few Broadway shows have done recently, have the actors on stage play. I believe that recent productions of [Company](#) and [Sweeney Todd](#) have each had principal players playing instruments. I can see Grandpa Prophater blowing away on a tuba on stage when not singing.

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## It's Time To Sing The Music

# Of The Night

The local community theatre has added a new weekend series of entertainment to its offerings. The first month of shows has showcased "Broadway Through the Years" and has highlighted talented singers from the area... some familiar faces from past shows and some newbies. This weekend was the first show I have been able to attend and was actually quite impressed. A dear friend sang "Tell Me It's Not True" from [Blood Brothers](#). I really love the music from this show and the story; hopefully, one day I will be able to be part of a production.

I must say that a new young lady who has apparently conveyed an interest in auditioning for future productions showed an immense display of talent. Performing DIFFICULT selections from *Ragtime*, *Songs for a New World*, and *Parade*, I began to wonder where this young lady has been hiding.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the talent of the young women who have organized the series of concerts. The two were highlighted in pieces of their own. My favorite was a duet from [Assassins](#). "Unworthy of Your Love" is a beautiful ballad sung by John Hinckley and Squeaky Fromme in the musical. They are both singing to the objects of their affection; Hinckley to Jodie Foster and Fromme to Charles Manson. Yet another musical I know about, see clips of via youtube, love everything about it... but will it ever be staged by this area. Most likely not no matter the number of people who suggest it.

Finally, rounding out the evening was the delightfully entertaining emcee for the evening. Very quick with a quip and able to improvise while performers were searching for music. A good way to "get butts in the seats" for the upcoming production of [Over the Tavern](#).

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# Something Suddenly Came Up

The following post, while going beyond my normally tame fare, just could not be resisted. Besides, it reminded me of one of my favorite moments in the entire Brady Bunch mythos. You know the moment when Peter threw a football and it came flying into the daydreaming face of Marcia, Marcia, Marcia. Marcia screamed "[OWW, MY NOSE](#)". This gave the young lady a huge swelled nose and a severe blow to her ego as well as throwing any chance of her big date with the star football player out the window. Well... a similar incident recently occurred at an establishment in Akron, Ohio. However, it did not involve a football.

*AKRON, Ohio – A northeast Ohio man who was smacked in the nose by a stripper's platform-style shoe is suing a nightclub for \$25,000 over injuries he says will require surgery.*

*Yusuf Evans says he wanted to entertain his cousin, who had come to visit from out of town, so he took him and a friend to the XTC Nightclub in Akron. 30 minutes later, Evans says he was doubled over in pain.*

*"When the boot hit me in my face all I could do is drop...and just holler for about ten minutes", he said.*

*Evans says, while performing a dance move, a stripper's shoe flew off her foot and smacked him in the face. "She ran, at a nice speed, grabbed the pole and flung her whole body around, all her weight flung like that in a circle around the pole and her boot flew off and it hit me in my nose", explained Evans, who filed a civil lawsuit on Tuesday in Summit County Common Pleas Court. He's asking for \$25,000 in damages over injuries he says will require surgery. "Right here. It's*

*chipped", he said, pointing to the left side of his nose. "This side of my nose, I often get clogged all the way up, where I can only breath out of (the opposite) side", he said.*

*The lawsuit says XTC management allowed dancers to wear improper attire and required strippers to perform dances that made the stage a hazardous place.*

*"Safety reasons and that they're responsible because it happened in their establishment by their employee", Evans told FOX 8.*

*The owner of the XTC Nightclub had no comment.*

*Evans filed the civil lawsuit the same day he says he was injured exactly one year ago. The 37-year-old Akron man says he still has pain from the chipped bone in his nose.*

*He says he saw a doctor the day after he was injured. He has medical bills and was told he'd need surgery. "The bills, the pain, my nose that ain't gonna go away unless I have surgery and I don't like surgery so I don't know what I'm gonna do about that."*

I guess next time I decided to invite a cousin to a night on the town, I would choose a safer place to be entertained. I wonder what the man's significant other thought about the incident. The evening news reports that the victim is not a frequent patron of clubs and just wanted to show his cousin a good time. I guess he thought the good time would be a little safer. [poll id="15"]

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# Giving The Customer What She Wanted

Today while at work, a young girl and her mother came through my line. The mother asked her 6 year-old daughter if she still remembered Morat from the Idol show. The little girl's eyes lit up and she very enthusiastically nodded her head. I could not pass up a golden opportunity to entertain a young fan so our friend from Liswathistan returned for a few minutes. He even asked if there was a song she would like to hear. She told Morat she would like to hear the "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." So Morat did his best and sang the song for the little people.

Morat just returned from Ton of Washing and see new owner America country. I also see Plumb Joe in other country for TV box or news web or something, I do not know what he do. But is Plumb Joe like the Bob from Idol show? They are both very strange people.

Ok... thank you, Morat. I just think it is wonderful that someone that young remembered a character from a show she saw when she was probably 4 years-old. Was he really that memorable?

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## Presidential Fodder For Letterman, ALREADY!?

I just marvel at the sight of witnessing an Inauguration Day on television. Actually being within miles of the actual ceremony must be exhilarating. The pomp and circumstance of

the changing of power from one administration to another is just inspiring. Millions of people gathered at the Mall facing the Capitol Building (I heard an estimated report that there was 1 port-a-potty for every 400 people), a chilly day indeed unless you are wearing layers upon layers of clothing. The appearance of the three living past Commanders-in-Chief as well as their seconds in command preceding the oath is yet another traditional element of the passing of the torch. Of course, there was a small snafu involved in the ceremony, it was a moment or two behind. Is it in the 20th Amendment that the oath must be administered at noon?. It does state that the President's and Vice-President's tenures ends at 12PM on January 20th.

Poor President Bush was mocked so heavily by David Letterman (among other talk show hosts) in what seemed like nightly installments of Great Moments in Presidential Speeches. Mr. Letterman may well have his first moment for President Obama even before he was even sworn in. The President-elect rushed over the Chief Justice in the recitation. I believe that this inadvertently caused Justice Roberts to slightly flub the second line of the oath. Probably the excitement of the moment.

I was impressed with the history making address of the new leader of our country. He pulled no punches and made it blunt that there is work to be done in the U.S. as well as abroad and that it would not be easy days ahead but necessary. I think the moment was made more profound when he alluded to the fact that 40 years ago, his family and others like him could not enter certain restaurants and be served; now he is now the leader of that country. A change has indeed come. Let us hope that the next four years are filled with a new spirit and new prosperity. I just hope that the president and his mother-in-law are on good terms. Of course, the White House is a big place.

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# 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 Tale Of Ponder-grossa and Wally World**

This morning, I was treated to a story by the boss involving a dinner at an area steakhouse (one of my least favorite places). The couple went to an area Ponderosa and Unfortunately for them, chose the WRONG place to sit. Sitting at a table near them was a rather large, loud, and unruly bunch. She even commented that it made a Shaffer gathering seem tame ("Hardy-har-har-har"). As the dinner progressed, the neighboring party kept throwing biscuits at each other. Diane's husband commented that if one happened to hit him he would go to the other table and throw it at the adult(?) at the table along with a few epithets (there's your .50 word for the day). Soon after, one of the flying biscuits ricocheted off one of the children and came within inches of hitting Tony... did not hit him. Seconds later, a three year old got hold of a lemon and threw that. Not sure how close that got. I'm not sure why no one complained about the crowd, I guess it has been a while since I have eaten at a Ponderosa, but see little has changed.

Which brings me to my second tale of this post. It seems that my father was shopping in my FPOE. He was looking for a bottle of shampoo which my mother had run out of in her beauty salon. Dad, bless him, has a real problem tracking things down. If he does not know exactly what he is looking for and



where it is at... forget it. He eventually used his cell phone to call and say he could not find it. Why not ask an associate you ask? AHHA, HE DID. Apparently, he picked the wrong associate because they were "TOO BUSY" (direct quote) to assist him. WHHOOOAAAHHH... WAIT A MINUTE!!!! It is a good thing I was not with him because the first thing I would have done is gently tell this associate that he would help me or I would go to another associate to see if they were too busy. I know your boss and I am sure that he would be willing to help me. I have been thinking about doing some investigating by going to the store one Wednesday evening to see who was working in the Health and Beauty Department and see if they are too busy. It could be that the associate was busy, but that is certainly no way to treat ANY customer aside from the fact that they are in there at least once a week and drive 12 miles to get there. Dad did eventually find the shampoo after Mom described the bottle to him over the phone. It's been a while since [taylhis'](#) last WM post... thought I would contribute.

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## Getting Exactly What Was Advertised

A group of friends and I attended an area talent showcase of extremely gifted teenagers. Who says that tomorrow's leaders are destined for failure? Sponsored by a local church, many of the acts were religious in theme from very powerful interpretive dance/signing to an intriguing dramatic presentation. However, there were a few pianists, a very talented violinist, and some EXCEPTIONAL female vocalists. One of the worship bands who performed, Exclamation, featured a friend who is a regular member of our game night and has

been on stage several times. I sat beside her father and I could tell that [j](#) was as proud as can be of his youngest as was I. One of the critiques made by the judges was that their diction was TOO crisp?! That caused me to raise an eyebrow. I cannot tell you how many times I have been told to ENUNCIATE almost to the point at which I was over enunciating. I can see instances where dialect in a song would cause diction to be stressed differently, but the song Exclamation sang definitely was not one. I wonder if the group's mentor had been sitting in the audience and what her reaction was.

One of the solo vocalists I have had the pleasure of performing in ensembles with previously. She sang a glorious rendition of "Think of Me" from *Phantom of the Opera*. This junior in high school is already a three-year member of an area city's opera. She definitely has a very bright future ahead of her.

I was also greatly impressed by an 11th grader who chose to perform an aria, [Amarilli, mia bella](#). I did not begin singing Italian art pieces until after high school with a trained vocalist. This young lady commented that she had received a LITTLE(?) training.

There were other performers who played an instrument that in my opinion must be learned from birth. I greatly admire anyone who can come close to mastering ANY stringed instrument. A junior in high school performed her violin solo seemingly flawlessly.

I must say that some of the interpretive dances were perhaps some of my favorite segments... even if one of the groups seemed to be toted higher than the others as they were formed from young members of the evening's sponsoring church. Another of the groups performed to "You Raise Me Up." This song is very special to me as it was the last song that I worked on under Emily's tutelage and I don't think I gave it its true potential. This is definitely a song that I would like to

revisit, I think I am ready to.

So, our little corner of the world does indeed possess some exceptional talent in our youth. What a blessing to have evenings such as this to showcase it. Although I knew going in that the evening would contain some religious flavor, I for one think that it had just a smidgen too much for my taste. Not enough to totally turn me off but I am sure that there were some in the audience who may have been a bit uncomfortable. I also grew weary of the panel of judges giving their critiques which did not always make sense although they were all three trained professionals in the field. Seventeen acts with critiques for each seemed to drag at times and the comments and the "stars" awarded did not always match up. Just give the critique and move on. And above all, eat the microphone. Plus, be sure to enunciate but not too much.

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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 if 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!!