

May I Return...

What a day! I took two of my nieces to Journey Oz as the cast and crew prepared for what is sure to be a [WONDERFUL](#) production next weekend. I once again will be playing reviewer Tuesday night. Today, the cast and crew provided an on and back stage experience tailored to the entire family.

Munchkins, Winkies, the Wizard, Wicked Witch, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, Tin Man, and Dorothy were on hand for photo ops and previews... and "her little dog, too." Alyssa and Sydney were both quietly excited at the site.

After, Megan texted me and asked if I would like to accompany her to an area production of [Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#) which starred two thespians I have had the honor of performing with previously. So after grabbing a bite to eat and dragging her to church as I had to sing, we headed out. Tim has really grown as an actor and delivered a FINE performance. Crystal as always was stellar as one of the trio of narrators. This is the first time I have known of a production utilizing more than one narrator and it worked nicely. The entire cast looked like they were having such an outstanding time. In every show, it is important to believe that the people on stage are actually enjoying what they are doing. Joseph perhaps a bit more than any other because it can easily slip into "cheese." The gentleman portraying "Levi" is the husband of a friend of mine who I have known since my pre-school days. Could not find him after the show to congratulate him. Just one of many shows that never gets old for me either watching or performing in. Nine months is a long time. But soon I will be on stage delivering the list of songs I have been perfecting.

A very fun day spent with loved ones doing things I love to do.



All Is Well

It is OVER! The phenomenon that began in 1997 with the British publication of a little book entitled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and continued through 7 books and now 8 big screen adventures has reached its climax. All I ask is that it ends here. To go back or to move forward would cheapen what has come before. I cannot recall a pop culture phenomenon that has endured, captivated, and caught the world's (for better or for worse) attention. Millions of children (and adults as well) began reading the novels of "the boy who lived." These same children grew up with each page turn, every movie frame as the core cast of the films remained the same throughout the octology. I found it enthralling to follow Daniel, Rupert, Emma, Matthew, Tom, and the other young actors progress from naive 10-11 year olds into 20-something year old seasoned performers aided by a cadre of many of the finest British thespians.

I dare say that never before (and very likely never will again) has the world experienced the likes of such a series. Midnight book/movie releases; a game invented from the pages; a theme park; college classes; and I'm sure a myriad of other items devoted to the world have appeared.

I was (as I'm sure millions of other fans were) a bit nervous about what to expect from the printed pages being transferred to movie screens. Apparently, the worry was for naught as *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* has vanquished several box office records in its path in the first 5 days of

release. This afternoon, I spent the extra money to attend my first IMAX 3D experience. I was blown away by the pre-movie graphics and announcement to say nothing of the main feature itself. There were moments that I could tell that were filmed traditionally and transferred but the total experience was breathtakingly immersive. I would have enjoyed the film itself on a regular screen but after investing the last decade plus in the characters, I felt that the farewell needed to be experienced on a grand scale. Thrilling, wondrous, emotional (any fan who isn't moved... well...) action packed. The best of the series? Definitely... YES! However, I like to think of the movies as a whole. Things that were left out in the transfer to the movies... most notable in the Half-Blood Prince.

☒☒ Goodbye, friend of Hagrid! It has been a magical adventure.

Should Have Gone And Fed The Ducks

Well... another year plus 3 days older. This year has definitely been one of the most personally dramatic I have ever faced but with God's protective presence through my wonderful family and once again the very best friends He has put out there for me, I feel that I am nearing as close to a full recovery as possible.

I always enjoy doing special things on my birthday. This year, I was lucky enough to have a 4 day holiday (I will be paying for it since I now work until Tuesday without a break... I can handle that). Saturday, my parents and my oldest brother celebrated with me at The Factory restaurant. This is one of at least three family named (Don Hall) restaurants in

the Fort: Triangle Park and the Gas House are two of the others... if memory serves there are a few others. It had been years since we had eaten at the Factory and that being the case I decided on that. Being only 5PM on a Saturday, there was not much of a crowd so we were seated right away. The selection was NOT at all what it used to be. In fact, I almost wished that I had decided to go to Triangle Park which has a small pond in which ducks and a few swans are known to gather looking for bread crumbs. However, my surf and turf was wonderful.

Sunday (the actual big day), I was invited to spend the day with my second family. This year, there was no other place I would rather be. C&L saw me and continue to stand beside me as I improve more and more each week. To say that they and their family are really special is an absolute understatement.

We met a few other friends at church service and then went to brunch. On the way, I had two little ones trying to play with the windows in the car. Their mischievous plans were thwarted as they discovered that the driver's door has a window lock. MWAHAHAHAHAHA! Then back to the house and some play time with the littles. Around 6, I had to make my exit as I had forgotten to bring my meds.

Monday, more fun. I volunteered to take the three little ones to church while L took T to her camp. Later, I had a meeting and was invited to help celebrate another guy's birthday (he CAN'T be three already... I distinctly remember the day I was called informing me of his arrival).

Tuesday... a day to relax and think about nothing. Started reading the original Gaston Leroux *Phantom of the Opera*. Not as dry as I thought it might be in fact it is pretty good so far. Perhaps I will compare and contrast the longest running Broadway musical and the novel somewhere down the line. I did get our team signed up to play Family Feud at our annual village fest on the 29th at 7.

All in all a Happy Birthday. NOW I have to find a day to see the final chapter of Harry Potter opening this weekend. Definitely on Tuesday since I close every night through Monday. Anyone care to join me?

And I Had To Catch It On Baseball Tonight

WOO HOO!!!!!! Captain Jeter has done what few other have done and the first Yankee to do it! I have always thought (well for the past several years, anyway), that Derek has been and continues to be a star in not only the way he plays but the in way he presents himself off the field. A real classy guy! Yesterday at 2PM, number 2 hit a homerun in his second time at bat. Why is this so special? This homer was DJ's 3000th lifetime hit in the 'stripes! Something else the superstar shortstop did that he has not done in a bit... he went 5-5 at the plate!

The fan who nabbed the ball showed a tremendous amount of class himself! Instead of cashing in, he gave the ball back to Jeter. In return, the phone salesman was awarded with four tickets to each of the remaining Yankee's home games as well as autographed balls and bats. I know what some of you are thinking... he'll sell those and make a mint that way! ☐ I hope not.

Why couldn't he have hit it when the game was carried in our area? AH, WELL **DJ3K!**

Almost There

Well... it has been just over a year since I BEGAN taking voice lessons. For obvious reasons, I have not had a full year's worth. However, I think I have made fine progress in the 8 or so months I have had. I am S000000 close to polishing the 10 songs I have chosen to put before an audience including 3 or 4 selections which require more than one voice. One piece was described by K as being very difficult to sing not because of the notes but because of the character. Perhaps, but it is a fun character piece that I am so excited to finally be performing... definitely the one which needs the most polishing considering I just picked it a few weeks ago.

One of the other pieces is having a bit of intonation problems. Written in the key of C... one of those that should be easier than I am making it. As a test, it was suggested that I put my finger in my ear to hear what I was flubbing.

VOILA! Not only did it help the intonation but created a fullness that was missing from the song. Now all I have to do is get the finger out of my ear. Not one of the most comical of songs.

As far as the repertoire... old favorites, new challenges, ALL FUN and I can't think of any that all ages cannot enjoy (well... maybe one, but that has been taken care of). So... now I need to get these other talented individuals on board whom I have had in mind since picking these songs.

Carte Blanche

Just finished the latest 007 novel (if it is going to be a few more years before the next movie... glad someone was commissioned by the Ian Fleming family to write a new one).

Carte Blanche is yet another reboot of a classic character. Bond is introduced as an agent in his early 30s who is a veteran of the Afghan War. To me the last two movies which combined as a reboot failed horribly by being something the franchise is not. They are WAY too serious and totally dismissed what is so fun about the classic Bond movies. However, they are all back in the pages of the first official Bond book penned by an American, [Jeffery Deaver](#) (author of such suspense novels as *The Bone Collector* which became a Denzel Washington/Angelina Jolie film).

Supporting Cast:

- M... Bond's boss is once again a male character. I enjoy Dame Judy Dench as the head of MI6 but liked a return to the classic male figure
- Q... Quartermaster... weapons guy who provides agents with the most advanced weaponry available... whether or not it comes back intact at the end of the adventure is always fun to see. Sadly missed in the last two movies.
- Miss Money Penny... a bit different role in the books than in the movies but also missed in *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace*.
- Felix Leiter... CIA Agent who has more of a cameo role in this one.

The Bond Girls: There are three in this one. One of the three MORE than lives up to her name. Another is as icy as Pussy Galore, herself.

The villain: Severan Hydt. Quite memorable. I don't think there has been a Bond villain quite as interesting in quite a

while.

Of course, 007 is sent on a hazardous mission with Earth shaking consequences and millions of lives at risk. All of these elements combine to bring James and company into the 21st century. The reader is even provided with quite a bit of backstory into the life of the secret agent that ties directly into the action. Exotic locales, breathless action sequences, and twists, including an ending most unusual for a Bond vehicle. Let's hope the movies get back on track.

Another Director For The Heavenly Choir

This past week saw another great musician and conductor leave the confines of his earthly existence (morbid way to start, I know). Ray has been ver instrumental in the formation of a community choir in my hometown for the past several years.

Each summer at our hometown festival, he gathers a good size group and leads them in a selection of patriotic songs. I also recall singing Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* in an alumni choir directed by this fine man at high school Christmas concerts a time or two. Each of Ray and Joan's children developed and nurtured a passion for music. Kevin, their oldest, is the music director of a school in Texas. Growing up, I remember seeing Kris, Kermit, and Kyle in musicals and in show choir. After graduating from THE Ohio State University, Kermit subbed a number of times for band and choir. He would grab the second sousaphone and we would jam out to some pep band music... GOOD TIMES!

This summer's Festival of Flags chorus will be in need of a

new leader. Unfortunately, Ray suffered a massive stroke and heart attack and was called to direct an even larger chorus.

Emily must have needed some help directing up there... of course, nearly three years is an awful long time ☐

Rest in Heavenly Peace.

About Time

NOTHING beats the sheer spectacle of a live theatrical performance. However, when those of us do not live within reasonable driving distance to take in a professional show less than occasionally and scraping the \$100+ for a single ticket... WELL... Fifty years ago or so many of the bigger shows would be given the big screen treatment at "Affordable prices." However, the popularity of the movie musical has all but gone by the wayside. There is the occasional offering... *Chicago* (good), *Evita* (ok, I suppose), and *The Phantom of the Opera* (not so ok).

It was announced today that a cinematic treatment of Schoenberg and Boublil's *Les Miserables* (really, is there any other?) is finally in the works. "In the works" insofar as the announcement that Hugh Jackman is attached to the project and a screenplay is being written. Wolverine as the "pup" Gavroche... I can see it now... with an Australian accent. Of course, I have heard that the musical has been in development for ten years or more and we got nothing more than a Liam Neeson starring flick that "is not the musical" and I have not seen. So, we will see if this comes to fruition.

Until then, the musical itself is coming to the area in November!

Charm

Well... yesterday was another voice lesson. It went much better than last week's meeting... perhaps it was because I focused on 4 or 5 pieces I have been working on since almost the beginning. Once again, a deceptively simple song is one of the most problematic (well... the last part of it is rhythmically tricky, but will come). Another piece, I need to find that spot of greatest emotional impact. I KNOW where it needs to be but need to back off just a bit on some of those other big moments. I have to skip next week as the j-o-b asked me to come in an hour early on Thursday.

Today, I had my first follow up with the doctor. He seems to think all is well... progressing nicely. He asked me what I have been doing... how long I am on my feet each day, etc.

Well... given my current job, I am on my feet probably 95% of the time. I have been taking short walks as the seasons have changed but not quite up to the 3-4 mile hikes I was accustomed to taking but those will come in time. As we have both commented, "I miss my walking buddy." I told the nurse, who lives two houses south of me, that I didn't think that trying out for [The Wizard of Oz](#) or [Annie](#) was such a good idea.

Once again, I did bring up the idea of trying out for Roosevelt and brought a chuckle. But I have been going to my weekly voice lesson so once my leg is closer to 100% I will once again be doing something. The actual appointment was nothing more than hearing things I had already known. He did feel my leg and commented that it is still a bit tight. I guess his prescribed 4 month check was nothing more than witnessing my charming personality ☐ KIDDING... I know it is necessary but doesn't hurt to display that indelible Jamiahsh charm.

Pottermore

Apparently, the end is just the beginning when it comes to the Harry Potter verse. July 15th will see the final cinematic adventure take place. BUT in October will come a website known as "[Pottermore](#)" created by J. K. Rowling herself. The content of the site is being held under wraps (for now, the site is "Coming Soon"). Speculation by fans ranges from an online community full of message boards and chat rooms (hopefully it is not that... do we really need another social network?) to the e-book release of the seven novels to an on-line game of the world of Harry Potter. HMMM... the site has changed even since a few days ago when I heard of the site.

I'm of two minds on this. I'm not sure that this is not an attempt to bleed every drop out of the franchise... too much of a good thing and all that. However, if it is what the fans want... I guess it will be worth at least a peek once it is fully presented.