

# The End Of Songs I Have Learned

Yesterday was an emotional roller coaster. Thursday night, I hardly slept at all... maybe 5 hours tops (which some people I know are lucky to get in a week ;)). Being off stage for almost a year and a half created a huge amount of excitement and at the beginning of the day a little nervousness which I know surprised even me but several things throughout the day alleviated that fear. By the time I was ready to leave for the theater, I was ready to go... physically and mentally.

Adrenaline still there but the fear I seemed to be feeling was gone (if indeed it was fear). I arrived at my designated time and was soon joined by my accompanist and my cousin who joined my coach and I in a trio. I ran through just two of my more problematic numbers and waited on the other two participants to arrive to run through my pieces with them.

With a half hour to spare and the first audience members began to arrive, I headed backstage to put the finishing touches on my attire. While it does still fit (a fact that amazed my pal :)), I need to use suspenders to hold the pants of my tux up.

Thankfully, I have lost some weight since my days with the BGSU Men's Chorus. Moments before I went on stage, my best friend, third brother, and mentor came back and led one of my traditions: the pre-show prayer. Unfortunately for both of us, he and members of his family have been really under the weather for a while so he had to leave. But I was SUPER glad that he came behind the curtain for a pep talk, prayer, and hug (don't care if I catch whatever they are having). I'm sorry they had to miss it knowing how much they have meant to me in the past 6 years but their health is so much more important.

A little high school game on the BGSU campus with a victory meaning a trip to the state tournament, kept all but 7 of my

immediate family members from attending but what I had left was an audience full of wonderful friends plus my two sisters and 4 of my nieces (Kyli came down to the stage after I completed the show and gave me a hug). The music was great; however, I hope no one asks me to emcee an engagement in the near future. I am so better suited to a scripted show than attempting to offer extemporaneous (there's your .10¢ word of the day) comments between songs... Awkward to say the least.

But the duet and trio of the evening went remarkably well and my solos went as well as I could hope. I am told that video clips are ready but either my cousin goofed on my email address or there was a goof up along the way somewhere. In either case, when I get them I will post them (maybe those awkward extemporaneous comments scattered throughout were omitted). I detest watching myself on film (most of the time). I can handle Morat from time to time but that is about it.

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## A Great Dane

Weekday mornings (except for Mondays) I go to my "sister"'s house at 7:45 to watch the youngest kids she sits with while she takes the older ones to school. One of the younger ones is an extremely cool little dude named Dane who goes to pre-school later in the morning. The kid is just a ball of fire!

Every time he is there he asks Charnel... "Where is Jamiah?!" There was a spider in the laundry room the other day and he asked if she was going to call and have me come and take care of it. Over Christmas break, Dane and his mother came into the grocery while I was working and upon entering he exclaimed, **"THERE'S THAT GUY!"**

Wednesday morning after coming back from pre-school, he was

absolutely not himself. The poor guy had a tummy ache and a temp of 102° ☐ Charnel called his father and he was on his way. Until he arrived, Dane sat on my lap, cuddled with me, and we watched *The Flintstones* which drew a few chuckles but he really did feel warm. Shortly after, Dane's Dad arrived and took my newest little pal home. This morning they were both sick! Get well soon, little buddy ☐

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## What I Did To Ring In 2012

Quite an eventful day, really! I checked out Facebook around 9 to see that my oldest brother had been in the B-town Hilton (more commonly known as the Hospital) for the past 4 hours and Mom had caught whatever has been making its way around for the past week (glad I am only battling a stuffy nose). Dad was in true for as of late by dragging a bunch of his treasures out from their trove and piling them out around the house. I see that he has finally started to put his carport together. We'll see if he can get it together before the snow hits.

While at work, I got a call asking if I could sit with Jeff's kids while their mother worked 3rd shift. I thought that I could beat Joshua at Harry Potter Scene It but he was too busy in the recesses of his fortress of solitude so I spent the evening watching DIck Clark's 40th ball drop. The entire evening event featured a countdown of the 40 top musical performances over the years (I guess they did not say 40 "Best"). Seeing J-Lo prancing around in a skimpy 1 piece was not my idea of Best **MUSICAL** performance but, I did not get a vote. Noah, bless his heart, tried so hard to stay awake for the ball drop but with about 15 minutes to the event he was off to lala land. Fifteen minutes later when that new unfit for anyone's eyes and ears group rook the stage, it was time

for the little ones to bid good night.

I thought I was done for the night and could relax. I was mistaken. About 2AM, I heard the heavenly choirs announce that "Noah threw up in Daddy's bed!" Up the stairs, strip the bed and Noah and toss one in the washer and the other in the shower. I believe that I put each where they needed to go because at 7, I heard another deluge. And at 8, Rachel returned to take command.

What a way to end the year! HAHAHAHA! The night could be turned into a modern day Marx Brothers feature which I was hoping to find on the box last night, but...Hope you all had a safe, fun, and eventful start of the new year!

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## Say... **FART**

No.. honestly, the photographer for our big Jamiahsh family portrait used that in an attempt to get a few of the more rambunctious models to cooperated. A certain young man chose to say "gingivitis" instead (bad teeth, Noah?). In any case, today was the big family portrait day. It probably has been a good 10 years since the last one. Looking at the old one, there are a few people it was deemed necessary to delete for one reason or other and Alex for one had those monkey ears hanging out and I still had a reasonable amount of hair on my head plus a few extra pounds (now it is the opposite on both counts). There have also been a few additions to the family so it all balances out. The last picture was more a photo of the children for the parents' Christmas present. This one included all 17 (or is it 18?) of us.

The day began at mass. I was not aware that the choir sang this morning (it is not the third Sunday of the month. Guess

I should look at the schedule a bit more closely). The choir master came down and told me to come up to the loft. I was shocked to see Chad (who had just had gall bladder surgery on Thursday up there. Better than expected but he did not do much. I KNOW that the next time the choir sings is Christmas Eve at 9:30PM mass. A half-hour earlier than normal (hope the Children's mass at 7 is quick since we sing carols at 9).

Then it was off to break the camera. It actually went quacked than I thought i had. We arrived around noon and were finished by 12:20. I think the most troublesome one was my 15 year old godson who really was not appreciative of being torn away from his Fortress of Solitude. We asked him if he would do better if we showed him a picture of his girlfriend. Still amazes me that he has found the time to be social enough for a girlfriend. Guess there is someone for everyone. Rather humorous with about 10 photographers offering placement suggestions. Not me... I just went with the flow. Wonder if she can photoshop a bit of hair to cover the glare that is sure to come. ☐

Today was also the combined three-store Christmas party. Not for me... not that I am not a sociable person, someone needed to stay behind and run the store. We now have Noble Romans pizza at the store. The sign out front says "Made Fresh Daily."

Apparently, we had a customer who took the sign a bit too literally as he called to place an order. We are NOT a pizza parlor and do not deliver. You have to buy and bake at home ☐

Kind of reminded me of the customer who called and inquired on our availability of breasts. As reward for staying behind, a pizza, 2 liter, and leftover cookies were delivered to me to take home. We also have a stand up mascot of Noble Romans at the front of the store to greet the customers. I do recall back in the day that there was a Noble Romans in the Fort and vaguely remember said mascot in television ads. I remember the tag for Godfather's Pizza which was the apropos "Pizza You Can't Refuse" but that is another chain.

Well... off to bed. Early start tomorrow.

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## Not As Good As Others

Well as I am often reminded after wishing customers a good day: "They are all good just (all together now) some are better than others." I think that this year has taught me that there are times that test us but with the help of family, the best of friends and the power of HIM above, we manage to get through them even (often times) better for the experience.

This past week, my Dad was back in the hospital. At least he was in the right place at the right time as he was at his doctor's office for a follow-up and ended up spending the next two nights and one day in the luxurious accommodations of our area hospital. After getting him checked out, I had to take him across the street to the medical center for his appointment with a specialist. I learned something new about his condition: one of the arteries in his neck is 60% blocked.

Unfortunately, physicians do nothing unless it is at 80% or more. I'm beginning to think that this just might be the crux of his problems. Not knowing how it feels physically, I can see where it is having an effect on his mental health. The specialist said he would see him in another year and sent him on his way. Seems to be the response of the day. In any case he had a CT scan done today, has a stress test next week, and to the VA on Thursday. Think that is why he asked his sister to come up from California who arrived last night ☐

Prayerfully, Chad seems to be doing well. Yesterday, he went in to have his gall bladder removed. His friend called here about 10AM before he went "under the knife" and by one, my brother was out of surgery, in recovery, and doing

wonderfully. He got to come home a few hours after as well.

I received a Facebook comment yesterday from BooBoo who "Hopes that the Jamiahsh family has investments in the hospital."

After this year, I think we have our own private rooms with engraved beds. ☐

And thanks to my pal-brother who happened to be in the ER the other night and was there for them as he, himself, was checking on another friend.

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## A Muppetational Thanksgiving

What a fun-filled day full of loving (if a bit wacky) family with so many blessings given to us from above. So thankful that He has led me through this one of the toughest years I have had to endure with not only my own physical hurdles but hopefully within a few weeks those of my Dad and Chad's as well. Chad is having his gall bladder removed on the 1st and Dad goes to a specialist on the 2nd. I pray that both of them come out of these experiences better and stronger for the experience.

As tradition, I got up and helped set the table for the first of two feasts and then watched the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade getting a glimpse of some of the best of this year's Broadway shows and a sneak at the coming *Newsies*!!!! that would be EXTREMELY fun to see on stage.

Before we sat down to two long tables in the dining room and Mom joined a few of the littles in the kitchen, Alex provided the blessing. He is serving as chaplain in his Boy Scout troop. He says he is also bugler but has yet to get a bugle.

After the noon day feast, I stretched out and tried to nap... NICE TRY! Not sure what we did, just sat around enjoying each other's company and viewed Elizabeth's video she made for her honors English or Lit class (whichever it was) a faux trailer for a new version of H.G. Wells' (not Orson, Jeff) *The Time Machine*. And at 4, the annual Drug Cartel of Dallas football game. And around 5, the Swary contingent arrived for the second feast.

FINALLY, a troop of us headed to the movies to watch *The Muppets!* YAY!!!!!! Highly, HIGHLY recommended! I would pay to see it again! Everything that I love about the old series and the movies rolled into one and with nods to both. The new character, Walter stole the show he was S0000000 adorable.

Cameos, singing, dancing, fun for the ENTIRE family. It could have done with a bit more Statler and Waldorf but still great fun! Mahna Mahna! In an interview, Jason Segel (who plays Walter's human twin, Gary and served as a writer and producer) stated that every generation needs a Muppet movie.

No spoilers just plain, good, FAMILY fun!

Finally, Chad and Cynthia stayed to go to shop electronics at Wal-Mart for Black Friday while the rest of us drove home.

Hope all of you my friends AND family had a blessed Thanksgiving filled with love. Do D00 de Do Do! Mahna Mahna! I think that will be stuck in my head for a few days.



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## Les Misérables Remastered

SO GLAD Megan could get tickets! Back in June, I learned that the 25 Anniversary of *Les Misérables* was making its way to the

Stranahan. I did not forget but with all the eventful events surrounding my family the past few months, it kind of took a back seat. However, Megan was able to score us a trio of seats for tonight's show. I was willing to drive which at times met with some rather humorous moments from young Miss Clark ("**OMG WE ARE GOING TO DIE!**"). Even walking to the theatre parking lot after the show. MWHAHHAHAHA!

We made excellent time even with my capable driving. We got a bit of dinner with an hour to spare before curtain. The show was even more spectacular than I remember. I last saw a high school production about 3-4 years ago and saw a professional production (it had to be) about 10 years ago at the Stranahan. There were several changes made in the staging, scenery, and lyrics which all combined to enhance what was already one of my favorite shows.

Immediately noticeable was the changing of the backdrop pre-show. It had previously been a drawing of the young Cosette with her broom. It has been replaced by a Victor Hugo painting. I did not know that the author of the original novel as well as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was also an artist. Gone also were the captions indicating the time and location of the story. These were not needed as the action just moved at a steady clip.

The revolving platform that had previously been used in productions was also noticeably absent. Instead, different levels of perspective were used to heighten the drama. Marius sang the beginning of "A Heart Full of Love" to the mature Cosette from the ground while his love stood on her balcony (think Tony and Maria or Romeo and Juliet). Later, the audience could "see" Valjean carry the wounded Marius through the different sections of the sewers. Finally, Javert falls back and is enveloped by the water as he falls to his death. A brilliant re-imagining of a classic theatrical event!

After the show, the three of us had our picture taken with M.

and Mme. Thénardier (who as usual stole the show). We lined up and (also as Usual) I was relegated to the back but go right between the charming couple. As you may recall, I performed "Master of the House" with Carol at a recital last spring. How I would relish the opportunity to play the role in a full scale production. I will post the picture as soon as Carol makes a copy.

The drive home was fun as well. After stopping at a gas station before getting on the turnpike for a drink (again after Megan made her patented quip about dying), we popped in the new LIVE anniversary recording. As we approached our drop off point I heard "**TURN LEFT! TURN LEFT! NO, KEEP GOING! KEEP GOING!**" **HAHHAH!** Sorry...at least I did not mention how many times the lovely ladies had to visit the powder room ☐ (oops)

I also learned for future reference that a high school classmate of mine live a short distance away from the theatre. A handy tidbit for those times when we have to go dashing through the snow like a few years ago on Good Friday.

Thanks Megan and Carol! ☐

Now that I know how to put accents above letters in words like *Misérables* and Thénardier, I cannot stop myself. Such a fantastic show! A silver screen version of the musical *Les Misérables* is soon to start filming with Hugh Jackman as Valjean, Russell Crowe as Javert, Anne Hathaway as Fantine, Geoffrey Rush as Thénardier, and Helena Bonham Carter as Mme. Thénardier. Set for a 2012 release. If they ruin the show with the translation to the screen, I will not be happy!

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# A Time For Catching Up

WOW! Have I been lax in posting, or what?! Think I will use this space to catch myself and all my faithful readers up on the past few weeks (that have seemed like months. My second oldest brother went back to the doctor on Friday last and now waits until November 17th to go to the surgeon to learn when he is going to go in for his gall bladder removal. Funny the time of this one! A few years ago, the night before Thanksgiving, I went to my oldest brother's house to sit with him following his own surgery... of which he had a photo taken (a nice mental picture for Halloween).

Speaking of tomorrow's holiday... I was not able to join in much of the frivolity this year. Last night was my Saturday to sing at mass and wouldn't ya know "tricks or treats" was at the same time. However, I did get to see some of the younguns in their ghastly get ups. Elizabeth was Ghostface from the ghastly *Scream* films and her new friend of the male persuasion came as Fred Flintstone. Noah was a Ninja. Alex was a banana who decided to go as Freddy Krugger (with Jason mask and hatchet) and Charlie Sheen. How he came up with Charlie Sheen is beyond me but he was "Winning" as he got a \$10 prize at the judging. Alyssa was a Ghoul Maid and Sydney looked like a young Glinda-like princess. I did not get to see Shelby in her Whoopie Cushion costume. Nor did I get to see the other three as Snow White, Wonder Woman, or the 2 week old as I Dream Of Jeannie. Hopefully, there will be pictures of those three sometime soon. Kyndall did win the prize for the youngest.

I just might have to dress up for my voice lesson in the morning. Speaking of THAT... my final piece for my "Songs I Have Learned" Weekender arrived in the mail via Jeff's mailbox last week (don't you love the mail system?). Now to get the other four voices together or at least inform them...

I hope you all have (or had) a frightfully ghoulish Halloween.  
Now that the month is nearly complete, I pray that the final two months pass with a bit more good times because the last month seems to have had a bit more of the not so good. And watch out for those signed documents that peculiarly are not notarized or you may get a football pulled out from under you.  
UUUUUGGGGHHHHH!



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# A Hug For The Hugs

Strange how the events of a few days can change the atmosphere around you. Just days after I was joyously welcoming the arrival of two special little ones, a life-long family of friends experienced not one, not, two, but three tragedies.

On Thursday, one of my dearest friends welcomed a new granddaughter. The moments Teresa got to spend with her son Cody, his girlfriend Carly and their baby Cori were very happy and will be remembered forever but very short-lived as she was taken home above only a few short hours after she was born.

Saturday morning after finishing shopping for my nephew and nieces' birthday, I found a message on Facebook asking if I had heard about Don. She had read on a family member's post that he had passed away. Before we confirmed it, we decided to find out for certain. A few moments later, I received a horrific phone call. I said a prayer to calm myself down before I called mom's cell phone.

Hours before Don's passing, the twin sister of Blake's (Jena's son) girlfriend was killed in a car accident.

Such great memories growing up with the Hug family:

- The family lived in this house until my parents bought it when I was about 6 months old. My poodle, Buffy was one of Digit's puppies and we took her out often so they could visit.
- I was always "Seah's" baby. Marilyn sat for the four of us quite often. In the summer, Teresa would take over. I even asked Don if I could marry her. On her wedding

day, I went back before the ceremony to see her and she told me "Please, don't cry." I don't remember if I did or not (my memory fails me). While she lived in Ft. Myers, we would write to each other ON PAPER! Does anyone do that anymore? ☐ I was surprised when I rode along with Marilyn and my mother to pick Teresa up from the airport for Jena's wedding. I believe the ruse was that they had to go do something with the wedding dresses.

- Sunday night caramel corn. I put this on Facebook and Chad confirmed it! I KNEW that I was not crazy.
- I believe that I am too young to remember but my oldest brother Jeff was with them at McDonalds. He wanted a cheeseburger his way (Just ketchup). He did not get it 'his way" and got sick. ALWAYS The picky eater ☐
- Like Teresa did with me, Jena took Christi under her wing and took her wherever she went whenever possible. My sister was the flower girl in Ron and Jena's wedding.

So many great memories and I'm sure that I have only scratched the surface. But what an indelible mark the Hug's have left on not only myself but on my entire family. God, please watch over Marilyn, Van, Teresa, Jena, and Tod and their families in these painful days. Lift up their spirits and let Don, Cori, and Mickae rest in peace. As Jena's daughter Cassondra once stated: "We are like family who rarely see each other but know they are there,

Love you all!

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# Many Blessings This Week

Today, I became an uncle yet again. Kyndal Grace Hazelton was born at 3:46pm weighing in at 7lbs 10oz and measuring 19.5".

It has been a long haul but she arrived safely. Calls at 12:30am... 3:00am...7:45am. Finally, Charnel's water was broken around 11 this morning. We have two little girls and a Bandit sharing the house with us for the next few days. Two special healthy little ones arriving in less than a weeks time... [WHAT A BLESSING!](#)

A touch of sadness also. Ma2's mother passed away Saturday at the age of 88. But I am sure that Mrs. Foster is now with Emily and Mr. Foster in a place where there is no longer any pain or suffering. May HE watch over the family and may Jonathan return from his deployment safely.

I have the final piece of my Weekender gig coming soon. In the next four months, I will put the spit and polish to the lineup of "Songs I Have Learned" including finding 4 male voices to fill the finale out. One I have asked (any other interested gentlemen out there? Two other fellow tangenteers are (I will assume) out of the question. One from a distance perspective; the other admits that he "doesn't sing."

