

Just When You Thought It Was Over...

BAM!!! Winter returned earlier today with another blast. Not that we were expecting anything less since it is only approaching the end of February. I had rehearsal from 1-4 (4 being rather optimistic since I had to leave at 4.45 to be at work by 5). The drive over was rather problematic: snow covered road the entire 10 mile journey, but I did make it (did you expect anything less?). I arrived around noon to complete my costuming... THANK HEAVEN THAT IS DONE! Now, we just have to wait for my final outfit to arrive from the costume shop in Toledo opening week (hopefully it fits). But Grandpa is now fully clothed. The costume mistress made a wonderful, very astute comment. She told me that she knew that I had been a theatre veteran for two reasons: (1) my talent and (2) my security in dropping my pants without hesitation to try on costumes. Well... my security in the latter is limited to the costume room. I have yet to be cast in a role in which I have been required to drop my drawers (quite frankly, at present, that would cause a moments pause).

One of the highlights of today's rehearsal was the trolley. It is really going to be something. Not quite complete, but enough that it could be moved on and off stage. I must say that I was quite impressed with the organization and pace at which it was pushed on and off for one of the signature numbers of the show.

Grandpa's songs must have impressed... well, I was told that I could be heard. Unfortunately, the part that could be heard was harmony that was supposed to be mixed with Tootie and Agnes' melody line. I have often been told that one should never work with children or animals on stage. Funny thing is, I have never had reason to believe it. Wonder why?

Happily, the road back was snow clear for the most part although the wind was horrendous. But, who knows what tomorrow will bring.

Grandpa Meet The Trolley

Tonight Act numero dos with the orchestra went much better than any of us had planned. Perfection... I would not go that far. There were some problems. Missed qs or rs. Songs falling apart, but I have been in a show or two when during the final week of rehearsal, we had the same thing happen. "A Victim of Gravity" comes to mind. But, I am really getting into this Grandpa thing. I had everyone on stage, in the orchestra, and a few people sitting in the audience laughing at some of his antics... to which madame director was quick to admonish. Tonight was also bio night. "John Truitt" mentioned that he had no idea what to include so I let him glance at my rambling. When he came to my favorite roles, he had to comment. Morat Notboratnichkov? Once again, the Liswathistani came out for a moment. Confusion arose since everyone naturally assumes this is Borat, but NO, NO, NO... not Borat... MMMMMORAT. Plus, we attempted one of the most dreaded moments of any show: the curtain call. Has anyone EVER been in a show in which the curtain call went perfectly the first time? OK... maybe not the first. But I am sure we will need to work on it again and again. Especially when there is a 13 member chorus along with several walk on cast members and 11 principals. Grandpa took a seat on the trolley while everyone else fell over each other. Two weeks from tomorrow!

Throw Him In The Pit

Tonight was the first rehearsal for which we had an ORCHESTRA. And I am pleased to say that it went remarkably well. We finally started about 7.30 and got to the end of Act I shortly after 9. Remarkably, we stopped very little although there were some problems with lines but only once or twice did anyone call for a line. Good, bad, or indifferent we mae it through. I was even surprised by the young girls playing Agnes and Tootie. But for getting through the act in just over an hour-and-a-half was remarkable... evn the director said so after she delivered her long list of notes. The one note she had for Grandpa was the necessity to learn the Scene 2 song which we have not practiced a great deal.

Performing with an orchestra can be a very interesting predicament. You really have to be on your toes and know where you are in the music. We were informed that most productions do not get the benefit of the orchestra until the week of a shows opening. We have 8 rehearsals remaining, but it is STILL great to be on stage taking to heart all the comments and making note to find ways to improve upon the character. Thursday nights Act II REHEARSAL SHOULD BE JUST AS INTERESTING. □

Stalking Deer In St. Louis

Last night was the first night we have been on the Huber stage. I have been in the audience to watch a production of School House Rock, Jr (think I've mentioned that before). However, stepping onto the stage was something else entirely. An actual stage raised above the audience with an orchestra

pit beneath. Even a balcony in the audience and a thrust stage. For being our first time on the stage, I thought it went really well. We did manage to plunder our way through Act 1.

When I was not needed on stage, I was in the costume room looking for costumes. I was enamored by the number of hats I found... everything from a fez, to a beret, to a genuine deerstalker which Sherlock Holmes himself would feel at home in. I just need to find a light, summery suit. Meet Me in St. Louis is set over the course of one full year so the actors on stage need to convey the change of seasons. There is a Halloween and a Christmas scene as well as summer and spring. Many costume changes. Every time I come on stage, I have at least one article of clothing unlike any other I wore previously. So... night one on a new stage was fun and inspiring. Different, not necessarily better, from the stages I have been on in the past few years ☐

Walzing On The Trolley

Today was one of those hectic, busy days that I just love. Work til 2 then immediately have to make my way to rehearsal. Fortunately, the time clock is set 5 minutes fast. Rehearsal was just as fun as I had imagined it would be. The principal cast and members of the chorus were given a lesson in waltzing by the choreographer. Actually not as bad as I had feared although it was only a rudimentary lesson. In the ballroom scene, Grandpa actually has to appear to be moving somewhere during his graceful dance with Esther. We also got to watch the big chorus number on board the trolley begin to take shape. Just so long as it isn't a bunch of people sitting on board moving up and down, up and down to simulate the

movement. While listening to chorus members practice, one of the male singers was asked which part he sang... Bass. And by golly, he was indeed a bass. I could never in my wildest dreams hit some of the notes he was able to. There are basses and then there are BASSES!!!

Then it was over my home theatre where we were having three meetings as well as a surprise 21st birthday party for a dear friend who is in Over the Tavern. Apparently, she was surprised because she was amazed that I could keep a secret. I just told her that I had to come over for the meetings.

Following the meetings, some of us went across the way to eat. I had no money with me... something about misplacing my wallet. This never happens to anyone else, right? I did find it when I returned home.

OK... The End of The Spy Who Loved Me

James Bond Will Return in

For Your Eyes Only.

But he returned in Moonraker (yuck) first.

Happy 21st, Megan.

One... Two... Three aaand One... Two... Three

Tonight's rehearsal was full of fun. We had a visitor from an area newspaper who may also be of help in the costuming area. She was there to discuss the show individually when we were

not needed in a scene. "John Truitt" and I happened to be available at the same time (it was not the scene in which we are part of). As I introduced myself to the interviewer, "John" said "I know who you are. You look just like your brother." Apparently, the young man is a self-acclaimed nuisance to my oldest brother at school by dropping in on him quite frequently with computer problems. Knowing my brother quite well, I doubt if he sees the teenager as a nuisance.

Part of the fun was watching people attempt to waltz as well as trying to dance myself. Then, the real challenge came: waltzing and talking at the same time. At least I only have one line to remember while I dance. Hopefully, waltzing will come back to me on Sunday when the choreographer joins us.

I also found a lot of other humorous possibilities as well as some very quick costume changes... how fun THOSE will be.

Fun In A Different Costume Room

Tonight's rehearsal was extremely interesting and cut short because of our limited space. The stage was being used for final dress rehearsals for the production of [Steel Magnolias](#) going up this weekend. The community room in the building (which has been used as our practice area prior to the stage opening up) was being used by another civic organization. Our final option was to use the costume room. On Sunday afternoon when I found out that this was where we would be practicing, I had to laugh. The WCCT costume facility is wall to wall, floor to ceiling, full of rods, shelves, totes, and boxes full of clothes with very little space to move around. Tonight, I

walked into a room that was much larger and less packed with clothes. Maybe this was because it seemed that there was a fraction of the costumes present. There was still a limited amount of space.

Before we began, I met the young man who will be playing John Truitt, the “boy next door.” We have something in common: both of us are featured in a youtube video. And of course, this lead to the introduction by everyone’s favorite Liswathistani. This drew quite a reaction (a good reaction) from everyone there. I made sure to invite everyone to look up the video. “John” and “Grandpa” share one brief moment on stage together. One of the highlights of the evening was seeing “John” learn how take an on-stage punch from a girl. I had an experience taking an on-screen punch during a melodrama, In one performance, the hero’s fist actually collided with me... OOPS ☹ OOPS again, I took an on-STAGE punch.

By the time we had finished (early), we had blocked the largest scene in the musical and one smaller scene. Some good Grandpa moments in those scenes including a very lovely, tender moment with Esther... right before we do that thing that will be taught this weekend.... looking forward to that ☺ .

I Need To Know About A Super Weekend Under The Sea

This weekend has been one of the busiest but most fun I have had in sometime. It all started Thursday night when a group of us met at the theatre to practice singing the songs we had selected for our concert on Saturday night. I did not get to

practice mine because circuits got crossed and the clip that held the accompaniment to my piece was not there. But it was fun to see some of the others practice. Chris practiced his two selections from [Jekyll & Hyde](#). I had forgotten that the song "I Need to Know" (one of my favorites from the show) had eventually been taken out of the Broadway production. It was replaced by "Lost in the Darkness" which is sung by Jekyll over his comatose father. I often listen to the Anthony Warlow Gothic Musical Thriller version and find it far superior. Chris also shone brightly on "Confrontation" which is sung toward the end of the musical as Jekyll battles the evil that has risen to the surface and is about to totally consume him.

On Friday morning, I had to go to church to practice singing the songs I would lead the congregation in Saturday night. Then I returned home to practice the song I eventually chose to perform Saturday night at the theatre. When I decided to sing this weekend, I had two selections picked out that were very special to me and I thought would challenge me; however, they were deemed "not modern enough." The theme for the concert was musicals of the past decade. I eventually chose "Under the Sea" from *The Little Mermaid*. Very fun piece. However (and I don't know why it bothers me), I was not able to memorize the entire piece. But I had fun with it and heard many compliments from some close friends and also from newcomers to the theatre group. Megan even noted that she could see me one day performing the role of Sebastian on stage. Another great character with not one but two very memorable songs. Carol also expressed an interest in eventually performing a duet with me in the near future. I would relish the opportunity to perform a duet with Chris and one with Carol. I loved Carol's duet of "Feed the Birds" from *Mary Poppins*. The song really lends itself well to beautiful harmonies. I must say that all of the performers as well as the MCs were very good and the evening was a great success.

Super Bowl Sunday found me at work then immediately onto rehearsal. We got to watch some of the choreography begin to take shape. One of the signature pieces from *Meet Me in St. Louis* is the "Trolley Song." Just in the beginning of the staging of the song, I can see that it will be very intensive but fun. However, Grandpa does not get to ride the car. After rehearsal, I made my way to a game party. I thought the game was good; sad to say the team I picked was not victorious but it is always fun to watch the game with a large group of friends as spirited as mine. I will watch the Super Office Special episode tomorrow.

I Get Ideas

Tonight was the first night that the fun began to take shape at rehearsals. Especially when you are with a new cast, it does take a few rehearsals to get acquainted. But I was greatly impressed with the two youngest girls who have for the most part memorized each of the songs they are part of at least in the first act.. "Tootie" has an adorable solo all to herself which is sure to be a crowd-pleaser. She also has a cute little choreographed ditty with sisters "Esther" and "Agnes." And the two young ladies looked great while the older sister admitted that she did not know the steps as well. But it really looked good for the second week of rehearsals.

As for GRANDPA, let me just say, the director has given me a very long leash from which to create the character and there is a lot to give character to. In fact, Mr. Prophater is in a scene with the young ladies in the family room in which he has no dialogue. I was quick to ask... what is he supposed to be doing? "You'll think of something." My eyes lit up and I

felt a rather mischievous grin come upon my face. COOL

Given the fact that we were practicing in a very small music room in a church while the theatre was being used for another production, we had very limited space to choreograph our on stage movement but we managed to basically take a stab at entrances and minimal (dare I say) dancing. But I have some ideas during the title song to interact with the family octet.. pending director's approval of course. Guidelines: Grandpa is a rather eccentric old man. Lots of Possibilities.

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.