

Once Again Hollywood Has Come Up With A Creative Idea

Or maybe not so creative idea. It seems that ABC and Selma Hayek are combining forces to create a magical miniseries which is based on a popular novel which was based upon a beloved classic movie which was based upon another book. The popular novel was also the basis for a megahit Broadway musical which is (the last I heard) is being turned into a big-screen production. Whatever happened to an original, creative idea.

The miniseries in question is based upon the novel, [Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West](#) by Gregory Maguire. While the musical may be a blockbuster, one of Maguire's newer "Fractured Fairy Tales" was made into a telefilm. Anyone remember *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister*? That's ok... neither do I.

I think I will stick with the Fractured Fairy Tales as ready by Edward Everett Horton as seen on The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle Show. For your enjoyment, I have chosen a classic Mr. Know-It-All segment.

King of My Heart

Way, way back may centuries ago (ok... 1968, if memory serves) two young men composed a 15 minute cantata centering around Joseph, his 11 brothers, and the Amazing coat of many colors given to Joseph by his father, Jacob (aka Israel, or as his sons and their wives used to call him: Dad). Some 42 years later, [Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#) has grown into a full-blown musical extravaganza, a grab bag (if you will) of old time rock and roll, powerful ballad, country, calypso (my favorite piece), and other genres. It was the first to join the ranks of American Idol in that a televised contest allowed the British television viewing public to assist in determining who would don the magnificent garment for the 2007 London revival.

For the newest incarnation, a new song was written for Pharoah, who if you are among the uninitiated, bears a slight resemblance to the king of rock and roll himself. If memory serves, Lord Webber even offered the role to Presley.

Here is a video of the new song. Comments please...

At the official website of the show, you can delve into a history of the show, clips, photos, and even try your luck at a quiz devote to the show. Questions range from the really simple to the outrageously difficult.

You Cain't Say No to OKLAHOMA! by Jamiahsh

Yes, my first byline appeared in today's local newspaper.

VERY exciting and fun how it came about. Last Thursday, I received an email asking if I would like to go an review the local production of *OKLAHOMA!*. The extremely talented regular reviewer of theatrical productions was unavailable for press night. The fact that he is also the president of the board for the non-profit theatre group also might have played a role. So, I quickly replied and was really excited about the opportunity.

Just prior to the beginning of my voice lesson, I hear my cell phone ring (and no it is no longer what I was informed was the theme to "Sex and the City..." never seen either the tv show... or the movie). I quickly got the details... time was the most important thing, the rest I pretty much figured out on my own.

A small town community theatre needs positive feedback from the media. These are not paid professionals performing here.

As I have said before, the show is not one of my favorites for many reasons... chief among them is the length. However, I am pleased to say that [Fountain City Festival's](#) performance was top notch. It was very easy to mention all of the principal actors and a few of the veterans who have been involved in the eleven shows the group has produced (two of

which I have been in).

The production team decided to remain totally faithful to Rodgers and Hammerstein's original. So faithful that only 8 measures of the score were dropped. Everything gelled nicely; the acting, singing, orchestra, set, costuming, and choreography were all superb. Where most groups may drop such moments as the Dream Ballet for the benefit of time or the lack of decent dancers, the sequence was included and it was extraordinary. In fact, all of the big dance numbers were high energy and very engaging. All of the performers on stage (from Curly all the way to the cameo performers) remarkably brought their roles to life. The director also was involved on stage... very fun. He surely had a lot of help from his production team. I have also worked with the vocal director and pit conductor in the past.

While there was a lot of good to put in the review, it was hard to put into a coherent article. Who wants to read a review containing the same adjectives over and over. I had to put in a bit of the history... which was easy for the show which kicked off the modern musical... as well as enough of the plot to engage anyone who might not know the show. Plus be kind to everyone involved. Finally... shortly after 1AM Friday morning (about the same amount of time it took for the entire show), I forwarded a copy. It only took a three editions of the paper to see the light of day. It could have stood a bit of editing to reflect the show dates. I just hope no one tries to attend a performance tonight.

So... anyone in the area who wants to see a great performance of the most classic of modern musicals... check out the remaining shows this weekend. Just forget how dated the material is. I do think there is an audience for these light-hearted shows. And as the banner on the website says: Professional Quality Theatre in Northwest Ohio. And another piece to add to my resume! Right up there with a little television performance.

The Singing Potter

Sunday night while watching the Tony Awards, Daniel Radcliffe was on stage, presenting some trophy (can't remember which one... sorry). Filming just wrapped on the finale to the Harry Potter film series and as can be expected, there was a sense of sadness over the cast. I would imagine that young adults especially who have worked together side by side for half their lives would find it difficult to separate themselves.

The first part of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* hits theatres November 19th. The finale hits mutiplexes July 15, 2011.

Radcliffe is no stranger to the stage. Just over a year ago, he was on Broadway in a tale about a boy and his horse. As he was introduced Sunday night, it was announced that he would be appearing on stage in a revival of [*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*](#). When I heard it, I thought it was a joke and dismissed it totally. Today, I read that he has indeed been cast in a new production of a 1961 musical that was last revived in 1995 when Matthew Broderick starred as J. Pierrepont Finch. This made me question how soon is too soon to revive a show. Or perhaps, it is a red herring much like the web-slinger's much delayed debut.

I think it would be interesting to see if the wizard can sing and dance.

Something Was Missing

Adaptations from original sources always leave things on the “cutting room floor.” I just read a very fascinating article about the transformation of [South Pacific](#) (click the link to the article) from a James Michener novel to the original Broadway production to the classic movie to the current revival on the Great White Way and touring around the country.

More historical background from the first performances of the ground-breaking, Pulitzer prize winning classic came to light.

- On April 17, 1949, ten days after the show's opening, a boat carrying 120 American casualties of war arrived in Honolulu. Casualties of the Theatre in the Pacific.
- There was a lot more that Rodgers and Hammerstein wanted in the show dealing with race relations. “You’ve Got to be Carefully Taught” was just the tip of the iceberg. The central story of Emille de Becque somehow made it into the show. But there was a lot more.
- Like many musicals turned movies, many things were dramatically altered from the original. The director of the 7 Tony Award winning revival, Bartlett Sher, called the 1958 cinematic effort “no use” when developing the return to the stage. Which just adds to my belief that most of the time, somethings are better left ON stage. Beautiful to look at, perhaps, but with a loss to its central meaning.

How fitting that I came across the article as we stop to reflect on the millions who have made the ultimate sacrifice in preserving the freedoms we all sometimes take for granted.

Hopefully, one day, the revival of this musical masterpiece makes it way to our neck of the woods. Or... better yet... just another great show with a scene-stealing character role or a central male lead I wouldn't mind tackling.

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)
- Fieryo (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:



The Arts Are Alive!

I am pleased to relate that [EHS'](#) production of *Your A Good Man, Charlie Brown* was a hit. Several people have asked me if I was able to attend last weekend... regrettably I was not.

Apparently, it went very well. "Charlie Brown's" mother was in today and she related that she was a bit apprehensive until her son got through his first song. She did not know he could sing. That comment took me back. Prior to my duet of "Summer Nights" my junior year in high school, few people knew what kind of voice I had. When auditioning for the bit, Emily herself was taken aback!

However, I am also pleased that the director is already making plans for next year's musical! **HOORAY!** It is so neat that we finally once again have a music teacher who is committed to not only building the band and choral programs but also reinstating something that has been lost at the school of a good many years! Now only if the administration can manage to hold on to her! Seems that the last few years the school had an array of music educators who have been poor influences.

Bravo to Ms. Reardon and to the young adults who have begun the work of making the arts once again flourish!

Back At EHS

The return of the high school musical. It has been years and long over due! I'm sure there is some talent still in the school. I remember the days when the musical was one of the highlights of the school year! I may only vaguely remember seeing *The Wizard of Oz* back in the late 70s but I don't think I have missed either being an audience member, in the cast, or helping in other regards of all the others. I remember *Carousel* (my favorite Rodgers and Hammerstein show), *Music Man*, *Finian's Rainbow*, and many others.

March 18th-20th, my alma mater will once again present *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. I remember the last time the school performed it. My two oldest brothers were in the chorus. For the new staging, there will be a nostalgic feel. Schroeder's piano is being donated by the person who built it and had the role 25 years ago! The mother of the actor and I reminisced the other day at the store. Her daughter played Peppermint Patty. Maybe would have been nice to have a show never done before at the school but at least the interest is there for the future.

DON'T READ THE POST...

unless you have seen WCCT's extremely fun-filled production of *Little Shop... Little Shop of Horrors*. Megan and I checked it out tonight since I figured a Thursday night showing would need more help filling the seats than a Friday night. I must say that it was very well done. The set took you to Skid Row, U.S.A. full of bums and trash laden streets. Someone mentioned that the first weekend shows were a bit loud in the musicians area, but I did not notice it. The man with the fingers and the gal with the sticks must have toned down a bit?

The entire cast was great, but I will pick on a few remarkable standout performances. I have to say that Travis **is** Seymour. He had the bumbling, nerdy, inept orphan turned flower shop attendant down to an art. So many great scenes that it would take an entire post to detail it all. **SUPERB PERFORMANCE**, my friend! I can't wait to work with you again. If it were in my power, you would be the Willie Award winner!

I must say that I was extremely taken aback by Shelley's performance of Audrey. She usually has this great, big, powerful voice that truly commands the stage. This time, she backed off the power to give a touching, sincere persona to the meek, "semi-sadist" dating character.

Finally, the trio of Mary, Amber, and **PEGGY!** They very nearly stole the show and for good reason... they were incredible. I'm running a bit long here, so I will comment on the young lady whom I have known since the 5th grade on her stage debut. I couldn't be prouder! Where were you !& years ago in high school?! For her first time on stage, Peggy had to deal with some truly powerhouse stage veterans but she held her own brilliantly. I was asked to tell her if I could hear her. Going against my trained experience, I tried to hone in on her voice during the trio numbers and yes, I could hear you. More

importantly, the mixing of the three voices was great! The attitude was dead on. During the scene changes, the three divas kept things lively by ad libbing which brought some chuckles from the audience.

So.. if you are in the area this weekend, take a few hours down on Skid Row. You will be in for a treat!

A Sequel to Broadway's Longest Running Musical

A few months ago, a fellow [tangenteer](#) posted about the upcoming continuation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*, a musical that first hit the London stage 23 years ago... today on October 9, 1986...WOW! Since then, it has been translated into 15 languages, seen in over 25 different countries by over 100 million people, and has won over 50 major theatrical awards worldwide... we will just mention the movie version in passing. Yesterday, the Lord held a press conference in which he announced (once again) that *Love Never Dies* will be given its West End premiere on March 9, 2010 and in New York in November 2010. What happened to the triple opening New Year's Eve gala of 2009? He began working on a story 15 years ago coming up short. I guess it takes years to come up with a show when you haven't produced anything even remotely original and successful (did anyone see *Woman in White*? I didn't either and apparently no one else did either).

From what I gather the plot will find the characters (Raoul, Christine, and the Phantom, himself) at Coney Island ten years following the events in *Phantom*. The Phantom has traveled to

America and is billed as the top draw at the amusement park while still pining for his true love. Christine accepts the invitation of an impresario to perform in the States. Not much there. Time will tell if love will never die or if it will be buried like all of the most recent Lloyd Webber works.

But you can check out the press release, listen to the overture of the new show, as well as a new Phantom song ("Til I Hear You Sing"...it's no "Music of the Night") by visiting the official [website](#). I wonder... if a show has an official site, does this mean that it is going to be produced or is it just another red herring?

P.S. If any of my readers are in or around the London area or plan to visit, there is already a site which is offering [travel packages](#) for the show. Maybe that is another sure sign.