

# Morning Guilty Pleasure

This morning, I was able to catch most of *Regis and Kelly* (the ONLY celebrity focused morning show I enjoy watching). As I made mention of earlier, John Stamos is now in previews for *Bye, Bye Birdie* for its return to the Broadway stage since the debut 50 years ago (WOW!). Mr. Stamos will be playing the lead part of Albert Peterson. Dick Van Dyke originated the role of Conrad Birdie's manager in the original production as well as the original movie. The cinematic experience does not do the stage version justice at all. Not sure why but like many musicals it is much better to have that live, theatrical experience. I honestly cannot think of many musicals that have translated better or at least as enjoyably on the screen. I guess I would say *The Sound of Music* only because it has been so ingrained into pop culture as a movie that many forget or don't realize that it was Rodgers and Hammerstein's theatrical swan song. That reason and the puppet show version of "The Lonely Goatherd" is my favorite part of the movie and IS NOT in the stage version.

Ok... back to my original topic. During the interview, Reege made mention of the fact that Ann-Margrock (err.. Margret) played the young girl, Kim MacAfee in the movie. Shortly after the movie was filmed, Ms. Margret would be Presley's leading lady in my mother's favorite Elvis movie, *Viva Las Vegas*. However, Mom was not aware that she was in the cast of *Birdie*.

Here's a few more tidbits: one of our fellow [tangenteers](#) has played the role of pop singing idol/draftee Conrad Birdie. I assisted in the directing of my high school alma mater's production a few years ago. AND there was a veery short lived sequel (4 performances) entitled [Bring Back Birdie](#) which was set twenty years following the events of the original. Twenty years is quite a LONG time to wait to attempt a comeback.

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# Some Added Spring In His Step

Sometime ago, I blogged about the famous and infamous celebrities who have gone through the seemingly revolving casting door of the musical [Chicago](#). Well, you can add one more: sleaze television king Jerry Springer. This month, the lawyer-turned Cincinnati mayor-turned talk show host-turned Dancing with the Stars (yes?) contestant wrapped his six week stint on the London West End as ethically elastic lawyer Billy Flynn. I suppose the acting would not be a far stretch from his days as a real lawyer and questionable politician. He is well known for his flamboyant, quick talking, flim flam personality. However, singing? Never had the pleasure of hearing him so I can't judge (let me see if he has made the you tube rounds). Here he is performing ["All I Care About"](#) at a performance of selected songs at a Leicester Square park. You just have to forward past the opening "All That Jazz." Personally, I would rather watch the first number but that is not what this post is about.

Well at least he and David Hasselhoff have something else in common. Jer-eee was the host of America's Got Talent and the Hoff is one of the judges. And as some will recall, the Burger King aficionado played the roles of Jekyll and Hyde on Broadway. Wonder if ol' Dave is going to put on the tux. Springer says that he is going to be joining the Broadway cast until he returns to the Windy City for the talk show. However, the producers of the New York show have no knowledge of this.

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# Wherever One Door Closes Another Is Sure to Open Soon

While at work tonight, my sister and cousin came into the store with some bad news. The director for Little Shop called the house to inform me that I was not cast in any role... apparently my attempt at a Jewish accent did not meet with the director's approval? Have to work on that... I would hate to think that he only one I am good as is one from Liswathistan ☹ . I will have to think about the offer to work backstage this time. It has happened previously and while it was fun, I really want to be on stage. I know that the Village Players are doing a murder/mystery soon. Another area theatre usually has a fall production... although the drive is a bit longer. As I have noted before, I have been on different stages in the area and have had great times on each of them. I dunno... is this wrong of me? I love to be a part of the theatrical experience in any way especially when great friends are involved (two of them are producing Little Shop), but I am definately an on stage person.

Another great supporter suggested I research a theatre even farther away in [Fort Wayne](#) where they are doing Joseph in the near future. I signed up to join their email list to be informed of audition dates and info. That would be a GREAT BIG WONDERFUL adventure. We shall see. Until then...

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## Another Night Of Horrors

Tonight was the second and final night of Little Shop auditions. Tonight, I did not travel from E-town alone. A

friend commented on my Facebook space that she would like to go and put her foot in the door of the world of community theatre. If you are frequent guest of my blog, you know that one of my 50 high school classmates has been cast in a B-horror movie. Peg told me that she would like to try auditioning for a live stage show. Never having been on film (aside from a certain television news broadcast a year or two ago), I could only say how much I adore the smell of the greasepaint and the roar of the crowd.

I thought Peg did fine her first time out. She just lacks the confidence that only repeated auditions and experience will bring. She has a lovely voice but just needs to project her voice more so that it can be heard. When she read scenes from the script, I could see a bit of the 'tude necessary for one of the trio of Skid Row gals come through.

Another newbie (well... someone who was not available to attend yesterday's round) continued to amaze me. Chris may have been running on fumes but his excerpt of "Love Changes Everything" was brilliant. He asked me to keep him awake if we were ever called down to read together... never happened. Dunno... too much talent to put on stage at once? His plant voice was tremendous and brought a tear to my eye from laughter. I did catch him dozing in his seat a time or two, but his stage presence still rocks!

I once again read mainly for Mushnik, a bit for Orin, and once for the voice of the plant, Audrey II. I would be happy with either of the roles. However, I think the part of the florist would be a hoot. I was tempted to ask to read for Seymour but I thought why when I had already read for two of the supporting roles who have ample opportunity to shine. I'm just not sure that I could do justice to the plant. A bit of off the wall reading was asked of the men when we were asked to read a few lines as women. Weird, to say the least.

Well, we were informed that we would learn of our sentencing

tomorrow. I have waited longer than that to find out the results of show casting (one I will not mention). So... good luck to all and once again... great job, Peg. Hope to see you again!

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## Little Shop Of Which?

Tonight began auditions for WCCTs newest venture: *Little Shop of Horrors*. I knew of at least two others who would be joining me. [Mare](#) and Travis from my stint with the Village Players in *Meet Me in St. Louis*. However, I began to wonder if they were going to show as Mary promised that they would be early. Early turned out to be about 7.05 PM. There was a wide range of talent... some young high schoolers to twenty somethings to the older set (30ish).

To break the ice, we all went around and introduced ourselves (including the director and asst. director). We then sang our selected audition piece. SOMEONE so kindly volunteered me to go second. So, I handed my excerpt to piano man/producer. I thought I did well. Honestly, there were a few who I could barely hear singing. Apprehension, nerves, but there were some who barely opened heir mouths. Some sang with the MIDI track from the show provided by the director. Only two others bothered to bring music that was not "canned." I have to mention Tim who sang something called "Ladies Choice" (I have no idea where the song comes from), but the performer was flamboyant to say the least. So much so, that he was asked to perform the song again. This time with his hands in his pockets and not moving so much across the stage.

The role of Seymour (after night one of tryouts) seems to be down to two. If it were up to me, Travis would have had it

from the start. In my eyes, the poor sap should have a whiney voice, totally lacking from self-confidence, and shy. Travis not only had the voice, but the mannerisms. He projected well while maintaining the meek, humble character.

As expected, Mary totally rocked as one of the pivotal doo-wop girls. Her stage presence and "ghetto tude" was exceptional. Until the director asked the girls on stage to develop a Spanish(?) accent. Thankfully, that request was quickly abolished.

We also had a lot of readings done for Orin Scrivello, D.D.S. Tim once again brought some chuckles from the audience. I attempted to be sly, slippery, and sadistic, as I led Seymour to the chair ("Say, AHHHHH"). Squirmy put a southern twang into his performance. I'm just not sure that I could do justice to the dentist's songs.

Only two were asked to read for the voice of Audrey II. Tim put his own spin on the voice. There was a young high schooler who seemed to have the voice. For his audition piece, he sang with the vocal track for "Feed Me/You Can Do It."

I was asked to read a segment of Mr. Mushnik's lines. After my first reading, I was told to be more Jewish. After my second and third, I heard no comments. Maybe I will rewatch some of Vincent Gardenia in the movie version before going back tomorrow night. No one else was asked to read the role... no one else old enough, apparently. Guess I am too old for Seymour... did not get asked to read for the role. But, I think Mushnik would be a fun challenge... he gets eaten, anyway.

I don't remember too many reading the role of Audrey. Dunno, maybe tomorrow night.

So... if anyone else is interested, round two tomorrow night at 7.

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# Make Way For Ducklings

(Wait! I think there is an actual children's book of that actual title). Tonight, a good friend and I attended the newest offering of the community theatre... BOY it seems like forever since I have been on stage... hopefully, that will change in a week or so. Before the show, we decided to try the newest rave among fellow tangenteers... The Four Seasons... a nice, cosy restaurant. Some day, I will be brave and try some Mediterranean cuisine, but tonight I had lasagne which was quite good and extremely filling. I was told that I was a bad influence as my companion skipped on the wrap she was going to get and decided upon fettucini alfredo instead. The prices were quite reasonable and the food was quite excellent. Sounds like this may become a new pre-show gathering place.

*HONK!* was extremely adorable. Everyone knows the tale of The Ugly Duckling about the outcast duckling who grows into a beautiful swan, but this musical expands the tale introducing a gaggle of other animals and relates the beautiful story of the lengths a mother will go to show not only her son but those around her that it is not what is on the outside but what is inside that counts.

I will have to say that my favorite part of the show was a Busby Berkeley-inspired song and dance production number led by a bullfrog. I also loved the wiley old cat. Two characters I would have had fun portraying, but I was involved with another musical at the time of auditions.

I also ran into a gentleman who also tried out for Joseph last weekend. He informed me that he auditioned for the role of "Geriatric Joseph." I, for one, am glad that I did not list the title role on my audition sheet because one of the

requirements is the need to be comfortable on stage with out a shirt. I may have the vocal chops, but I'm not quite to the point at which I am ready to be on stage bare chested. I guess I need to work on that.

After the show, the three of us (we pick up a stowaway) headed back to what we were promised was a party at a local tavern, but when we arrived, it was closed so we headed to Taco Bell for a drink. A great night of fun theatre.

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## Where You Can Eat And Get Gas Or Get Gas And Eat

Tonight, a group of self-anointed "cougars," Megan, and I (the only male) traveled to Findlay to see a production of [\*Pump Boys and Dinettes\*](#). Before our hour and a half trek began, piling into the minivan was almost worth a few dollars to see itself. I would have gladly given up my front seat but to see the ladies crawling over each other to get a seat was priceless. We drove through quite a bit of rain... so much for the "Slight chance of evening showers."

For dinner, we decided on a place called The Gathering that was right beside The Tavern in the Inn (I almost thought I was back in NYC at Tavern on the Green). I decided on the restaurants signature ribs. Thank goodness, I decided on the Piglet order instead of the full-rack Oinker platter. I barely finished the half-rack. Guess I was not as hungry as I was when I tackled the full-pound sirloin burger.

This show itself was billed as "a country music review." However, while most of the music had a country feel, I did notice a few pieces that had a rock sound from the 50s-60s.

The music was ALL ORIGINAL. Since the show was a review, the plot was totally secondary and seemed to be spliced together from old bits of Hee Haw corn. The small cast included sisters Rhetta and Prudie Cupp who run and operate the Double Cupp Diner and the three main attendants at the garage/filling station next door. The leader of the Pump Boys, Jim, seemed to be the MC of the evening and introduced the ladies man, Jackson and the more suspicious, L.M. The pit was included on stage and the two guitar players, pianist, and drummer each seemed to have personalities of their own without saying a word. I would say my favorite selection was L.M.'s recollection of a week he spent while attending the concert of a certain buxom blonde country legend.

The set really made you think you were in a small backwater town in Carolina where the men far outnumber the ladies (inbreeding). Where beer is home brewed as well as the 'shine and a cow eats the field of marijuana (be sure to have that milk tested).

After the show, Megan and I were encouraged to check out the green room in the basement. Although the ceiling was a bit low (thank you Megan for pointing that out as I hit my head more than once), I must say that I found myself thinking of making a switch. There was furniture galore (comfortable furniture), a large television which served as a monitor showing the action on stage (very nice to have), as well as cast pictures from previous shows. As the Fort Findlay Playhouse is also constructed inside a hollowed out church, it made me wonder how many theatres have been converted from places of worship.

On another note, it seemed that the [Fort Findlay Players](#) stole our theme idea for a season (or more members of their board were more receptive to the suggestions). Next year, the theatre is doing a Salute to Hollywood by presenting a series of plays that were also movies. Shows like *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *House of Frankenstein*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *The*

*Wizard of Oz* (the version based on the 1939 classic film), and *The Odd Couple* are on the season. See... it is possible.

*Pump Boys and Dinettes* was just a fun bit of escapist fun that just flew by. The vocal talent was extraordinary and the choreography was simple yet energetic. I could see myself doing it. That again is saying A LOT.

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## Sometimes I Amaze Even Myself

Once again my reputation has followed me. I walked uptown this afternoon to deposit three checks (ok... deposit two and cash my State Refund). At the bank, I had the pleasure of meeting the new, quite personable manager. I was immediately impressed. First, he identified me as the "guy from the grocery store." So, I formally introduced myself. He then began his spiel to see if I knew how to get the store to switch banks. I told him it was not me... he would probably have to go to the big guy himself (Good luck with that). I know the manager would be of no help. That put me off a bit as I am not that high on the feeding chain, but after I was totally amazed.

He then mentioned that he has seen me in the paper (been a while) and on stage many times and asked what was coming up. Well... next weekend I have an audition for the 10th Anniversary of an area theatre's production of *Joseph*... His daughter is also planning to try out. I asked if she had been to the theatre's website where she could download an audition sheet as well as follow a link to some MIDI files of the songs from the show. I have been going over "Benjamin Calypso" and other songs since discovering the link.

This summer also marks the 10 year anniversary of my foray

into community theatre. I auditioned for [FCF](#)'s first summer show but did not get a part. Happily, I did not let this deter my efforts (a LOT of HELP from a certain teacher who is now helping from above did not hurt either). The following summer, I tried out for a [neighboring production](#) of *Joseph* and got my first role in a non-school show... and a monster was born. The first few years, I tried out for summer shows only. The manager of my FPOE was not too keen on even that much rearranging of my schedule. But the fabulous person in charge of the front end pleaded my case. And the rest I will elaborate on later. Always keep them wanting more (where have I heard that before).

But I will once again be auditioning for one of my favorite ALW shows. Now if only the rights had not been taken away for the other (a toss up between *Cats* and *Aspects of Love* ... WOW... so not).

[poll id="18"]

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## Fridays Are Great

Not only because it was Good Friday, either. I did join the choir yesterday for services at noon. It was interesting because our priest skipped all over the place, leading many to believe that we were going to skip over the reading of Christ's Passion all together. Actually, one of my favorite moments of mass every year. Resembling a play, with readers assuming various roles in the passion, the priest serving as Jesus and the congregation serving as the chorus of people sending Christ to his crucifixion. However, Father Steve eventually got back on track and continued onward. Someday, I would love to suggest that the choir (or soloist... never heard

a choir version) sing “I Only Want to Say” from JCS. The meaning of the song is found within the Bible if not the exact words. Every year, I find myself reflecting on the sentiment. Christ praying to His Father in the garden questioning whether or not He will actually be able to do “His will” moments before he is handed over.

I just learned that an EHS alum is part of the ensemble in a semi-professional production of Superstar at the [Croswell Opera House](#) in Adrian, Michigan that ends its run tonight. If only Cindy’s mother would have let me know sooner... Semi-professional since amateur rights are not available at this time ☐

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## The Plays The Thing

Our community theatre, in it’s infinite wisdom, has decided to limit the number of musicals to one per season. I suppose that I can see the need for this. A good, well-known musical is much more expensive to produce than a play. However, it has been pointed out time and again that musicals are the bread and butter of most theatres and if the right musical is chosen and performed well, they generally bring in more money than most plays. Most of the musicals I have either been involved with or heard about have done well (with one exception but the reasons for the financial loss were many).

The problem is... trying to find plays that will bring in audiences. It has been suggested that we attempt to focus on seasonal shows. In October, I cannot wait to be part of the all cast production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. In December, we are performing *Miracle on 34th Street*. Both shows would appeal to the seasons.

For next season, we already have the musical locked in. *Taffetas* is going to be done in October 2010. I suggested doing another Christmas show like *A Christmas Story* (yes the movie has been turned into a stage play that I think would be a riot to perform). There are also any number of versions of Dickens' perennial favorite, *A Christmas Carol*. I also mentioned via email a suggestion given to me for future October shows: *Dracula*. Are there any other shows that would fit into other seasons? A good romantic comedy for February. Something like *Honk!* for future spring shows?

Or another possibility, our theatre has within it at least two people who have the fantastic knack of playwriting. Many times, these are given spots entitled "independent projects." I think that if someone has a piece ready for performance it should be included as part of the season.

So, if any of my readers hiding in the shadows have any suggestions, please come out and suggest them. I still think that it would not hurt to do *Romeo and Juliet*. I know most people cringe at the idea of bringing Shakespeare to a small stage, but I say why not take a chance?