

Final Miraculous Thoughts

To say that the weekend of *Miracle on 34th Street* was great is putting it mildly. I am so proud to have been part of this wonderful cast of on-stage and off characters. Several newcomers who have never before been in a show, some who have not been on for years, and the veterans who just seem to come back for more ALL made it stupendous... well, judging from the great numbers and reviews from the audience. There were several performers I have worked with previously whom I consider it a delight to work with. Others that I have watched from being in audiences and have wanted to work with or have heard good things about. And some of the most adorable kids starting out (when they are on stage... off-stage in the basement could get a bit hairy). But overall, another worthwhile venture.

I always find myself totally grateful yet humbled by all the comments especially when it is directed to my own performance. So hard to define what that feeling is but always remember to take it all in stride and acknowledge that it is a total group effort. Especially for this show with a few of the casted performers decided to not show up during the rehearsal process after they had been called and said that "Yes, I'll be there. I'm still in it!" Thank Heaven for our director of many hats who stepped into at least three cameo roles.

Several on-stage and off memorable moments. One of my favorites occurred opening night when "Duncan" made his appearance as a witness during Kris Kringle's sanity hearing. The reindeer keeper walked over to the witness box, took off his hat, and off came his wig! I also had fun during the courtroom scenes BEFORE Sawyer was fired!

Thanks Carmen, Bruce (the Totally maniacal and vicious Kringle), Harriet and Carol (had a ball during the courtroom scenes before Sawyer was fired), Bobbi Jo, Terina and Natalie,

Travis, Michael, John (I can't believe he fired me), Dusty, Bill, Carla, Beth (who did not flash me THIS show... LOL), Anna, Stefanie, Kate, Sydney, MacKenzie, Grace, Riley, Julia, Racer, MaGuire, Terri Lynn, AND MARY. Still not so sure about the karaoke celebration Saturday night/VERY early Sunday morning but it was.... Interesting.



Sawyer learning from Mrs. Walker about Macy's new Santa Claus. I had a ball working with Terina and the entire cast!



Sawyer asking the "dangerously deranged" Kris Kringle a simple mathematics problem. Bruce was an exceptional Santa!



A little eye twirl goes a long way. With the vicious maniac.



The entire cast. Thank you all for a wonderful experience!

A Break From The Chaos

So glad that I got to take in 2 SUPER shows last weekend amid all the hectic goings on otherwise. As I pointed out in my last post, *Nuncrackers* was hilarious, kudos once again to Mare for going the extra mile by stepping out on stage to fill the role of Sister Amnesia as well as serving as director!

Yesterday, I was lucky enough to take in my other home away from home's production of one of MY favorite holiday gems LIVE ON STAGE! I know that I have mentioned my family's extreme love of *A Christmas Story*. Each year to get a viewing in, I have to stay up after mass and catch one of the showings during TBS' 24-hour marathon while everyone else is all settled in for a long winter's nap. This year, Christmas Eve mass is even earlier so I should be able to catch the midnight show!

Seeing the show on stage ALMOST made up for that one viewing!

Things have been crazy around the house the last few weeks so I was not able (or did not take the time) to make reservations before all 6 performances were sold out. This has not happened for a scheduled WCCT show since the 1978 production of *Fiddler on the Roof*! I know of at least one NON-scheduled show that was a sell out, but I won't go there (something about a karaoke). In any case, my vocal coach who played Ralphie's mother made arrangements for me to attend. They had to turn 20 people away who had called the reservation line.

Almost everything from the movie was brought to wonderful life in front of our eyes. The tire changing episode, the rattle trap furnace battles, Randy's mummification with the arms that would not stay down, the "Fra-JEE-lay" leg lamp, the Bumpuses' dogs (unseen but heard), the "triple dog dare," and of course the "official Red Ryder, carbine action, two-hundred shot range model air rifle! With a compass in the stock and a thing which tells time." My only qualm was the absence of the original soundtrack as Ralphie and friends are being chased by

the notorious Scut Farcas. Everyone on stage perfectly captured the essence of the characters being portrayed from the adult Ralphie down to little Drew. But I have to make note of the two brilliant actresses. Tiff was her typical showstopping brilliant as Ms. Shields with her margin marking quill. Seriously, anytime she is on stage the audience is in store for a treat!

I had never before seen Kathrine on stage; however, she was extraordinary! Her total presence on stage was wondrous! Her facial mannerisms, her voice, each little quirk and nuance MADE Mrs. Parker a delight to see. Her chemistry with The Old Man was one of many highlights of the show!

Now here is a bit of some of my favorite scenes in the movie or the complete theatrical trailer which I have never before seen:

Sold Out Two Months Ahead

WOW! I learned at my weekly voice lesson that the local community theatre's production of *A Christmas Story* already has two dates sold out! Not sure if a show has had sold out dates two months ahead in this area, but this is the first I know of. K will be playing the role of Ralphie's mother and her little man will be playing a little boy... no lines but he is already being instructed to develop the character to give himself some business on stage.

Now that I am five months out from my weekend gig, I have begun to plow through my books to find new things (or old things that are worth digging out) to not let my list become a lesson in tedium. I dug out a favorite that I have never before been able to get because of range... (guess which part gave me fits). Two octave range from a low A-flat to a floating high A-flat. Poor K was commenting from the keyboard on the 5 flat key to the 4 (or is it 5) sharp key. I probably should also pick some unfamiliar pieces just to take me out of my comfort zone. I also visited an old friend that will be a part of the evening. I really do not want to add too much to the program but if it goes from 45 minutes to 120 minutes before February... NAH! No one wants to see me on stage **THAT** long ☐

Two To Go

Everything is falling nicely into place... of course, there are a few minor details to be worked out before Friday's opening,

but I would be even more surprised if there were not. I definitely have found a role that rivals even the visitor from another country in terms of ranking. It is so funny that fellow cast members who were at the audition site told me that I nailed the role of Henry F. Potter right then! Am I really that good at playing evil? There's that oxymoron again. I did get my ears lowered this afternoon. I don't think a man in the 1920s-40s would have long hair, particularly a gentleman of stature. I noticed that my goon, admittedly, was looking rather shaggy tonight as well (not to mention his attire). It is rather late in the game so there is really no chance of finding a replacement. I must say that good help is so hard to find!

There was a photographer taking shots for the paper tonight. She noticed my character and mentioned that if this kept up, I would become typecast. Why? Well... you will just have to come and see for yourself.

The Holiday Season Can Now Begin

I have seen *Miracle on 34th Street*... not the 1947 classic, not the made for TV redux, nor the most recent big screen treatment. Tonight, I treated my sister and her two little angels to a live production. I absolutely **LOVED IT!** The entire cast was magnificent... from the smallest child, to the briefest cameo, to the big guy himself. The set was a stroke of genius. The entire production flew by. Everything that makes the classic film such a treasure was in place along with a few added bits that were pure delights.

Since purchasing the tickets on-line Tuesday, I had been overwhelmed by shrieks of anticipation by a certain 6 and 4 year-old. Finally, the night arrived and I treated everyone to McDonald's before going to the theatre. A miracle in itself was that the girls actually were done eating BEFORE the time I said we had to head out.

During the show, Sydney was on my lap the whole time and was totally enthralled by the magic on stage. Alyssa, on the other hand, was asleep before intermission. After going down to the "confession" stand (as the 6 year old calls it), Sydney began to share her M&Ms with Megan and I. How cute was that? And on the other side of me, Alyssa was again sawing logs.

After the show in the reception line, I told the girls to go sit on Santa's lap but they wouldn't... until I apparently moved down the line. I didn't see it.. I saw some fans in the audience who asked why I was not on stage and I put in a plug for a little show coming up in a mere 5 days. **I CANNOT WAIT!!!!**

Once again... brilliant job one and all. You created the Christmas spirit in everyone in the audience and made us all believe. **BRAVO!** My favorite part as it is in the movie... I just love the little Dutch girl who hasn't a friend but sits on Santa's lap and they begin singing a song from her native land.

Tech Sunday

WAIT A MINUTE! Isn't this a week early?! We still have another full week and a few days before curtain. Weell... that may be but the Huber is always in a bind this time of year:

school programs, civic gatherings, etc. So, we must share the space with others. Mr. Potter would definitely find this situation downright despicable. But, I guess we will make nice. Yes, we did have the lights and mics going for the first time four our nearly 4 hour rehearsal... which was to be expected. However, it went rather well for the first time on stage, off book, all the way through with lights, sound, and set thrown in. I was pleasantly surprised how well I did with the lines. There was only one spot I really noticed where I forgot a line but the same is repeated only two lines later, so I will just pick it back up Thursday night.

Poor George... I'm not entirely sure that I would like to be in his shoes. All those lines. I have a great many, but.. OH, MY! In one of our scenes together, he asked me why I did not have my script. It was in the house being used for prompting.

I am also happy that I have been able to come up with my full costume... minus a hat... in my own personal wardrobe. I had to take my jacket to be cleaned, but that is to be done by Tuesday afternoon... good to go!

I must say that I think we have another heart-melting, scene-stealing little tyke on our hands. It's a good thing Mr. Potter and Zuzu do not share time on stage because I'm not sure I could keep the mean demeanor.

So... another 12 days before curtain. Just need to keep reading over my lines, getting my cues in order. I did get a new line tonight... added from the movie

Week The Third

Ok... former director and current fellow cast member, this is for you (I expect a comment, btw ☐) Tonight began the third week of rehearsals and there was A LOT GOING ON! We have posters to distribute and I grabbed enough to paste all over E-town. We were all informed that Hicks-TV (or is it HIX=TV?) is going to be by tomorrow night to film a piece on the show. My aforementioned former director/current fellow cast member mentioned that this was her least favorite part of her directorial debut? I thought my debut on the news was a blast. Even Travis said it was very humorous as I threw the interviewer for a whirl. Here is a [link](#), Beth... just for you (you can have something to watch as well as read). I must also commend our director in his continued efforts to step into multiple roles for missing cast members... male and female alike.

As for rehearsal, it is coming along quite nicely (which is subjective... I don't think nice is a good way to describe Mr. Potter). Apparently, my evilness is improving but he said I need to slow down a bit... which I have heard before. Well... as soon as my goon decides to show himself, it will be easier to make my entrances and exits. But even going through the scenes, I am developing even more ideas and with just under a month to go...

Oh, yes. On the way to my car following rehearsal, I was flashed by said cast member and she had her young son with her as well... SHAME ON YOU! I AM SHOCKED! ☐

Not So Evil... YET!

So... we are now in week two of rehearsals. Last night was exceptionally fun. We had our first injury and it wasn't even stage related. It seems that our director had a bit of a spill earlier in the day and had a humongous gash on his forehead. Someone made the crack that he should have dialed 9-1-1 and he could have answered his own call.

We rehearsed a few of Mr. Potter's scenes and while I tried my best to be good and evil, I was having a bit of difficulty. For one thing, I kept hearing someone humming the "Imperial March" (or Darth Vader's theme) from *The Empire Strikes Back*. No goon to lead me in so I improvised which did not help matters at all. So, while fun, I don't think we got a great deal accomplished.

After rehearsal, I went home and watched my new rental, the second X-Files big screen extravaganza entitled, [*I Want to Believe*](#). It was definitely the uncut director's edition because there were a few rather gruesome scenes that would have NEVER made it to movie screens rather long the television series. But, being a fan of Agents Mulder and Scully, I enjoyed it.

Back to the Bronx

After returning from being booed at rehearsal... second time we have read through and I'm already being booed... **I'M LOOOOOVIN' IT!!!!!!** I Returned to see the Yanks down 3-1 in the second and it did not get much better after. I'm pleased to say that they never gave in. That dratted combination of Lee-Utley killed us again. Mr. Utley tied Mr. October (Reggie Jackson...

even named a candy bar after him) for the most home runs in a single World Series with five... so far, **NO MORE FOR YOU!!!**

So tomorrow night, we go back to 'da Bronx for the magic game six. I have said for the past week or so that it would be six and **BACK TO THE NEW DIGS!**

Final: Yanks 6... Phillies 8.

Deliciously Evil

Today at our second rehearsal, we got to watch the original 1947 classic film starring Jimmy Stewart, Donna Reed, and Lionel Barrymore. I now wonder why *It's A Wonderful Life* has not been a holiday tradition along side the myriad versions of *A Christmas Carol* and other movies. I thought it was extraordinary for the first time. Primarily, Travis wanted us to watch and listen to line inflection and deliveries since many of the lines in the script are taken verbatim from the film, but I think watching Mr. Barrymore's performance will help even more in developing my take on Mr. Potter. Producer Mare asked if I could channel Drew's great-uncle. I thought the performance was stupendous and I can see why many in the cast have congratulated me on getting the role.

I also had time today to highlight my lines with the extremely cool erasable highlighters. Whatever genius at Crayola came up with these deserves millions. I highly recommend them to every actor.

And **ONE MORE WIN TO GO!** but I will not be so bold as to predict a five game series. But I will ask... how many HBPs does it take before it becomes intentional? In his first at bat, A-Rod was hit for the third time in two games. A warning

was immediately given to both pitchers. Coincidental? I realize that pitchers like to come inside to him but jeez...

Final score... Evil Empire 7... Defending Champs 4