

Putting It All Together

Well... with just a little over three weeks to go, I FINALLY tracked down a capable accompanist who is not going to bail on me. This morning, we met at the studio and it sounded great (even if my accompanist was doing little more than sight reading). While K did a fine job of playing for me, it allowed very little time for her to focus on what I was doing and what to critique. Happily, she had very little to comment on except for a few spots I KNEW could have been better.

Usually the first time hearing the full accompaniment for a piece (rather long... let me see... 11), makes me a bit apprehensive especially when I'm not sure of the pianist's ability. But as I have been taught over and over the best ones will follow you and BOY did he ever! I think the addition of the full accompaniment only enhanced many of the pieces. I can't wait to hear what the final product will produce!

"Songs I Have Learned" is going to be bookended by two (what I feel are) more inspirational pieces. A bunch of fun character-driven tunes (my favorite kinds) and some emotional ballads will comprise the remainder of the set that will be divided into two. Each of the songs hold a special place in my heart a lot of which I will share.

Yesterday at work, I was approached by a customer who had just come from the theatre's revival of *Escanaba in da Moonlight*.

She had heard in the intro to the show that I would be presenting a show on March 16th. I definitely will need to attend Saturday night's show (an extended night) to see if this was so... not that I had not planned to see it before, just haven't found an open date on my calendar. I was asked if I would be interesting in performing at a special ceremony commemorating the 100th anniversary of Clem (the Civil War statue that was injured a few years ago in the "microburst" that destroyed our village hall). The service is scheduled

for Memorial Day following the ceremony at the cemetery. I said I would be happy to and to keep me informed of the details.

Speaking of hometown events, the Boys' High School Basketball team has completed its regular season. **A PERFECT 20-0 record!!!** The first time in school history! I have not been to a game in many seasons and I do kind of miss them. Perhaps, I will be able to make one of the games on the tournament trail. We shall see.

Back To Baskerville

Ok... let's go back to the show I have been cast in. Just to remind everyone where I am. I have probably 95% of my lines memorized for *The Hound of the Baskervilles* **BUT (as most who know me well know)** line memorization is no where near enough for me. Acting is much more reaction to what is happening around you. As the caretaker of Baskerville Hall, it is Barrymore's responsibility to ensure that the riff-raff does not overtake the home which he has so lovingly overlooked for generations.

Tonight, we ran Act I two times. I was given a line which may or may not become mine. Poor Eliza has only one line the entire act, so I was asked to read it since it could very well be Barrymore's line as well. We'll see if Mrs. Barrymore would like to retain her line.

After my first moments onstage, [Stapleton](#) complimented me on my facial and physical characterization. "You have the butler role down very well."

I also have a very important bit prior to the finale of Act I.

I seriously doubt that the bit I have done since the beginning will be the finished product. (Bloopers reel of the DVD?) It leaves the [director](#) shaking her head every rehearsal. "You are such a DORK!" I like to think of myself as eccentric. "Dork" is such a demeaning term.

A Buckeye In Wolverine Land

On to another great post! Thursday afternoon was my first voice lesson in about two and a half years. I am pleased to say I am very ecstatic about the next coming months! We began with a review (for me) about breathing, support, the diaphragm, the mask, and other technical terms that we quickly glossed over. Then, we determined that I have an octave and a half range with the same above that in falsetto which totally surprised the both of us. Then, it was time to get down to business... FUN TIMES!

I decided that "Younger Than Springtime" would be good to warm up on. It would have been if the copy I had was complete. We got to the last page and discovered that there is something missing. So I dig and find the book with the song... only to discover that it was in a lower key! But manageable... only slightly lower. But I prefer the higher range. I like to shoot for my POWER notes, but those would come later.

Next, I dug out "This is the Moment." Kathrine is unfamiliar with *Jekyll and Hyde*?! Blasphemy! Just don't listen to the Hoff's version. Then, we went to "If I Can't Love Her" from the stage version of *Beauty and the Beast*. The big ballad which closes Act I. The only suggestion she had for both pieces is to find the soft moments in both pieces. They are both powerful songs but powerful is not always meant for

volume.. Build up to the big moment! Then you will have them eating out of your hand. Sounds like homework. But she said that with a slight polishing they are already prime for performance. I wanted to do the Beast's number previously; however, the gig I wanted to sing it for was limited to musicals of the past decade. So, I sang "Under the Sea."

It is a good thing I was introduced to *Miss Saigon* earlier in the week via youtube. My new coach had me read (sight reading... YUCK!) two duets from the show with her. Not the character driven pieces I had hoped for but those will come in time. It has been advised that I check out both the Engineer and Thuy (although Vietnamese I am not but...). Kathrine mentioned that we should sign up for one of the weekend gigs starting up again in the fall. I am totally against that idea ☐ HAHHAHA! Just need to get some more cool character pieces in with the big dramatic ones. Several I can think of easily... maybe go dig an old fossil of 18 years ago. Go in there and blow everyone's minds. Of course, provided that anyone would actually come and see me?! I'm sure I could get at least 3 people there... and that is a crowd.

Who knows what the next few months will bring? I just know that the next musical on a nearby stage is not my cup of tea.

I better stop with those two songs. When I do perform, I don't want to spoil it all for those three in the audience ☐ Two big, powerful ballads now for a few duets and at least three character pieces.

As I was pulling out my checkbook, my new coach sneered at the picture of the Script Ohio on my first check. "Since it is money, I guess I can accept it." Oh, we're going to get along REALLY well. At least she is not a BoSox fan... I hope.

The Sun WILL Come OUT!

I have it on good authority that tomorrow will be a beautiful day. I just don't listen to the weatherman! It wouldn't rain on my parade! I got to sit in with the Bryan City Band at rehearsal (the director found me a suitable tuba, thank you!) and conduct my piece. He asked me before rehearsal began how I was going to start. Holding the tuba, I held one hand up and started going one, two... down, up (down beat is one, up beat is two). But how was I going to set the tempo for the band to follow? Get it in your head, give a little suggestive beat to the ensemble and BRING IT!

A few of the selections were familiar. Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* is a piece I remember ALL TOO WELL from high school and it was no easier tonight than 18 years ago. There was medley of music from the 60s. A lesser known (to me, anyway) J.P. Sousa march called *Fairest of the Fair*. And a variety of others.

My moment had finally arrived. As I made my way from the back of the band to the podium, I was given an impromptu introduction. I took my place behind the conductor's stand with the baton. I gave the tempo, gave the down beat, and.... nothing. I forgot to BRING IT! Try again. It worked! It was such a thrill. WHAT A RUSH! You darn well bet ya that I will not fail to bring it tomorrow night. Just keep the beat alive.

Well... let's hope I get some friends, [WCCT](#) fans, [BCB](#) fans, AND FAMILY! there tomorrow night. But, once again, it is Jubilee week on the square so come early and bring your chair/blanket to sit on!

Miracles Are All Around

Sorry for the gaps between posts but really hard to find time between working at 6AM Monday morning. Getting to bed at 3AM Tuesday morning. Reading, rereading, typing, retyping, running lines with my sister, rehearsal and everything else. After Monday night's practice I was not sure what I had gotten myself into. But after some kicking and screaming (mentally) I think we are ready. Monday night was just a BAD practice as the few people who were there in the audience to take pictures, etc could tell you. I have NEVER been in a show that was in such a bad way that soon to performance. So... I was up until 3 o' clock going over my lines until I was ready to explode. Then, I got up Tuesday morning and had my sister run them with me.

Last night's rehearsal was a noticeable difference. Not without the occasional missed line but no one shouted "LINE!" and we made it to the end. After rehearsal, Beth and I went to [Mary's](#), hung out, ate, and ran lines again. This morning, I ran lines again. Do you think I may be overdoing? Maybe it is just the new experience and I'm trying tooooo hard because I KNOW the lines. I just need to RELAX!! Remember why I am up on that stage and it is not because of one line (although...HAHA, Beth!)

So after getting off work at 5, I will head over. Look over the script again and be miraculous!

One Week To Go

After tonight's rehearsal, I am even more excited. There are some issues to be ironed out but what show doesn't all the way

to opening. Mary send me a text during rehearsal commenting on one of the aspects of the show. Something that is very noticeable but I think is essential and makes it even more challenging, but I did agree. Even more I think I NEEDED to be in this show to see how far I could push myself.

One of the issues was staging. The director specifically pointed me out and I could not have agreed more! In one scene, I was not sitting how I needed to be to interact with "Eve." It will be remedied. Madame Director commented on my facial and body expressions. Seriously, do they stand out THAT MUCH!

Bring... it... on.

And the Yanks finally came home and won a game after the near sweep by the team from Motown.

Scary But Exciting

I don't know if it's because this is the most dramatic show I've ever been part of, the smallest cast, or a combination of the two but I'm really starting to feel a bit of pressure. I keep going through the script and I'm doing fine (just a few beats I'm having trouble with)... I dunno. Of course, we did just get on stage. I guess I need to take my "teenage daughter's" advice and relax! Don't let the pressure overwhelm me and above all HAVE FUN! This **IS** what I love to do!

We had a bit of tech tonight: lights and sound from Trav. Flashing lights.. HAHA! One day I'm going to get lurkers to comment even ones who have told me have tried but don't get their comments posted. Not because I haven't been checking

for those in moderation.

There is a lot to enjoy about [Miracles](#) as I thought there would be and it will be fantastic! They don't call it hell week for nothing! The cast is fun (not forgetting the director now) and "Kate" told me that she is having a ball working with me once again. A week and a day (oops, make that a week) to curtain.

A Gold Star For Me

So the last two nights have been dedicated to walking through [Miracles](#). We were warned that we would be "using book as little as possible." However, it was more of a see how much we know with less than 3 weeks to go! It is so difficult to feel comfortable until we get on the stage. The VPs do not get the stage until 2 weeks prior to curtain... probably the one thing I do not enjoy with the group. However, I am really pleased with the amount of memorizing I have been able to do thus far. I surprised myself. Still some work to be done there but I was pleased.

Many of the dramatic beats are coming along nicely as well. Even I can't believe where they are at this point! Imagine where they will be in a few weeks. I'm really going to surprise a lot of people... myself included. I got a gold star Monday night and heard some "WOW"s from the director tonight. Even a "Well done, Mr. Shaf."

I must say that this is my most emotionally draining stage experience to date. I will definitely be ready for a lighter show very soon. But I am lovin' the challenge of the drama. I wonder if the countdown widget is back! Time to add one.

But It WAS A Productive Rehearsal!

The last two rehearsals have been dedicated to blocking the entire show... preliminary blocking anyway. You just know that it is going to change, particularly when we get our two weeks (of rehearsal) time on the stage. But even to get that little idea in your head as to what you will be doing on stage is a big help. It was like the blind leading the blind but when aren't first blockings like that. We did get to see "Eve's" development of her big moment and the rest of us think she is off to a good start!

I am pleased with where I am at this point! The memorization is coming. Although, I do find myself running over "Kate's" lines at times which at times seems appropriate since most of our moments end dramatically. However, I will focus a bit more on the cue lines.

One of the highlights last night did not involve any blocking or scripts. In the middle of a scene, we heard the thrilling refrain of John Williams' "Superman March." I should have ignored it and kept the others guessing. I was as surprised as them because I am usually careful to turn the cell phone off at inopportune times. I did silence it after I read the text. I did get HOMEWORK! I'm to find my recording of the instrumental "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" which is an important part of the show. It is in my itunes library. I wonder if there is a way to send it to Beth via email. I'll see.

All in all.. a successful rehearsal with less than [4 weeks to go](#)?!

Now Why Couldn't We Have Taped This?

tonight, the cast had a brush up rehearsal. Necessary when you have a two weekend run to keep it fresh in our minds so it doesn't become stale. Well... it may not have become stale, but it was far from sane! It was just a fun, goofy time something that could have definitely made the gag reel of the DVD. No sets, no curtains, bare stage, and a cast full of clowns. Mr. Potter somehow became acquainted with some tinsel while getting himself from place to place *sans* Goon. George couldn't keep a straight face while being raked over the coals. Clarence and Potter continuing their quest for world domination in the sequel... who said the angel gets his wings? What a Wonderful time! **Bring on the final weekend!** But don't let it end too soon.