

Off The Book & It Feels Soooo Fine

YAHOO!!! I took the plunge and ditched the script for the entire rehearsal. As a wise scientist once stated: "Once you set your mind to it, you can accomplish anything." I will not say that I was perfect but I felt good after the evening was complete. So fun and ultimately rewarding... now I can begin the tweaking of my character. We also attempted to run the show using the lights: extensive blackouts, many light tricks and sound effects that will definitely need to be worked out during the next three weeks. Hopefully, our tech crew will arrive soon to get all of their cues. The entire cast was fumbling around in the dark on numerous occasions tonight but no one was seriously injured... yet. I even got to provide a word following the run through. As I have stated previously, this show is much more than an audience-participatory murder-mystery, I think it closely rivals some of the best melodramas out there. I mentioned that most of the characters have lines that can be delivered as asides to the audience. That was one of my few complaints with the last melodrama I saw staged... there were asides but the director chose not to have them blatantly directed to the audience which limited the amount of booing and cat-calling.

This new internet is crazy cool. So much faster than the old Verizon. Just sitting here makes me feel like a kid in a candy store. Three weeks to go and our rehearsal schedule has changed so that we now have practices every night except Saturday. Well... if they are needed (and I think they are, there is just so much to work out technically as well as theatrically).

17 Days 5 1/2 Hours And Counting...

and still actors still have their scripts on stage! Ok... so I'm one of them but it is more of a crutch than anything else. Besides, as I said there are still 17 days until the curtain goes up and the "NO BOOK" deadline is set for Friday. I think tonight I will go completely off book. I don't need it! There are just a few of those incidental phrases that throw me off every time during the rehearsal process.

This is kind of a different role for me. One reason being, I have the opening line of the show. Nothing can start until I say so! I can hold the audience, my fellow thespians, the directors, everyone in the palm of my hand! MWAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA! I may have had the opening line for *School House Rock* but that was recorded.

Oh, yes... I received some fliers at last night's rehearsal which I took around town to display along with some Oktoberfest announcements. So come one come all to the [Huber theatre](#) October 9-11 and solve the mystery of whodunwhat to whom.

A Case of MPD?

Monday night at rehearsal, we had about half the cast present without either of the directors. This greatly limited the amount of work we could accomplish. It was decided that we

would once again run lines. Quite often in these situations, actors are asked to read multiple roles. I ended up being three of the four male parts. At times this was quite humorous but most of the time it gave me even more insight into my own character; who is Harnell Chesterton and what makes him tick (or in terms most theatre performers can relate: What is his motivation? UGH!) I believe I have a firm grasp on Mr. Chesterton's persona. However, for reasons that will hopefully be quite clear to those in the audience, I am having a bit of trouble with his lines, but they are getting there. I have such a grasp that the assistant director told me that I was perfectly cast. Two weeks in and my reputation has already preceded me! C'est impossible! No worries... by week's end, I should be good. I just need to visit my area Goodwill's for a white dinner jacket.

I Am Playing The Part Of The Plant

OOOPS... wrong show... or is it?. Tonight was the read-through for my latest on-stage endeavor. I will say that reading the script with the actors (*sans* one) was an absolute RIOT! *You Have the Right to Remain Dead* is much more than an audience-participatory murder mystery, it almost plays like a melodrama. I believe I alluded to the fact that this is a play-within-a-play with the actors portraying actors on stage as well as the characters within a very Tennessee Williams-esque production. It will be quite a challenge to keep under control as the hilarity ensues throughout. All of the actors are on stage throughout the entire show. Among the colorful cast of characters are the actors within the local community theatre, the director, the teenage backstage manager, and an

inept detective who I believe will be very reminiscent of Columbo (rumpled trenchcoat, tattered notepad, and all).

The fun begins when one of the "actors" is murdered. Each of the remaining thespians (on and off stage) and the audience itself is suspect. Everyone has a different motive for doing the poor sap in and it is up to Officer Bainbridge to discover whodunit, how, and why. Nothing is as it seems, the clues pile up at a hilarious rate, until the guilty party is revealed. In order to find out who did what to whom and with what it was done to whom be sure to come to the Huber Theatre October 9-11. A double show on October 10. Judging from the read-through this will be yet another memorably great production but aren't they all memorable...good or bad?

WHOOO HOOO WE HAVE A SHOW!!!

After Tuesday nights ever predictable rehearsal from heck, the cast, crew, and orchestra really pulled together tonight. Tuesday's rehearsal was predictably bad because I have yet to be in ANY show in which opening week was not full of pitfalls. I actually would be very surprised if I ever in one that ran flawlessly... I would have to walk out and come back into the theatre.

The entire evening was magical. You would have thought we had a paying audience. This was the first time that Grandpa got to be in makeup. The director's major comment after the run is that I needed more age lines. OK, I will inform the makeup mistress of this tomorrow night. I DO NOT do my own makeup. Although a certain female within my home theatre scares me sometimes when she carries around a mascara applicator. Honestly, look into my eyes and tell me that my lashes need

extended.

One thing that was mentioned in early rehearsals. Meet Me in St. Louis actually has a basis in fact. [Sally Benson](#)[✖], whose nickname was Tootie, wrote about her childhood experiences in St. Louis and attending the 1904 World's Fair. The house that her family lived in on Kensington was demolished in 1996 as it had fallen into disrepair. That is all that I know that is historically accurate. Like *The Sound of Music*, *The King and I*, *Titanic*, and any other historical musicals or plays like [Lion in Winter](#), I am sure there are many tidbits added for dramatic purposes. But what a treat. Total run time... we started at 8 and got done juuuuust after 10. I think the 15 minute intermission went a bit long. We did get to indulge in some chocolate cake following the rehearsal. If you happen to be coming, the doors will open at 7.10 Friday and Saturday nights and I would say 1.50 Sunday afternoon. To The Cast... BREAK A LEG. To those attending... ENJOY!

Two To Go

Dress rehearsal #1! Typical. Still bugs, cast members losing their voice (Daughter Anna needs to gargle), technical difficulties, and other mishaps. Anyone involved in community theatre surely has any number of dress rehearsal nightmares. Happily, I have encountered worse so I knew exactly what to expect. One of the big problems tonight was the sound crew. Apparently, their script was not marked well with cues and such so large spaces in which nothing was heard by the actors on stage. However, IF we had done a full run through yesterday... but that is hindsight and we can only look forward. Lots of improvement continues and lots of positives from the director who actually wants MORE from Grandpa. In fact, some

of the cast has mentioned that there has been a bit of typecasting in the role. I cannot understand that AT ALL! More to come.

Drop Hangars And Other Uninvited Guests

Today was a rather hectic, busy, but ultimately rewarding day. The Sunday before the opening of any show I have ever been in (no matter the venue) is known as Tech Sunday (or as I like to refer it... Hell Sunday). This day was much different than ones I am used to. Today involved trying on the rented costumes which we just acquired... I am happy to report that my costume fits nicely. After trying on the costume, I helped hang three drops that will be flown from the rafters of the Huber. FINALLY, the tech rehearsal began. Microphones tried for the first time... some successfully, others... well, we were promised that they would be worked on. Good to know!!! the rehearsal was much more for the lights and sound cues as we just rushed through lines, songs, everything. I have every confidence that the dress rehearsals will go magnificently beginning tomorrow... The best of times; the worst of times.

I am happy to say that my ticket count continues to grow. Today, I had to pick up two for opening night. For Saturday night, I have already purchased 4 and tomorrow I have been asked to pick up 4 more. Glad to know that I am contributing to the audience count.

After rehearsal, I needed to get the tickets to Megan and Carol. Megan and I decided to make the final showing of [The Uninvited](#). A very suspenseful movie that I will not dwell

upon since [taylhis](#) has already done so. I, too would find it hard to post a full review as there is just so much good stuff packed into the 90 minutes that it would be hard not to give anything away. Excellent movie. But I am pleased to say that we both enjoyed all the twists and turns and even were getting to the point of overanalysis while eating at Pizza Hut which I can now tell I will be paying for.

[Buy Movie Tickets Online Now!](#)



Some REALLY Last Minute Choreography

I guess it could be worse. Tonight, the Smith family octet blocked the movements for “Whenever I’m With You.” With only three rehearsals to go (Sunday’s tech rehearsal is that alone... a day for tech... getting light and sound cues, rented costumes distributed and hoping they fit, etc. no run through Sunday), the routine is going to be fun... if IT KILLS ME and even easy... coming from a certifiable Redwood.. But it is a good thing we got it blocked because without the choreographer, we were just ambling around the stage looking lost. I think the choreographer has been at a total of 2 rehearsals (tonight being the second). But somehow, the other choreographed numbers are going really well and look good. The dance guru also commented on one of my many costumes. She was jealous and I told her that it would be hard to put away after the show’s run. We also saw a copy of another press release from Hicksville’s hometown newspaper. There is a website, but it has not been updated to include this week’s headlines. I’ll keep checking and post a link. I also realized once again

tonight how much I LOVE to sing. Guess that is a good thing since I am in a musical?

Here I Go Again

I dunno... the past day or two I have just had this burst of creativity or energy or excitement as the days count down. Tonight, we actually went through the entire show start to finish for the first time without stopping only for notes between the acts. All in all, it went pretty well. We started at 7 and got done around 9.30. To me in my vast experience, two and a half hours for the first full run through is very good. The director was impressed. The last time we did ACT I alone, it ran an hour and a half. Tonight, it went an hour and ten minutes. Another run through awaits Thursday night with the dreaded tech rehearsal Sunday and then the adrenaline-filled, excitement of dress rehearsals and finally the THREE performance run will soon be upon us!!!

Grandpa's notes were decent. My energy for the opening title song were great. Full of energy, perfect characterization. A round of applause from the cast. I'm not sure how many shows this makes me on my resume. I will check that out in just a second. Only my twelfth since 2002 and my first since last summer... MUCH TOO LONG A BREAK FROM THE STAGE!!!

Not to sound (not sure what the word is but really negative), but I really hope that some of my best [friends](#) will be able to come and Meet Me in St. Louis but I know that if [C](#) is doing well every effort will be made. Hope you get well soon, pal. And once again, to [J](#) and the rest of the cast of *Lion in Winter*... Break a Leg!

It Takes A Village... Well Almost

Although there is just as much excitement and hard work involved in producing a non-musical, there is simply nothing like the thrill I personally get when involved with a BIG musical. Not only is there lines to memorize, character to establish, blocking to perfect, and everything else involved there is the added excitement of song (ok... and dance... there I SAID IT... I don't have to like it, but have to ACT like I like it). The cast of *Meet Me in St. Louis* is composed of stage veterans but also a lot of stage newcomers even in the major roles. The young man playing John Truitt (the male lead) has never before stepped on stage. The head of the Smith family also has had no previous stage experience. Perhaps one of the youngest actresses (age 12) has SOME of the most experience behind her. "Agnes" has had roles in *The Music Man*, *Aladdin*, *Schoolhouse Rock, Jr.*, and *Hicksville, the Musical*. The gentleman playing Lon stated that his favorite role has been as Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors* (hmm...) plus he has directed *M*A*S*H* and [Murder by Poe](#) (sounds interesting... right up [j's](#) alley).

Tonight, before rehearsal began, we were shown a copy of The East Allen Courier (a small-town publication of Northeast Indiana) with the first press release from the show. Here is what my portion included:

JS(Grandpa Prophater) has done a lot of shows with the Williams County Community Theatre, but this is his first production with the Village Players. He majored in theatre at BGSU. His favorite roles have been Rooster in Annie and Morat Notborat Nichkor (honestly, I wrote the name out for her when

I was interviewed and she still didn't get it correct) in Idol Night at the Karaoke Place. He is enjoying playing a character much older than himself and looks forward to the makeup that will surely be used to age him. He will be heard singing in the title song (and its many reprises), "Whenever I'm with You," and "A Day in New York."

Actually, with a cast full of newcomers as well as many stage veterans, we have come a long way since the middle of January. I'm sure that within the next week and a half we will have a fabulous musical in a gorgeous theatre. But after coming to see this production, be sure to check out WCCT's production of [Lion in Winter](#).