

The Spider Or The Potter

Last week saw yet another delay in the [Spider-Man](#) musical opening. Not only another delay but a new creative team was brought in to take control of the astronomical catastrophe (ok... I had to leave that... I honestly thought it was a -y and not catastrophe... this coming from someone who misspelled p-a-j-a-m-a-s in the 6th grade spelling bee ☹). Nine years in the making and in previews for months! I'll say it again... sometimes it is best to leave things in the mediums they were meant to be. Comic books, cartoons, live action television (remember that?), movies... live theatre (?). By the time this mess is ever (IF ever) straightened out, it might be Spectacular to look at but will it mean anything beyond the \$65 million dollar+ price tag? In any case, opening night has been pushed back to sometime in the next decade (or is it this summer).

In other theatre news, Daniel Radcliffe is in previews for his singing and dancing debut in the 50th anniversary revival of the Frank Loesser classic, [How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying](#). The show itself may be extremely dated but I was fortunate enough to see the last Broadway revival in the mid 1990s. It was a fun show that I could see being done in community theatres in my neck of the woods. Perhaps by the time the rights become available again, these theatres will not be so turned off from staging musicals more than once every two years or so ☹

Why would a 21 year old straight from completing one of the most lucrative film franchises in history, choose such an undertaking? As I understand it, the former boy wizard wanted a real challenge. No dance experience, little vocal training, so maybe it was the name (KIDDING... I'd rather see a 50 year old revival than a NEW show that has been stuck in a rut for half a year with no end in sight no matter the premise).

Break a leg, Dan!

Over The Rainbow In A Different Oz

Tonight sees the opening of what sounds like a different production of [The Wizard of Oz](#). Produced by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, the London premiere has all the elements of the classic 1939 movie however, it has added elements which (according to Sir Andrew) make it more suitable to the stage.

Added are 4 songs which give Glinda, The Wicked Witch of the West, and the Wizard a chance to use their singing chops.

Apparently, the Good Witch's short bit in Munchkinland does not count as a song. For the new songs, Lloyd Webber re-teamed with lyricist Tim Rice a partnership which dissolved 30 years ago after *Evita*.

Casting for Dorothy was done in what seems to be the Lord's new-found trademark: the televised talent show. He did it for Joseph, Maria in *The Sound of Music*, and now for Oz. I dunno about this American Idol meets theatre concept.

A familiar name was cast in the title role. Michael Crawford (the original Phantom of Lloyd Webber's production) was number one on the list. I can actually picture Mr. Crawford in the roles of Professor Marvel and the Great Humbug. Wonder how many other roles he will be filling. [Taylhis](#), how many parts did Frank Morgan have in the movie?

This July, [Fountain City Festival](#) will be performing a version closer in production to the original movie. As soon as I get back on my feet... I really pray that it is soon... I look forward to helping to bring one of my favorite shows to the stage.

Opening weekend

Production week essentially started the Thursday before Thanksgiving, as we had no rehearsal last Wed. and Thurs. for the obvious reason. Well, we didn't have Wed. rehearsals period due to the church being used that night. I have to say that those rehearsals left me drained. We were there until after 11, and with my sleep troubles and having to be up for work- well, let's just say that I didn't always maintain a good handle on my frustrations. Not that there were any blowouts or even close to them, just periods of anti-social me. The biggest struggles were moving sets around. There is no stage crew, so we all chip in with moving set pieces and props around. Between some scenes there are a **lot** of changes.

On to the topic, we opened this past Friday to a sold out crowd. Saturday was sold out as well. I should add that the small church only seats about 140, so it is actually not hard to sell out. In fact, at least one more performance is completely sold out and a couple others have less than 10 seats available. Not bad for a theatre in a church, eh? So Friday night we performed after a two-night break and I had two spots where I messed up. One minor, one not-so. For some reason, there is a set of lines I constantly struggle with. An excited Dr. Campbell runs out to George and excitedly informs him that the Building & Loan will keep going and that in fact there is a special treat for George (which *he* doesn't think is so great, but that's beside the point). Well, with the excitement and my slow brain, I tend to fumble some of this. Even after going over it in my head several times during the day. Sigh. The not-so-minor messup was me not making it out in time for the start of act II. I don't know what happened- I *heard* the one-minute call, but it just didn't

register. I realized the problem when I heard the start of the scene and rushed up there. Too late. Well, my role was very minor with one line that wasn't really necessary, so it wasn't as bad as it could have been. Still...

Fortunately the next night I did much better. I don't know if we as a whole did much better (the second act dragged Friday- we were told it lasted 15-minutes longer than it should have!) but I would be surprised if we didn't. Anyway, I don't know if there will be a pickup rehearsal or not, we'll see. Otherwise, next performance is this Thursday.

By the way, you may have noticed I wrote "Dr. Campbell" above. In addition to Mr. Gower I play three other roles (two others really- I combined a couple of them). Mr. Partridge is the third. His first name became Charlie, the fourth role.

Looking Ahead

Tonight was my introduction into a new theatre board. I think this organization will be a fun, challenging, and ultimately rewarding crowd to be a part of. Hopefully, the passion I have for the dramatic arts will be beneficial. This summer, the group will be presenting the beloved, immortal classic *The Wizard of Oz*. I have dreamed of playing one particular role for as long as I can remember.

However, another nearby group will be presenting another of my favorite shows. I believe that I have mentioned a time or two that I have been in two separate productions of *Annie*. Back in 1992 at good ol' EHS, I played Rooster. Daniel Francis Hannigan will forever be one of my most memorable and favorite roles. Back in 2001 (I believe it was), I was cast as a Hooverville-ite and as one of Daddy Warbucks' servants. As we

approach the 35th anniversary of the musical's Broadway debut (and it's planned 2nd revival in 2012 as part of the celebration), the opportunity to audition for Rooster once again would be a delight!

Thank goodness, I have a few months to ponder the conundrum.

For any lurkers who may be out there who deem themselves qualified to fill one of the PAID technical (director, pit director, vocal director, etc) positions for a full-scale version of the Wizard of Oz, visit the [Fountain City Festival](#) website within the coming weeks for more information. If you drop by the website now, you can take tour of the past few summer shows the group has produced.

A breather at last

Well, it is Saturday and I am neither working nor rehearsing. For the moment. The last week has been tech week, so the set has been going up little by little as we have rehearsed. Even after last night, the final dress, there was still work to be done. Thursday we got glowing praises from the director on how well the show looked even if the blood wasn't present yet. Hey- people die, so there has to be blood- especially for one of the deaths involving a slit throat. Yes, I will wait while you take care of your stomach in the bathroom... Well, I do know some of you three readers are horror buffs so you are still with me. ☐

My death is clean so I don't have to worry about blood at least. Moving on, last night the director was extremely po'ed after the first act. He didn't yell, but he did make sure everyone knew. He was far more pleased with the second act and so during notes he crumpled up one note after another

without reading them aloud so as not to get down on us. I shudder to think of the contents of the notes had the second act not gone so well. I do think the first number at the start of the act was the best we have ever done though, even if it did drag a bit.

Following this show I am now in the first community theatre non-musical, that is straight play, I have been in in a very long time. Now I have done straight drama in church of course, but as for community theatre it has been far too long. It is the same show [Jamiahsh](#) was in last year, but my role is far more humble though I felt my audition went fairly well. So did others' apparently. This is my role:



Oh, sorry. That was [Gowron](#). My role is Gower. Mr Gower, the druggist a young Mr. Bailey worked for, originally played by [H. B. Warner](#). They asked if I would be willing to play additional roles if necessary and I said absolutely. Well, hopefully next time I try out for this group they will know me better (in a good way ☺). We all have to start somewhere. I do not know when I will begin rehearsing, but I will miss the first read-through because of my Monday night small group. I'll try to post more on this topic.

CAST

Thinking of a good title is difficult. While some of the suggestions were good, I wasn't in love with any of them and I'm not sure yet how much I love this one. CAST is an acronym- Christ, Acting, Singing, and Teaching. I don't do much of teaching anymore, but I still do once a month or so and am at least a leader for other weekends. It is

conveniently placed last in the acronym while Christ is first. Not that He really has been first in my life seemingly, but it is a goal. Christ needs to be before everything, including family (fortunately He places a high value on family, especially children so He usually won't demand anyone actually give up their family, just put Him first in your family). So what do you think of this title? It also has a ring to it as far as the performing words of the acronym. As in I am currently cast as a singer and actor in Jekyll & Hyde.

The unofficial takeover of the 11:15 service has become official with the couple I mentioned before having been asked to share the role of the "point person," or head "anchor". I am having somewhat of a problem with one of them unfortunately. I haven't yet decided if she is just taking the role far more seriously than others in previous years or she is overstepping her authority. Looking in the guide their role is that of the room leader, but she has taken to threatening to not allow someone to lead a small group for such things as being late or doing something during the teaching time other than sitting with the kids and listening to the message with them. Productive things I should say, not "I just don't want to listen" things as kids often do in school. I believe she is crossing a line here but I have to think on it, maybe ask Lisa- the staff member in charge of 4th/5th grade. In any event, there is friction here and something needs to happen to remove it.

The show is almost there. We just had our first rehearsal with the orchestra yesterday, at the actual performance venue. Okay, the set for the currently running show, Into the Woods, is up meaning we will have to work around it, but aside from one more rehearsal at the retirement home we've been at, we are now rehearsing on the actual stage. It was strange to work with the orchestra two weeks in advance- I am used to the orchestra not being there until a day or two before opening

night. Indeed, we may not see them again until then, but even if so, the one chance was better than none at all. Less than two weeks until opening- yikes. But we will be ready. ☐

The updated life of Mr. D

I have now closed comments on the one post that was getting a bunch of spam. I'm not sure what I would do if one of those spambots latched onto a more recent post. I'll cross that bridge when I get to it I suppose. Moving on now...

Musical: Going well. I went from using two canes as per script to just one. A couple weeks ago I brought up the point of cane usage to the choreographer and almost got taken out of Facade for it as it would change how I move. The only dance number I'm in. As for the other big one at the start of act II, let's just say there is a good reason I am not in it except for a short scene. Tonight is a full run-through of act I, and given the rehearsal is four hours we will probably run through it more than once. We're supposed to be off book, but I think it will be reasonable to use my music for any off-stage singing, such as the background vocals in Alive. I'll soon find out if they feel the same.

Work: The one I have been training is now out of training, so time to move on to other things. What? Another trainee? *Two* trainees?? Sigh. Just throw my quality control manager title out the window as it has been weeks since I have done any of that and seemingly weeks more before I can. Well, as long as the company doesn't mind then neither do I. At least some pressure has been removed with the one former trainee taking over three stores I was training him at- no more trips to Naperville or St. Charles! Well, after tomorrow at any rate

when I just have to watch over him at one of the stores in case of problems. I still have the huge Elgin store for the time being and I can finally give it better attention, but then there are the new trainees. Well, I'll see how it goes.

Church: Still working away serving two services for 4th and 5th grades. A couple that started this year have sort of unofficially taken over one of the services with their ideas they are implementing. While they don't see themselves as the volunteer heads of the 4th/5th grade ministry, I am trying to take it in stride by thinking of them as such as the one we last had went and got himself married and so he has, shall we say, a new focus. Interestingly enough, the one before him went and did the same thing, but it wasn't his reason for moving on- he was graduating from Moody and got a (paid) position elsewhere if I recall correctly.

Books: After reading a the [Wheel of Time](#) series for about five months straight, I am now on break from it for a short time. I was all set to check out the next book which showed as one copy available last night only to be on the hold shelf this afternoon. It's just as well since rehearsal really picks up for the next few weeks so I won't have enough time to read it anyway- I can hardly finish one of these 700-page tomes in a month as it is. I am not even a third of the way through the series, and not yet where I left off way back when. Mr. Jordan, you certainly wrote a good series. I certainly hope you accepted Christ in your life so I can meet you one day on the other side. Hopefully Brandon Sanderson completes the epic in a way that would please Robert Jordan.

Gaming: Nothing really to say at this time. For a future post.

The flyer...

Just the flyer I said I would put up yesterday, a day late...

[Click to see flyer for musical](#)

That's General Lord Glossop to you...

That's right, not General Glossop, not Lord Glossop, and certainly not Mr. Glossop. General Lord Glossop, thank you very much. No, I am not on some sort of medication. I am in a show, believe it or not. What? I never mentioned auditioning for one? Well, I didn't. I had actually noted this theater group's auditions awhile back, but got caught up in work so I forgot about them. Then less than a week ago I took another look at the green room and came back to that site only to see a cast list. Nuts- I had wanted to try out for this show. Then I noticed a blurb mentioning that they were looking for a few more men. I couldn't hit the contact us form fast enough. A short time later I received not one, but two emails informing me that my interest was being passed on to the director. Next morning, a call, and a request for my presence Sunday night. Resume in hand I arrived at St. Joe's (as they call it) nursing home where they do most of their rehearsals. As I arrived, another theatre group, Tesseract, was just leaving- a popular rehearsal place apparently. The directors arrived shortly after, talked to me, then I sang a bit from the show for Ann Stewart (I thought I'd mention this

name to see if C recognizes it- it's a bit unbelievable that she is still doing this!) and read a line for the director, Kevin, who said I read it perfect the first time. Yes! I was in. Two other new ones joined me that night, and we rehearsed the first dance number. Of course my first rehearsal would have to be a dance rehearsal. For those who know me, I could never be considered a triple threat- far from it. Of course I'm not much of a single or double threat either, but that's beside the point. ☐

What? I didn't name the show? Do you really need to know? Are you sure this is the moment to say? By the way, you can wish for me to break a leg, but I do break a neck in the show, or rather it will be broken for me... ☐

Ah... The Antoinette Perry's

Tonight, we honor the toast of Broadway. I will just touch on some of the highlights.

- In the much coveted Best Musical we have Green Day's *American Idiot*, *Fela!*, *Memphis*, and *Million Dollar Quartet*. Best Musical Revival nods go to... *Finian's Rainbow*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *A Little Night Music*, and *Ragtime*. I think both categories will come down to two. I think B. M. will come down to *Fela!* and *American Idiot*. Revival will be either *La Cage* or *Night Music*. They both have been getting a bunch of press. I would like to see Finian walk away with it but alas...
- Can you imagine *The Addam's Family* with Nathan Lane as Gomez (only 2 nods and the king of Broadway is not one)? Bebe Neuwirth is Morticia.
- Scarlett Johansson just won her first statue for her

role in the revival of *A View from the Bridge*. Ever since she was a little girl, she had dreamed of being on Broadway. WOW! Sounds like someone I know all too well. From Iron Man to Broadway.

- Ricky Martin is going to be in *Evita*? He was on Broadway in *Les Miserables*? Aren't we about tired of the jukebox musical? This year we have Frank Sinatra in *Come Fly with Me* (I think it is actually Ol' Blu Eyes set to dance... eh. Plus we have *the Million Dollar Quartet* who were the back up singers for everyone from Jerry Lee Lewis to Elvis to Johnny Cash.
- Oh, boy... Will and Jada Smith. Perhaps to dote on their son's breakout performance in *The Kung Fu Kid*. I've actually heard mixed comments on that one. Think I'll wait until Netflix gets it in about 3 months. So, get them over with already! AH... two of the producers for *Fela!*
- Back to *La Cage*. In Junior High, I remember that my English/Lit teacher took a trip to New York to see the show. Unaware of the show's plot, she and her husband walked out prior to intermission. I believe that it may be the big winner of the night. It is tied with [Fela!](#) with 11 noms. And Kelsey Grammer just lead his line of "lovelies" in *The Best of Times* (probably the only thing I really know about the show aside from the obvious).
- *Superior Donuts*? I've never heard of it, either. And the play did not win its one nomination for Best Featured Actor in a Play.
- I must say that I am more interested in the plays of this year's season. I don't think the musicals are much to get excited over (coming from me, can you believe it?!). I have read August Wilson's [Fences](#) (up for a number of awards) and *The Piano Lesson*. Both remarkable plays and ones that I have little chance of being in unless we have a color-blind casting director. Denzel Washington is up for best actor in a play along with Jude Law (*Hamlet*), Alfred Molina (*Red*), Liev Schrieber

(*A View from the Bridge*), and Christopher Walken (*A Behanding in Spokane*). Denzel must have gone from *The Book of Eli* (on DVD Tuesday) to New York. **WOO HOO! DENZEL WINS!!!** And the play itself wins Best Revival! H00ray!

- Yep... [*In the Next Room or... The Vibrator Play*](#) is exactly what it sounds like. The invention of... well use your imagination.
- The Grande Dame of the theatre, the first honorary chairperson of the theatre wing... Ms. Angela Lansbury. And she was beaten in the Best Featured Actress in a Musical category.
- Focus on that one thing. Don't let anyone stand in your way. Don't listen to anybody else. You will meet the right people (I have), teachers (still looking), circumstances (so far, so good... if you consider CT in NW0 good which it is, but...).
- Mark Sanchez from the New York Jets?! That is too COOL! Presenting the cast of [*Memphis*](#).
- I see that Valerie Harper is up for Best Actress (Play) in *Looped* based on the life of Tallulah Bankhead. Neither Rhoda nor her 70s tv competition... Linda Lavin ("Alice") were winners. But Viola Davis won for *Fences*... **YAY!**
- Does anyone else find Kristin Chenoweth to be somewhat annoying. I maybe in the minority but perhaps its that voice.
- "Send in the Clowns" Catherine Zeta-Jones. 80th birthday of Sondheim. *A Little Night Music* is up for four... already lost its first. Never understood the show. I always thought it was overrated.
- Father's Day and the Tony Awards are presented by Wal*Mart?! OMG... it really is taking over! Whatever happened to *Wal*Martopia*?
- *Annie* is being revived yet again in 2012 (is that 35 years?). Too late to audition for one of my favorite parts?

- 10 o'clock... one hour to go.
- Best Choreography... YUCK! I admire those that can and do... those who can't... sing. Those who do neither? I'll just be Sean Hayes (*Promises, Promises*) sitting at the desk, working while the dancers do their thing around me. *Fela!* wins that one.. jumps ahead of *La Cage* with two.
- In Memorium... Lynn Redgrave, Rue McClanahan, Dixie Carter, and Larry Gelbart (co writer of ...*Forum*, creator for television of *M*A*S*H*) were four of those that I knew of.
- Best Play... *Red*
- I haven't become a *Glee(k)*. But two of the stars were on singing "All I Need is the Girl" (*Gypsy*, I believe). And "Don't Rain on My Parade" (I forget the show □ No real reason but to promote the tv show.
- *American Idiot* (the show based on Green Day's album) set to perform soon. 25 to go... scheduled, anyway... we'll see how close they cut it. Is it just me or is Green Day trying to come up with the next *Rent*?
- Spider-Man coming on singing "Don't Rain on My Parade" muffled by his mask. Someday, somehow... he is set to make his Broadway debut this season. I'll believe it when I (don't) see it. The concept seems ridiculous. I love the character. I think the post shows my extreme dislike of theatre. However passionate I am of both... they should not be allowed to combine!
- *La Cage aux Folles* wins Best Revival of a Musical.
- 14 minutes to go...
- Best Leading Actress/Actor in a Musical presented by two non-nominees (Bebe Neuwirth and Nathan Lane). **Actress:** Catherine Zeta-Jones (*A Little Night Music*). **Actor:** Douglas Hodge (*La Cage aux Folles*)
- One to go... five minutes and a final performance? Hmmm... welll... I don't think there was a big winner of the night but I'm glad that *Fences* won so many well deserved awards. I haven't seen the show but it was a good

read.

▪ **MEMPHIS** WINS BEST MUSICAL!? What an upset! Dark horse, definitely! WOW!

Well... I hope I haven't bored any of my faithful readers and hopefully, I gain a few! Good night.. congrats to the winners! Bravo to Broadway!