

How Do You Solve A Problem

Well.. another audition has come and gone. THIS time, I did say that I definitely was trying out for Captain Von Trapp. I had forgotten that Max does indeed sing in the stage version. However, since the general public is more familiar with the classic film version, most people may not know this. I feel that the time has come to stretch myself dramatically. I have portrayed the lead male in a play before (still my greatest on-stage challenge to date); yet. the dramatic lead of a HUGE musical is something I have never been presented with. I have always felt that while Uncle Max would be another fun scene-stealer but the Captain would definitely be more of a challenge as he is much more dynamic in that he starts out as a strict disciplinarian to his seven children but his heart begins to soften as Maria reintroduces music and fun into the household.

I felt that the audition went really well. There were a large number of children the first day (of two) try outs. Some of them were really quite impressive ranging in age from 5-13. They each sang a bit of "Do-Re-Mi," and "My Favorite Things." Each of them were also asked to yodel as the seven children need to during "The Lonely Goatherd" number (one of the many differences between stage and screen... there is no marionette show). After singing, they read a bit of the scene in which Maria is introduced to them.

Being the only adult male in attendance who wanted a singing role, it was difficult to judge the competition. I was asked to sing "Edelweiss." The version in the score is a little low for my taste but I thought I performed nicely. I also brought a selection of my own which must have impressed. One of my friends in the room even told me that she had never heard me sing before. WOW! I then read for the role of Captain Von Trapp in the scene in which he and Maria meet and he insists that the house is run with a discipline. Later, I did read

for Max. Seriously, I know what kind of character Max is but I was asked to start over as I was “reading the part like you read the Captain.”

There must have been more adults Sunday as there were a total of 65 auditioners. However, there is still a need for a Rolf the “seventeen going on eighteen” love interest of Liesl).

The thing that I am apprehensive about is the limited amount of time we have to put this together. There are callbacks anticipated for this weekend and the first rehearsal is next Tuesday. The show opens on March 1st. However, I am sure that the cast and creative hands will pull together nicely.

Back On STAGE

And I could not be happier. I know that it has been two years since *Hound of the Baskervilles* but it really seems like yesterday especially this week when the last three months of fun work come to fruition. Each experience is a different challenge and along the way I am lucky to meet new performers and work again with those I have previously been on stage before. It really does feel like a family over time... at least in this neck of the woods. Of course, tech week is full of interesting events: New sound system that will be extraordinary I am sure; Mishaps with the set; Attempting to control the young ones in the cast when they are off stage; and other assorted chaos.

Yes, I once again was cast in the role of the slimy villain.

My favorite type of role! When Mare asked me which role I would like (after I was informed that I was not old enough to portray Kris Kringle), I did not hesitate when I told her... “Sawyer.” I knew exactly what I wanted to do with the role

and make it my own but still have some of the nuances of the original in the 1947 movie, *Miracle on 34th Street*. It must be paying off because Miss Mary told me after rehearsal tonight that she loves my character and what I have done with it. AW, Heck! As someone told me after I announced the role I had received "This could be your best role yet. Both as a challenge and fitting your acting forte." One of my cast mates even compared me (the role, I assume) to a Bond villain.

Come and like us on [Facebook](#) and hope to see some of you in the audience with the great talent on and off stage.

A Two-Fer

Good news all around! Dad will be home soon (within a few weeks).

Wednesday, the therapist had Dad come to the house for about a half hour to see how he did in old surroundings. While still under guidance, he walked through the main floor... though the front door; to the bedroom, the bathroom, and the kitchen. He sat on his recliner and the couch. Laid on the bed and got into his dresser drawers and closet. Sat on the loo and stepped into and out of the shower. He then sat at the kitchen table and got into the cupboards. All in all, what you and I would consider menial tasks yet important to have him do in order to see where he is at in his progress. Before leaving, the therapist stressed the importance of motivation and activity once he is released or he will be right back out.

Today, the siblings and I met to discuss ways in which we all could make life easier for the two of them once he does come home. Thankfully, we collaboratively came up with a plan even determining our holiday gathering schedule. Tonight at

dinner, I was amazed to learn that Dad is prepared to once again go to the school ball games. Until last spring, he and Mom went all over as she drives the bus and keeps the book for volleyball, boys AND girls basketball, and softball. Last spring, he fell off the bank wagon and had no interest at all in attending. His desire to go shows (I believe) that he is indeed ready and willing to return to his old routine.

In other news, I have been offered and accepted the coveted role of Mr. Sawyer in *Miracle on 34th Street*. This afternoon, the full cast and director Mare met to watch the glorious 1947 classic... even if it is only the last day of September.

Throughout the movie, several cast members asked if I would be portraying Kris Kringle, himself. While playing Santa would be a fun opportunity, I think the villainous psychologist will make for an even more fun challenge.

Searching the archives, I noticed that the last performance I was in with a theatre company was October 17, 2010 as Barrymore in *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Last weekend's adventure was something else entirely. However, while watching the movie I see ALOT of opportunity for a memorable character to develop. Time to grab the erasable highlighter that I received in October 2009 after a performance of *You Have the Right to Remain Dead*.

great and beautiful marvelous things are happening!

A Year Full of Ups And Downs

2010... What a year! So much happened that I do not know where the time went! It started off LAST January when I received my first two awards for acting in *You Have the Right to Remain*

Dead (as everyone's ill-fated, lovable, hammy narrator... Harnell Chesterton) and for bringing the Grinchi Scrooginess of Mr. Henry F. Potter to life in *It's a Wonderful Life*. Even my best friends gave up a Bears' playoff game to share in my moment as well as family!

I can't even fathom the reality that I had limited myself to only two plays this year. I tackled my first lead role in the three person DRAMA, *Miracles*. I hope that Dawn and Rebekkah share in my belief that this play was one of the best shows I have ever been a part of. Thank you Beth for pushing for this show to be done and spreading its important, powerful message.

Chris next challenged me to seek out a new vocal coach. I had wanted to find one ever since Emily passed; however, I was uncertain as to whether I could find one as determined to help me in what I need to do. Thank God, he helped me find Kathrine. I could not ask for a better coach. I just adore people who know where your talent lies and are willing to guide you with suggestions on how best to cultivate them. Over the years I have had and continue to have some of the best!

I also became a board member of a new theatrical group in which I get to spend more time with my friends and help to bring *The Wizard of Oz* to the stage next summer. I also had my first byline when I reviewed the company's production of *(Cr)Oklahoma!* last summer.

My final performances of the year came in the Mare helmed production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in which I played a dual role as Barrymore, the caretaker of the Baskerville estate and as the doomed Selden who met a rather grisly demise. Each production lends some challenge as well as fun working with old friends and making new ones.

The fact that I only limited myself to two shows this past year allowed me to do some very cool things with my friends.

In July, we went to Cincinnati to the zoo and then to Kings Island. I had not been to one of my favorite parks in several years and to go and be treated as V.I.P.s was extraordinary. Not to mention the multiple game nights (from which I just opened 2011), chats in person and via I.M.ing. Just good times!

Of course a year is not all roses. On January 5, we lost our beloved Aunt Carol to cancer. Gone long before her time but held on longer than many thought she would. And more recently, my brother separated from his wife. I think that ultimately with the help and guidance of prayer and the love of family and friends striving forward yet remembering the special times only make us stronger.

So as we bid farewell to 2010, wrap up the holiday season and look ahead to the new year, I wish all of you the very best of peace, joy, and happiness.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, and days of auld lang syne?

For auld lang syne my jo,

For auld lang syne,

We'll take a cup of kindness yet,

For auld lang syne.

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE... GOOD NIGHT!

Christmas Two-Fer

Looking for a bit of Christmas spirit (not THAT kind of spirit)? My nephew Alex, Megan, and I found a smattering at the Huber tonight as the Village Players presented a duo of one act plays. Things got started with an adorable retelling of the immortal Nutcracker story. Most of the cast was made up of children with a few adults in the mix to keep things under control. There were whole families taking part in some of the roles! And what would the tale of little Clara and her Prince on a magical Christmas Eve be without the classic music of Tchaikovski's ballet. There were also some of the dances thrown in: The Waltz of the (ADORABLE) Snowflakes, The Chinese (Tea) Dance, and of course The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy. And the Snow Queen really sent shivers down my spine.

BRRRRRRRRR! And WHO was behind the Owl Clock who kept popping up in rhyme?

After intermission, O. Henry's classic tale of unselfish, sacrificial gifting was presented. What better way to remind us all what the Christmas season is all about than by seeing a young couple give what they "think" is their most valued possession in order to purchase a gift for their true love.

Be it by reading the printed story, seeing it presented on stage, or watching the Mickey and Minnie version, *The Gift of the Magi* has always been a personal favorite of mine. And the narration wasn't bad, either ☐

After the performance, my trio greeted the cast... most of whom I have either worked with previously, been directed by, or been reviewed by ("a raised eyebrow speaks volumes" still cracks me up!). Travis received his giant nutcracker director's present... very appropriate. No present for Amber, yet. And of course, my young companion had to endear himself to everyone. Calling Miss Mare "a gift from God?!" Honestly...

I did forget how much I adored the two sets. The Nutcracker

was full of fun colors, a giant tree, over-sized sweets, and the razzle-dazzle of the season. The polar opposite was true of the second show. The young couple's (by the name of Young, coincidentally) abode was dark and dreary. Both sets captured each tale beautifully.

A really fun evening full of friends and Christmas magic.

Baskerville Hall No More

✘ In a most shocking affair, Baskerville Hall has fallen. The caretaker and his wife, the Barrymores were so shaken by the tragic passing of Sir Charles that within days of the heir's arrival the couple decided to leave service in hopes of succeeding in some other business. The Baskerville fortune left the loyal servants enough money to set out on themselves.

In order to start their life afresh, Mr. Barrymore altered his facial appearance not an hour following their departure.

The walls, curtains, furniture, bookcases, and all the trimmings lay in rubble. Unfortunately, the relater of these events failed to have his camera to add photos to illustrate the unfortunate event.

However, the good times shared by all will be remembered in the coming DVD which chronicles the events of the last days of the once great estate and the mystery surrounding Poor Sir Charles' demise.

Thank you Mare and everyone else involved in the Village Players production of the immortal Sherlock Holmes mystery *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Once again, a delightful time was had by all (even those two people who fell asleep who shall remain safely anonymous). And who knows... it may not take

another 9 years for another facial hair growth. I'm sure there are several roles which call for it. I am also pleased to announce that the [ghost upon the moor](#) failed to wreck havoc with Selden's death... if only for the show's swan song.

Two Weeks To GO!

Two weeks from tonight will be OPENING NIGHT of the Sherlock Holmes classic (still can't believe how many odd looks I get whenever I mention the title) *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at the splendiferous (yes... that is a word) Huber Opera House!

For my part, I am happy to state that my lines are learned which is quite common at this point in a show (more common than the line learning from my last play... still a great experience but challenging which was even more rewarding personally). The next couple of weeks will be a whirlwind of activity from work to vocal lessons to rehearsal and whatever else may come my way but as always... I AM SUPER EXCITED!

Sunday, my talents will once again be used in set construction. As many of you know if you ever need anything painted... I am your guy! I remember the praise I received for my last set painting... I think it was a few years ago for *The Odd Couple*. Funny how no one has ever asked me to once again use my paint brush. Their loss, I guess. But my talent has not gone unnoticed. More than once [justj](#) has commented to [Mare](#) about my remarkable painting prowess. We'll see on Sunday if it used.

Hopefully, by Tuesday everyone will be better on their lines to avoid the dreaded Saturday before review rehearsal day. I just learned that another tangenteer will be coming to review the show. Hopefully, it will not take as long for her review

to be published as the one I wrote for OKLAHOMA! did.

Click the link to the [Village Players](#) website for tickets and time information.

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.

He IS A Bit Draft

AH... the first week of a new adventure in acting! A larger cast this time. A more limited role... but an important role (which is what I wanted for the moment). The chance to develop a new accent. ACCENT?! And a chance to drive everyone crazy with a physical change... a change that will be remedied after the show.

I am playing the role of Barrymore, the caretaker of Baskerville Hall in a dramatic interpretation of the Sherlock Homes classic *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Some fans have asked me why Holmes or Watson need a beard. I am playing neither the detective nor his trusted friend. John Barrymore and his wife, Eliza have been employed by Sir Charles for years and upon his death may know a bit more than they are willing to share.

This will be a great show with some great friends I have made amongst the Village Players (our director is a fellow [tangenteer](#)) over the last two years. Two other WCCTers (one of whom is another [tangenteer](#)) have decided to come along for the ride! Hopefully, both js will enjoy the experience as much as I have in 4 previous shows.

October 15-17th.

A New Old Look

In preparation for what I hope is my next stage performance, I was informed that the role had to have a full beard... the "handsome" part? Well... the say beauty is in the eye of the beholder. More than a few summers ago, I was cast as Motel in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Of course, the tailor had to grow facial hair as well. Nothing new, it will just be a bit warm under there once again. Of course, a Holmes play requires the cast to have English accents, or no go. It would be very odd having a cast with American accents. Maybe I could give a Liswathistani interpretation of the character. A non-Jewish *Fiddler* would be strange for that matter.

Today, my mother had had enough. I previously had an electric trimmer but after 8-10 years, it seemed to have died out. So, she took me to the beauty shop to help it along. She was worried that she would make a booboo, but I thought there is plenty of time to grow it back. I think it only took a little over a month for the beard to develop on my last attempt; it has only been about a month since I started this one. I started the day after *Miracles* wrapped. Nothing like preparing for future parts. Plus, I got a hair cut, such as it is. □ The script says nothing about a full head of hair. □