

Go See... Oh Wait, It's Much Too Late And So Am I

Big surprise, time got away from me. How did that happen? Couldn't be that it's Christmas time and I have a million things to do. Honestly, I always try to refrain from sending Christmas cards, but sometimes I feel so badly when we get cards from others and I'm not sending any back. So then I start sending some – just to my MOPs (Mothers of Preschoolers) group, I'll say. But next thing I know, I've decided to send Christmas cards to “a few” select groups of people, and that's when I realize that I'm just sending Christmas cards anyway even though I wasn't going to! Well, this that and the other stuff; Christmas cards are just one extra check on my holiday time to-do list, but that's a tangent...

My point was busyness. I was so busy that a few weeks ago when I wrote another newspaper review for one of our community theater groups, I forgot to post it on my blog. I usually like to post my reviews in my blog – since I'm doing the work to write them anyway, I might as well post them here to try to remind some friends and readers to go see the show. But now it's too late, for the show I saw and reviewed has finished its run. Oh well, such things happen; hopefully my review as it was printed in the paper made some people want to come see the cute show. For fun, here is a copy of the review:

Pageant Shines This Season

Early December finds many people preoccupied with the hustle and bustle of the approaching holiday season, so what better way to unwind from holiday stress than to see a live show?

A play guaranteed to inspire Yuletide spirit, The Best Christmas Pageant Ever is being performed by The Williams County Community Theatre in the playhouse at 501 S. East

Avenue in Montpelier during these chilly December weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

This festive show provides fun for the entire family. The audience can spend a wintery evening or an afternoon matinee getting to know the Bradley clan (cohesively played by Jake McAfee, Mary Valdez, Allie Boyer, and Logan Psurny) as their normally normal life erupts into chaos. Thoughtfully narrated by young Beth Bradley (a cute and concise Allie Boyer), a heartwarming story unfolds, and the audience is a captive witness to the events leading up to what everyone hopes will be The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.

When Bradley mom Grace (a funny, flustered Mary Valdez) is chosen to replace Mrs. Armstrong (an amusing character played by Nicki Bassett) as director of the church's annual Christmas Pageant, all seems well until the Herdman family (outrageously played by Lance Day, Jessica Valdez / Sunny Bowman, Mason Bassett, Elliot Bowman, Isaiah Valdez, Jamison Grime, and Katie Taylor / Zara McNalley) slips into the scene. The Bradleys' seemingly picture-perfect world is turned upside-down when the six trouble-maker Herdman kids come to Sunday school. Even the reason why they began attending in the first place is hilarious (Logan Psurny takes the heat as Charlie Bradley). Poor Grace just wants to tell the story of Mary and Baby Jesus in the Pageant, but rehearsals are tough with a zany assortment of characters (brought to life by Amy Boyer, Jenna Bowman, Kyla Huband, Jake McAfee, Abby Ledyard, Makayah Long / Alisa Parsons, Kayden Long, Anna Valdez / Carolyn Rychener, Brook Ward / Bailey Ward, Taylor Brown, Amari Blanco, Tatum Grime, Savannah Kleinhenn, Ethan Psurny, Hailey Tressler, Hannah Tressler) who just don't seem to like the idea of giving the Herdman kids a chance. Will it all come together in time to be The Best Christmas Pageant Ever?

It's the perfect time of year for this touching show, and WCCT's The Best Christmas Pageant Ever will have you flooded with Christmas spirit. Whether you simply come for the holiday

fun, to see the joyously decorated theatre, or to watch the adorable children in the cast put on their Pageant, this show will tug at your heartstrings, chase away holiday blues, and leave you humming Christmas carols with a glow and a grin!

“After all, It’s almost Christmas!”, so come out to the theater and join the fun!

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever can be seen on the Montpelier stage on Friday and Saturday nights at 8 pm on December 3,4, 10, and 11 and Thursday night December 9, and Sunday afternoon December 12 at 2:30 pm. Some of the roles are split between multiple actors, which is just one reason to see this show more than once. Reservations are recommended, but not required. Please call the WCCT Office for reservations and more info: 1-888-569-9228.

Taylor has experience in community theatre that spans multiple decades. Ms. Taylor has been on the stage as an actor, as well as behind-the-scenes doing production work like assistant-directing, producing, and stage-managing. As an enthusiastic supporter of the arts in Northwest Ohio, she has also enjoyed serving administratively on the boards of various local community theatre groups.

I Ain’t As Good as I Once Was...

Not to quote Toby Keith, but... I today am feeling glum. Back-to-Back shows I have auditioned for and not been cast. ☹ Joseph and now Little Shop.

I am sure it will be a great show I was just so excited (with

the hope) to be a part of it. I tried out for the voice of the plant and, well, someone else tried out who was better – that's theatre!

I am just a bit down realizing that never before Joseph had I auditioned for a musical and not made the cut and now... It is 2-in-a-row and I have to face the facts – I AIN'T AS GOOD AS I ONCE WAS. Ahh, growing older... ☹ In fact, the last musical I auditioned for and was cast in was Grease a FEW YEARS ago! Ugh!

Anyway, some great people auditioned and made Little Shop – some of our new friends from Hicksville auditioned and really did outstanding! AND THEY MADE IT!!! ☹

You can see the complete Little Shop cast list [here](#).

It is a real sad realization that my musical theatre "career" has definitely passed it's prime and very well might be over (ended with *Grease!* – ugh!).

Oh well. I wish I had appreciated my God given talents more when I still had them; I was never very confident. It is ironic that I was never very satisfied with my singing in the past and now I only wish I could have my past talent back – eech!!!

Acting wise I have lost a few steps too – I thought my reading for the voice of Audrey II went really well; though I know I stunk up the place with my "singing" of Love Changes Everything. Ugh... This stinks!

Ugh...

One Or Two Who May Be Getting Nuttin' For Christmas

Tonight, the family and I went to the Junior high and high school chorus Christmas concert. The band concert was last Monday night... was not informed of that until 6 o'clock that night. My 13 year-old niece is in the 7th grade and is in the chorus. I was pretty impressed with the younger group. Some of those pieces were tough. Not only did they have pieces in which there was at least two part harmonies going on, there was one song entitled "Dueling Christmas Trees" that had two entirely different melodies going on AT THE SAME TIME. One section sang of the virtues of having a real, pine tree while the other half sang of the artificial variety. Quite a difficult task for a young group to undertake, but it was a fun time.

The high school choir was also quite good. I heard some fine voices in the group; particularly in the male section. There were only four male voices in the 17 member group (there were not any in the first group). □ One voice in particular came from a young man whom I shared the stage with in *Love Rides the Rails*, a melodrama which our [community theatre](#) presented 2 summers ago. He played the hero's sidekick while I played the villain's right hand man.

I had only two questions about the concert. Why in the world would you have a group sing 8 songs?! I attended a past concert in which it seemed that every member of the choir came forth and sang an entire song by him/herself. Now that goes a bit toooo far... and I love to sing and hear others sing. PLUS... where were the decorations?! OH, MY... Emily must surely be rolling in her grave. But aside from those two details, it was an enjoyable concert... EXCEPT for two young ladies (not mentioning who they belonged to or what their names are) who became rather loud and unruly as the concert went along. As

the chorus sang their last song, I told them both that they better listen to those words closely or they would get "Nuttin' For Christmas," too. ☐

Where Was Mr. Morton?

Tonight, a great friend and I went to see my niece and nephew in their elementary school's production of *Schoolhouse Rock, Live!* Ok, so it was the juniorfied version of the show. phooey! A year ago our [community theatre](#) did a production of the full 21 song-filled show in which I was the central character, Mr. Mizner, on his first day as a teacher. The 80 kids on stage tonight delivered a very fun, energetic (but shortened) version. The kids were broken down into four groups each of which were on stage in turn during certain songs (you try putting 80 kids on stage at the same time). I attempted to find my two stars and easily spotted Elizabeth when she was on stage. However, my godson, Joshua, decided to hide himself whenever possible. BUT, I did catch him getting into the dances a few times.

I was pretty impressed with the work put into the show. Lots of high energy (as it should be) and choreography that even I could have done. There were only eleven of the songs from the full version present. I was surprised that "Lolly, Lolly, Lolly" was not included. I thought that the kids could have done a good job with that and had fun. Most disappointing, to me anyway, was the absence of "The Tale of Mr. Morton." But, as Megan pointed out repeatedly... "It's the JUNIOR version... j-u-n-i-o-r!!!" I thought... ok, but... I don't see why I got to sing the song and the young man playing Tom did not. THAT IS HIS BIG NUMBER. I would have been disappointed if I were him and did not get to sing it. The kid did a good job in the

part, but he could have shown a little bit more apprehension at the beginning.

Tonight's version of "Do the Circulation" featured a soloist resembling Elvis Presley singing the song and doing some moves. This was a fun bit, but I liked our idea of turning the cast members into gym equipment (treadmills, weight benches, etc) and having the kids in the choir operate them. Since our version had a female singing the song, it would not have worked.

I also missed the added dialog that our wonderfully gifted and talented director and awesome friend added to the show for a more cohesive and flowing plot. Tonight, the constant raising and lowering of the lights between each song was at times tedious but I don't suppose there was anyway around it with all the kids coming on and off stage. I wonder how many parents had to be behind the scenes to corral all 80 of them. Carol... could you have done THAT by yourself? You only had 30 to work with. Here is your chance to COMMENT on our blogs... hmmm.

A fun evening although our plan to eat at the Olive Garden before the show did not work out. Promise Megan that we will go there reaaaaaaly soon... thanks for coming. And you can comment, too. I know you are both out there reading and lurking in the shadows ☹ .

Actor: Not Believable as a Human Being.

If you've seen friends you might remember the episode when Joey, a often unemployed and ridiculously bad actor, gets a

review that reads “Not believable as a human being.”... Well, today I am the received such acclaim.

I am in a local production of the Nerd and play the title character or Rick Steadman; the Nerd.

With such choice phrases used as “over the top” and “upstages the others” and “hard to believe he is a real person” it is indeed time to ask myself the question... Am I as bad as Joey?

The good news is the show itself got a good review and so did some of my VERY WELL DESERVING castmates!! ☐ ☐

Oh well. I can only learn for next time. I have always found myself a little better at dramatic roles; not a character actor am I. For now I will have to live with “not being believable as a human being” – or at least “hard to believe he is a real person”.

Persuasive Speaking – How NOT to Make an Argument!

Anyone who knows me well knows that sometimes I can lack confidence. I suppose years of adolescent torment can do that to someone. But one thing I was confident in was my ability to make a good persuasive argument.

NOT ANYMORE.

After recent events as a member of our local theatre’s “Play Reading Committee” I am wondering if when I talk I simply make no sense... If what is a compelling argument (point) to me is just plain stupid to everyone else.

You see, our theatre has a play reading committee where people involved with the theatre meet to discuss what plays and musicals to do for the following season. This year, to start, we were given the assignment of bringing a complete season (OR TWO – with dates & location) to the meeting and your reason for selecting the shows you named.

As far as I could tell, I was one of the only ones who completed the assignment in it's entirety. Some had just a few shows they would recommend while others had 5-shows for a full season and no particular order.

I brought in two complete seasons... Shows, dates, and REASONS as to why I picked those shows and those dates. I made sure to keep in mind the needs of our struggling theatre and the mandates which had been given to us from the Trustees of the theatre. These mandates were to do a show that involved children, pick one show where everyone who auditioned could be cast, and to pick shows which the audience would have an awareness of already.

The shows I named specifically were:

Bryan in Feb – *A Few Good Men* (or) *Diary of Anne Frank*

May in Montpelier – *Phantom* or *Clue the Musical*

August in Montpelier – *The Goodbye Girl* or *Lost in Yonkers*

October in Bryan – *Little Shop of Horrors* (Cast ALL)

Nov/Dec in Montpelier – *Miracle on 34th Street* (Cast ALL
KIDS)

My logic was to create a season around a theme of "The Movies". As many of the general, non-theatre lover, public might not know some core plays – almost everyone has heard of these movies.

I also placed a Christmas show (with kids in the cast) in our December slot, a show with a "Halloween" theme in our October slot (which could be one where we cast everybody), and a serious acting play (drama) at the begining of the season.

I argued that as a theatre we need to do more to entice the public. Giving them something they already know is a key factor. This is why so many community theatres in large markets focus on primarily musicals. While a theatre lover may have heard of *Scapin* – almost everybody has heard of *West Side Story*.

Anyway, since we don't want to do 3 – 5 musicals a year I thought "movies" would be a good way to go...

GUESS NOT.

The latest meeting of the play reading committee has left me with no doubt. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT.

I have been with the theatre several years now and, not to pat my own back, but the productions I have been heavily involved in have been extremely successful from both a financial and cast-retention standpoint. However, it seems I make such a poor argument and such little sense that... Well, as the season begins to form I can see that NONE of my suggestions will be there.

It's not that I love those shows or anything. Anyone who knows me knows I would rather do *Assassins* and *Shear Madness*... Or even *Noises Off*. But the point is, what I saw as a persuasive argument (to get known shows in the season) seems to have been more of a pointless and non-compelling one.

It seems that my (obviously misguided) banter has become so apparently flawed that I am just getting ignored now. For example...

This last meeting we were trying to get any show that already had a director and solidify it into the season. I reminded the group that I was willing to direct *Little Shop of Horrors*.

Another member of the committee (a dear friend of mine!) suggested another musical, *Honk*. She suggested that she might

be able to find a director for that one.

Well, the leader of our committee (who I absolutely adore – no sarcasm – love the guy!) says “I move we commit to Honk and put it in the season since we have a musical that someone will probably want to direct”.

I reminded the committee that we have two other musicals who people have COMMITTED to direct. *Little Shop* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I asked that maybe we commit to one of those.

“No, I think it’s too early to commit to one of those. Let’s see what happens with some other things first.”

WHAT!? The same person who JUST WANTED to put HONK (a musical of which he had never seen / heard) into the season because it MIGHT have a director said NO to putting either of the shows I talked about in the season for the reason of??

That is when I relalized – I have completely devalidated (is that a word) myself. Apparently I have made so many bad mistakes and so many poor arguments that now when I speak it is just considered nonsense.

Oh well. At least I know now not to think too highly of my persuasive speaking skills.

One boy for sale

Or rather, just over 100 boys and girls in the production of [Oliver!](#) I saw last night. There was a boy, a former student in the 4th/5th grade class at my church who invited me to come. His older brother, also a former student, helped out by running a spotlight. How could I say no? Even though *they* never saw *me* when *I* was in *Oliver!* just two years ago... I was

so disappointed then that not a single student from my church came, or at least told me they came if they did. I advertised this to them for a few weekends, but nothing. Oh, well.

This rather large production is apparently typical of [Christian Youth Theater](#). This organization started out west, but became a reality around here when someone move to my wonderful state and received permission to branch out here. Now there are many branches just in the Chicago area, all under the [CYT-Chicago](#) umbrella. This isn't ordinary community theatre though. In order to allowed to audition for a show the kids are required to take one of several theatre classes through this organization. Obviously not a deterrent at all judging by the size of these shows, and even in the number of CYT shows some of them have been in according to the program. The quality wasn't bad at all. The characters for the most part were very convincing and if there were any slipups I didn't notice. I did have a couple of issues with their Fagin, but of course since I played the part myself this is only natural. I wish I could remember what those issues were now. Anyway, the boy who I came to see, Brian, played an orphan at the beginning of the show, then appeared twice more later during chorus numbers. During [Food Glorious Food](#) he nearly slipped up when he saw me in the audience, front and center. Interesting spot they sold me- I guess it pays to come by yourself and get those prime spots when groups fail to completely fill up a row!

I was a bit disappointed at a couple of things though. First off, the show was shortened quite a bit. The running time was about 1:55, and that included a 20 minute intermission, making the actual running time 1:35. Since the original show has a running time of well over two hour you can see a lot was not there. I Shall Scream and [Oom-Pah-Pah](#) were two full songs that were cut, and were probably the most obvious to go considering the group. Bill Sykes's song, My Name, was cut in half for some reason too though the one who played him did a

fine job. Many scenes were abbreviated as well. Ones I noticed most (again having been *in* them before) were some scenes in Fagin's Lair. However, these weren't the only places shortened. The scene where Noah Claypole is introduced was snipped (Oliver just leaves right after [Where is Love?](#)). The scene at the end where everything goes south for Sykes and Fagin's gang was shortened to the point where Sykes doesn't even get killed (Nancy still does though), and the scene at the end of Act I where Oliver goes out with Dodger to pickpocket, then gets falsely accused was missing entirely! Well, that whole thing aside I was also disappointed that for a production so well done they for some reason chose not to have a live orchestra. Everything was sung to recorded music. I'm sure they must have had a reason for this, but even so this took something away from the show. Outside of this, and I should stress that shortening the show sounded much worse in writing than it actually was, it was a very good production. Christian Youth Theater is something that should be considered for many other areas.

In any event, if you want to know why I didn't post yesterday this was why. ☐ Interesting thing: according to Brian he was considered for the role of Oliver, but at 12 years old he was a little tall in comparison to their pick for the Artful Dodger. Instead they cast an 8-year-old who did a fabulous job considering his age. This brought my thoughts back to a certain [Little Shop of Horrors](#) production where their original pick for Orin, who later dropped out, was actually shorter than me so when considering who would play Seymour they went with someone smaller and I got stuck with being the understudy. However, I should be happy with that because had the show not been sabotaged by a distraught producer who though he should have been director I wouldn't have been considered at all as I was still kind of a weak actor at that point. Did I get all of that right, O great admin who directed this show? ☐

QUIET!!!!

Ok... so last night was dress rehearsal for *Murder with a Silver Spoon* to be presented Saturday night at Orchard Hills Country Club in Bryan, Ohio. Let's just say it was an interesting rehearsal. To begin, our stage was cut from a huge space which was three smaller rooms minus retractable walls to one small area. Apparently, we were sharing the club with a group who was having a banquet. The space was not the important part. While waiting in the hall for their entrances, a few actors were told by the other group to keep the noise down... seriously. This proved to be very difficult especially for one performer who is full of energy and found it hard to keep the volume down while maintaining his energetic persona. He had to be constantly reminded to tone it down so we would not disturb the other room. Following the dress rehearsal, the director jokingly commented that she had trouble hearing anyone and that the energy was lacking. It was a good thing that Wednesday night's rehearsal was such a success.