

A Bridge Over Not So Troubled Water

I received a cool picture via email the other day – a river bridging over another river! It's man-made of course, but what a feat! It bridges the River Elbe in Germany and connects two important shipping canals. The project was put on hold indefinitely when Germany was split during the last century and was finally completed in 2003. I think this is pretty cool, so I'll share it and thank fellow tangents.org blogger [Jamiahsh](#) for sending it to me. I don't know why he didn't put it on his blog, but I figure he probably would have gotten a chance by now if that's what he wanted to do with it ☐ Check it out:



For more information about the bridge, [click here.](#)

The Lion In Winter

I am very glad we were able to arrange our obscenely busy schedule in such a way to be able to see the play The Lion In

Winter on Saturday night. A great friend and fellow blogger, [Jamiahsh](#) was a ~~sucker~~ kind enough to babysit all four kids for us, as this was not a play for children. Not that it was “adult” per se, but our younger two especially would NOT have been able to sit still throughout the entire production.

The Lion in Winter tells the story of King Henry II and his family in 1183. Although the actual play is fictional, it is based upon real people and real events. King Henry has 3 surviving sons who share the same goal: to inherit the kingdom, although that is where their similarities end. Richard, the eldest brother, “growls out for gore”, as it is said in the play. He is the warrior of the bunch, and he has the temper to match. Geoffrey (played a little too convincingly, haha, by a great friend and fellow blogger, [justj](#) – great job!) is the scheming, conniving, if mostly forgotten middle brother. Geoffrey “hums treachery” and is the epitome of someone who suffers from middle child syndrome – and it’s that much more hilarious when his parents actually admit to not giving him the time of day! John is the youngest brother, who is favored by his father for some reason despite his lack of... well, his lack of much of *anything* upstairs (I’m tapping my head). Eleanor, Henry’s estranged and imprisoned wife, is a tyrant in her own right, although she is largely limited by gender roles in the twelfth century.

This particular production was co-directed by a good friend – someone whose many talents I’ve long admired – she’s a gem! She is a very detail-oriented, hard worker, and the finished production illustrated those attributes. Because The Lion In Winter is typically an historical drama, it wouldn’t normally be one of my favorite shows – I’m the type to much prefer good stagings of upbeat musicals like Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, The Wizard of Oz or slapstick comedies like Idol Night at the Karaoke Place, The Nerd, or even a good melodrama. That being said, I can honestly say (and to my surprise) that I was never once bored during The Lion in

Winter. And even being an historical drama, it's not without its (large) share of comedy as well. The dialogue (and hilarious insults!) fly swiftly and smartly, and I honestly wish time would have allowed me another opportunity to see the play as I think there were many more things I could have caught, especially if I weren't a walking zombie these days. The play is complex; its dialogue and characters almost too intricate to effectively absorb in just one sitting. The playwright, James Goldman, found many opportunities within the script to have the characters make clever satirical remarks, often making fun of the time period in which the play takes place. Among my favorites was the following exchange between John and his mother Eleanor, the Queen:

Towards the end of the first act of *Lion in Winter*, John is astonished and horrified when his older brother Richard pulls a knife on him. "A knife," he says, "he's got a knife." To which his mother, Eleanor, responds by saying: "Of course he has a knife. He always has a knife. We all have knives. It is eleven eighty-three and we're barbarians!" Just the memory of that line makes me smile, especially because the woman who played Eleanor was simply awesome – she gave one of the best performances I've ever seen on a community theater's stage. I would expect it to be difficult to give life to a character as complex as Eleanor; after all, in Henry's words, Eleanor "thinks heavy thoughts like molten lead and marble slabs." but she did it marvelously.

Actually, all of the acting was great in this production; King Henry came across as powerful yet emotionally weary and even a bit vulnerable, and King Philip of France seemed to be both a willing yet also an unwitting pawn in the treacherous game played by the royal family of England around 1183.

Also of note in this particular staging of the show was the remarkable set which exemplified an old European castle quite well. Although it amounted to hard physical labor for its extensive stage crew, the medieval set was easily (depends

who you ask, I guess!) transformed into 6 distinct settings for the play.

Overall, a good show, and a fine job by both cast and crew. I only wish I had a chance to review it earlier so I could have done my part in recommending it to and recruiting audience members. Well, such is a busy life with 4 little kids, I suppose!

What The Truck?

I recently received an email forward containing pictures of trucks from Europe. These trucks are cleverly painted so that they can effectively advertise their contents. Check them out:





Now THAT Is One HORRIBLE Stage Manager

Wow – what happened here? Due to a props department mix-up, an actor was doing a suicide scene with a real knife instead of a fake one. Luckily, he wasn't killed, but this qualifies as a bit more than a simple mistake, wouldn't you say? Perhaps I'll think twice about offering to stage manage anything in the future – apparently there's a lot at stake. And for you actors who read this, how much trust do you have in your props people? And how much will you trust them after reading something like this?

From Time.com

by Adam Smith

Try this for an Agatha Christie plotline: performing on stage inside Vienna's Burgtheater, one of Europe's oldest and grandest, an actor takes a knife to his throat in his character's desperate attempt at suicide. As audience applause fills the opulent theater, blood pours from the actor's neck. But something's not right. Buckling and staggering his way off stage, the actor collapses to the floor. That's because the knife, and the harm that it's done, are both tragically real. Unfortunately for Daniel Hoevels, a 30-year-old actor from Hamburg, those pages from a murder-mystery came to life last Saturday night during a performance at the Burgtheater of Mary Stuart, Friedrich Schiller's play about the wretched life of Mary Queen of Scots. Rushed to the nearby Lorenz Bohler hospital having sliced through skin and fat tissue but thankfully not his main artery, Hoevels was fortunate to survive. "Just a little deeper," said Wolfgang Lenz, a doctor who treated him, "and he would have been drowning in his own blood."

The police investigation into the calamity points more to a foul-up than foul play. Viennese police say they're not probing the possibility of attempted murder; press reports had speculated a "jealous rival" could have had a hand in Hoevels' injury. Instead, investigators are focusing on possible negligence within the props department of Hoevels' Thalia Theater ensemble. According to local media, the company picked up the knife in Vienna to replace one brought from their Hamburg base that was then found to be defective. One possibility: that props staff forgot to blunt that new blade, which, police say, still had the price tag on it.

Hoevels himself seems to have put the snafu behind him. "I am now absolutely fine again," he told local media, "but I will always for the rest of my working life have a strange feeling about this scene." After reprising the role Sunday, albeit with neck bandaged, Hoevels headed back to Hamburg Monday in preparation for his role in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. In that play, the long-suffering title character winds up shooting himself in the head. Someone might want to double-check the gun.