

# 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. ☐

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## **Throw Him In The Pit**

Tonight was the first rehearsal for which we had an ORCHESTRA. And I am pleased to say that it went remarkably well. We finally started about 7.30 and got to the end of Act I shortly after 9. Remarkably, we stopped very little although there were some problems with lines but only once or twice did anyone call for a line. Good, bad, or indifferent we mae it through. I was even surprised by the young girls playing Agnes and Tootie. But for getting through the act in just over an hour-and-a-half was remarkable... evn the director said so after she delivered her long list of notes. The one note she had for Grandpa was the necessity to learn the Scene 2 song which we have not practiced a great deal.

Performing with an orchestra can be a very interesting predicament. You really have to be on your toes and know where you are in the music. We were informed that most productions do not get the benefit of the orchestra until the week of a shows opening. We have 8 rehearsals remaining, but it is STILL great to be on stage taking to heart all the

comments and making note to find ways to improve upon the character. Thursday nights Act II REHEARSAL SHOULD BE JUST AS INTERESTING. □

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## **Assembly may be required**

What a snooze... No, not me last night which was anything but- I think I may have gotten about five hours of sleep if I'm lucky. I'm referring of course to the assemblies that happen sometimes at schools. Especially those that totally mess up the schedule. For me, it was pretty much irrelevant too. Not to the kids or staff, just to me and any other sub that might have been there. You see, it was an awards ceremony. For the entire school. All, or at least many, sports and academic clubs. As a sub I knew pretty much zero of the names, hence why it was kind of a snooze to me. It was a snooze to probably nearly all the students as well because it lasted for more. Than. Two. Hours... For nearly all of the awards, they handed out certificates to every student involved, name by name, and then gave awards to high achievers. I would guess well over 300 names were read over those 2 hours 20 minutes. There was one sport I couldn't believe they had, let alone the number of students involved. Bocce-Ball. I kid you not. Nearly a hundred kids involved too by my estimate. Wow. Only track compared to that with four teams, 7th and 8th grades, boys and girls. There were probably 60-80 students involved there. The only other sport I remember was girls volleyball- I'm guessing there was no boys volleyball team because one of the students was a boy. The teacher was careful to not refer to that particular team (7th or 8th, I don't remember) as "the girls."

The academic teams and clubs consisted of a math team,

geography team, and science olympiad. Probably more- I don't remember. Interesting to note the math team was entirely Indian (or similar) or East Asian. Hmm. Perhaps our schools really are failing the children in the math field. Band, orchestra, and drama were part of the other extracurricular activities. And finally, there were also service clubs. One club helped the mentally-challenged kids, and another- well club doesn't really apply here (you'll see why in a sec)- recognized students who did some sort of community work. Thankfully they did not recognize these students individually as a good 90% of the students raised their hands when the principal asked who has done some community work or project! Was this part of a class assignment or were they really this outward-thinking?

Well, after some 25 teams, clubs, and organizations they wrapped up, had a drawing for some Pepsi T-shirts, and then were dismissed. The scheduled ending time was 9:45. The actual ending time was 10:35. Oops. Reminds me of television networks and sports for some reason...

So, we skipped two of the periods and I went on break. Finally I could get off my feet. Oh, did I mention that I had to stand for the entire assembly because there were no chairs provided for the teachers? Some plopped down with the students, other stood right along beside me. Now, I have an injured foot so I did a lot of leaning, walking, and a little bit of sitting on the floor in addition to the standing. So, all good and well now. Unfortunately I had about twenty minutes and I had to start eating my lunch as the teacher I was in for had no scheduled lunch. Instead, she had a study hall period. So, I had a panini during 4th period, an orange and a Mountain Dew 6th during study hall, and the rest of my lunch last period. Well, an interesting day for sure.

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# It Is Finished

Well, once again I was part of a great experience which started off a bit shaky but came off brilliantly. Sometimes I think that is the basis for many wonderful productions. You start off bumpy, have many highs and lows, but in the end (even moments before showtime) it all comes out fine.

Sunday night was to be our final rehearsal for the Requiem concert. However, the conductor was beside himself because there was no organist. The woman who pretty well organized the entire event was in the hospital and not expected to be released for two weeks. In the end, rehearsal was scratched with everyone hoping that our two hour rehearsal prior to concert time would be enough to polish the piece. Not to mention that the small orchestra accompanying the chorus would not be added until this evening.

Yet, everything came together relatively smoothly. The entire chorus was present (Lora must have signed herself out of the hospital as she said she would... but she looked fine). The soprano and baritone soloists were both splendid. The soprano (who is a freshman in high school) sounded positively angelic. No applause between each of the 6 sections of the piece (one small child made a sound in a silent moment). A well deserved standing ovation was received in the end.

Outside the performance space, several people commented that they could pick my voice out several times. Hoping that this was a good thing, I thanked each one. It is not usually a good thing to be heard above everyone else in a chorus. On the contrary, it is preferable for the voices to blend with each other. But who am I to turn down a compliment? Someone must appreciate my voice. Or have heard it enough to recognize it

(good or bad? Guess it depends who is singing... me or the visitor from Liswathistan).

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## Requiem Aeternam

Good heavens this music is HARD!!! It isn't even the fact that it is written in Latin!! I have had enough vocal training to at least fumble through that. But the parts are just all over the place and some of the parts have notes that do not even make any kind of sense. Oh! Excuse me. I have been trying to practice this piece (*Fauvre's Requiem*) which I just had to say I would be part of during the sanctuary dedication at St. Patrick's Catholic Church . It is not to say that I do not enjoy it; it is sooo FRUSTRATING!!!! It is nearly impossible to practice on your own because listening to the CD is so hard finding when to come in and finding the right notes. I find myself at the piano just plucking the keys. At least last Sunday there were five tenors at rehearsal. I think it was actually easier to be around other singers who tried to sing the same part. While I was a student at Bowling Green State University, I performed in a presentation of *Verdi's Requiem* and that actually seemed easier. Perhaps the fact that the choir at B.G. was actually composed of men and women who more or less had a clue about how to perform it instead of throwing a bunch of people together made a difference. But I am sure that it will all come together in the next month. Especially after we get some bodies to fill the risers. Fifteen voices are not going to be heard over an orchestra. But, I have every confidence that it will be a great success.