

Glory Moments

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In fifteen years of directing plays at the Coaster Theatre Playhouse, I've learned that audiences, though fascinated with the world of make-believe, are more interested in what it takes to create that world. Windows don't open so the burglar has to use the front door; the maid trips on her way offstage, falls down and smashes her tray of dishes; dogs lured across stage with biscuits stop and walk into the audience. Guns don't go off, so someone backstage screams, "Bang!" Some actors forget their lines, walk off stage and leave the rest of the cast to clean up the missing pages of dialogue.

Regardless of the risks involved in live theater, the few of us who brave walking on stage do it anyway for the glory. I call it our playground "Watch Me, Ma!" moment, and we don't get many of them in this lifetime. We've all seen the "Follow your Bliss" books, and while we think it's a grand idea, most of us settle for sensible: sensible shoes, sensible jobs, sensible lives. Yet, something calls to us of a deeper nature, and we yearn for those few moments in the spotlight, our glory moments. Even if we can't experience them ourselves, we like to stand in the wings and let some of the glory dust from the moments of others fall on our shoulders.

When Kentucky Derby 50-1 long shot *Mine That Bird* pulled away in the stretch to score a 6-3/4-length victory at Churchill Downs, 153,000 people in the stands came to their feet with a roar. We love it when the underdog wins. Last month, 47-year old singer Susan Boyle, a plain woman in sensible shoes, walked on the stage of *Britain's Got Talent*. Within seconds of beginning her jaw-dropping rendition of *I Dreamed a Dream* from "Les Miserables," the audience was on its feet with wild applause for her glory moment.

Earlier this month, over 500 of us were part of a standing room only crowd for the Tillamook Monday Musical Club's presentation of the Oregon Symphony. The concert featured local school and community musicians. It was definitely a glory moment for 100 Tillamook School District kids including a sixth grade band. It was a stellar performance conducted by Gregory Vajda with music to move our souls like Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* and Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* from *Symphony No. 9*. More, it was a success story--the story of a school district that had eliminated some of its music programs for five years and just in the last two years began the process of rebuilding its music curriculum. It was the story of families filling a gymnasium, families filled with pride to hear their son or daughter play with the Oregon Symphony. It was the story of the Ford Family Foundation funding the community music partnership between the Oregon Symphony and 250 musicians and singers from the Tillamook School District and community.

According to composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein, "Music...can name the unnamable and communicate the unknowable." All the arts have the power to speak to us, to reach deep within and touch us. In our schools, sometimes the first things to go in budget cuts are the arts--the very things that maximize a child's full potential, and sustain us in life. Those of us who've lived long enough realize that, indeed, "Art Saves Lives."

Actor Michael J. Fox, who's struggled with a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease for over 18 years says about life: "Everyone gets their own bag of hammers." But each of us has a choice. Following our bliss might not be a bad idea after all, whether it's center stage for just one moment, playing that one piece of classical music, brushing a bit of paint on canvas or stringing a few words together to create a poem. Wherever we find our glory moments, it's a great way to be alive. And basking in the glory dust from those around us is almost as good.