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Hi all,

GREETING:

A lot has been happening with me in the world of acting and entertainment. I have landed my first real stage role (finally!), was selected to join a theatre/production company for stage, film and television projects, worked on HBO's "Sex and the City", played with ZUZU at The Bitter End, worked at the inaugural Tribeca Film Festival, finished phase one of my headshot mailing campaign to casting directors and have become involved with a few production/development companies on the business end of things.

THIS ISSUE'S HIGHLIGHTS:

- Arol nabs role of *Tyler* in Susan Sandler's "**CROSSING DELANCEY**" and the role of *Norman* in an original one act play "**THE SESSION**" from **THE DINER PLAYS**
- Arol does Shakespeare.....or tries to!
- Arol to play Jean Paul Sartre and other fine characters
- So, Arol want's to write a screenplay?
- ZUZU's final gig?!

WHAT I HAVE DONE:

ACTING:

CROSSING DELANCEY and THE SESSION

I was offered the role of Tyler (in the movie he is Anton) in a stage production of CROSSING DELANCEY in Wayne, NJ this August. Ok, its still not Manhattan, but it is closer than the Castle Theatre where I did ONCE UPON A TIME! Actually, the theaters that where I am performing in NJ are much larger, nicer and bigger budget than many of the Off-Off Broadway productions in Manhattan. This is my first real stage role (i.e. not children's theater and not an extra role at the MET). I saw the casting call in Backstage, got the audition, got the part (no callback). Rather quick and easy. I am looking forward to playing this role as Tyler is a rather self-absorbed, smarmy, generally not too pleasant guy – a stretch for me as I'm sure you will all agree.

I was also offered the role of Norman in THE SESSION, one of four one-act plays in THE DINER PLAYS to be performed at the Brickford Theatre in Morristown, NJ in July. While I am happy to play the role of Norman, a rich kid who happens to be waiting tables in a diner, I was hoping to land one of the more meatier roles in the other one-act plays.

Me and Sarah Jessica Parker together in a dark movie theater

OK, we weren't actually sitting together and there were a dozen other extras around as well, but hey, ya gotta start somewhere. I have been getting calls from casting directors as a result of my mailing campaign (basically sending my pic&res along with a cover letter to every single casting director in NYC) and Amerifilms casting called up with background work on "Sex and the City". Now, I know I said in HWI#9 that I didn't want to become the go to guy for extra work (and I don't!), but, come on, it was "Sex and the City" for Christmassakes! I was hoping I would get to work with Kristen Davis, but alas it wasn't to be. Well, the other 15 or so extras and I sat around in the holding area most of the day before finally being called for our scene. It is a scene where Sarah Jessica Parker's character is sitting alone in a darken Paris Theater watching some romantic flick surrounded by couples getting' all lovey dovey. There is no dialog, just a music track of decidedly French origin. The production assistant had to pair us up for the scene by height and look. I stood by and watched while all the attractive girls got paired up with other guys. Finally I was the last person standing unpaired. Man, how embarrassing. I had flashbacks of being the last guy picked in elementary school gym class! Then the PA looked behind him and saw that there was one female still uncoupled."No, not the ICE QUEEN!!" This woman was totally anti-social. She did not sit with the other extras, she did not talk to the other extras, she even brushed me off when I went to introduce myself as her "partner". It was clear that she had done extra work numerous times before (including this show) and did not want to be associated with the newbies. As we moved from the holding area to the set, all my new 'extra' friends were offering their condolences to me for having drawn the Ice Queen. Once on the set, Ice and I were placed two rows behind and to the right of Sarah Jessica. On "action" the couples would all canoodle (some were told to make out – thank god, I was not!) while pretending to watch the flick. I eventually was able to thaw the Ice and she turned out to be a pleasant woman. She still looked old enough to be my mother so I wasn't all that excited about gazing at her romantically, but an actor's gotta do what an actor's gotta do. Actually, I am pretty sure that we are not even in the shot. Based on where the camera was, I think you might just see my shoulder. I'm not sure when "my episode" will air, but I think they are usually a few weeks to a month out. For those celebrity stalkers, Sarah Jessica seemed rather pleasant, exchanging jokes and whatnot with crew and extras alike.

To Be Selected....Or Not To Be Selected (That is the question)

For weeks, if not months, I had been seeing casting calls in Backstage for Shakespeare plays over the summer and I had ignored them because I have never done Shakespeare before. Not only have I never performed any of Shakespeare's

plays, but, shamefully, I had never read one in its entirety (except for Cliff's Notes of course). I have never even worked on a scene or monologue in my acting classes. Well, I finally decided that the best way to remedy this is to submit myself for a Shakespeare audition, then I would be forced to at least get a Shakespeare monologue under my belt. The next week I saw a call for the MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR to be performed this summer in Inwood Park (way up north in Manhattan). I was very excited when I got the call to audition, since there are no Shakespeare credits on my resume – aside from my college fraternity parody of Romeo & Juliet in which I played Julio Monteguido. After the initial excitement of getting the audition subsided, I became despondent when I realized I had three days to select a monologue, understand it, memorize it and put some meaningful actions behind it. Well I was currently reading CYMBALINE (not one of Bill's better known works) so I chose a monologue from that play. Problem was, I was told to do a comedic monologue. No matter, rather than start from scratch reading another Shakespeare comedy (i.e. the MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR!), I decided to do a comedic interpretation of the very macabre CYMBALINE. I'm sure Lee Strasburg (if not Bill himself) is turning over in his grave. I memorized and tried to put some of me into the character. Then I took it up to Inwood Park for the audition. When I told the director, Ted Minos and his associate Frank, what I was planning to do they both raised an eyebrow, but said nothing. Well they laughed in all the right places and I did as good a job as I think I could have under the circumstances. I felt good after the audition. I may not get the part, but I thought I did as well as I could have given my background and training. Plus, I was finding the doing Shakespeare was kind of fun. Two days later I got a call from Ted saying that they wanted me to come in to read for the roles of Fenton and Evans from the play itself. This time I enlisted the help of an acting coach that I call on from time to time, Andy Gale. Andy has performed more Shakespeare than I would ever be able to if I did show a day for the next decade. Andy wasn't too impressed with my monologue, but he couldn't argue with the fact that it got me the callback. The first thing he told me, which bummed me out, was that Shakespeare is never done with an English accent...unless, of course, you are English, but then, that wouldn't be an accent, would it. I just think it sounds so much better with an accent – one which I dare say I think I do fairly well. Doing with my flat American accent takes some of the joy out of it for me. Next he took me through the two scenes from which I would be auditioning and helped me get my arms (and tongue) around the dialog. Again I only had a few days to prepare, but by audition day I felt like I had done all that I could to prepare under the circumstances. I had quickly read the play, understood the motivations of the characters and sought out guidance from an Shakespeare expert. Ted and Frank were at the audition again and, while I felt I did OK, I didn't get the sense that they were overly impressed. Well, my instincts for how I do in auditions are getting better, b/c I never heard from Ted again. Maybe it was beginner's Shakespeare luck with the first audition or maybe they agonized over choosing me or another guy, I will never know. But at least I have entered the world of the Shakespeare audition and I won't rest until I have that first Shakespeare role.

Mingling with the Stars at the Inaugural Tribeca Film Festival

Through a friend of a roommate of a friend of mine from Wharton (thanks Liza!) I was able to volunteer to work at the Tribeca Film Festival – Robert De Niro and Jane Rosenthal’s effort to revitalize the downtown section of the city post 9/11. Of course, I was thinking there would be benefits galore, namely attending the premieres, seeing some of the indie films and going to the discussion panels. Well at the first volunteer meeting we were all told flat out that there would be zero fringe benefits and that if we were not doing this out of the kindness of our hearts that we shouldn’t do it at all.

Well, I didn’t have much else scheduled for that week and I thought, if I work hard enough they are sure to throw me a bone. While there were volunteers needed to work the premiere screenings, the afterparties and the Star Wars events, I figured I would avoid the mad rush to sign up for those areas and volunteer for the Operations group. Less sexy to be sure, but I figured I could put my education to some use figuring out logistics from the comfort and safety of the festival headquarters. I spoke with Sally, the head of the operations group and we instantly bonded over her former job as a banker for Salomon and my experience at Goldman. She said over and over how excited she was to have me on her team. I walked home that night, satisfied that I had made the right choice and was in the right group.

Well, as it turned out, for the first three days all I did was no brain, heavy lifting work. I helped the event production company, Dalzall, move their office from Midtown to Tribeca and then spent two days driving a huge truck and loading and unloading cases of beer and liquor to the various parties, overseen by a 23 year old over eager Texan who had been in the city for only two months. Much to the annoyance of me and the other volunteers (read: suckers) he kept pronouncing Houston Street, Houston, as in the city of his home state. Three days and I had not even seen any of the movies, parties or celebrities.

But just when I had begun to despair, I was asked to help out with the screening of the world premier of the new Al Pacino movie “Insomnia” at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center (TPAC). I arrived at 5pm on Saturday and in typical TFF fashion proceeded to sit around for two hours while the people in charge scurried around, completely unorganized, and tried to mobilize all of the volunteers. At about 7:30pm I was about to leave when I saw one of the supervisors place a volunteer right at the entrance to TPAC, right on the edge of the red carpet as a greeter for the celebrities. Well, if no one was going to assign me to a task, I would assign myself. I walked over and took up a position next to the female volunteer and told her that I would be joining her as a greeter because they wanted there to be a girl and a guy. She nodded and no one else said a word. In fact, Jim (the guy I had been bugging for the past two hours about finding something for me to do) looked downright pleased when he saw me looking purposeful at the theater gates.

At last the celebrities strolled up the red carpet, one by one, stopping in front of the cavalcade of photographers assembled to click and flash. Then they would stroll by me and my greeter friend and into the theater. I tell you, I was in heaven. Those of you who have read the early issues of the insider know how star struck I get. Here are just a few of the celebs I can within an armslength of: Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Kristen Davis, Billy Crystal, Ed Norton, Whoopi Goldberg, Hilary Swank, Harvey Keitel, Adam Goldberg (Saving Private Ryan & A Beautiful Mind) and Robin Williams.

WRITING:

Ok, so I believe that part of the strong integrity that the Hollywood Insider possesses (tongue firmly in cheek), and what its readers have come to expect <ah-hem>, is a follow up on things that I say I will do in previous issues. So, to honor that, I must say that I have gotten absolutely no where in my writing of the children's stage version of A WATERSHIP DOWN or my original play idea about a group of jungle animals. I have really no excuse except that there are so many creative things I want to do and I have to keep shifting priority as new interests invade my head.

The newest idea is a screenplay for a feature film. I have what I think is a sure hit which I am currently developing. I wont say more on it now, except that it is a romantic comedy (they sell well!) – kind of a “She’s All That” meets “Four Weddings and a Funeral”. I am taking this one slowly, because I want to use this as an opportunity to learn about the entire screenwriting process. To that end I have been reading books on the subject and talking to some screenwriters about the process. This one will take time no doubt, but I think it will be a ton of fun. Stay tuned.

MUSIC:

ZUZU played again at The Bitter End last Thursday. Thanks to all of you who turned out for what could be ZUZU's last gig for a while. Lead singer Susan is preggers (due very soon) and lead guitarist/songwriter Colin's lovely wife Sheryl is about to give birth to their second child. Therefore, it is unlikely that we will be up on stage again much before the fall.

THIS ISSUE'S STATISTICS:

Days since becoming an "actor":

Number of Films:

Number of TV shows:

Number of Theater shows:

Number of Subscribers to the Insider:

Website Hits: (www.aroljahns.com).

Mood Meter:

Very High! Having booked a couple of roles I am feeling very confident. I know they aren't Broadway (or even Off-Broadway) credits, but who cares? I am auditioning and getting callbacks and landing roles. This is exciting for me. I have noticed in the past few months that my hit ratio of getting auditions to submitting my pic&res is over 50% (probably more like 65%) and my callback to audition ratio is around 30%. I'm not sure what the national stats are, but I am very happy with these numbers. It might be because of the new, more professional look and feel of my resume or the recent credits that I have put on there. Or it might be that I am being more selective with what I submit myself for (I no longer submit myself for roles asking for "tall, African-American women"). Whatever the reason, I know that confidence in this business breeds more confidence and, as a result, more roles. The most important thing for me though, is that I am having a blast doing it. I love the whole audition process and, while it is nice to land roles and get callbacks, I try to learn something from each audition.

THIS ISSUE'S STATISTICS:

Days since becoming an "actor": 283

Number of Films: 3

Number of TV shows: 0

Number of Theater shows: 4

Number of Subscribers to the Insider: 158

Website Hits: 1,643(www.aroljahns.com).

Mood Meter:

High. I am definitely excited about the fact that I am getting more auditions and getting some callbacks and good feedback on the work that I am doing. This is very positive. However, I am beginning to get impatient that I have not begun to make any real headway in terms of film or television. My agent is doing absolutely nothing for me (it may be time to search for new representation) and only time will tell if my mailing campaign will bear any fruit.