

BROCK'S BANTER: Mellow

My Mellow's Been Harshed

By Brock Weir

?Shh, you're harshing my mellow.?

That was one of the first words that greeted me from a regular ole' hippy on Sunday afternoon.

Taking my seat, I was sitting a row or two behind an elderly man in a very crisp linen suit who could not be described as ?hirsute? by any stretch of the imagination.

Evidently the other hippies agreed.

?Whoa, man! What happened to your hair?? said the next hippie, this one, a real swingin' chick wearing a Mama Cass smock and palazzo pants as she rubbed the bald head as if she was trying to get a genie to burst out of his left nostril.

As much as I would like to say I was riding the YRT's Magic Bus through some godforsaken, newly-discovered hipster enclave of York Region, the scene unfolded in the comparatively staid surroundings of the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts for Wavestage's production of Hair.

You've likely read about their production in these pages over the past few weeks. If you didn't heed the call to go out and get tickets, you missed out on a great production.

We're no strangers to Wavestage, whether it is in their present incarnation as the Wavestage Theatrical Company or in their previous life as the Aurora Performing Arts Group. This fact was driven home by the parade of familiar Aurora faces that bounded around the stage in various states of undress, letting the Sunshine In and letting down shining, gleaming, streaming, flaxen, waxen, long, straight, curly, fuzzy, snaggy, shaggy, ratty, matty, oily, greasy, fleecy, shining, gleaming, streaming, flaxen, waxen, knotted, polka-dotted, twisted, beaded, braided, powdered, flowered, and confettied, mangled, tangled, spangled, and spaghettied coifs. Of particular note was Colin Campbell, who took on the lead of Claude ? a far cry from his last appearance in The Auroran taking on the wildly different role of Gilbert Blythe in the musical version of Anne of Green Gables, alongside Rachel Sanderson who also featured in the latest production.

And was the pre-show scalp rubber.

While the actors are to be praised for their versatility going from turn of the century Canadian classics, to a world of peace and love, going a few tokens over the line is really not that far a cry from Anne Shirley getting poor Diana hammered on homemade currant wine, is it?

Following the show, the producers and actors behind ?Hair? warmed to their theme and put it to good use ? having barbers at the ready in the lobby, encouraging people to shear their locks to make wigs for those in need.

That is more than a ?good news? story: it is great, and one which should be shouted from the rooftops, particularly in these times. Take the last two months or so as an example. We have had disheartening scandals emerge at every level of government, from the steady stream of swill continuously engulfing Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, to Senators of all party stripes doing their utmost to bring their own chamber into disrepute.

On a human level, we have families still coming to grips in the aftermath of the tragic train derailment in Lac-Mégantic, people struggling to rebuild their lives after disastrous floods in Alberta, not to mention the growing discord and civil unrest percolating amongst our southern neighbours on both sides of the coin clamoring for justice following the Treyvon Martin verdict.

Oftentimes it seems people reporting on such issues are put in an awkward place of trying to strike the right balance in their coverage. It is a problem which, in many cases, might be self-inflicted. The old adage was: ?If it bleeds, it leads' and this might be what people have become accustomed to.

Is it really, however, what they want?

If one focuses on ?good news? every once in a while at the national, provincial, or local levels, there is often a blowback ? a backlash that you're lobbing softballs in favour of what are described as ?real issues/news.?

Consider the flurry surrounding Prince George's birth last week.

Naysayers claimed to have no idea why this was such a big deal. Babies are, after all, born every day. People who were excited were often ridiculed for waving the flag, hosting a tea, or losing sleep and productive work days keeping one eye on webcams focused outside the door of their London hospital broadcasting absolutely nothing to their large international audience until George decided it was time to arrive.

Admittedly, some of the coverage leading up to that point was inevitably excessive and pointless. How much can one possibly say to

fill time and space when everything can be boiled down to, ?No word on Womb Watch??

The answer: headlines the child will be ?23rd cousins twice removed to? Blue Ivy Carter and the Finnish government sent the Duke and Duchess a baby hamper complete with a pack of five condoms.

On the first count, that might be an interesting piece of bar trivia 20 years down the road. On the second, it is too little, too late.

Bundled together, who cares?

Nevertheless, the birth of a baby is always something to celebrate, but when it is one that arrives with the gravitas and presumed destiny of the one born in London on July 22, it is definitely good news, good news which we should have no shame in celebrating. God knows after the last few months, it is a refreshing and welcome change.