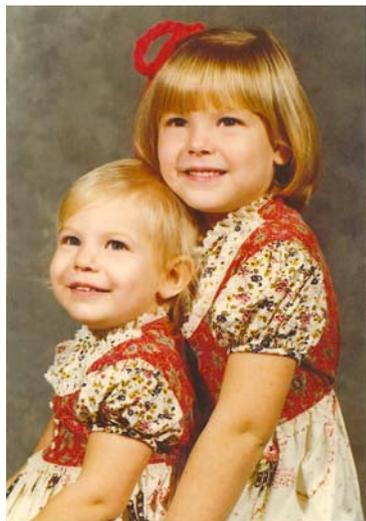


Backstage for the Holidays with Becca and Heather Ayers

December 24, 2007 By Bixby Elliot



Becca & Heather Ayers

Are you enjoying the holiday season? Taking a little time off of from work, doing some shopping, going to parties, chugging down an extra eggnog because tomorrow you can sleep in because it's, well, it's the holidays? That may be true for YOU but not for the hard working folks on Broadway. While the rest of us celebrate they still have to perform (8 shows a week) and try to squeeze in their holiday plans backstage and between shows. I thought it would be fun to find out how some B'way vets spend their holidays so I caught up with Becca and Heather Ayers to find out how these Broadway Babies balance their show biz with their holiday biz.

Becca and Heather Ayers are sisters and they are both currently performing in Broadway shows. Isn't that the coolest? Becca is an ensemble member of the B'way revival of Les Miserable and the understudy for Madame Thenardiere while her sister Heather (just a few blocks away at the Hilton Theater) plays Helga Shmelga in Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein and covers the roles of Elizabeth (Megan Mullally's part) and Frau Blucher (Andrea Martin's part). They also live together in an apartment in Times Square. How great is that? They roll out of bed. Stumble down Shubert Alley and they are at work - ON BROADWAY. TOGETHER! Someone should create a television show for them. Seriously! Someone should get on that.

During the holidays, it sounds like things get very festive backstage at Les Miz and YF. While famine and the French Revolution are played out on stage at Les Miz, Becca informed me that backstage is the opposite. The dressing rooms are filled with lots of decorations; trees and lights and a variety of fun things. Becca said that the dressers at Les Miz get very excited by the season - surprising the cast with cute things on the mirrors. This year they hung paper snowflakes from the ceiling in the quick change area, creating a winter wonderland. Little Cosette/Eponine decorated their dressing room door like a gigantic present and Christmas music fills the halls of the theatre. There is also an on going mice theme at Les Miz - there are cut outs all over the theatre - so for the holidays the mice got some mistletoe, decorations and even a menorah! Holiday mice at Les Miz, you heard it here first folks!

Over at YF there might be monsters and mayhem on stage, but backstage there are lights and holiday classics streaming from ipods. Heather says that the best display is in the wig room where they "go all out" with a silver metallic tree with ornaments, garland, stocking everywhere, huge stars, lights and music playing. It sounds like those wig folks take their yuletide preparations very seriously!

Heather tells me that the YF crew loves a good holiday party, it sounds like they have had several. A company party at Bond45, Megan Mullally and Roger Bart threw a party at the new Pop Burger (a fantastic idea for a party, I think), Shuler Hensley had a celebratory soiree at his abode and "Miss Andrea" as Heather calls her (meaning Andrea Martin) had a "gals night party" at her amazing apartment!

Becca played the role of Elf for the Les Miz Secret Santa and helped deliver all the presents and even did some detective work to find out what cast members wanted under the xmas trees this year. And, while the denizens of Les Miz might be starving on stage there are plenty of cakes, cookies and treats backstage. Many folks at Les Miz are civic minded during the season and did Carols for a Cure/BCEFA and participated in a Toys for Tots Concert and a toy collection for that as well.

Broadway performers have to work right up until the holiday. Some stay in town and enjoy a day or so of relaxation and others jump on a plane to spend a few moments with loved ones in other parts of the country. Becca and Heather are going to attempt the later and hope that there are no unexpected travel delays. They will leave Monday morning and fly to St. Louis where they will spend Christmas with their family, but then come right back on Tuesday! Wow. Becca said, "it's a quick trip, but we love to be with family...we especially want to see our Gramma as much as possible these days. Nothing is like being with your family during the holidays." Heather told me that she and her sister will have a little NYC Christmas as well, celebrating a bit on Sunday night before heading to St. Louis. "Sunday after the show, Bec and I will relax in our apartment in Times Square and hope that the kids upstairs aren't blaring their music so we can watch a movie and open our presents under our three foot tall pink plastic Christmas Tree that Bec bought on sale last year from Duane Reade!" Is that not adorable!?!

When the topic turned to Christmas presents I tried to do some sleuthing and find out what was waiting for each sister under the xmas tree, but they didn't really give up any info. Becca knows the two things that Heather definitely likes so she can count on those things being wrapped up, but she didn't give up any more specifics. But, I found out from Heather that she considers herself pretty picky and likes bubble bath and soapy stuff. Thus I have deduced that Heather will be getting bath products for the holidays. See how I did that. Call me Sherlock Bixby. Becca said that Heather is always "very thoughtful and creative and really good at making crafty cards and things" so she thought that Heather might be going in the direction for a present or two. It does seem like each already has their favorite present this season; being in a Broadway show.

"I'm thrilled & grateful to have this job!" Heather exclaimed. Any of the hassles of being in and a show during the holidays seem to melt away when compared to the joy of doing what you love on "the Broadway". Becca mentioned that she is "pretty used to working while the rest of the world plays (and vice versa) so it doesn't phase [her] too much." They both feel lucky to get that quick trip home, which isn't always the case. One year Heather was in the Off-Broadway production of Forbidden Broadway and couldn't go home with Becca. She describes a not so pleasant Christmas. Apparently she had just tried to switch to a different cell phone service but it had gotten all messed up and she didn't have any phone at all. Heather recalls, "loading my gifts on to a wheelie-cart and taking them to the Paramount hotel and opening them in the lobby while I talked to my family on a pay phone." Um, that doesn't sound like a ton of fun!

They may be away from family for the majority of the holiday but Heather and Becca find much to love about Christmas in NYC. Becca really likes the tree at Lincoln Center and the windows at Bloomingdales and is really hoping to get in some skating at Bryant Park. Heather, meanwhile, enjoys the craft fairs all over town and the lights on 5th Avenue. However, she says the simple things make her happy too; "coming home from the show, turning on the tree lights, lighting their Christmas-tree-smelling candle and wrapping presents." Oh, she also likes the After-Christamas Sales!

I want to thank Becca and Heather Ayers for sharing a bit of their holidays with us here at Two On The Aisle. It has been GREAT! You can see Heather in [Young Frankenstein](#) now and into the near future at the Hilton Theater and Becca will be in [Les Miserable](#) until it closes, then she will begin performing in South Pacific at Lincoln Center in January. Make sure to keep an eye on both of these lovely and talented performers. I am quite sure that they will both be headlining in their own shows on "the Broadway" very very soon. Hey, maybe they will be cast in leads together in the same show! That would be an awesome Christmas present for next year. Santa? Did you get that?

To learn more about Heather you can go to her website - click [HERE](#). To find out more info on Becca you can click [HERE](#) or go to her myspace page [HERE](#) and listen to her music (she is more than just a B'way star!)

Have a great holiday everyone and I will...

~ See You On The Aisle