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An ode to proud papas

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The more refined among you will clearly recognize that this isn't technically an ode, defined by Merriam-Webster's online dictionary as "a lyric poem marked by an exultation of feeling...." But I do so love the sound of the word, and will at least do justice to the feeling component. Cut me a little slack here.

Lizabeth (my youngest daughter) and her peeps have been getting together for the past several days—and I was especially impressed this afternoon with the father of one of her friends, who drove them all to a local museum. Any dad that can take a gaggle of teenage girls to a museum, instead of a mall, is ode-worthy in my book.

I, of course, opted for the mall. I was there to record my "[Gammage Goer](#)" review for the opening night of Annie at ASU Gammage. I'm one of a dozen Valley residents selected (by application and interview process) to participate in the inaugural year of the Gammage Goer program—which shares written and online show reviews by a diverse panel of Arizona residents via the ASU Gammage website.

We've each got three shows to review this season. First up for me was Annie, which Lizabeth and I saw together last night. (I'll also be reviewing Jesus Christ Superstar and

In the Heights.) We do our reviews in a classy little cubicle that sits near the concierge desk at [Scottsdale Fashion Square](#)—through a company called “[MyStudio](#).”

“We’re so hip that we don’t even know it,” someone from a local theater company told me recently. I felt that way about [Scottsdale](#) when I discovered we’re the only city other than West Hollywood to have such a thing (MyStudio reports that a New York location is in the works).

The second proud papa I encountered today was MyStudio manager Toby. (I know another proud papa named Toby if you count being father to a feline.) Toby might take offense, in a good-natured way, to my use of the term “cubicle.” MyStudio describes itself as “a self-contained, state-of-the-art, high-definition (HD) audio/video recording studio.” (Their description really is the better one.)

When I arrived at MyStudio, Toby was assisting a family making a studio recording together. I didn’t see exactly what they were up to during their five minute session (which runs just \$20)—but I know it involved clown-size purple sunglasses and a lot of giggling.

It made me wish, for once, that I’d actually brought a gaggle of girls to the mall. They could have some serious fun doing karaoke or stand-up comedy together. Once you record your session (with one of oodles of backgrounds you have to choose from), you get a CD to take home (and copy, I’m told, as many times as you like).

Your recording can be posted on the MyStudio website and accessed by password so you can share it with others—and watch yourself over and over and over again. Where was this technology when my husband did that YMCA Village People stint for a college talent show so many years ago? (No, honey, I didn’t mean to imply that you are old.)

I had to wonder, after recording my review of [Annie](#), why more arts organizations aren’t using this resource. I’d love to be able to visit the MyStudio website and see a whole host of teasers for upcoming children’s theater productions. MyStudio seems such a convenient and economical way to capture cast and crew comments or creative team perspectives.

Never mind the fact that I seem to have a bad hair day anytime I go near their studio. I’m still a fan. Lizabeth is lucky I hadn’t yet stumbled upon this while she was studying violin. I’d have had her make a musical recording at least once a year for her grandparents. The gift-giving potential of this baby is huge. And how else can you send four teens into a mall with just \$5 each and have them come out with something so gosh darn wonderful?

I got a kick out of Toby because he was a proud papa par excellence. We chatted a bit while waiting for my recording to hit the system and he shared with me that he has three children—two sons who attend a K-8 performing arts charter school in [Peoria](#) called [Paramount Academy](#), and a daughter who’ll start kindergarten there next fall. (Their

MyStudio recordings are truly charming and will come in handy one day should their proud papa ever want to embarrass them in front of a prom date.)

This is what makes my travels in the arena of the arts so rewarding—meeting new people and discovering new ways for children and families to experience and share the arts. Although my own high school student attends a school for the arts, I hadn't yet heard about Paramount Academy, which combines academics with various types of drama and music study. I was happy to be educated.

If you're a proud papa (there were plenty of them at last night's performance of Annie), drop me a line and tell me about your favorite arts experiences with your children. What are your favorite arts activities to do together? What are your favorite venues for enjoying music, dance or theater with your children? Which museum will you choose when it's your turn to teen taxi?

–Lynn