

Austria T4 4-9 December 2004

WOW talk about picture postcard beautiful---I loved Vienna, Salzburg, Bregenz Austria and Munich Germany!! And seeing the Alps and Innsbruck—could not believe it—gorgeous does not do this country justice!! I want to Thank Heike, Kathi, and Franz for coming to the airport to get me. I turned right and out of my left ear I here my name and turn to get one of the biggest hugs ever from Heike—Kathi—was videoing the whole event and Franz extended his hand to say "hello"—well yall know me, he got a hug also. Okay let's get started lots and lots to tell you about.

Mr. & Mrs. Bailey's troupe is fabulous!! In fact they are the most precision drill team you have ever seen. You just had to know under Des' tutelage there would be no number left unfinished. For example when the warlords dance, after Des had taken Alice off stage 4 girls remained---I wondered what for? Mistake? NOT HARDLEY! The girls are not only very beautiful bookends at the end but all during the number are cheering the guys on—screaming and just playing with the fans. Gotta remember here Des' attention to detail. The girls "frame" the guys at the end of the number. A very neet touch to a fantastic number. And during warlords the guys snap their heads around---very precise. And in Stolen Kiss—before Des comes out the girls circle around Saoirse and then slide one leg behind them, arms go in front and then at the end they kinda "peel" off—in perfect succession. (sorta, kinda like going down for a push-up—but different) But what it does it give Des time to adore Saoirse and us to adore the both of them. NO other troupe does it like this—it was really beautiful. I wish I could draw you a better picture—cause it done in an instant and it is neet.

And if there has been any change to Des and Kelly it has only been for the better. There is now a fire between them that only a husband and wife would know about---and Kelly knows what she has and she plays Des and the looks he gives her are magical. Kelly has gotten more beautiful, it had been too long since I have seen her---2 years. I am soo very proud of Kelly, and I told her so, that she kept Bailey as a professional name. So many professional women will keep their maiden

name. Kelly said: "I am Kelly Bailey now"—and with a man like Des for a husband who wouldn't? In one of the photos I am looking at Kelly and Des is looking at the both of us and I think you can see the beautiful "newlywed blush" on his face.

Now for "my T3'rs": Nope don't get me wrong Des' troupe is like Donny's in that they are 1 (one) totally complete troupe. Sooo let's correct that right now to read: now for "my former T3'ers". Donny, first thing Johnny ask was had I seen you lately and to send his best your way and to all T2. Liam, Paul, Sinéad were all fantastic to me. The first night Johnny said, "JoeJoe, I can't believe you would come this far to see us." Heck, I think by now everyone knows I would go to the ends of the earth or where ever is beyond the other side to see the kids dance. Paul now has a clean-shaven face—he looks like a baby!!! Yes, he reminded me he will be 29 in a couple of months. I thought maybe it would make a difference when I saw him dance-----we will get to that answer on his show report. Liam was just phenomenal and Sinéad beautiful. She did say however that she is not doing the windup doll much in T4---I hope she will get more chances—she owns the role. I will not ever forget the HUGE smiles I got the first time they saw me from the stage!! "THANK YOU", to this group—seeing yall remind me of a lot of wonderful time spent in Vegas. I now know how an "aunt" or "grandma" feels when they go see their "kids". I was treated with such warmth and kindness—can't believe it and it just floors me when a dancer remembers me and comes to chat with me. BTW, the sparkle in Johnny's eyes we love to see is now downright glitter...pure glitter. He still has an aura around him when he dances. You know the starburst they use to vignette a person in a photo? He will always be the star onstage. I know everyone knows I try not to play favorites although I might have let out a secret where Donny is concerned---Johnny is right there too. (As is soooooo many of the guys—NOPE-----not gona start naming them.) He makes you feel as if you are the only person in the world that matters. In fact he is the most like Michael Flatley of any Lord we have. But we will wait for the rest until I get to his show.

I have waited 4 years to see Des dance (a full show—remember at Epcot there were only half hour shows, and I missed him on the 2001 trip to Germany) and I did not have to wait any longer than the 1st show cause Des was our 1st Lord. SSSSOOOO was it worth the expense, time and effort????? YES, a million, trillion times YES!!! As I sometimes do, I said, "yeah, Des" and FROM THE STAGE we heard, "JoeJoe you really made it here". He knew me from 2 words—cause he had not looked my way, at that point. And at the end of the show he pointed to me and said, "JoeJoe this is for you", and then he said, "Heike this is for you too" and we got an extra encore---OH MY GOD I still get goose bumps when I think of it. So many special things have happened to me from the Princess' troupe & Donny's Troupe—now this, it was an honor I will NEVER forget. THANK YOU DES!! But how did he dance you ask???? HUGE kicks, leaps to die for and a handsome lord too. He was "on" and in control. I loved seeing the respect the rest of the troupe afford him, as should be. OK, OK I hear you---and yes there were other leads. Mrs Bailey was our bad girl. She is pure sex, absolutely gorgeous, and "owns" our Des, on and off stage. The way the look at each other should be rated "R" or at least HALF an X!! haha. Alice Reddin Saoirse, Epcot kid, Former T1er, how graceful—just think of Tracy and Sarah mixed together with Bernadette for icing. Alice is totally feminine, soft expressive---I was sooo very proud of her. Anthony Street was our bad guy. WWWOWOWOW! Another handsome man, evil—oh stop right here just a sec—his men dance couples in the bad guy uniforms!! This is the only way it should be done. Anthony is a "take charge" leader and is just flawless. AND, OH BTW, NO beating Des to a pulp. They were harder on the Little Spirit than Des. Speaking of Rebecca, she is a muscle bound, little power pack. She presents the little Spirit differently from Ash, Helen or Sharron. You know, at the beginning of the second act—the wind chases the Little Spirit around—very foreboding, scary time? Well Rebecca comes out dancing, like she has not a care in the world—and we do not know anything is a miss until the guys capture her. She is bubbly, yes as in champagne. Wow (at this point) I could not wait to see her again to make sure what I saw was really what I saw. The fiddlers are very different from each other and any duo I had seen before. One tall—leather vest and skirt—high heel boots with

sequins—very lively and one in an outfit I did not care for: a silver bra like thing they wear in Siam. She looked very uncomfortable with it. . I thought it was out of place and a distraction to her talent and beauty. And they do not change for Hell's Kitchen. I think the only fiddler I would want to see the belly button of would be Johnny---oops a Demi Moore moment. She had a more subdued presentation and the Austrians and Germans I was with seem to prefer that.

Imagine that—only one show down and Des' troupe has already grabbed my heart and ran with it. What will I feel after 4 more shows—stay tuned!!

Franz came and got Heike, Kathi and I and took us to Kaiser FRANZ JOSEPH and Elizabeth's palace—don't know it, you say---think Lipizzaner horses—yep I was right there. Nope did not get to see them but we walked to the most beautiful streets full of little shops. And in the center of it all—the Austrian's have uncovered Roman ruins—2 stories down---wowowow. Then we went to Franz' sisters house for Coffee and Cake and wonderful companionship and friend ship. I will pause here to remind everyone I know NO German or Austrian—but funny isn't it—when we were talking LOTD we all spoke the same language.

Johnny Finnegan is our second Lord. Johnny is still all that is Vegas—PHENOMINAL!! He is the consummate showman, he plays with you and you beg for more!! And I cannot stop talking about those eyes—they are infectious!! And a gentleman to boot. And sweet. And just Johnny. Paul Devers was the Dark Lord. Baby face sweetness lasted only the first step and then he was our regular old scumbag, horribly mean dark lord—and the best there is at that. There is NOTHING innocent or nice about him on stage (but secret be told—off stage he is a giant of a gentleman and sooo very sweet.) And I love his Dark Lord sooo much!! And Johnny and Paul are one when they dance—in the vein of Donny and Adam or Damien O'Kane and Tom Cunningham. They

match each other leap for leap. Louise Hayden Saoirse, former Epcot kid and T1er was the good girl and Katie Martin former T1er the bad. Louise's presentation is very tall, long lines and very sweet. She is also beautiful and very expressive. She is a little taller than Johnny, but it did not matter. Katie was the one dancer that was gona have to prove she could pull of Morrighan---she is too little, beautiful and petite---so I thought. Just stand back and watch. My God---she was a tawdry little vamp---one of the best I had seen. She could out "sexy" anybody, anytime. Oh and I should tell yall that Des' troupe is more pure to the original in another way: the bad girl does not jump up and slide down the Dark Lord like our kids---nope, she is danced off just as if Daire himself was there. And Rebecca and the fiddlers were just the icing on the perfectly made cake. They enhance it tenfold. Colette is an expressful, wonderful and talented singer you will ever find. The music stopped one time and she just kept going---I think she is the only former T2er in Des' troupe.

Oh---and the thingy about attention to detail---all of the dancers wanted to stop to chat in a driving, cutting freezing wind---not wanting to pass us by---we hurried them along as much as possible. We were froze solid. But this night was sooo very special for another reason also: I met James Keegan, 18 year old phenom that my hostess, Heike loves so very much, and could not stop talking about. "JoeJoe James is only 18 and the best we have seen this young". His report will wait for another show. But I will say this much---guess I have an eye fetish---but his eyes are the dreamy kind like Jason Gorman's. Basically to die for.

Okay 3 hours to Salzburg and then another show tomorrow night. The morning of the show Heike's thoughtfulness came bursting through we I found out we were going on a guided tour. All righty then. What did Salzburg have to offer? Remember THE SOUND OF MUSIC???? Von Trapp family?? We saw the façade of the house they used in the movie, the real home, and the real chapel the Von Trapps were married in. And several castles and it is beautiful. Then we were dropped off at Mozart's house, which is now a museum now. Took a bus back to our hotel---a chalet own by a family since the 1700s. We had to hike a good couple of miles from the bus stop.

The 3rd show---I felt so sorry for the whole troupe—the audience was DEAD. Only us in the front row were making noise, clapping, enjoying ourselves. I don't think in all the years I have been going to the shows have I EVER seen a group this DEAD. They did not move till Planet Ireland and then it was only to clap. Think God for Kathi—she had bought the 3 of us Santa hats with Lord of the Dance in gold on them and stars across the front that lit up and flashed in sequence. We had slipped them on before Planet Ireland and it seemed to cheer everyone up—Des laughed out loud, as did many of the troupe. Des Bailey was our Lord and put up with an audience that no STAR should have to endure. He was perfect—leaps as high as the sky. He tried so hard to breathe life into these people—but they would not budge. Kelly Bailey was vivacious and Alice Reddin Saoirse, was scrumptious. They both are so beautiful—I loved watching them sooo much. But what really caught my eye this night was a used to be “skinny” “scrawny” tall thin Epcot kid, and T1er. Chris Hannon. THE TALENT, THE EVIL, THE ANIMATION!! BRAVO CHRIS!!! Leaps and jumps to match anyone. I am sooo proud of this young man and what he has become and the talent he has. It was a GREAT SHOW T4, BRAVO.

Tomorrow we leave for Bregenz and our last two shows. We pass through the Alps, Bavaria, Innsbruck and some of the most beautiful scenery I have ever seen in all my 53 years. Innsbruck is not the sleepy little town ABC told us about in 1974, it is huge. It rolls on for miles and miles as do the mountains. I told Kathi and Heike, “Thank god I don't live here, cause I would be dead”. Why? Because I would be driving and saying OH MY GOD and turning the steering wheel looking at different things. We stopped at Kathi's family home to say hello. Got to meet her mom and dad. I cannot tell you how beautiful it was. Word just do not describe this “Eden”. Oh, yes—let me just say I have never been through this many tunnels in my whole life never mind a 3 hour span.

MY EPCOT KIDS RULE!!! Do kids still say that?? They are indeed something to behold. Des, Kelly, Chris, Alice, Louise and now----NIKKY (he signed his name Nikky—although it would not have mattered—he is

another one that the "y" will be on his name forever)

FALLON. WOWOW!! Little Nikky was the "runt" (his words) of the troupe at Epcot and now a Dark Lord!!! I was telling Des at one point to take care of our newest "Epcot Kid" Lord(s) and he said, "But JoeJoe, I was an Epcot Kid too". Yes, Des you we're and still are an always be an Epcot Kid, a star from the first time you did the opening run across the stage—why else would it mean so much for me to find you and watch you dance a full show. You are everything I could have ever dreamed you would be, star, captain, gentleman and most important husband to a gorgeous, beautiful, wonderful Kelly.

Oh, I was telling yall about the 4th Show. I could not take my eyes off Nikky Fallon—he is a street gang leader type lord. Not afraid to scuffle, ridicule the lord, stands about 10 feet tall onstage. He is full of life and extremely exciting to watch—could only take my eyes off him to see T4's "Terminally cute" James Keegan. Remember Paddy McCarthy and Steven Scariff's kicks—well James' high kicks are higher and they make you just loose your breath. Two times in a row---God he is a phenomenal Lord!! Even though he is a star right now—can't wait to see how much fame he has in 2 or 3 years. Katie Martin was their bad girl and she is a perfect match for Nikky---just every bit as saucy! Alive and beautiful. The Good Lord Loaned us one of the most beautiful Angels I have ever seen for the good girl. Katrina Hesketh, delicate, famine, a dream to behold. I was truly in awe of this beauty and could not take my eyes off her. And put this goddess in James arms and that is why we have romantics today. You are reminded of everything good and beautiful in the world today. James is a gentleman from the old world—he treats Katrina as a piece of the most delicate crystal a man can hold—looks at her with all the want and respect someone her "station" should have. I am so very proud of this group—you all now join a very elite group of stars and now hold the keys to the future of Lord of the Dance. You know how I feel about Adam and Kaitlin Dancing in Couples together---Good LORD I wish you all could see Des and Kelly—they are relaxed so they interact as a couple in love, extremely happy and the way Des looks at Kelly—I wish they could make a movie of those two. THIS is why I sit in the front row—to see the eyes and the hearts and souls of the dancers.

Spent the day shopping before the last show. But here I go, 5th Show: Des, Kelly, Alice and Paul. I loved watching Des and Paul these two originals know the ropes and pushed them to the limits tonight. It was like watching a world title fight. Des won!!! But Paul did not loose--- They are both just perfect!! The girls I have talked and talked about and could go on for hours more—but there just are NOT enough superlatives in the dictionary to add anything else. I cannot tell you how hard it was to watch my last T4 show of the week, knowing I have no idea when I would see them again. I was so very misty and my heart full of tears---until they came out the stage door and after signing Heike's and David Golensen's (another new friend from around Bregenz area) posters—when then come to me and hug and kiss and act as if It really meant something to them for me being there. I felt so welcomed and part of T4.

Thank you so much to two old friends from Frankfurt Manuela Eder and Kathrin Leiss who are dancers who preformed a number for us—just as perfect as our kids. Made me feel just like I was watching another show. Then Heike and I went by train through Bavaria—God it was beautiful—how many times have I said beautiful in this report?????? We stayed the night in Munich walking for hours in the Mariplatz—Christmas bazaar. Ate in a true Bavarian restaurant. Then up early—cab to the train station to catch the bus to the Airport—to find out there was a three-hour delay. Good Grief. I do love United International however. I miss Heike, Kathi and Franz sooo much, and all the new friends I met---we were raised to believe----a stranger is a friend you haven't hugged yet!!!

Oh God now the really hard part—saying Goodbye to everyone. Dancers, Troupes, Friends. Why Goodbye? I have no idea when I will be able to see another show. The house was pretty torn up from the hurricanes—and must be a priority next year. If I had not already had show tickets and plane tickets I would not have gotten to go to Jacksonville, Sarasota, Providence or Austria. Several people think I am crazy to love Lord of the Dance enough to go different places to see the different troupes ---but it is my heart and soul. It is

a part of me that I will miss terribly—but rest assured all the dancers will be in my heart till.....till another dream can come true and I can go to another show. So now I will wish Dancers and Friends Merry Christmas and may all your dreams come true. I will you health and happiness. Please stay in touch and I will see yall in LOTDdancers or LOTDtroupe2 yahoo groups or CelticCafe's Mikerocosm. I am trying so hard to remember Donny gave me tomorrow---and there will be another tomorrow—just don't know when.

God bless JoeJoe