

WIGGLE LOVE
by Wendy Hopkins

Every time I go to a live performance I get a crush on a performer. A *stage crush*, I call it. The first time I remember it happening was at a high school dance. Usually our student council hired a DJ for dances but that night they hired “White Wolf”, a local heavy metal band and I fell for my first drummer. That night I imagined how we’d meet after the show and how eventually I’d hang out with all the other “White Wolf” wives.

Since then I’ve found at least one guy in every band, in every play, in every Cirque du Soleil show to fall in love with and imagine a life with. All the members of Tom Waits’ band, one of the Jersey Boys, David Byrne, Rum Tumm Tugger, an actor in the House of Blue Leaves, all the male cast members of Stomp and Tap Dogs. I could go on but it might get embarrassing — or maybe it already has.

I suppose it must be the energy a live performance creates. You can feel the passion a performer has for their art, maybe that’s what I tap into. Whatever it is, I experienced it less and less after I got married and had my son (probably because parenting and staying awake to watch live performances don’t go together naturally). So you can imagine my surprise when I took my 4 year old son to the Long Beach Terrace theatre a few years ago and ended up falling in love with one of The Wiggles.

I’d seen The Wiggles on video about a million times and at first I thought they were a bit weird. I mean, why are four Australian men children’s performers? But after repeated airings I found myself singling along with Anthony, Greg, Murray, Jeff and Captain Feathersword.

As the theatre filled to capacity, I started to get that feeling of excitement in my chest that only comes with live performance and I hugged my son close, telling him about the curtain and what would happen when it rose.

Soon an overture of favorite Wiggles tunes was playing and the entire auditorium was clapping along in anticipation.

And then the curtains shuddered and rose and there before us were The Wiggles and my son squealed and jumped to stand on my lap. “Hello Everybody” they said in their Australian accents, “Let’s start the show with “Rock a bye your bear”.

The crowd cheered and children and parents started to sing and do the actions.

I peeked over from behind my son and was immediately ashamed by the feelings I had for Anthony. Surely I couldn’t have a stage crush on a children’s performer?! I pushed away the thoughts of our sprawling ranch in Australia and tried to concentrate on my son. This was his experience, not mine. I’m a mother now, I needed to be more responsible, more selfless.

My son and I laughed together as Captain Feathersword tripped and fell all over the stage. It was easy not to have a stage crush on Captain Feathersword — he's the comic relief and I've never gone for that.

My son was my focus for the next few songs but then the music for the Animal Song started. "Kangaroos hop, hopping, hopping" And there was Anthony taking huge leaps, his muscles bulging under his casual slacks.

And that's when I slipped, back, back, into my old ways. I imagined Anthony seeing me, the good parent, from the stage, singing with and engaging my son and I imagined Anthony's life changing in that moment. I imagined him asking me out: I'd be carrying my son back to the car and he'd find me in the crowd and I'd say something witty to relieve the tension of our obvious passions. And I imagined having Captain Feathersword and his wife over for dinner.

For two or three songs I was Mrs. Wendy Wiggle (or would I keep my last name?) and I was living in Sydney and happily drinking a beer by the barby and then I felt my son's weight in my arms and I was pulled from my imaginary life back into this one, only to realize that my son had fallen asleep.

I looked around to see if other parents had seen my son fall asleep while his mother fantasized about a Wiggle, but it seems no one had noticed. So with my son safely asleep I let myself slip back into my dream world and live out my days as Wendy Wiggle. (No, I decided, I'd definitely keep my last name.)