



Take Two
 With... **ADAM LAZARUS**
 Sponsored by National Association of 2YO Consignors

Co-Owner of MUSICAL ROMANCE
 (f, 4, Concorde's Tune—Candlelightdinner,
 by Slew Gin Fizz)

Consigned by *Ocala Stud*, agent
\$22,000 2yo '09 OBSAPR

Lifetime Record: GSW & GISP, 32-8-5-7, \$677,849
 Last start: Second in the Gil TCA S. at Keeneland.

For Adam Lazarus and his partners, **Musical Romance** (Concorde's Tune) has been a "godsend" and a "dream come true." Lazarus, who operates the Pinnacle Racing Stable along with his partner and trainer Bill Kaplan, was forced to bide his time and watch several horses on his short list go by the wayside at the 2009 OBS April Sale of 2-Year-Olds in Training, but after more than 1,100 horses and well into the fourth day of the auction, the team finally found what they hoped would be their four-leaf clover.

"We were basically down to our last swing at that sale," Lazarus explained. "She was one of the last horses that we had on our list. She breezed :21 flat and looked awesome doing it, and I remember when Bill pulled her out of her stall at Ocala Stud's consignment. I looked down at the sheet of paper and I saw the second dam, Sea of Green (Seacliff). Then I looked at this filly and saw how long-legged she was. She had a great body."

At that point, Lazarus availed himself of some 'inside' information.

"Bill had trained Seacliff, who swept the Florida Stallion Stakes, and Sea of Green was the best horse that Seacliff ever produced," he stated. "He was a monster in the northeast, won close to a half-million dollars in sprints. So I am fixated on that, and then I am looking at this horse and thinking, 'Boy, she's a long-legged horse and she breezed so well,' and we were just very lucky to get her." Kaplan signed the ticket on the filly for \$22,000. **Cont. p8**



Jim Lisa photo

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Cont. from p7

But, just when things appeared to be going well, fate intervened. "After we bought her, on the second day at the track, she broke her ankle," Lazarus said. Musical Romance would undergo surgery in Ocala to have four screws inserted. "I had sold [all the shares in] her coming out of the sale, and I returned all the money. I wouldn't take any more money for the filly until she proved she could come back and work out consistently, and until I felt comfortable enough that I could offer her to my partners."

The filly recovered quickly and made it to the races in the fall of 2009 and, though she broke her maiden sprinting on the dirt, became a useful runner going two turns on turf, winning a Gulfstream allowance and the Sweettrickydancer S. at Calder in 2010. But the operation found itself at something of a crossroads in the middle of the season, and a crucial decision was made.

"Bill's closest friend on the track is Milt Wolfson, and he trains Trip for A. J. (Trippi)," Lazarus commented. "She was one of the best fillies in South Florida and, as a 3-year-old, she was really dominating the two-turn races."

Lo and behold, last fall, a seven-furlong allowance race with some good fillies in there came up. We ended up running, and ran the fastest seven-furlong time of the meet at Calder. We had not sprinted at that point for about a year, but that encouraged us a little bit to look at races like the Sunshine Millions Sprint."

Sent off at 62-1 in that six-furlong event last winter, Musical Romance made a late run that saw her finish fourth, beaten under a length behind Aegean (Northern Afleet) and the talented Jessica Is Back (Put It Back).

"We wanted to avoid Trip for A. J., because we didn't think we could beat her on a consistent basis, and the Sunshine Millions Sprint showed she could sprint," Lazarus continued. "But there was still some convincing we had to do, because up until this year, we were running on the turf and going long. So, she's really only been sprinting since May."

Winner of the Ema Bovary S. and the U Can Do It H. at Calder this past spring, Musical Romance came into the GI Princess Rooney H. as a 7-1 chance against the likes of top distaffer sprinter Sassy Image (Broken Vow). Reserved at the back of the pack, Musical Romance took the lead in deep stretch, only to be run down on the money by a freakish last-to-first run from Sassy Image. It was an effort Lazarus found difficult to be upset about.

"Going into that race, I was hopeful she'd hit the board," he admitted. "I wasn't disappointed in the result, because my expectation level was just to hit the board. A lot of people felt bad for us and were almost apologetic, but going into the race, it was like signing a contract... 'If you hit the board, I'll be happy.'"

He continued, "She's going against fillies who were the best of her generation and just missed by a nose. It's a gigantic circle and you figure you'll get the bob next time, which is exactly what happened a little later."

Shipped to Presque Isle Downs for the valuable 6 1/2-panel GIII PID Masters S. Sept. 10, the dark bay was up for a neck victory. But in her most recent start in the six-furlong GII Thoroughbred Club of America S. at Keeneland Oct. 8, the wire came a bit too soon at a distance probably too short and she settled for second behind Holiday for Kitten (Kitten's Joy). Those efforts, in addition to the Princess Rooney, would make Musical Romance one of the top chances in the GI Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Sprint, but Lazarus does not expect to be there, at least this year.

"I don't think it's very likely," he said, explaining that it would take a \$140,000 supplement to get her in. "To make the investment that it would take to get her in, I don't think it fits our economic model. She deserves to go, she fits, but I'm not sure it makes sense for us--unless I win the Powerball. But I think she could be rolling into a season where she can be a real force. Next year, could be the year."

Lazarus attends the 2-year-old sales exclusively, and keeps to a strict budget and plan.

"Pinnacle Racing Stable is a partnership, and our goal is to find anything between \$15,000 to \$35,000," he offered. "That's usually our budget to run in South Florida. Bill grades every horse that's in the sale, and he does it strictly off the videos, doesn't even look at the pedigree page. Every horse that grades out well enough on his grading scale is examined for conformation. If they pass both, he provides a list to me and we go over what we think would fit in to our program. He'll give me his list, and I'll kind of peel away the pedigrees that might be, in my eyes, horses that will be sound based upon a pedigree page. Other than that, it's totally up to Bill. He looks for athletes and he does an incredible job and has an incredible eye for young horses."

He sees another advantage in the breeze-up sales.

"I feel like the fillies fall through the cracks at 2-year-old sales and that you can get more value for your money with fillies. I firmly believe that," he said.

Lazarus, who attended Appalachian State University on a baseball scholarship and whose father befriended Kaplan on the links, said Musical Romance could run once more this year in the GIII Sugar Swirl S. at Gulfstream Dec. 10.--Alan Carasso

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