



Nate The Great

By: Patrick Browne - Grade 4, Andrew Avenue School, Naugatuck

On May 27, 2010, I was given a great opportunity to visit and tour the Palace Theatre in Waterbury CT...I met with Karen Streeter who gave me a glance at the Palace Theatre history. Open in 1922 originally as a movie theatre the Palace cost 1 million to build, it was designed in Renaissance Revival Style by a period architect named Thomas Lamb. The Palace was then closed in 1987 and after 18 years of darkness it reopened in 2004 with a restoration cost of 30 million dollars. It took four men four years to paint the faux marble walls that line the grand foyer "the main entrance" their names are written on the top stair case.

When my tour was over, I was then seated in box seats in the theatre to watch the production of Nate the Great. Nate the Great is based on a series of children's books and is about a detective, his two imaginary friends Jackie Chan and Sherlock Holmes and his good friend Annie. In the production Nate was helping his good friend Annie find her lost picture. The show was very energetic with plenty of singing and dancing. I think this play would be great for children of all ages. It was played with a problem and a solution. Thanks for a great time; I loved learning about the history of the Palace Theatre.

My Great Experience

By: Brianne E. Sousa - Grade 4, Andrew Avenue School Naugatuck

Have you ever gone to a play? I recently went to a play at the Palace Theater. We saw *Nate the Great*. I loved learning the theater history, the play of course, and meeting the actors and actresses. It's an experience that I will never forget.

The Palace Theater was built in 1920, by Thomas Lamb who was hired by Sylvester Z. Poli, the theater impresario. Unbelievably, it was built over the Mad River. When they wanted to put in an orchestra pit they had to re-route the river and it now runs under Brook St. Where the box office is now there used to be a hotel where the actors and actresses would sleep the night before their performance. During a hard time the theater closed in 1987. In 2004, the theater re-opened with it's much needed repairs.

The main character was Nate the Great who was helping his new friend Annie find a picture of her dog Fang. Sherlock Holmes and Charlie Chan are Nate's imaginary friends who help him through his cases. Rosamond is a suspect but loves cats not dogs. So she couldn't have taken it. Then they went to Harry, Annie's little brother. Nate gives up. He doesn't have anymore suspects. But then Annie finds a clue. It ended up that Harry took the picture. The set that they had was really cool. There were triangular like boxes that changed around to the different scenes. One side was Annie's room, another side was for Nate the Great's kitchen, Harry's room, and then it flipped around for Rosamond's bedroom. They had a background scene that didn't change; it was the city/town street. By Annie's outfit and her room that Annie loved yellow. By how many times Nate, Charlie Chan, and Sherlock Holmes mention pancakes I could tell they were a lot alike with the pancakes and detective work. I could tell by Rosamond's house she loves cats.

Meeting the actors to plays you go to really makes you think about what you usually think of them. When you get older you realize that the actors aren't like their characters . Doing the interviews really helps you see the inside of them more than the character(s). I realized that they are just like us except they act . They're funny and laugh at old experiences. They seemed to be having fun. They were being very honest. They were very believable stories. I ended up interviewing Rebecca Lee Lerman who played Charlie Chan and Rosamond. My question to her was if she enjoyed acting in kids plays. She loved acting in kids plays because she could interact with the kids in the crowd .It was fun learning some of their answers and how they're alike and dislike their characters. A few of the people had to look at their past to answer their questions.

I suggest you try this when you get the chance. It's a great experience so you really will love it. You'll love learning about the theater history, seeing the play, and meeting the actors just as much as I did.

Nate The Great at the Palace

By: Jackson Yost - Grade 4, Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School, Waterbury

As I first walked into the palace, I felt so exhilarated to be surrounded by this grand, eye popping, and extraordinary palace. Little did I know how much I would learn about its birth and get to be a real reporter.

The Palace Theater was built by Sylvester Poli. He started working on it in 1920 and finished in 1922. He was an immigrant from Italy and built many theaters all over the country. The Palace Theater's grand foyer has a staircase and floor made of marble, but the walls are what they call faux marble. It is hand painted to look like real marble. This hand painted marble took the four painters four whole years to finish. Once they finished they carved their names into the staircase railing. There is a gold leaf plated dome in the theater. Gold leaf is almost like holding tissue paper. In the palace there is a total of 208,000 square feet of gold leaf. Did you know that there are 2,600 seats in the whole theater?

Now let's talk about the show. *Nate the Great* was mysterious, a good laugh, entertainment for the whole family, and an over-all outstanding performance. We got to interview some of the cast members. When asked how they could relate to the characters they played, Sherlock Holmes said he is a very intelligent man just like Mr. Holmes. Annie said she was like Annie when she was eight.

I guess I would just like to say that the Palace Theater is truly a majestic theater. This was one of the best experiences of my life. I learned about its history and I was able to interview real actors. In my opinion, I felt as if this was where entertainment was born.

Palatial News Review

By: Kimberly Deyo - Grade 4, Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School, Waterbury

As you walk into the grand foyer room, you gasp! Huge chandeliers are hanging from the high ceiling. Giant mirrors cover the walls and you are overcome with its magnificence.

Sylvester Poli, an immigrant from Italy, built the Palace Theater. Sylvester started building it in 1920. The theater took two years to build. The stairs and floors of the Palace are made of real marble. The walls are faux, or fake, marble. Four painters painted the walls to make them look like real marble. They did an outstanding job. You probably wouldn't notice the difference if I didn't tell you. The painters took their time and finished after four years. They signed their names on the railing of the grand foyer.

Have you ever looked up at the ceiling of the lobby? Did you notice the gold squares on the ceiling? Those squares are called gold leaf and there are 208,000 feet of them. In the theater, you may have noted the pretty organ pipes on the walls. I have news for you, they are fake. There used to be an organ in the theater with 1,700 pipes. No one knows what happened to it. Do you want to know something else that's interesting? There is always a light on the stage. It is called the "ghost light" and it is always lit, even at night. Some people say it's because they don't want anyone tripping on something and falling, but that is not the real reason. The real reason is people are afraid that ghosts from past plays will come and wreck the stage.

The play was phenomenal! The actors projected their voices so that it was very easy to hear them. There were awesome songs and the set design looked professional. I think the Palace Theater did a good job selecting a show that appeals to young audiences. The actors were very accessible and happy to answer our questions. Most of the actors could connect to their characters so they were extremely convincing. They all agreed that acting is exciting and I hope I can see them in a future play. If I could, I would see this play again and again.

In my opinion, the Palace is the most extraordinary theater! It has a rich history, interesting superstitions, and the ability to choose extremely stupendous shows for their audiences.

Dear Reader,

Today I went to the Palace Theater in Waterbury, CT, to see *Nate the Great*. There were seven actors and actresses playing the characters Nate (the Great), his two imaginary friends, Annie, Fang, Rosilan, and Harry. Fang is Annie's dog. Harry is Annie's brother. Rosilan also has three cats named Plain Hex, Big Hex, and Super Hex. Annie loves yellow and her brother Harry loves red.

The whole point of the story is that Annie makes a picture of Fang for her mother's birthday but it gets lost. So Annie goes to see Nate and tells him everything she knows about the picture. So they both go to Annie's house. First Nate and Annie go into Annie's room. All Nate found out was that Annie loves YELLOW! Then, Annie and Nate go outside to investigate. While Annie and Nate were investigating, they ran into Annie's dog Fang. You could tell Fang was interrupting Nate because he just wanted Annie and Nate to play catch and other games. Nate realizes that it is not here, outside near Fang's dog house and narrows it down to two suspects. Nate and Annie go back into Annie's room along with Nate's two imaginary friends. When Nate and Annie went into her room, Nate had a melt down and said he could do every thing himself. But Annie and Nate's imaginary friends tell him he needs help, since every great detective has a partner. Finally Nate thinks... then it comes to him, and he knows they are right. He welcomes Annie and his two imaginary friends back to the crew. Then they all went to go see Rosilan. Annie told Rosilan that Nate is a great detective and they are there to look for her picture. She didn't believe Annie and made Nate search for Superhex in her house to see if he is a real detective. He finds Superhex when he accidentally falls over her couch. Annie and Nate leave but he wonders why she would have Annie's picture is all she has are pictures of cats. He is left with only one suspect, Harry. He confronts Harry and finds an orange picture of Fang. Nate reminds Annie her brother likes red and her picture was yellow. He solves the mystery because yellow and red make orange. Since he ruined her picture they gave their mom a picture that Harry made in yellow, instead and then went to Nate's house for pancakes.

When I interviewed the performer's I was interested in knowing if they went to school to become an actor or actress. They all said yes, but the actor who was playing Nate only attended high school while the others had been to college. Another interviewer asked them how they remember their lines. They said different things like writing them on paper and then studying them like homework, asking family member to rehearse with them or reading the script one section at a time, then the whole thing together. Someone else wondered why there were so many singing voices when there were only a few people on stage. One of the actors explained that they sometimes have to sing backstage while they are changing costume. The actor that portrayed Nate said his favorite play that he has acted in was "Little Shop of Horrors", the actor that portrayed Harry said his favorite play to be in was the Nick Jr. tour of

"Go Diego Go". When they were asked how they relate to the characters the play, the actress who played Annie said she played herself at the age of eight. One of the Imaginary friends said he finds things around his own house when they are missing so know what it is like to be a detective. Another actress said she relates to all her characters through music and dance.

In 1922, the Palace Theater was built. The Grand Foyer has a lot of marble, the floors and stairs are real and the walls are painted to look like marble. There are 2 cracks in the floor where a water pipe had to be redirected. In the lobby, there is gold leaf decorating the ceiling. It is as thin as tissue paper and covers a faux ceiling. The whole theater was painted by only four men. There are 2600 seats. The stage is 5000 square feet. Under the stage are the new dressing rooms for performers and the way to the orchestra pit. If a costume rips, it goes to the wardrobe room to be repaired with white or black thread. A long time ago, Houdini appeared at the Palace. For his performance they put a trap door in the stage floor. Since it wasn't removed, an elephant in another show died when it fell through. Some believe his spirit still is still there haunting the theater. One tradition in theaters is to leave a "ghost light" on. This is not only for safety in case someone goes on stage in the dark but to keep the spirits from causing mischief. Theater curtains used to have legs on the bottom. At the end of a performance, they would raise and lower the curtain for the actors to receive the applause of the audience. The more it went up and down the more likely it was that the legs would break off. When actors wish each other to "break a leg" they are really hoping for a great performance the audience will enjoy, not that someone gets hurt!

Daniel Walsh - Grade 4, Western School, Naugatuck

The Palace Theater

By: Griffin Puc - Grade 4, Western School, Naugatuck

The Palace Theater opened to the public in 1922. It was designed by architect Thomas Lamb. The Palace was originally a movie and vaudeville house. When Harry Houdini performed there, he had a special trap door made into the floor of the stage for his act. Years later, an elephant went on stage and accidentally fell through the trap door and died. Today, some people say they can hear the ghost of the elephant. In 1987, the lights went dim. After 18 years of darkness and a significant financial investment by the state of Connecticut, the lights were turned back on again and the palace stage was set once again, thanks to a major renovation.

As you walk through the front doors of the Palace Theater, you will see a giant diamond chandelier hanging from the ceiling. As you look up, you will also see gold leaf. If you look closely, you will see that the walls are fake marble, and the floor and stairs are real marble. The entrance is not the only fancy part of the building. The theater is also fancy. The ceiling is a big parabolic dome that is used to catch sound and bring it down to the audience. The architect, Thomas Lamb, was very creative in making the theater. He made sure that you could see the stage from every seat. He even made the theater cantilevered, so there are no pillars holding up the ceiling. If you ever go to the Palace Theater, go to the second floor balcony in the entrance hall. Under the railing, try to find the names of the people who made the fake marble. The painters worked their names into the marble design.

On Thursday, May 27 2010, I saw the play Nate the Great at the Palace Theater. Afterwards I got to interview the cast members. I was lucky I got picked to do it.

Interview:

Q: How do you memorize your lines?

A: I take a paragraph, memorize it, then pick another paragraph, memorize it, then put it all together.

Q: Do you get stage fright? Before or after the show?

A: The first few times it is scary, but we don't get scared anymore, just a little shaky.

Palatial News Review of Nate The Great

By: Erin M. Doris - Grade 4, Central Avenue School, Naugatuck

"WOW" is the reaction of most people as they enter the Grand Foyer of The Palace Theater. The Foyer was one of the most beautiful foyers I had ever seen. It was built and originally opened in 1922. Black and white movies were shown when it opened and there were no words. People had to read the captions at the bottom of the screen. There was a fire and it was closed for many years, reopening in November of 2004. The renovations cost 30 million dollars compared to the 1 million dollars that was spent when it originally built. The walls and floors were made of real and fake marble and it was hard to tell the difference. The original chandelier was preserved and is very beautiful. Everywhere you look there were paintings, gold trim and decorations to give it an amazing appearance.

I was able to go on a tour of the theater. It was fun to be able to see and go in the dressing rooms and the Green Room. We learned stories about past shows. Houdini wanted a trap door on the stage for one of his magic tricks. There used to be animals on stage as part of the shows. One sad story was about an elephant that fell through the trap door and he was injured and died. There is not a trap door on the stage anymore. We learned that when the theater was designed it was important to the architect that everyone in the audience could see the stage and hear what was being said. The stage is one of the biggest and is 5000 square feet. My favorite part of the tour was seeing the murals that were painted on the wall and signed by the cast. I learned that each show had a person who drew the mural for their show.

The play that I saw on 05/27/10 was Nate The Great and was written by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat. She wrote a series of over 20 Nate The Great books. You don't have to read the books in any order. To prepare for seeing this play, I read the Nate The Great book. This was the first time I have ever read a book, and then seen the play. Some differences I found between the book and the play are that in the book Nate didn't have any imaginary friends like he did in the play. Another difference was that in the play Annie's dog Fang didn't have anybody to play with and he was sad. In the book he didn't have anybody to play with, but he was happy.

My opinion of the play is that everyone did a good job and it was a cute play. After seeing the play I was speechless because the play had funny parts, like when Annie's little brother Harry said he was going to paint Nate and he actually painted him. There were sad parts like when Rosamond's cat, Super Hex was missing. I think the actors did a very good job, especially the person who played Nate and the ones who played different characters. They put a lot of effort into their parts and how the play went on as they were changing characters and scenes. The actors did a very good job changing the scenes and making it part of the play so that it wasn't noticeable. The actors had good imaginations because they pretended for different scenes and made it believable. For example, they pretended that it started to rain and used umbrellas. By the reactions of the audience, I could tell that they

liked the play. They laughed at the funny parts and they clapped at the end of each scene. I think that if anybody is thinking about going to the Palace Theater that they should see Nate The Great.

After the play we were able to interview the actors. Leonard Williams played Sherlock Holmes and Plain Hex the cat, Jeremy Neal played Nate the Great, Richard Portela played Fang the dog, Little Hex the cat and Harry, Rebecca Lee Lerman played Charlie Cahn and Rosamond and Rachel Kara Perez played Annie. I think interviewing the actors was fun because we were able to see what they thought about acting. They were asked if they traveled and they said yes. They liked traveling to different states to perform the play because they get to see a lot of places they would have never gone to. They also like meeting and getting to talk to children like us to see how we liked the play. I asked what the hardest part that they ever played was and Richard Portela answered my question. He said the hardest part he ever played was Diego from Go Diego Go. It was fun, but hard because it was popular and he had a very busy schedule doing interviews and publicity events. So he didn't have a lot of free time to rest. They were asked if they had fun acting and they all said yes. They said that when they were little they had other ideas about what they wanted to be when they grew up, they knew that they liked acting the best and are happy with their choice to be actors. When asked what part was the hardest, the main character or another part they said that there were pro's and con's to both. When you are the main character there is a lot of pressure because you have more lines and are on the stage all the time. The other actors get little breaks during the show. It is fun to be the main character because you get the most attention. They were asked if they get to pick their parts and they said that they have to audition for a part they want. Sometimes you get the part you want and sometimes you get the part that the director thinks you are best at. They were asked if it was hard to remember their lines. They all described how they learn their lines in their own way.

If anybody is thinking about going to The Palace Theater, they should go see Nate The Great. I think they will enjoy the play and the beauty of the Palace Theater.

Nate The Great

By: Jessie A. Furphy - Grade 4, Central Avenue School, Naugatuck

Who built the Palace Theater? Sylvester Z. Poli built the theater in 1920 and finished it in 1922. It took 1 million dollars to build it, and 30 million to rebuild it after a fire. The orchestra pit is big enough for 65 people. There used to be a river flowing under the theater and stage. They had to move it and put a new floor in the theater to add the orchestra pit. There is a special way to open the pit, it opens by a button. If you started to walk on the floor above the pit it will sound hollow because the pit is down there. Some people believe that ghosts haunt the theater so they put up a ghost light. Just to be safe they put up a microphone stand and a simple light bulb on it. I think they are silly!

Nate is a young boy with two imaginary friends: Sherlock Holmes and Charlie Chan. Annie, Nate's friend, is a young girl who loves yellow and has a dog named Fang. Harry is Annie's little brother and he loves red. The mystery was that Annie had lost a picture she was going to give to her mom.

Nate is a detective played by Jeremy Neal. Jeremy Neal is a young gentle boy. Annie is Nate's friend who is played by Rachel Kara Rerez who is young, crazy and friendly. When she was asked how she was like her character she said, "When I was 8 I was crazy." Fang and Harry were played by the same person, Richard J. Portella. Richard studied very hard to be in this play. Sherlock was played by Lenard Williams, he is a black person and as a boy he was always wondering what his sister was up to. Charlie is a famous Chinese detective and is played by Rebecca Lee Lerman. She is a young adult and she loves being in children's plays.