

## The Last, the Very Last Butterfly

The Last, the Very Last Butterfly, might take you into a world where you may feel upset that the Holocaust happened and now I understand why many are in denial of this horrible event. I personally felt that way after I saw this play. You, in some way, may feel that way too.

The Holocaust created concentration camps which lead to death camps. This happened during the Nazis' fight against the Jews. Children during the Holocaust were sent to gas chambers so people could test the gear for the army. Some kids were sent to death camps to get executed. They were beaten by the Nazi soldiers and were trapped in with barbed wire. Children even had no school and most kids actually begged for it. Some kids had a secret school and they would have a teacher who had them share drawings and songs. The only time you were happy was when you went to this private night school. The school was also a place to free the mind. This play was about a girl who had actually experienced many of these horrible acts and survived. The director, called this play The Last, the Very Last Butterfly because butterflies don't go to places like the Holocaust. A place that was dark and sad. The last butterfly was seen before the Holocaust began.

There was emotion in the play, but in some parts I thought there was not enough. One part where I thought more emotion was needed to get the point across was when Peter was taken off to the death camp. I didn't feel Alena showed the amount of emotion she could have. Her closest friend was taken away from her. From a place where all you had to survive were your friends. On the other hand, they did explain the Holocaust very well and what had happened there. They had explained how badly people were treated just because of their religion. People should not be treated poorly just because of their religion but back then, in 1933, some people didn't accept that. People believed that we should have the same religion, and not be Jewish. But now we have learned from our mistakes and we try not to treat people badly, but some people still choose to.

When the actors moved slowly at first it was hard to tell what they were doing. Then as the show went on you would soon figure out that they were displaying a memory. The costumes demonstrated the time frame of the play because of how the outfits were put together. The set was very calm looking and I liked how the actors would set up the stage while they were acting. One of the actors really stood out to me. The way Peter would act when he got upset really showed how a person might feel if he really had to face these things. When he acted this way the emotion seemed to flow out of him and really expressed how upset he was.

At the end of the play, they talked about how we can help other people. You should speak up when you see that someone is being hurt and if things get out of hand you should get an adult. An act of kindness can be just holding the door for someone or making something that could help someone out. Vote for things that could help your town by voting in government. Last, but not least, the only way for evil to prevail is for good to do nothing. Don't let things like the Holocaust happen again. Treat people like you want to be treated. This play taught me don't let just a hundred people survive; let all of them live to tell their story.

**Kellie Hamlin**  
**Chalk Hill School**

## Reviewing The Very Last Butterfly

The Palace Theater, truly an enchanting place, is full of beauty and wonder. Entering its doors you can't help but to turn your head up in amazement, its golden ceiling scripted with designs that leave your jaw dropping. However, I wasn't there to marvel at the architecture, I was there to see the show.

As the lights dimmed and I took my seat, the crowd silenced. I watched as the lights slowly brightened to reveal a broken down classroom. As a man and woman walked on stage I began to feel the gloom of the setting. The story soon unraveled into the treacherous memory of the main character, Alena's, tormented childhood at a concentration camp in Terezin.

Within seconds the actors pulled me in, I found myself crossing my own fingers when they would sneak out of bed to go to their secret school. They were not allowed to go to school because of the Nazis.

At the school is where I grew close to the characters. The children during the Holocaust wrote poems and drew pictures that warmed your heart, but made you want to cry at the same time. The seriousness upon them all was just horrid, children should be playing and having fun, not worrying if their going to die tomorrow. At this point the story swallowed me whole, for it wasn't a story any more, it was real.

I watched in excitement as each scene rolled on, the sorrow that loomed from the actors was so believable that I was afraid that one of them might break down on stage from the pain. As the story began to wander towards the end, I was truly stricken. Alena had a very close friend in the camp, his name was Peter, just like everyone else in the story you become close to him, but sadly he was taken away to a death camp. I have to say this scene could of been bigger, but the grief Alena showed later on was so powerful it made up for it, and I felt as much grief as she did. All in all, the actors, the set, the lighting, and everything else did its job of making the play come to life.

It was a sad, but beautiful piece, and its lesson was beautiful as well. Although the Holocaust is over parts of it are still alive today. People are experiencing their own versions of the Holocaust throughout our world. This play opens our eyes to what we, as children, need to do. We need to stop this terrible treatment.

**Maya Pirulli**  
**Chalk Hill School**

### "The Last, The Very Last Butterfly"

On April 20, 2009, schools from all over CT. visited the Palace Theatre to see "The Last, The Very Last Butterfly", a play about the children of the Holocaust. Many of the students I talked to before the show were excited to see the performance and learn more about these children's lives. The show focused on the lives of children in the Terezin ghetto during World War II. It told about the hard labor they were put through. It showed how they were forced to sneak secret school sessions so the children could learn to read and write. It told how children were taken from their families and put into these labor camps all alone, without anyone that they knew. Teaching children about the Holocaust this way was very effective because they could relate to these people who were their age. By the end of the show, students knew a lot more about this horrible event than they did before. They learned many valuable lessons such as "evil prevails when good people do nothing." A quote at the end of the show that taught the students to do what was right and help people in need. This was a great show to be held on National Holocaust Remembrance Day and it kept the people killed in this time in our hearts on this day.

**Nicole Gatti-Lopez**  
**Waterbury Arts Magnet School**

## **The Last, the Very Last...Butterfly**

Performed at the Palace Theater on April 20<sup>th</sup>, "The Last, the Very Last ...Butterfly" was a touching remembrance show about the Holocaust. This play tells the story of children who lived in the ghetto and describes their feelings and thoughts through poems, drawings and songs. The piece tells few stories about the Holocaust, leaving room for imagination and inquiry, as this play is designed for ages 10 and up.

The audience varied in knowledge about the Holocaust but all were eager to watch the show and had their own thoughts about the plot and the play itself. Roger, who attends the Waterbury Arts Magnet School had many facts to share about the Holocaust but still anticipated to learn new information. He predicted that this play would focus on Hitler's passion and hatred for Jews. Jason, from North End, says he's pretty much clueless about the Holocaust but does hope and expect to learn more by watching this performance. Cailey, from Tyrell, believed the play would be about Hitler, while Lydia, also from Tyrell, thought this play would touch upon the horrid concentration camps.

After the show, many kids learned new information and saw a different side of the Holocaust; one student even liked the way the information was explained throughout the play. Some first timers also commented on the beauty of the Palace itself. In all, I would say this play used a different, more efficient method, based on art, to teach students of a significant time in world history.

**Patricia Oprea**  
**Waterbury Arts Magnet School**

## **The Last, the Very Last Butterfly**

The last Butterfly filled the palace seats with kids of all ages. Students from all over the state were full of anticipation as they entered the theater. Whole schools were entering the palace for the first time. Comments about the ornamentation and beauty of the theater were heard all around. Alanna a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Carrington said, " I heard this show was supposed to be good." She went on to explain how high her expectations of the show. Around the theater remarks like this could be heard. As the show went on, it left kids amazed and stunned. After the show people were clapping widely and thinking about the true purpose of the show. This show really did convey its message and got people thinking about the bullying and the sadness of the holocaust. A 4<sup>th</sup> grader at St Mary's said the show left her almost in tears at the end. All the children who died left, her seeing how sad of an event the holocaust was. The whole crowd at the palace was moved by this show.

**Cassandra Britton  
Waterbury Arts Magnet School**

## **“The Last, the Very Last Butterfly” Technical Aspects**

On April 20, 2009, students from numerous different schools gathered in the Palace Theater to see a play called, “The Last, the Very Last Butterfly.” Along with a depressing story line, the show had many technical aspects. There was music, lighting, and costumes. All three components helped to create a very realistic play. The play turned out to be a musical much rather than just an ordinary play.

“The Last, the Very Las Butterfly,” is about a lady named Elena who was a survivor from the Holocaust. As a little girl, she had been taken away from her home, separated from her family, and sent to “the ghetto.” There, she attended school and worked for several hours. In order to tell her story, she went back into time. The play emphasized time change by means of specific lighting. Whenever Elena traveled back to the past, the lights would get dimmer while she would walk in slow motion along with her school teacher and friends. After that process occurred, Elena would appear as an older adult or a young student in class or even out in the field working. The lights would gradually become brighter. Time of day also mattered. If it was night, the lights would go from bright yellow to dark blue lights. If it were day, the lights would change from dark blue to bright yellow. The lights showed particular time throughout the whole musical.

Considering that the Holocaust was a very sad story to be told, indeed it was a musical, perhaps to make the play seem less miserable to the young children ranging from ages nine to thirteen. The music in the play often reflected off of the daily lives of the students attending school. While in school, Elena would sing her poem. Usually, her poems were depressing concluding to the fact that she would never be free from the ghetto. Peter, in the beginning, sang his poem, “The Last, the Very Last Butterfly.” The butterfly symbolized freedom. The last butterfly represents the meaning that Elena and her friends will never see freedom again. They could never escape from the ghetto. Sad music was sung by Elena and Peter when they were at work. When the Nazi guard would turn around to inspect them, they would immediately stop singing.

Costume choice was very important to help tell the story. What the characters wore helped tell which character they were portraying. The Nazi guard was dressed professionally with black pants and a black shirt tucked into his pants. He also wore a cap with a weapon in his hands. Right away others knew which character he was playing. Elena resembled a little girl just by wearing her pink head band with a bow tied on it. Her clothes were quite raggedy to show that she couldn’t change while being hard at work. When she appeared older, she wore a longer coat with a hat and a handbag. Peter was too a Jew. Jews wore yellow stars for identification. Elena wore one too, along with the teacher at the school. The clothing was outdated, showing how many years have passed since the Holocaust.

When putting on a show or production, or even any live performance, it is important to be able to have all of the right technical features. It is significant to get the point across. Lighting, music, and costume matters for a situation like this. When it is night time, there mustn’t be bright yellow lights set onto the scenery. Or even if someone is hard at work, it does not fit the occasion to have them wear clean, new clothing. The show will be confusing to understand. Whenever there is a sad moment, the characters would sing sad songs. They were dressed appropriately to fit the time period and the right music was conveyed. With all of these technical aspects, the show succeeded.

**Sabina Tamis  
Waterbury Arts Magnet School**