

Entry 35

Subject: NVUSD Auditorium/Evans Auditorium, Napa High School

The final day was here. I couldn't believe it. I parked at the intersection of Lincoln and Jefferson, and walked up the steps towards the towering white pillars, entering the NVUSD District Auditorium for the last time. In what seemed like the blink of an eye, my makeup and hair was done, and it was time for warmups. It was more subdued than usual. A certain melancholy tension hung in the air: the mutual understanding that, once this performance was over, it would all be done. Instead of coming to this very building every day from four to nine PM, I'd be going home. It felt strange – how could something that occupied my every thought for eight weeks suddenly be...gone?

Warm-ups began. We held hands, performing our diction exercises. Slowly, the energy rose. We shouted into the open air, our voices soaring, united.

In ninety minutes, we were on the last song. I stood on stage, and everything seemed to slow down. I looked out into the audience, and saw many familiar faces. I saw my parents, and their friends who came simply to support Vintage's choir program. I saw my dad's patient, who loves theater. I saw our retired superintendent, who now helps us with our diction. I saw neighbors. Friends. Teachers. Grandparents.

I saw Napa.

Every year, this hundred-year-old neo-classical building brings our community together. For eight weeks, it houses forty dedicated students (and one Broadway star!) who only want one thing: to create a show worth watching. It becomes our home as we sing and dance, laugh and cry, love and hate. Then, for two weekends, within its walls, we showcase the fruits of our labor. Every day, going out into that hallway after the show and seeing someone greet me with flowers reminds me of why I do this: not for my love of singing or acting, but because of the fellowship it brings us. It brings Napans together who perhaps never would have met. The district auditorium, whether through Vintage or Napa High musicals, scholarship ceremonies where extraordinary students are honored for their achievements, or educational events where the public comes together for the mutual love of learning, serves as a reminder that in Napa, no matter what, we'll always be supported and surrounded by kindness unachievable in any other community.

The hot lights snapped me back to reality.

As the song came to a close and the audience began clapping, I savored the moment one last time. The lights warmed my face, illuminating the tears that spilled over my eyes. My mic tape struggled to grip my cheek as sweat ran down my forehead. The itchy costume turned my skin red, and my heels, worn by many generations of Vintage High School choir students,

pinched my toes, but I savored it because I'd never wear them again.

Within a few hours, the auditorium was empty. The black floor, scratched from decades of musicals, seemed so bare without the giant staircases, foam cars, and wooden tables that once populated it. I went into the changing rooms, and felt an odd sense of sadness. Although this room was the scene of many stressful quick-changes, and has colonies of cockroaches and mites hiding in the folds of our costumes, I knew... I'd miss it.