



PALACE THEATER REVIEW

By: Catarina Rego, Grade 4, Hop Brook School, Naugatuck

I had a wonderful time at the Palace Theater, and I think the best part would have to be interviewing the performers and seeing the fantastic play, Junie B. Jones.

In the play, a girl named Junie B. Jones is nervous on her first day of first grade, and she is experiencing ups and downs. For an example, during lunch time, Junie B. Jones was so excited because she got to help the lunch lady serve the food, but when May saw the food, she fainted, and everyone else didn't like the food. Then, the lunch lady brought sugar cookies and they thanked Junie B. Jones for handing them out.

The play was very enjoyable for me, because I loved the theme song. It was really cool, and the music made me want to jump up and dance. I also got to use my reading skills by predicting what would happen next. The stage was very bright with lights all around it. The shapes designs on the stage were interesting and great, too.

Inside the Palace Theater, it has lots of outstanding designs on the floor, ceiling and walls. The dressing rooms for the performers were very neat, too. They had their own mirrors and lights. The Theater is very big and looks like my entire school could fit in it. The theater has an interesting history. When a magician came, his elephant fell through the trap door. They say that at night, if you listen carefully, you can hear the magician's elephant moaning and the ghosts that haunt the theater.

I felt very excited and pleased that my teacher picked me out of the whole class to go to the Palace Theater. It was a great and fantastic play, and a wonderful opportunity for me to interview the performers and write about the play.

JUNIE B. JONES

By: Allison Carasone, Grade 7, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, Waterbury

As soon as I walked into the Palace Theater, I felt very welcomed. When I found my guide, Karen, in the lobby and joined our group, I knew I would have a great time. Karen knew exactly what school I was from and was very informative in the history of the theater.

It was very interesting to learn about what was original in the lobby and what happened to the theater after a fire two doors down many years ago. Our guide told us about how the plaster had fallen off of the ceiling when the water was sprayed onto the building by firefighters and about what had been done to repair the damage. It was also interesting to learn about what happened after the Flood of 1955 and about the restoration that occurred around the year 2000 to bring the theater back to life.

After our guide told about the history of the building, we were given a tour. Our first stop was to see the Hotel Palace part of the building. There, we saw the original box office and then looked at pictures of what the Palace looked like when it was first built. Our guide took us through the lobby to the waiting room that is directly in front of the theater doors and showed us the ceiling of this room. The ceiling is very interesting because you can see the individual tiles which are plated with precious metals. I have been to the Palace before, and I have never noticed the plating. We then walked behind-the-scenes and were able to see dressing rooms and many other areas that are not usually seen by the general public.

After our tour, we sat down in our seats to watch the performance of "Junie B. Jones." The play is about a first grade girl that has a diary called her "No Beeswax Journal" because no one is allowed to look inside. During the play, Junie loses and gains friends because of some of her actions, but overall, she has a good first grade year. Once the play was over, we saw the huge curtain come down, and we waited for the actress that we would be interviewing.

About ten minutes later, our actress Emily was ready to talk to us. She had played the main part of Junie B. Jones. Emily was very nice and told us many things about herself. Students asked questions like "What was your first role in a play?" and "What inspired you to become an actress?" Emily told us that she was inspired to become an actress when she saw Judy Garland playing Dorothy in the movie "The Wizard of Oz". Emily's first on stage role was when she was four years old and played a Munchkin in the play of "The Wizard of Oz". I felt it was a privilege to be able to speak to an actress whom I had just seen on stage.

Overall, I thought this was a great experience for me and for the other students. Seeing all of the behind-the-scenes areas of the Palace and getting to interview Emily really brought me closer to the theater than I ever thought I would be.

JUNIE B. JONES

By: Jordan Theroux, Grade 5, Community School, Prospect

Lights, camera, action! This is what it feels like to be at the Palace Theater in Waterbury, Connecticut. In the following essay I will tell you about the history of the Palace, the wonderful performance of Junie B. Jones, and interview the star of the play Junie B. Jones.

As we entered the Palace I met up with Karen Streeter who talked to us about the history of the theater. I was able to tour the Palace and go back stage. We learned many interesting facts, but the one that stuck out in my brain was when Harry Houdini came to the Palace and asked for a trap door cut in the stage. They cut it, but the following day a circus came and an elephant walked over the trap door and fell in. I also learned that almost every theater would light a ghost light, which is said to keep away the Phantom of the Opera. One thing I found out was that after every show one of the actors/actresses would paint a picture on the back stage wall and sign all the cast members' names on it. I learned many facts from Karen and hope to learn more.

After we learned all the facts, we were asked to come and sit in the box seats and enjoy the production. The show began as Junie B. Jones was entering first grade. When she got to the classroom many of her friends said that since they were her best friend in kindergarten they weren't her friends now. As the show went on Junie made a new friend named Herb. They became very close and sat with each other every day. Towards the end of the story Junie B. was practicing for the kickball tournament when she stubbed her toe. Not being able to participate in the tournament upset Junie, but she thought of something else she could do which was juggle. But as the day of the show arrived, she still couldn't juggle so she played the triangle. When the crowd got bored of that and booed her she gave juggling a try and low and behold she did it. The show ended with the song "The Life and Times of Junie B."

Shortly after the performance we were allowed to go backstage and interview the main character "Emily" who played Junie B. some questions were...

Q-What inspired you to become an actress? **A-** "As a kid I watched the Wizard of Oz almost every day and decided that is what I want to do."

Q-What do you do to get ready for a performance? **A-** "It usually takes 2 hours to set up the scenery and we have half an hour to get into costume."

Q-What do you do if you mess up on stage? **A-** "Keep going and act like it was supposed to happen."

Q- Do you ever have stage fright? **A-** "Only when my family watches me perform." I very much enjoyed talking to Emily and getting to know about her acting career.

These were the highlights of my trip to the Palace Theater in Waterbury, CT. I enjoyed learning about the history of the Palace Theater, watching the play about Junie B. Jones, and interviewing the main character. I can't wait to go back again sometime soon.

JUNIE B. JONES

By: Olivia Theroux, Grade 5, Doolittle School., Cheshire

Junie B. Jones is a great play for kids to see. It is about the life of a girl moving up to the first grade. It has a wonderful storyline including friendship, the new boy, getting glasses, and much more fun and surprises!

I would definitely recommend this play to people of all ages! I was smiling during the whole show. It was a great, great experience. You should have seen it, whoever is reading this!!!

During the tour we walked around almost the whole Palace! Our tour guide, Mrs. Streeter, was very nice and told us some amazing things about the palace!

One of the things we learned was about Houdini. Harry performed at The Palace Theater and in order to perform, he required a 6x6 hole on the stage. In a later show, there was an elephant. During the show, the elephant fell through the hole and, tragically, he died. Beware the ghost of the elephant!

In addition to the tour and show, we interviewed Emily, who played Junie B. Jones! It was so exciting! Guess how long she had to learn her lines? Only 8 days!!!

I loved the experience! Five stars. That's all I have to say.

JUNIE B. JONES

By: Hannah Vitarelli, Grade 7, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, Waterbury

My experience at the Palace Theater was interesting. I learned many new and exciting information. The things I learned were about the construction of the Palace, renovation, history, and some things about the performances put on. There were many things I enjoyed at the Palace, but if I had to choose one it would be the architecture.

The design of the Palace was magnificent. It had little details that made it beautiful. The stairs, walls, seating, and even ceiling were amazing. My favorite design would be the ceiling. It was made of gold leaf that was shaped into little squares.

As I walked through the theater I saw and learned new things. The basement was full of dressing rooms and other rooms were you prepare for a show. Also in the basement, there are walls where the actors of each show sign their names.

The show I saw was Junie B. Jones. The show was entertaining and everyone seemed to like it. The actors really made themselves feel like their character and performed very well. As we interviewed them the answers were very interesting to hear. Some said they have made a mistake or were nervous when their family is there.

The Palace is a great place to go and see a show. The seating is amazing and everyone will love it. I would recommend it to anyone who wants to see a show. I know I will be going back to the Palace Theater to see other performances.

JUNIE B. JONES

By: Jade Lima, 4th grade, Hop Brook Elementary School, Naugatuck

This play is about Junie B. Jones' first day of first grade. Junie doesn't care about what other people think of her. When she got glasses, May laughed at her, but everybody else loved them! The whole class started to dance and sing, about how Junie could now see. Junie B. Jones helped the lunch lady in the cafeteria and she was proud of it, she didn't try to hide it! This play was amazing!!!! It was colorful, fun, and made the audience laugh. The sets were so creative. There was a giant journal in the middle of the stage. It was a musical, so all the actors were singing and dancing.

The Palace Theater is beautiful. It actually looks like a palace. The floor and stairs are made of real marble, but the walls are just painted. There are 60,000 square feet of gold leaf! The theater holds 2,600 people. The organs are fake, but the sound comes from a sound station. People sit down behind it and click the button for the sounds or music. The stage the stage is 5,000 square feet!

The Palace Theater has a lot of history! Harry Houdini once performed at the Palace Theater. He told the stage managers to cut a hole in the middle of the stage. After the show, they covered the hole with a trap door. Later in the month an elephant performed. The elephant fell through the hole and died. Some people say the theater is haunted. The workers put out ghost lights to keep ghosts away!

I would definitely recommend seeing *Junie B. Jones*. The actors had a lot of fun, and wore colorful, fun, and creative costumes. The stage managers are so creative, and the actors were loud and clear. I would recommend seeing any play at the Palace!

JUNIE B. JONES

By: Kyla Drewry, Grade 5, Community School, Prospect

It's Tuesday, May 2. We arrive at the Palace Theatre at 11:30 and are astonished. Walking in I truly felt as if I was in a palace- marble floors and walls, a grand staircase, crystal chandeliers- it was as if I were in a fairytale. There, we met up with our tour guide, Karen Streeter.

Before the show, we were able to learn all about the history of the Theatre and take a tour, too. We learned about how the Palace looked before it was closed in 1986 and how it was remodeled and opened back up in 2004. While it was closed, there were multiple fires and floods throughout the Palace and it cost the workers about 2 million dollars to restore it. We also learned about the materials used, such as the gold, silver, and copper block designs and aluminum designs. On the tour, we got to explore the green rooms, the snack room, and the paintings of all the Broadway shows that had been there in the past. Also, Karen showed us the Orchestra pit and all the seating in the House. At last, we took our seats and the show began.

A gigantic notebook sits in the middle of the stage. The music starts, the book opens, and out pops Junie B. Jones. She is singing and dancing, telling us about her new journal and how excited she is to start the first grade....."Nooooo daddy! I don't want to. Don't make me go in there!" It's the first day of 1st grade and let's just say that Junie B. isn't as excited as she is nervous. She goes in and sees Lucille, her best friend from Kindergarten. Her nervousness and sadness shatter and turn to excitement only to find out Lucille has made new best friends, twins named Camille and Chenille. Once again, Junie B. is disappointed when she finds out her bus friend, "that Grace," is sitting with someone else. However, when she sits with Herbert, a boy who is new to her school this year, she finally has something good happen when she makes friends with him. Throughout the play, Junie B. has more downfalls and high points, like when she needs to get glasses and doesn't know what people will think or when she helps out the lunch lady, Mrs. Gutsman. She learns valuable lessons like "when life gives you lemons, make lemonade!" or that "true friends will love you for who you are, not what you look like" and that "when you make a mistake, try to fix it and not just pout about it." We learned all this, too and had some good laughs along the way.

After the show, all the schools cleared out but a school and our group stayed. We got to ask the actress who played Junie B., Emily, many questions. She answered questions like "Were you like Junie B. when you were little?" and "How long did you get to memorize the script?" and "How long does it take to set up the show. She answered that she was like Junie B. a lot, they only got 8 days to memorize the script because of canceled rehearsals due to snow, and that it takes 2 hours to set up the show since they have to check the lighting, sound, set up the stage, and get into costume. Emily answered those questions and many more involving theatre and her role and involvement in it.

Going to the Palace for the show was a great experience. I learned a lot about the Palace, theatre, and a couple valuable life lessons from the show. I would definitely want to do this again, and would recommend it to a friend. I had an exciting time.