

An Awesome Palace Theater Tour

On May 13 we went to a wonderful place called the Palace Theater. We got to watch a play about Benjamin Franklin and go back stage with our pen pals. We are Raven and Samantha, fifth graders, from Ridge Road Elementary School in North Haven. Our pen pals are from Hop Brook Intermediate School in Naugatuck.

When we went to the Palace Theater we thought we were going to enjoy lunch and the play "Frankly Ben" with our friends the penpals from Naugatuck. We were wondering why we had special seating with our penpals Hannah and Victoria, sitting away from our classes. It turned out that we and our partners were going to have a back stage tour along with meeting the cast. But first were told by Karen Streeter, an employee at the Palace, that we were going to sit in a box. We were wondering what she meant. She explained that this was a special rectangular section with seats called the journalist boxes.

Suddenly the curtain opened. The stage was completely dark. If you looked carefully you could see five mysterious figures slowly moving on stage. Instantly the elderly Benjamin Franklin morphed into a young Ben Franklin. He was speaking about his independence from his brother. The other characters turned out to be his alter egos explaining independence.

Soon after the play our pen pals and we got to go on a backstage tour. We were excited. We learned much about the history. The Palace Theater was built in 1920. It took a year to build. Sadly, the building was closed down in 1986. It was reopened with the help of generous donations in 2004. If the theater remained closed it would have been a sad lose. Instead as you near the theater the lights outside sparkle and shine, drawing you in. When you first enter you notice the huge entryway. Marble stairs and floors sparkle. Glistening chandeliers radiate from the ceiling. It looked like diamonds hanging from the sky. Gold is everywhere. The seats are soft and comfy. On our tour we learned about the ghost light. The ghost light is a single bulb that shines from the ceiling all night to keep the ghost away from a show. The dressing room was not what we expected. In it there are ironing boards, steamers along with tables and chairs even a microwave. It looked like a kitchen or a small apartment. We saw the orchestra pit under the stage. It had an echo because it was hallow. There was a hallway painted with pictures of plays performed at the theater. The cast signed these.

Luckily, we met the cast of "Frankly Ben". We learned how they prepared for the show. They said they drank milk to keep their voices strong. They had to do vocal practices. We found out it takes many years of hard work and practice to become a professional actor.

We knew this was a special occasion we'll never forget. We got to see our penpals for the last time this year at an amazing place, see a great play and get a backstage tour.

By: Raven & Samantha