

Peterson Cabrillo Orchestra Concert

By Emily Cameron, 12/12/2013

Mr. Pickard grabbed the microphone and flashed a sharp glance at his students. We fell silent, our eyes trained on him. "Thank you for coming to our Cabrillo and Peterson combined concert this evening." His deep voice rumbled throughout the room. "We will start the concert with a song called . . . Chorale." He set down his microphone and turned to us. I lifted my violin to my chin and set the bow on the strings. Mr. Pickard swished his conductor's baton through the air and the song began. It was a simple song, and the notes were easy to play, but it had a sweet melody that rang through the air as my bow glided across the strings. On the last note, my bow lingered on the violin for a moment longer, and this created an effect as if the music were slowly fading away. The audience clapped furiously, and I spotted my family among the other two hundred people in the crowd. Two hundred people? I swallowed nervously. That was a pretty large audience.

We performed several other songs, each one increasingly more complex and difficult to play than the last. Finally, Mr. Pickard announced that this was going to be our last song for the night: 21 Guns by Green Day. The moment the words left his mouth, interest and energy level of the audience rose, since this song was a modern classic and many people had heard of it. Mr. Pickard glared at us, his dark eyes glowering under his close-cropped white hair. "Remember," he said, "it's a C sharp on the G string. *C sharp!*"

He swished the baton through the air four times, and the song began. The music was slow at first, ringing through the air with its sweet, soft melody, enchanting the audience. Then the steady, rhythmic sound of the drums thundered throughout the room, and the song picked up speed, the notes higher, the tempo faster. I could see the audience bobbing their heads up and down to the beat, and a smile played across my lips. We actually sounded really good—despite the fact that I wasn't very good at playing violin. When the song ended, the audience clapped and cheered furiously. Mr. Pickard thanked all the parents for coming to the concert, wished them a great night, and dismissed his orchestra students.

We strode out into the night. I lugged along my heavy violin, humming "Dance of the Harlequins" under my breath. I stuffed my violin in the back of our Toyota, and clambered into the car. The performance had gone surprisingly well. I was amazed by how good we sounded, and the audience had seemed to enjoy it. Even Mr. Pickard was satisfied with our performance. I grinned. I could barely wait for our next concert.