



## **Anastasia – Tuscarora High School**

Alright, comrades. Let's party, Bolshevik style! Tuscarora's production of *Anastasia* is like a nesting doll in that the farther you delve in, the more intricate any details get.

*Anastasia* first premiered as an animated film in 1997. It opened in its current musical form in 2016 and quickly moved to Broadway a year later. Based on the murder of the ruling Romanov family during the Russian Revolution, this show asks an important question: what if the youngest Romanov daughter, Anastasia, had survived? Anya has lost her memory and must join forces with some locals—Dmitry and Vlad—to discover her past and experience her royal future.

In Tuscarora's jaw-dropping rendition of *Anastasia*, Queen Kincaide (Dmitry) switched effortlessly between comedic and dramatic acting. For example, in the song "In a Crowd of Thousands," her tone starts out comedic, changing to a heartwarming love song by the end. When recollecting a buried memory, his acting sold the connection between Dmitry and Anya in this pivotal moment and gave Anya's remembrance weight.

Ava Peach (Anya) had no weakness but was exceptional when singing and building relationships on stage. Ava boasted an incredible singing voice, especially in the song "In My Dreams." Her tone sounded professional and acted as a perfect introduction to the character. Aside from vocals, Ava had great chemistry with Dmitry and the show's villain, Gleb (Maggie Larson). Her confrontation with Gleb at the show's end was exhilarating because of each actor's commitment to their character: a Bolshevik general preventing an uprising and a defenseless street sweeper.

Maggie had a great singing voice, particularly in the role's solo, "The Neva Flows." In her performance, Maggie combined her vocal abilities with great physical acting, lamenting the horrible acts her dad had to commit as a Bolshevik soldier.

One common theme for the show's technical elements was Uniformity in Excellence. For example, the show Dramaturg (Joelle Aheto) used the phonetic alphabet to teach the cast an authentic Russian accent that never wavered during the show. The Orchestra, led by the flutes, clarinets, and trumpets, never overshadowed the performer while keeping the songs together and moving. The costumes (Emma Marfia, Katie Brunton, Emily Phifer) all had specific styles, letting the audience instantly recognize which ensemble any character is a part of. Hair and Makeup (Addison Zimmerman, Ava

Peach) used wigs that worked with costumes and were indistinguishable from regular hair.

While uniformity can lead to stunning results, it is essential to include some elements of flair in your show. These following tech elements demonstrated Tuscarora's ability to stick out while blending. The set (Rachael Giessmann, Leo Hall, James Mangovski, Lily Frankenfield) features a large purple music box center stage. This music box was tastefully decorated and worked as the focal point for the stage. Joelle Aheto, Ryan Sirinsky, and Luke Pierce crafted the choreography to work with and around the set, especially in the song Land of Yesterday, where they transformed the Fabergé egg-inspired set into an elevated section of a club.

Tuscarora High School should be proud of their production of Anastasia. Overall, the show boasted incredible performances from leads, an outstanding supporting cast, engaging lights and choreography, and hours of evident work from those behind the scenes. Thank you, Tuscarora, for this exceptional production.

-Ethan King