



The Legend of Sleepy Hollow – Liberty High School

The auditorium is barely lit, and the sound of a galloping horse in the distance causes time to slow. Anticipation builds, as the sound gets louder and louder, causing panic and spelling doom for the soon-to-be victim Ichabod Crane. However, with a burst of speed, he escapes at the last moment, ending the scene and setting the eerie tone that permeated throughout Liberty High School's performance of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

The original "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" was published as a short story in Washington Irving's book *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* The story was adapted into a play by John Heimbuch and Jon Ferguson in 2013. The original was one of the first examples of American literature and has stayed relevant through its titular evil spirit: the Headless Horseman. This monster torments the residents of Tarrytown, including recent Yale graduate Ichabod Crane. He acts as the town's Schoolmaster and teaches private choir lessons, in which he learns of the town's supernatural side. While feuding with town muscle Brom Bones, and attempting to woo the town's most attractive bachelorette, Katrina Van Tassel, he gets up close and personal with the town's scariest wives' tale; a headless Hessian ghost who's out for blood, hunting people from horseback. Ichabod must try to survive his stay at Sleepy Hollow, before he becomes less of a school teacher, and more of a victim.

The highlight of this show was the cast's physicality. Ichabod Crane, played by Elliot Cavener, used all props given to him to their fullest extent. While onstage, he ate several pastries, carefully picking out which sweet treats to eat and completely ignoring any conversation about his new job. He only later engaged in the conversation to say--with food still in his mouth--how delicious the pastries were, making clear his character's greed and gluttony. He interacted a lot with his love interest's father Baltus Van Tassel (Naqui Francis). Naqui would constantly use a straight posture and dignified walk, helping sell his character's wealth and experience. He also would act in the background of scenes, making movements such as pointing to the door in order to sell his impatience with the town's minister Parson Van Houten, played by Cassie Shaidt. Baltus' daughter Katrina, played by Karly McDonough, along with Cassie both made the deliberate and effective choice of having more reserved movements. They both kept from wild movements, providing great contrast to Elliot and Naqui. They both also had great character voices, adding or removing age from their voices in order to fit their roles. The physicality of the entire cast, along with these examples of character voices led to engaging theater.

The tech for this show was always being manipulated in order to fit different scenes. Through the dimming and brightening of lights, Kenny Mullins, Connor Mullins and Liam Meadows helped turn the stage from a bright classroom, to a spooky forest. The dramatic dimming of lights, especially for Ichabod's first interaction with the Headless Horseman, did a great job at heightening the show's urgency. The Stage Crew (managed by Jonah Blue) had creative transitions between scenes. One transition saw a door spin around a frozen Ichabod, as he is

moved from the inside of a house, to the outside in an instant. Both of these tech elements helped move the show along, and kept the show dynamic between scenes.

Liberty High School had a dynamic performance of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, with lots of movement both onstage and behind the scenes. This showcases the willingness of Liberty's actors to put themselves out there, and create a truly unforgettable experience.