

## **ANHS' The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime Equals Tenderness**

written by Kristen Slymen, a junior at Capistrano Valley High School

Aliso Niguel High School performs a heartwarming production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*. The show includes an autistic boy, a well-intentioned father, a flawed mother, and one dead dog. The boy has a mission to figure out what happened to his neighbor's dog, and along the way he learns more about his parents, and ultimately helps strengthen his family's bonds.

Mateo Yepiz creates a believable Christopher with dedicated gestures and body movement, never once breaking character or faltering in his accent, while maintaining precise articulation. His facial expressions and vocal inflections convey every hint of confusion, frustration, and pure happiness, connecting to the audience and touching hearts.

Luke Colomerbo matches the emotional impact as Ed, Christopher's father. His contrast of large gestures and loud projection to when he was gentle and softly spoken help create the realness of a struggling father doing his best to help his son. To the opposite effect Judy (Leah Fahim) is a mother who ran away from her struggles, but still cares. Fahim is able to communicate love and regret through her continuous loving tone and elegant demeanor.

Mrs. Alexander (Emilie Manville) is very sweet. Manville moves slowly and bends over to better portray her character as old and delicate. She brings a sincere voice into the storyline. The Station Policeman (Daunte Mosley) is another minor, yet strong character, displaying sternness as an officer with his harsh instructions and posture.

The actors' touching performances pairs remarkably with the stunning technical aspects. The set, by Max Marquez, allows props to enter the stage from cubbies without any of the performers having to leave the stage. This effect creates seamless transitions from scene to scene, which also has to be credited to stage management by Gia Ventura.

The lighting of this show, designed by Ian Little, is a key part of the story telling. The lighting includes UV lights that reveal numbers on the stage that provide comfort to Christopher. In addition, the lighting design complements the set by fitting in the grid that is painted. The lighting reveals the world through Christopher's eyes by appearing in a logical manner and highlighting areas where Christopher looks.

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* by ANHS is uplifting and moving due to the wonderful actors and crew.