

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

EXTRAORDINARY KIDS

CATHERINE J. ROURKE
 For the Siuslaw News

Nyah Vollmar



She's only 12, but her voice has the power to move crowds to tears and rousing applause. With a voice as big as the arenas in which she performs, Nyah Vollmar's rendition of the National Anthem evokes gasps and goosebumps wherever she goes. Listening to her deliver the high notes during a recent Oregon Ducks basketball game in Eugene, it's hard to believe the voice comes from a kid instead of some sophisticated diva.

Nyah looks like any ordinary schoolgirl with her shy smile and unassuming demeanor. But when she opens her mouth to sing a melody, this amazing voice rises from her depths to dazzle audiences with wonder and admiration.

"I've always loved singing," said Nyah, who started belting out tunes at age 7. "I like Disney movies and just started singing along to them."

Nyah discovered her natural singing voice at an early age. Since then, the Siuslaw Middle School seventh-grader has developed an impressive repertoire of skills, including acting and modeling.

Nyah never had any formal singing instruction until recently. "I joined the school choir in fourth grade, but that's about it," she said. "I never even thought about it; singing has always been my hobby."

That hobby inspired her to join the Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW) and develop her skills further. "It's harder to memorize lines for plays than for songs," she said.

"I've always loved singing. I like Disney movies and just started singing along to them."

—NYAH VOLLMAR, 12 YEARS OLD

"Music makes it easier for me to remember the words. I had to practice a lot but it was also fun and I got to wear some fun costumes."

Nyah bravely began entering auditions and won a spot singing the National Anthem publicly for the first time at age 11 before hundreds of people at an Oregon Ducks basketball game.

"I was really nervous," she said. "I still get nervous when singing in front of anyone."

Her favorite song to perform at auditions is "Applause" by Lady Gaga. As proof of her talent, Nyah has won numerous talent competitions. She received First Place for three consecutive years in "Florence's Got Talent," where she sang "I'm Like a Bird" by Nelly Furtado.

With so many singing engagements since then, including the Eugene Emeralds and NCAA athletic events, does Nyah feel more confident now? Her reply is honest and straightforward, as would be expected from any girl her age: "Nope!" Still, she gains a sense of accomplishment from every event.

"I feel totally relieved afterward," she said with a laugh. "But I really love doing it and always feel great when I sing."

Nyah was born in Tualatin, Ore., and remembers living "in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower" as a toddler when her family moved to Paris. The daughter of Scott, a former financial executive, and Marijo, a physical therapist at PeaceHealth, Nyah has two brothers ages 6 and 14, as well as a 21-month-old sister. The Vollmars moved to Florence in 2011 for its natural beauty.

"We always knew we wanted to live on the Oregon coast," Scott said. "We love the dunes, ocean and lakes."

Scott began posting Nyah's profile on talent sites with great response but keeps her education as the top priority. The stay-at-home dad serves as her manager and closely monitors Nyah's schoolwork so her grades don't suffer. Despite an agency booking auditions, print modeling and acting gigs, none of it has gone to her pretty little head. Instead, Nyah takes it all in stride and even shares her "worst moment" when she lost her voice during a performance due to a cold.

"My voice came out like a screech on high notes," she said with a laugh. "It was so apparent and very embarrassing."

Asked if she plans to audition for TV talent shows, Nyah replied, "I want more experience behind me first."

And she's getting plenty of it. Nyah just expanded her repertoire to include an online commercial launched last week for a new app-enabled BB-8 toy from the "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" movie. The ad shows her using the wearable Star Wars Force Band to control the BB-8 droid's movements.

Despite such talent and a voice that sounds like someone way beyond her years, Nyah is still a just a kid with a great sense of humor who likes sand dune rides, eating crab puffs and telling jokes. While still too young to define her future career, she hopes it will combine singing, acting and dancing. Her dream is to perform musical theater for Broadway-style shows.

"I don't know exactly what I will do for my profession, but I will definitely go to college for performing arts because it opens up more doors," Nyah said. "I can see myself becoming a professional singer, though not quite like Lady Gaga."



PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT VOLLMAR

Nyah will perform on Sept. 10 at the new CROW Center for the Performing Arts and on Sept. 14 at City Lights Cinemas.

Acting in movies and learning how to do animation would also be pretty fun, but singing is the main thing."

Earlier this summer, Nyah sang a rendition of "Almost There" from the Disney movie "The Princess and the Frog" for a CROW fundraiser that, in a prophetic way, echoes her bright future: "I know exactly where I'm goin'... gettin' closer and closer every day... there ain't nothin' gonna stop me now 'cause I'm almost there..."

Don't miss the chance to see this rising star perform in Florence. With a voice like that, she may soon take off for "America's Got Talent" and

the big stage. Nyah will appear Sept. 10 at the grand opening of the new CROW Center for the Performing Arts at 3120 Highway 101. She will also sing a duet with CROW musical director Maree Beers and the Miles to Go Quartet at the Siuslaw Outreach Services benefit on Sept. 14 at City Lights Cinemas.

Catherine J. Rourke is an award-winning writer, journalist and book editor who teaches creative writing at the Florence Regional Arts Alliance. She may be contacted at CJReditor@gmail.com.

LETTERS

Anti-Trump vandalism

Monday morning, Labor Day, Duke and Trish Wells, owners of Old Cedar Tree Woodworking, came to work to find yet another act of vandalism against their support of Donald Trump.

This time, instead of just throwing their Trump signs in the street and driving over them, it appears a slingshot was used to break the window holding the large Trump sign. This large, 4 feet by 6 feet bay window in the front of the store has been in their shop with its matching windows for 30 years. The hole is in the upper left and the entire window will have to be replaced.

There are reports of Republican signs being stolen from Glenada Road and other streets around Florence.

I heard that an anti-Hillary person made a ruckus at the Democratic Office north of Fred Meyer — this is also bad. We need to get along and love each other no matter who wins the election; we will still be neighbors.

Florence is better than this.

Sherry Harvey
 Florence

Unacceptable act

Today is a sad period of time in our nation when private property destruction is the acceptable form of political expression. Whether or not you think a candidate/political ideology is unacceptable does not give anyone the right to punish someone for their beliefs.

Does destroying property persuade a voter to choose the culprit's preference or does it help to elect the one they oppose? Let us all join hands as Americans to show our disdain for this act and others like it.

Help Old Cedar Tree Woodworking repair its window, which was smashed by someone opposed to their political choice. Stop by and

offer to help them replace the window.

Show us what America is all about as in the old days when people joined forces to rebuild their neighbor's barn.

Ralph and Karen Nichols
 Florence

Tax revenue, cuts

Believe it or not, according to usdebtclock.org, using CBO data, in 2008, the total income tax revenue was \$1,158,715,224,700 the year of Obama's election. After he served his first four years, the total income tax, revenue totaled \$1,128,357,496,540 in 2012. That is a difference of \$30,357,228,160 less, after higher taxes and regu-

lations — and, of course, there were a lot less people in the work force.

In that same period, the total federal tax revenue totaled \$2,527,909,189,049 in 2008, and in 2012, the federal tax revenue total was \$2,436,940,962,376, a difference of \$90,968,226,673 less than in 2008.

Perhaps some of the difference has to do with a 33 percent drop in manufacturing jobs, which has produced the lowest work force participation rate since the 1970s.

Which party controlled the hill then?

In 1980, probably before many were born, tax revenues were \$956 billion (in 1996 dollars). This was before Reagan cut taxes. Those tax cuts in the following 10 years with the exception of two, revenues averaged \$102 billion above their 1980 level in 1996 dollars, according to heritage.org/research/reports/2002/10/issues-2002-tax-reform-for-economic-growth.

There it is, only took me 10 minutes to find.

The 33 percent loss in manufacturing jobs is largely due to the increased cost of doing business. Those costs to business are for the most part increased taxes and regulations.

Jim Selby
 Florence

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County. Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed.

All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number for verification. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity.

Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received. Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published. All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

Write to: Editor@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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