

## CDMHS Makes A Splash With "Big Fish!"

written by Carolyn Cohen, a junior at Trabuco Hills High School

Big Fish follows the larger-than-life Edward Bloom and his adult son Will. After Edward is diagnosed with cancer, Will commits to learning the truth behind his father's fantastical tales. Blending both humor and heart, Big Fish ultimately centers around themes of storytelling, truth, family, legacy, and empowerment.

Expertly balancing the duality between youth and age, fantasy and reality, Cameron Firoozi delivers an astonishing performance as Edward Bloom. Though Firoozi captivates with infectious energy, from his exaggerated leaps and bounds across the stage in "Be The Hero" to his impressive footwork in "Out There on the Road," this vigor, like Edward's stories, is ultimately a fantasy. Firoozi expertly highlights this harsh truth as he morphs into a bedridden cancer patient with hacking coughs, a rasping voice, and a trembling frame.

In complete contrast to Firoozi, Logan Booth employs clipped diction and a stiff posture to characterize the realist that is Will Bloom. However, in "What's Next," when Will finally allows himself to believe in the power of storytelling, Booth's physicality evolves to mirror Firoozi's, with bright eyes, sweeping gesticulations, and frantic paces across the stage.

As The Witch, Blessindia Danurwenda leaves an unforgettable mark on the show. By swooshing her flowing cape, wildly dancing her hands around her crystal ball, and exercising catlike physicality, Danurwenda enchants the audience and draws them into the magic of Edward's mind.

The impressive calypsos and fluttery pas de chats of Ingchean Tiang's Mermaid and Dancing Fire seem to defy the laws of physics, further immersing the audience in a fantastical world where anything is possible. The enchanting choreography of Willow Boyd achieves much the same effect. By employing dance styles from multiple decades -- from tap to waltzes -- Boyd reinforces the idea that art -- for example, storytelling -- transcends space, time, and reality.

The lighting design of Cameron Firoozi, KJ Farrell, Nick Lopez, and Ryan Ordujadi is perhaps one of the most brilliant elements of the show. Whereas the neutral lighting of scenes set in the real world helps convey stifling monotony, the elaborate purples and greens of "I Know What You Want" and the bold scarlets of Amos's circus invite the audience to believe in color and magic.

CDM's fantastical interpretation of "Big Fish" transports the audience into an enchanting world of magic, music, and mystery, and reminds them of the empowerment offered by imagination and creativity.