

The Apocalypse Unfolds at Huntington Beach High School's "Mr Burns, A Post Electric Play" written by Brooke Metoyer, a junior at Mission Viejo High School

"Mr Burns, A Post Electric Play" at Huntington Beach masterfully demonstrates an idea of how humans would use entertainment, such as the TV show "The Simpsons", in a post-apocalyptic world, with the audience seated on stage and immersed in the story. In three acts, the last being eighty seven years after the first, six survivors process and endure their new dystopian reality; re-enacting the episode "Cape Feare" as entertainment in act one. The episode later morphs and the very idea of "The Simpsons" is critically disfigured by the third; humanity changed forever.

Grady Farman masterfully embodies the characters of Matt and Mr Burns. As Matt, he passionately attempts to re-enact the episode, donning different voices for each character and flailing his limbs, desperately trying to keep his group laughing. As Mr Burns, he drags his sword while staggering on stage, a hunched posture, and sense of vindictive courage communicated through a grotesque smile and piercing gaze. His calculated expressions are emphasized by Heath Ledger-inspired clown makeup designed by Raylee Hayes and Leo Piccinino. The red paint smeared across his mouth accentuates his taunting and horrifying smile after he sends the baby plummeting off the side of the house-boat.

Captivating the audience through skittish cat-like movements and wide eyes, Keri James animates the fervid Colleen. James taps her fingers, hugs herself, and bites her nails; exuding her anxiety while barely speaking in act one. Later, James confidently stands tall and commands the actors on stage with a stern tone as director.

Act three opens with Isabella Greenbaum, wearing a yellow decrepit mask, horrifyingly rising from behind seats in the back of the house. Greenbaum begins maniacally laughing and producing other freakish noises as they clamber like a spider towards the stage with horrifying agility; jutting limbs out- a moment to be remembered.

Utilizing programs such as "Q-Lab" and "Soundly, Genevieve Perry gathered and modified sounds such as a fire pit, crickets, gunshots, and glass breaking. All sound effects play smoothly and punctually, and some: such as the grass rustling, play from stage right, where the actor later enters; hauntingly placing the audience amidst the ominous wilderness.

Through extraordinary acting and effective tech, Huntington Beach Union's dystopian "Mr Burns, A Post Electric Play" is a haunting reminder that entertainment will always endure and survive, in one way or another.