

Portola Wonderfully Retells Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella

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With dazzlingly technical elements and stellar acting, Portola High School's production of "Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella" reignites the notable tale in a new, modern light with new characters and elements.

Originally derived from Charles Perrault's version of Cinderella, the production mainly reflects the classic tale. However, Ella (Raksha Rajeshmohan) takes action upon the wrongdoings happening in the kingdom and inspires kindness within Prince Topher (Nishad Francis) and the entire realm.

Raksha Rajeshmohan, as Ella, enchants the heart of Prince Topher with her serenading voice and bright smile. While singing "In My Own Little Corner", she expresses her hopes of living outside her small little life. When she first meets Prince Topher (Nishad Francis), their beautiful harmonies and passionate gestures demonstrate their powerful connection in "Ten Minutes Ago".

With her elegant voice and powerful stage presence, Marie (Stella Park) casts a captivating spell onto the audience. Her melodious and mature vocals in "Impossible" empower Cinderella to go to the ball and to fight for what she wants.

As Jean-Michel, Ian Pham Aros has a powerful stage presence with his bold tone and strong stance as he protests the faults of the monarchy. However, when he is alone with Ella's stepsister, Gabrielle (Rachel Abalos), he suddenly becomes flustered and awkward as their relationship develops throughout the play.

Madame (Aliyah Davis) and Charlotte (Paris Shuttle) present themselves as a comedic duo with their impeccable timing and over the top gestures. While Madame exquisitely delivers her harsh one-liners, Charlotte tumbles down to the ground consistently, but she still maintains her boldness around others.

The ensemble in this production actively adds to the atmosphere of every scene while remaining as a cohesive unit. Particularly, in "Stepsister's Lament", Charlotte and the Ladies of the Court angrily come together as they discuss the 'mysterious woman' at the ball.

The lighting design (Yejin Ashley Kim and Harrison Lin) superbly reflects the mood of each scene as well as transforms the stage for each scene. Particularly the dark red flashes striking on stage as Prince Topher attacks a threatening giant.

The costume design (Aneska Smith, Kathryn Mann, and Isabelle Hung) goes above and beyond with their intricate and enchanted dressmaking. Their several "transformation" dresses considerably add to the magic of this production.

Through mesmerizing vocals and creative technical design, Portola High School demonstrates the importance of kindness and the magic it can bring to a person's life.