

It's Not Easy Being Green, yet Dana Hills's "Shrek" Stuns!
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Once upon a time, an ugly ogre, a beautiful princess, and rich nobility crossed paths. But this isn't your typical fairytale. When secrets- along with some farts - are let out, the ugly ogre turns out to be beautiful on the inside, the charismatic princess harbors her own dark mysteries, and the powerful royal is a little... little. The cast and crew of Dana Hills's 'Shrek' whisk audiences off to this upside-down magical kingdom where stereotypes are broken as friendships are formed.

Bell Basalla is hilarious as the haughty and grouchy titular role, Shrek. She growls, grumbles, and groans at each joke her contrastingly enthusiastic travel companion, Donkey, (Cameron Pham,) brays. Rolling her eyes with a mannish impatience, she spits out each biting retort with vitriol that effectively captures Shrek's short temper. However, as her character's heart melts with love for the charming Princess Fiona (Taylor Chelius), so does her tough exterior. Basalla peels back the onion-layers of Shrek's outer gruffness as she exchanges growls for hopeful sighs and a softer vocal tone in the pique of her metamorphosis, the moving ballad 'When Words Fail.'

With widened, terrified eyes juxtaposed by cheesy smiles, The Duloc Dancer ensemble is a hilarious crew. Their terror seeps into their saccharinely-sweet vocals as they dance in animatronic-like unison, effectively encapsulating their forced conformity.

William Doppenberg and Isabella Arbour astound with their intricately-designed props and thorough attention to detail. As the Three Little Pigs each reluctantly lug their baggage across the stage, the audience can characterize them by their suitcases - one dragging a bag of straw, one clutching a bag of sticks, and one wielding a handy-dandy toolbox. In their clever nod to the original fairytale, the props team effectively clarifies the identities of the irked trio of piggies and helps to envelop the audience in the musical's enchanted world.

What underneath is an ingenious contraption of pipes and pulley systems (designed by Aidan Lindsay) is on top a fabulous pink dragon bejeweled with glitter and shiny gems (thanks to the creativity of Lani Earley, Jewliana Fowler, and Mickey Freeman.) This technical grandeur in addition to Jewliana Fowler's impressive vocals as the besotted Dragon effectively brings this impressive mythical creature to life onstage.

With such a talented company, you won't want to miss Dana Hills's amazing production that reminds us to celebrate our differences.