

Let Your Freak Flag Wave at Capistrano Valley Christian's Shrek
written by Addy Engelken, a senior at Tesoro High School

When the shiny kingdom of Duloc casts a flock of fairytale creatures into an unsuspecting swamp, a loner ogre, accompanied by a talking donkey and a shut-in princess, must embark on a transformative hero's journey to discover that true beauty comes in all shapes and sizes.

At the onset of his quest, Shrek (Gavin Sharp) is ardent to remain isolated, knees bent, arms spread wide, and jaw unhinged—a stance perfect for bellowing at any creature that draws too near. But when becoming an ogre-in-shining-armor proves harder than expected, Sharp adjusts, shoulders tight and fists balled in uncertainty as he belts out the sorrowful notes of "Who I'd Be." As his journey finishes, Shrek's menacing grimace evolves into a hero's prideful beam. While Sharp's physicality transforms, his musical Scottish lilt never wavers.

Princess by day and ogre by night, the duality of the feisty Fiona is brought to life by Laila Vataha. In "Morning Person," Vataha mixes operatic soprano notes with gritty growls. As Fiona embraces her unconventional ogrehood, Vataha sinks low into her hips, mouth open wide as she and Shrek celebrate the messy, flatulent parts of themselves in a hilarious belching contest.

The authenticity of the ogres is contrasted by the shiny plasticity found in "What's Up Duloc." Choreography by Scarlett Petar, in which uniformed Duloc Dancers jazz box and jazz hands with blinding, cheesy smiles, has the garishness and glitz of Old Broadway. Though he may be small, Lord Farquaad's (Lucas Miller) larger-than-life stage presence ties the number together. Farquaad, coyly toying with the strands of his silky black bob, steps on the backs of his dancers to raise himself up, arms open and face split into a triumphant grin.

In the lobby, green lighting, designed by Brayden Phernambucq and Owen Brandt, welcomes audiences into the swamp. Once the curtain opens, Phernambucq and Brandt's thoughtful design choices are matched to the music and reflect Shrek's transformation—a blue night sky glittered with stars lights the emotional, reflective "Who I'd Be," and soft pink cues color Shrek's love ballad for Fiona.

Wig design by Sadie Cantrell highlights Fiona's emotional and physical transformation. Fiona's signature, fiery red wig features a free-flowing ponytail that is both poignant and practical: the style reflects Fiona's plucky spirit and ensures that each princess-to-ogre transformation runs smooth.

Capistrano Valley Christian's Shrek is a fun-loving celebration that reminds audiences that what makes us special makes us strong.