Aliso Niguel's "Leopoldstadt" Paints a Portrait of a Multi-Generational Tragedy
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Set in Vienna Austria, Leopoldstadt follows the story of the Merz-Jakobovich family and their struggles over the course of fifty years, from 1899, an era of relative peace in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to 1955 in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Throughout the show, the family explores the cost of maintaining their identity at the risk of compromising their safety.

Fisher Compton skillfully portrays Hermann Merz as a baptized Catholic of Jewish heritage struggling as he navigates through antisemitism and prejudice even after his efforts to assimilate.

Gretl Merz, Hermann's wife, played by Sara Phan is motherly and warm, while pivoting to a joyful and carefree demeanor later in the show. Hermann's brother-in-law, Ludwig Jakobovich (Greg Kaloustian) is a brilliant mathematician who is denied professorship, struggling with the belief that they will never be fully accepted into society.

Young Leo (Tatum Adams), Nellie's son, moves freely and spontaneously around the stage portraying the genuine joy and curious nature of a child. Her character contrasts with Leo's fear and anxiety when his family is confronted by an officer.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, older adult Leo (Tate Barry) differs from the rest of the family, with his British upbringing and accent reflecting his disconnection from his familial roots, leading up to the haunting memory of his family sitting together at the dinner table. Throughout the entirety of the show, the family members show definitive relationships and unity even when faced with extreme adversity.

The Props Team (Viktor Norman and ANTC Props Crew) baked a total of 20 cakes for the entire run of the show week in order to protect the realism and immersiveness of the environment.

Costumes (Katerin Fleschere, Kaley Dwyer, and ANTC Costumes Crew) and Hair and Makeup (Benita Alirezai, Audrey McMenamin, and Anna Reznichenko) blend seamlessly together to create historically accurate designs depicting the many eras of the show. They carefully designed each character's appearance based on their age, time period, and personality, such as inspiration from a 1920's flapper girl for the design of Hermine's eye-catching sequined fitted dress and Hanna's change from an intricate updo to long soft waves.

Overall, Aliso Niguel's Leopoldstadt is a tragically touching story of memory, identity, family, and history. But don't just take my word for it; go see this success of a show for yourselves!