

Tesoro's "Freaky Friday" is an Out of Body Experience
written by Akemi Nishida, a senior at University High School

The Blakes aren't your average nuclear family. With troubled teen Ellie's attitude issues, her meticulous mother's sky-high standards of perfection, and a load of uncovered family grieving, there's a recipe for disaster brewing— so, when the two polar opposites mistakenly switch bodies, can their sour relationship somehow turn sweet? Tesoro's stellar actors and tech deliver a production of Freaky Friday that's certainly something magical.

Natalia Vassilian is showstopping as Katherine Blake, master of the kitchen and matriarch of the family. She struts into each scene with poise, her unwavering posture and stern tone communicating her authority over the family. Vassilian later portrays Ellie with breathtaking emotion, gliding through "After All of This and Everything" with soaring high notes and gut-wrenching voice breaks, invoking empathy for the anguishing teenage girl.

Adjacent Vassilian, Lauren Rigby is the eye-rolling, arm-crossing, cake-smashing sixteen year old, Ellie. Her voice drips with sarcasm as she bickers with Katherine during "Just One Day", then flips to a sing-song tone when speaking to her high school crush, Adam, mid-dissection during "Oh, Biology." Rigby's superb acting versatility showcases all sides of Ellie's personality, from snarky to sweet to sentimental.

The entire high school ensemble can be applauded for impressive energy, from soulful grooving in biology class to gallivanting around the city during The Hunt. Key standouts include Savannah (Lana Moussa) and her posse; Moussa unleashes powerful leaps and ninja kicks with outstanding technique.

The set is intelligently designed by Ariana Gomez to be multifaceted, swiveling between angular walls of grey lockers and the Blakes' gleaming white kitchen. Running crew, including Emma Beddingfield, Aminah Sesay, Zack Alweheiby, and Emily Palmer, executes rapid scene changes to switch between Ellie's drab high school environment and the shining, tidy world of the neurotic Katherine Blake.

Bright, jazzy brass reverberates triumphantly as the show opens with "Just One Day", then dark, ominous piano notes trickle through the war zone that is Ellie's gym class in "Watch Your Back." With a demanding variety of musical genres, the student orchestra admirably elevates the specific moods of each scene.

Boasting a company of tremendous technicians and acting extraordinaires, Tesoro's "Freaky Friday" is a five-star production.