

Journey to the past with Orange Lutheran's "Anastasia!"

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Set after the Bolshevik Revolution, Orange Lutheran's "Anastasia" follows the orphaned girl, Anya, lost and searching for her family in Paris. But when two clever conmen, a heartbroken duchess, and the nightmares of her past begin to interrupt the present; Anya discovers the value of friendship, family, and, most importantly, herself.

With a straight back and clenched jaw, Liam Somerville (Gleb) captures the unwavering determination of a soldier. His booming vibrato overwhelms the theater in "Still" as he paces, fists clenched and eyes set in a piercing gaze, to mirror his character's intensity. Yet Somerville humanizes his performance when he meets Sophia Zonni (Anya). He chuckles nervously and stutters over her name to parallel a newfound vulnerability as he discards his barking tone for the softened gaze of a man in love.

Kristina Long (The Dowager Empress) elicits the raw despair of a heartbroken grandmother. Back bent low and head downcast, Long strikes a dejected figure as her voice breaks and breathing hitches, mimicking tears when she recalls the loss of her Anya in "Close the Door." And by repeatedly turning her back to the audience she encapsulates a hopelessness that mirrors her broken spirit.

Adding to this grief, the citizens of St. Petersburg ensemble portray the sadness of leaving home as, brows furrowed, they cling to one another and whisper quiet harmonies throughout "Stay, I Pray You." Combined with the emotional acapella of Melkie Sherman (Count Ipolitov), the scene is overwhelming.

Juxtaposing the somberness of Russia, the Neva Club ensemble illuminate the excitement of Paris in "Land of Yesterday" with their energetically high kicks, wide eyes, and ear-to-ear grins. Guided by the bright tone and spirited movement of Aleena Aoun (Lily) as she struts across the stage, this ensemble captures the vibrancy of city life.

Bringing the production to life on and off stage, the publicity team led by Lindsay O'Leary transforms the theater's lobby into 1900s Paris, arranging cast headshots dispersed against the backdrop of a glittering Eiffel Tower. Heightening the anticipation, the publicity team also conducts "tech takeovers" on Instagram to market behind the scenes glimpses of show rehearsals, ensuring a valuable look into the production's journey that will leave viewers begging for more.

Vibrant and heartwarming, Orange Lutheran's dedicated cast and publicity team bring audience's home in their magical production of "Anastasia."