

Newport Harbor's High School Musical is "What I've Been Looking For" written by Mia Gasca, a freshman at Laguna Hills High School

With a talented cast, crew, and orchestra, NHHS perfectly executes the Disney energy in their performance of High School Musical. This teenage romance finds Gabriella, the new science nerd, and Troy, a basketball star, coming together as they audition for their school musical. Many things try to get in their way, but soon the school realizes they're "all in this together"!

Nicholas Earnhart as Troy Bolton captures the essence of the basketball jock through a confident outward appearance. He also brings humor while bantering with Claudio Gonzalez playing Chad, Troy's teammate, over who will embarrass themselves first in drama class. Earnhart shows Troy's soft side in his sweet and innocent relationship with Gabriella, Lucy Berg, as they sing flawless duets with show-stopping harmonies. Berg perfectly contrasts Earnhart as the shy, genuine Gabriella through closed-off body language and sweet smiles.

Shelby Kliewer, playing Kelsi, executes the nerdy playwright brilliantly, using a higher-toned voice, silly giggle, and precise comedic timing. Kliewer also uses her piano skills to beautifully play the keyboard live onstage, making the show all the more impressive.

The entire ensemble radiates with energy, using over-the-top facial expressions and gestures to make each scene very engaging. They put emotion into every number and execute choreography with enthusiasm, adding to this liveliness. When the students are told to act like animals for an acting exercise, each ensemble member devotes to choosing an animal and going full-force with it, making for a hilarious moment.

From background lights to spotlights, lighting designer Omar Babovic is the mastermind behind it all. Omar's building, hanging, and tech-designing of lights add to the mood of every scene. The rainbow disco lights flashing in Ryan and Sharpay's audition show the chaotic fun of the number. However, when there is a conflict in the show, the background lights split colors, emphasizing the divide in feelings. As the conflict resolves, the lights become one solid color again to prove this resolution.

The hair and makeup team brings the Disney movie's characters to life. They give Ms. Darbus bright eyeshadow to heighten her bold personality and add wrinkles to identify her older age. The hair designers also went so far as to dye Sam Price's hair light brown to better match his character of Ryan.

The talented bunch at Newport Harbor makes this production of High School Musical unforgettable!