

Under the stars, San Clemente High presents Beauty and the Beast!

Written by Anya Nygaard, a senior at Capistrano Valley High School.

With a heartwarming flourish of talent and perseverance, a tale as old as time is presented in an outdoor environment. Familiar and joyous is the tale of Belle, a beautiful town girl who yearns for adventure and by mishap befriends a cursed beast, learning not to judge a book by its cover.

In every scene, a stunning effect is drawn by the well-executed cues, orchestrated by stage manager Avery Walker and heads of lighting and audio Joanna Fitzpatrick and Carter Lantz. Background music and the mixing of twenty microphones, as well as the timing of lighting, bring a cohesive and precise feeling to the production.

Daisy Kopenhafer assumes the perfect leading lady as Belle with grace and an enchanting voice. Her interactions with other characters -- especially Gaston (Griffin Croft), her father Maurice (Dax Hill), and the Beast (Christian McCleary) -- are each well-thought-out and show insight into Belle's kind manner and strong will.

As the puff-chested and narcissistic Gaston, Griffin Croft brings a mighty hilarity to the stage. He poses for swooning girls and is all the while supported by the fabulous LeFou (Tre Kuhn). The two make an excellent comedic pair, with Kuhn tripping over himself to cater to Gaston's hubris and impress previously mentioned girls.

Gaston's biggest fans, the lovesick Silly Girls (Grace Nachreiner, Abby Matossian, and Lindy Matossian), are an excellent trio, and with brightly colored costumes (each designed by Gabriela Deyhomy) and iconic reactions to Gaston's advances, they are a memorable force of comedy and outstanding ensemble roles.

The Beast's claws and fangs are impressively crafted prosthetics, excellently arranged by Sophia Miller, head of Hair and Makeup, and her crew. Accompanying this are grand costumes by Samantha Morgan, in which attention to detail is flaunted with the addition of springs in Cogsworth's costume throughout the show, representing the curse's progression. Creating a fresh and lively feeling in every ensemble number, there is individuality in the enchanted castle objects and the colorful townsfolk.

Although outdoors, the chill in the air is fended off by the warmth emanating from the stage and all of its hard-working actors and crew. San Clemente has put together an enchanting and entertaining show to be remembered!