

Fountain Valley High's "Beauty and the Beast" is enchanting.

written by Sophia Galvan, a junior at Fullerton Union High School April 1, 2022

FVHS's production of the classic Disney "Beauty and the Beast" is a charming, hilarious telling of the tale as old as time. Booksmart Belle gives up her freedom for her kooky father, trapping her in the enchanted castle of a cruel Beast. Through wolf attacks and self-absorbed suitors, Belle and the Beast gain greater perspective and develop love for each other.

The captivating dynamics between every character gave the production a personable touch that most showings of the classic tend to lack. McKenzie Martell's sassy, self-advocating Belle matched well with Jahir Cervantes's endearing, emotionally troubled Beast. Interactions among the enchanted objects (Roger Nguyen as Lumiere, Robbie Macey as Cogsworth, Cambria Hernandez as Mrs. Potts, Lizzy Doan as Chip, Sophia Pederson as Babette, and Emmy Luu as Madame De La Grande Bouche) were constantly nailing their comedic timing. Lumiere and Babette had a witty, suggestive relationship that got many laughs. Cogsworth's haughty voice and nervous bumbling mixed perfectly with Lumiere's grace and charisma. Mrs. Potts and Chip showcase the ability of this production to balance comedy with raw emotions; their emotional newly-human reunion was a tear-jerker. Madame represents everything magical about the show: commitment, grace, and over-the-top characterization.

Performers shine outside of the castle as well. The ensemble as a whole had moments of synchronicity that filled the entire stage, especially during "Mob Song" and "Gaston." Clay Waite as Gaston and sidekick Katie Bell as Lefou stole the show with endlessly entertaining euphemisms and conceited antics. The song "Me," in which Gaston attempts to woo and marry Belle, showcased Waite's commitment to the misogynistic character. When Gaston snaps and leads a mob to kill Beast, Waite's anger is pointed and believable despite the drastic switch.

A standout for this production was the entirely student made set. The hand painted village flats, interchangeable murals for different settings, and cohesive color-block painting styles helped the set resemble a children's pop-up book. Choreographer Hailey Hosilyk beautifully mixed multiple styles to create dynamic and memorable numbers. The lighting crew transitioned between colors seamlessly and sound crew aided in the pacing with well-timed cues. Makeup designers created striking looks, including swirls that perfectly matched the set. Costuming for the leads were incredibly fun and were altered well.

FVHS's endearing, hilarious production of "Beauty and the Beast" was entertaining and as beautiful as Gaston himself.