

Aliso Niguel Cracks Out an Egg-cellent Show with Something Rotten. 4/28/22

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Taking place in Elizabethan England, *Something Rotten* portrays the life of struggling playwright, Nick Bottom. Tired of living in Shakespeare's shadow, Nick takes it upon himself to produce the next big performance: the world's first musical! On his way to the top, he entreats mystics, enrages Puritans, and even catches the attention of Shakespeare himself. However, Nick eventually learns that fame should never come at the cost of compromising his friends, family, and values.

Shay Seymour as Nick Bottom excellently embodies the stress of a starving writer in Shakespeare's time with his exasperated gestures and sarcastic body language. Playing off each other as a sweet husband-wife duo, his chemistry with Brianna Graves as Bea Bottom shines through in their heart-warming hugs and affectionate kisses. Seymour's emotional range is outstanding whether it be delivering jokes with ease or harnessing sweet moments such as when he apologizes for getting caught up in his plans for fame.

Impeccably playing Nick's antagonist, Marcus Ramberg takes command of the stage as Shakespeare. With his lazy hand movements and even a subtle roll of the eyes, Ramberg flawlessly emulates an arrogant celebrity. In "Musical Playoff," his presence cannot be missed as he not only showcases his powerful vocals but also flaunts his dancing abilities with impressive hip-hop moves.

One word to describe this show is "energetic," and the lighting (Grace Dimapilis) captures that perfectly. Ranging from creating calmer classical scenes with soft orange lights like in Nick's apology, the design is also able to create a wilder atmosphere with fast, flashing lights such as the disco in "Welcome to the Renaissance." Utilizing bright strobe lights and a wide-ranging color scheme, lighting harmonizes with the energy of each scene.

With its towering backdrop and large set pieces, *Something Rotten*'s set (Mia Perez) transports one into the dreary London cityscape. The designer uses a warm, muted color palette which not only is reflective of the times but also helps the actors stand out on stage.

Following its moral of "to thine own self, be true," Aliso Niguel does just that as it produces an unforgettable night of constant spirit and excitement.