

Orange Lutheran Spins Gold with "Charlotte's Web"
written by Baran Ansari, a sophomore at University High School

What can kindness accomplish when time is limited? Within the walls of a humble barn, where days begin early and end softer, an unlikely friendship takes shape. Orange Lutheran's production of Charlotte's Web opens a tender world of sunlit mornings and familiar routines, where care is woven strand by strand. Yet as the web begins to thin and seasons turn, the warmth gives way to a gentler sorrow, asking what it means to love something enough to let it go.

Bursting with buoyant energy and childlike wonder, Peyton Simon's Wilbur bounds across the stage with expressive physicality. He runs, leaps, and spins throughout the barn, embodying a pig whose thoughts spill out through movement before words. This animated presence contrasts gently with Charlotte's description of Wilbur as "humble", revealing a performance rich in sincerity, one that shows humility can exist in motion as much as in stillness.

Faith Novak brings Charlotte to life with a voice so velvety and steady as a lullaby, it seems to settle the barn itself, her gentle delivery matched by elegant, deliberate movement. Each gesture is orchestrated with intention, lending Charlotte a quiet wisdom that contrasts beautifully with Wilbur's youthful vulnerability. In her presence, the bond between spider and pig suggests that the most meaningful connections are not always the loudest or the most romantic.

Goose (Emily Houssels) and Gander (Simon Gorgy) operate in perfect comic sync, their dialogue unfolding like a practiced call-and-response. Houssels' chatty interruptions and Gorgy's echoing repetitions create a playful verbal loop, heightened by calculated stutters and mirrored gestures. Together, the pair establishes a lively barnyard cadence, elevating everyday exchanges into carefully timed moments of humor.

The hair and makeup team brings each barnyard animal to life with thoughtful detail. Wilbur's rosy cheeks and soft contour suggest a sweet, loveable piglet, while Charlotte's dark eyeshadow and black lips form a striking yet elegant spider. Free of heavy prosthetics, the designs feel warm and marvelously at home on the farm.

The marketing and publicity team created farmhouse-style goodie boxes filled with stickers, animal crackers, and juice boxes. Cozy and rustic yet playful, they delighted younger audiences and added a heartwarming, storybook touch that made the production especially welcoming.

Some pig. Some story. Some show. Orange Lutheran's Charlotte's Web spins a heart, humor, and humanity in a story worth sticking around for.