

Our Hearts Say: "Don't Let Go" of San Clemente's Grease!
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San Clemente's 'Grease' brings 1959 Rydell High roaring to life, proving that beneath the hair gel and poodle skirts lie timeless questions of identity, belonging, and the price of fitting in.

Ella Corbridge delivers a Sandy that evolves beautifully from wide-eyed innocence to confident self-possession. Her sweet, breathy vocals in "Hopelessly Devoted To You" contrast strikingly with her leather-clad transformation, raising questions about empowerment versus conformity.

Opposite her, Kade Laucik's Danny masters the performative masculinity of the T-Birds leader - switching between silly high pitched nervousness and a deeper, swagger-filled persona, particularly hilarious when Sandy slams the car door on him mid-flirtation.

The Pink Ladies command attention from the opening number. Avery Santore's Rizzo captivates immediately with bold strides and sassy posture before ever speaking a line. Her mocking impressions of Sandra Dee reveal sharp wit, while "There Are Worse Things I Could Do" unveils devastating vulnerability through her strong, soulful voice. Rizzo playfully takes Freddy's role during Marty's (Kaia Miyasaki) signature moment, planting a sweet kiss on her cheek. Marty's melodic voice soars as she twirls dreamily in her kimono, imagining her faraway love stationed in Japan - capturing both longing and romantic hope. Gabby Miller as Jan brings infectious fun and perpetual hunger to every scene, but she's even hungrier for the dedicated mooner, Roger (Oliver Wilcox). Their awkward, endearing dynamic makes every interaction irresistibly charming.

Jonelle Salas's Costume Design tells powerful visual stories. Sandy's pale yellow separates her from every clique until her transformation into red and black - strikingly similar to Rizzo's signature look, suggesting influence rather than independence. The Pink Ladies sport cohesive yet individual outfits with connecting pink elements, while the T-Birds' matching leather jackets establish uniform cool. During "Those Magic Changes," Evan Potwora's Doody dazzles in a gold sparkling jacket - the exact one worn by rockstar Janie Casino (Holland Thomas) - visualizing his aspirations of fame.

Sunny Del Rosso's lighting design amplifies emotion brilliantly. Spotlights isolate characters during solo moments while color communicates feeling - pink for romance, blue for heartbreak - with intentional shadows adding dramatic depth.

At San Clemente, 'Grease' isn't just the word - it's a question. Did Sandy gain confidence, or did the show betray its own message about unapologetic authenticity? Either way, this production delivers electric performances that make you think long after the final hand-jive.