

Simply Iconic: San Juan Hills' Chicago is All That...Jazz!

written by Ava Miller, a senior at Santa Margarita Catholic High School

Following two rivaling murderesses and their savvy lawyer, Chicago tells a tale of corruption, exploitation, and the pursuit of fame and fortune with a jazzy, pre-cabaret flare.

Surrounded by Hollywood lights, the SJHHS Orchestra sits center of the otherwise simple set, allowing the show to speak for itself. Having the musicians on stage delivering the score provides a true cabaret feeling, wonderfully executed by the student pit.

As the band begins to play, the ensemble slowly approaches center stage. All black from head to toe, the sea of leather and lace provides a fantastic entrance for Velma Kelly (Taylor Zielenbach), delivering a thrilling and confident "All That Jazz." Her signature black bob and intense facial expression capture the audience the second the spotlight hits her, holding them until the curtain falls. Taylor's electric performance sets the tone for the show, and the following does not disappoint!

Leading alongside Taylor is Peyton Kirkner as Roxie Hart. As the bright new star of Cook County Jail, Roxie loves the attention of the press and will do anything to keep it. Peyton's sweet voice, wide-eyed expression, and blonde, pin-up curls give the character a Betty Boop affect. With her adorable charm, Peyton goes from doe-eyed and innocent to selfish and cunning in a second, keeping the audience on their toes. Completely contrasting Taylor's Velma, these two murderesses make both great rivals and a lovely pair.

Another standout performance comes from Jacob Koclanis as the savvy lawyer, Billy Flynn. A true puppet master of the justice system, Billy knows all the strings to pull to keep his girls off death row. Playing this slick showman, Koclanis is nothing but entertaining. Surrounded by the incredible ensemble, Koclanis lights the stage with suave grandeur, creating an absolute spectacle. With sarcasm, arrogance, and a fantastic tap dance, Koclanis's Billy is delightfully wicked.

Cayla Chen and Leo Perry worked to create a visually stunning lighting design that perfectly encapsulates the cabaret vibe. The stage is framed with light bulbs, illustrating the show's themes of fame and celebrity. Beautiful but never distracting, the lighting truly elevates the experience, creating the perfect ambiance for this excellent cast to tell the story.

San Juan Hills High School does an incredible job of staying true to this Broadway classic while making it uniquely their own. The show is an absolute must-see!