

Fight for the Privilege to Pee at Dana Hills High School's "Urinetown"
written by Brooke Metoyer, a junior at Mission Viejo High School

"Urinetown" at Dana Hills is a satirical comedy of a town where megacorporations have taken advantage of the drought and charge the poor to pee. Dashing everyman, Bobby Strong, begins a rebellion which demands that the people "pee for free", while also falling in love with Hope Cladwell- the daughter of the man who runs the "Urine Good Company." Secrets are revealed, people are kidnapped, and a hope for happy endings persist in this musical.

Lauren Bodnar commands the stage as Penelope Pennywise- the intimidating owner of the public urinal. During her expositional number, she marches around stage with a daunting stride as she brandishes her toilet plunger like a weapon, declaring through her riveting vocals how it is a privilege to pee. Bodnar uses melodramatic facial expressions and over-exaggerated swoons when reminiscing on her forbidden love, masterfully illustrating both sides of the coin that is Pennywise.

Throughout the musical, Lucy Himmelberg provides a committed and energetic performance as Little Sally with a raised pitch and bouncy walk. These characteristics are immediately discarded when Sally witnesses the horrifying reality of "Urinetown", trudging back to the poor with an unfocused gaze to deliver the news; perfectly portraying her character's loss of innocence. Little Sally and the poor wear neutral colors and rough materials such as burlap, providing clear contrast to the rich; who don silks, satins, and jewel tones. Together, costume team Mac Amato, Serena Pearl, and Austyn Perrone distressed and dyed the poor's garments with coffee to accentuate the filth of their part of town.

Capturing hearts through sweet smiles and enchanting vocals, Annika Green shines as the ingénue of this story, Hope Cladwell. When captured and tied-up by the rebels, Green maintains a horrified, wide-eyed gaze into the audience, expressing her desperation throughout multiple scenes without breaking character. Later, Hope confidently stands center stage with a newfound sense of hope as the narrator brings the story to a close.

Elizabeth Field and Tobi Newman collaborate to illuminate the stage and execute over two-hundred cues smoothly. Warmer colors are observed during scenes with the poor, whereas cooler blues and purples appear when the rich are present; distinguishing each group flawlessly.

Through sublime performances and creative tech, Dana Hill's hilarious "Urinetown" reminds that even in the most troubling times, hope for change must not be abandoned.