

## Ambition Born in Fullerton Union's "Bright Star"

Written by Serena Pearl a senior at Dana Hills High School

A musical circulating the life of a woman, Alice Murphy, during two substantial segments from her life: her teenage years in the early 1920s and her adulthood of the mid 1940s.

Alexis Helmer perfectly portrays the depth of Alice Murphy. Helmer sports a spritely disposition with her love interest Jimmy Ray Dobbs (Ian Klatzker), directly paralleling her stiffness and aloofness later in life. Helmer creates a raw, emotional production with her connection to the character as though she truly were in Murphy's circumstances. Paired with her acting, Alexis Helmer's chilling vocals echo throughout the theater as she sings "Please, Don't Take Him" whilst hopelessly regarding the dilemma she and her family now face.

Equally beautiful vocal performance, Sydney Parker projects the caring, maternal nature of Mama Murphy. Parker's perfectly pure voice amplifies those harmonizing with her as well as creating a comforting, motherly identity. Amplifying such, Parker's mannerisms cement this older woman within the story.

Juxtaposing such, Marco LaRosa characterizes the stern and cruel Mayor Josiah Dobbs. LaRosa's intimidating presence creates an uneasy atmosphere on stage. The apathetic mayor's demeanor only heightens as LaRosa sings sonorously whilst condescending those around him. LaRosa continues with his compressed, rigid body language even when most vulnerable, alone with his son.

Bright Star's ensemble entirely strengthens the production. Whether doing ballet, square dancing or observing the leading roles' interactions, this ensemble's energy and commitment created the glorious, small-town setting. Jojo Fares, Mylah Elisaldez, and Sophia Galvan shine amongst the stars. Within each ensemble number, Jojo's attitude and charisma create a mesmerizing experience. As student choreographer, Elisaldez not only masters but personalizes each dance with emotion and expression. Though appearing very little, Sophia Galvan's memorable performance as Dr. Norquist fosters comedic relief in an otherwise emotionally heavy scene.

Sound designers, Ashley Nava and Kit Kelekoma, amplify the small-town North Carolina atmosphere with chirps of birds and other noises of nature. Though the ambiance is very present, it never becomes distracting and only makes each scene more engaging. Additionally, Kelekoma consistently guarantees the audibility of each actor and musical track.

The stage management team Janae Pease, Lucia Castrejon, and Karissa Annette Lentz provide the swift progression of scenes and cues. The stage managers keep the cast and crew organized and connected through rehearsal reports, call sheets, and color coded spike tape.

Fullerton Union High School's "Bright Star" demonstrates the importance of following one's heart and ideals.