

A "Puff"ect Parody

written by Emma Harline, a junior at San Clemente High School. Nov 2019

El Dorado High School's rendition of Puffs plays with the magic of misfits, re-telling one of the most beloved children's series from the perspective of the perennially overlooked.

Puffs, or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic, parodies the Harry Potter series through the lens of the Puffs, the ones who didn't make the cut into the more specialized--and more respected--houses (Smarts, Braves, or Snakes). Instead of the well-known Harry, Ron, and Hermione, this story follows Wayne Hopkins (Gavin Hamze), Oliver Rivers (Joey Miranda), and Megan Jones (Jennifer Chau), three Puffs who, it seems, are just trying their best.

Gavin Hamze gives depth to Wayne Hopkins, an impressive feat considering the humorous content material. Hamze not only captures the blundering lovability of Hopkins with an eager gait and goofy smiles galore, but he manages to address the pain of the forgotten with just a dash of seriousness to counteract the silliness through strategically timed stillness.

Ensemble member Zach Palmer keeps the mood light as a feather with his hilarious cameos as various teachers and/or ghosts. The impressively varied British accents make him easy to distinguish, and the comedic timing of his brief appearances is impeccable.

The real charm of Puffs lies in the chemistry of the Puffs themselves. Their physicalities unite them through their unapologetic uniqueness, whether it's a pitiful attempt at 90s dancing (the sprinkler was not intended to be a difficult move!) or an elated "HI!!!" at every passing person, the ensemble embodies the essence of Puffs: wonderfully wacky and surprisingly well-developed.

Props to the props crew (Kira Ayala, Ashley Jones, Jessa Laboissonniere, Jordyn Murray, Gabrielle Grijalva) for creativity--many props are essential to the overall comedy of the show. From hand-made wands to magically appearing birds to beloved characters played by mops and wigs (Ron and Hermione, we knew ye not), the props undeniably adds to the magic.

Stage Manager Blake Berggren takes on a staggering amount of light and sound cues with poise and (dare I say it?) perfection. The well-timed sound cues during the fight scene make a potentially cheesy moment magical, with spells and kicks matching their cues seemingly effortlessly.

Puffs endearingly promotes pride in being plain, celebrating the seemingly unimportant and giving limelight to the otherwise overlooked.