

## **Microphonus! Magical Performance of Puffs at Aliso Niguel**

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A hilarious spoof of a particularly well-known tale, *Puffs or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic* illustrates the journey of Wayne Hopkins after he discovers that he is a wizard and is sent to school in England. There, he and his fellow housemates--dubbed "Puffs"-- must work together to hone their magical skills and fight evil wizards. With hilarious comedic bits and astonishing technical achievements, *Puffs* is a playful production with lots of heart.

When Wayne (Shay Semour) first arrives at school, he bashfully hunches over while conversing with other students. However, when Wayne finally realizes that he is the hero of his own story, he stands tall with confidence. Oliver (Nick Breen) embodies the stereotypical math geek with awkward, apprehensive physicality, and Megan (Makena Mosher) shows her initial disdain for the Puffs with eye rolls and clenched fists.

The Puffs work together to create a whimsical, heartening performance. Each making their own spirited, unique choices, the actors are able to come together form a cohesive unit that skillfully executes comedic bits. For example, after the Puffs adlib amongst themselves during introductions, they burst in a united, enthusiastic "Hi!" Puff Sally Perks (Kimmy Levene) consistently upholds the joke about her not wearing her glasses, even walking into walls and stumbling around when she is not the focus of the scene.

As the effects of spells and potions come to materialize on stage, stage manager Isabel Cravens expertly calls cues in perfect timing with lights, sound, and actors' movements. Furthermore, a versatile set (Mia Perez) consisting of the four houses was moved into different configurations to suggest various locations; the movement of these set pieces (ANTC Running Crew) was swift and efficient during blackouts.

Having a yellow motif in the costumes (Skylar Connolly, Ashley Atkinson, ANTC Costume Crew) of the Puffs makes them easy to spot, which is especially helpful in a production where many actors play multiple roles. Similarly, it is noteworthy to have Megan's mother in yellow when she finally accepts her identity as a Puff. Moreover, lighting designer Grace Dimapilis is innovative in using moving lights, specifically when the house puppets are present.

The cast and creatives of Aliso Niguel High School's production of *Puffs or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic* work together to create a memorable performance.