

Enter a World of Whimsy and Fantastical Wonder in University's "The Phantom Tollbooth"

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A child's seemingly mundane day turns whimsical in University's "The Phantom Tollbooth," where wacky hijinks and new discoveries await.

Annoyed by the banal repetition in everyday tasks, Mila (Mallika Cadin) has ceased to be content in her daily life. However, when a mysterious package is delivered to her room, she is transported into a mystical world where words can be eaten, cars are powered by thought, and not everything is as it seems.

Mallika Cadin portrays the excitable Mila, bouncing around the stage with an air of innocence and naivety, tilting her head in confusion at the anxiety-ridden Gatekeeper of Dictionopolis (D'artagnan Osier). The calm foil to Mila's energetic character is the disgruntled Humbug (Scott Burke), commanding the stage with his long strides and pristine posture. Burke's confident swagger and a condescending finger wave as he scorns the self-assured Spelling Bee (Sage Lamott) contrasts hilariously with his sudden bashful demeanor when complimented by King Azaz (Varin Gupta).

Pervading the lighthearted show with a sense of dread, The Terrible Trivium (Gabe Young) slinks onto the stage, speaking with an ominous drawl as he cajoles Mila and her motley crew to waste their time completing his inane tasks.

The impressive lighting by Yannik Cadin and Max Dickson greatly enhances the feeling of wonder as Mila meanders her way through a new and strange world. The streaks of warmer colors across the stage in Dictionopolis, creating a cozier appearance, contrasts with the cold sheets of light in the futuristic Digitopolis. Additionally, the dangling dodecahedrons, emanating a soft light onto the stage, assists in highlighting the whimsical nature of Digitopolis.

The eye-catching costuming by Camille Cabunag and Akemi Nishida expertly establishes the distinct personalities of each character. For example, the citizens of Dictionopolis wear swathes of bright reds and yellows, creating a visual contrast with the Humbug, who is adorned in a dark suit to emphasize his surly demeanor.

University High School's "The Phantom Tollbooth" spins a wondrous tale of whimsy with a captivating cast of characters, stunning lighting, and dynamic costuming.