

Fall in Love With Portola High School's "Almost, Maine"! 4/22/2022

by Jillianna Le of Mater Dei High School

Portola High School presents a captivating variety of love stories through the vignettes of *Almost, Maine*. In this refreshing production, occupants of a small town called Almost, Maine learn to find love through little epiphanies through ordinary experiences.

Through a simple yet satisfying set, scenic designers Jungwon Lee and Kori Martinez create versatile pieces that make up the locations within Almost. An impressive feat was the double-sided door and porch piece, which was used in two scenes and contributed greatly to the speediness of set changes. The set pieces were also complimentary to the costumes and while they were very detailed, they never took away from the focal point of the scene. Another commendable technical element was the lighting, operated by Seogyung Han. The crucial moments in the vignettes were highlighted especially by the colorful splashes that painted the Northern Lights on the stage. This also helped the audience to fully understand the moments in which the characters finally discover love. The costumes, worked on by Jasmine Shaon, Carol Chiang, and Ivan Bascos, were very cohesive with the other technical elements of the show but especially helped to depict the personalities of the characters. One that especially stood out was the costume of Gayle, whose uptight personality was captured through her businesswoman-esque outfit.

Of course, the swoon-worthy production would not be complete without the beautiful storytelling of the actors. A standout scene was that of Deena and Shelly, who were portrayed by Kiara Knight and Mia Zappala respectively. Their patterns in conversation conveyed a very close pair of best friends, up until the revelation that Shelly has fallen in love with her best friend. The vulnerability of this scene, especially when they both had fallen for each other, made for a really cute and moving moment onstage.

Portola's unique and heartwarming production of *Almost, Maine* is one definitely worth seeing and shows that love can be found anywhere, even when you think you are at the edge of the earth.