

Kick Off Your Sunday Shoes at St. Margaret's "Footloose!"

written by Kathleen Shepard, a senior at Santa Margarita Catholic High School

After Ren McCormack moves from the hustle and bustle of the "Windy City" to the suburbs of Bomont, he hopes he can leave his home and his father's memory behind. But when vindictive boyfriends, an uptight reverend, and a ban against dancing threaten to halt his groove, he quickly realizes that hiding is no longer an option. So, Ren must learn to face the music, and himself, before it's too late.

Juxtaposing the warmth of a small-town preacher, Els Page (Reverend Shaw Moore) encapsulates the brokenness of a father who cannot grieve. For, with brows furrowed and teeth clenched, he chooses to truncate his vibrato in "Heaven Help Me," instead of biting out his verses as one would a half-hearted plea. He even clenches his hands into little fists, working as if to muscle through the pain. Yet, he slowly humanizes his performance alongside his wife, Gigi Policicchio (Vi Moore). For her unwavering gaze and lilting falsetto expose the man beneath the brimstone in her emotional rendition of "Can You Find It in Your Heart?"

As fiery as her red cowboy boots, Sophia Kistler (Ariel Moore) commands attention from the moment she saunters onstage, traipsing one heel in front of the other. She smirks slightly, entwining a finger through her hair as she steals glances at the new boy, Alexander Kim (Ren McCormack). However, she reveals the schoolgirl underneath when he serenades her in "Almost Paradise." For she now shies away from his gaze, no longer rolling her eyes as she inclines her head towards the ground. Transitioning from her previous belt to the airiness of her head voice, Kistler highlights the tenderness of her and Kim's harmonies.

Illuminating such moments, Lighting Designer Jack Justus captures the vibrancy of the 1980s. He pixelates the cyclorama with rainbow colors, enveloping the stage in a joyous frenzy of reds, oranges, and greens that mirror the raucous swell of "Holding Out For A Hero." Yet, he also showcases his versatility in quiet moments, choosing to emulate darkness with cool tones. For he frequently contrasts the silhouettes of townsfolk against the purple blinders that follow Kim in "Somebody's Eyes," alluding to the fact that the shadows, and rumors, will never stop haunting him.

With tender performances, talented technicians, and plenty of rock 'n' roll, St. Margaret's "Footloose" teaches audiences how to live, and dance, again.