

## YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN!

Review by Opinions Editors Catherine Chiang and Daisy Prom

The charming yet cynically philosophical childhood favorite, Charles Schulz's Peanuts comics, came to life with the talents of Alhambra's Thespians in the spring musical, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. On Wednesday, May 14, the cast gave faculty and club representatives a preview with their last dress rehearsal before opening on Thursday evening. Though not completely flawless, the dedication and effort of all involved, led by Director Emily Coalson, were reflected in the overall performance.

The show was held in the Big Theatre, making it an enveloping experience, but a difficult room to hold without proper microphones for all of the players. The careful control of the lighting contributed heavily to the mood, but the inconsistent usage of amplification made it a struggle to decipher some of the player's dialogue.

Adding to the atmosphere, Music Director Mark Trulson conducted a live band. The music energized the production and gave the play a more polished feel. Many scenes of the play were displayed through a three-boxed structure, a clever reference to comic panels. The props were done well, including the iconic red doghouse where Snoopy spends most of his daydreams.

The protagonist, Charlie Brown, was played by senior Gordon Ip. He portrayed Charlie's childish depression with charm as Charlie suffered through the ups and

downs—mostly downs—of a five-year-old's life. The play is everything you remember about the endearing Peanuts comics, with an emphasis on emotion via soulful singing.

Marissa Tovar as Lucy embodied the self-centered, but lovable character with her attitude and lungs that must be from Broadway, because she was one of the players who

Acting	★	★	★	★	★	★
Singing	★	★	★	★	★	★
Set	★	★	★	★	★	★
Music	★	★	★	★	★	★
Script	★	★	★	★	★	★

required no mic to be heard throughout the auditorium. Many of the other supporting characters, such as Nina Najera, Bryan Perez and Carissa Herrera, flaunted stronger vocal talents than the lead, but limited screen time and amplification restricted their spotlight.

Though strong individually, with the exception of some

pitch issues, the cast had problems harmonizing; thankfully, the lack of harmony added to the innocence that a Peanuts production should possess.

Both Act One and Act Two of the hour and 45 minute play portrayed the children as philosophers, but it wasn't until Act Two that we saw a more optimistic group of school children. The baseball scene in particular demonstrated the dynamic staging and dramatic singing that made the play a success, as well as the trademark cynical Peanuts humor about the inevitability of failure.

All of the other players contributed their unique energy and child-like wisdom to the production, including Clarissa Rivera, Melissa Maldonado, Carolina Ku and Brian Burgos, who all characterized the clever lines with their quirky spins on them. Additionally, the impressively coordinated routines were created by more of the supporting actors, including Crystal Navarro, Perlita Rocha, Lulu Illingworth, Justine Leiva, Sabrina Mendez, Janet Guan and Evelyn Mendiola.

Following scenes laced with childish philosophy about the difficulties of life, the optimistic closing was a refreshing note to end on. The poignant song left a bittersweet impact, and Lucy's—because, of course, she would have the last word—concession to Charlie, "You're a good man, Charlie Brown," ended the musical perfectly.



*Thought the actors did really well. Singing went very well with the live band, we've never done that before. Everyone was very dedicated because they stood for several hours for practice which ended at five.*

Deanna Romo, 12

*It was very entertaining. I liked the singing because every single actor was very talented. The storyline was random, but it made sense after the play went on. After the play was over, I felt that people needed to go watch it because it's actually really good for a high school production.*

Sydney Mai, 11

*Amazingly successful; the cast, crews, musicians did an amazing job. The show just came together and it was really fun. I picked Charlie Brown because it's a person we all have inside of ourselves. The story is about redeeming ourselves.*

Ms. Emily Coalson  
Director

*Adorable, all the actors act like little children on and off stage. It had a good storyline, little kids lives from adult perspective overall, the music was really good. I like how the cast worked with Mr. Trulson.*

Alex Padilla, 11

*The play was awesome, with so much energy and all the songs were so uplifting. I think it went really well since the audience and cast liked it. The plot went smoothly. It was funny and it resembled the actual show. Our practices would go on for three hours, and we warmed up before rehearsal.*

Marissa Tovar, 12  
Starred as "Lucy"

Photos by Joyce Tsui and Stewart Rydman-Espinosa

The MOOR Alhambra High School 101 South Second Street, Alhambra, CA 91801

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## Contact

moornewspaper@gmail.com