



## **Bye Bye Birdie – Lightridge High School**

You know what they say about Conrad Birdie; He's a healthy, normal, American boy. But what happens when he gets conscripted into the army and leaves all his adoring fans? Lightridge High School answers this question and successfully creates an experience that leaves you wanting more.

Bye Bye Birdie, first performed on Broadway in 1960, is about famous singer Conrad Birdie being conscripted into the army. Writers Michael Stewart and Lee Adams based the musical on Elvis Presley's conscription in 1957. The musical stars Albert and Rose, Conrad's manager and the manager's secretary, as they struggle to keep him under control until he is conscripted.

The pit orchestra was incredible, blowing the audience away right when taking a seat. You then get the first taste of Albert Peterson's (played by Brandon Foley) and Rose Alvarez's (played by Lily Selvaraj) chemistry. They managed to work together incredibly well and stood out as exquisite actors. Albert was a very charismatic character and was also a confident singer. Lily Selvaraj played Rose stupendously, managing to create a lot of character development in a short amount of time. Rose's singing was great, but she did exceedingly well during the song Spanish Rose. Her dancing was also on point for the entire show, but she also elevated during Spanish Rose.

Kim MacAfee (played by Isabella Schumacher) and Hugo Peabody (played by Isabella Dalebout) also had great chemistry and beautifully played the part of an on-again/off-again couple. Kim MacAfee's voice was incredible, starring in "How Lovely to Be a Woman." She hit high falsetto notes while keeping a character-true facial expression, an impressive feat. Hugo Peabody played the role of Lovesick exceptionally well. Whether drunk or sober, he never dropped character and was always entertaining. The American Heartthrob Conrad Birdie (played by Alex Armstrong) sang his way into everyone's hearts. His dancing, singing, and extreme commitment to the character (especially in "One Last Kiss") help propel his performance.

The entire ensemble did great in their performances. The ensemble during the song "Talk to Me" was great, especially the town mayor (played by Aanya Dhannapuneni). The ensemble also did great as Conrad's fangirls. The entire cast managed to stay composed during minor tech problems early in the show. The ensemble and the entire cast never panicked, and the tech fixed the issues for the rest of the show.

The props for the show (made by Samantha Bernat, Annaliese Laoretti, and Aidan Ulrey) were charming. The star props were 2D phones that were used throughout the show. The phones were colorful and a fun addition. The set design for the performance (made by Isa Martin, Jonathan Hollinger, Olivia Kim, and Zoe McConnel) was also charming, consisting of an upstairs bedroom, a kitchen area, and a giant record with the word's Bye Bye Birdie on them in the center. The most exciting piece of the set was the train piece, a set piece on wheels that was pushed around by the running crew. The train set was inventive and added to the show. Costumes (made by Bailey Mitchell, Lilly Coyle, Sophie Coyle, and Emma Mironenko) were also incredible, especially Conrad's, an all-gold suit.

Bye Bye Birdie was a joy to watch, as they entertained the audience for the entire watch time. The acting was great, the set, costumes, and props were delightful, and the pit orchestra played their hearts out. The only thing I can do is thank God for Conrad Birdie.

-Ethan King