

# **CAPPIE REVIEWS**

## ***TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING***

### **HERNDON HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE**

**NOVEMBER 20, 2021**

TO: Advisor and Show Director of Tony n' Tina's Wedding at Herndon High School

FROM: Jane Strauss

Here are the Cappies reviews for Tony n' Tina's Wedding. There were 23 critics at your show, and up to now we have received 23 reviews. If we receive late reviews, we will forward them to you.

Please share these reviews with your cast and crew.

Thank you.

A wedding day. One of the most important and carefully planned days in a person's life. Everything should go perfectly... unless you're Tony and Tina. This Italian-American couple and their wild families not only put on an entertaining spectacle for the audience to view, but get them directly involved in the party, the food, and the madness. Herndon High School's Tony n' Tina's Wedding is as humorous as it is heartfelt with a talented cast immersed in the world of Queens, New York.

Tony n' Tina's Wedding, created by the Artificial Intelligence comedy troupe, is an "environmental" theatre piece. The audience is involved in the wedding as if they were guests themselves. The mostly improvisational play is centered around the union of Tina Vitale and Tony Nunzio. Their loud and warm families dominate the event, from embarrassing speeches to getting up in the middle of the vows to use the restroom. The audience remains engaged throughout the whole event.

Tony, played by Yali Miranda, embodied the tough but lovable character completely. It was a joy to see Yali's progression from timid during the homily to ripping off Tony's dress shirt to defend Tina in a brawl. Tina, played by Lulu Megahed, was cohesive and convincing as a bratty, yet sweet, bride. Megahed's accent, like the rest of the cast, stayed consistent throughout and Tina's love for the Vitales shone through.

An audience favorite was the pregnant bridesmaid Connie, played by Emma Harris. Harris' interactions with the audience were hilarious, and the witty, improvised comments and animated movements were a joy to watch. Johnny, played by Augustus Wood, dazzled the audience with both amazing dance moves and charm. Wood even flirtatiously gave out "Johnny's" phone number to multiple people in the audience.

There was never a moment where it felt like one performer was competing for the spotlight. Due to this skill, some of the most vibrant and enthusiastic characters got an unforgettable moment in said spotlight. Uncle Luigi, played by Noah Eckert, embodied an old, Italian man perfectly. Seeing Eckert laugh at all the wrong times and dance with a cane was incredible to watch. Father Mark, played by Tommy Maxson, was a proper Catholic priest at the beginning and later turned into a sloppy, drunken mess at the end. Maxson was a master at character development. The beloved Grandma Nunzio, played by Gaby Bradley, was consistent with the character's demanding physicality throughout the whole play, which was a difficult task that Bradley achieved with ease.

Even the waiters, who served a three-course meal of salad, pasta, and wedding cake without ever dropping one plate, were actors too. They all played an integral part in the production, while at the same time developing characters of their own.

To produce this show technically was not an easy task, but Herndon's tech team were geniuses in lighting, sound, and costumes. The lighting was cleverly designed by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Liam Nowak. During the wedding ceremony, a beautiful pink was displayed in the back, and during the reception, an array of a rainbow and Italian flag colors lit up the scene just right. Wilson Purdue and Caleb Silvernail, who managed the sound, ensured that everyone could be heard, even despite the masks. The costumes, created by Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, and Katie Hancock, were both appropriate and immersive in the world of the early 90s.

Tony n' Tina's Wedding at Herndon High School is a demanding production that effortlessly ticks all the boxes with its talented cast, impressive technical skills, and hilarious improvised dialogue.

**Charlotte Lobring**  
**St. Andrew's Episcopal School**

The wedding was everything the newlyweds had dreamed of and more. Friends and family admire the bride as she elegantly struts down the aisle. The ceremonious cutting of an extravagant three-tiered cake is accompanied by a toast. The groom rips off his shirt while attempting a WWE-esque smackdown of his wife's ex on the dance floor... Wait, wedding smackdown? WIFE'S EX??? Yes, you heard that right! In its full Italian glory, "everyone is welcome" to Tony n' Tina's Wedding at Herndon High School, which had guests up and on the dance floor, rolling on the floor laughing, and "fighting the urge to use the Lord's name in vain."

Determined to showcase Italian American stories of growing up (and apparently getting married) in Queens, Nancy Cassaro led The Artificial Theatre Company to New York City. In 1985, they premiered Tony n' Tina's Wedding, which tells the story of two feuding families, the Vitales and the Nunzios, "brought together in holy matrimony." Set in 1991 and complete with a live band and three-course meal, the production (or more fittingly, immersive audience experience) is the epitome of interactive theatre. Vibrant character backstories, one-of-a-kind improvisational vignettes, and live interactions with the onstage audience reveal the hilarity of the tumultuous ordeal, and as the mix of alcohol and Italian blood becomes progressively problematic, the reception hysterically takes a "highway to hell."

Rather than simply watching the chaos unfold, the spirited cast cultivated a welcoming environment where wedding guests (the audience) were invited to join in the festivities - a critical element of the semi-improvised production. From the seamless integration of individual conversations with an overarching narrative to comprehensive technical efforts, the entire cast and crew's passion and commitment to simulating an authentic Italian wedding were evident in a collective display of extraordinary endurance and unity.

Commanding the wedding with her cohesive character and consistent accent, Lulu Megahed convincingly portrayed Tina with a comedic presence. Paired with Tony, charmingly played by Yali Miranda, the couple demonstrated that through thick and thin, "love endures," exemplified in their heartfelt apologies and declarations of love at the end of the reception.

Alongside the bride and groom, several characters emerged as lives of the party. Showcasing explosive enthusiasm during the groomsman's dance and an infectious charisma after giving their number to a wedding guest, Augustus Wood embodied the groom's little brother, Johnny, with an unparalleled youthful spirit. Similarly, Emma Harris's captivating sarcastic humor and witty jests made Maid-of-Honor Connie a favorite amongst the wedding guests. Proving that anybody can have a good time, Gaby Bradley characterized the boisterous Grandma Nunzio with profound commitment, even maintaining her physicality during curtain call!

Countless technical enhancements brought the venue to life. From managing and incorporating a vast array of props (Cecily Rood, Chloe Thompson, Meena Megahed) to the immaculate execution of sound (Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak) I), where constant adjustments had to be made in real-time to balance coinciding conversations, the crew's technical precision and clear collaboration with the cast helped immerse the audience in Tony and Tina's whirlwind of a wedding.

Riddled with comedic nuances and an unwavering spirit that kept attendees on the edge of their seats, you never know who may pass you a drink or pull you up to dance. Through the pandemonium of it all, the genuine relationships established within Herndon High School's Tony n' Tina's Wedding remind us that even when you take a tumble on the dance floor or get demoted to Maid of Trash, "it takes a village, and we've got a pretty good one if I do say so myself."

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by Justin Pokrant of Westfield High School

Although Tony and Tina may be madly in love, their Italian relatives from Queens will do their unwitting best to turn the beautiful celebration into a comedic romp complete with head bashing, toast roasting, and tempers flaring. Herndon High School's production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding pointed beyond the farcical beauty of fiery Italians drinking their way through rambunctious celebrations to the close bond of family that keeps them together.

The show is a semi-improvised, honest-to-goodness Italian wedding between Antonio Nunzio and Valentina Vitale. The wedding guests (the audience) watched, and even participated, as the bickering members of the wedding party worked out their differences.

The play was created by Nancy Cassaro as a part of the New York based Artificial Theatre Company. Cassaro wanted a piece of theatre that represented the experiences of her people, the Italians, because she wanted to tell the stories of this interesting group. It premiered off-off Broadway in 1988 and ran for 22 years.

Audience participation was a crucial element to this show and the actors pulled it off beyond what was expected. While scenes played out, actors would mingle with guests, sometimes pulling them up to dance. The commitment to character from everyone at all times made the show feel like a real wedding. Even the waiters, with their well-coordinated serving efforts, were fully in the wedding world.

As the far-from-blushing bride Tina was Lulu Megahed, New York accent and all. Megahed played up all of Tina's bridezilla tendencies with well-timed improvisation and lots of hand talking. Tina wanted all attention on her and Megahed's entertaining performance made this demand no chore. Emma Harris played Tina's Maid of Honor, Connie. Harris's fiery temper and witty one-liners made her a magnetic presence on stage as she quipped with guests with candor and abandon. Harris's understated chemistry with her boyfriend Barry (Jefferson Escobar-Rivera) was sweet as both carved out genuine moments within the well-intentioned chaos. Tony, the groom, was played by Yali Miranda with quiet devotion. Tony's love for Tina brought out his wild side out with Miranda's intense physicality during the fight scene.

Other guests included the sleazy father-of-the-groom Tony Sr., who Andrew Landrum portrayed with an oozing confidence as shown by his perpetual smile and impassioned "romance" with the emotional mother-of-the-bride Josie (Kelly Grover). The groomsman Johnny was danced and flirted into being by Augustus Wood who brought all the debonair charm to the young smooth-talker that the audience could handle. As the drunken mess of a bridesmaid Donna was Hannah Clements. Her hilariously inebriated rendition of "Hopelessly Devoted" added to the zany air of the reception.

Perfectly complementing the mayhem on stage were the carefully orchestrated lights (David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, Emmy Tublin) which went from playful rainbow to red during the action-packed fighting, to calming blue for romance. With so many actors all improvising at unpredictable times, the sound (Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak) had to be well timed so everyone could be heard at all times. Never once did the mics pick up any extraneous noise, meaning they were turned off and on in perfect rhythm with the play's current. The costumes (Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, Katie Hancock) were hilariously 90s and the pink theme fit the chaotic charm of the show.

"La familia" is messy, it's loud, colorful, and hard but it's also everything. Herndon High School's production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding immersed the audience in the messiest, loudest, and hardest of them all.

by Beverly D'Andrea of Westfield High School

We are gathered here today to celebrate the wedding of Tony and Tina and surely nothing will go wrong...or will it? Herndon High School presents Tony n' Tina's Wedding, a riveting improv experience filled with self-centered brides, flirtatious groomsmen and fiery bridesmaids that transports the audience into the drama-filled wedding hall and witnesses how love will always win.

Tony n' Tina's Wedding is an immersive theatre event, where the cast interacts with the audience through scripted and improv elements. It originally debuted in New York in 1985 then moved to off-off Broadway in 1988. This production has been produced several times all around the world, including a film adaptation premiering in 2004.

The production follows Tony and Tina throughout their Italian American wedding ceremony and reception. Along the way, the audience meets the wedding party, members of the family and the owner of this joint! As the night gets later and later and many get drunker and drunker, chaos begins to rise, and someone must find a way to stop it before the marriage ends even as it begins.

Lulu Megahed starred as the lively and egotistical Tina, who is focused on having her wedding be as perfect as possible. Megahed immersed herself in her character by having over-the-top physicality and detailed facial expressions that added comedy throughout the production which quickly shaped her into a bridezilla. Megahed's diction was incredible, especially since she used an authentic New York accent. Yali Miranda transformed into the apprehensive and romantic Tony. His ability to evolve through the show from timid and nervous (during the controlled ceremony) to energetic and combative (during the battles throughout the reception) helped progress the show from marital bliss to conflict. The tremendous connection between Megahed and Miranda added humor throughout the show, especially featured in their vows during their ceremony.

Emma Harris starred as the humorous and dynamic maid of honor, Connie. Harris' magnificent acting range was demonstrated throughout her interactions with the audience that contrasted her exchanges with the other characters. Harris fashioned small remarks throughout the production which added to her comedic and blunt character. Augustus Wood thrived as the flirtatious and intriguing groomsman, Johnny. Wood's fantastic dancing ability, evidenced throughout the several dance numbers, created the vibrant atmosphere of the wedding. The ability to flirt with most of the audience established the character and helped differentiate Johnny from the fellow groomsmen. The ensemble shined throughout the show by performing many different roles from playing in the band to serving an actual three-course meal to the audience. The ambience of the wedding was sparkling and animated.

The technical aspects featured in this show should not go unnoticed. The lighting (designed by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin) helped set the scene of the wedding and paralleled the emotions featured throughout the show by shifting colors. The costumes (designed by Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker and Katie Hancock) were masterfully crafted and transported the audience back to the 1990s. The costumes used pink, large sleeves, and sparkle to incorporate styles of that era.

As the wedding reception begins to wind down, Herndon High School's production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding proved that fights may happen, but love will always come out on top.

by Elli Vlattas of Westfield High School

"Mrs. Josephine Vitale and Mr. Anthony Nunzio, Sr., request the pleasure of your company at Tony n' Tina's Wedding." The playbill's opening words frame the play and tease at the interactive, diegetic nature of many aspects of the show. Herndon High School's Tony n' Tina's Wedding tackled an unconventional, challenging comedy with incredible talent and witty, quick-thinking approaches that were clear in every moment of the play.

In the mid-1980s, Writer Nancy Cassaro, with the aid of a small professional theatre group in New York known as The Artificial Theatre Company, wrote the play Tony n' Tina's Wedding. It became an Off-Broadway hit, running for over ten consecutive years. Notable to these performances were improvised aspects often unique to each show and the interactive experience of the audience, who were utilized as attendees in the wedding ceremony and the reception. These aspects make the play far from easy to perform, but Herndon High School rose to these challenges with skill and gusto.

Every technical aspect of the show took into account the positioning of the audience, stepping away from traditional approaches in order to match the unusual technical situation. The costumes were finely detailed, selected with an understanding that the audience would be only inches away from the characters. The various props, arranged by Cecily Rood, Meena Megahed, and Chole Thompson, had similar loving detail. The cane of Uncle Luigi, a wonderfully odd walking stick with a handle carved and painted to look as if it was the head of a mallard duck, was from actor Noah Eckert's grandfather, adding another touch of authenticity to the performance. Every aspect of these props and costumes remained historically accurate, truly capturing the time and place. Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak, who were in charge of sound, created a soundscape where the audience could clearly hear every conversation but maintained a grounded atmosphere, balancing the authenticity of listening to a chatting crowd with the stage magic of hearing the soft, whispered exchanges of characters as they explored their own relationships with each other. Coordination of every aspect of the play with the lighting, run by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin, was the cherry on top of Herndon High's spectacular technical work for this play.

The actors did an incredible job, with skillful acting that blurred the line between the scripted and the improvised. Augustus Wood played Johnny, the little brother of the groom, with a mischievous charm, snarky sense of humor, and a surprising tenderness that ends up repairing some of the disasters the reception encounters. Emma Harris walked the line between earnest drama and comedy, humor and outrage, as the Maid of Honor, Connie, while also utilizing incredible physical performance to highlight the intricacies of Connie's character. The actors responded to audience interaction with speed and creativity, never freezing up. Their presences complimented each other rather than wrestling for control, which is no small task with the constant simultaneous performances of the play.

Herndon High School's Tony n' Tina's Wedding was a talented show with bountiful details that not only made a beautiful performance but showed the heart the cast and crew had brought to it.

by Abigail Gaughan of St. Andrew's Episcopal School

"We love our bread, we love our butter, but most of all we love each other!" exclaimed Tina and the Vitale family at the convincing wedding reception on the stage of Herndon high school.

Set in Queens, New York, 1991, and written by The Artificial Theatre Company, Tony n' Tina's Wedding is a unique comedic show that encapsulated the personalities and interactions of two stereotypical Italian families joining into one. The whole cast interacted with the audience throughout the show as if they were welcome guests at the wedding. With a large cast consisting of waiters, band members, wedding guests, a bride, a groom, and more, Herndon High School was able to beautifully perform this scripted and improvised show.

The play revolved around Lulu Megahed as Tina Vitale and Yali Miranda as Tony Nunzio, whose personalities complemented each other. Megahed played an energetic and excited new bride who was not afraid to speak her mind. Also, Megahed never strayed from the strong Queens accent and interacted with the audience throughout the night, making them feel as if they were a part of the family. Miranda, on the other hand, played a more timid and nervous groom. Although Tony began as a nervous wreck, Miranda developed the character throughout the show and became confident enough to stand up for Tina when the ex-boyfriend Michael (played by David Wrigley) tried to win Tina back.

Augustus Wood as Johnny and Emma Harris as Connie had the audience laughing the whole show. Augustus Wood did an incredible job as Tony's flirtatious little brother/groomsman. Wood was so committed to the role that from the beginning of the show to the bows and throughout, Wood never broke character. Whether Wood was showing off some fantastic dance moves or "hitting on" some of the audience members, they were constantly doing a fantastic job of conveying the character of Johnny. Emma Harris portrayed Connie as the sassy, pregnant, maid of honor. Harris did an amazing job interacting with the audience and keeping the energy up throughout the show. When all chaos broke loose after an argument between Connie and Tina, Harris changed from energetic to argumentative and had the whole audience rooting for Connie in the battle of the bridesmaids. Additionally, Father Mark played by Tommy Maxson did a wonderful job unfolding from an orderly and pious priest to a sloppy drunk.

The technical aspects of the show deserve praise as they set the mood for the entire production and completed the wedding environment. Costumes by Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, and Katie Hancock were perfect for the 1990s and showed the character's personalities while also being wedding-appropriate. Additionally, the sound crew (Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak) handled the number of microphones incredibly as the audience could hear every member of the cast the entire show. Song choices such as Karma Chameleon and Fly Me to the Moon (sung by Lainey Bradley) set the mood for each scene. Lastly, the lighting design done by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin perfectly fit each scene. For example, during the fight scene, the scrim was red and at one point in the show, it was even the colors of the Italian flag.

Tony n' Tina's wedding was one like none other. The amount of detail in the technical aspects and the actor's ability to improv for hours made the show unforgettable.

by Kaylee Williams of Fairfax High School

Save the date! An evening of heart-warming relationships, champagne-infused altercations, and 80s-centric dancing is what you could expect from this wedding! Produced by Herndon High School, Tony n' Tina's Wedding was a two-hour immersive experience that had audiences in a standing ovation by the curtain call.

Created by Artificial Theatre Company in 1988, Tony N' Tina's Wedding is a comedic interactive theatre concept where the audience is a part of the show. The show had a run of over 20 years off-Broadway. Herndon chose to set the show in Queens in June of 1991, creating a period piece that encapsulated the heart of the 90s. The production illustrated two stereotypical Italian families trying to put aside their feud and unite as one. The show had no intermission but kept audiences engaged from the ceremony, through the toasts, and to the bouquet toss. The monumental aspect of the show is that it is largely improvised, creating a different production every performance.

As assumed by the title, this show centers around Tony, played by Yali Miranda, and Tina, played by Lulu Megahed. Megahed characterized a young romantic perfectly as her energetic sense of wonder emitted from her throughout. Even when she wasn't in the spotlight, Megahed could be seen engaging audience members and giving insight on how Tina was feeling - all while keeping a consistent and convincing Queens accent. To juxtapose her was the groom, Miranda. Upon introduction, he was seen to be timid and more reserved than his castmates by having a hushed voice and closed-off physicality. By the end of the show, Miranda was bold and committed to be a husband. Though subtly, Miranda developed his character's physicality and vocals to create a well-fleshed-out character. Miranda and Megahed had excellent chemistry and delightfully executed the highs and lows of newlyweds.

supporting performers were vital to the story. Connie, portrayed by Emma Harris, seemingly became a crowd favorite, as at one point she had the crowd chanting her character's name. Connie was pregnant, which Harris wonderfully incorporated into her character's physicality and comedy. Harris's comedic timing and quick quips were an integral aspect of the show's atmosphere. Another standout performer was Andrew Landrum who portrayed Tony Sr. Landrum's character was the stereotypical in-law who breached the brim of appropriateness. Landrum was often seen dancing/flirting with audience members and saying things like "Hey doll, are you single?", which showed the commitment Landrum had to the character. The connection they had to their characters enhanced the overall experience.

In an improvised show, one might question how the techs can keep up with the sporadic cast. The techs impressively and seamlessly managed this show. The sound team, Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak expertly juggled the task of having many people with mics without having chaotic sound. Performers could always be heard, which is commendable in a show with a large cast. Likewise, the accuracy and details of the costumes by Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, and Katie Hancock were impressive. Not only were they period-accurate, but they all coordinated beautifully.

As said in the closing lines of the show, "We are famiglia", is a great way to describe the experience of this show. The skilled cast of Tony N' Tina's Wedding created an unforgettable production that left everyone feeling as though they, too, were family.

by Isabella Jackson of Fairfax High School

When asked to think of a "wedding," most people expect a peaceful ceremony and a fun, memorable reception. Herndon High School's hilarious production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding was anything but predictable. From shirt-ripping and dance floor brawls to hitting people with chairs, lap dances, impromptu performances of Grease, almost everyone making out with each other and getting drunk, and so much more, this was something to remember. With much of the show being improvised and a real three-course meal being served, this production truly engaged the audience and immersed them as guests to an iconic Italian American wedding.

Tony n' Tina's Wedding, conceived by Nancy Cassaro, is an environmental theatre event that follows an Italian-American wedding between Tony Nunzio and Tina Vitale in Queens, New York on June 1st, 1991. The audience are incorporated into the mostly improvised production, except for a few scripted parts. It was first performed by the Artificial Intelligence comedy troupe on November 11th, 1985, in Greenwich Village, NY.

The whole cast stayed in character the whole time and displayed a deep level of connection together, revealing masterful improvisational skills. They all listened to each other and shone individually but knew when to hold back and let others shine. The actors embodied their set stereotypes perfectly and maintained realistic Italian accents and a high level of energy throughout the show. There was never a dull moment as everyone was doing something and did not falter in moments when the audience interrupted. The cast also displayed a smooth and not overdone progression from sober to drunk throughout the show. This production was assistant-directed by Meena Megahed, who encouraged and actively reinforced the importance of relationships and bonding between the cast.

Lulu Megahed (Tina) gave off bridal glamour and comedy gold through a diverse array of mannerisms and interesting conversations. Megahed's choices complimented the tactics of Emma Harris, who brought so much vitality to the show with her bold interactions and never-ending sass while playing maid-of-honor Connie. Augustus Wood, who played groomsman Johnny, radiated pure charisma and humor, from expressive physicality to occasional flirting with the audience and charming delivery. Yali Miranda (Tony) slowly overcame his shyness and became much more daring and rambunctious as the show progressed.

Lainey Bradley, who played Debbie Dulce, both dazzled the audience with her beautiful vocals and helped keep the pace of the story. Noah Eckert fully embraced the stereotype of an Italian uncle with his humorous quips and sass while playing Uncle Luigi. Gaby Bradley utilized incredibly realistic physicality to play Grandma Nunzio like falling on the floor, stiff dance moves, and constant hunching. Andrew Landrum (Tony Sr.) added a promiscuous playfulness with flamboyant mannerisms and suggestive one-liners.

With a dynamic and unpredictable show like this one, collaboration between the actors and tech crew is key to making sure everything goes smoothly. The live sound mixing (Wilson Purdue, Liam Nowak) ensured that the people who needed to be heard were audible while the others were not and the lighting, done by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin, utilized spotlights to highlight the main people speaking and the cyclorama colors matched the emotion of the scene and the section of the wedding.

Love is complicated and weird. Marriage is also complicated and weird, like the events that transpired in Herndon High School's eccentric rendition of Tony n' Tina's Wedding. But love and marriage also bring joy and happiness, which is what the cast and crew brought to the audience.

by Spoorthi Nadkarni of Westfield High School

Family drama. Emotional turmoil. Snarky one-liners. If anyone objects to Herndon High School's engagingly comical production, speak now or forever hold your peace!

Nancy Cassaro's wonderfully immersive *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* opened Off-Broadway in the mid-1980s. It is a play with improvisational elements that takes place in Queens, New York, at the wedding ceremony of Tina Vitale and Tony Nunzio. The play balances many nuanced storylines, such as the well-meaning altercation between Tina and Connie, the uncomfortable presence of Tina's ex-boyfriend Michael, and of course, the overarching pressure for the two families to get along. After the audience delighted in watching relationships get comically torn apart, they watched with smiles as the universal themes of sincerity and family taped them back together.

Sparks flew between the actors of Herndon High School's *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*. The cast did an amazing job of establishing relationships and creating believable chemistry between characters. A particularly outstanding example of this was Lulu Megahed as Tina. Megahed brought the show to a new level of authenticity with her exceptional performance, effortlessly showcasing her ability to tell a story through character relationships. Over the course of the show, Tina could be observed mingling with the guests and audience members, even when the focus was not on her. This also goes for Emma Harris, the actor playing Connie, the titular Maid of Honor. Harris charmed the audience with one-liners and a likeable attitude, leading up to Connie's memorable fight with Tina. All the actors were also very skilled at displaying character development. For example, Yali Miranda, playing Tony, demonstrated striking character changes between before the wedding, when he was timid and awkward, and after when he was confident.

The comedic elements of the show were seemingly an audience favorite, especially Johnny (Augustus Wood) and Tony Sr. (Andrew Landrum). The improvisational elements of the show forced audience members to ask the question, "Was that scripted or improvised?" Wood and Landrum did an exceptional job of not giving away the answer. A standout piece of the show were the musical elements of the show. Incorporating a choreographed dance like *Material Girl* as the Bridesmaid's dance added authenticity to the show. Something that made the show seem very genuine were the Queens accents, flawlessly executed by almost every actor. The distinct speech patterns of New York succeeded in transporting the audience there, and making the experience just a bit more immersive.

The eye-catching costumes designed by Chloe Thompson, Lauren Tucker, Augustus Wood, and Katie Hancock also brought the show's immersion to a new level. The pink sequined bridesmaid dresses, complete with bows took the audience back in time to the 1980s. Tina's several ensembles also aided in making the experience distinctly 80s. The lights, operated by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin were the perfect finishing touch to make *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* a seamless, immersive experience. The improvisation from the actors combined with the lights, props, and seating make the show feel more like a real wedding than a fictional one. The small details, like the crepe flower petals, and the branded plastic water bottles make the show feel like an event that you're attending, instead of merely a play that you're watching.

In conclusion, Herndon High School's actors and technicians worked together to create a high-energy, phenomenal production and a lasting experience for everyone involved.

by Gauri Manocha of Fairfax High School

An ex-boyfriend showing up, two feuding families, and one large wedding, what could go wrong? "Tony n' Tina's Wedding" at Herndon High School was a hilarious show in which the energetic actors and impressive tech drew the audience in for a memorable and comical show.

Tony n' Tina's wedding, based on a stereotypical Italian-New Yorker wedding, follows two newlyweds, Tony Nunzio, Jr. and Valentina 'Tina' Vitale through their eventful wedding day. The audience members are treated as guests to the wedding with the actors often interacting and improving with them throughout the show. Written by the Artificial Intelligence Comedy Troupe, Tony n' Tina's Wedding is one of the longest-running Off-Broadway shows, lasting over 20 years and has been performed in over 150 cities around the world.

The play was led by Lulu Megahed as Tina. Megahed embodied her authentic character with her commitment to her strong characterization, superb New York accent, and lively interactions with the guests of the wedding, often telling them her feelings both in words and in her facial expressions. Alongside Tina was Yali Miranda as Tony, the timid newlywed husband to Tina. Miranda displayed a strong character arc throughout the show, starting out extremely nervous and quiet and eventually coming out of his shell becoming a confident husband who stands up for his wife whenever necessary, even if it includes getting hit by a chair. Megahed and Miranda had exceptional chemistry and perfectly portrayed a married couple, in good times and in bad.

Standout performances were given by Emma Harris as Connie and Augustus Wood as Johnny. Harris flawlessly portrayed the sassy maid of honor. Harris showed a strong and meaningful bond and had remarkable chemistry with her husband, Barry, played by Jefferson Escobar-Rivera. Harris was energetic and her authentic characterization had the audience constantly laughing. Augustus Wood played the hilarious little brother to the groom and the stereotypical heartbreaker. Both Harris and Wood interacted with the audience for large portions of the show. Their commitment to their characters and connections made with the audience, even causing the audience to cheer for their characters even amid dramatic family fights. Additionally, the annoying, yet comical Uncle Luigi that no one likes was played by Noah Eckert. Eckert had an outstanding connection with everyone on stage. The deaf Grandma Nunzio, played by Gaby Bradley, had amazing physicality. Bradley committed to her grandma-like movement and stayed consistently in character throughout the entire show.

Costumes, designed by Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, and Katie Hancock, were functional and time-appropriate. All the costumes were incredibly detailed and fully immersed the audience in the time period. Additionally, the sound team, Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak balanced the actors' microphones incredibly well. Even with a large cast, every character was always heard, but never overpowering. Finally, the lighting, by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin, was fitting and used techniques, such as changing the color of the lighting on the scrim, to add to the mood of the show.

Tony n' Tina's Wedding, performed by Herndon High School was engaging, unforgettable, and energetic. The skilled actors along with the outstanding technical elements created a truly magical experience.

by Sarah Zakreski of Fairfax High School

Feuding families, nerves, booze, and what's supposed to be the happiest day of Tony n' Tina's life. What could possibly go wrong in Herndon High School's production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding?

Set in 1991, Queens New York, Tony n' Tina's Wedding is a fun and interactive comedy. Audience members are treated as guests during a classic Italian-American wedding. The wedding party features many fun quirky characters you'll be rooting for by the time the night ends. Moreover, Tony n' Tina's Wedding was first performed on November 11th, 1985 by the Artificial Intelligence Comedy Troupe. Their off-Broadway performance was from February 6th, 1988 to July 25th, 2010.

The bride, Tina Vitale (Lulu Megahed), is bubbly, energetic, and not afraid to say what's on her mind. Megahed's portrayal of Tina gives the bride the perfect balance of depth and ditzyness. Whether she's demoting Connie to maid of trash or having a deep conversation with ex-boyfriend Michael Just, Megahed will have you rooting for Tina to get her perfect wedding and happy ending. In a perfect contrast to Tina, the groom, Tony Nunzio (Yali Miranda) is levelheaded, exhibiting a more nervous energy. Tony's declaration of love for Tina, saying he'll love her today and tomorrow, would cause anyone to swoon. Megahed and Miranda's depiction of Tony n' Tina will have you wishing the best for the newlyweds.

The maid of honor, Connie (Emma Harris) is the perfect mix of sassy and sweet. In the span of about thirty minutes she goes from calling Tina her sister to white trash. Connie also starts a feud between another bridesmaid Donna. (Hannah Clements) Donna is a drunk, out of control bridesmaid who performs an unforgettable rendition of "Hopelessly Devoted to You." Donna also gets named as the replacement maid of honor which sparks outrage in Connie and causes her to seek out audience members to become her new best friend and future maid of honor. Harris and Clements create an unforgettable comedic duo that'll leave the audience laughing so hard, their crying. Other standout actors include Grandma Nunzio (Gaby Bradley) and Tony Sr. (Andrew Landrum). Bradley always remained in character regardless of if Grandma was center stage dancing or sitting in the back. Tony Sr, a stereotypical Italian father had a young woman by his side, and he continually received laughter from the audience.

The set design for Tony n' Tina's Wedding is fresh and like something you've never experienced before, instead of sitting in the house, audience members or "guests" sit on the stage. The design of the set for the ceremony allows for a seamless transition to the party. Lighting, which is done by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin, sets the mood for scenes. Light displays on the cyclorama such as the Italian flag during speeches, red during fight scenes, or the rainbow when Tina's brother comes out make the tone of the scene clear.

The costume selection from Chloe Thompson, Lauren Tucker, Gus Wood, and Katie Hancock are not only time-period accurate, but also still shine a light on the individuality behind each character. An extra detail that really made Herndon production shine was the masks that had roles on them such as bride, groom, or best man.

The joint effort from the cast and crew made Herndon High School's Production of Tony n' Tina's an unforgettable experience for every audience member.

by Sydney Grossbard of Fairfax High School

Anything that could've gone wrong at a wedding, did go wrong, but in the most marvelous way. From the wedding vows to the end of show bows, the audience was drawn into the ambience of two feuding families coming together in holy matrimony. The picture painted by Herndon High School of Tony n' Tina's Wedding perfectly captured the chaos of getting married, enduring drunk family members, and facing a crazy ex-boyfriend in one production.

Set in 1991 Queens New York, Tony n' Tina's Wedding is a comedic and vastly improvisational show. The show depicts two Italian families (trying) to put aside their differences and join as one as Tony and Tina celebrate their wedding day. Starting off with an actual ceremony, the show slowly reveals tiny insights into each of the characters' lives and their relationships with one another. This show was hugely interactive with the audience, seeing as the audience was not sitting in the house seats, but rather onstage as if they were in the wedding party. The first running of the show was performed in an American Legion hall on West 14th street on November 11, 1985 and ended up having a 22 year long run.

Tina (Lulu Megahed) led the show with a bubbly charismatic performance, which took us on an emotional roller coaster throughout the show. Whether it was fighting with the maid of honor or having a heart-to-heart with her ex-boyfriend, Michael (David Wrigley), Megahed made sure to keep the audience engaged the entire time. Tony (Yali Miranda) perfectly contrasted Megahed's energy but complemented her character. Miranda played more of a timid and nervous groom at the start of the wedding, but he became a force to be reckoned with defending his bride against her ex. Even when hit with a chair, Miranda still pulled off playing a loving husband towards Tina. Megahed and Miranda were exceptional at playing authentic newlyweds, and had the audience rooting for them the entire time.

Other notable performances were contributed by Emma Harris playing Connie and Augustus Wood as Johnny. Harris was hilarious in her performance portraying not only the maid of honor, but a pregnant woman as well. Additionally, Harris on top of her priceless comedic act was her depiction of a "Big sister" for Tina. Another standout role was played by Wood who was a charmer, throwing winks at the audience and even getting many of them up to dance. Wood kept the audience entertained with his dance moves, which kept the energy high onstage. Both performers seemed to be a crowd favorite.

To add onto this fun, full of personality show, the lighting changes to set different moods and scenes were almost seamless. The sound cues were on point and it being a mostly improvised show the sound cues complimented the actors well. The costumes designed by Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, and Katie Hancock, were incredibly detailed from the dress under Sister Maria's costume, to the cross necklace around Connie's neck. Detailed costumes were incredibly important to this production especially with the audience so close to the cast members. The element of a 3-course meal being served during the show was an immaculate touch to make the experience more realistic.

Overall Herndon High School did an amazing job in bringing the audience into the world of Tony Nunzio and Tina Vitale. The audience always had someone to look at and a joke to laugh at in this captivating show. Congratulations Tony n' Tina, on a day no one will ever forget.

by Victoria Collins-Jost of Fairfax High School

Tony and Tina's Wedding, presented by Herndon high school, was truly different than your typical high school play. In this improvisational performance, the actors incorporated the audience which truly made for a very fun and interactive experience. The story is set in Queens NY and it's about two very eccentric Italian families that are joined together through the marriage of Tony and Tina.

What truly made for an amazing performance, especially with improvisation, was that you could tell that the actors had established relationships in which they were comfortable bouncing off of each other's energy and reacting to whatever situation arose during the show and were able to adjust to it very well. This allowed for great improvisational skills and consistent energy from all of the actors throughout the show.

In this show there are so many moving parts that if you did not pay close attention, you would miss something. For example, two actors had a conversation on the mic and in the background other wedding guests had their own conversations and stories such as small arguments or, the priest and the nun who were drunk during the reception. If you only paid close attention to the two main people speaking, you missed something important to the movement of the show. That is what I like about it. There were so many moving pieces that allowed this show to move smoothly. The actors acted in the background, although not speaking, and the audience still knew what was happening as the story progressed.

The production crew did amazing job with the lighting and using different colors to set the mood for whatever was going on during a certain scene. The sound quality was great, and it truly encapsulated the environment of a wedding with different conversations going on while an actor spoke. The costumes and props were also very detailed which made the whole show feel very real in the fact that we were close to the actors and we could see the detail of the props in their costumes definitely helped us feel more immersed in the show.

Another thing that I found very engaging was the adult humor sprinkled throughout this show. This made it engaging for teenagers and adults.

by Charlene Akese of Osbourn Park High School

Most people have been to watch a regular show, where the audience sits in the auditorium, and watches the show play out, the way it's been written. "Tony n' Tina's Wedding," however, is not that way. The audience sat onstage and interacted with the characters the whole time. The show took place in the early 90s and followed all the chaos happening at Tony and Tina's wedding, where the audience was treated as guests. Nearly all the guests had conversations with the actors, and everyone got the opportunity to go up and dance at least once.

The actors did a great job with managing their characters. Augustus Wood (Johnny) played Tony's younger brother, an audience favorite. He interacted with "guests" regularly and had great comedic timing. Another favorite was Emma Harris (Connie), who was great with portraying the ex-maid of honor. It was clear she knew her character well and knew when to make the audience look at her and when she needed to blend into the background. Yali Miranda (Tony) did an incredible job with developing his character throughout the show. At the beginning, he was nervous giving a speech. By the end, he was bolder, which was great character development.

The costume crew (Augustus Wood, Chloe Thompson, Lauren Tucker, & Katie Hancock) was wonderful at making all the costumes period-accurate while incorporating masks. Several characters had wedding-themed masks. The costumes, especially the bridesmaid's dresses, were very authentically 90's. They clearly put a lot of work into getting 90's-esque attire. The lighting crew (Liam Nowak & Jack Milkiewicz) did a great job with changing lighting based on the mood. During the celebration, the backdrop curtain was rainbow, but while characters were arguing, the curtain was red. The changes were subtle, and you never noticed it happening, but it made a huge difference.

This was an Italian wedding, and every actor was amazing at having a consistent Italian accent. They all did an amazing job with not speaking over each other and trying to dominate the stage. Every actor knew how to make the audience feel engaged and it really worked.

by Frances (Franny) Stec of Osbourn Park High School

Tony n' Tina's Wedding, made in the mid-1980s to show the wonderful life of Italian American story. This play is a hilarious story about an Italian Catholic wedding where Tony (Yali Miranda) and Tina (Lulu Megahed) get married and join two families together. This play shows the joy of family and the hardships of fighting while still being light-hearted and captivating every minute. Tony and Tina show they love they have for each other and their nervousness that comes with getting married during the ceremony, which quickly turns into the crazy Italian style wedding during the reception. During the reception we dance, with the audience being able to join in, fighting between family members, and the acts of love for each other.

One amazing thing that these actors did was make it truly feel like a family wedding. Their chemistry with each other and even the audience invited us all in. Another thing was always staying in their characters, like when they were in the background watching the events unfold and always making sure they had their authentic Queens accent. They even got to improve by having conversations with the audience. One time Connie (Emma Harris) did this by going around and getting people on her side after a fight with the bride, Tina. Also, on multiple occasions I got to talk with Johnny (Augustus Wood) who made the night even more enjoyable. Though their acting was outstanding, their dance moves also had a major impact on the night. They would invite guests from the audience to dance and even have their own dance routines which displayed their character's emotions and personality fabulously. Overall, these actors knew their roles and by the end of the night I felt like I knew them well too.

Most importantly, I cannot forget the amazing set. They had decided to have the audience on stage and be a part of the set as guests at the wedding. The audience were at tables which had water bottles that said, "Tony n' Tina's Wedding," which was also used for marketing. It was also notable the fact they did not change the set much. During the ceremony they had chairs and benches out for the guests to sit in but moved them to reveal a dance floor. The set crew did a terrific job making it look like a true wedding, even "forgetting" the center pieces that were supposed to be put out. Another advantage they got from the audience being so close was with costumes. They were able to make beautiful costumes with tons of detail, that was appropriate to the time. The crew put a lot of effort into these costumes, and it showed by the detail they put into it, whether that was Tina having three different outfits, the matching bridesmaids' dresses, or the creative use of making masks that went with their character. There were so many different details the tech put into the show that upped the level of this performance. It was truly a wonderful experience, and this cast and crew wants me to watch it over and over again.

by Katherine Misero of Osbourn Park High School

From lively dancing to exhilarating fights, Herndon High School's production of Tony and Tina's Wedding was a delight for all who were lucky enough to see it. The vibrant play tells the tale of an Italian American wedding gone awry as couple's breakup, makeup, and lost loves reunite all over the course of a brisk two hours.

The cast did an amazing job of bringing their exaggerated characters to life with stand-out performances from Emma Harris as the spunky pregnant maid of honor Connie, and Augustus Wood as Johnny, the amorous brother of the groom. Both actors did an amazing job of bringing life to the production through their witty improv banter and over-the-top portrayals. While Wood and Harris both brought engaging comic relief to the show, a surprising emotional through line was portrayed by Yali Miranda and Lulu Megahed as the titular Tony and Tina. While not lacking comedic chops themselves, the couple were able to imbue the story with heart. Truly they created a heartwarming dynamic urging the audience to root for the pair of crazy kids. Megahed especially portrayed the highs and lows of a bride through her exuberant yet understandable Tina.

The actors were only enhanced by the technical design of the production. The lighting design by David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin not only accentuated, but elevated the performances. The lights subtly changed colors in time with the changing mood of the play to impress the emotional tone upon the audience. One particular addition that stood out was the use of tealights upon the tables to integrate the audience into the show. Furthermore, the stage management shone through the whole production. Each cue went off swiftly and distinctly with little deviation. Stage Manager Zach Wemyss' detailed eye was apparent via the intricacy of the production. All actors were on point and confident with their deliveries something that surely must have been hard to manage with such a large ensemble and cast of characters, not to mention the balancing act of serving hot food during the production. Truly Wemyss' efforts must be applauded.

One surprising aspect of the show was the addition of live music. Lainey Bradley acted as the animated maestro Debbie Dulce to keep the show moving. Not only did she sing but she provided a needed force of guidance in the chaotic comedy unfolding on stage. The show had a lot of surprising musical feats, some being the bridal party and groomsman's dances. In particular, Jenna Ainge as Marina displayed surprising dance skills in tandem with Augustus Wood's Johnny.

Overall Herndon Highschool's production was high quality and deserves praise. Surely their next show will continue to be at the near-professional production they put forth.

by Katia A Schineller of Osbourn Park High School

It was definitely a different type of show than most people were used to. Not only did you sit on stage and were served food there were also no scene changes. The lighting was well executed and you could tell tech had put a lot of thought into it. The acting was really well done and I couldn't tell what parts were improv and what were scripted.

The actors also interacted with the audience during the show. The people who served the food did an excellent job at making sure everyone got food and everyone got the right food. There was a live band to the side of the stage that also did an amazing job.

They also did well with the accents, not once did any of them default to an American accent (if their character didn't have an American accent). The light changed a lot for the mood, but it was don't so discretely that no one could tell when it happened. The actors did a great job having their own little story lines but making it so that it wasn't overpowering the main storyline.

I was impressed that even though they had such a big cast it wasn't too chaotic even when they had everyone on stage. The play took place in the 90s and the outfits, references, music, and how they acted was very 90s. There were a bunch of small details in everything on stage, from the set to the outfits to the masks. Overall it was a very enjoyable play to watch.

by Logan Ryle of Osbourn Park High School

The 80s, full of sequins, iconic music, questionable fashion choices, but most importantly, the wedding of Tony Nunzio and Tina Vitale. In the play, which has a huge reliance on improv, we are invited to the wedding of Tony and Tina. Throughout the ceremony and reception, we are given a look into the largely chaotic dynamics of two Italian families. Tony n' Tina's wedding is packed full of drama, romance, and an overall great time.

Tony n' Tina's wedding first premiered in an American Legion Hall on November 11, 1985 before moving off-off Broadway in 1988. Since then, it has been performed in over 200 cities.

Our titular Tony and Tina are portrayed by Yali Miranda and Lulu Megahed, respectively. Miranda initially portrays Tony as a somewhat shy person, mumbling the vows during the ceremony, not partaking in the shenanigans of the groomsmen. However, throughout the show, we see Tony grow more and more into an adult. Tony goes out on a limb to defend his wife, contrary to who we saw earlier in the show. The development is not outright, however very subtle. Tina, on the other hand, is already portrayed as sociable and a people person. Throughout the show, we see Tina set limits and lose a level of childlike naivety and believing in the inherent good in others. Tina's development is more reliant on her being pushed to her limit rather than to defend someone. She changes to develop herself rather than the relationship.

Connie, played by Emma Harris is also a role that got much development. When we first meet Connie, she's a bit eccentric and is a party person. Throughout the play, we see Connie show a more protective side when it comes to Tina. She's nurturing yet stern when it comes to the people she loves, which was lovely to see on stage. Harris also managed to interact with much of the audience, always bringing a smile to those with whom she interacted.

Johnny, the groom's brother and resident ladies' man was played by Augustus Wood. Wood did a fantastic job also developing Johnny while engaging the audience whenever he could. What Wood did phenomenally was portraying Johnny's flirty nature without being too raunchy or too perverted which tends to be hard to do. Throughout the show we see Johnny enjoying himself while also trying to make sure the wedding doesn't completely fall apart.

The play itself was an impressive feat. From the live band to sudden audience mishaps, the entire cast deserves a round of applause for how wonderfully they handled each scene. Improv, especially for a high school cast is difficult, but the cast handled it like professionals. Never was there a pause too long or someone fighting for the spotlight too hard. The cast has much of which to be proud.

by Amelie Pandit of St. Andrew's Episcopal School

As Uncle Luigi, played by Noah Eckert said, "This is an Italian wedding" everyone can feel as though they are a part of a very special day. Tony n' Tina's Wedding is a comical, entertaining, interactive, with some hints of improv that will make sure the entire audience laughs with joy. Based on two Italian people getting married, this production truly allows the actors to fully unleash their inner characters.

Due to the improv elements of the show, the actors are able to have fun with their roles, dig deeper into their emotions and reveal a unique side to their character that is not scripted. Herndon High School did a fantastic job with bringing all these elements and more to this play. From the lighting, to the stage set up, to the costumes, and the actors themselves; this play was quite entertaining production.

The show Tony and Tina are getting married but have to deal with lots of drama that goes down within their families. Wonderfully played by the actors, the drama was entertaining, settle but humorous. Each character was able to portray such emotional standing, the authenticity was truly there. The audience could always hear them, they performed for the audience all around. It was really hard to tell between script or improv, all the characters played it off so well.

Tina, played by Lulu Megahed, took her character by every single string and played it superbly. The actor was able to fully capture the essence of a bride during her wedding day. On top of their entertaining character they were able to stay in that character to further interact with the audience. By far, the way the actor held their accents the entire time was quite impressive. Their costume changes were done efficiently, and it was not noticeable that the character had exited to do a costume change.

Tony, played by Yali Miranda, played an excellent "soon to be husband" role. They were able to portray the settle by not too noticeable feelings of a man able to get married. Being nervous at the beginning during the ceremony, to becoming so energetic, Tony showed the audience what it was like getting married while being encountered by the ex-boyfriend of the bride. The fight scene was an interesting scene to add character to the play overall.

Grandma Nunzio, played by Gaby Bradley, really captured the character of an Italian grandmother. The most astounding element was how they were able to stay in character the entire time, through the bows and everything, such talent that took! They truly grasped the passionate energy of a grandmother and was able to add "personal characters" to reach further into their role.

The tech did a great job with the lighting, set design and costume. Those who were in charge of lighting, Zach Wemyss, David Wrigley, and Emma Tubulin did a wonderful job of choosing what color would be in both the backdrop and throughout the actual stage. The lights really added more emotion essence and emotions to the scenes. Those who did the costumes; Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, Katie Hancock, did a good job with deciding the bridesmaid's dresses to put and emphasis on the 80's, it definitely amerced audience into the time period.

by Mia Redjaee of St. Andrew's Episcopal School

Mix together a makeshift Italian-American wedding with elements of unhindered improvisation and what do you get? An event with timely song picks and stand-up jokes, filled with rousing turmoil to dashes of slapstick comedy, Herndon High School's exhilarating production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding made sure the night would be one to remember.

Tony n' Tina's Wedding was put together by the Artificial Intelligence Comedy Group, with its first performance dated to November 11th, 1985, before premiering in New York on February 14th, 1988. The story is set at the start of a wedding between two Italian families who are on opposite sides of the tracks. Each character introduces themselves with their own unique quirks, followed by the ceremony, and then a bountifully engaging reception which morphs from celebratory to widely out of hand as quickly as you can say "la familia!"

The unique ordeal of seating the audience at tables on stage, whilst waiters brought out courses of edible dishes, invited many opportunities for engagement with the actors and actresses. Another notable facet of the performance was the relationship the crowd had with the characters: whether giving out autographs to inviting members on stage, it's crucial how monumental the audience's role in the show really was.

Driving the wedding, as the newlywed couple, Tony (Yali Miranda) and Tina (Lulu Megahed) both conveyed distinguished chemistry, even through shifts of personal growth and altercation. Connie, played by Emma Harris, shone with her stellar acting, humor, and confidence, not to mention a stunning New York accent. Her partnership with Barry (Jefferson Escobar-Rivera), Tony's best-man, was also one to behold. As one of the prime groomsmen, Johnny (Augustus Wood) took to the dance floor with adept skill and poise, complementing songs performed by the live band, Fusion. Augustus' banter with the audience was quick-witted and clear, usually by asking for opinions of the scene or the addition of occasional touches of foreshadowing to generate a riveting amount of dramatic irony. Another notable slew of performers were Grandma Nunzio (Gaby Bradley) with her blunt yet comical temperament, Uncle Luigi (Noah Eckert) with his witty mannerisms, and Tony Sr.'s (Andrew Landrum) flamboyant persona continually spurred audience laughter.

The Ensemble cast added the cherry on top, or more specifically a 4-course meal, to the wedding. Appearing in wait suits and offering refreshments and food to those in the crowd, the wait staff certainly added to the authenticity of the entire play. Even after fulfilling their roles, they'd continue to chatter with the audience on the sidelines and gossip about different characters with broad enthusiasm.

To match the quick-pacing of the show, David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin's use of moving lights and LEDs were able to perform flawless changes between cues, such as transitions into a rainbow-esque backdrop and the appearance of the Mexican flag. Sound was a separate feat entirely: due to the presence of a live band and the inability to use the auditorium speakers because the audience was seated on the stage itself, Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak displayed incredible craftwork from start to finish. Trying to costume a performance stationed around a wedding is a challenge alone, however, Chloe Thompsons' Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, and Katie Hancock demonstrated they could take the obstacle by presenting gorgeous dresses and devilishly handsome suits.

Throughout the laughs, fights, and sentimental apologetic confessions, Herndon High School's production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding exceeded all expectations with its revival of an evocative immersive theatre experience.

by Justin Neil of Westfield High School

From blood feuds to overbearing Grandmothers, the Nunzio's and Vitale's have their fair share of drama. It's Tony and Tina's wedding day, and the start of an unforgettable night. Herndon High School's production of "Tony N' Tina's Wedding" is wildly engaging, from live band performances, to fistfights on the dance floor. The cast and crew ensure this boisterous Italian wedding is done justice from start to finish!

Tony N' Tina's Wedding first opened in 1985 and went on to be staged in over one hundred locations. Set in the 80s, the show is an immersive theatrical experience, based on the traditional Italian wedding and reception. Audience members are treated as guests of the wedding, participating in dance numbers and interacting with characters. The show is a combination of scripted dialogue and improvisation, leading the show in different directions every night. Guests are provided with a 3-course meal of salad, pasta, and cake, joining the cast in celebrating Tony N' Tina's big day.

Lulu Megahed's performance as the bride to be, Tina Vitale, was remarkable. Megahed's accent was strong and steady throughout the entirety of the show, and her interactions with the audience supplied more than a few comedic moments. As the show progressed, and family members began to disrupt the ceremony, Megahed's sweet, excited demeanor became vengeful and feisty. Yali Miranda's performance as Tony was both endearing and hilarious. Miranda's quiet mumbling throughout his vows, and his references to iconic songs of the time period created the perfect bashful groom. It is not until Tina's ex begins to cause a scene, that Miranda transforms his character from timid, loving groom, to macho fighter, attacking multiple members of the wedding party. Both Megahed and Miranda were able to incorporate little moments between one another, from hand holding, to sarcastic remarks, even amidst a show of such insanity.

Augustus Wood's performance as Johnny was thoroughly engaging, capturing the smooth, ladies' man persona of his character. Wood's dance moves were effortlessly cool, offering audiences shock after shock. From the worm, to the cha-cha, to his interaction with guests, Wood was always in character, and gave all his energy to the performance. Emma Harris's performance as Connie was riveting. Harris's ability to work with the pregnancy belly, from waddling around on stage, to cracking improvisational jokes, was a natural way to inhabit her character. Harris's engagement with the audience was sassy and almost intimidating, persuading all guests to side with her in the showdown between herself and Tina. The waiters were fundamental to the show's success. As an ensemble, the waiters completed the wedding atmosphere, offering the occasional drink, and serving each course on a proper schedule.

The technical capabilities of the show were commendable, as both the lighting and sound teams had to keep up with the ever-changing pace and directions the show took. Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak managed to coordinate the turning on and off of mics perfectly, as each character was able to be heard at all times. David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin managed the mood of the show, with color changes such as the red flashing disco lights of energetic moments, and soft blue lights in slower, more romantic scenes.

Herndon High School's production of "Tony N Tina's Wedding" was a night to be remembered. Tony and Tina are married, new relationships have formed, and one nun may be finding a new career path. Italian weddings never disappoint, and neither did the cast and crew of this authentic, immersive experience!

by Kylee Weimister of Westfield High School

There's no drama like wedding drama and there's certainly no wedding drama quite like Tony n' Tina's wedding drama. Herndon High School's Tony n' Tina's Wedding production was the perfect balance of comedy and profound themes.

Tony n' Tina's Wedding, is a unique play because it is improvised by the actors. Because of this, the story fluctuates with each new cast that performs and a new audience that watches. It was first performed in 1985 and later on the big screen in 2004. As for the plot itself, the audience attends a traditional Italian-American wedding and all the not-so-traditional events that transpire.

The cast and crew of Herndon High School's Tony n' Tina's Wedding maintained their energy throughout the two-hour-long performance with no intermission. With an ensemble heavy cast it can be hard to have everyone on stage all the time, not to mention the actors were improvising so there was no telling where or when actors would do or say something. On top of all the unique elements of this production, the assistant director was a student, Meena Megahed.

The Bride and Groom themselves Tony (Yali Miranda) and Tina (Lulu Megahed) were believable as a devoted couple. Miranda portrayed a shy groom whose love for his wife was immeasurable and led him to eventually come out of his shell to defend her. Megahed portrayed the vibrant character of Tina with an Italian-American accent and did not falter the entire performance. Their chemistry with each other and the rest of the wedding guests showed how much they understood their characters' personalities.

Connie, Emma Harris, was the Maid of Honor to Tina. Harris's confident mannerisms commanded the stage. Harris's improvisations were well received and her relationship with Connie's husband Barry, Jefferson Escobar-Rivera, captured the audience's attention. The audience was always excited to see what Johnny, Augustus Wood, had up his sleeve next with his animated personality and strong improvisation skills. The elderly at the wedding, Grandma Nunzio (Gaby Bradley) and Uncle Luigi, (Noah Eckert) were brilliant with their physicality and comedic timing. All of the characters' chemistry with one another, along with their improvisation, only added to the authenticity.

An improvised show raises challenges for lighting and sound cues because there is little certainty. The sound crew, Wilson Purdue and Liam Nowak were able to manage not having mics on continuously but ensured that, if the actors improvised a line, they could be heard. The lighting crew, David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, and Emmy Tublin used intense colors to differentiate moods and even illustrate international flags. The marketing and publicity, Sicily Rood, Kelly Grover, Cailley Graham, advertised so well that the performance was sold out. Because the audience was so close to the actors, the costume department, Chloe Thompson, Lauren Tucker, Augustus Wood, and Katie Hancock, had to make intricate costume designs for each character.

Herndon High School's Tony n' Tina's Wedding left the audience with the wonderful embrace of family and the reassuring truth that "love endures."

by Maryn Brown of Westfield High School

Everyone has been to a wedding. There are the vows, the reception, there is - a bridesmaid hitting someone over the head with a steel chair. At Tony and Tina's Wedding, nothing is impossible. Herndon High School's production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding was a unique experience, mixing improv and scripted scenes in an incredibly compelling way.

Tony n' Tina's Wedding was conceived by Nancy Cassaro and Mark Nassar, and first opened in 1985. The story follows Italian-American couple Tony and Tina and the events of their wedding. A significant portion of the performance is improvised, so the plot changes from night to night.

The improvised elements of the show added an element of reality to the characters and their personalities that is impossible to get in a fully scripted show. The actors approach audience members to have one-on-one conversations throughout the performance, giving more information about themselves and the plot. Everyone, down to the wait staff, had a fantastic handle on their character's personality, motivations, and opinions.

Yali Miranda and Lulu Megahed, the actors portraying the characters of Tony and Tina, both excelled in their roles. Miranda performed Tony's change from timid and uncomfortable with the scale of the wedding to a fiercely protective, drunk man tearing off his shirt to fight Tina's ex-boyfriend, deftly. Megahed masterfully altered her characterization of Tina as needed, with three costume changes and a myriad of moments, including a bouquet toss and a few dances, that had to be executed with perfect precision- which Megahed navigated with ease.

The supporting cast was quite large, with subplots winding around one another as the show progressed- but due to the nature of the show, every character was always onstage and in character- regardless of if they were a part of the central scene or not. Connie (Emma Harris,) and Barry (Jefferson Escobar-Rivera,) were coming to terms with their soon-to-be-parenthood, the father of the groom (Andrew Landrum,) and the mother of the bride (Kelly Grover,) were having a romance of their own, the band was playing, everyone was getting drunk, singing, and making out- the bridesmaids were fighting, the groomsmen were dancing, and all the while, every single supporting actor was fully in character.

While the show's actors had to do a lot of improvisation, the show's technicians must also be praised for pulling off the same feat- all of the lighting changes (David Wrigley, Zach Wemyss, Emmy Tublin,) microphone cues (Wilson Purdue, Liam Nowak,) and costume transitions (Chloe Thompson, Augustus Wood, Lauren Tucker, Katie Hancock,) had to be not only improvised according to the direction the actors were taking, but every technical element was adjusted to account for the audience- who were onstage alongside the actors. A notable example is the sound team's struggle with figuring out how to utilize the actors' microphones, since they would, in many of their scenes, be right next to audience members- yet they still managed to turn mics on and off in such a way that everyone could be heard.

Full of detail, charm, and hilariously pointed humor, Herndon's production of Tony n' Tina's Wedding was a masterful production of a genre extremely difficult to pull off- and yet, the cast and crew provided a performance worthy of a celebration- perhaps, though, one without any alcohol.

by Zoe Brennan of Westfield High School