

*Shucked* is a musical comedy taking place in a fictional town deep in the American South. It follows Maizy, a farmgirl who sets out to solve the mystery of the dying corn crop that her community relies on. Along the way, we learn about Maizy's close connections and make new ones with her. With its plethora of clever humor and dynamic characters, the show stays light and entertaining through its entire run.

A standout piece of the production is definitely the set design. The stage is set up at an angle, creating an illusion of a shaken up, skewed world. This choice definitely compliments the themes of the musical, teasing an upheaval that is sure to overtake the lives of the characters. The set has a rustic theme, muted colors and natural materials, like wood, taking up the majority of the stage. The production makes great use of this set up when Maizy travels to Tampa and her world is turned upside down. The set undergoes a drastic change along with Maizy's worldview, as rows of corn are transformed into loud neon signs that spell out "T-A-M-P-A" and bathe the stage in bright purple-pink lights. The transition is immensely effective; it manages to set the scene for the next arc of the musical, relays Maizy's feelings to the audience, and has great comedic value. It leaves a memorable impression for the rest of the show. Another set piece that adds to the charm of the musical is the mechanical corn. Watching the dying corn come back to life with the characters on stage creates a sense of wonder and makes for a great conclusion to the musical.

The main storyline of the show wasn't the most exciting part of the musical. It mainly stuck to the traditional plot points of a story of a character venturing into a new world for a change in perspective, which left it feeling a bit predictable. Nevertheless, the relationships between the characters still manage to stay quite exciting, highlighted by the character's loud personalities and the actors' outstanding performances. Andrew Durand as Beau and Alex

Newell as Lulu were particularly entertaining in their roles. Beau felt like a great counterpart to Maizy's character with a silly but determined personality of his own. And Lulu dominated the stage whenever her character was present in a scene with her strong, yet relatable persona.

Alex Newell also gave an amazing singing performance for the show, which was incredibly strong on its own but also perfectly fit Lulu's character. Overall, however, the musical score of the show leaves one wishing for better. The songs are strong in humor and character building, but the show is heavy on ballads and solo performances, leaving the pace of the story to feel slower than it should be. For a dynamic comedy like *Shucked*, a better choice might have been to go easy on the "I am" and "I want" songs and to include more complex, energetic numbers.

Despite its hiccups with the script and the music score, *Shucked* shines through its actors and comedy. The cast manages to keep the audience laughing throughout the entire performance, receiving standing ovations by the conclusion of the musical. And as a musical comedy, remaining humorous and entertaining is the show's main goal, proving it to be quite successful in the end.