

MR. BURNS, A POST-ELECTRIC PLAY

Musical Staging/Choreography Note from Haila Strauss:

Content:

After binge-watching the Simpsons all summer, it became clear that the longevity/success of the series is, in part, due to the very clever series' writers who simultaneously write for two audiences (a) the general population who appreciates the lovable cartoon characters and (b) the "in the know" viewers who delight in identifying the cultural references that appear throughout each episode - references as diverse as Helen of Troy, Gilbert and Sullivan and the film "Cape Fear".

For our production I chose to honor the style of the Simpsons' creative team (see above) through dance and movement. So...

- a) For the general population - You will recognize our version of known Dance Steps/Movements, i.e., the kick-line, vaudeville steps, military marching, etc.
- b) For those "in the know" - You will recognize our version of Dance Steps/Movements inspired by ballet, modern dance, social and Broadway dance, i.e., The Dying Swan, the Minuet, Tango, Salsa, the Hustle, Martha Graham choreography, postmodern dance, the Manson Trio (Pippin) plus lots more....

Collaboration:

The collaborative spirit that infused every rehearsal for musical staging/choreography was extraordinary. Along with our two Assistant Choreographers, the actors contributed their talent, theatre smarts, patience, sense of humor and generosity to solve challenges in dance, music, singing and acting. Everyone worked hard - the atmosphere was reminiscent of a television series' writers' room. In his article describing The Simpsons' writers' room Michael Reiss wrote, "The work on 'The Simpsons' isn't writing - it's rewriting. It's not enough to be funny - you have to get along with everyone."* The students displayed a professional work ethic and got along beautifully. It was a privilege to work with this team.

My special thanks to Jill Stevenson, Chair, Ellen Orenstein, our Director, the Faculty and Staff of the MMC Theatre Department for this lovely opportunity.

*Michael Reiss "How to Succeed Like the Simpsons" May 26-27, 2018.



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