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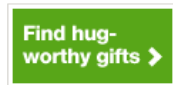
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Time's Square
at [Langley High School](#)

Reviewed on November 14, 2009

REVIEWS

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Lindsey Neimo	Briar Woods High School	<i>Washington Post - Fairfax</i>
Shayla Dhingra	Briar Woods High School	<i>Washington Post - Fairfax</i>
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Caroline Lucernoni	Briar Woods High School	<i>ShowBizRadio.net</i>

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Lindsey Neimo
Briar Woods High School
Submitted for publication to *Washington Post - Fairfax*

"Music is often called the vernacular of the human soul" explained Wes Brandt, the playwright, director, composer, pianist, and conductor of Langley High School's recent musical *Time's Square* 2090.

Set 81 years in the future, Brandt followed the styles of famous writer George Orwell by creating a futuristic society in which the power of one entity is absolute, and no truth ever reaches the people. This glimpse of "future" America had symbolism bursting from sea to shining sea, from the names of the characters, to the amount of dirt on their faces.

Characters in the show were visually separated by costume colors depicting their class level in society, and their views on the world. The simplest white tee shirt cued the audience in on that character's innocence and hope of the future, while blacks and reds showed power and stubbornness.

With such a deep mind boggling show, Brandt could not have selected a better cast. Paul Goldberg, who played the absolute ruler, Julius Lyons, portrayed each scene with more emotion than the last, allowing the audience to travel with him as he completely transformed as a character. Goldberg's vocal talents matched his acting abilities, even with his songs ranging from classical to rap.

Contrasting this leader's lifestyle, Johnny Braver (Brian Patterson) lives day to day by stealing from those better off. Almost all of his songs were expressed in raps, and Patterson's energy was so powerful the audience was moved to "Stand Up" and fight for the truth.

The driving force behind the discovery of this truth was stereotypical pop star Marissa Lamb (Kelly Hubbell) who was truly the classic diva with a heart, but no brain. Contrasting this fame and wealth, Lily Braver (Chelsea Raitor), mother of Jonny Braver, fights with all her willpower to conquer the evils of government once she discovers the truth. Raitor's struggles, especially when electrocuted, were very realistic, and the emotion she poured out through her songs dragged out sympathy from the most unsuspecting characters.

The show's overall dichotomy emphasized Orwell's original paradox. What one believes to be right is actually wrong, or is it? While observing this brilliantly done student piece, it's easy to see "there's a war going on for your mind."

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Shayla Dhingra
Briar Woods High School
Submitted for publication to *Washington Post - Fairfax*

As the ominous sounds of Star Wars play throughout a dark theater, setting an eerie tone to this unique, student-written musical. I was told I wouldn't need to be afraid of the future, but Wes Brandt contradicts that belief in *Times Square* 2090. This musical is a look at the political corruption in New York and how our



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King Stag

present government could influence our future. The society that Brandt created was based off of 1984 by George Orwell, written in 1948. Orwell forecasts the political future of the world. Time's Square 2090 connected with the audience, using the music of our generation. The reactions of the audience and cast were enthralling because they were connected with their peer's work.

Wesley Brandt not only wrote the play, but directed, conducted, and played keyboard for his musical. His songs told the story to the audience and as Brandt said, "music is often called the vernacular of the human soul." The plot was based on three families within each level of society and how the government corrupted each stratum. The symbolism of lions, lambs (being ineffective in leading), and shepherds (helping the lamb) signify the relationships between societal groups. The lion of this story was Julius Lyons, the president who uses the name Julius (as in Caesar) to represent his power. He falls in love with Marissa Lamb, a pop star who questions the government, creating separate issues in each class.

Leads were well-cast and seemed to understand the depth of their character. Lily Braver's character, played by Chelsea Raitor, provided charming singing with much clarity. The most emotional character was Julius Lyons, played by Paul Goldberg, who has a great voice and ignited passion with each line he sung.

At certain times, the choreography and music conflicted with the storyline, and there was some lost dialogue. The actor who had the greatest stage presence was Erik Pike who was Bruce, Julius' geeky assistant. Erik Pike assumed a strong character pose and dialect that never faltered. All supporting roles and ensembles were alive in their portrayals and added texture to the performance.

The set, costumes, and lighting in this show were impeccable. The set exemplified the distortion of society by its unequal layout. The costumes had symbolism within their color, giving the upper class blacks and reds to illustrate evil, the middle class whites demonstrating their innocence, and the lower class greens/blues to create earthy tones. Lighting throughout the show was a spectacle in itself because each color represented the standard and difference of each character or group.

Time's Square 2090 was a phenomenal take on that of Orwell's 1984. The political and symbolic look on society was realistic and provided the scary truth of what the world may be coming to. Brandt filled this play with comic relief in the serious undertone of the story, allowing the audience to relate and interpret its own messages from the musical.

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Sveta Pyntikova
Briar Woods High School

Submitted for publication to *Connection*

"And so the lion fell in love with the lamb." In this case, the lion is actually Julius Lyons, dictator-like President of a corrupted government-controlled America 81 years into the future. The lamb in question is Marissa Lamb, a famous pop star who decided to go on a hunger strike in protest of the lies the government is telling America.

"Time's Square 2090" is set in the year 2090 and focuses on how corrupted society would become if our government continues as it does today. It was directed and written by senior Wesley Brandt and is based off of the novel 1984.

Langley High School's production was anchored by the remarkable enthusiasm of the talented cast. Its deep thought-provoking messages were lightened by the hilarious pop culture jokes that the audience related to.

The leads portrayed their original characters in impressively strong ways. Chelsea Raitor (Lily Braver) hit exceptionally high notes with ease and touching emotion. Paul Goldberg (Julius Lyons) undertook the challenge of showing how his character underwent a complete emotional change beautifully, and he sang with ardor that sent chills down your back.

Although there were some dropped lines, the ensemble of supporting actors, dancers, and vocalists cooperated to push the plot along. Erik Pike stood out as Julius' geeky assistant, Bruce, with excellent comical timing and especially hilarious character dancing and singing. Some dancers' moves were weak, but their effort in dancing a variety of different styles throughout the performance was conspicuous.

The lighting, set, and costumes were amazingly symbolic throughout the performance. Raised platforms and lopsided buildings were used to represent the inequality and quick ascent of corruption in the government. The lighting and costume colors represented each character's personality and societal role. Villains were lit up by deep colors and wore red and black (the state colors), the president was purple to show his descent from a democratic leader to a royal dictator, the Lambs were pink and white for their innocence and hope, and the commoners were earthy, poor tones.

Wesley Brandt adapted modern fears into a wonderfully awakening high school production. Although "Time's Square 2090" was entertaining and intense, it makes us ask ourselves the hard questions about our political system, country, relationship, and lives. Langley performed this play phenomenally for a high school and reminded us that "there is a war going on for your mind, and if you are thinking...you are winning."

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Gabby Keene
Woodbridge Senior High School

Submitted for publication to *Times Community Papers*

Marissa's on a hunger strike, the Sheppard watching over the Lamb, the Lyon falls in love with the Lamb! Think it's too much for one night? Not if you attended Langley High Schools production of senior Wesley Brandt's "Time's Square 2090."

It is the year 2090, and everyone is completely under the government's control, when Marissa Lamb a pop star "trillionaire" decides to go on a hunger strike to protest against the government. Julius Lyons who has an overly controlling wife, Mallory Lyons, hears about what Marissa is doing and falls in love with her. Meanwhile, Julia Sheppard has discovered what happened to Julius' competition during the presidential election and informs the Lambs and the "poor" chorus members. Julia records a short newscast and sends it back in time using a time machine, created by Bruce, who works for Julius.

An ensemble with exceptional vocals and dancers with a great amount of passion gave the show lots of energy. Brian Patterson showed lots of affection in his role as Johnny Braver, and his fantastic rapping in "Stand Up" and "Rise" got the audience up off their seats. A love story between Rael (Justin McKay) and Lily Braver (Chelsea Raitor) gave the story an extra meaning, being that you can find love anywhere, including prison!

Julius Lyons (Paul Goldberg) acting was terrific though his line delivery was slow in the beginning. Also, Mallory Lyons (Janie Yurechko) overacted in some scenes but she had a great understanding of her character.

The ensemble with a great amount of dedication and outstanding vocals, were off in some dance numbers. However, the choreography for "The Thinkers" done by Liza Mayman, and Nicole Kang, who also played Carol was well done.

Costumes done by Lulu Walker, Emily Mannon, Sarah Mendelsohn, and Fiona Hoehn were fantastic and played a big part in defining the different social classes. Sound was wonderful although at the end some of the gun shots were off. The show had overall great props.

Langley High School's production of the student written musical "Time's Square 2090" despite a few small fumbles, was a creative and fun experience.

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Caroline Lucernoni
Briar Woods High School

Submitted for publication to *ShowBizRadio.net*

"And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there." Words you hear almost every morning as you quietly mumble along, but have you ever really thought about what exactly you're preaching? Langley High School's production of the political musical Time's Square 2090 has you questioning not only that, but many aspects of our lives; where are we going? Does Old Glory still have the same strength and power to unite and inspire us as she once did? Just how closely have we been watching the government that rules us?

Time's Square 2090 and the majority of the music and lyrics found within were written and directed by Langley student Wesley Brandt in 2009. The play arguably bears some resemblance to George Orwell's 1984, written in 1948. Both are about the danger of a centralized future government that tries to control the population and abuses new technology to accomplish their own greedy goals. The story also plays off of the lion falling in love with the lamb. The corrupt president Julius Lyons (Paul Goldberg) falls in love with the girl who first began to question the government, Marissa Lamb (Kelly Hubbell).

Brandt's Time's Square 2090 was mainly anchored by the actor to crowd interaction during many of the musical numbers and the modern pop culture jokes made throughout the show. Both served to keep the crowd intensely interested in the play and allowed many to easily identify with the characters, judging by the way all members of the audience danced, clapped, and sang along with the cast. Time's Square 2090 was truly a team effort and the enthusiasm of the entire cast was rewarded with a standing ovation at the end.

The leads did exceptionally well in staying in character and nearly all had very good voice control and performed beautifully during their songs.

The supporting actors and actresses truly helped to play up the leads to the best they could be without losing their character. They each had a well-developed personality and fun character quirks, which kept the play exciting.

One especially enjoyable factor of the production was the use of symbolism and the cleverly named characters e.g.; The ruler being named Julius after the famous Roman dictator, the protesters being led by the Lamb family, the ruling family being the Lyons, the use of costume colors and the way they were shown in the flag (The lambs dressed in white, showing innocence, the government in red and black, the colors of the flag. The flag featured one white star, representing the lambs, trapped inside a black box, representing the government's hold on the lower classes). The play contains many other clever uses of symbolism from Harry Potter to ancient world history.

The way the stage was set made it so the government officials were always higher than the commoners and this furthered the idea of how they looked down upon them as a lesser peoples, and helped add an element of depth to the stage.

Langley's performance provoked much deep thought, though it was served in such a way that it did not feel weighty, but instead the comedic element and the powerful characters helped deliver it to feel still light and hopeful. Time's Square 2090 is a very impressive work for such a young playwright and was seemingly well received by all ages and groups watching in the audience who acted enthralled and enthusiastic from start to finish.

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