Music Theatre Workshop presents Addams Family musical

Alicia Balderrama, Staff Writer | Posted: Tuesday, May 17, 2016 7:00 am

A hysterical combination of lighthearted music, macabre lyrics and dark humor had audience members nearly laughing to death at this weekend’s performances of “The Addams Family: A New Musical Comedy.” The play, put on by the Cal Poly Pomona Music Theater Workshop, tells the story of a grown-up Wednesday Addams who has fallen in love with a “normal” boy and decides to marry him. The major conflict of the play is centered on her family’s objections to the union and keeping it a secret from the Addams’ matriarch, Morticia.

The only member of the family who appears to be on Wednesday’s side is Uncle Fester, who raises the family’s ancestors from their graves and forces them to make sure that Wednesday’s romance is successful or else they’ll never rest in peace again.

In one number, Wednesday begs her family members to have just “One Normal Night” because her fiancé, Lucas, and his parents are coming over for dinner. The only one she tells about the engagement is her father, Gomez, who feels “Trapped” between his devotion to his daughter and his compulsion to tell his wife Morticia everything.

“I didn’t want to be someone else’s Gomez, so I decided there are three things that are important about Gomez and those are the things I pursued,” said David Tkach, a fourth-year musical performance student. “They are: Gomez is Latin, and I’m a big white man that is not Latin, but luckily I live in southern California, and there’s plenty of inspiration — food if nothing else — to draw on. Second thing about Gomez is that he’s a father, and I have one of those, so that wasn’t too hard to figure out. And the last step was falling passionately in love with [Morticia].”

Wednesday finally reveals the truth of her engagement to everyone. Morticia is especially enraged that her faithful husband, Gomez, knew about the secret and kept it from her. By this point, three relationships are in a shambles: Morticia and Gomez, Wednesday and Lucas and Lucas’s parents.

Morticia performs one of the most hilarious songs of the show as she tries to make herself feel better about the situation. She cheerily reassures herself that death is always “Just Around the Corner,” and even makes a pun: “Death is just around the coroner! Get it?”
Morgan Semrau, the actress who played Morticia and a second-year vocal performance student, said this number was her favorite part of the show.

“It’s just hilarious,” said Semrau. “I just so love it because when do you ever get to be like ‘haha, I love death’? So that was really fun.”

Eventually, with the help of the ancestral ghosts, Lucas and Wednesday and Lucas’ parents mend their relationships by embracing their true selves, and Gomez convinces Morticia to dance with him one last time before she leaves. The couple performs a sexy tango number together and Morticia decides to stay and forgive her husband.

The couple’s on-stage romance was made even more realistic because it had blossomed into a real-life romance over the weeks preparing for the show. Semrau and Tkach said that they had been so busy rehearsing that they hadn’t even been on a real date yet.

“We count each rehearsal as another date,” said Semrau.

In the finale, the Addams family’s butler, Lurch, who is known for speaking in unintelligible groans and growls, breaks into song. The audience laughed quite heartily at that.

Zachary Mann, who played Lurch and is a second-year student, is not part of the music department like most of the cast. Mann is a civil engineering student who was taking a voice class for fun when the teacher suggested that he try out.

“They were like, ‘you’d be a really good Lurch,’ and I said okay!” said Mann. “I just try to keep a straight face and ‘grrr’ and walk very slow. It’s not that [Lurch doesn’t] have a lot of energy, it’s that [he’s] very contained and very deliberate about [his] actions.”

Mann continued that he had a great time being part of the musical and that it was really fun meeting new people.

After the finale on opening night, the cast received a standing ovation and applause so loud it could have woken the dead.