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I have always been captivated by musicals. As a former musical theater entertainer, I have profound respect for the actors, the stage crew, and everyone involved in the process of making a perfect show. The show I was set to watch was *The Drowsy Chaperone*, a musical comedy based on a Broadway lover reminiscing about his favorite musical. The almost two hour play depicted a character, “Man in Chair,” a fanatic of the musical *The Drowsy Chaperone*, presenting to the audience the story, as well as sharing his personal experiences throughout the play. The show-within-a-show revolves around a chaotic wedding day, filled with strange plot lines and a drowsy chaperone during the times of strong prohibition.

Before the show started, feelings of nostalgia and excitement flooded me. I had never heard of or watched *The Drowsy Chaperone*, so I was curious as to what the show could be about and whether it was a silly play or not. What started as a parody turned out to be a very interesting homage to the 1920s and musicals around those times. A notable moment to me as I was watching the play was a character named Aldolpho, a satirized Latin American man whose premise was to mock that stereotype and seduce the bride-to-be. His songs and jokes had every person in the audience roar with laughter, and I believe this is due to the absolutely absurd nature of his character in the 1920s specifically, as well as how ridiculous both the costume and his songs were.

The play managed to break the fourth wall often, something not commonly found in musical theater, and it piqued my interest in the concept behind the play. Every song depicted had poor lyric and song structure, characters with different controversial stereotypes, and a substandard plot for a broadway musical. The notion that the play was so ‘horrible’ made the play that much more enjoyable, highlighting how ridiculous those old standards were.

Throughout the play, actors were prompted to do different fascinating feats, like the male lead skating around the stage ‘blindfolded’ or every actor in the ‘freezing’ scenes, some lasting over five minutes, all of which required resistance.

The casual feel of *The Drowsy Chaperone* due to its jovial storytelling detaches the audience even more than normal. The main point of shows like these is to entertain audiences, educate on certain topics, and potentially invite social growth. I believe that *The Drowsy Chaperone* successfully emulated the style of 1920s Vaudeville/Broadway through its specific use of deliberate clichés, and also accomplishes the emphasis on decompressing. While musicals often have a deeper meaning, this specific play aims to be as lighthearted as possible, bringing back feelings of relaxation and isolation, disconnecting audience members from their personal realities. *The Drowsy Chaperone's* cheery tone made it easier to bond with the characters because the production refused to take itself too seriously. They were personally able to reel me out of the academic and social pressures of college for a good two hours, packed full of laughs and emotional moments.

A limitation of my subjective description is unfortunately my personal bias towards the performing arts. As mentioned earlier, I do have personal experience being an entertainer, a flame now burnt out due to larger commitments. As I was watching the show, I remembered the intense breath control required to dance and sing, and it brought back the appreciation I used to

allocate so strongly for musical theater. The actors made musical theater look enjoyable again, and I can imagine the cast had a blast with this sort of satirical play; this was visible to me through the quality of the performance. I can safely say every audience member and I was thoroughly amused. I find live shows like these to be far more engaging than recorded movies, as the anticipation of seeing if a joke in the show lands releases more excitement than a rewatching of a taped performance. All in all, I would recommend this play in a heartbeat, and I believe it has become a new favorite.