

A Radioactive Resolution for Change: Costa Mesa's "Radium Girls"
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Following the story of underrepresented young women working for a powerful company with a toxic secret, Costa Mesa's "Radium Girls" effectively presents a fact-filled message in an impactful way. Withering away before each other's eyes, the girls resolve to fight for their right to fair treatment, and exemplify the importance of doing the right thing, even in times of turmoil.

Fingers lightly gliding across chiming ivory keys, Jessica Ramirez plays a somber medley, composed by herself and Rachel Laurence. Their creativity is aptly showcased in an eerie reproduction of a chord progression reminiscent of Jim Croce's "Time in a Bottle". The composition rings true to the dark theme of the show, successfully honoring the hopelessness felt by the Radium Girls themselves.

Throwing herself into the arms of Grace Fryer, Rosey Bagnara as Kathryn Schaub wails with grief at the overlooked death of her dear friend Irene. The raw, keening emotion she tapped into successfully showcases the anger held in the heart of her character and the disgust for the corporation responsible for her friend's morbid death. Stumbling over her words, she pleads with Grace to take action, while maintaining her crisp enunciation and clear projection.

Stepping down from her podium after delivering a capturing speech to her league members, Katherine Wiley, as Ava Pollok, boasts a powerful purple coat and hat. Standing out from the drab blues, greens, and greys around her, she exudes an air of importance, commanding the attention of young Grace Fryer as she passes by. Costume designer Andi Lopez's use of period-accurate pieces and the color purple--particularly in the addition of a felted, 1920's era hat--effectively display not only the power held by the character but maintain the historical accuracy of the show.

Her glare burning into the back of Colin Sanchez as Arthur Roeder, Grace Fryer, played by Isabella Mills, watches as his eyes flick towards her and away in an attempt to hide his regret. The two share a moment with their counterparts, questioning why the other acts in such a way, one exceeding burning contempt and the other solemn remorse. Both actors effectively communicate how they feel about the other in subtle changes of body language, with Grace begrudgingly staring down a visibly uncomfortable Mr. Roeder.

A true power play, Costa Mesa's "Radium Girls" does a radiant job showcasing the strengths of actors and technicians alike.