



• Frozen in the Desert: Tuacahn's Icy Spectacle

Description

IVINS, UT In the scorching heat of Southern Utah weather, **Tuacahn Center for the Arts** has somehow managed to bring the cool to the enchanting world of Arendelle. Tuacahn's *Frozen*, with a book by **Jennifer Lee** and music & lyrics by **Kristen Anderson-Lopez** and **Robert Lopez**, is a stunning production set against the breathtaking red rock cliffs of Southern Utah. This adaptation of a beloved animated film is a visual and emotional feast that transforms the open-air stage into a winter wonderland, even amidst 100+ degree weather—now that is what I call magic.

From the moment the show begins, it's evident that **Tuacahn's Frozen** is a top-notch production. The elaborate sets seamlessly transform from Arendelle's royal castle to Elsa's icy palace, enhanced by impressive video projections (designed by **Adam Koch** and **Steven Royal**) and special effects under **Michael Heitzman's** direction. I was particularly impressed during Elsa's show-stopping performance of "Let It Go," which creates an immersive experience for the audience in a beautiful snow castle. Just before the intermission, Elsa's dress transforms (designed by **Ryan Moller**), flurries of snow surround her, shooting out of geysers, and fireworks shoot into the air. The transformation scene effectively stuns the audience with the majestic display of theatre magic.

Equally impressive is the cast, with standout performances from the actors portraying Elsa, Anna, Hans, and Kristoff. Their voices, on-stage chemistry, and emotional depth bring these iconic characters to life in a way that is both faithful to the original film and enjoyable to watch. The heart-warming and relevant lessons taught through this atypical Disney Princess story, centering around the triumph of sisters, make this musical a winner.

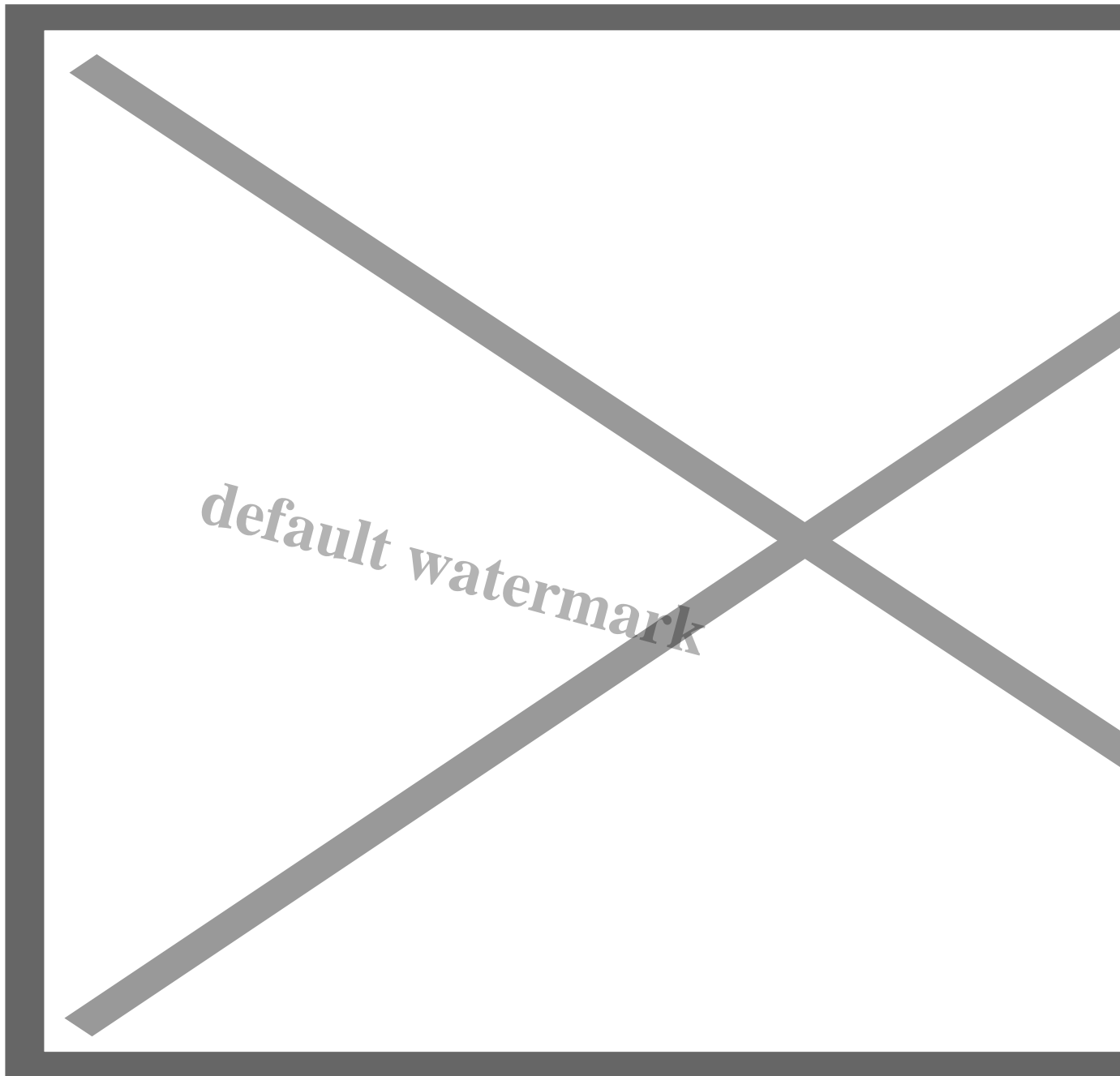


Photo Credit: Leavitt Wells

[Cayleigh Capaldi](#) as Elsa brings intensity to every scene, which is so impressive considering the heat and the fact that Capaldi is in a huge transformation dress (that is essentially two dresses) for much of the show. Capaldi's voice delivers solid vocals without fail, displaying a range of emotional depth, especially in "Let it Go" and "Monster."

[Daisy Wright](#) as Anna is a strong comedic actress who portrays Anna perfectly with naivety and awkward charm. Anna's numerous wigs (by **Bobbie Zlotnik**) allow Wright's comedic timing to shine, constantly switching from neatly braided wigs to messy wigs that look like a rat nest.

[Preston Taylor](#) as Hans is a natural performer with an undeniable charisma that perfectly suits a fallen hero-villain. Taylor has a face and voice that one does not easily forget, and I instantly recognized him from several productions across the state that I have seen. Taylor and Wright have a palpable stage chemistry that is enjoyable to watch.

As a Big Island girl, I loved seeing the loveable Kristoff, played by Hawaiian actor [Jonah Ho'okano](#) (Aladdin in the first National Broadway Tour). Ho'okano impresses with his comfortable stage presence and smooth vocals, especially in his duet with Wright, "What Do You Know About Love?"

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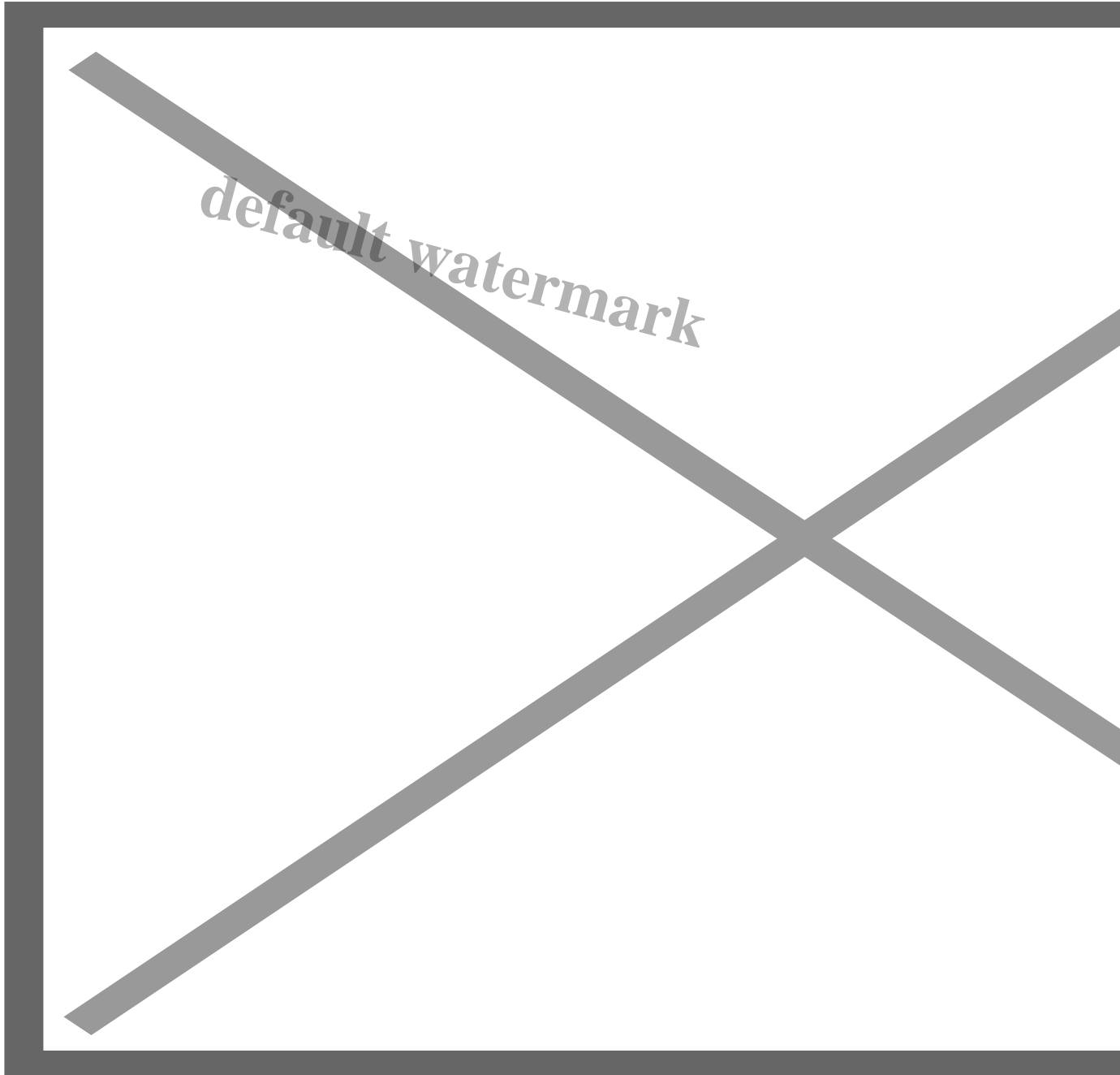


Photo Credit: Leavitt Wells

Olaf, the lovable snowman (portrayed by **Kyle Kempf**), provides much-needed comic relief and quickly becomes a crowd favorite. Kempf tap dances alongside four other full-sized Olafs during his solo, "Summer," and is lifted and flipped through the air. The puppetry and voice work are exceptional, capturing Olaf's whimsical personality and adding an extra layer of magic to the production. Similarly, Sven, the reindeer, is brought to life with remarkable skill by **William Bishop**, delighting both children and adults alike with the life-like animation of Sven's eyes and ears.

[Jeffrey Landman](#) as Weselton is feisty and spirited, delivering excellent voice work with textured inflections that complement his pompous physicality. The flopping wig was a nice touch to his character, and I loved it when he tangoed off the stage.

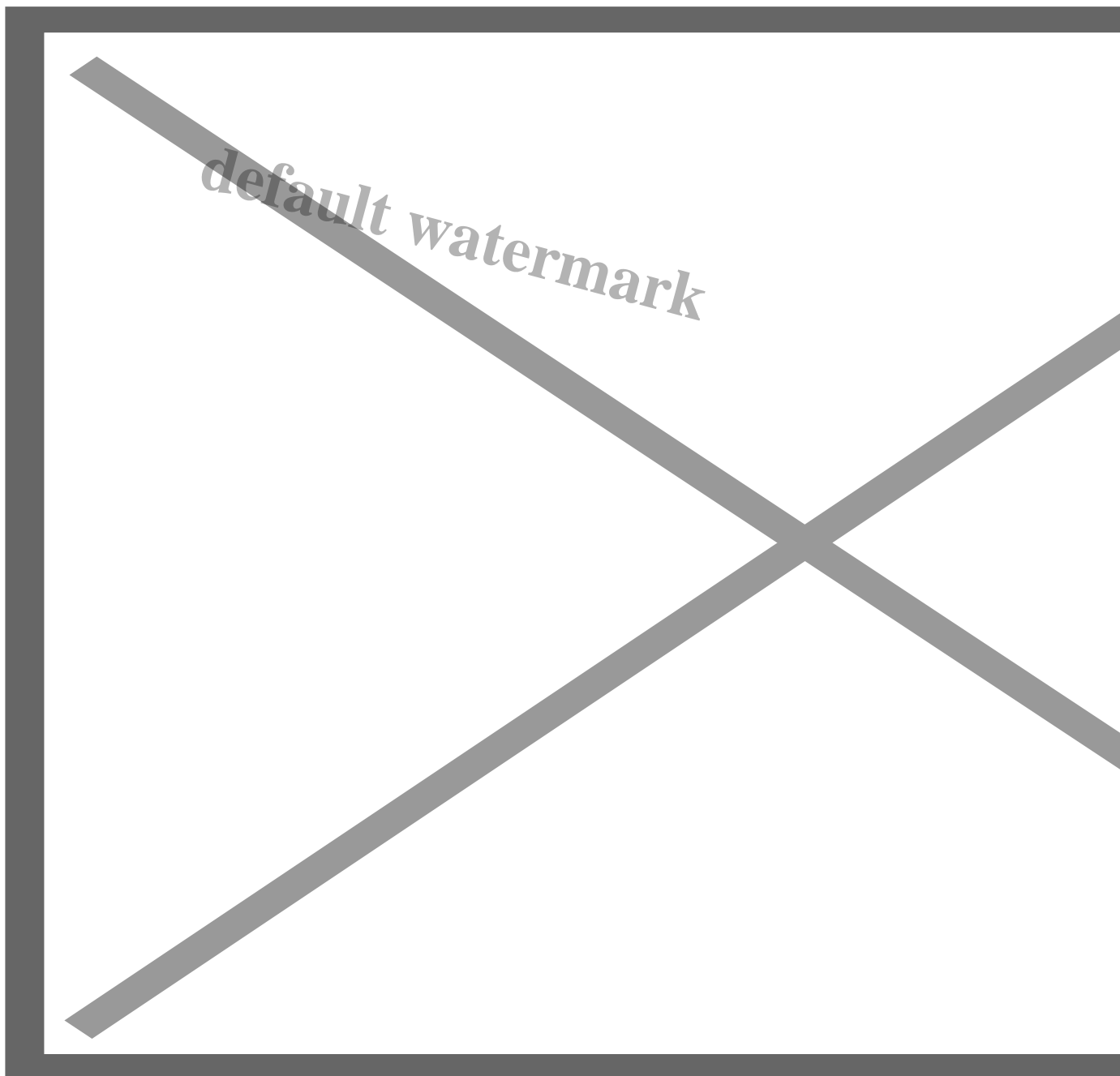


Photo Credit: Leavitt Wells

Naomi Sharette as Young Anna is a ball of whimsical energy. Sharette's fearless portrayal of Anna is one of my favorite parts of this show. **Harper Griffith**, as Young Elsa, impressed me with her voice; she has a nice, clean belt for her age, and I am excited to see what she does in the future.

Musically, the show is a triumph. The beloved songs from the film, including "Do You Want to Build a Snowman?" and "For the First Time in Forever," are performed with energy and emotion, while numbers like "I Can't Lose You" and "Hygge" add emotional depth and comic relief to the story. Additionally, having a live orchestra (led by **Christopher Babbage**) accompanying this show enhances the impact of each scene.

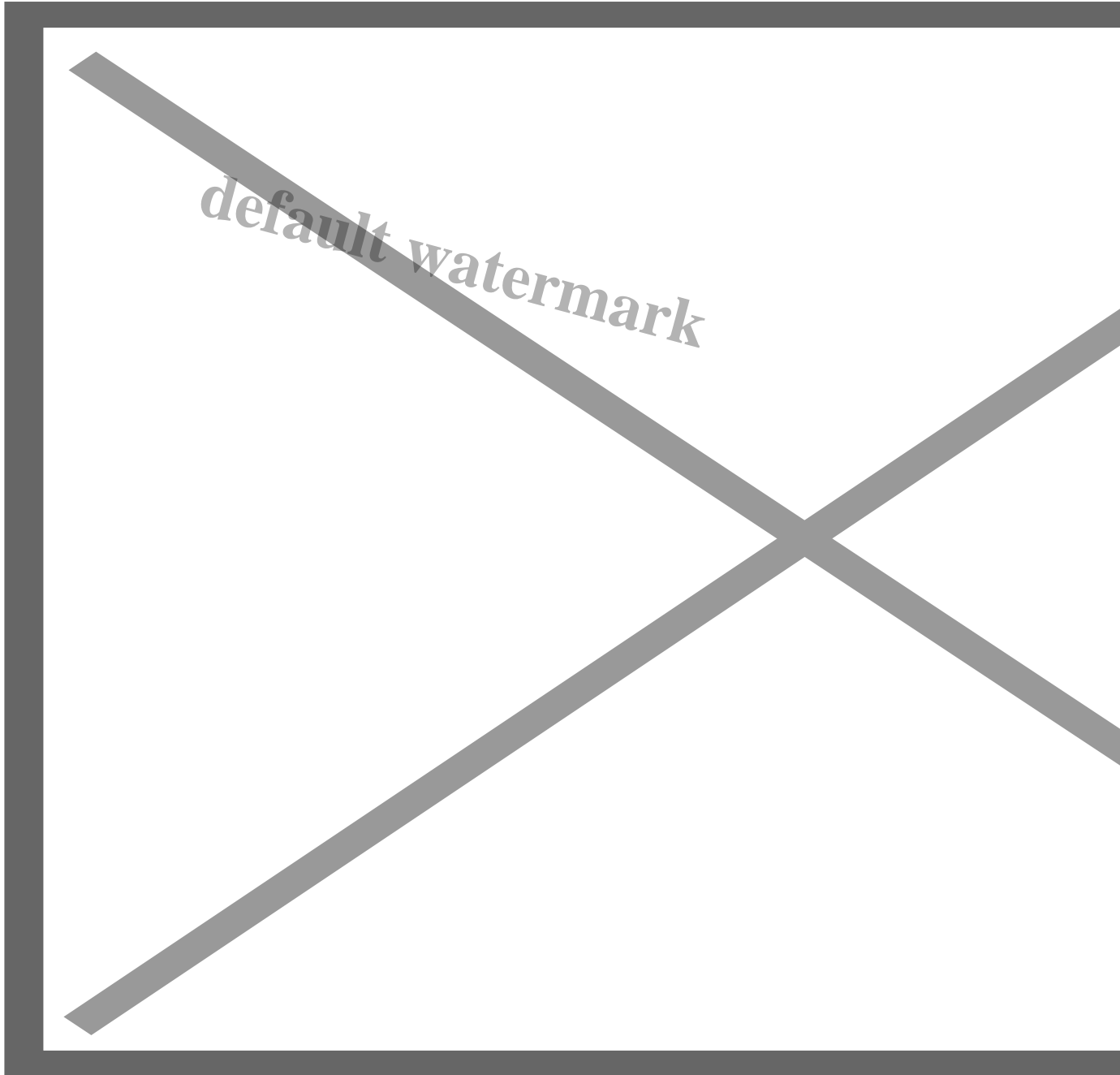


Photo Credit: Leavitt Wells

Robbie Roby's choreography is another highlight, with ensemble numbers that are both visually stunning and meticulously executed. The dancers navigate the expansive stage gracefully, adding to the grandeur and spectacle. In the second act, Roby added some much-appreciated and tasteful adult humor for the dance break in "Hygge" which takes place in a sauna and features ensemble members dancing extensive and hilarious choreography in what appears to be just their towels.

In "Do You Want to Build a Snowman" the castle paintings are gracefully carried across the stage in dancers' hands as the pictures weave around young Anna (**Naomi Sharette**) to show movement in the castle. Carts are creatively utilized to move clocks and other objects, symbolizing the swift passage of time. The ice pillars designed by **Adam Koch** and **Steven Royal** during "I Can't Lose You" create the illusion of wind rippling and storms brewing.

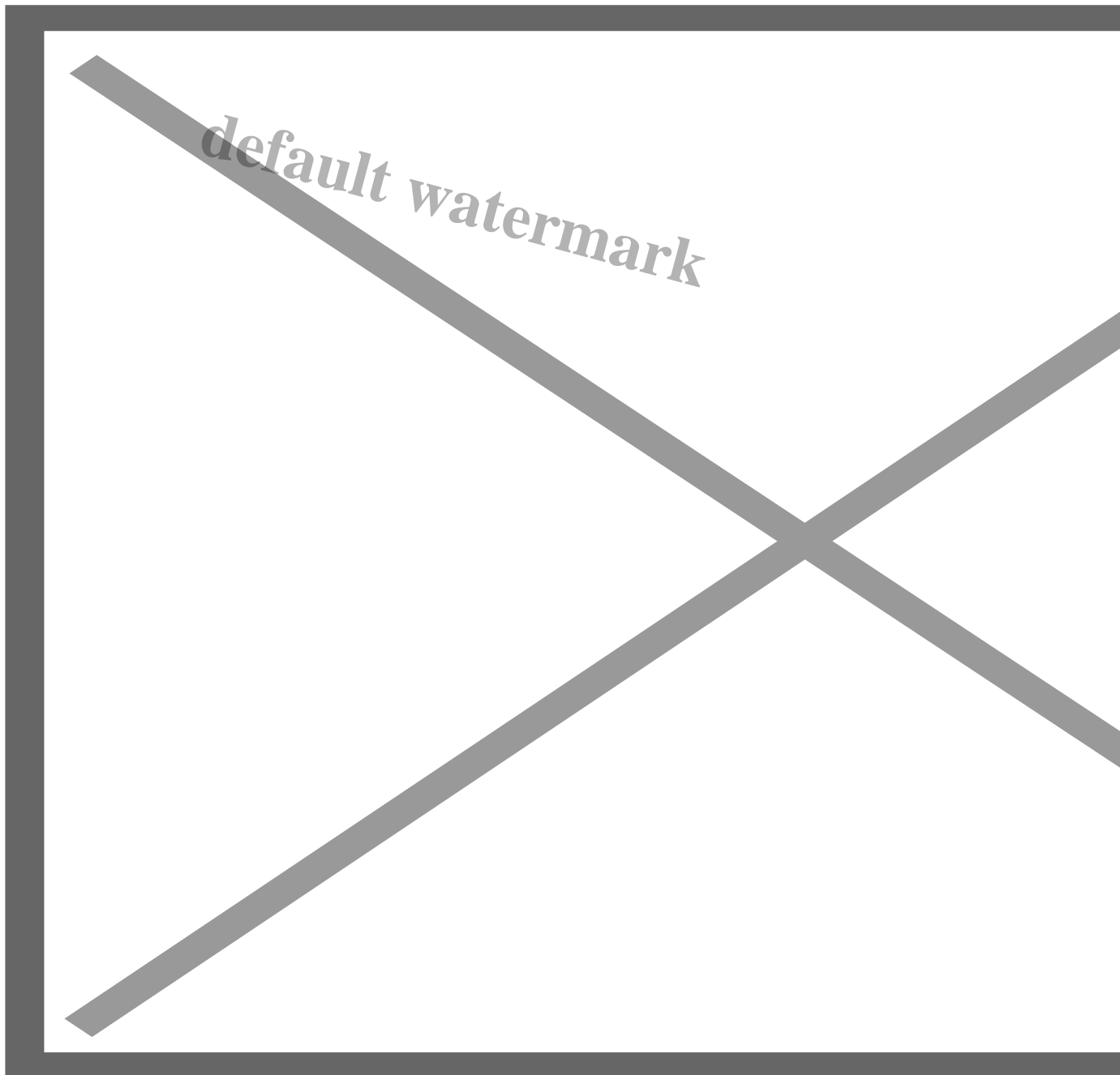


Photo Credit: Leavitt Wells

The bright and colorful costume design by **Koch, Royal**, and designer **Ryan Moller** is a feast for the eyes set against the ice castles. The detailed bedrooms of Elsa and Anna are stunning, with Anna's pinks and yellows contrasting Elsa's purples and blues. There were so many thoughtful details, like how Anna's room had a fire while Elsa's did not.

In a production that is a huge undertaking, the only song that fell somewhat flat for me was "Fixer Upper," and that was simply because of the slow tempo that dragged at certain parts of the song.

In summary, *Frozen* at Tuacahn Center for the Arts is a magical production and must-see for theatre-goers in the region. This production successfully combines breathtaking visuals, outstanding performances, and enchanting music to create a unique and stunning theatrical experience. The outdoor setting enhances the story's wintry charm if you can stand the heat. Whether you're a longtime fan of the film or new to the story, this production will leave you spellbound!

Disney's Frozen plays now through October 17 (on alternating days) at 8:45 pm, located at Tuacahn Amphitheatre (1100 Tuacahn Drive, Ivins, Utah 84738). Approximate run time is 2 hours and 30 minutes, including intermission. Tickets range from \$35 to \$111. For more information, visit tuacahn.org. For tickets, call 800-746-9882.

Tuacahn Center for the Arts presents *Frozen*.

Performance Dates and Times: Now - October 17, 2024, varying dates and times

Contact: 800-746-9882 or <https://www.tuacahn.org/show/frozen/>

Tickets: \$35 to \$111

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keola06

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