

## Review: Everyone's a "Star"

By Brieyana Miranda

Do you want to partake in a musical story filled with inspiring characters, toe-tapping tunes, and brilliant choreography? If you do, then you sure do not want to miss the tour of MEAN GIRLS. You can catch this musical comedy at the Raymond F. Kravis Center, playing now through December 10th. If you are looking for engaging, hilarious entertainment, then this is the show for you.

MEAN GIRLS follows the misadventures of Cady Heron as she shifts from being a homeschooler in Africa to a student in the North Shore school district. Through her new experiences with "human people," she learns many lessons about friendship, romance, trust, and betrayal.

Every actor in the cast delivered a performance that was not only believable but also displayed their level of dedication and skill. One actress that particularly stands out is Alexys Morera, who plays Janis in the show. She seemed to hit every note with ease, even the insanely high belts that would send chills down your spine. Her physicality as Janis was so convincing, and she never broke character. Another actor who deserves a round of applause is Ethan Jih-Cook for his performance as Damian Hubbard. His comedic timing is impeccable and will have you crying with laughter.

This show is directed by Casey Hushion and choreographed by John MacLnnis. Every aspect of the show was tied together beautifully. All transitions were seamless and made the world of MEAN GIRLS extremely believable, especially any transition that involved dancing. That element being added to the transitions made them especially entertaining to watch, seeing how they used props to dance with yet also somehow got them where they needed to be for the start of the next scene. The believability was amplified by the cast's ability to play off of each other. It seemed as if everyone in the cast were close friends, or worst enemies, for that matter. The relationships of every character were well portrayed through the actors' body language, inflections, and movements. The choreography was complex and entertaining, with difficult moves and aesthetically pleasing stage pictures. A subtle yet powerful detail that shows the director's attention to detail is the power dynamic shown by elevating the "more powerful" character. This element is initially shown with Regina towering above everyone, then Cady, and eventually Janis and Damian.

The set and costumes were vibrant, bold, and effectively displayed the setting of the show, which is mostly in Illinois. The set takes us into many locations, including North Shore High, Regina's house, Cady's house, the mathlete competition, and even Kenya. Everything was very detailed, including the Africa setting that was only used for about five minutes of the show.

Although there were a few hiccups, the sound design of the show was notably innovative. It seemed that some of the actors' mics were not turned on during parts of the show and sometimes cut out, which temporarily took focus off of the story. The best part of the sound design was its' marriage with the choreography. The use of the lunch trays in "Where Do You Belong" and the pencils and hand drumming in "Stupid With Love" added sound to the orchestrations and delivered a beautiful effect that was pleasing to the ear.

The lighting was emotionally and directionally effective, drawing focus where it needed to be drawn. The colors and intensity of the lights assisted in setting the mood, using intense colors like red in songs such as "World Burn" to create a sense of anger and cooler tones in songs like "I See Stars" to convey a more somber setting. One interesting aspect of the lighting is how projections were used in some scenes, such as the fire projections used in "World Burn." This added an appealing visual element that went even further to convey the emotions of the characters.

This production did a marvelous job of providing stellar entertainment while conveying the message that "we're all stars" and that everyone is unique and important. You are sure to come out of the theatre laughing, singing, and maybe even tap dancing. Snag a seat; you will not want to miss this production!

Get your tickets at [kravis.org](http://kravis.org).