

‘Mean Girls’ hits the local stage

A show about bullying, backstabbing, and discovering your true self in spite of social pressures

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Aaron (played by Jonathan Kranz) and Cady (Saidee Avila) are among the main characters of “Mean Girls,” a South Valley Civic Theatre production that opens Feb. 21 in Morgan Hill. Photo: Chris Foster

The teen drama and cafeteria politics of North Shore High School come to life at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse as South Valley Civic Theater launches their production of “Mean Girls,” opening Feb. 21.

The show features a cast of 25 local performers ages 14-18, starring Saidee Avila as displaced transfer student “Cady Hernon,” and Klara Klotzbach as the infamous mean girl “Regina George.” The musical is directed by Adrienne Wilkinson and produced by Ingrid Rottman and Michael Horta.

Hernon is a recent Illinois immigrant whose parents had homeschooled her all her life, and at the age of 16 is thrown unprepared into the chaotic world of a suburban high school, where she experiences culture shock and struggles to find her place in her new environment.

“It’s about letting go of what other people think, and really truly becoming yourself,” Klotzbach said. “Not basing your personality off of who you want to be friends with. I think Cady does, by the end, learn that she can be herself, and everyone is, as the show says, a star, no matter where they come from or who they are.”

Determined to fit in at her new high school, Hernon joins the feared dominant social clique known as “The Plastics,” its de-facto leader Regina George taking the new girl under her wing.

“She is a bad influence on Cady,” Klotzbach said. “She takes her in and turns her into someone that she is not, and when Regina gets kicked out of the group, Cady kind of takes over and becomes the next Regina. She wants to fit in so badly that she changes herself for the worse.”

SVCT’s version of the iconic tale is based on the 2017 Broadway adaptation. While the high school version of the script includes options for modulating the tone of the production to suit younger audiences, Wilkinson opted not to heavily censor the occasionally-risqué dialogue.



Pictured are characters of South Valley Civic Theatre’s upcoming production of “Mean Girls:” Karen (played by Sydney Hoiberg), Gretchen (Coraline Christian), Regina (Klara Klotzbach), Cady (Saidee Avila), Damian (Ezrah Cortez), Janis (Gabriella Horta) and Aaron (Jonathan Kranz). Photo: Chris Foster

“We’re using pretty much the Broadway script as is,” she said. “We left it up to the kids whether they had any concerns about saying anything, but they didn’t have any issues. So, just a warning for the audience, there may be some words you’re not used to hearing onstage, especially from children. But, if you go to a real high school, there is much worse stuff being said.”

The cast and crew of “Mean Girls” are particularly excited to share with audiences the work they have done of their dance choreography, they said.

“I think the choreography is just really phenomenal in this show,” Klotzbach said. “We have two amazing choreographers, Natalie and Christine, and they both worked really hard on it. I think it’s one of the best parts of this show, and part of turning something like this into a musical, seeing how it translates into song and choreography. Natalie and Christine did a great job.”

While audiences who are familiar with the 2003 movie may notice significant variations between the story they know and SVCT’s presentation, the soul of the narrative remains unchanged.

“I’ve been really encouraging everyone to make these characters their own,” Wilkinson said. “We have the movie version, the Broadway version, and the movie musical version. They can take the best from each of those and create their own character. Although, the basic storyline is like the movie.”

Although “Mean Girls” is a story about the divisive social politics of high school, the show has brought SVCT’s cast together and forged lasting bonds between its members.

“For a show that is about cliques, it has really brought our cast really close together,” Horta said. “They’re really getting to know and accepting people for all of their differences and quirks and coolness and all of the things in between. They’re leaving with a lot of good friendships, and it actually reads onstage when you see how much fun they’re having.”