



Double Discourse: 'Mean Girls,' not quite fetch

BY: ELLA BARRY & OLIVIA NORDYKE / ON: JANUARY 23, 2024 / IN: FEATURES, MOVIES & TV

Like it or not, we're in the age of movie remakes, and no movie is safe from a new adaptation. The recent release of the newest "Mean Girls" adaptation caught our attention and we knew we needed to review it.

"Mean Girls," written by Tina Fey, originally came out in 2004 and is a favorite early 2000s movie. The film was adapted into a musical in 2017, and now into the 2024 movie musical.

Multiple actors from the original film returned for this musical adaptation, including Fey herself. Some actors reprised their original roles and others made cameos, but we won't spoil who.

Normally, we wouldn't call ourselves mean girls — we don't want to be. But for this review, we're not holding back, and if you don't agree... you can't sit with us!

Olivia's Review

1 out of 5 stars

Bad! This movie is bad and I would never waste money to watch it again. I didn't love the original "Mean Girls," but I enjoyed the soundtrack to the Broadway production. Much to my surprise, this movie ruined every single one of the great Broadway songs and the parts that could have been salvaged were disappointing.

It's ironic in a sad way — a movie about a group of girls called the plastics being cheap and ugly. Everything looked like it was bought off an influencer's Amazon storefront, including Regina George's originally iconic bedroom set.

The costuming was the biggest flop of this film. It reeks of Shein and laziness.

Now, I'm all for making an artistic choice to utilize the younger generation's love of fast fashion as an aesthetic for costuming. The problem isn't even that it looks bad and outdated at the time of the film's release, I just think it wasn't an intentional choice. This is showcased when men enter the shot, looking mostly normal because men's clothing doesn't really go out of style in the same way. If done with intention, they would have considered this dissonance.

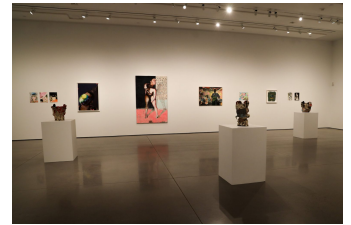
While Renee Rapp (Regina George) starred in the Broadway production of "Mean Girls," her vocal performance in the film is unimpressive. It was hard to understand what she said, and the punch was taken out of the songs she was featured in.

Rapp was still the best part, considering Angourie Rice's (Cady Heron) vocals sounded like she was on a heavy dose of sedatives. Recorded soundtracks will never be the same as belted harmony in live productions, but if you're going to do a musical, do the songs justice!

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The meaning of Regina George has been lost under a pile of brand imagery. I counted nine in-your-face moments of product placement, like when Rice's character drops the full name of the E.L.F. product she's using. No matter how good the product is, the plastics wouldn't be caught dead using drugstore makeup.

The third iteration of "Mean Girls" was worse than I expected. It didn't do the original film or musical justice. Half of it was a commercial and the other half was a PSA about how trendy items age really poorly.

The "Mean Girls" story itself doesn't come out too hot either. It's best to keep plots about body shaming and tearing down other women in 2004 and come up with some new stories.

Ella's Review

3 out of 5 stars

"Mean Girls" is camp; always has been, always will be. "Camp" is a difficult style to perfect, and while the original "Mean Girls" does it well, the new movie musical teeters the line between camp and cringe.

If you truly just want to watch a fun film with great songs, you're in luck! The jokes are funny, the characters are iconic and unlike Olivia, I loved the costumes.

When the trailer for this film first came out, I heard some talk online of disappointment with the costumes, specifically for the outfits worn by the "plastics." It's true, the costumes are cheap, fast fashion micro trends, but is that not what a high school mean girl would wear?

Plus, I think there's something campy about the characters wearing clothing that was trendy during filming but has already gone out of style by the time the film is released.

There were two actors who carried this film: Renee Rapp as Regina George and Auli'i Cravalho as Janis 'Imi'ike. Both Rapp and Cravalho showcase their musical backgrounds, with impressive acting and powerful vocals.

Rapp, who starred as Regina George in the original Broadway musical, clearly knows Regina well, and she embodies her character perfectly. Cravalho brings new life to Janis, and manages to remain true to her character while also making her more likable than in the original film.

Janis' character, known for being weird and artsy, is implied to be a lesbian in the original film, but it's never officially confirmed. In the movie musical, Janis is openly queer, which is exactly the representation we need, because it's 2024, not 2004.

Now, here's where we begin to stray from camp to cringe. In what appears to be an appeal to the Gen-Z audience, a few scenes in the film are set up to look like a TikTok video taken on a smartphone. Yikes.

Call me old fashioned, but I think you can incorporate the use of social media in a film without completely changing the aspect ratio of the screen.

Overall, the film was enjoyable, but I didn't need to watch it, I've seen the original. The film is based on a musical, based on a film, based on a book — we're getting way too meta. My message to everyone in Hollywood: please stop remaking good films.

Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures.



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