

Review: **Heather: The Musical**

Generic's Perfectly Dark 'Heathers: The Musical' asks What's Your Damage?

It is a night of '80s fashion, fun and murder that was so VERY, when 'Heathers: The Musical' opened at Generic Theater to a sold out house.

'Heathers: The Musical' is a rock musical with music, lyrics, and a book by Laurence O'Keefe and Kevin Murphy. It is based on the 1988 cult film Heathers starring Winona Ryder (Veronica) and Christian Slater (J.D.). The film portrays four teenage girls—three of whom are named Heather—in a clique at a fictional Ohio high school. In order to get out of the snobby clique that is destroying her good-girl reputation, Veronica teams up with a dark sociopath J.D. in a plot to kill the cool kids. Heathers has grown so much in over 25 years that it's now gotten that ultimate niche-classic coronation: adaptation as a Broadway musical. It is often mentioned in the same breath as the likes of Mean Girls and Clueless due to its subject matter and snappy dialogue, but Heathers features a dark streak unmatched by its descendants. Heathers, while a comedy, deals with issues of teen suicide, bullying, homophobia, and gun violence. Seen today, these issues seem more prominent than they were in the totally tubular 80s. However, Director **Shon M. Stacy** melded all these topics of today with the satirical notions from the 80s together and created a totally rad production.

The musical opens with The Heathers greeting the audience with a hilarious curtain speech which was crafted perfectly and very reminiscent of the opening scene in the film. The musical, just like the film follows Veronica Sawyer, played by **Gabby Jurscaga** through her time at Westerberg High as she tries to find her place and fit in. Ms. Jurscaga's take on Veronica was very reminiscent of Winona Ryder with a little more edge and spunk. Her "dear diary" moments were solid and some of her best acting moments due to her conviction and honesty as Veronica. She has been taken into the clique of popular senior girls known as the Heathers on account of her uncanny forgery skills. We meet the untrustworthy Heather Duke played by **Emily Grace Rowson**, who delivered an awesomely wicked portrayal, Heather McNamara played by **Maria Moss**, who shocked the audience with her totally bodacious vocals in 'Lifeboat' and last but certainly not least the ferocious and way bitchin' Heather Chandler played by **Grace Mincks**. Color me stoked, she delivered a standout performance and hellaciously owned her character. Veronica then meets Westerberg's moody bad boy Jason "J.D." Dean played by **Adam Silorey**. He has a righteous singing voice. He complimented Ms. Jurscaga's portrayal of Veronica very well. The onstage chemistry between Veronica and J.D was undeniable, as they connected through songs like 'Freeze Your Brain' & 'Seventeen'. I just wish Mr. Silorey's portrayal had a little more mystery & edge. Other standout performances came from the ensemble member **Guy Liskey** as the Bitter Geek. One word: memorable. **Jon Hatton** as J.D.'s Dad was pure comedy. He also was way cool as Kurt's Dad with **Jim Kessler**'s killer performance as Ram's Dad in "My Dead Gay Son". Their duet brought the house down at the beginning of Act 2. **Tyler Lee Nobles** as Ram and **Daniel Wilson** as Kurt gave a superb comedic performance in "Blue".

Director **Shon M. Stacy** made sure we would be transported to the 80s. As we entered the theatre we were greeted by 80s music as we walked the halls of Westerberg High to our seats. The gnarly lighting, designed by **Jeff Branagan** added to the quality of the top notch production and made the costumes designed wonderfully by **Katlyn Jackson** pop. **Shon M. Stacy's** choreography & set design is a critical component in the success of this piece; the set was very creative and cleverly designed. There was one little hiccup with the car. It seemed like a comedy bit because they couldn't fit the pieces together quite right but you knew it wasn't meant to be that way. However, It didn't detract from the show. Overall, the actors movement of the set pieces was very precise, clean & fast. The choreography was not only energy appropriate to the young characters but conveyed the attitudes of those characters and their actions clearly and believably. Some of the best moments occur when the action slows down to show moments of violence in slow motion as staged brilliantly by Mr. Stacy – facial reactions and movement combine to make what might have otherwise been horrible quite humorous.

'Heathers: The Musical' was funny, heart-warming, musically outstanding thanks to musical direction by **Roy George** and full of the same tongue-in-cheek humour the film managed to convey. You would be so grody not to go see this radical show. So I ask you just as Veronica asked Heather, "What's your damage?" Go and see 'Heathers: The Musical' at Generic. Don't have a cow and don't be a dweeb. You don't want to miss this show.

