

There's nothing dumb about the "Legally Blonde" musical

The musical stuck to the movie's roots, with the addition of catchy songs

by Elizabeth Byrne

New Trier's production of "Legally Blonde" on March 3-6 didn't fail to transport the audience into the fantastical world of Elle Woods, a sorority girl turned successful lawyer, complete with perfect hair and all-pink dorm room and wardrobe.

For all of those who are big fans of the 2001 movie with the same name, the musical did not disappoint. The same characters made appearances, including kooky Paulette, exercise queen Brooke Windham, creepy Professor Callahan and the lovable teacher's aid, Emmett Forrest.

The story is more or less the same. A naive Elle Woods follows her ex-boyfriend, Warner Huntington III, to Harvard in an attempt to win him back and show him that she's serious about their relationship.

The peak of Elle's independence is shown in act two when she cracks the murder case she's working on by outing the pool boy, Nikos, as gay on



Katherine Melulis as Elle Woods performs the song "What You Want" | Stuart-Rodgers

the stand. She makes it seem like a victory for the entire audience.

The leading lady, Elle Woods, was played by senior Sacha Appel and junior Katherine Melulis, who both stayed true to Elle's bubbly and sugary-sweet personality.

As Elle, Appel and Melulis were in almost every scene of the musical. The only time they were ever off-stage was for their impressively rapid quick changes. You could blink and miss one of Elle's unique all-pink outfits.

The show's music exhibited a variety of genres, from sugary pop-

rock of "Omgod You Guys," from the girls of Delta Nu, to a classic show-tune "Blood in the Water," sung by Professor Callahan. There's also a sprinkling of slower, heartfelt songs such as "Legally Blonde" in act two, when Elle decides she's giving up her law career and going home.

For anyone who says that actors onstage don't break a sweat as much as athletes in the field, there is the number "Whipped into Shape." The energetic act two opener is staged as a jump rope workout video by the accused murderer, Brooke Windham.

In the number, she and an en-

semble of women and police officers from the prison jump rope and sing simultaneously—it was very impressive.

And who could forget about "Bend and Snap"? The iconic move from the movie has an entire song dedicated to it in the musical, where Elle's three best friends from the greek chorus, Serena (Emma Alter and Jenesse Pono), Margo (Lily Piekos and Emma Fitzgerald) and Pilar (Donna Kang and Adrianna Lauber), get to show off their moves.

The song is empowering to all women, which is the goal, and made me want to stand up and join the dance onstage.

Overall, the variety of music allowed everyone in the audience to enjoy at least one song, but the show was ultimately dominated by pop-rock themes that originate from the first and most catchy song "Omgod You Guys."

The most outstanding part of the set was a contraption called a revolve. The revolve was center stage and was the source of many of the scene changes during the show.

For example, in the first song, "Omgod You Guys," the revolve acts to shift from the Delta Nu sorority house to the shop where Elle is finding the perfect dress for her dinner

with Warner.

It was well utilized throughout the show, creating strong stage pictures and allowing the majority of the shifts to occur while the show was progressing, instead of blackouts, where the audience pretends they can't see the students on stage changing the set. It made the show move quicker, contributing to the run time of just over two hours.

Beneath all the cotton candy pink and fun upbeat songs, there is an important message for all: you can do almost anything you set your mind to. Elle's transformation from a bronzed and blonde sorority girl to a powerhouse in the courtroom is a great example of defying stereotypes and what a determined woman can do if she sets her mind to it.

I saw the show three times this past weekend, twice with friends and once with the girls I babysit for. Each night I found something new to appreciate in the show, from the intricate set and well-executed lighting to the upbeat tunes from the orchestra and high energy from the cast.

Needless to say, I will be listening to the original cast recording on Spotify for the next week to try and get rid of all the songs playing on repeat in my head.

Death Grips grabs onto fame

The punk-esque band boasts critical acclaim

by Joe Borushek

Death Grips is a Sacramento based industrial hip-hop/punk-rap group that has exploded into the music scene, all while maintaining a mysterious persona.

Zach Hill, MC Ride (birth name is Stefan Corbin Burnett), and Andy Morin formed Death Grips in 2010.

The band has recently announced a new album titled "Bottomless Pit," but it is unclear when it will be released due to their mysterious nature and their unpredictable track record.

Several times throughout their career they have canceled shows, broken up and released albums without notice.

The band is scheduled to perform at Coachella Music Festival later this year, but judging from their past performances, it is unclear whether they will perform or if it is another one of their stunts.

The group released their first album "Exmilitary" in 2011, a combination of dark, hostile lyrics and punk-esque instrumentals that made for a very hard hitting album brought new life to the world of hip-hop.

The album received praise from major music reviewers such as Anthony Fantano. "This is one of those reviews where I love what I am hearing, but I am positively, absolutely sure that most of you are going to hate this," Fantano wrote.

And Fantano wasn't wrong, as most people don't care for Death Grips at all. Junior Annabel Weyrich said, "It sounds like people scratching their nails on a chalkboard."

After the commercial success of "Exmilitary," Death Grips signed with Epic Records and soon after released their second studio album, "The Money Store," which some fans regard as their best album to date.

Similar to their first album, "The Money Store" was met with critical acclaim, even receiving the title of "Best New Music" and a 8.7/10 from Pitchfork.

The band spent the next four months recording their third album, "No Love Deep Web," which against the wishes of Epic records, was released for free on The Deep Web, a place where people go to purchase hit-men and illegal paraphernalia.

Shortly after the release of this album, Epic Records dropped Death Grips.

The album was met with a lot of attention from different media groups, particularly because of its sexually explicit cover.

Released in 2013 as a free download on the group's website, "Government Plates" was met with mostly positive reception. However, some criticized the lack of MC Ride's vocals. The album featured Robert Pattinson from "Twilight" playing guitar in the single, "Birds."

In 2015, the group announced that they would be going on tour shortly after their double album, "The Powers That B," was released to generally positive reception. The first disc was scored lower than the second, with Pitchfork stating that it was their "least intense album."

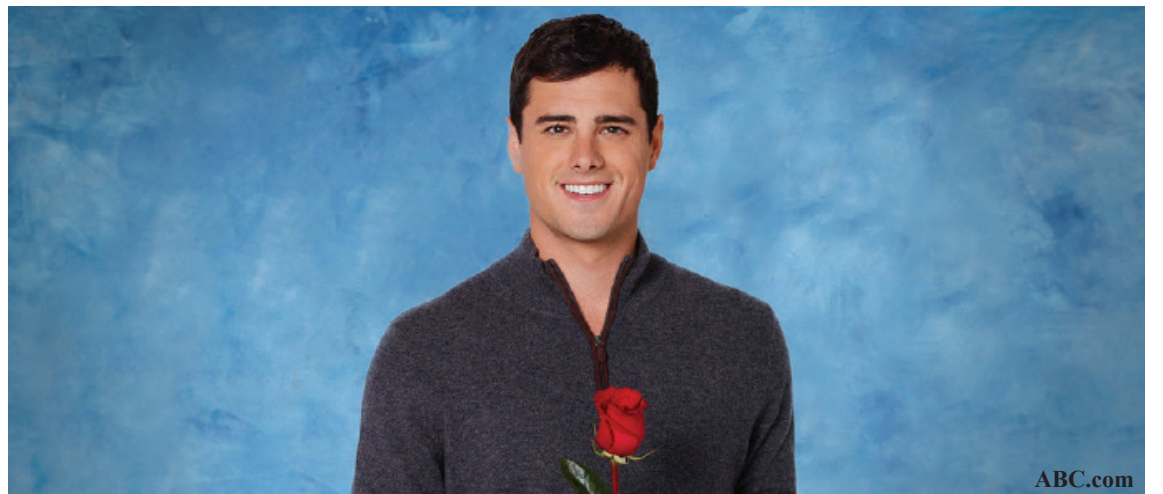
"It's the gritty flow of MC Ride and the heavy hitting instrumentals that makes me love Death Grips," junior Trevor Visotsky said. "It's nice because they don't fit the cookie cutter style that rap music has sort of evolved into."

Death Grips' raw style is almost unprecedented in today's music industry and the fact that they don't let anyone dictate what they do is admirable for any angsty teenager.

Combine this with their angry sound and you've got yourself a recipe for success.

Whether you love them or hate them, Death Grips are impacting the music industry by changing the way hip hop is made.

Their violent lyrics and punk-esque instrumentals have helped them assert themselves as pioneers for a new age of hip hop music.



Wife material? Finding love on "The Bachelor"

Drama and exotic travel destinations attract viewers to reality TV show

by Emily Roemer

Do lights, cameras, and millions of viewers make for a realistic setting to find true love?

The reality television dating show, "The Bachelor," aims to prove that one can find love in any environment, even on a show.

"The Bachelor" debuted on March 25, 2002 on ABC, and is now on its 20th season. It is hosted by Chris Harrison. The show's success has resulted in several spin-offs, including "The Bachelorette," "Bachelor Pad," and "Bachelor in Paradise."

The series is designed to revolve around a single eligible bachelor, who typically starts with 25 romantic interests. By the end of the season, the bachelor is expected to select a wife from this group of 25.

During the course of the season, the bachelor eliminates candidates, and the final episode sometimes ends with a proposal to his final woman.

Of the past 19 seasons, 11 of the bachelors have proposed during their final episode.

For the first two weeks of filming, the contestants stay in "Villa de la Vina," a 7,590-square-foot, six-bedroom, nine-bath home in Agoura Hills, California. The bachelor and women then spend their other weeks

traveling, both around the U.S. and abroad. Episodes have been filmed throughout the United States, Canada, England, New Zealand, Vietnam, Korea, France, Italy, and more.

"The dates and trips they go on are so exotic and cool," junior Rachel Cohen said. "It makes the show more interesting that they are constantly traveling to beautiful places and doing extravagant things."

Besides the wanderlust-inspiring adventures, many people are intrigued by the drama stirred up among the women. The drama and conflict on the show are heightened by the elimination-style format of the show.

Sophomore Meredith Nassar, who has watched the show for three seasons, said, "It's so ridiculous that you want to see what's going to happen. It's not practical at all."

Many people believe that with so much drama and emotion, the show cannot be realistic. "There's no way people can be acting genuine when all of America is watching," sophomore Peter Lifvendahl said.

These dramatic scenes with heightened emotions often take place on rose ceremony nights, where the cocktail party can continue until 4 or 5 am, and the women then are given some time to clean themselves up before starting the rose ceremony.

After a night of no sleep, high heels, and hours of alcohol, it's no surprise that there are occasional outbursts.

Controversy ensued on March 15, 2010, when the creator of the show,

Mike Fleiss, appeared on 20/20 and said that the contestants are often made into characters that will satisfy his audience. "They need their fair share of villains every season," Fleiss said. This can be achieved through selective editing that falsely portrays a woman and her true character.

After admitting this, Fleiss has been the subject of controversy for making the show seem less about "true love" and more about what will attract audiences.

When fan-favorite Ben Higgins was sent home by Kaitlyn Bristowe on "The Bachelorette," viewers were heartbroken. Ben left in despair, without a rose, but still looking for true love and ready to put his heartbreak behind him. ABC then chose him as the 20th Bachelor.

Higgins grew up in the small town of Warsaw, Indiana. His parents have been happily married for thirty-four years and Ben is looking for an authentic love like that.

Ben's life as a normal software salesperson has dramatically changed. He is recognized and approached by his adoring fans everywhere he goes. Ben appears to have it all, except for the true love he is searching for. He believes it is possible for him to find his soul mate on his current season of "The Bachelor."

Spoiler Alert- Though currently unconfirmed, Ben Higgins's second runner up, Caila Quinn, is expected to become the next Bachelorette. The finale will air March 14, where Ben will choose between Lauren B. and Jojo.