

The world isn't full of Kens

Commentary on the 'Barbie' movie backlash

Cassandra White
Staff Reporter

July 21, 2023. Movie theaters flood with crowds of people in bright pink, excited to finally see the long-awaited Barbie movie. They leave the theater sometime later, Billie Eilish's "What Was I Made For" still playing in their heads as they reflect on the film.

Many left the theater with a feeling of deep nostalgia or sentimentality. Many left feeling like they were truly seen on screen for one of the first times. Of course, some left unimpressed, confused, or unaffected. One's reaction to the Barbie movie is largely based on their own identity, particularly gender.

The movie didn't hit home for a significant number of people. The film has been under attack by more conservative news sources and figures for pushing a feminist agenda, or for being too "woke," for what it stood for. "Barbie" is a movie that takes something not commonly seen as a feminist icon—a Barbie doll—and reimagines her world and how it relates to ours. It tells the truth of womanhood in America, how women are forced to navigate a patriarchal society, and how, even in a system set up for men, it's not actually all that hot for them, either.

It takes the patriarchy and explains it in a way accessible to practically everyone—showing how the system is not only detrimental



to women, but to everyone, and it does so in a fun, creative way. Yet, some people simply can't wrap their heads around the realness of the film. While the movie angered some of these people, it simply confused the rest. Why should they care? How were they supposed to relate to a plastic doll?

"Barbie" is a movie made by women, for women, in a male-dominated industry where

women struggle to be and see themselves truly represented. So the plethora of complaints by men on "Barbie" not being relatable is almost laughable when, all throughout movie history, the vast majority of stories have been made for and by them.

And yet, "Barbie" could resonate with men if you know where to look. Ken's journey through the film is really just about find-

ing yourself in the world. Your Kennerly, if you will. It's a universal struggle, and it pertains to every individual in their own way. But of course, the point of the film is not to cater to men's relatability. America Ferrera—who was nominated for best supporting actress in this year's Oscars—playing the character Gloria, explains her struggle and the struggle of women as a whole in her monologue towards the climax of the film.

"I'm just so tired of watching myself and every single other woman tie herself into knots so that people will like us," she says in her now famous monologue. "And if all of that is also true for a doll just representing women, then I don't even know." It's this monologue that explains the very point of the film.

"Barbie" was the highest-grossing film of 2023, and the highest-grossing film by a female director ever, earning over \$1.4 billion and making history. And with the recent Oscars, it's made it to the forefront of movie discussion once again. Although it didn't win any major awards, one thing is clear: The impact of the "Barbie" movie has been monumental. Not only for pop culture as a whole but for individuals.

Shorewood's not so drowsy musical

Drama department produces spring show

Abigail Brueck
Staff Reporter

The cast of "The Drowsy Chaperone" can't wait to say "Hello" and "Show Off" their play. Although you won't need to wear a "Fancy Dress," they still hope you'll stumble along into the theater from April 11 to the 21 to catch one of their eight performances.

"The Drowsy Chaperone" is the story of a man whose favorite Broadway play "The Drowsy Chaperone" comes to life around him as he listens to the cast recording. The play within a play showcases the story of a couple wanting to get married while almost everyone around them frantically attempts to stop the wedding.

With the main plot meant to make you laugh and applaud, many underlying themes of loneliness are brought to light throughout the play. It will take you through a roller coaster of emotions with different twists and turns at every angle. You will be transported back to the 1920s where the play within the



Students rehearsing after school in the black box

play takes place, feeling as if you are a guest at the wedding.

"It's such a fun process all around and there's not a single part that's bad about it," Morgan Bacon, sophomore, says. Bacon plays the part of the Drowsy Chaperone in the play, being one of many leads. Bacon shares the role with freshman Clara Abernathy.

The amazing thing about this musical is how many opportunities come with it to be a lead. With 13 main roles and eight of those roles being double cast, many students get the opportunity to be in the spotlight. The cast has a total of 38 members, with an ensemble of 17.

Directed by Amy Pottinger, one of Shorewood's very own English teachers, and

Shorewood's only drama teacher, Pottinger hopes to keep the original story and music of the play while also making a few minor changes because of some things being viewed as racist, such as the song "Message From a Nightingale."

"My favorite part about the process is when we're first getting into costumes and full runs of the show and watching it actually come together," Grace Abernathy, senior, says. Although we as the audience only get to see the much-practiced final product of all their hard work. The cast gets to not only see the behind the scenes but be a part of them as well.

When thinking about what all goes into a musical, the first thing that comes to mind for



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most people is the cast who will be performing under the bright lights. But, there are many different elements to putting on a show than just acting. With the accompaniment of a live orchestra and many talented stage crew and tech, the show would not be able to go on without it.

The cast is a tight-knit community made up of freshmen to seniors who spend their time teambuilding and rehearsing throughout the year as they gear up to finally showcase the spring musical. An hour and 45 minutes of laughter, chaos, and energy ushered into the spotlight by many skilled Shorewood scholars.

Opening night is April 11 and runs that weekend until Sunday. Closing night is April 21 having shows every night from the 18 to the 21. If you wish to see this amazing show you can purchase tickets through Brown Paper Tickets or click the link on the Shorewood Drama webpage. Tickets are \$12, but if you wish to see the play for free and get service hours, Shorewood students can sign up to be an usher at one of the many performances.