



BWW Review: MACGYVER: THE MUSICAL at Stages Repertory

STAGES rigs together another fantastic production with
MACGYVER THE MUSICAL

[by Armando Urdiales](#) Feb. 17, 2022



Mark Ivy in Macgyver the Musical. Photo by Os Galindo
"We are the tools!" DIE HAMBURGERS

As the audience walks into MACGYVER THE MUSICAL at STAGES, the greeting they receive is full of '80s nostalgia. Primarily based on the TV series, the audience is reminded of the height of '80s fashion and pop culture. Jane Fonda's workout tape, teased hair, and denim are the beginnings of a great night of frivolity and fun as audience members become participants in this new camp classic.

With the tagline of "Everyone's MacGyver," the story centers around an audience member who becomes the central character. As the "MacGyver" is chosen through a singing and dancing competition pre-show, this home-grown hero is surrounded by characters that would make late President Reagan proud. As "MacGyver" is sent to communist Russia, the central character meets brother/sister duo Johann and Ingrid separately. Johann, a secret East German spy for the Americans and West

Germans, and Ingrid, a "punk" East German, are simultaneously and unknowingly trying to bring down the communist rule. Ingrid's friends and band, Die Hamburgers, McQ, aid in this endeavor as they overthrow Heimlich and his assistant Hilde. The story, of course, is a victorious one for MacGyver as they use their smarts and cleverness to not only unite Johann and Ingrid but to bring an end to the Cold War.



Carolyn Johnson, **Jay Aubrey Jones**, and **Brandon Grimes** in Macgyver the Musical.

Photo by Melissa Taylor

The production overall is an interesting one, as the music and lyrics by Peter Lurye bring a night of both comedic and punk rock tunes with names such as "Play the Game," "On the Other Side," and "I'll Take Care of You." Most of the songs bring the story forward and are immensely fun in the moment. Book by Kate Chavez, **Lindsey Hope Pearlman**, Robin Ward Holloway, and Lee David Zlotoff has the most comedic and campy dialogue currently in the Houston theatre scene. There are so many comedic moments as the team loves the camp factor that the concept of MacGyver has become.

Performances from the opening night cast were stellar. The audience member playing MacGyver is a performer as they nailed the dancing and singing parts. **Mark Ivy** as Johann was equal parts endearing and hilarious as the character navigates loyalties to both family and country. Yasir Ali Muhammad's portrayal of MacGyver's sidekick, McQ, shouldn't be missed as their voice is astounding and their comedic timing on point. The incomparable performance of **Hannah Levine** is breathtaking as their beautiful voice pulsates the theater. Supporting "punk" characters played by Katrien Van Riel, **Brandon Grimes**, Mike Dorsey, and Keivon Akbari perform their characters as a team and provide the hilarious inspiration for the line "We are Tools!" **Carolyn Johnson** and **Jay Aubrey Jones**, as the totalitarian and communist East Germans, have the challenging task of playing the sometimes-loveable villains are done so brilliantly.



Keivon Akbari, **Hannah Levine**, and Katrien Van Riel in Macgyver the Musical.
Photo by Melissa Taylor

The design elements of the production are what really elevate this fun musical. Costume Designer Kristina Ortiz Miller knows how fun the '80s were for fashion, and the wardrobe of the cast reflects it. Joel Burkholder's sound design is impressive, as they are able to create sound moments that are both frightening and engaging. The lighting design by **Christina R. Giannelli** invokes a classic rock

concert and allows the production to feel like one. **Kirk Domer's** scenic design propels the musical into true camp status, as the set not only moves in surprising and unconventional ways but also allows for more fun from the audience.

STAGES this season has done a brilliant job of including their audiences in their productions, and MacGyver is no exception. If you're looking for a fun night out with friends and family or just want a campy night at the theater, don't miss this lively and clever production.

MACGYVER THE MUSICAL runs at STAGES from February 4th to March 4th, 2022. Performances are Wednesday, Thursday, and Sundays at 7:30 PM, Friday and Saturdays at 8:00 PM, and with matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 PM. Audience members are encouraged to get to the theater early as STAGES requires either a negative - COVID 19 test within 48 hours of the performance or a vaccination card revealing full vaccination status. Masks are required while in the theater unless eating or drinking.

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