



'GIVE ME AN...': The cast of *Bring It On: The Musical*. Photo: Joan Marcus

*Theater Review*

# ***Bring It On: Energetic; little to cheer about***



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**BRING IT ON: THE MUSICAL**

**Libretto by Jeff Whitty**

**Music by Tom Kitt & Lin-Manuel Miranda**

**Lyrics by Amanda Green & Lin-Manuel Miranda**

**Directed & choreographed by Andy Blankenbuehler**

**Through October 7, 2012**

**St. James Theatre**

**246 West 44th St.**

**(212-239-6200), [www.bringitonmusical.com](http://www.bringitonmusical.com)**

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**By David NouNou**

If *Bring It On* was being reviewed on looks alone, it would get a 9 out of 10. Yes, the cast is that good looking; one of the best assembled for a show. However, this is not a beauty contest and must be critiqued as a musical. Unfortunately for the show, it has such a trite and predictable libretto that only merits a two. It is hard to believe that this musical was written by Jeff Whitty, the same man who wrote the wonderful and witty *Avenue Q*. Talk about running out of ideas and cramming hackneyed dialogue and clichéd characters is an understatement.

The music by Tom Kitt and Lin Manuel Miranda is energetic, but the lyrics in most cases are banal and over amplified, which makes them mostly incomprehensible and negligible. The story, what little there is of it, is there only to frame the high-flying cheerleading acrobatics. Actual cheerleaders are used and they supply the oxygen to this show.

The story in a nutshell is Campbell (Taylor Louderman), head cheerleader at Truman High, an almost all-white school, with all the stereotypical students: pretty girls, good-looking male cheerleaders, snobs, mostly vapid people, and the obligatory misfit fat girl, Bridget (Ryann Redmond), have both been redistricted to Jackson High. Jackson is multi-ethnic, with no cheerleaders and has a very open-minded

student body. They even have their own drag queen, La Cienega (Gregory Haney), who belongs with the girl posse, known as the squad headed by Danielle (Adrienne Warren). Campbell gets ridiculed with her usual soup jibes (being named after the soup) and has a hard time fitting in this milieu, while Bridget, the misfit, is quickly embraced. Why tell you any more? I'm sure you have already guessed what will ultimately happen.

Unlike most current musicals, this isn't a threadbare cast; there are lots of energetic people on the stage of the St. James Theatre and they try their best to entertain an audience. They even make up for the lack of sets. They are directed and choreographed by Andy Blankenbuehler. Direction isn't Mr. Blankenbuehler's strong suit; his choreography is. In the musical numbers, the cast is soaring and most of their routines are breathtaking.

Cheerleading musicals are nothing new on Broadway. In December 2011, the too-short-lived musical *Lysistrata Jones*, although threadbare, was far more entertaining and a much-better-written show. According to the press release, *Bring It On* came to Broadway for a tryout due to an opening in schedule while touring on the road. I understand it ends its run here on October 7th and will be back on the road: A good place for it to be.

***Edited by Scott Harrah***

***Published August 8, 2012***

***Reviewed at press performance on August 7, 2012***

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