

Many years ago, marriage had little to do with connections between two people's hearts, but rather the connections in society that would be made by the ceremony. Bringing to life the etiquette and elegance of Georgian England, Riverside High School's production of *Pride and Prejudice* teaches us that when it comes to marriage, love has everything to do with it.

The stage adaptation (by Joseph Hanreddy and J.R. Sullivan) of *Pride and Prejudice* is based on Jane Austen's romantic comedy of the same name, originally published in 1813. Through witty and necessary social commentary, Austen's work earned her acclaim in the Regency Era and continues to enrapture readers centuries later.

Set in the English countryside in 1812, *Pride and Prejudice* follows the middle-class Bennet family, and their daughters' trials and tribulations with love and marriage. Between their dotting mother's fixation with finding suitable husbands for her five daughters, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia. When two eligible bachelors, Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley, suddenly move into the countryside, the girls' lives are abruptly disturbed.

The headstrong, empowered Elizabeth Bennet (Autumn Anderson) has no use for the notion of marriage. Anderson portrays an incredible range within the niche character that is Elizabeth, blurring the line between reality and fiction. Her zeal and involvement in the scene, whether it be through short witty remarks, facial expression or her lifelike reactions, enticed audience members. The aristocratic Mr. Darcy (Jack Gutierrez) needs not the sentiment of love. Gutierrez brings depth and quirkiness to the prideful and reserved Mr. Darcy, an often monotonous character. The chemistry between Gutierrez and Anderson stole the show. They created a

believable passion and sparks flew throughout the second act. Gutierrez leaned into this with his awkwardly adorable reunion with Elizabeth.

Overbearing yet doting, Mrs. Bennet (Brigid Randolph) just wants the best for her daughters. With larger than life physicality and exuberant vocal changes, Randolph perfectly encapsulates the mother that is fed up with her daughter's quips about marriage. She displayed impeccably perfect comedic timing and meticulous modulation in her voice when talking to a person she did not particularly care for or if she was in a drunken state at the ball. The entitled Miss Caroline Bingley (Sophia Grado) dislikes the country residing Bennets very much. Her facial expressions and sass towards every character she encounters leave the audience chuckling. Whenever these two were on stage together, the audience was in jubilant laughter for their mutual disdain and snarky comments.

Adding to the elegant air, the technical elements emerged the audience in Georgian England. The unit set (Jackson Anderson) was utilized beautifully and showed stark contrasts between the houses they represented. Effort, time, and research were shown throughout the set down to the semi-circle design to feign an old oval office in England. The use of levels throughout the set added to the already complex set and provided a nice stage picture. Charts and annotations provided by the stage management (Emaan Abassi and Jack Darnell) were organized very clearly and showed the progress made by the tech and actors over the course of the show's rehearsals.

With both amazing acting and technical elements, Riverside's production of *Pride and Prejudice* is one truly for the books, staying true to its origins. They encourage us to look beyond what

prejudice we have about someone and overcome the pride we might possess; you might just fall in love.