

Friday, November 7, 2008

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change (Review)

Playhouse offers funny, mature look at love and marriage

By Rick Pender



Critic's Pick

The desire for love is a fundamental urge, but perhaps as basic is the drive to remake the object of your affection. That's the funny and poignant premise of Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts' off-Broadway musical *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*.

Cincinnati Playhouse staged it successfully in 2000; it's back for a second run in the Shelterhouse through the holidays. It's a perfect date-night show but also one for mature audiences.

The cast (Pamela Bob, Holly Davis, Michael Dean Morgan and Bob Walton, plus two musicians in a tiny loft) work on a simple rose-embazoned stage designed by ETC's Brian c. Mehring. Cast members play many roles involving countless costume and wig changes.

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Each scene opens a window into a relationship. The lighter first act focuses on the ups and downs dating, culminating in a wedding; the second act covers marriage from laughs to tears, from newlyweds to senior citizens. With Dennis Courtney's spirited direction (he also staged the Playhouse's 2000 production), there's never a dull moment.

Walton, who starred in the Playhouse's hilarious *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in 2005, is perhaps the most "perfect" in this cast. He can be young and fretful or old and charming; my favorite scene is his addled new father ("The Baby Song") awash in trite emotions and wrestling with a gigantic teddy bear.

The opening night audience loved Davis's "Always a Bridesmaid," a countrified tune about playing second fiddle, finishing with a Hudy Delight extracted from beneath her hideous pink dress. Pamela Bob sings wonderfully, but her best moment is a monologue to a video camera as a freshly and painfully divorced woman stepping back into the dating pool. Morgan shines as a long-married husband ("Shouldn't I Be Less in Love with You?").

This show ran for 5,003 performances in New York before it closed last July. You'll see why at the Playhouse.

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE, presented by the Cincinnati Playhouse, continues through Dec. 31. Buy tickets, check out performance times and find nearby bars and restaurants [here](#).

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