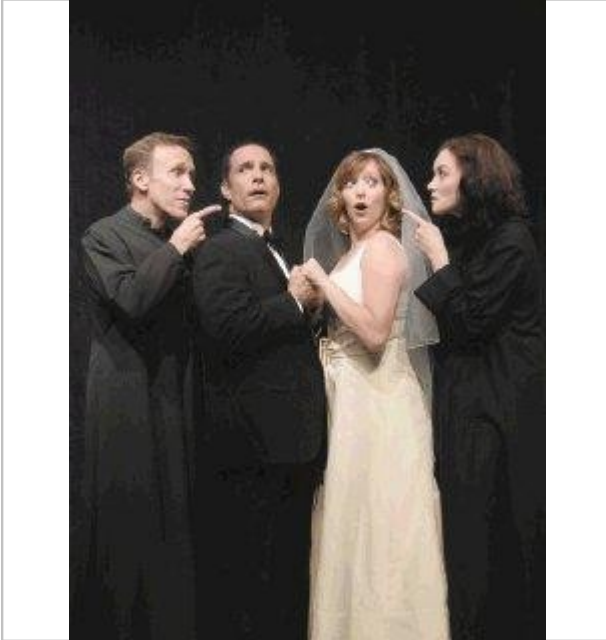


**The Peterborough Players' latest show is a glimpse into love that rings true**



Members of the cast of "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change," now at the Peterborough Players, are, from left: Kirby Ward, Joshua Finkel, Pamela Bob and Bridget Beirne.

**By NICOLE S. COLSON**  
**Sentinel Staff**

Published:  
Thursday, July 16, 2009 12:24 PM EDT

If men are from Mars and women are from Venus, "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" is a good long glimpse into what happens when they have to live together on Earth.

The play, written by Joe DiPietro with music by Jimmy Roberts, opened this week at the Peterborough Players. It runs through July 26.

There's a reason it's the second longest-running off-Broadway show in history — it's a clever, provocative, well-written play. From the minute the stage lights went up until they went down again, the audience was laughing. It doesn't always happen that the music and script are equally enjoyable, but that's the case here. The flawless comedy and tight harmonies can be credited to the cast of four — referred to only as Woman No. 1 (Pamela Bob), Woman No. 2 (Bridget Beirne), Man No. 1 (Joshua Finkel) and Man No. 2 (Kirby Ward). These characters were given generic titles because they are archetypes, interchangeable couples who serve as reflections of ourselves, symbols of every important event we experience.

What's brilliant about it is we can all identify a nugget that rings true, no matter what point we are in our lives. The dialogue is funny, but what makes it even more humorous is the "I've been there" factor. We recognize these odd beings and their antics, however crazy they might seem.

There isn't really a linear story here; it's done as vignettes strung together, each covering an area of significance in a person's life — that first date with a potential spouse, meeting the parents, getting married (a noteworthy segment offers a nod to hideous bridesmaid dresses), having children and dating again after a spouse dies. The skits are introduced using titles printed on cue cards, all delivered by a mystery man and woman, whose interactions are entertaining on their own.

Women will recognize the strange grooming rituals required to ready for a date, from waxing off body hair to spending hours doing their hair and makeup. The same goes for men who let themselves be dragged to a so-called "chick flick" to impress a woman early on in a relationship.

Those who don't have children will still recognize the couple who have a baby and suddenly act like complete neurotic strangers, making "ga-ga goo-goo" noises and freaking out at every noise heard on the baby monitor. The majority of parents will relate to "Marriage Tango," about the dance of finding time for each other after the bills are paid and the kids are in bed.

The play premiered in 1995, which is impressive because it's current, especially the satirical segment about having to wedge dating into our too-full schedules. The couple, who have just met, decide to skip dating in order to save time so they instead go straight to their first post break-up meeting, when they can appreciate each other again. Technological references were updated — for instance, there's mention of Facebook (it didn't exist in 1995), but everything else is spot-on in this age of speed dating and online singles match-up sites.

It's not all yuks here, though — there are plenty of sweet, sometimes poignant elements to this play, in reference to topics such as dating again after a painful divorce and the idea of skipping the mid-life crisis and continuing to love your spouse after many years of marriage.

The most baffling part of all this? No matter how frustrating, painful or tiresome love can be, no matter how many times wives have to pretend to love football or husbands to enjoy shopping in a lifetime, we still can't get enough. The cast sang it best for all of us: "I keep coming back to this whirlwind tour/Of loving, and leaving, and wanting more."

"I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" is on-stage July 16-18 and July 21-25 at 8 p.m. and July 19 and 26 at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$38-\$43 and can be ordered by calling 924-7585 or [peterboroughplayers.org](http://peterboroughplayers.org).