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THEATER REVIEWS

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I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE by DiPietro & Roberts  
Theater Too @ Theater Three

Director- Terry Dobson  
Musical Director - Pamela Holcomb-McLain  
Lighting Design - Paul Arnold  
Original Costume Design - Bruce R. Coleman  
AEA Stage Manager - Sally Soldo  
Technical Director - Daniel Pucul  
Scenic Artist - David Walsh  
Production Assistant - Katherine Marchant  
Production Crew - Elizabeth Lowe, Katherine Marchant

CAST:

MAN 2 - Bradley Campbell  
MAN 1 - Jeff Kinman  
WOMAN 2 - Lisa Jae Miller  
WOMAN 1 - Carrie Slaughter-Whittlesey

REVIEWED 01/20/2011 PERFORMANCE

Reviewed by Associate Theater Critic,, Sten-Erik Armitage  
for John Garcia's THE COLUMN

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We all live busy lives, and quest for the bottom line. So in order to save you a precious five to ten minutes, let me give you an instruction. Go to [www.theatre3dallas.com](http://www.theatre3dallas.com) right now, and buy tickets for this run of I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change before the show sells out. Now. You'll thank me later.

For those of you who require more convincing let me fill you in a bit on this perennial favorite of Dallas theatre goers. The musical first hit the stage off-Broadway on August 1, 1996 and ran continuously until July 27, 2008. Do the math - that is over 5,000 performances! I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change has the distinction of being the second longest running Off-Broadway musical. That right there should catch your attention if you have not yet been fortunate enough to see this production.

The show itself is not your typical play. Instead of following a handful of characters through a production, we have four very talented performers who perform a series of

vignettes highlighting different aspects of dating, love, and relationships. The first act consists of sketches surrounding the concept of dating, while the second act focuses on life after dating - marriage. The demands on the actor are immense. They must be able to quickly jump from one character to another, often with significant costume variation from scene to scene.

Admittedly, the script is a bit cliché. The seemingly worn stereotypes of man and woman are celebrated in this script. Men love football and hog the remote, women love shopping and criticize the driver, men never ask for directions and women sit by the phone for hours just hoping the cad they dated will give them a call. In addition, the script gives a very cynical view of marriage. Marriage is presented as a trap that will suck the life out of you and build up resentment and isolation. As I approach my 14th anniversary, let me assure you - there is hope in marriage! The best years of my life are yet to come, and the worst years of my life were before I put that ring on my finger.

That said, if you get the right cast to work through this script, the clever writing and intentional cliché factor work together beautifully! The production at Theatre Too at Theatre Three is no exception. This is the 11th year that the theatre has presented this show, often to sold-out audiences. For one audience member, this marked her 40th time to see this show at this venue. Talk about loyalty! I can see her attraction to the show. Our company of four versatile actors sang, danced, and acted their way across the stage in a winsome way.

On a technical note, I need to give a hearty "well done" to Paul Arnold for his excellent lighting design. Theatre Too is a small, intimate venue. Paul's lighting design made the stage come to life. With some lighting cues requiring a hair trigger to capture the moment, he exhibited the eye of an artist as he painted the area with light. At times the lighting accented the comedy of the moment, or the poignancy of painful emotion. Treating the light panel as an actor in its own right is a challenge, but Paul succeeded.

Three of the four cast members are veterans of this production. Jeff Kinman was the newcomer to the script, and at times I could see he wasn't as in touch with the material as his three peers. However, his performance of "Shouldn't I Be Less in Love" was the highlight of the show for me. In that moment, he gave life to his character, and soul to his song. I could feel the ache of his pain, and was moved by his character's decision at the end of the scene. Well done, Jeff! You are a welcome addition to the ILYYPNC family!

Another highlight of the evening was the brilliantly executed "High-way of Love." Bradely Campbell and Lisa Jae Miller played their roles perfectly as the relationally stressed parents embarking on a road trip, and Jeff Kinman and Carreie Slaughter-Whittlesey for two very convincing back seat children.

If you haven't seen the production, I don't want to spoil the clever execution of this scene, but it is worth seeing!

Throughout the production there are several ensemble numbers. Each of our performers are strong vocalists on their own, but they blend as an ensemble very well. They were a joy to hear and to watch. Almost all of the ensemble numbers were brilliantly done, with the exception of the "Scared Straight" number. This was a non-musical scene that felt jarringly out of place, and a bit dated.

Another non-musical scene was "The Very First Dating Video Of Rose Ritz" performed by Slaughter-Whittlesey. Wow. In a show as fast paced and sketch oriented as this one, you don't often have the opportunity to see what acting chops each performer actually possesses. In this number, Slaughter-Wittlesey had me from the beginning. Like Kinman in his song mentioned earlier, she emoted powerfully. We felt her anger, regret, shame, and ultimate satisfaction through this bittersweet scene. In that moment, she demonstrated for me that she is a top notch actress.

One final highlight from the evening would be Campbell and Miller in "I Can Live With That." In this sweet, touching number I could see the love each character still held for their departed spouse as they shared a moment of comfort together. Campbell also shone in his silly, yet strangely touching rendition of "The Baby Song," as did Miller in her hilarious take on "Always a Bridesmaid." All four of these actors moved from character to character smoothly and convincingly. It is hard to believe that nearly 60 different characters were presented by only four talented and capable actors.

All-in-all, I had a smile on my face throughout the evening. Although I do feel as though the script has a fatalistic and cynical take on marriage, this cast was able to make my night at Theatre Too the highlight of my month. Now I have a question for you. What are you doing still reading this review? Make the phone call, pull up the website, and get your tickets to see this excellent production before it is too late!

Reviewed by Associate Theater Critic, Sten-Erik Armitage  
for John Garcia's THE COLUMN

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I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change  
Theatre Two @ Theatre Three  
2800 Routh Street, Ste. 168 • Dallas, TX 75201-1417

Running through February 14th (how perfect is that).

Thursdays @ 7:30, Friday & Saturday @ 8:00, Sunday @ 2:30 and 7:30 with special Valentine's performances from February 12-14. See website for details.

Visit [www.theatre3dallas.com](http://www.theatre3dallas.com) or call 214-871-3300 to pick up your tickets.