

THEATRE REVIEW

Play Dates = Charming + Fun = Go

There are so, so, so many things I like about *Play Dates* currently running at Theatre Asylum in Hollywood. Let me count the ways:

The story. Because I happen to be a believer in the idea that it is better to laugh than cry, it's such a delight to see a piece of theatre about love and relationships that doesn't make me want to jump out the window upon my return home. Can we just laugh... a little? Well, *Play Dates* (by the talented and clever, Sam Wolfson of *Jewtopia* fame) provides ample opportunity to do just that. This 90-minute show (no intermission, I LOVE this!) is broken up in 3 acts. "Boy Meets Girl" has the blossoming 48-hour romance of 4 year olds (possibly 5 year olds, does it make a difference?), Sam (Rob Nagle) and Stacey (Elizabeth Bond). And isn't that where it started for all of us? Either giving or receiving the note on the playground asking, "Will you go with me?" (Well, that was the phrase I was given) The genius thing about this act was that it was written with adult themes and speech patterns, but sprinkled with plenty of kid jargon for kicks and laughs. Hilarious. The second act, "Dr. Love" shows a grown and bitter Sam in his chosen profession as radio host dispensing his tainted views on love, and handing out advice to callers. The third act, "Honeymoon Period" tells the story of Mike (Brian Monahan) and Katie (Krystal Marshall) who have been together for 5 years... and are finding themselves moving out of the blissful, sexy stage of their relationship into the "all too familiar with each other" phase... which may or may not involve popping back zits and shaving armpits. These seemingly non-related acts (at least the way I'm describing it to you) are cleverly tied together to form quite the romantic comedy.

The small theatre. I hope you know that I truly love theatre. Remember that when I say that it's awfully hard to find a good piece of theatre in a small/low budget venue in Los Angeles. There is a lot of crap out there. In my perfect world, I would support many more smallish productions in town than I do... and it's simply out of fear and inevitable heartbreak that I don't. I enjoyed this show so much. I enjoyed this show ever-so-much-more-so knowing that I wasn't at the Taper/Ahmanson/Geffen (no offense to those fantastic establishments, but you know what I mean)... and I still loved it. The set was simple, functional and fantastic (Kurt Boetcher). The lighting, with far fewer instruments than any designer would likely prefer, (Christian Epps) was lovely. This little production was great, down to the comfortable seats and respectable legroom.

The acting. The cast was delightful. The four aforementioned actors are talented... talented and funny and made up quite an ensemble. That's my story and I am sticking to it. The acting wasn't subtle. It was comedy and they were a little larger than life and over the top. But they were ALL larger than life and it worked. If I have to single one of them out, Rob Nagle, LA Theatre semi-celeb actor-extraordinaire, is not to be missed.

The laughter. In the end, my favorite thing about this show is, it made me laugh. Often and sometimes out loud. I shook my head, rolled my eyes, covered my mouth... and laughed some more. I walked in the door ready to experience a light or even frivolous bit of theatre. Instead, I witnessed a surprisingly honest and truthful show exploring love and relationships through the eyes of four intriguing characters. Speak the truth about love/relationships and hilarity will ensue. It's just how it is. Go support

small LA Theatre, Green Beetle Productions (Kristen Lee Kelly, Jennifer Chambers), theatre for entertainment sake, and the belief that laughter is always better than tears... especially when it comes to love.

[Theatre Asylum](#)

6320 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A.