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audience reviews

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change!, Magic Circle Theatre

Review: I am such a fan of this show, however I feel that the actors did not do it justice. Seeing the show during the first weekend, I expected a lot of energy, but instead received a dull performance. The only actor who stood out was Erin Johnson Gabriel (?). She seemed to be the only one really enjoying herself, but only at times. Not sure if this was a bad night, but no chemistry was there.

- Judith B

Review: I, too, saw this show opening weekend, but disagree with the previous review 100%. This show had nothing BUT energy. I was exhausted by the end of the night just watching these 4 very talented people changing characters and costumes after every scene. I saw this production in 2003(?) when Magic Circle opened the Tower Theatre and this production is far superior. I would highly recommend seeing this show. We'll be back again this weekend!

- Kevin S.

Review: This is a great musical done in Magic Circle's usual manner, servicable - but far from great. First off, the direction is uninspired, to say the least. One can only imagine what having 2 directors (one of which is in the show) would be like. In several scenes the action just didn't fit the scene. Not bad acting, mind you, just misguided direction. For as many shows as these two direct at Magic Circle you would expect a better vision and direction than what was served up in this production. Costuming as usual was nice. Set design was minimalistic and satisfactory to help push the show along. Choreography was simple. Just not in a good way. I forget who the choreographer is, but I hope they are new and can learn from this experience. Dance, like acting (at least in a show like

this) needs to push the scene along, not stand out as 'hey look, I'm dancing 'cuz it's a song!'. And repetition gets old quick!!! Graham Sobelman does a excellent job on the keyboards, it's just too bad another instrument or two couldn't have been added to round out the sound overall. Of the actors, Erin Gabriele is by far the stand-out of the bunch. Both her singing and acting were spot on. I would come back to see her performance again. Christi Axelson and David McDaniel were very good. Each had moments where they looked momentarily lost, or reaching for a note or two, but enjoyable despite the occasional flaw. Brent Null seems to be struggling with almost every song he sings in. His number 'Baby Talk' is the lone standout. The final song, which starts in acapella, is the moment when Mr. Null is at his weakest, and it shows. I would say that this show definitely deserves to be seen, but keep expectations in the middle and you will be in for a fun night. Just make sure to leave the pitch pipe in the car.

- Eric

Review: First of all, I need to clarify that my husband and I have been season tickets patrons at Magic Circle for several years. We are theatre-goers and frequent many of the local productions all over the Sacramento area. We have seen a number of productions of "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" including the Delta King and the first production here at the Tower Theatre. This production was equally as good and in many ways better than the others. One of the highlights is the return of Christi Axelson and Erin Johnson Gabriele, both returning from the original production here. But these two have improved since their first run of this show in 2003. The new cast members, David McDaniel and Brent Null, are welcome additions to the show.

This is a very fast-paced, high energy show that never loses steam. From the moment the show starts right through curtain call, this show delivers on its promise to entertain. A couple of high points to mention are "A Stud and a Babe" with Ms. Axelson and Mr. McDaniel playing a couple of nerds on a first date and the prison scene with Mr. Null playing a convicted felon who scares people into getting married. My face is still hurting from laughter.

I feel I have to address a couple of the points of the previous reviewer with regard to the direction and choreography: I know theatre and have been involved in various productions at different levels. Doing shows in the round is an entirely different animal than doing them on a proscenium stage. You have to make sure the action is directed at all sides of the audience. This show certainly accomplished that task. The

choreography was exactly what the show required: simple yet effective. This is not a huge dance show like "42nd Street" or "A Chorus Line" and once again, being in the round, you have to play to all sides. "The Marriage Tango" was the best choreographed number of the show.

Vocally, the show is quite solid. Ms. Gabriele obviously has the best trained voice in the show, which is quite apparent with her solo work in "Always a Bridesmaid". The other three definitely shined, especially in their solos. "I Will Be Loved" by Ms. Axelson was beautifully moving as a woman singing about being intimate with a man. "Tear Jerk" by Mr. Null was quite hilarious to watch, and one of my favorites from the show. His acting, facial expressions and characterizations are the by far the best of the bunch. "Shouldn't I Be Less In Love With You" by Mr. McDaniel reminded us all of why we put aside petty differences in our married lives to stay true to the ones we love. A couple we were sitting next to had recently seen this show in Chicago and pronounced, without reservation, this production to be far superior to the one they had seen there.

All in all, this production is a triumph. Great music, solid voices, funny script. Go see this show. Word from the Producer is they have been selling out to packed houses so get your tickets early.

- L. Price

Review: I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change is a wonderful production at the Magic Circle Theater. I laughed from beginning to end and enjoyed some touching moments inbetween. The cast was excellent and better than previous casts I have seen in this show. I would highly recommend it and would see it again!

Review: While I have theatre credentials as well as season tickets to several area companies, I will refrain from listing them as some have. Theatre is about the individual experience, not resumes of show seen. I have seen this production twice, once opening weekend and again the next weekend. Obviously I enjoyed the show alot, but I feel the need to clarify WHY I did. I Love You... is a wonderful show. It near perfectly describes what all of us have gone through or will go through in our lifetime of relationships. The music is very enjoyable with lyrics both witty and touching.

Shows like this are hard to mess up. 4 cast members, material we all can relate to, MUCH humor, singing, dancing, and did I mention comedy? However, that being said, I think many people easily confuse great MATERIAL with a great PRODUCTION of said material. This show IS fast-

paced, it DOES entertain, and it WILL make you laugh A LOT! But in this case, the material is the reason more-so than the production itself.

I agree that Erin G. is the standout and truly enjoyable to watch and listen to from start to finish. The three other performers each are very good. I do have to agree with Eric though that Brent N. is the proverbial sore thumb in this cast. While he is a good singer and actor, with the other talent onstage, his flaws are more apparent. I have seen him in previous productions (most notably Guys and Dolls) and have always enjoyed his talents. Maybe this material however is a bit of a reach for him?

I too found the direction a bit... lacking. Magic Circle tends to be very 'solid' to use L. Price's term. It is also 'sound' and 'reliable'. Personally I enjoy theatre that is better than those 3 descriptions. Merely following the stage directions written in the script does NOT constitute good direction and acting. But in this case I fault the direction more so than the acting.

While I'm not sure about the differences between choreography in a Proscenium Theater vs. Theater in the Round, I did find it repetitious and overly simple.

So yes, I recommend attending I Love You...It is a FANTASTIC show, performed adequately. And sometimes, like in this case, that's good enough.

- Stephanie J.

Review: I like how everyone and their mom thinks that they are theater critics and that they know everything there is to know not only about this show, but theater in general. Those were some very detailed reviews, but many of the people who reviewed this show have forgot one MAJOR fact...its community theater, it's not professional, these are volunteers who have put their time and effort into this show because they love it and just for that they should get props, for working so hard to put this forward to entertain YOU! and you just crapped all over that, I don't think people realize how disheartening it is for actors to read reviews like that. I loved this show! I thought that ALL the performers did amazing jobs, of course they all had their high and low points they have to portray somewhere between 15 and 20 characters, which is not an easy task, bringing something new to the table everytime. So I wrote this review not only because I wanted to encourage people to come see it, cause it is a fantastic show, but also to remind everyone that if you want

to see a professional show, go to a professional theater company. Don't come to local community theater companies with those kind of expectations, cause you won't find what you are looking for.

- Mady W.

Review: I am aware that this is a community theater production and not professionally done. I have seen many shows in both categories and can tell the difference. I saw this show over the past weekend and agree with all reviews except the first one. The show is enjoyable. I encourage people to come see it. It does have its flaws... just read the previous reviews to see what they are.

But I take exception with the reviewer who attacked other reviewers. Actors put themselves in front of the audience and want reactions. Preferably applause and wonderful reviews. But if you want the good, you need to accept the bad too. Theater is not something that can be defined very well. Opinion rules the day. I agree that people need support for doing what they do, but to say that you can't criticize is ludicrous. Call a spade a spade. And don't get me started on how often shows get un-deserved standing ovations... they mean next to nothing nowadays!!!

Maybe \$20 a ticket raises expectations a bit high for a production that, at least by the previous reviewers opinion, is "only" community theater. No celeb's, no pro's, and no equity actors. Just average folks like you and me. Maybe \$15 would be better? That's more than a movie and far enough away from a professional production so as not to be confused.

This is a fantastic show... for any level.
It is a decent production... for community theater.
It is neither the worst nor the best of anything.

Go see it. Keep these reviews in mind. Laugh. Go home. Make up your own mind.

- Jeffrey

Review: All things considered, YOU SHOULD SEE THIS SHOW. As a community theatre, Magic Circle does a great job in producing high-quality, limited-budget productions. However, as a critic, I think it is important to remember a few things. In NO way am I saying that these things warrant mediocrity ... I am just saying that we need to consider them when judging a show and while watching it.

In regards to acting and vocals, community theatre actors are hobbyists who just enjoy what they do. They are not paid (or are paid very little) for what they do and they often do it after a full day at work. In addition, all actors, even professionals, have their ups and downs. Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses and sometimes an occasional slip-up. Even on Broadway - I've seen it happen.

Although this show is written very well, one must also consider the toll it takes on a cast of FOUR. Set, costume, and character changes are extremely fast. The cast's energy is different in each scene since they are different people, but it is not lacking.

There is no room for fancy sets. I thought that the sets were adequate for this show... simple yet effective. There is NO way the crew could have set up a whole set - for example a living room - without dragging out the blackouts (and detracting from energy).

The choreography was also good for the show. This show simply does not lend itself to dancing. You can't expect this show to be like Crazy For You or 42nd Street. Plus, this show is in-the-round. Very few people know how hard it is to choreograph in this type of venue. You have to play to all sides without looking like you are turning around for this sole purpose.

Finally, we need to remember that community theatre is for entertainment and fun. Both the actors and the audience are supposed to enjoy themselves. I can safely say that both did in this instance. The show was a hit with a deserving standing ovation. You are not going to waste your time or money. However, like another reviewer mentioned, don't expect professional theatre. If you do you will walk away from a wonderfully hilarious show with disappointment.
- Lauren

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