

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change by Noble Fool Theatricals

By Dan Zeff  
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ST. CHARLES- I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change is heading toward the completion of its 12th year in New York City. The revue has played in more than 400 cities around the world, including a long and prosperous run at the Royal George Theatre in Chicago several years ago. It may be the great date show of our time.

<sup>3</sup>I Love You <sup>2</sup> is now being presented by Noble Fool Theatricals at the Pheasant Run Resort in a production that easily establishes why this work has attracted so many customers in so many places over so many years. It's funny, imaginative, and leavens its entertainment value with spot-on in sights into the games males and females play today as they meet and attempt to match.

The team of Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Rogers created an intimate vehicle for four performers who play about five dozen characters (the costume changes backstage must be a track meet). The show comes in at just under two hours, blending sketches and songs about being single, being married, and being parents.

None of the subject matter is new, but it's delivered with charm and flare.

While the evening should be fun for all demographics, the twentysomethings and thirtysomethings in the audience should particularly recognize themselves and their experiences in romance and domesticity. It's all sold with irresistible enthusiasm and versatility by the four performers under Tom Mullen's sprightly directing.

The first half of the show explores the rituals of the dating scene, from the tension-filled first date through the manipulations and gamesmanship that lead to the altar. The insecurities and false bravado of the male-female social dance are nailed in one number after another (only a shrill scene at the Joliet prison seems out of place).

After the intermission the revue enters the minefield of young married life, which mostly means the obligations and distractions and pleasures of parenthood. The evening ends on a touchy feely note with two numbers, the first a husband's quiet hymn across the breakfast table to the woman he has loved for 30 years. Finally, an elderly widower gently hits an on elderly widow at a funeral home viewing for a deceased person neither of them know.

The viewing becomes the senior citizens equivalent of a singles bar, demonstrating that the sparks of romance still glow even when there is snow on the roof.

The revue doesn't touch on the dark side of the man/woman mating encounter.

There is nothing about cheating partners or sexually transmitted diseases.

Potentially serious themes like the loneliness of the single life are examined with a light, if rueful, touch, especially in the number called <sup>3</sup>Always a Bridesmaid.<sup>2</sup> And the show is strictly heterosexual, something of a novelty in the mid 1990's, when <sup>3</sup>I Love You <sup>2</sup> opened and gay oriented musicals seemed to dominate the New York stage. But the light touch doesn't diminish the many truthful contact points scattered throughout the revue.

The Noble Fool revival is beautifully served by the ensemble of Charissa Armon and Amy Olsen, representing the women's half of the

equations, and John Sanders and Karl Hamilton, representing the men. They can all sing and act and strut through Stacey Flaster's bright and deft choreography.

The show doesn't shy away from stereotypes, so we get males fixated on the TV screen during football season and women who immerse themselves in shopping, both to the helpless aggravation of the opposite sex. But stereotypes are built around a grain of reality and the opening night audience obviously had no difficulty recognizing and possibly identifying with the assorted characters on stage.

The production benefits from the efficient musical accompaniment provided by the duo of music director Ken Jones (keyboards) and Paul Bauer (percussion), both perched above the stage behind a scrim. Don Conley designed a sleek modernistic all-purpose set that takes the action from street corners to interiors with the addition and subtraction of a few props slid on and off stage. Jennifer Kules designed the lighting, Kimberly G. Morris the costumes, and Joseph Fosco the sound.

While <sup>3</sup>I Love You <sup>2</sup> breaks no new ground, it consistently amuses and occasionally stimulates with its tuneful songs and witty lyrics. DiPietro and Rogers have taken on a well-mined subject and turned it into a show that is cute but never cutesy. The performances by the ingratiating Noble Fool foursome bring it all to exuberant and thoughtful life.

<sup>3</sup>I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change<sup>2</sup> runs through July 19 at Noble Fools Theatricals, 4051 East Main Street. Most performances are Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 5 and 8:30 p.m., and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$27 and \$38 with dinner packages available. The Harvest, one of the classiest restaurants in metropolitan Chicago, is highly recommended.

Call 630 584 6342.

The show gets a rating of four stars.

For more information, contact [www.noblefool.org](http://www.noblefool.org).