

Chicago Theatre Review by Richard Eisenhardt

Married Alive

Critical Evaluation: * out of ******

"Married Alive," which is a love and marriage musical, had its first outing at the Marriott Theatre and is now being done by the Noble Fool Theatricals. John Gawlik, the artistic director, should have a hit. The show that has a book and lyrics by Sean



Grennan and music by Leah Okimoto is perfect for the Pheasant Run stage. While the program doesn't list any of the songs, the show requires a stellar cast of four and works perfectly with only an orchestra of two; Valerie Maze and Kevin Disch.

The show is being directed and choreographed by Rachel Rockwell and she has cast four first-rate performers in the lead roles. The cast includes Anne Gunn as Diane and Justin Berkobien as Paul. Justin is known as Buddy Holly as he played that role at the Oakbrook and Water Tower

Drury Lane Theatres as well as the boy next door in "Meet Me in St. Louis." Megan Long has the role of Erin for this show and who in the show is married to Paul. Both Berkobien and Long are bright young talents who are groomed for Chicago stardom.

Matthew R. Jones has the role of Ron and he and Ann Gunn are a perfect match in their roles. It's also great to see Kristi J. Martens who is a stage manager back as she was associated for years at the Drury Lane Evergreen Park which now a Wal-Mart. We often wonder why Anne Gunn isn't used more on the stage as she sings and acts to perfection. The show deals and celebrates the marital bliss of lovebirds Erin and Paul, not to mention the trials and tribulations as well as the seasoned couple who go through the ups and downs of modern marriage. The show deals with new babies, empty nests to job stress and wedded bliss.

If you're young, old or middle aged and love to laugh this is the perfect vehicle for you. It may not be Broadway material but it's perfect for small regional theatre. Whether the title is "Married Alive," "From Niagara to Viagra," or "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change!," this should be the perfect cup of tea for audiences. "Married Alive" runs through October 31, 2009. For show performance dates and reservations call 630-584-6342. Tickets are \$28 and \$39. Dinner show packages range from \$49 to \$59. There is free parking as well as valet.