



Karl Hamilton, left, and Charissa Armon, right, play parents trying to convince their son (John Sanders) and his girlfriend (Amy Olsen) to marry in Noble Fool's "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change."

Relationship sendup sparkles

By Barbara Vitello

Daily Herald Critic at Large
 bvitello@dailyherald.com

"I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" hasn't been absent from Chicago-area stages for long.

And before we even had time to miss it, the pop-infused musical revue by Joe DiPietro (book, lyrics) and Jimmy Rogers (music) is back.

A longtime off-Broadway favorite, this confectionery chronicling contemporary relationships premiered in Chicago at the Royal George Theatre in 2002 and ran for 3 1/2 years. In 2006, a little more than a year after Royal George's production closed, Arlington Heights' Metropolis Performing Arts Centre opened its version, which also had a bit of an extended run. Now Noble Fool weighs in with a vivacious (and slightly abridged) revival directed by Tom Mullen, whose appealing quartet of singers/actors includes Charissa Armon, Karl Hamilton, Amy Olsen and John Sanders.

Nobody gets bloodied in this battle of the sexes, an upbeat sendup of dating, relating and mating that plays out in two acts.

upbeat sendup of dating, relating and mating that plays out in two acts. The first centers on dating, the second on marriage.

For laughs DiPietro relies on familiar stereotypes: complaining women and uncouth men; hypervigilant new parents; a single gal happy to remain so; and a harried dad whose castle is his car.

"I Love You/Now Change" is a predictable show, but it has some affecting moments. There's Armon's sweetly sung "I Will Be Loved Tonight," about a woman whose friendship with her bowling buddy blossoms into more, and "Shouldn't I Be Less in Love With You?" — a disarming ballad refuting the clichés of a longtime marriage that Sanders delivers with the right degree of understatement.

Then there's Olsen's delicious take on "Always a Bridesmaid." Dressed in costume designer Kimberly G. Morris' outrageous green sequined dress, Olsen plays a perennial attendant recalling hideous dresses ("for Tabitha, I wore taffeta./You should never, people laugh at ya") she endured at friends' weddings that lasted longer than their marriages.

Hamilton's explosive turn as an unmarried Joliet State Prison inmate who scares picky singles straight to the altar emerges as one of the show's comedic high points. And the wistful scene between widowed seniors who meet at

"I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change"

★ ★ ★

Location: Pheasant Run Resort, 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles

Times: 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 5 and 8:30 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays; through July 19. Also 2 p.m. Thursday and May 29.

Running Time: About two hours, with intermission

Tickets: \$27, \$38 (\$49, \$59 with dinner)

Parking: Free lot adjacent to theater

Box office: (630) 584-6342 or noblefool.org

Rating: For adults, references sexual situations

a funeral and embark upon a December-December romance reflects the optimism at the heart of this show.

DiPietro's playful rhymes and Rogers' midtempo score punctuated with country, doo-wop and Gregorian chant make for a palatable show. Still, "I Love You/Now Change" could use some trimming. Reducing the filler and refining it as a tidy, intermissionless one-act would make this agreeable confection even tastier.

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