

# *Emotional roller coaster*

## **‘I Now Pronounce’ sparkles, stresses and stimulates**

By David Winkelstern, Sept. 28 2017

Its story had more ups and downs than an M. C. Escher stairway painting hanging in the elevator of a two-story building, but what remained consistent in “I Now Pronounce,” was a talented cast who could adapt to any level or circumstance.

The set — designed by Jeff Boerger who played the Rabbi and Mrs. Goodman — consisted of nine plain panels set at different depths and nothing more. Often, a singular character would venture on the unadorned stage without props. Sound effects were rare, and lighting was never complex. With limited frills, the actors could be captivating and engaging.



Peppermint Creek Theatre Co.’s “I Now Pronounce” was filled with silliness and heartache, drunken hilarity and cruelty and belly laughs and gut-wrenching moments. It was a black comedy about a dressed-in-white bride. An endearing, seven-person ensemble adjusted smoothly through every oddity of the Tasha Gordon- Solomon play about a wedding loaded with bumpy spots.

Kathleen Egan as a loaded, loveless bridesmaid gave authenticity to her feigned inebriation in a loveable way. In a fancy blue bridesmaid dress — perfectly designed by Anna Szabo —

Egan offered a wobbly and bubbly charm while drinking blue drinks that turned her tongue a matching hue. Her realistic chewing back spew and ralping behind a panel had me throwing up my hands in delight.

Sally Hecksel as Eva — a role played by Hannah Feuka this weekend — was forceful as a single woman with a multitude of issues. Early in “I Now Pronounce,” wearing a matching, blue dress, Hecksel showed a more sober image. As the play progressed, she exposed layer after layer of emotions and sides of her character in dramatically convincing ways.

Joe Clark played Adam, a mostly-timid groom, in a very un-timid manner. Michael Temple, as groomsman Seth, provided personality and pizzazz to his part with a perfectly passive portrayal of a plagued pal. Grace Hinkley was the embodiment of a bride pushed to the limit — making a disagreeable character agreeable to watch.

Just as other cast members, Angela Dill, Taylor Rupp and Lauren Kreuer, skipped in and out of the panels and offstage with ease. I judged the supposedly pre-teen flower girls as Goldilocks might: Too tall and old, too tattooed for a kid and “just right.” Just like every member of the Peppermint Creek Company, the trio kept in character and kept performing while they exited behind a wall or into an aisle.

I credited such details to director Jordan Climie.

Since Climie “encouraged collaboration” from cast members, much of the superb character features could be attributed to the actors. They worked with a vague script without written scene directions or role insights. Despite that — and the lack of stage embellishments — the ensemble brought to life a varied group in a wedding full of horrific, surprising, outrageous and crazy events.

Not an easy task. Peppermint Creek pulled it off. They often did so by pulling at our heartstrings or making us laugh at serious themes about relationships. “I Now Pronounce” was filled with questions about marriage, commitments and friendships, but is not recommended for fiancées, newlyweds, or anyone on the brink of divorce. Although peppered with lots of humor, the play also inspired lots of salty tears. Also, for every hilarious antic, there were about three displays of brutality.

I couldn't imagine another ensemble making such an emotional and chaotic script succeed as the peppy Peppermint troupe did. Thanks to them, I now pronounce “I Now Pronounce” 90 minutes of stimulating theater.