

Charming portrait of romantic foibles inspired by *Pride and Prejudice* is a delight!

Review by Jane Zussman
April 27, 2018

I LOVE YOU BECAUSE is a delight at Peppermint Creek Theatre. A full house gave an unhesitating standing ovation to this charming portrait of romantic foibles inspired by Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (though you don't have to remember that plot to appreciate this one.) This is a modern reassurance that relationship politics are still a mess, and the "wrong" one can indeed become "right."

Relative newcomer Jake Przybyla ("discovered" as a standout muleteer in Starlight's *Man of La Mancha*) has fulfilled his leading-man promise as conservative but endearing romantic Austin Bennet, reeling from a recent breakup. Goofy but adorable Brian Farnham plays Austin's brother Jeff, full of questionable advice. Meghan Eldred-Woolsey shines as another questionable advice-giver counseling Marcy, who is also reeling from a recent breakup. Christine Ciucanu plays Marcy with poise and charm beyond her high-school years. She's off to NYC in the fall to study musical theatre at Marymount Manhattan College. The questionable-advice-givers and the reeling-from-breakup pair are circuitously meant for each other. Hilariously versatile Zach Riley and Racheal Raymer play assorted waiters, baristas, neighbors, bartenders etc. donning wigs and personas with variety and aplomb — and they ALL have wonderful voices and great harmony. (Kudos to music director Angie Constein-Schwab and her 5-piece band.)



Perhaps the area's most experienced first-time director Michele Booher-Purosky has assistant directed/stage-managed/apprenticed with the best local directors. She's hit a home run with her first directorial credit. Not only is the cast wonderful, but also the music, choreography, costumes, props, lighting, set... Michele has gathered a great team and all aspects mesh beautifully.

Though the cast is small, there are a lot of costume changes, and two characters play multiple roles - so yay, Kris Maier, for costuming a "cast of thousands" played by six people. (Remember to contact Kris to volunteer to help on costumes for *Spamalot* at Riverwalk - sewing or crafting; email Kris at <mailto:kmaier@masb.org>)

Karyn Perry's choreography is creative and fun. Ted Daniel's lighting shifts moods with each scene change... and there are many. Tom Ferris's multi-piece set had many moving parts solidly built by Larry Savoie and his team. It was efficiently and frequently changed by a well choreographed crew. Aja Jenks (assisted by Jay Jenks) scenography included several excellent signs for restaurant/bar/coffee shop. (Notice how the Chinese Restaurant "window" reads backwards when they are inside the restaurant.)

Go online today for reservations. This promises to have more sellouts.