

WCP Takes The Audience Through the Trials and Tribulations of Relationships in *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*

By DEVON GOHDE

WESTFIELD – Relationships are complex, from first-date anxiety to marriage and beyond. The Westfield Community Players (WCP) production of Joe DiPietro's *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* invites the audience to reflect on their own romantic experiences, often with a knowing wink and a nudge. The show's universal themes of love, longing, and the quirks of modern relationships resonate across age groups, making it an enjoyable experience for a broad audience.

The central appeal of *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* lies in its relatable themes and catchy songs. Directed by Brian Remo and produced by Fred Cuozzo, The WCP's take on the timeless musical showcases the trials and tribulations of dating. Instead of following a singular plot like more traditional musicals, each musical number is a quick look at various men and women navigating the brutal world of dating, marriage, children, and relationship struggles.

This unique approach allows the musical cast to step into a new role for each of their musical numbers. The cast consists of Brendan Joel Bartlett, Connor C. Introna, Ami Martino, Tay McQueen, Meg Murray, and Greg Perkins. Their dynamic and hilarious performances are the heart of the show, turning each sketch into a celebration of modern relationships' joys, challenges, and quirks.

This structure allows them to showcase their talents as performers. From Ms. McQueen gleefully singing about

receiving a phone call from a man she's dating in "He Called Me" to performing a raw and honest monologue as a recent divorcee finding herself back in the dating scene in "The Very First Dating Video of Rose Ritz," to Mr. Introna playing as a lawyer who will defend clients of disappointing sexual encounters in "Satisfaction Guaranteed" to later sing a heartfelt ballad on why he hasn't fallen out of love with his husband despite what studies say in "Shouldn't I Be Less In Love With You?"

Despite the musical's primary focus on relationship dynamics, some scenes take a look at relationships outside of a couple dynamic. Ms. Martino performs a hilarious number, "Always and Bridesmaid," as a woman who finds herself as always the bridesmaid, never the bride. However, they take the twist of the phrase where the seasoned bridesmaid finds peace with not having the stress of marriage in her life. There is also a look of disgruntled parents (Mr. Introna and Ms. Martino) frustrated that their adult son (Mr. Bartlett) and his girlfriend (Ms. McQueen) decide to break up instead of getting married and giving them grandchildren in "Hey There, Single Guy."

The breakdown of scenarios allows this talented cast to bring the audience on a rollercoaster of emotions about

the many hardships of building meaningful relationships and moving on from broken ones.

Performing on a small stage with only a little set design gives the cast the challenge of bringing the performances to life, which they successfully achieve. One that stands out is Perkins, Martino, Bartlett, and McQueen in "Highway of Love," performing as a family on an outing while the father (Mr. Perkins) speeds in his beloved sports car. The use of rolling chairs circling the stage brings the extra hilarity to the song's already hilarious lyrics.

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change's timeless appeal lies in its clever exploration of love's many facets, allowing the music to elevate the humor and heart of the show. With a two-person musical ensemble, Kyle Cao on piano and Shania Carinha on violin, the production's intimate feeling allows audiences to build a connection with the various characters. It'll have you laughing until you cry and bring you to tears during its final musical number. If you have ever been in love or just a human in general, make sure to check out WCP's production of *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. Show dates include January 18, 24, and 25 at 8 p.m. and January 19 at 2 p.m. For more information or for tickets, call (908) 232-221 or visit www.wcptheatre.org.

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