



# LA Theatre Review

Everything Pertaining to Small Theatre in Los Angeles

Of director Jennifer Chambers' previous production, [The Muscles in Our Toes](#), I commented: "I don't know whether any part is meant to be taken seriously. . . . All I know is it was funny. And that's saying something." Her latest endeavor, *Play Dates* currently playing at the Elephant Theatre, is twice as funny, despite being twice as serious.

Armed with a clever script by Sam Wolfson (co-creator of the smash hit *Jewtopia*) and an extremely talented cast, Chambers puts together ninety minutes of virtually non-stop laughs. Essentially two one-acts with an interceding skit thrown in to loosely connect the two, *Play Dates* explores the overarching theme of love: falling in, falling out, losing out on, and losing touch with.

Act I takes place at the site of many a first love, kindergarten, where Sam, still recovering from the recent breakup with his girlfriend of almost two hours, finds Stacey eating lunch in the playground. One thing leads to another and before long notes of "Will you be my girlfriend? Check Yes or No" are being passed and the two find themselves napping together. It's always amusing when kids speak as adults ("So what do you do?" "Eat paste, how about you?" "Sales, girl scout cookies, mostly."), and *Play Dates* plays every line for its comedic most, logic and internal consistency be damned. After a while, I stopped asking questions and just went along for the ride. Rob Nagle and Elizabeth Bond are delightful as the pre-pubescent couple.

Act II takes place a few years later and shows the lasting effect this brief romance and breakup had on Sam's life. (Spoiler alert: he didn't take it well.)

The play then shifts to the question of what happens assuming (a) one manages to find the right person, (b) that person actually feels the same way, and (c) the two manage to overcome their respective neuroses and enter into a long-term relationship. Even after overcoming all the above hurdles, the relationship all too often grows stale. Act III shows another couple (played by Brian Monahan and Kristen Lee Kelly) who find themselves in that familiar situation and attempt to freshen things up a bit. The scene in the bedroom (with another appearance by Bond) is absolutely hilarious. Even as I write these words, I can't help chuckling to myself.

The set design by Kurt Boetcher is marvelous, managing to get two separate sets into one small stage. The set for Act III is particularly impressive.

Theater is like a relationship: if you get nothing else out of it other than a good laugh, you're doing better than most. And if it also speaks to you on some deeper level, you're way ahead of the game. As long as you're not looking for too much clever insight in your theater-going experience, for a good time, call *Play Dates*.

-Written by Joel Elkins

The play dates for *Play Dates* are Thursdays through Sundays at 8 pm through August 1, 2010.

The Elephant Theatre is located at 6322 Santa Monica Blvd. in Hollywood (one block west of Vine).

Ticket prices: \$20.00