

The ABCs of Love in Play Dates

By **Bonnie Prieuer** on July 15th, 2010
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Elizabeth Bond, Brian Monahan, and Rob Nagle in "Play Dates."

The childhood adage "It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game," rings so true in Sam Wolfson's (known for Jewtopia) new work, *Play Dates*. The young at heart ensemble is playing by the rules in the game of love and matters of the heart, which are instilled early on.

The play cleverly juxtaposes vignettes of lunchbox play dates, shared naptime, to the more complex, almost too close for comfort issues of broken hearts and keeping the sparks of marriage alive. It's a somewhat jaded look at the reality of romantic love and romance once the 'lovey-dovey' honeymoon phase wears off. Rob Nagle plays Dr. Love, an SNL style sketch/spoof of Dr. Drew, the latest guru on this subject.

As Nagle sorts through a box of Necco Valentine candy hearts, he states, "From the age of four, our perception of love develops from this little package!" He analyzes each phrase, and concludes that rather than "Be Mine," or "Together Forever," the hearts should say "It's Not You, It's Me," or "I Think We Need A Break!"

Play Dates incorporates Robert Fulghum's theory that all we know in love and life we learned in Kindergarten, and novelist Tom Perotta's depiction of adults as nothing more than Little Children. From the innocence of finger-painting comes the messy hand print on your heart, and the reality that intimacy and commitment isn't always pretty.

The actors are fresh, youthful, and energetic, and keep the momentum going (though the third scene, "Honeymoon Period," tends to lag). For the most part, the cast, through a dynamic dance of romantic love, entertains and amuses.

*"Play Dates" is playing at Elephant Stages Theatre located at
6322 Santa Monica Blvd. from Sun-Thurs. at 8 p.m. Reserve tickets at (323) 960-7776 or on the*