



Photo credit: Rich Clark Photography

ALONE TOGETHER—Jessie Withers and David Laffey play two lonely singles looking for love who happen to live one floor apart in the same building.

Obscure Sondheim songs unite in a tale of love, longing, loneliness and new life

Good People Theater Company presents the musical “Marry Me a Little,” featuring wonderful Stephen Sondheim songs that were tossed out of their original shows when they were replaced by others in the show’s line-up.

Craig Lucas and Norman Rene compiled these songs into a charming, bittersweet tale of love,

longing and loneliness. Together they breathe new theatrical life and meaning into a collection of trunk songs that were culled from the final productions of “Anyone Can Whistle,” “Follies, Company,” “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum,” and “A Little Night Music.”

“Marry Me a Little” centers on two urban singles, solo in their

studio apartments 2C and 3C on a Saturday night in New York City. These individuals pass the time with secret, unshared fantasies, never knowing that they are just one floor away from each other and possibly the end of their solitary dreams.

The 70-minute one-act is perfect for the Hollywood Fringe Festival, presented with loving care

by producer-director Janet Miller, with Musical Director Corey Hirsch, who accompanies the two cast members on piano with great gusto and emotional intensity through the entire show which is entirely song-driven.

David Laffey and Jessie Withers command the stage in their struggle for love with each song illuminating their life of joy and loss. Certainly these two are meant for each other if only they could meet face to face.

Miller uses two chairs and one bed with two pillows on opposite ends to reflect the similarities in the man and woman’s apartments and lives, often having both in bed on either side as they sing beautiful duets together in perfect harmony.

In fact, if you are not familiar with the play, it may take you a minute to realize they are not really in the same bed together, their mirrored actions so perfectly choreographed. Then you will notice they never really touch, although they do pass a book back and forth between them – laying it on the bed so the other may pick it up.

A few highlights of the show are Withers’ rousing rendition of “Can That Boy Foxtrot,” in which she stretches out the “F” to denote the real meaning behind the lyrics as she cavorts on a chair. Laffey has a dapper dance routine during

“Uptown, Downtown,” in which he describes the various women he has encountered in the city that never sleeps.

As is true for Sondheim songs, the difficult harmonies and lyrics are always challenging and these two (along with Hirsch) certainly handle everything with great skill and perfect timing. Brilliantly colorful lighting designed by Katherine Barrett accompanies and enhances the mood of each song.

Performances continue at the Lillian Theatre, 1076 Lillian Way, Los Angeles on Friday, June 19 at 10:30 p.m.; Saturday, June 20 at 1p.m.; Sunday, June 21 at 2:30 p.m.; Wednesday, June 24 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, June 27 at 1p.m.*; Saturday, June 27 at 8:30 p.m.; and Sunday, June 28 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and may be ordered in advance on the Hollywood Fringe site at <http://hff15.org/2234>.

*Denotes “Charity of Choice” performance for which 100% of the proceeds will be donated to The Young Storytellers Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to the intersection of children’s literacy, storytelling, and theater. More information at www.young-storytellers.com

Learn more about Good People Theater Company at www.good-theaterco.org