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'Love, Perfect, Change' stages triumphant return

By KATIE HUGHES MCKEE Posted: 06/24/2010 12:13:49 PM PDT

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Cabrillo Stage has not one but three offerings this season: a remount of last year's hit, "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change," the musical review "Swing!," and "Cabaret." "Love, Perfect, Change" is a perfect fit for the new Black Box Theater at Cabrillo College...

Last season's production of this musical was presented with the same cast at Cabrillo's Forum Theater and was a huge success. As one friend said to me the day I attended, "Oh, you are in for such a treat!" She was right.

Love is one of the most basic human emotions: we feel it, we seek it, it can crush us. The desire for it is a fundamental urge, and so, it seems, is the drive to remake the object of our affections. This is the often hilarious, sometimes poignant, and always spot-on premise of this musical comedy by Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts.

Act I deals with courtship "" the desperate singles scene, dating, right up to the second thoughts just before the wedding. Act II is what comes after: babies, in-laws, boredom, divorce, death, and new hope.

Director Andrew Ceglio has assembled a terrific quartet of performers: Max Bennett-Parker, Ariel Buck, Nicholas Ceglio the director's brother, and Sara Stein. As an ensemble, which has now had over a year to gel, they are outstanding. Individually, they

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The returning cast from 'Love, Perfect, Change' (from... (Jana Marcus/Contributed photo)

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are fine actors and singers who have impeccable comedic timing and can also deliver poignant. Max Bennett-Parker makes you want to cuddle him in one scene and then slap the smirk off his face in the next. Ariel Buck has a big stage voice and can pull off whatever musical style is thrown at her. Nicholas Ceglio and Sara Stein have the physical comedy chops. At times, with these two, I felt I was observing a skit from "Saturday Night Live," as Stein was channeling Tina Fey.

Andrew Ceglio is not only the director, he choreographed the production, as well. There is a family car trip in the second act that will leave you breathless. Skip Epperson's set is simple yet classy, with stained glass, hearts and chocolates hovering over the action. Maria Crush has outdone herself with a particular bridesmaid's dress, and Mark Hopkins' lighting design includes gobo projections and supertitles and even lands us in prison.

And let us not forget the orchestra. Drew Lewis on keyboard, David Nordgren on bass and Gretchen Miescke on violin are on stage throughout the entire production, and even get to show us some acting chops.

Go see this hilarious, lovely show -- and take a date.

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'I love You, you're perfect, now change'
 written by: Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts
 presented by: Cabrillo Stage
 when: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, through July 3 at 8 p.m., Sunday, June 27 at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Saturday July 3 at 3 p.m.
 where: Black Box Theater at the Crocker Theater, Cabrillo College, Aptos
 Cost: \$16 to \$38 general; \$16 to \$36 senior (60+); \$16 to \$32 child (6-12).
 details: 479-6429 or www.cabrillostage.com

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