

An Octopus Love Story

Written by Delaney Britt Brewer

Directed by Mike Klar

Center Stage, NY

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Review by Rebecca Jones

Even with its hipster soap opera veneer, no attempt is made to soften the political statement in Delaney Britt Brewer's *An Octopus Love Story* — a surprisingly moving production by young theater company Kids with Guns. What's even more astounding is that the propaganda actually adds to the power and humanity of the play.

Jane won't admit to her coworkers that she's gay, and this infuriates her hip, intellectual "live-in girlfriend," Tosh, who works in PR for an LGBT organization. Danny has no direction in life, a constant source of frustration to his hip, intellectual, flamboyant best friend, Alex, Tosh's coworker. So in an effort to save these two confused young people, Tosh and Alex devise a plan to marry their friends to each other as part of a scheme to publicly "protest the ban on gay marriage." Granted the ploy sounds as bizarre as the double negative, but Tosh and Alex have big plans to change the world, and the protestations of lost souls are not going to stop them. But when the experiment goes beyond their control, will they have second thoughts?



Eight is Enough: Jenny Greer and Kelli Holsopple in An Octopus Love Story

Delaney Britt Brewer has written a tight script in which brilliant comic jewels glitter amid deep, poignant revelations. Her flip contemporary style finds the anchor it needs in the grounded performances of a truly talented cast. The actors uniformly

mine character stereotypes for sincere moments of comedy that transcend the molds. Kelli Holsopple is a lovely and vulnerable Jane, with a karaoke breakdown scene that is not to be missed. Josh Tyson is instantly lovable as Danny. Michael Cyril Creighton and Jenny Greer are hysterically pretentious and exasperating as Alex and Tosh, respectively. Krista Sutton lights up the stage as Jane's Texan beauty queen stepmother. In a memorable cameo, Andrew Dawson steals the most conflicted, provoking scene in the show as an overly curious Midwestern journalist.

Director Mike Klar has integrated the elements of this show with humor and style. Michael Wall's sound design creates the right atmosphere before the postmodern plastic curtain even goes up. The only interruptions were the overly harsh light fades between scenes, and a set design that left one wondering how many apartments were actually featured. But these details couldn't detract from a play that gives no easy answers and leaves you thinking as you leave the theater