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Quirky allegory in the theater can be charming, and Delaney Britt Brewer uses the device beautifully in *An Octopus Love Story*. In this play about how we can sometimes deny our instincts in pursuit of companionship, the playwright includes a fanciful tale of a sea creature that crawls out of a marine biologist's tank. The main plot involves Danny (Josh Tyson) and Jane (Kelli Holsopple), a gay man and a lesbian who tie the knot as a publicity stunt to protest the ban on same-sex marriage.

It's a clever setup for this comedy of manners, directed with gentle buoyancy by Mike Klar, even if, like Brewer, he stumbles occasionally—particularly in the portrayal of the two public-relations flacks (including Jane's lover) who conceive the mock-marriage. More successful are two characters that could be caricatures: an evangelical reporter (Andrew Dawson) who interviews the "happy couple" and Jane's beauty-queen stepmom (Krista Sutton). The production's best moments, though, belong to Danny and Jane, appealingly rendered by Tyson and Holsopple. These are characters of enormous pluck and charm. In fact, they almost seem like a 21st-century equivalent of Rock Hudson and Doris Day. As their friendship grows, they start to resemble that lonely octopus, reaching out a tentacle for contact. — *Andy Propst*