

I Love... What's His Name? A Modern Take on a Modern Conundrum



From left to right: Bob Logan, Sarah Dunn, Angela Jajko, Rachel Hanauer, and Jeff Blanchette. Photo courtesy of Rachel Hanauer.

Directed by Rachel Hanauer and co-created by she and Jeff Blanchette (both of whom were lead actors in the production, alongside co-stars Sarah Dunn and Angela Jajko), *I Love... What's His Name?* is a delightful musical take on the all-too-often confusing world of dating in the age of Tinder, Grindr and selfish, apathetic people.

As someone who's saved potential romantic prospects as "Name/Dating App/ Age and important info" in my phone (haven't we all?), when I heard about this cabaret-style show, I immediately felt a connection to it. Fortunately for me and the rest of Saturday's full house at the Arctic Playhouse in West Warwick, the writing, singing and overall performances that "I Love ..." featured blew our minds — and it's easy to see why.

All four actors are talented and established professional vocalists and performers. Hanauer and Dunn teach voice at the high school and college levels, Blanchette was part of Ocean State Theatre's well-reviewed take on *Avenue Q* and Jajko's singing credits include the most recent *Final Fantasy* soundtrack(!). Their uber-entertaining performances were supported by pianist Bob Logan and stage, lights and sound supervisor Christian O'Brien.

The tunes in this musical were a mix of new songs composed by musical theater writers, songs from musicals (including *Guys and Dolls*) and one opera aria (from *Street Scene*). More operatic flair was evident elsewhere throughout the cabaret, too.

One of the best parts about this *original* (I'm saying it one more time to remind you how thoroughly

badass that is) production was its original ideas. Like when loyal Starbucks customer Sarah (played by Dunn) professed her love (with song, of course) for "Taylor the latte boy," an unassuming Starbucks barista (portrayed by Blanchette) who felt more than a bit creeped out by this. And then Taylor responded with his own song for "Sarah, the stalker chick," complete with an jaw-droppingly awesome falsetto.

Because its central themes and attitudes are relevant to people looking for love in the Millennial era, and because its script and songs were so nicely expressed, I can picture *I Love... What's His Name?* being sold and put on in theaters across the country and beyond. It was a fantastic modern take on a cabaret.

I Love ... What's His Name was performed as a one-off performance on May 6 at the Arctic Playhouse