

Theater: ‘Marrying Terry’ a Comedic Chicago Musical Without Music

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CHICAGO – It’s a musical without the music.

Coupling the common theatrical themes of love and humor with the uncommon counterparts of radiology and rare books, “[Marrying Terry](#) [15]” is not only performing now in Chicago but was also derived entirely from the city and its familiarities.

The set is a miniature facsimile of the household Drake Hotel. References to the Chicago Transit Authority, its 151 bus, a frenzied Chicago street, Lincoln Park and Michigan Avenue allow the local production to shine a tongue-in-cheek – albeit campy – spotlight on what many Chicagoans hold dear.



Ana Sferruzza closes her eyes and recites poetry from John Keats while Dan Rodden listens in the Chicago production of “Marrying Terry”.

Photo credit: Joanna Kozek

The story’s crux rests on endearing rare-books librarian Terry Adams (Ana Sferruzza) and the twist of fate that bestows her to another Terry Adams (Dan Rodden) while in what he thought was his bed.



Brian Simmons and Debbie Laumand-Blanc sing “Auld Lang Syne” in the Drake Hotel bar in “Marrying Terry”.

Photo credit: Joanna Kozek

He's a radiologist being reluctantly coerced to tie the knot by his assertive girlfriend while she's meeting her own assertive, long-distance boyfriend thinking she wants the same. Strong supporting characters round out the feel-good production that clearly makes no mystery of where it's heading.

Just in time for the glacial, snow-white New Year's Eve the Windy City sees every year, the romantic comedy comes from the mind of playwright Gregg Opelka. Though known as a musical composer, "Marrying Terry" only bursts into a melodic number in one drunken scene.

Still, many of the components of a musical – a simpler storyline, an upbeat plot and a light-hearted romance – resonate loudly.



Mary Mulligan (left) and Ana Sferruzza square off in "Marrying Terry".

Photo credit: Joanna Kozek

Elements of "Marrying Terry" draw on the feel of classics such as "Bye Bye Birdie" or "The Music Man". The performance is directed by Suzanne Avery-Thompson who directed Opelka's 2002 chanson musical "La Vie Ennui" and choreographed his musicals "Charlie's Oasis" and "Hotel d'Amour".

Its storyline is adapted from real, semi-autobiographical events. Opelka drew inspiration for the performance in part by the Russian film "Irony of Fate," in part by his days at the American Library Association and in part by a real-life incident at a New Orleans hotel.

"Marrying Terry" runs through Jan. 27, 2008 at the Victory Gardens Greenhouse Theater. 8 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; 5 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. on Saturdays; 3 p.m. on Sundays. [Tickets](#) [16] cost \$24-\$30.

By **Adam Fendelman**

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