

TV Review: Christina Applegate, Will Arnett in Funny ‘Up All Night’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 14, 2011 - 11:41am

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CHICAGO – NBC’s “Up All Night,” debuting tonight, September 14th, 2011 at 9pm CST (before moving two hours earlier next week into its normal timeslot) is a very-promising new comedy largely due to the immense talent of its trio of stars and the relatable simplicity of its structure. As more and more people wait to have kids, how do the nights of wine tastings and social events transition to diaper-changing and bottle-warming? It’s a vast playground for talented comedy writers and there’s reason to believe they’ll strike a nerve with “Up All Night.”



TV Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Reagan Brinkley (Christina Applegate) is yet another one of those modern sitcom heroines trying to have it all and finding wacky hijinks while balancing career, motherhood, friendship, and marriage. After having a beautiful baby girl with her stay-at-home husband Chris (Will Arnett), Reagan tries to go back to work as an assistant for the Oprah-esque talk show queen Ava (Maya Rudolph). While Chris tries to balance time playing video games with taking care of a baby and Reagan manages a boss who’s arguably needier than her new daughter, this likable couple fights against the tide of responsibility.



Up All Night
Photo credit: NBC

We’ve seen shows like “Up All Night” before. Young couples trying to balance family with the rest of their lives is not exactly what one would call high concept. But there’s a relatability to the writing on “Up All Night” that makes the foundation of the show feel fresh and new enough to avoid cliché. Creator Emily Spivey (Rudolph’s regular writing partner on “Saturday Night Live” and a voice behind “Parks and Recreation”) and executive producer Lorne Michaels find a balance between the relatable new-parent issues like swearing in front of the baby and arguing over who gets up next when the infant cries with writing that doesn’t feel stale.





Up All Night
Photo credit: NBC

Most of the time. There are elements of "Up All Night" that are close to their expiration date after only one episode. We can't see Reagan and Chris argue over nighttime wake-ups every week and Ava's over-the-top routine is going to get old quickly. Rudolph's character was more subdued in the original pilot but she was retooled after the success of "Bridesmaids" and not for the better. Watching Ava belittle underlings and go through a cleanse is not entertaining. It distracts from what works about "Up All Night" which is the dynamic shift that happens when husband & wife become father & mother. I LOVE Rudolph, but her character needs to be toned down. She could be more effective in smaller doses.

"Up All Night" belongs to Applegate and Arnett, two great actors in roles that are perfect for them. Arnett may not seem like the right choice for a down-to-Earth dad given his track record of playing preposterous idiots lately, but he's perfect here. It's great to see him play a relatable, normal guy. And Applegate is stellar in everything she does. Her comic timing is perfect. If "Up All Night" fine tunes the problems with its writing, Arnett & Applegate could be in year-end awards conversations.

But I have my doubts that it will be around that long. Up against "The X Factor," "Survivor," and the similar-skewing "The Middle," while also being paired with the abysmal "Free Agents" — "Up All Night" is in trouble. If "Whitney" falters on Thursday nights and Spivey's show can be moved into that line-up, it has a chance. For that to happen, the show needs to prove to NBC that it could have a following. Tone down the sitcomish behavior. Put the focus on the relatable. Highlight the strength of the talented cast. These are the only ways that "Up All Night" will be on the schedule in the morning.

"Up All Night" stars Christina Applegate, Will Arnett, and Maya Rudolph. It was created by Emily Spivey. It premieres on NBC on Wednesday, September 14th, 2011 at 9pm CST (before moving next week to its normal 7pm CST timeslot).



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [13]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [12]

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