

Theater Review: Nothing Without a Company's 'Bobby Pin Girls' Plays on Millennial Angst

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 5, 2017 - 11:27am

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CHICAGO – The “breeder years” are difficult on everyone, as the biological imperative becomes overwhelming and the couplings that result yield both discovery and misadventure. Nothing Without a Company's new play “Bobby Pin Girls” highlight two such Millennial women, roommates who are having man trouble, although the argument can be made that it's eternally “boy trouble.” The show has a Thursday-Sunday run at the Chicago Mosaic School through December 10th, 2017. [Click here](#) [19] for more details, including ticket information.



Play Rating: **3.5/5.0**

In the years I've had the privilege to follow the theater group Nothing Without a Company I've seen their shows in garages, old timey Chicago community centers and bowling alleys. “Bobby Pin Girls” converted a typical Chicago apartment and filled it with audience chairs, as the intimacy of our heroes Ana and Bree play out in real time in the setting. While the play doesn't quite reach the height of its potential, it provides some knowing laughs about the trials of managing old and new boyfriends, and how it builds upon a sense of overall identity.



Bree (Emilie Modaff) and Ana (Grace Hutchings) Are 'Bobby Pin Girls'

Photo credit: Nothing Without a Company

Bree (Emilie Modaff) and Ana (Grace Hutchings) are 20-something roommates in Chicago. Bree is a fine artist working on a canvas and Ana has a retail job, while also trying to be an actor. Their domicile set-up is altered a bit when Bree's old boyfriend, Danny (Peter Wilde), visits the apartment for the first time since the couple broke up in New York City. The reason for the break-up – Danny's bad habits – hasn't changed, and Ana gets swept into it. Meanwhile, Ana has a suitor of her own (Debo Balogun)... a fellow actor who can't take "no" for an answer. The dynamics of all the interaction fuels the scenario.

The four actors – Modaff, Hutchings, Wilde and Balogun – earnestly work through the script of Nothing Without a Company member Jamey Bell, delivering jokes that both land and stay in the air. Most charming are some momentary flights of fancy, sequences that become fantasies expressing love for old relationships and... Wheat Thins. Both of those moments are effective, funny and even poignant. Modaff and Hutchings as Bree and Ana didn't connect that well chemistry-wise, but the characters do care about one another. The suitors, portrayed by Wilde and Balogun, have less to work with, and have to play on their negatives rather than any deeper explorations.

Nothing Without a Company prides itself on diversity in casting and character exploration, and "Bobby Pin Girls" continues that tradition. One of the more intriguing elements of the play is Bree and Ana's intentions toward each other. The dance that is happening around the boy trouble has potential for connectivity, and slyly playwright Bell gives it room to breathe. It is the highlight of the work.



Cast of 'Bobby Pin Girls' Includes Danny (Peter Wilde, top left) and Tim (Debo Balogun)

Photo credit: Nothing Without a Company

The shortness of the piece, barely longer than a one act, scores points for brevity but not for completeness, as more depth into all the characters might have made the situation more evocative. As it is, everything occurs rather quickly, allowing that the rather unwieldy plot interrupts anything more significant relationship-wise. But the swiftness also provides a flash of recognition, as the fellow Millennials in the audience were in laugh-ready tune with the travails of the weed-smoking, boyfriend-corralling, angst-expressive roommates.

"Contemporary" is the word that always defines Nothing Without a Company. They are the theater group of the now, unafraid to take on the delicate pathways of life in our post-tech society, always within reach of a connection on a device, but not as connective when the object is a fellow traveler. Bobby pins keeps the hair in place, but are thin enough to let a few strands fall away.

Nothing Without a Company's "Bobby Pin Girls" takes place Thursday-Saturday nights @ 8pm, Sundays at 6pm through December 10th, 2017, at the Chicago Mosaic School (2nd Floor), 1101 West Granville Avenue, Chicago. Featuring Emilie Modaff, Grace Hutchings, Debo Balogun and Peter Wilde. Written by Jamey Bell. Directed by Ben Kaye. For more information about Nothing Without a Company, [Click here](#) [20]



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