

TV Review: Jason Bateman, Will Arnett Reunite For ‘Sit Down, Shut Up’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 16, 2009 - 4:07pm

- [Arrested Development](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Cheri Oteri](#) [4]
- [Family Guy](#) [5]
- [FOX](#) [6]
- [Henry Winkler](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Jason Bateman](#) [9]
- [Kenan Thompson](#) [10]
- [Kristin Chenoweth](#) [11]
- [Mitch Hurwitz](#) [12]
- [Sit Down Shut Up](#) [13]
- [Television](#) [14]
- [The Simpsons](#) [15]
- [Will Arnett](#) [16]
- [Will Forte](#) [17]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [18]



Television Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Will another animated show on Sunday nights be a perfect fit for “[The Simpsons](#) [15]” and “[Family Guy](#) [5]” fans or will those beloved shows have set too high a bar to jump over for another cartoon to compete? People love their Homer and Stewie. Will they fall for the teachers of Knob Haven on “[Sit Down, Shut Up](#) [13]”? Despite the incredible talent involved, I highly doubt it.

What incredible talent? Try the creator of the best sitcom of the '00s, Mitch Hurwitz of “[Arrested Development](#) [2],” and voice talent that includes amazing comedians like [Jason Bateman](#) [9], [Will Arnett](#) [16], [Henry Winkler](#) [7], [Will Forte](#) [17], [Cheri Oteri](#) [4], and [Kristin Chenoweth](#) [11]. Lots of talent. Most of it completely wasted.



Sit Down, Shut Up
Photo credit: FOX

Bateman voices the lead, Larry Littlejunk, a gym teacher at Knob Haven High School, an educational facility where the teachers have way more to learn than the students. Larry has a crush on the science teacher Miracle (Kristin Chenoweth), an overly religious girl who probably

shouldn't be teaching about evolution.



In Plain Sight
Photo credit: Gregory Peters/USA

Larry and Miracle may be the center of the show, but “Sit Down, Shut Up” is over-crowded with crazy personalities. There’s acting Principal Sue Sezno (Kenan Thompson), “Ass Principal” Stuart Proszakian (Will Forte), English teacher Ennis Hoffard (Will Arnett), German teacher Willard Deutschebog (Henry Winkler), librarian Helen Klench (Cheri Oteri), drama teacher Andrew Legustambos (Nick Kroll), and custodian “Happy” (Tom Kenny).

The series does look different. It’s blend of 2-d animation against live-action backdrops that makes for an intriguing visual presentation. And I like the design of the characters.

The faculty of Knob Haven may look interesting and have great people voicing them, but they don’t say anything particularly clever or funny. I’ve seen the first two episodes of “Sit Down, Shut Up” and they’re just not as laugh-out-loud as you’d expect. They’re too often frantic, over-the-top, and ridiculous.

Too much of the show plays like something that Bateman, Arnett, Winkler, and Hurwitz came up with while sitting around after filming on a day off from the “Arrested Development” movie. It feels like everyone can do better. Perhaps if “Sit Down, Shut Up” featured unrecognizable voices and I didn’t know Hurwitz was behind it, but I expected so much more from these multi-talented people and I think viewers will tune out in droves.

The biggest problem is the ADD sensibility of the show. I know “The Simpsons” and “Family Guy” aren’t exactly what you would call leisurely-paced, but there’s a difference between a show that’s well-timed like those series and one that just feels frantically eager-to-please like “Sit Down, Shut Up”.

If the show is to be saved, they need to put the focus on just a few characters, like The Simpsons family, and then let the supporting ensemble come and go. But, now, it feels like Bateman, Arnett, Forte, Thompson, Oteri, and the rest of the gang are all fighting for microphone time. As is, it’s likely that audiences will tell “Sit Down, Shut Up” to live up to its title and make room for another attempt at animation domination.

‘Sit Down, Shut Up,’ which airs on FOX, stars voice work by Jason Bateman, Will Arnett, Kristin Chenoweth, Will Forte, Henry Winkler, Kenan Thompson, and Cheri Oteri. It was created by Mitch Hurwitz. The series premieres on Sunday, April 19th, 2009 at 7:30PM CST.



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- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mitch-hurwitz>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/sit-down-shut-up>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/television>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-simpsons>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/will-arnett>
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