

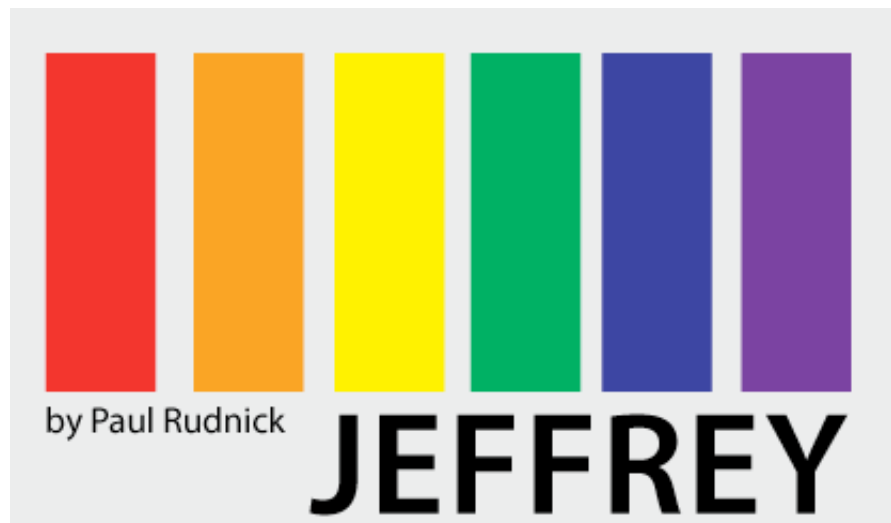
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JANUARY 15, 2008

Phillylist Reviews... *Jeffrey*

HIV and AIDS aren't in the news so much these days. With the creation of "the cocktail," it sometimes seems as if the media has downgraded the gravity of these diseases to something akin to Hepatitis: take care of yourself, take your pills, and use condoms – and you, too, can live a healthy life. We don't really hear about it anymore. For those whose lives haven't been touched by HIV or the AIDS virus, it's not at the forefront of our sexual consciousness anymore.



But hey, folks? Remember the 90s?

When everyone was terrified of AIDS, especially the gay community? *Jeffrey*, by Paul Rudnick, is about that: one man, absolutely in love with sex both as an idea and a practice, who chooses celibacy over the risk of infection.

And believe it or not, it's a comedy. And a very funny one. Not without solemnity, of course – but when you compare it to other plays about AIDS (*Rent*, anyone?), there are way more laughs and way fewer deaths.

Playing the title role in the [Represented Theatre Co.](#) production of *Jeffrey* is Andrew Gorrell, a straight actor who manages to play the sex-obsessed gay character without devolving into *Will and Grace*-like stereotype. Jon Mason shines as Sterling, Jeffrey's close friend and confidante – stereotypical, yes, but also completely believable. And Roy Wilbur, playing no fewer than seven characters, is outstanding in each of his roles: gay or straight, you couldn't help but laugh. Rounding out the cast are Walter DeShields, Bill Egan, Scott Franco, Michelle Horman, and Dominick Romeo, all of whom do an excellent job at keeping things light when the show's topic could easily get darkly depressing. You could tell that behind the scenes, everyone was having a lot of fun.

That being said, sometimes, the fun was too much. In a small black box theatre, you just don't need to be as big or as loud or as energetic as Daniel Student directed his actors to be. The production would have worked excellently well on a larger stage, with a larger audience – but it lacked the intimacy called for in a space like the Walnut's Studio Five. The production wasn't bad, by any means, but once in a while, it was exhausting: too much to look at, too much to process from my seat in the second row. But then, maybe if I'd been sitting

in the back row, I would have thought it was perfect.

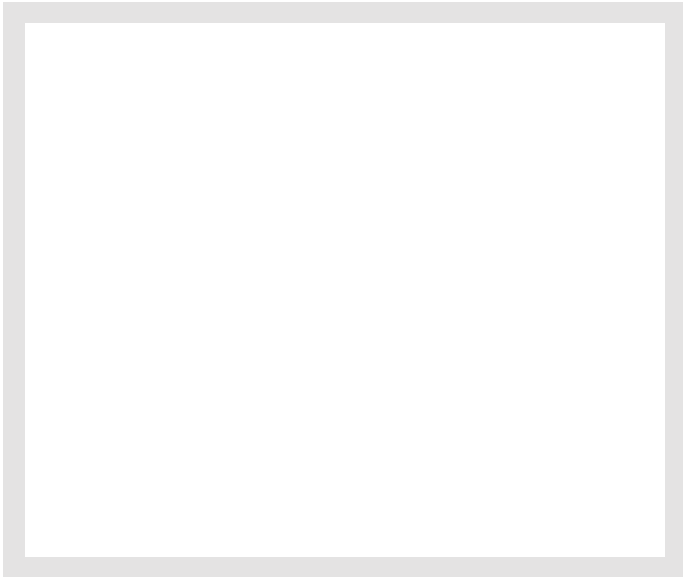
It's probably worth going to see the production for yourselves. Then you can tell me.

By [Jillian Ashley Blair Ivey](#) in [Arts & Events](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [Recommend this!](#) | [+1](#)

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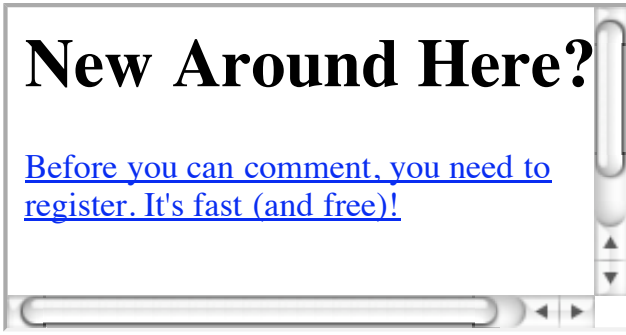


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