



'Ordinary Days' at Round House Theatre

by **David Friscic** on June 3, 2014



• [Star](#)



There is certainly nothing ordinary about Round House Theatre's current production entitled *Ordinary Days*. Indeed, how often does one come across a totally "sung-through" meditation on relationships that is so totally relevant to today's climate? The title is also a bit deceptive because this is quite a complex and "non-ordinary" show to review. In one way, a person could view this show as a pleasant diversionary tale of urban angst and chance occurrences (sort of a cousin to the musical *Company*, which covers much of the same terrain). On another level, one could dissect the proceedings down to a deeper analysis: perhaps we are being stimulated into asking ourselves if days that seem ordinary (and all the little incidents of life) really mirror deeper psychological issues and themes?



Erin Weaver (Deb), Will Gartshore (Jason), Janine DiVita (Claire),
and Samuel Edgerly (Warren). Photo by Danisha Crosby.

The show is infused with nineteen verbally intricate songs and as performed by four actors who sing their hearts out with skill and polish. The show moves along nicely under the masterful direction of the accomplished veteran Stage Director Matthew Gardiner. A sole pianist, the marvelous Musical Director, William Yanesh, accompanies our talented troupe; the piano playing of Yanesh is a major standout.

A slightly bare bones semblance of a plot is actually better explained as a series of incidents and coincidences that beset four young New Yorkers struggling to make sense of their circumstances: their supposedly “ordinary” circumstances and events of their lives are set to rhythmic music that mirrors their contradictions and their quests. Yes, the music is definitely the strong point here and for that we can thank the “up-and-coming” composer of the moment, Mr. Adam Gwon. Gwon’s songs have a delightful, playful and whimsical quality when they are at their best—such as in his amusing “Saturday at the Met” sung by the entire company, the defiantly funny “Don’t Wanna Be Here” sung with appropriate anxiety by the ever-dependable Erin Weaver (who plays the neurotic Deb), and the touching “I’m Trying”—delivered with gusto by Will Gartshore (Jason) and Janine Davita (Claire).

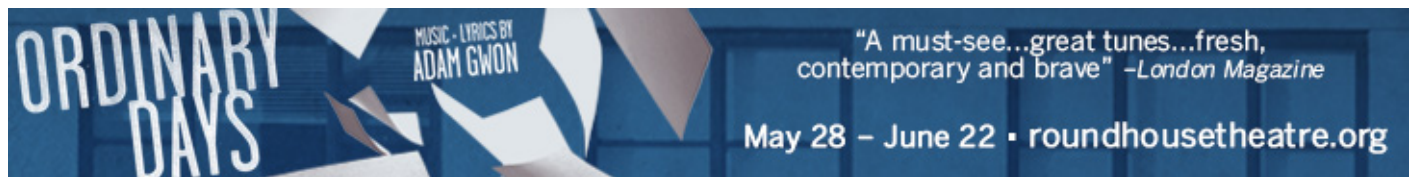
Gwon’s musical palette is exciting and visionary but, concurrently, seems like an exciting and audacious “work in progress” at times; this tone befits this very spontaneous, exploratory and intimate evening. Though his work is highly original indeed—like all good composers who are influenced subliminally by others—shades of William Finn’s musical style flows through at times. Whether intended or not, close your eyes and the song “Fine” has a musical spirit very similar to Sondheim. Mr. Gwon has definitely listened carefully to those that came before him and riffed-off into his own intriguing and unique sound. Mr. Gwon’s more comedic songs are his forte to my ear but his ballads and more dramatic numbers soar beautifully as well. Particularly well-done is Gartshore’s beautiful rendering of the song “Favorite Places” and Ms. Davita’s “Gotta Get Out.”

The show details the intersecting and contrasting characters of two pairs of people, namely, the aforementioned Jason and Claire and the zany Deb but I must not leave out the dry wit and theatrical singing style of Samuel Edgerly's iconoclastic and optimistic portrayal of Warren. This character borders on the downright quirky but Edgerly's bold confidence in his interpretation draws one right into this character's unique world. Edgerly delivers "One by One by One" and "Life Story" with feeling and panache.

Credit must be given to Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Yanesh for melding the flow of these songs so effortlessly into one organic whole. On the technical side of things, the urban milieu is sharply etched by Misha Kachman (with tall buildings in the background and a coffee shop and apartment stage front), Costume Design by Frank Labovitz is crisp and trendy, and the Sound Design by Eric Shimelonis is outstanding.

If you don't usually get to see something full of musical yearning, angst, and exploration, do something 'out of the ordinary' and go see Round House Theatre's 'extraordinary' *Ordinary Days*!

Running Time: 95 minutes, with no intermission.



Ordinary Days plays through June 22 2014 at Round House Theatre -4545 East-West Highway, in Bethesda, MD. For tickets, call (240) 644-1100, or purchase them [online](#).



About David Friscic

David has always had a passionate interest in the arts from acting in professional dinner theatre and community theatre to reviewing film and local theatre in college to making numerous treks to New York City to indulge his interest in live theatre. An enthusiastic interest in writing has shown itself in a BA in English/Education and an MA in English Literature. Taken together, these two interests have culminated in the logical conclusion of writing for an arts blog. David moved up and down the East Coast due to his father's job at General Electric and this has helped him to perceive the world in a very open way. After his schooling, David taught in Catholic school systems for awhile and, then, spent three years in the seminary with two years at Catholic University studying Theology and one year in a practicum working at a church in New York State. David currently works at the National Science Foundation as a Technical Information Specialist for the Office of Polar Programs and has had the great opportunity to go to Antarctica twice and Greenland once in support of the research community. He enjoys living in Bethesda and has taken courses at the Writer's Center. David enjoys swimming, traveling, reading, and working on committees at his condo. His major interest, however, is the arts and all it encompasses---from symphony, to film, to museum treks to live theatre. He counts having lunch with Lillian Gish and meeting Lily Tomlin,

Geraldine Page, Maureen Stapleton, Liza Minnelli and Sandy Dennis as some of the more exciting encounters of his life.

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