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## Round House's Ordinary Days is pure joy

June 5, 2014 by Jon Boughtin [Leave a Comment](#)

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For a recent college grad, there's a special feeling when stepping out into the world. Three parts excitement and one part nausea, there's a sense that anything is possible, happiness is preordained and

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opportunity is all around. I'm just barely old enough to declare that "those were the days," but there it is.

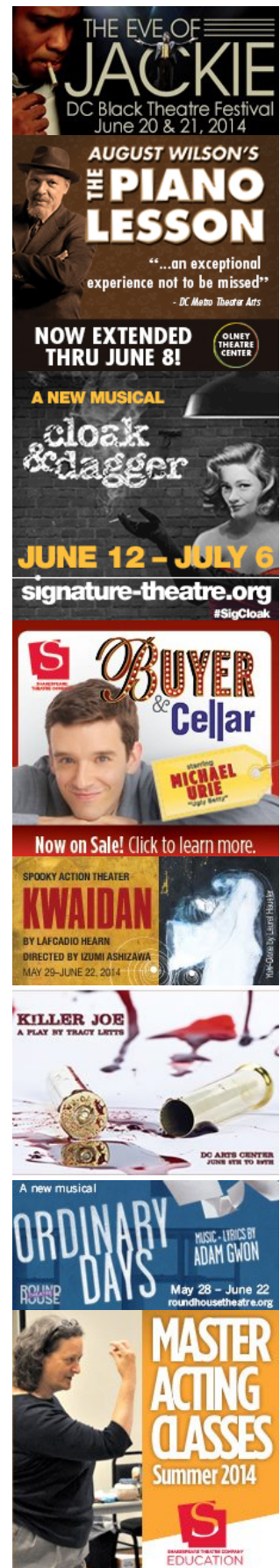
At any rate, that sentiment of hope and optimism is splashed aggressively in your face from the opening minutes of Round House Theater's production of *Ordinary Days*.

The play is the work of Baltimore County local Adam Gwon. But *Ordinary Days* isn't a parochial work. Adam left the region for NYU's Tisch School of the Arts straight out of high school, and it's only now that the much-proclaimed work is being performed in his home state of Maryland.



Edgerly as Deb and Samuel Edgerly as Warren (Photo: Danisha Crosby)

*Ordinary Days* captures two loosely intertwined vignettes of young adults in New York City, the first of which tells the story of Warren and Deb. Warren (Samuel Edgerly) is an artistically-minded idealist, less struggling and more expecting to find his place in the big city. When we meet him, he's working in the service of a presently incarcerated artist, living the hipster-lifestyle as a cat-sitter and glorified personal assistant. His days are spent handing out fliers for the artist he serves (unpaid, it would seem) and drawing meaning from everything from photographs to journals that he finds on the street.



Deb  
(Erin

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Weaver), on the other hand, is the ultimate over-achiever. First in her class in high school, she rocketed through college and grad school. We find her waist-deep in a thesis on Virginia Woolf, and she's entirely consumed by the project. It's left her callous and single-minded, with a sharp edge that puts her barely on the right side of sanity. But for all her obsession, Deb leaves her thesis research on the subway by accident – where it's found by none other than Warren.

And thus the meeting between the hopeless optimist and the grad student is set.



Janine DiVita as Claire and Will Gartshore as Jason (Photo: Danisha Crosby)

The second vignette involves Jason (Will Gartshore), a love-struck young man and the woman he's eagerly moving in with, Claire (Janine Divita). For her part, Claire is *far* less eager, and while the romance smolders from

the beginning it unceremoniously fades away as time carries on. Jason fights to save the relationship, but Claire is clearly at wits end over how to escape a perfectly likeable guy who she just doesn't love back.

It's a hell of a town.

The play itself is a musical, and all four of the players are

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tremendous. The score is entirely performed through the players and a lone pianist (William Yanesh), and the numbers largely range between upbeat and soaring (this is, after all, a play lathered with optimism).

Erin Weaver's portrayal of Deb is perhaps the most memorable performance. She brings a spiciness to Deb that is sometimes sassy, sometimes cutting, but mostly a laugh riot. As for Samuel Edgerly's Warren, he's believably naïve, but without the eye-rolling effect that such a worldview can sometime invoke.

Will Gartshore and Janine Divita are both strong and believable as Jason and Claire, respectively. And while they're clearly the targets of the play's message – as opposed to our apostle for optimism, Warren – their storyline is one that's compelling nonetheless because Gartshore and Divita have committed to selling it hard.

At its core, *Ordinary Days* is a generational piece. For Warren and Deb, it's a story of being launched into a world where jobs are hard to come by, hard work is largely unappreciated and great minds are dwarfed by the big city around them. But their response and the growth they show is really the story. Sure, sometimes you want to choke Warren as he waxes poetic about a piece of art, and Deb would be too prickly for most of us in the real world, but these two learn a lot from one another and they skillfully share it with us without being *too* preachy along the way.

Likewise, Jason and Claire might very well be the products of ten years living in the reality that Deb and Warren explore for us. They're slightly older and more established, but still have many of the same longings and desires as well as a lingering sense of wonder.

### **Highly Recommended**

#### **ORDINARY DAYS**

**Closes June 22, 2014**

**Round House Theatre – Bethesda**

**4545 East-West Highway**

**Bethesda, MD**

**1 hour, 30 minutes, no intermission**

**Tickets: \$35 – \$50**

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Of note, the men in *Ordinary Days* are the swooning romantics and the women either aloof or callous. That may be a refreshing switch on the way men and women are often portrayed or an annoying reminder that the play was written by a man. Either way, it was interesting nonetheless.

More than anything I was struck by the fact that I largely forgot myself while watching the play. Let's face it: Reviewers can't just enjoy. They have to analyze as they go. And while that often means taking notes so you won't forget what you saw, I found myself foregoing the notebook so I wouldn't miss a moment of what I was seeing.

So be it. I grinned, laughed and (once or twice) sniffled my way through instead of working, and I loved every minute. *Ordinary Days* is truly short and sweet throughout, with something important to share.

Now, don't get me wrong. The play's bubbly nature is akin to spending 90 minutes alone with an eager, idealistic, fresh-out-of-college 23-year-old. If your natural response to such an encounter is a jaded muttering or a sprint for the exit, *Ordinary Days* might not be for you.

And if so, fine. But humbug on you! *Ordinary Days* is a delight. Don't miss this one.

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**Ordinary Days** . Music and Lyrics by Adam Gwon . Directed by Matthew Gardiner . Featuring Janine DiVita, Samuel Edgerly, Will Gartshore, and Erin Weaver . Musical director: William Yanesh . Scenic designer: Misha Kachman . Costume designer: Frank Labovitz . Lighting designer: Justin M. Thomas . Sound designer: Eric Shimelonis . Props master: Andrea Moore . Stage manager: Bekah Wachenfeld . Produced by Round House Theatre . Reviewed by Jon Boughtin.



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