

This review appeared online on October 2, 2014, at abeastinajungle.com, a professional website dedicated to San Francisco performing arts reviews.

The Late Wedding: Fully engaged

By John Marcher

Playing out like a dream in which playwright Christopher Chen converses with Italo Calvino about his own past, present, and future relationships (both real and imagined), and staged with a knowingness recalling Joe Frank's *Work in Progress* radio program, *The Late Wedding* excels at uncovering emotions, often uncomfortable ones, without transferring that discomfort onto the audience. Chen has enough confidence in his sharply delineated observations to let them find their own way into the audience's psyche without resorting to anything heavy-handed and under the direction of Marissa Wolf he appears to have the perfect accomplice. The humor is sharp and mature, and Wolf lets the ensemble take their time in order to make sure impressions go deep and emotions reverberate. The play frames the relationships of the characters within non-traditional marriages, mostly homosexual, which on one hand seems intent on making a point, yet on the other proves there really is no point to be made. Straight, gay, lesbian— these relationships would be the same, and they would *feel* the same, regardless of the actor's gender. A cast of highly talented equals perform multiple roles: Michele Leavy, Lawrence Radecker, Lauren Spencer, Michael Anthony Torres, Kelly Zdan, and Ogie Zuleta.

[*The Late Wedding*](#) is one of the best plays I've seen this year, creating some serious magic during its 85 minutes. There's no true plot, but rather a series of interconnected vignettes. That doesn't stop Chen from letting the audience know what's on his mind, nor does it prevent him from expertly guiding them through a maze of emotions which concludes at a point of remarkable depth. The dialogue is overly self-conscious, deliberately theatrical, and frequently delivered in the second person directly to the audience, but comes across with uncanny realism, even at its most absurd. And all of it works amazingly well under Wolf's direction on a gorgeous set by Melpomene Katakalos under expert lighting by Stephanie Buchner.