

Recommended New Review (Theater and Comedy) Marnie & Phil: A Circus Love Letter

Marnie & Phil: A Circus Love Letter

When: Through 3/20: Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM

Price: \$15-\$25

Taking a cue from Beckett, this show written and directed by House Theatre of Chicago member Chris Mathews opens with a playful if grumpy pair bemoaning their present state: "I was handsome once," "I was pretty," "[Age] happens to the best of us." Soon the story moves back in time, and we meet aspiring aerialist Marnie and clown-in-training Phil as 13-year-olds in circus school together. Jeremy Sonkin plays a hard-core trainer who reminds his troupe of the three enemies of the circus arts: "gravity, time, and inertia." We next see the couple in their 30s, when we follow them as they travel across the world, maintaining their long-distance love affair with touching letters. The show features beautiful musical numbers written by Kevin O'Donnell, and asks big questions about what it means to be an aging performer forced to bear up despite dwindling opportunities and "the crushing, ubiquitous weight of it all." —**Suzanne Scanlon**

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