

# Holiday theatrical fare at opposite ends of spectrum

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Akron Beacon Journal, Ohio.com

Dec. 16, 2015

Heading into the Christmas break, I recently took in two highly enjoyable holiday-themed shows at opposite ends of the theatrical spectrum, one being Magical Theatre's adaptation of *Cinderella*, set on Christmas Eve, and the other an adult one-woman show about the perils of dating during the holidays. The latter play, *The 12 Dates of Christmas*, is continuing at Rubber City Shakespeare at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

The comedy features the lovely Elizabeth Allard as Mary, who takes audiences through 80 minutes of tumultuous tales as a single woman searching for Mr. Right. The work is a partly autobiographical account by Columbus native Ginna Hoben, a New York-based actress who premiered the one-woman show in 2010 at American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Va.

The Ohio references are fun, as is the direct Ohio connection: Rubber City artistic director Dan CT Leasure knows Hoben and first saw her perform her show when he was an intern at American Shakespeare Center. Allard breaks the fourth wall and addresses the audience directly in this Northeast Ohio premiere, portraying a number of characters in Mary's life that include family, friends and dates.

The show starts out with heartbroken Mary discovering that her fiance is a philanderer who kissed another woman on national TV during the Thanksgiving Day Parade. Her life has just fallen apart but she soon throws herself into the dating world.

Allard enacts the series of dates Mary goes on over 12 months, ranging from the absurd to the seemingly dreamy, and puts an ornament on a small Christmas tree to mark each month. The actress employs just the right level of sarcasm as Mary becomes increasingly cynical, dating everyone from a commitment-phobic doctor to an ex-con.

Her tales are full of irony, which makes Mary all the more fun. One of Allard's most comical moments comes during Mary's rant about her sister's wedding.

*Twelve Dates* is as fun and flirty as Mary, a modern-day woman who won't settle for just a warm body. The show has a solo type of *Sex and the City* premise, but without the pure outrageousness and high fashion of those girls' exploits. The comedy, which contains some profanity and references to sexual situations, is recommended for mature audiences only.

These tales of dating disasters leave us with this note of hope: Happiness just may be found when you're not looking so hard.

*Twelve Dates*, which has been produced internationally from England to South Africa, also has been produced in Cincinnati and at CATCO in Columbus, where the playwright performed it.

Tickets cost \$14 or \$12 senior citizens and students. See [www.rubbercityshakes.com/tickets](http://www.rubbercityshakes.com/tickets) or call 234-252-0272. The theater is at Summit Artspace, 140 E. Market St.