

FEATURES

[Photo File](#)
[Stein's Way](#)
[Leaders of the Pack](#)
[Going for Gone](#)
[Space Case](#)
[Loose Lips](#)
[Star Bright](#)
[Weiss Guy](#)

[More Features »](#)

REVIEWS

[Stoppard Goes Electric](#) New York

[You May Go Now](#) New York

[Sweeney Todd](#) San Francisco Bay Area

[America LoveSexDeath](#) New York

[Penny Fuller: Friends In Deed](#) New York

[Steve Ross: Good Thing Going](#) New York

[Walmartopia](#) New York

[Lights Rise on Grace](#) New York

[33 Variations](#) DC Metro

[Rites of Privacy](#) New York

[More Reviews »](#)

[Peter Filichia's Diary](#)
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 Wednesday, & Friday

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TM REVIEWS Sep 10, 2007

New York

You May Go Now

Reviewed By: [Dan Bacalzo](#)

Bekah Brunstetter's delightful new comedy *You May Go Now*, playing upstairs at the 45th Street Theatre, contains the kind of inspired lunacy found within the wackier works of Christopher Durang and David Lindsay-Abaire. This darkly satiric take on marriage and child-rearing includes plenty of odd characters, dark secrets, and hilarious dialogue.

The play begins with Dottie (Ginger Eckert) teaching Betty (Melinda Helfrich) how to make white icing for a cake. Betty isn't a particularly good student, although she does have an enormous curiosity about things that Dottie doesn't wish her to know -- which includes just about everything, seeing as how Dottie has kept the girl freakishly sheltered. Although the action takes place in the present, Dottie has raised Betty as if they were living in the 1950s, and has tried to teach her how to be a stereotypically perfect housewife.

The two women have a playful affection for one another that goes a little beyond the bounds of mother-daughter intimacy. Still, Dottie announces that in honor of Betty's 18th birthday, she's sending the girl out to experience the world on her own, and literally throws her out of the house. The next scene, which introduces the character of Robert (Ben Vershbow), completely upends everything that you thought you knew about Dottie, and shifts the action into darker territory. **The plot twists keep coming as Betty returns, followed by the arrival of Philip (Justin Blanchard), who carries a gun and is pursuing Betty for reasons of his own.**



Melinda Helfrich, Ginger Eckert, and Justin Blanchard in *You May Go Now* (© Rachel Roberts)



Director Georgie Broadwater stages the play as a rollicking farce, filling the action with amusing bits of business and a few unexpected entrances from unlikely places. He's aided in this by set designer Tristan Jeffers, who is able to cram a surprisingly detailed and somewhat retro domestic interior onto the rather tiny stage.

Helfrich has terrific comic timing, an expressive face, and a superb vocal delivery that makes nearly everything Betty says hysterically funny. However, the actress also gives her portrayal a solidity that allows for a convincing shift into more serious territory towards the end of the play. **Blanchard is wonderful as Philip; he has a quirky unpredictability that helps to keep the tension taut as the play's mysteries unfold.**

Eckert is good with her more comedic scenes, but forces things a bit too much with her more dramatic material. Part of the problem may be that she doesn't seem to have any chemistry with Vershbow's lackluster Robert, making their scenes together oddly flat. This is the production's main weakness, as it affects

the flow and energy of the play. **Still, there's plenty to enjoy in *You May Go Now*, which on the whole is immensely satisfying.**