

## TIME OUT SAYS

**TUTA Theatre Chicago at DCASE Storefront Theater. Written and directed by Kirk Anderson. With ensemble cast. 1hr 40mins; no intermission.**

### **Theater review by Kris Vire**

“People never tired of repeating: ‘Happy the man who wins her love! He could not find a better wife.’” So the world says of the unnamed wife of Monsieur Lantin in Guy de Maupassant’s succinct short story, and the adoring Lantin couldn’t agree more. He basks in her charms and marvels at her ability to stretch his meager civil-servant income, tut-tutting only at her love of the theater, which tires him, and costume jewelry, which he considers gilding the lily. It’s only once he loses her that he—arguably—finds reason to question their love.

Kirk Anderson’s charming new adaptation fills out the spare story quite a bit (de Maupassant’s original is just a bit over 2,000 words), fleshing out Lantin (Layne Manzer) as an introverted workaholic who blossoms under the attentions of his bride, here named Emily (Carolyn Molloy).

Anderson’s staging contains striking touches of visual and aural surprise; a terrifically whimsical touch is the outfitting of ensemble members with tape decks to create an immersive soundscape of city life. An interpolated fable about a bird with a broken wing (Dave Belden) and the girl who rescues him (Lauren Demerath) reflects Anderson’s interpretation of the central relationship but feels out of place. But Manzer and Molloy craft compelling, sympathetic central performances, leaving admirably open the question of what makes love virtuous.

**BY: KRIS VIRE**

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