

REVIEW: Much to love about 'Megan Gogerty' at Riverside Theatre

By Marcella Lee
Cedar Rapids Gazette, 11/22/08

IOWA CITY — Hold on to your hats! Megan Gogerty is in town, holding forth at Riverside Theatre in a two-hour, no-holds-barred one-woman show. "Megan Gogerty Loves You Very Much" premiered Friday night, with the playwright as solo performer.

Megan who? one might well ask. Gogerty's name is not exactly a household word. But her list of awards and projects, both here and abroad, is impressive. Clearly, this 30-something writer is a keen observer of the world around her, with a wry sense of humor that sparks her many hilarious spins on the human condition.

Subtle she is not. Gogerty is all over the stage, arms flailing to make a point, mostly standing up but sometimes sitting cross-legged on the floor. Directing her observations to the audience in a sort of ongoing confessional; she's like a female version of Dave Barry.

From the start, Gogerty identifies herself as a full-blown liberal feminist Democrat. She adores Hillary Clinton with a passion — until she is smitten by the oratorical magic of Barack Obama. It's hard for her to change alliances, but she does. She is now Obama all the way.

The first half of the evening is devoted to Gogerty's experiences in Los Angeles where she goes to find a job, find herself, find a mission in life. None of this seems to happen. At an 70 minutes, this half is too long and could do with a bit of editing.

But when Gogerty returns to her Iowa roots, the material gets very funny. Her description of the Wednesday night farmers market or shopping at Hy-Vee is spot-on for accuracy.

And then there are the caucuses. With her keen eye for observation, she gives a play-by-play account of how a caucus works (or barely works in the case of the Democrats). John Edwards' followers are relegated to the library of the elementary school in a huff, while the Obama forces take over the whole gym.

It's all great fun. But nothing can trump the about-face change of tone and demeanor when she sees her newborn son smile at her for the first time. All bets are off now. Here is a woman smitten with a deep unending love — the intensity of which she has not experienced before. It's a beautiful moment.

Megan Gogerty is sharp, observant, sometimes caustic, but always funny. Happily, she never steps over the bounds of good taste. She leaves you with the thought that here is a bright, engaging young woman whom you would like to know better.