



## Definitively Funny

Chava Leiba Sneiderman - February 2010

I have no idea why “MazelTov Cocktail” is classified as a comedy. Don’t get me wrong—the show was hilarious. Every few minutes my friend would nudge me, laughing, and say, “It’s true! That always happens!” But the emotion that Jamie M. Fox expressed through her character moved me more than anything else. The distinct sniffles throughout the room got really loud toward the end of the off-Broadway show, and my eyes would not stay dry as Fox, playing the protagonist Lissy, said goodbye to “the brother she always wished he was.”

**Jamie M. Fox is on fire—and not only because her hair is bright red—this woman is talented. Not only did she write the show “MazelTov Cocktail” which is showing at the McGinn/Cazale Theatre through February 20, but she also performs it as the sole actress in myriad parts; each with its own distinct voice and body language.**

**The beginning of the play is light and funny and starts with a surprise when Fox comes in from the aisle talking on the phone. She was so realistic I found myself thinking she was unprofessional. But it was all part of the act. Before we get to know Lissy and understand the volatile undercurrents of her relationship with her parents, we laugh at her mother’s tactlessness and neglect.**

**Afterward I could hear the crowd buzzing: “The mother reminded me of my grandmother!” and, “My mom’s also on Weight Watchers!” We can all relate to that stereotypical self-deprecating Jewish humor, and we can’t help but laugh at things like, “Hey did you hear? Mom lost .08 pounds!” or, “Yes Ma! I took my sandwich! No I am not lying! Yes I ate it!”**

**Lissy, who probably represents Fox’s real life persona to some extent, wants to make it big as a producer, yet is stuck waiting on her boss hand and foot. She will never move up because Lissy makes the boss’s life too easy. Lissy is forever trying to please others and we see that this is impossible as she moves from her self-obsessed boss to help her unfeeling criminal of an older brother.**

**Overwhelmed, Lissy quits. She quits her job. She quits trying to sustain a one-way relationship with her brother. She quits trying to please her parents who want Lissy with nothing less than a nice Jewish doctor and a few Jewish grandchildren in the picture.**

**The story is heart-wrenching. Some of the funniest jokes are made at the most climatic moments when we are too busy holding our breaths to laugh. How can we, when Lissy explodes with traumas that have been accruing for a lifetime and her mother asks if she wants a mozzarella stick? (“But they are zero points!”)**

**If UrbanDictionary.com defines a Mazel Tov Cocktail as “A potent and surprisingly drinkable alcoholic beverage made up of cheap kosher wine and gin,” then I will define the show as “a funny but surprisingly potent one-woman performance made up of cheap kosher parents and Fox’s wit.”**