

FOREVER HOUSE by Tony
Abatemarco

This in-depth, theatrical study of a young, gay couple buying their first house, their "forever house", is told from the viewpoint of a gay playwright, director and actor of impeccable credentials and reputation, Tony Abatemarco. An almost empty living room with that "just moved in" look (set by John Iacovelli), has the lovers, Ben (James Liebman) and Jack (Michael Rubenstone) dizzy with anticipation, planning and decorating while occasionally pondering their commitment to each other as well as to a thirty-year mortgage. In pops one of their neighbors, Gloria (Elyse Mirto), the busybody president of the Earthly Delights Homeowners Association. Her veiled comments leave no doubt about how she feels living in close proximity to people different from the usual suburbanites. However, a visit from their tippling real estate agent, Bill (the hysterical Joel Swetow), is a comic delight. In their nesting fervor, the boys make plans for a possible adoption. Ben is the calm level-headed one, the diametric opposite of Jack, a man with issues by the bucketful, He

hears strange noises, thinks the house is haunted and is so tightly wound, we fear for his sanity. And, he does not handle disappointment very well.

In Act II, we meet Mrs. Grossman, (Dale Raoul) Jack's stereotypical Jewish mother who can be a bit annoying but is also quite funny. She treats Ben with sincere affection and confides details about Jack's problematic childhood. We also make the acquaintance of a neighboring couple, Pete and Francine (the excellent Swetow and Mirto, in dual roles), devout Christians whom the boys welcome into their home during an emergency (sound and lighting by Peter Bayne and Jeff McLaughlin, respectively, video by Nicholas Santiawgeo, costumes by Terri A. Lewis).

What we glean from *Forever House* is, that aside from the fact gay couples will probably have to deal with a few ignorant bigots, they are not so different from heterosexual ones. They bicker, they fight, they kiss, they make up. They contemplate starting a family and endure adoption complications. Director Elizabeth Swain is fortunate to have an extraordinary cast that is both convincing and affecting. The play is well worth seeing except too long. Personally, I could have done without the video sequence through *Gayland*. But, maybe that's just me.

Skylight Theatre Complex, 1816
1/2 N. Vermont Avenue, Los
Angeles 90027. Fridays 8:30 pm,

Saturdays 8 pm, Sundays 3 pm.
\$30 - \$34. Street parking. (213)
761-7061 or [The Skylight Theatre](#)
ends 2/28

REVIEW BY INGRID WILMOT

