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When Harry Met Barry

Paul Emelion Daly
Above the Stag Theatre
3 May–11 June 2017

This light-hearted comedy musical has nothing to do with the film *When Harry Met Sally* apart from the title twist. Indeed it should be called *When Harry Re-met Barry* for not only is it a revival of [a show last seen in London when Above the Stag staged it at its previous venue](#) six years ago but Paul Emilion Daly has rewritten some of it (including deleting a manipulating cupid) and this isn't the title pair's first acquaintance.

I don't know if it is better, it's the first time I have seen it, but it is certainly fun with its story of TV chef Harry re-encountering a friend from teen days, now a lawyer. They are both of them about to get married: Harry to a guy who's a fashion designer and Barry to a nice girl from a bookshop, but something is rekindled between them. It's not for nothing that Barry gave Harry a ring and he is still wearing it.

With 20 numbers or reprises, song carries much of the story, with fast-flowing lyrics and regular rhyming it is pleasantly tuneful rather than memorable. "Why Ask for the Moon" (when the sun is shining) adds a real touch to this romance, though "What do I have to do / to get a screw" is even more down-to-earth.

Designer David Shields provides a setting that reflects the lives of all four of its characters with a rather twee image to start with that helps set the style of Stephen Dexter's direction and induce a mixture of self-identification and indulgence, though that's hardly needed when the cast make the characters such good company.

Brandon Gale is Harry, fed up with being lonesome, Austin Garnett Spencer his rather camp designer fiancé. Sam Peggs plays the straight-seeming Barry and Maddy Banks as his girlfriend Alice is delightful. Daly doesn't linger over broken hearts and makes sure there's a happy ending. This isn't a show full of gay angst but a relaxed and enjoyable night out.

Reviewer: [Howard Loxton](#)