

# 2 Pianos 4 Hands



At the Colony Theatre

Reviewed by Jon Steely

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As targets of the Hollywood machine gun, we don't often have the opportunity to watch a story where the dreams that you dare to dream really don't come true. Typically, closing credits roll and a feel-good soundtrack blares to make us believe that we all have what it takes to do the impossible. Well, not this time. Instead, playwrights Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt embark on a different kind of journey: funny, at times sad, and, for most of us, all too real.

Richard (Roy Abramsohn) and Ted (Jeffrey Rockwell), seated at grand pianos, tell the loosely autobiographical story of Dykstra's and Greenblatt's rise to musical anonymity, through wonderful comedy and very good, but not quite concert-quality, classical piano playing. And this is the point of the play: Even after years of tyrannical piano teachers, competitive recitals, and relentless

discipline and sacrifice, Richard and Ted must face the fact that they are merely good, not great.

Director—or, given the circumstances, conductor—Tom Frey strikes the right chords to effectively chronicle the ups and downs of these two: children filled with resentment at their parents for making them practice scales when they'd rather be playing hockey, teens with grandiose dreams of piano stardom, crushed adults forced to accept that their names will never be mentioned along with Bach and Beethoven.

Playing a variety of roles—including music teachers, parents and the main characters at various ages—Abramsohn and Rockwell are magnificent, their comedic banter and strong performances remaining as consistent as the clicking of their metronomes throughout the show.

Part concert, part conversation, part sitcom, the sum of 2 Pianos 4 Hands adds up to a wonderful and very worthwhile night of theater and fine piano—the featured music a nice sampling of compositions by major classical composers. The play's theme echoes the words of another piano man, Billy Joel: "And you know that when the truth is told that you can get what you want or you can just get old. Dream on, but don't imagine they'll all come true."

*Presented by and at the Colony Theatre, 555 N. Third St., Burbank. June 20–July 26. Fri.–Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 and 7 p.m. (Added performances Sat., 8 p.m. June 27 and July 11. Thu., 8 p.m. July 16 and 23. No performances July 3–5.) (818) 558-7000, ext. 15 or [www.colonytheatre.org](http://www.colonytheatre.org).*