

Selected Press For “Any Second Now” (2006)

Any Second Now was the first show that Joanne O’Sullivan and Chris Earle developed together.

**The Toronto Star:
Nice Girl Finishes First
Any Second Now
Richard Ouzounian**

By Joanne O’Sullivan. Directed by Chris Earle.

As he was about to breathe his last, the story goes that tragedian Edmund Kean uttered the line: "Dying is easy, comedy is hard."

But had he lasted until the present day, with glib stand-up artists holding mics everywhere you look, he might have changed it to "Comedy is easy, honesty is hard."

Fortunately, Joanne O’Sullivan manages to combine both honesty and comedy in her one-woman show, *Any Second Now*, which opened last night at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts.

On the surface, there is nothing extraordinary about the tale O’Sullivan has to tell. As her story commences, she's in her mid-30s, waiting for her life to begin and feeling she's stalled in the wilderness of career and personal emptiness that haunts many people of that age.

When she starts out by sharing memories of botched adolescent romances and ventures into stories about speed dating and on-line romances, you'd be forgiven for sighing and thinking you've heard it all before.

Kill that thought immediately.

It only takes a few minutes to realize that O’Sullivan is a true original, in the best sense of the word. She doesn't try to overwhelm you with a pasted-on personality or bludgeon you into laughter with manufactured quirkiness. She's just a very sweet woman who looks at life from a slightly different angle than the rest of us.

She has one thing that makes her totally endearing and very different from most comic monologists and that's warmth. When she writes her on-line dating profile, she says she's looking for a man who could get along with her father. Well, you have the feeling O’Sullivan would be someone you could bring home to meet the

'rents without a moment's hesitation.

Don't let me make you think she's sticky sweet or horribly wholesome. Although she has a certain innocence about her, she can tell stories about the "Slurp Wall" where guys pleasure guys that curl your hair. She just does it nicely, that's all.

Any Second Now takes us through her romance with a younger man she calls "The Chunk," noting that the difference in their ages makes her look on him as "a calendar with a nice ass." They have their ups and downs but she narrates their relationship with a breezy candour that blames nobody when things go wrong.

She also talks about her entry into the world of episodic television, rising from coffee girl to script writer in record time. O'Sullivan makes herself the butt of most of her jokes, but when you notice that she winds up successful, you wonder who was kidding who all along.

Chris Earle has directed it all with a calm, loving hand and Steve Lucas has provided lighting that's just right.

Many solo comedy shows leave you exhausted. *Any Second Now* inspires. "Look at me," O'Sullivan seems to be saying, "if I can get the guy and the job, then so can you."

She's a nice person to spend an evening with. Drop by and check her out.

See Magazine, Edmonton:

Any Second Now

4 Stars

Tom Murray

She posits herself as an awkward , neurotic mess, but Joanne O'Sullivan sure knows how to use it, happily guiding the audience through her brief fling with speed and online dating, minor cosmetic surgery, and the disappointment that was her first kiss, which in her adolescent mind she thought would be the event that would finally kick off her adult life. Now *there's* a a setup bound to scar a young woman, and O'Sullivan a self professed "Good Girl" - deals with her mortification the way that generations of funny people have, by mining it for comedy gold.

Her choice of subject matter- interwoven anecdotes about her ongoing struggles as a professional entertainer and a single woman in her mind 30's could have easily yielded banal sitcom-style humour, but instead this Toronto actor/writer/comedian is wryly and sometimes brutally funny.

Edmonton Journal:
Any Second Now
3 1/2 stars
Sandra Sperounes

Any Second Now recounts one woman's fears -- of being single, of dating a younger man, of aging, of failing at her new job, of hurting the feelings of an unknown online pervert.

It sounds like the makings of a bad chick-lit novel, but TV writer/comedienne Joanne O'Sullivan is much more wry and sympathetic than any fictional character.

She's shy, awkward and desperate to attain certain "life markers" -- which she defines as getting a job or finding a boyfriend -- without realizing her journey is more important than her destination.

As such, there's no tidy, happy ending for O'Sullivan, just an endearing one-woman Fringe show.

Selected Press For "The Sexy Dance"

The Sexy Dance was Joanne's first Solo show.

Eye Magazine
THE SEXY DANCE

Written and performed by Joanne O'Sullivan.

Four Stars

The Sexy Dance is Joanne O'Sullivan's one-woman exploration of love, loss and dating. Yeah, yeah, you say, so tell me something new. What's new is that O'Sullivan is a funny, *funny* woman. Not just-a-chuckle funny, but laugh-out-loud hilarious. Funny enough that I spent most of the nearly 90-minute show anticipating the next laugh even while I was still guffawing over the previous gag. O'Sullivan is bright, insightful and very sexy -- even when not doing her titular dance.

O'Sullivan's character, Diane Hicks, is a kinda goofy painter who hasn't completely shelved her adolescent awkwardness around guys. She cites the death of her mother at a young age as a major factor in her romantic development -- her need to find unconditional love, her desire for a confidante. The passing reference given to such a weighty subject does not render it trivial.

Rather, O'Sullivan's Diane speaks like a real person, someone who allows moments of melancholy to invade otherwise exciting events in her life. What might have been a thinly disguised stand-up routine about a first date is given substance by a background story revealing what has led up to the momentous occasion.

It's a story director Carol Lempert (*That Dorothy Parker, Dating Myself*) gives O'Sullivan plenty of space to tell. The futon, dresser, kitchen sink, easel and offstage bathroom are all given fair time -- each location bringing out a different element of Diane's personality and helping to prevent the monologue from becoming overly introspective. They also allow for the audience to note changes in body language and energy levels as she anticipates the arrival of her date. O'Sullivan's frequent acknowledgement of the audience adds energy and flow, and helps to eliminate the voyeuristic element so often present in a one-person monologue.

Humorous and sharp, O'Sullivan's true talent lies in her ability to create a thoroughly likeable character. For example, she frames Diane's obligatory negative body-image remarks with an awareness that, from a thin person, most people don't want to hear it, then turns her complaints into one of the night's best jokes. -- JOANNE HUFFA