

FringePVD, July 2018

Complex Theatres, March 9 2017

The Sherry Theatre, March 10 2017

Sacred Fools, March 11 2017

Capital Fringe Festival, July 2016

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Project Description

A real life scene is re-enacted in excruciating detail. "It started when a friend sent me a written copy of a breakup conversation," says artist Clint Bagwell. "I was challenged to find actors who would re-create the event and interpret it in their own way." Names were changed and gender roles were allowed to reverse. Each cringeworthy 45 minute performance uses the same script, but is uniquely delivered by a different combination of male and female performers.

The play follows "Cameron" and "Dale" as they rehash their brief but intense encounter. *A Breakup Is Swift* promises nothing profound in the words that are spoken; instead the actors offer a hyper-realistic portrayal of two people talking in an honest way. The project uses personal interaction as source material, in the same vein as artist Sophie Calle, while reveling in the uncomfortable but naturalistic dialogue of so called "mumblecore" flicks like *Drinking Buddies*.

About the Artists

Clint Bagwell utilizes public space, technology, and collaboration to explore the notion of reality as a social construct. His conceptual work has been exhibited at Southern Exposure Gallery in CA, Impakt Audiovisual Arts Festival in the Netherlands, Collective Unconscious in NY, and University of Mary Washington in VA. Clint Bagwell received an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute and a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. He has taught at Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Mary Washington, NOVA Community College, and Howard Community College.

Nycole Bell (playing Dale) is a graduate from Christopher Newport University with a concentration in Psychology. She has worked with The Little Theatre of Alexandria most recently being nominated for her role as Helen in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. She is children's fitness instructor and local high school cheerleading coach.

Alex Beveridge (playing Cameron) is a DC based actor and musician. He graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelors in theatre. Select previous credits include *Eurydice* (father), *The Schooling of Bento Bonchev* (Bento), *Avenue Q* (Brian), and various touring children's productions.

Angie Menendez (playing Cameron) is a graduate from Christopher Newport University with a BS in Environmental Biology. After graduating she realized her passion for theater and acting. Since then she has taken courses at the Little Theater of Alexandria and more recently, has been studying at the Cheryl Felicia Rhoads Northern VA Acting school.

Richard Johnson (playing Dale) is an actor based out of Maryland. His credits include various indie projects and most recently: Just That Sort of Day and Bridge and Tunnel at 10 X 10 X Infinity Short Play Festival, as well as Ghosts at 2018 Capital Fringe Festival.

Previous Cast

Lily Richards is a Los Angeles based actress and writer. She recently graduated with Acting and Marketing degrees from Emerson College where she starred in over 15 productions including the world premieres of *We Are Pussy Riot*, *The Listener*, and *On My Honor* with EmersonStage. Additional Boston credits include *All This Intimacy* and *Hot N' Throbbing* with Rareworks Theatre Company, *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Charlottes Webb* with Kidding Around Theatre Company, and *Mad Cow* at Boston Playwrights Theatre. Recent Los Angeles credits include Dasha in Thee Oh See's music video "The Axis," The Consultant in LACMA and Gabe Barcia-Colombo's collaboration "The Hereafter Institute," and the role of Victoria in the science fiction podcast "Paradoxica."

Miles Hartfelder is an actor and singer based in Los Angeles. He recently graduated from California Institute of the Arts and is a member of The Silver Lake Chorus. Past credits include an appearance on *VEEP* and several indie films. You can also catch Miles singing along to a Bill Withers tune in a recent Google commercial.

Sarah Elizabeth Doerner recently moved from Denver, Colorado to California to pursue her BFA in Acting for Film and Television at the Relativity School in Los Angeles. Some of her recent credits include Makenzie in *That Poor Girl and How He Killed Her* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center, Hunyak in *Chicago* and Lucy in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* at Breckenridge Backstage Theatre. She has also had the incredible opportunity to perform at Lincoln Center twice for "Parade" as a member of the chorus and for the English Speaking Union's Shakespeare Competition.

Keenan Harpham Reilly is an LA based actor and writer. He graduated from the California Institute of the Arts with a BFA in Acting in 2015, and is currently featured in the comedic Facebook series "Couchtalk TV w/ Ian & Keenan." Keenan considers himself "an entertainer with a lot of heart whose work speaks for itself."

Ben Kleymeyer is a theatre artist and director in the DMV area. He recently graduated from the University of Maryland's School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance studies. While at UMD he worked as the artistic director of the Maryland Shakespeare Players where he directed *A Queer Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Macbeth*. Ben recently joined the Kennedy Center Directing Intensive Program as an assistant director.

Elle Marie Sullivan earned her degree in theatre from the University of Central Florida and has studied at Stella Adler Studio of Acting and International Performing Arts Institute. She is an Associate Artist at InterAct Story Theatre and currently can be seen in Stillpointe Theatre's production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*.

Nick Duckworth studied acting at UC San Diego and, more recently, has trained with DC's Studio Theatre. He has been featured in a variety of theatre and film projects in the DMV area including A&A's stage production of *Do You Pray or Prey?*, the upcoming film series *Thirst*, and ID's *Evil Kin*.

Gabby Jones has worked with the NYS Theatre Institute (including a staged reading of *King Alfred's Jewels* directed by Adrian Mitchell) and the Rising Action Theatre Company in their production of *Burning Blue*. Gabby Jones wrote, edited and directed *Voices in the Aftermath*, which showcased reactions of various artists in the days following 9/11. Gabby was also the stage manager of the Capital Fringe production.

Maggie Murphy received her BA in theatre from the University of Mary Washington. Her past roles include Dorine in Moliere's *Tartuffe*, Poppy Norton-Taylor in Michael Fryan's *Noises Off*, and Eurydice in Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*. She is unbelievably grateful for the love and support of her family and friends.

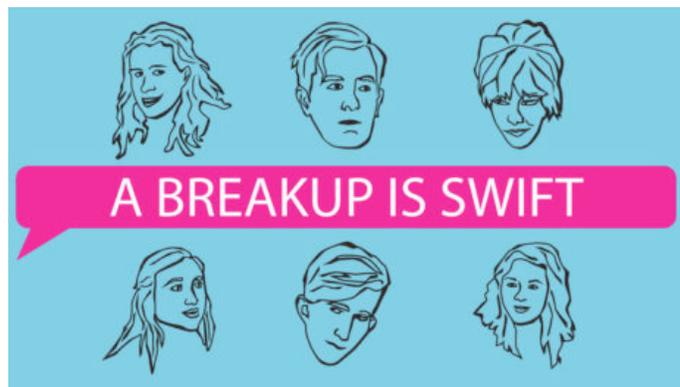


2016 Capital Fringe Review: ‘A Breakup Is Swift’

By Benjamin Dennis on July 9, 2016

In the thick air crevassing within the Martin Luther King Jr. Library basement, there’s some heated tension, worthy of addressing. Cameron (Nick Duckworth), and Dale (Ben Kleymeyer) are in the middle of one of life’s inevitable, awkward instances; a breakup – and it’s not so swift. Originally derived from a boy/girl text conversation, stage artist, Clint Bagwell has lifted the virtual messages of an ending relationship, into a heightened theatrical piece that is memorably gender-defied.

A Breakup Is Swift is performed with two opposing personalities; Kleymeyer dons a black, jean jacket – adorned with colorful campaign-sized buttons – while Duckworth is buttoned inside a rainbow-plaid, collared shirt – their wardrobe contrasts their individual responses throughout the answer-seeking transmission. Dale is fore front about his sexual desires, and innocent defensiveness, while Cameron exists in a world where he feels obligated to justify every one of his ‘reasons’ for ending a three-week relationship.



Bagwell has done a great service in maintaining modern, theatrical movements – the “script” is gender-neutral. The opening performance of *Swift* casts an eye on two men, played by Kleymeyer and Duckworth; two parties handling a typical breakup situation. Exuded by familiar bantering, the most eye-opening moment comes when conservative audiences, wonderfully realize that the physical appearances of Bagwell’s actors are meaningless – their respective genders are translucent via the underlying texts.

A Breakup Is Swift is a snowflake of a performance; no two are alike. Additional actors set to delve into the roles of “Cameron” and “Dale” are Elle Sullivan, Gabby Jones, and Maggie Murphy. The five performance dates introduce varied, actor interpretations of the same conversation. Depending on when you decide to mosey yourself to the MLK Library, prepare for a realistic conversation of awkwardness and appropriate humanism.

Running Time: 45 minutes, with no intermission.

A Breakup Is Swift is playing through July 17, 2016 at MLK Jr. Memorial Library: A:3 -901 G Street NW, in Washington, DC. For tickets, call (866) 811-4111, or purchase them online.

RATING: ★★★★★ **Best of the 2016 Capital Fringe!**

From Capital Fringe: Richard Nixon and a 'real' breakup

By Washington Post Staff July 12

The personal and the political are freely flowing so far at the Capital Fringe Festival. Roger Catlin reviews the Richard Nixon solo show "Secret Honor," and Amanda Erickson checks in on the semi-real "A Breakup Is Swift."



Ben Kleymeyer and Elle Marie Sullivan in "A Breakup Is Swift" at the 2016 Capital Fringe Festival. (Clint Bagwell)

"A Breakup Is Swift"

What would it look like to have your humiliating breakup play out before an audience? It would look a lot like "A Breakup Is Swift."

The show at the MLK Library downtown echoes an actual split experienced by playwright Clint Bagwell's actual friend. After a particularly grueling separation, said friend wrote down everything uttered; Bagwell made some tweaks to disguise the lovelorns' gender, then turned the experience into a script.

It's obvious -- much of the dialogue feels like something I've said or could have said or heard from someone while falling out of love. There are lines like, "So here's the thing. I don't think that we should see each other anymore." "This isn't the right match." "I'm doing the right thing for both of us" (a classic of this mealy mouthed, mundane genre).

That mumblecore realism is admirable, but limiting. The splitters in question (ably played by Nick Duckworth and Ben Kleymeyer) have known each other for only three weeks. Their breakup touches on big themes -- what makes a pair compatible, when is vulnerability a strength, are we always "acting" in a relationship -- but offers little insight (much like our own breakups often leave us scratching our heads).

Then again, I might need to come back. A set of five actors will cycle through the show over the course of Fringe. The actors I saw will play different parts. Men will be paired with women; women will be paired with women. The hope is that this scrambled casting will illuminate something new in the roles.

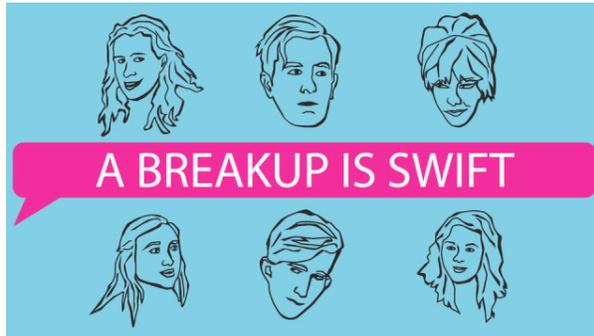
I'm not sure the characters are complex enough for this experiment to pay off. But I admit, I'm curious.

-Amanda Erickson

Hip Shot: *A Breakup Is Swift*

The awkwardness of a real-life breakup is presented in various ways in this funny, if not cringeworthy Fringe production.

ALAN ZILBERMAN — JUL 13, 2016 11 AM



They say: Ready to bum out? A real life breakup conversation provided by a friend is re-created in excruciating detail. Names were changed, genders roles allowed to reverse. Each performance features a naturalistic, yet cringeworthy interpretation by a different pair of actors.

Alan says: Before the play starts, its creator Clint Bagwell introduces the material with “Enjoy the awkwardness.” Indeed, break-up

conversations—the real kind, ones that mix hurt feelings with a desire for understanding—are stilted, messy affairs. Bagwell’s two actors ably capture that feeling, so *A Breakup Is Swift* is quickly relatable, and funnier than I expected.

Bagwell’s conceit is simple: each breakup script is the same, but the actors change in every performance. Two men, two women, and one man/woman perform the same material; Bagwell wants to examine how different actors and gender combinations can change the same dialogue. In the version I saw, **Dale (Ben Kleymeyer)** is broken up with by **Cameron (Elle Marie Sullivan)**.

Cameron starts the breakup quickly, and Dale does not respond with anger or histrionics. He speaks quietly, accepting the information as best he can, then they dissect their relationship. She offers reasons for the breakup, and gets his licks in, too, pointing out some of her flaws. They discuss the meaning of text messages with the kind of detail that’s exhaustive and real. The breakup lasts into the night—Bagwell divides the show into three scenes—and by the end, it’s unclear whether they’re more at peace than when it started.

Did I mention that the play is funny? It is. To the credit of Kleymeyer and Sullivan, they never seem like they’re in on the joke. The humor is due primarily to Cameron’s utter lack of self-awareness: self-aggrandizing and conceited, she stumbles through a discussion about how she great she is, and how it is a burden that she keeps attracting the wrong type of guy. Kleymeyer is more conventionally funny, deflecting his hurt feelings with profanity or skewering Cameron’s reasoning. *A Breakup Is Swift* includes a secret between the couple, one that is gradually revealed, and it colors what happened in an important way. We understand their impasse before Dales does.

Admittedly, in my breakups over the years, I’ve been on the Dale side more than the Cameron side. Come to think of it, I think most of the audience identified with Dale since all the laughter had a tinge of bitterness. I don’t mean that negatively: *A Breakup Is Swift* is intimate and revealing, so the halting dialogue arrives at rarely acknowledged wisdom. By enjoying the awkwardness, the audience finds solace that, yes, we’ve all been there before.

See it if: You’re not bitter about your relationship status.

Skip it if: You’re still pissed at your ex.



Capital Fringe 2016: A Breakup Is Swift

by Rachel Kurzius in Arts & Entertainment on Jul 18, 2016 10:05 am



*Elle Sullivan and Ben Kleymeyer in A Breakup Is Swift.
(Photo courtesy of Capital Fringe)*

Reminds us of:

A very compelling case for ghosting.

Flop, Fine or Fringe-tastic?

Fringe-tastic.

Artist and director Clint Bagwell says that the script for *A Breakup Is Swift* is a real breakup conversation between a couple that dated for "three intense weeks," sent to him by one of the participants in the talk. "Enjoy the awkwardness," Bagwell advises in an introduction. And oh, did I ever.

Each performance of the show features a different pairing of actors switching up the roles, so you could catch a same-sex couple, or a

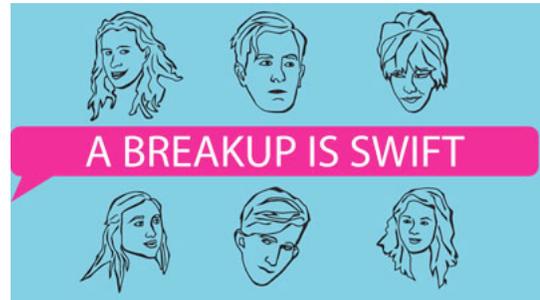
straight couple where a woman does the heartbreaking, or vice versa. The version I saw had Elle Sullivan as Cameron, breaking up with Dale (Ben Kleymeyer). Cameron tells Dale she wants to end it, expecting the conversation to be short, but he isn't ready to call it quits yet. "I'm just trying to make sense of it," he says. "Tell me about the incompatibilities."

What follows is a brutal—and brutally funny—back-and-forth. He wants her to accept her culpability, whereas she wants to preserve her sense of herself as a kind person. It makes for riveting theater because so much of relationships are performance anyway, whether to one another, our partners, or the other people in our lives. As the great Joni Mitchell says, "Love is a story told to our friends." I can't wait for more of *A Breakup Is Swift*, to hear the story told in a new, yet achingly familiar, way.

A Breakup Is Swift is playing at Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library: A3 on Tuesday July 19 at 7:15 p.m., Saturday July 23 at 4:15 p.m., and Sunday July 24 at 2 p.m.

In an age where relationships begin with a swipe to the right – based on select photos and carefully written profiles – how do you really know you've gotten to know the real person behind the digital façade? What do you do when the initial excitement dies and you're left with someone you don't recognize? These are the questions asked in Clint Bagwell's new play *A Breakup is Swift*.

As mentioned in his curtain speech, Bagwell has taken a transcript of a friend's real life break up conversation and recreated it on stage. And here's the really interesting part: at each performance, a different pairing of actors will play the two roles, switching up the genders. He hopes to see how the many different interpretations change the experience of the piece.



At the opening performance, Nick Duckworth played the clean-cut improv actor Cameron who is attempting to break up with the agitated artist Dale, played by Ben Kleymeyer. When Dale picks Cameron up from the train station for a romantic weekend, he is blindsided by Cameron's revelation that he wants to end things. Cameron expects the conversation to be short, but Dale refuses to let him off the hook that easy, and they head to Dale's place to discuss the minute, awkward details of their breakup.

As Cameron says at the beginning of the play, "I've heard a breakup is swift," and perhaps this one should have been as well, both in terms of the action in the play and the audience's experience of it. Even running under 45 minutes, the breakup lingers longer than needed.

It is important to note that the relationship in question is only three weeks old. To many, three weeks is barely long enough to even warrant the term "breakup." Which means the intricacies of the conversation can only go so far. Arguments quickly devolved to petty finger pointing, with neither of the gentlemen budging from his side. I was waiting for the bomb drop, for things to get ugly, or for a revelation that would lead to a higher conflict – but it never came. There was no waffling in decision from Cameron, leaving Dale to just snipe comments about the unfairness of it all.

Regardless, the play does delve into some interesting questions of culpability when a young relationship hits the rocks: did things move too fast? Is it the fault of the one who took it to the next level or the other who sat by and agreed when their heart wasn't fully in it? How do we navigate those challenging yet crucial early days as pretenses and hormones begin to fade, and we start to see the real person in front of us?

Played ultra-realistically, Duckworth was convincing as the feeling but determined Cameron, just wanting to get out of the room and out of the relationship. Kleymeyer's Dale was effectively awkward and downtrodden with the tendency to laugh off the situation in self-preservation.

The tech elements supported the show well. Lighting and sound were used effectively to convey the various locations as well as when the car was moving or sitting still.

While perhaps not a revolutionary breakup experience, *A Breakup is Swift* is a realistic look at a conversation between two people as their time together comes to an end. And this is only one facet of the larger event: who knows how the experience will differ with two new actors at the helm – it would be worth seeing more than once to get the full effect!

Hi, I'm Fringe :: Interview with *A Breakup is Swift* and *Over Her Dead Body*

Written on July 15, 2016



Clint Bagwell is a visual concept artist and the director of A Breakup is Swift. Actors Ben Kleymeyer, and Gabby Jones both play the same character in the play's intimate conversation between a couple in the middle of splitting up.

CB: Our project takes the conversation from my friend's real-life breakup, and uses that as the material. We changed the names but we also realized that if we leave the gender of each character open, different actors can interpret it different ways and tell a very different story. With our show work, each performance has a different pair of actors. Ben and Gabby play the same character, just perform on different nights, and the same goes for the actors playing the other character in the breakup. One night you'll see Ben getting dumped by a man and another night by a woman. We're encouraging people to see it more than once, so you can get the experience of seeing the same conversation with different relationship dynamic.

If you've ever wanted to eavesdrop on two people breaking up, and to see that intimate event happen then this is your opportunity. We try to make it very honest.

GJ: Breakups aren't always over the top or bombastic. Sometimes they are very subtle, and it's just something very human happening between two people. Being involved in that sort of space for 45 minutes and seeing that play out – there's a lot of beauty and definitely a lot of value in it. And in rehearsing this whole piece you really do go through it every time. It's emotionally draining.

BK: It's very cathartic, but I think the biggest thing I take away from this show is that it isn't black and white. It isn't like the person being dumped is the victim, and the person doing the dumping is the asshole. These are two people who both have issues, and maybe it is a good thing that this relationship is coming to an end.

We love to hear other people's breakup stories. It's important to remember that this is something we all go through.