

# LAWEEKLY

**NEW REVIEW** THE GOOD BOY Playwright-author Michael Bonnabel's pleasant solo show is an elegiac description of an LA childhood, of growing up as one of five siblings, whose parents were totally deaf. Within the mostly familiar tale of an otherwise typical suburban family, Bonnabel depicts much of the universal affection and pathos of growing up in the Boomer Era, with the slight twist that his mom and dad's deafness provides an additional challenge: The young siblings are frequently forced to act as interpreters and ambassadors to an often cruel and uncomprehending outside world. Bonnabel's love for the subject matter shines through director Darin Anthony's crisp, evocative staging, which is both intimate and yet smoothly assured. Yet, while many elements of Bonnabel's tale are emotionally moving, other incidents are prosaic, clearly of importance to him, but not quite connecting as powerfully with the audience. As a performer, Bonnabel's sincerity is consistently appealing - and the show's emphasis on deaf themes elevates the traditional nature of the narrative. For instance, Bonnabel punctuates his story with delightfully tuneful musical numbers, which he signs in ASL for hearing-impaired audience members (He doesn't miss the irony of his discovering a love of music while growing up in a deaf family). Still, the story itself ultimately lacks dramatic heft, and, while touching, the work's conventional dramatic tropes (with touches of melodrama) make for an evening that's only fitfully compelling. Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St., dwn.twn.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m.; thru May 29. (866) 811-411. (Paul Birchall)