

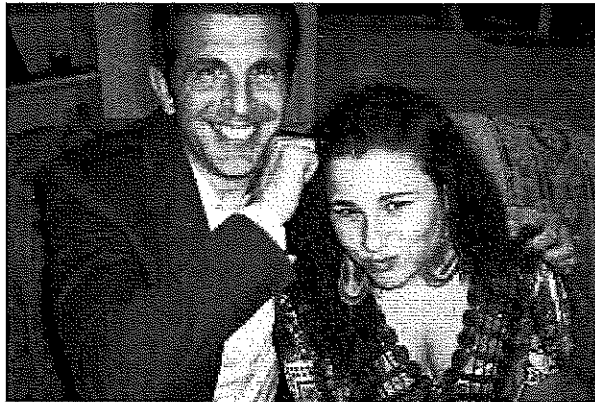
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## 'The Tin Woman' review: She has their son's heart

October 14, 2015 By STEVE PARKS [steve.parks@newsday.com](mailto:steve.parks@newsday.com)



Brian Gill with his character's sister, played by Cassandra Dupler, in "The Tin Woman" at BroadHollow's BayWay Arts Center, East Islip, through Oct. 18, 2015. (Credit: Marian Waller)

The author bills "The Tin Woman" as a "heart-warming comedy." Maybe that's supposed to be a wry joke. Sean Grennan's last play seen on a BroadHollow stage was "Making God Laugh," a "comedy" about Alzheimer's. His latest -- I call it a drama -- is about a 30-something woman who receives a heart

when hers fails. The transplant donor was her age. He died in a car accident. Joy, ironically, is miserable. Thinking she's undeserving, she writes to the donor's family, seeking connection with the stranger's heart that beats within her.

A laugh riot, eh?

But wait. There's more. Hank, father of Jack the donor, is just as miserable. He realizes, too late, that he barely knew the son he loved. Hank isn't keen on meeting Jack's heart recipient. He wants no part of what he calls a "made-for-TV movie." It seems evident that the author planted the line so we know that he knows what we're thinking. (Grennan conceded in an interview after "The Tin Woman's" 2014 premiere that the plot germinated from a newspaper story.)

In an effort to keep the play's cloying tendencies at bay, Grennan introduces a persistent case of crying out loud. Jack's sister can't stop bawling like Lucille Ball at whatever transpires. But the diversion is unnecessary. "The Tin Woman," delicately directed by Marian Waller, makes a compelling case for how ordinary people might behave under extraordinary circumstances at home and in a hospital (Bob Butterley's appropriately maudlin set). Carrie Heffernan as Joy takes us along convincingly on her emotional bumper-car ride -- from feeling sorry for herself in her recovery bed, to putting on a brave face as she meets her donor's family, to dismissive anger at Hank's hostility.

Scott Hofer as Hank makes us feel for him, even after he makes us feel like wringing his neck. His flashback scene with Jack would break the hardest of hearts. Emily Nadler as Alice, Jack's mom and Hank's beleaguered wife, exemplifies stoicism wearing thin. Cassandra Dupler's

crying jags fail -- it's not her fault -- to justify those "comic" moments, while Heidi Hecker adds needed context as Joy's friend. But without Brian Gill, the (mostly) silent specter of Jack looming over his family's lack of closure, there would be far less heart to the drama.

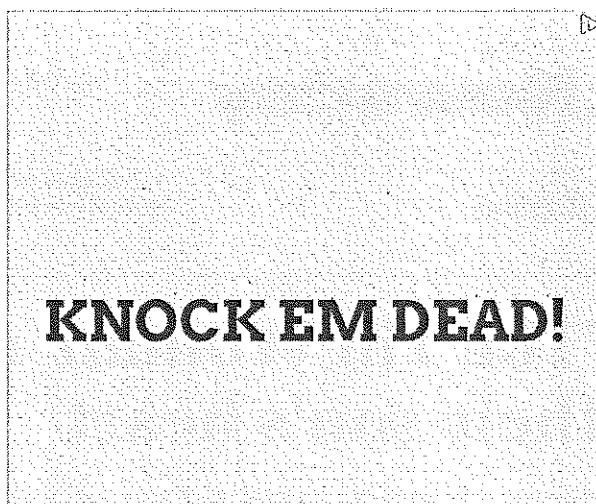
"The Tin Woman" is no comedy. But it is heartwarming.

**WHEN | WHERE** Saturday night at 8, 2:30 p.m. Sunday, BayWay Arts Center, 265 E. Main St., East Islip. Also Nov. 14-29, BroadHollow Theatre at Elmont, 700 Hempstead Tpke.

**INFO** 631-581-2700, 516-775-4420, [broadhollow.org](http://broadhollow.org)

**TICKETS** \$14-\$25

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