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'Coastal Disturbances' at Fells Point Corner Theatre by Amanda Gunther

March 3, 2012 Amanda Gunther [Reviews](#)

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Human relationships are like the sea; they ebb and flow crashing upon the sand washing away as if they never existed. Fells Point Corner Theatre sets up a unique experimental study of such relationships with their production of *Coastal Disturbances*. Directed by Jay Gilman, this series of scenes flashes through many instances of relationships; friend to friend, mother to child, ancient lovers, and summertime romances. It is a series of flashes on the stage, loosely connected to one another through the characters and their shared setting of

the beach; each scene like a wave— the same and yet different as it washes upon the shore.

Scenic Designer Katie Callahan creates a vacation getaway on the stage. Real sand, a full-size extra large lifeguard chair, and a little wooden walkway leading down to the beach set the perfect scene for this production. The walls are awash with murals of blue and white to simulate the sky; the beach itself looking out to the audience as if we were the sea. Combining her work with Sound Designer Dan Cassin, the audience enters the theatre to the sound of soft waves rolling onto the shore and all you can see is this stunning live beach seen before your eyes. It really captures the essence the play's location and creates a stunning backdrop for various relationships to unfold; a safe place to play for the children, a secure place to discuss friendships, a romantic spot for making-out, and a fond memory to celebrate past occasions. Callahan and Cassin make a fantastic team having created this fantasy escape on the Northern Shores of a Massachusetts private beach.



Holly Dancer (Maddie Hicks) and Leo Hart (Michael Alban). Photo courtesy of Fells Point Corner Theatre.

The relationships vary in the most astounding way as this play explores the true dynamic of human nature. The characters' stories are only related in so much as they keep encountering one another on the beach. There are subtle mentions of previous existences, Faith (Kate McKenna) knowing Holly (Maddie Hicks) from so many summers ago, etc. We see a fun and exciting playful friendship blossom between two children; Winston (Jacob Jedynek) and Miranda (Destiny Brown.) The children play well together; acting almost like siblings as they spend the summer together at the beach. Jedynek is the ever antagonizing boy, chasing Brown around the beach, trying to play tin-can phone with her. The children steal the scene during Holly's initial photo shoot, especially Brown where she really hams up her poses in a true youthful fashion.

Their mothers, Ariel (Elena Kostakis) and Faith (Kate McKenna) work through their friendship as Kostakis's character is going through a divorce and is depressed while McKenna is expecting her first non-adopted child. These two women simply provide comic relief at times, encountering young lovers in the middle of the trysts, and each have their own bizarre mini monologues of incredibly inappropriate comparisons regarding live child birth. Their interactions with the children are most strongly shown through Kostakis's dependence on her son, played by Jedynek, to pull her through tough times and she spends much of her stage time either reprimanding him for being a mischievous boy – or hugging him and simpering how she would never make it without him.

And of course when children grow up and get married and spend their long lives together they become the proverbial old married couple. This relationship is not forgotten in the show, reflected through Dr. Hamilton (Jonathan Claiborne) and his wife M.J. (Jill Vanderweit.) These two actors are the epitome of an old couple in

their prime, retired to the beach and set in their ways, bickering over simple things like collecting seashells and painting. They show a true connection on a much deeper level with their simple gestures and gazes at one another like a real married couple of many years. It is probably the most stable and adorable of all the relationships presented in this show.

And then comes the big one – the summer romance that was never meant to be. You have Holly (Maddie Hicks) a photographer who is in the middle of a breakdown and Leo (Michael Alban) who has taken a job at the private beach because he's just ended his engagement of three years. The chemistry between these two characters is immediately apparent even if their first handful of encounters is extremely awkward. This nervous tension build between the two until it erupts into fiery passion shared late night on the beach.

Hicks is prone to emotionally unstable outbursts and she expresses these outbursts both physically almost in tantrum with spastic gestures and vocally by crying and screaming to the point where she almost can't be heard. She's a bit too dramatic at times, working herself up into a frenzy over nothing and everything all at the same time but it fits the character's notion of breaking down. Alban on the other hand is calm and collected, having only one outburst when he takes to burying Hicks in the sand to profess his pent up feelings. Hicks and Alban share an intimate rollercoaster of emotions as they explore the boundaries of their characters' new relationship and are perhaps the focal point of the show. Watch out for scene stealer Andre (Brian Douglas) – a mystery man who shows in at the very end of Act I, in a much more significant way than you could possibly imagine.

So go, learn about life, love, and the beach, and enjoy the sound of the waves indoors in this chilly winter and see *Coastal Disturbances*.

Running Time: 2 hours and 15 minutes with 1 intermission.

[Coastal Disturbances](#) ended its run on March 4, 2012 at Fells Point Corner Theatre – 251 South Ann Street, in Baltimore, MD. The remaining 2012 schedule is [here](#).

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About Author [Amanda Gunther](#)

Amanda Gunther is an actress, a writer, and loves the theatre. She graduated with her BFA in acting from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and spent two years studying abroad in Sydney, Australia at the University of New South Wales. Her time spent in Sydney taught her a lot about the performing arts, from Improv Comedy to performance art drama done completely in the dark. She loves theatre of all kinds, but loves musicals the best. When she's not working, if she's not at the theatre, you can usually find her reading a book, working on ideas for her own books, or just relaxing and taking in the sights and sounds of her Baltimore hometown. She loves to travel, exploring new venues for performing arts and other leisurely activities. Writing for the DCMetroTheaterArts as a Senior Writer gives her a chance to pursue her passion of the theatre and will broaden her horizons in the writer's field.