

Written by Thom White
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Brad Hauskins elicited the largest laughs during Friday's performance of *Spreading It Around* at the Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse, starting with the moment he first walked onstage with his frozen-hip shuffle. His psychologist character Dr. Ward doesn't actually appear until the middle of the second act of this comedy, which concerns the efforts of the widow Angie to share her wealth (and that of her fellow retirees) with those in need, rather than leaving it to their ungrateful children. But with little stage time, Hauskins squeezes out every ounce of comic possibility from his role, relishing his awkward pauses, and dryly delivering his lines with the slightly high-pitched, mildly shaky voice stereotypical of the elder person he's portraying.

Beyond Hauskins' moments on stage, though, I laughed little during the play, and when I did, I merely mustered a chuckle. The audience, however, tittered a lot throughout the show, apparently amused by the clichéd jokes about the elderly that I didn't find funny. (The tagline for Angie's philanthropic non-profit is "Seniors doing it together while they still can." Ugh.) Playwright Londos D'Arrigo's script does have a certain sitcom flair to it ... though "flair" is being too kind. The humor is flat, most of the characters are one-dimensional (particularly Angie's greedy son and daughter-in-law, who arrive to scheme the retired woman out of her money), and there are too many impossibilities that require suspension of disbelief. D'Arrigo has created a world where oranges grow from blossoms into full-blown, ready-to-eat fruit overnight, kind and gracious parents somehow raise wicked children, and a cast of colorful characters – far more interesting than the ones on-stage – are never actually seen, only described.

Money Makes the Worms Come Around: "Spreading It Around," at the Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse through

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