

The Humans: We're only human after all

The Humans, by Brown grad Stephen Karam and directed by The Wilbury's Josh Short, is originaive for several reasons. The script is clever, so while you're interjected into this typical family turmoil, there is comedic relief throughout. This is largely due to the spot-on timing by Rachel Dulude, who portrays daughter Aimee Blake. She makes light of her problems in self-deprecating style, which we can all appreciate. Also, Jim O'Brien as dad Erik Blake skillfully has us laughing throughout by using others as the butt of his antics.

Set and prop design by Monica Shinn, together with light and sound design by Andy Russ, are very innovative. The set is bilevel, with six rooms that have things happening spontaneously at various times like a life-size doll house (It can be a bit rough on the neck if you're viewing from the front row, so choose a rear seat if that might be an issue for you). This creates the occasional cacophony that is a bit hard to follow, as cast members purposely talk over each other, but these don't last long. Carol Varden portrays Fiona "Momo" Blake who suffers from Alzheimer's often yells out loudly, which lasts just long enough for you to empathize with the frustration the family feels. There are also sporadic loud bangs, which draw laughter after the initial fright.



The Blake family survives the holiday as they toast gratitude for Thanksgiving. Photo by Erin X. Smithers.

Costume design by Matt Oxley suits the personalities of each individual whether it be Dad's and Aimee's professional attire, mom Deidre Blake's (Jeanine Kane) and Momo's relaxed attire, or the more

bohemian-ish garb of daughter Brigid Blake (Jessie March) and her somewhat-older partner Richard Saad (Dave Rabinow).

Family can bring out the best and the worst in us as we gather for the feast. These folks run the gamut of feelings together as they tackle such topics of the human condition as physical and mental illness, money and joblessness, marriage and fidelity, heartbreak and disappointment, death and alcoholism. You will ride the roller coaster of impassioned emotions with them as they bob through the issues, and just might laugh and cry along with them as well! Despite some rough patches, the tender love and caring is there throughout.

“It feels really special going into the holidays with this production,” says March. “Some people might see themselves, or say thank God my family isn’t like that! Hopefully, everyone has someone they call family.”

The production runs through Dec. 18 at the Wilbury Theatre, WaterFire Arts Center. For more info, visit www.thewilburygroup.org.