

# Cary Players have their hands full with *How to Succeed in Business*

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Byron Woods

There are several reasons *How to Succeed In Business (Without Really Trying)* is so rarely staged: It takes a small army of actors on stage, a hot band and considerable resources behind the scenes when it comes to set, sound and costume design. Fifteen years ago, Raleigh Little Theatre staged a memorable, if hardly flawless, version of the work. With its current production, Cary Players, that younger community theater just up the road, clearly have their hands full as they try to scale its heights.

Music director Harrison Fisher got yeoman's work from his five-piece band, as an ensemble led by actors Kevin Roberge (who borrowed a bit too much of Robert Morse's clumsy grace as J. Pierpont Finch) and Sarah Winter (as his determined secretary/sweetheart, Rosemary) repeatedly endeavored to rouse a sated, sleepy audience during Sunday's matinee.

Bob Kulow's sound design produced one of the crisper mixes I've recently heard, and costumer David Serxner arrayed the cast with some of the most hideously amusing tributes to the benighted color palette of the 1960s. Various supporting characters were bedecked in garish variations on burnt orange, avocado and billboard-sized houndstooth, as Roberge toiled in a business suit in sharkskin plaid.

Musical standouts included Winter's winning paean to mid-century domestic bliss, "Happy to Keep His Dinner Warm." But with all of the repeats in Frank Loesser's dilatory score, energy repeatedly dipped during the one-hour-and-45-minute first act under Nancy Rich's direction, making this show a hard sell, even for a company that was really trying.

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