

Carnival

By Lawrence Bommer

Bob Merrill and Michael Stewart's 1961 musical comedy is well worth reviving--especially when the director trusts the text as much as Michael Ehrman does in this sentimental but never cloying Light Opera Works/Actors Gymnasium production. Lili runs away to join a carnival, then must decide between an illusionist (whose specialty is infidelity) and a puppeteer whose war wound soured him on second chances. Rekha Rangarajan's Lili is radiant and touching in her naivete, especially in "Love Makes the World Go Round." Appropriately, Rod Thomas's world-weary vet becomes more endearing, though his puppet characterizations reveal his kinder self early on. Also charming are the sideshow characters and acrobats, who deliver an irresistible one-ring spectacle. Through 6/12: Fri-Sat 8 PM, Sun 2 PM. Northwestern University, Cahn Auditorium, 600 Emerson, Evanston, 847-869-6300. \$27-\$75. Closing.