

Barefoot Theater Company: Emergency Used Candles

By [Jennifer Thompson](#), NY Dance Examiner

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"Sweeeeeeeethaaaaarrrt," Chiara Montalto cackles, transforming before our eyes from the twenty-nine-year-old brunette to her ninety-two-year-old grandfather with whom she lives.

In this one-woman play, *Emergency Used Candles*, both written and performed by Montalto and directed by Victoria Malvagno, the Barefoot Theatre Company shows us the strong relationship between grandfather and granddaughter through the granddaughter's eyes.

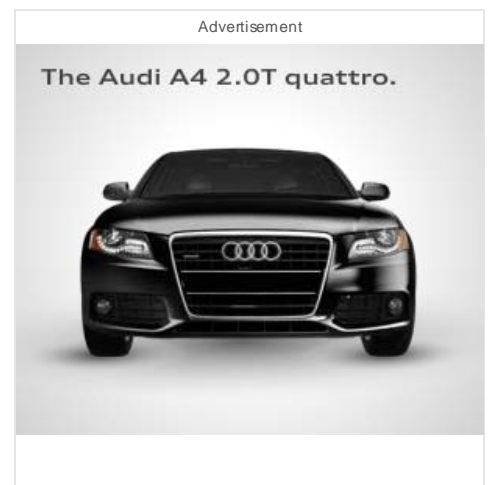
The generational differences provide much humor and are certainly relatable to the audience. We hear of Grandfather's constant requests to lower the heat four degrees, and his refusal to respond to any of Raphaela's (a woman very interested in him from church) cries for help...a.k.a dozens of voice messages. Meanwhile, the granddaughter's personal life is almost on pause as she spends all her free time watching *Law & Order* episodes with him and taking him to the diner for their weekly dinner out. Even bringing a man over for the night is an extreme and stressful challenge.

The performance of this relationship played by just the granddaughter is clever in its emphasis of how reliant and supportive the two are of each other: their lives are so closely intertwined. Montalto's shifts in tone of voice and body language play out the illusion of her character transformation. The occasional accents of the story with sound (designed by Eric Nightengale), whether it be a rooster, the famous "dun-dun" opening of *Law & Order*, or rock music playing while she cleans the house, provide atmosphere to the minimalistic set.

The checkered patch of floor in the quaint performance space at the Cherry Lane Theater is partly covered with an orange arm chair, a knit afghan draped along the top. Boxes are piled stage right – one, which we later discover, holds emergency used candles, that Grandfather says are important to always have "just in case." Stage left, cluttered around a lamp are stacked yellow legal pad notebooks. The backdrop is the image of one of these lined pads with one of Grandfather's famous lines written on it: "L.M.P (lemon meringue pie) is a deliciously that I cannot resist."

Amidst the humor and stories of surprise birthday parties and accidental emergency calls, the end touches us all as the sad, yet inevitable ending to this play unfolds, as death takes Grandfather, though no before he gets a last glimpse of his loyal, loving granddaughter.

Emergency Used Candles is presented at The Cherry Lane Theatre November 3rd- 20th.



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