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- event: **Six Characters in Search of an Author**

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Review

Time Out Chicago / Issue 175 : Jul 3-9, 2008

Six Characters in Search of an Author

Critic's Rating

Promethean Theatre Ensemble at **City Lit Theater**. By Luigi Pirandello. Dir. Joe Feliciano. With Kyla Embry, Jack McCabe, Michelle Zlatanovski, Marco Tazioli.

When this groundbreaking piece debuted in 1921, Roman audience members stormed out of the theater, insisting the author should be institutionalized; Pirandello and his family had to be escorted out. Yet subsequent productions were wildly successful.



ITALIAN ICE Tazioli longs for identity.

Even if you're not interested in exploring the self-conscious realm of metatheater and creative responsibility, this classic still holds up. When a theater troupe gathers to rehearse a Pirandello play, six fictitious characters arrive, abandoned by their author, and demand the right to tell their story. A bewildered cast of actors watches as the characters weave a tortured tale of sex and death. Pirandello mixes the right ratio of theory and conflict, to entertaining effect.

Promethean's production respects the work but doesn't add to it. Director Feliciano keeps the show at a steady clip yet misses crucial opportunities for humor and depth, while designer Caitlin McCown has crafted a basic, gardenlike set. The performances range from flat to inspired: Saddled with a Herculean portion of the exposition, McCabe succeeds in capturing his character's weary tragedy, but Zlatanovski's Stepdaughter seems performative and insincere. Embry shines as the spoiled peacock of Leading Lady, and Tazioli brings a dour fire to Son, who refuses to tell his character's story, justifiably terrified of its apocalyptic ending.

— Lisa Busceni

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