

The Bitter End presents

# Six Characters in Search of an Author

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a play by Luigi Pirandello

## Director's Note

Late last year I decided to try my hand at directing, and, for some unknown reason, Katherine and Elizabeth allowed me to direct my first show under their company, The Bitter End. I had no idea what show I wanted to do, but, in between exams, exchange applications and essays, I managed to read Luigi Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author. Immediately I was hooked by the premise of the play; six fully formed characters come to life in the midst of a rehearsal and play out their tragedy. The play constitutes what is known as metatheatre, theatre that examines its own existence. What better way to begin directing than by pulling apart theatre itself? Yet what truly inspired me about Six Characters was its layers; it examines the relationship between a work of art, its existence in performance and its relationship to reality; it asks us to question what is more real, a fiction which presents the absolute essence of reality or life itself? It is a witty, insightful and thoroughly entertaining work of theatre that beautifully mixes tragedy and comedy and offers a moving insight into the human condition.

I think my vision for the play is best captured by our motto: Nothing is Hidden. I wanted the audience to be aware of each individual element of theatre as they come together, and, more importantly, to question their own role, to see themselves as a character essential to the stage. For the performer, the challenge arises in creating a tension between the Actor and the Character; can the actors, always 'performing' their identities, truly be considered more real than the characters? Pirandello asks of both audience and performer, in life are we truly alive or merely playing out different roles, defining ourselves by single moments in our lives?

It is a challenging play to present, both from a production side and a performance side, and I could

not have done it without my extraordinary cast and crew. To my actors, thank you for believing in this play and in me. Thank you for being peacocks and sloths, fire and water, for punching, pushing and wringing, for carrying sandbags, for rhyming, for singing, for bippidy-bopping, and for always, always smiling. To my fabulous crew, thank you Jess for being so much more organized than me, thank you Ty for your tireless work and humour, thank you Mound/Jax for enjoying yourselves so much, and thank you Elizabeth for your amazing set and costumes, for putting up with my constant suggestions, and for doing all the hundreds of things I never would of thought of. And lastly, to my dear wonderful Katherine. The phrase "I couldn't have done it without you" is often thrown around, however I mean it in every sense of the word; thank you for supporting me, for challenging me, for speaking up and staying quiet, for late nights and early mornings, for telling me everything would work out, and most of all, for being such a wonderful person and a magnificent friend.

Before I part, I want to share one last sentiment; my greatest joy in this production has been the process of discovery. I mean this not only in my own discoveries as a director, but more importantly, in watching the cast and crew discover new ways of working, new experiences, new roles in theatre and new friendships. I hope that you, as the audience, also find something new in this production.

**Oscar Lopez**  
(Director)

## Cast

### **Davey:** David Miles

David has been involved in theatre since throughout high school and university, performing in shows such as Heat, Jesus Christ Superstar, Do or Die, The Pajama Game, Sweet Charity and RENT. Given David's typical bias towards theatre of the musical variety, Six Characters marks a foray back into straight theatre after long hiatus, which he has found immensely rewarding. David juggles his interest in theatre alongside full-time work and part-time study in Public Policy and Management. David is also currently rehearsing for New Beat Theatre Company's production of Parade.

### **Kat:** Katherine Hampton

When asked her main goal in life Katherine Anne Hampton simply replied: 'to be famous', and she won't let anyone stand in her way of achieving it (but if that falls short, a job in retail, specialising in coats and hats, is on the cards). Single after recently coming out of a whirlwind relationship with bad boy Cal, she has her eye on the glossy hair of the newest heart-throb in town, Jack. Although she isn't the least bit threatened by Toni and her experiences at NIDA, Kat is known for her jealous streak. And despite recent scandalous rumours, Kat is not a whore.

### **Jack:** Jack Nicholls

Jack was born amidst the gloom of mid-eighties London, and soon fled for the sunnier shores of Australia. He met Katherine Payne in primary school, and has since repeatedly taken advantage of her charity to procure roles in her productions. He had hoped that The Leading Man would be his big break, but the title of the role has proved misleading. Having finished a History degree at the University of Melbourne last year, he now dabbles in creative writing and unemployment.

### **Cal:** Caleb Samson

Caleb is a chronic disease caused by the bacteria Mycobacterium leprae and Mycobacterium lepromatosis. Caleb is primarily a granulomatous disease of the peripheral nerves and mucosa of the upper respiratory tract. Left untreated, Caleb can be progressive, causing permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes.

### **Toni:** Antoinette Kurban

Antoinette is a proud member of St Martins Youth Theatre community while undertaking study in their Foundation Ensemble and Performers Ensemble. She has recently appeared in plays and musicals such as 'The Suitcase And The Storm', 'Sickly Sweet', 'Refrakting' and will be appearing in her debut cabaret show 'Coffee With Miss Antoinette, the Cabaret Show' at The Butterfly Club later this year. She is currently studying dance at Jason Coleman's Ministry Of Dance and loves every second of it. She also drinks tea through a straw.

### **Ben:** Ben McMaster

Ben was called up at the last minute to play the Black Monk in last year's production of "The Killing Game". He has since rediscovered a love of theatre that first started when he finished high school and lasted up until 2005 when he had the lead role in "The Dillema of Watter Quandary" for the Australian Water Association. Ben is a multi-faceted artist and performer, having dabbled in areas as various as craft, fine art, music, theatre and street performance. He is currently carving out a career as a singer/songwriter.

## Characters

### **Father:** Joshua Lynzaat

"I would love to spend all my time writing to you; I'd love to share with you all that goes through my mind, all that weighs on my heart, all that gives air to my soul; phantoms of art, dreams that would be so beautiful if they could come true... But don't you see that the whole problem lies here in words? I present 'myself' to you in a form suitable to the relationship I wish to achieve with you. We think we understand each other but we never really do. Oh the dramatic theatre! I cannot enter into one without experiencing a strange sensation, an excitement of the blood through all my veins..." - Pirandello.

### **Mother:** Clara Pagone

Clara is an actress, writer and director. She directed "How to Direct from Inside" at La Mama Theatre 09 and produced, directed, performed and translated "Who Is Lindsay Boag?" for the 2008 Melbourne Fringe Festival, won numerous 2008

Dante Crash Test theatre awards, and was presented at "The Carnival of the Damned Funny" 08 Comedy Festival. She cherishes an intense study of Biomedical Sciences/Law, whilst co-running her production company REDLACED. She has been an Artistic Associate for St. Martins Youth Theatre.

**Stepdaughter: Eleanor Bally**

On several occasions, Eleanor has found herself to be confused about the meaning of this piece of theatre. In one instance, this confusion led to a questioning of her own consciousness. However, she's fairly sure that this production has been one of the most interesting and fulfilling she has ever been involved with. And she's almost certain that she's actually in love with everyone she worked with on 'Six Characters in Search of an Author'. Thanks for coming to see us, enjoy the show!

**Son: Harley Hefford**

"Harley Hefford sprang fully grown from the head of Oscar Lopez, one Sunday morning, already clad in armour. He was soon worshipped by the Greeks as the god of misunderstanding. Some of his favourite misunderstandings include when he wore a dress on dress-up day and when he acted like a street for hours, alone in his bedroom, convinced that he was performing street theatre. He decided to be a part of this play as he dreams of becoming a playwright, and figures that to do so, you have to be in plays, right?"

**Boy: Sean Scanlon**

Sean Scanlon is an MTC youth scholarship winner currently studying Theatre Arts at Victoria University. He enjoys spreading the rumour that he will be featured in a non-existent Dirty Dozen remake, usually to the local drunks at his place of work. Sean took on the role of 'The Boy' in order to challenge himself and reward friends and family alike with his extended silence. Sean plans to study in Canada at the end of the year for a semester to improve his understanding and appreciation of independent theatre. The two words Sean treasures above all others are "Ought" and 'Snagglepuss'

**Little Girl: Francis Grin**

Francis is one of the remaining creative arts kids at Melbourne uni - she's studying theatre and loving it. Origin-

-ally from Holland, she moved to Melbourne three years ago and can't get enough of the city. (Even though she sometimes misses those little Dutch pancakes.) This is her first time playing a four-year-old - but the role hits home. Francis, too, likes to sit around for hours and play with a stuffed Zebra while softly singing to herself.

**Madame Pace: Stephanie Dingnis**

Stefanie Dingnis is an experienced singer and musician, specialising in classical voice. She has extensive experience on stage, performing with the likes of Yvonne Kenny and Roy Best at the well known Opera in the Alps and Opera in the Market. Stefanie is currently studying a Bachelor of Music at The University of Melbourne. This is her first acting role.

## Synopsis

Rehearsal for The Game of Role Playing is interrupted by six strangers, claiming to be characters, cut adrift from their story and bringing with them a terrible drama. A Father, sends his Son away, creating an insurmountable gulf between himself and the Mother. He thus sends her to live with another man, with whom she has three more children, the Boy, the Girl and the Stepdaughter. When this new man dies, the Mother is forced to become a dressmaker for Madame Pace, who unbeknownst to her, runs a brothel and enlists the Stepdaughter into her service where she one day meets The Father as a client. Shocked at this realization, he invites the whole family to his house, and so the drama unfolds...

## Production Team

**Director:** Oscar Lopez

**Assistant Director:** Katherine Payne

**Stage Manager:** Jess Maguire

**Lighting Designer and Operator:** Tyrone White

**Music Composition:** Joshua Lynzaat and Max Piantoni

**Sound Designer:** Max Piantoni and Joshua Lynzaat

**Sound Operator:** Jess Maguire

**Muscians:** Jody Porter (Violin), Sonja Hornung (Cello), Max Piantoni (Guitar), Joshua Lynzaat (Piano)

**Sound Engineer:** Evan Gainsford

**Choreographer:** Tim Snowdon

**Set/Costume Design:** Elizabeth Payne

**Set Construction:** John Payne and Elizabeth Payne

**Costume Construction:** Katherine Payne and Elizabeth Payne

**Graphic Design:** Elizabeth Payne

**Front of House Managers:** Ruth Lonie and Katherine Payne

## Thank You

The Bitter End would like to extend a warm thank you to **The University of Melbourne Theatre Board** for their support and to Josie, Clynton and all the staff at **Union House Theatre** for their help and encouragement.

We would also like to thank Margaux Hayes, Corey Reynolds and Laura Harris for their help with Bump In and our Trivia Night.

We are also indebted to the following people for their assistance with Sound and Music: Bridget Graham, Stefanie Fusco, Tabitha, Wayne and Garth and the security guard who let Joshua bang things in the underground carpark at 3am in the morning.

We would also like to thank John Payne for his help with the Set construction, and Elsbeth Payne for her support and encouragement and for bringing this wonderful and interesting play to our notice.

Thank you for  
coming to see  
The Bitter End's  
production of

**Six Characters  
in Search  
of an Author.**

We hoped you  
enjoyed the  
performance!



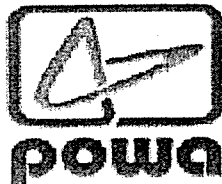
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