

new leaf



P.O. Box 30030 Chicago, Illinois, 60630 773-391-9800 newleaftheatre@hotmail.com

In The Spotlight Playwrights Series
An Idle King, Faultless, and Faster Than a Speeding Bullet
Written by Brandon Ray
Directed by Lila Stromer

REVIEWS

Chicago Reader, May 23, 2003

Bill Hyland –
Executive Director
Brandon Ray –
Artistic Director
Morgan Leavitt –
Artistic Associate
Tanya Ray –
Managing Director
Lisa Hyland –
Board President

In *An Idle King*, the first one-act on a program of three written by New Leaf company member Brandon Ray, an elderly couple consider their status as the only survivors among their circle of friends. In the second, *Faultless*, a blocked jazz musician gropes in vain for the melody that will win back his wife's love and respect. And in *Faster Than A Speeding Bullet*, Diana Prince and Hal Jordan aka Wonder Woman and Green Lantern encourage coworker Clark Kent to lighten up when it comes to off-duty romances.

Ray, who writes with an uncommon maturity and compassion, never patronizes his characters in the interest of showing off his own cleverness, instead maintaining a bittersweet humor about the ironies of the human - or superhuman - condition. And though last-minute cast replacements required a few actors to work from camouflaged scripts at the performance I attended, the players' expertise, under Lila M. Stromer's direction, made for personalities at once recognizable and individual.

Faster Than A Speeding Bullet rambles a bit, and the songwriter's spoken-word rhapsodies in *Faultless* need some fine-tuning. But the first entry in New Leaf's proposed annual local playwright series suggests it will be a fresh addition to the scene.

- Mary Shen Barnidge

NEW LEAF THEATRE