



Ensemble member Jeff Perry

The school at steppenwolf

Taught by members of Steppenwolf's world renowned ensemble, **The School at Steppenwolf** is a ten week acting residency for experienced actors who want to learn more about the ensemble traditions, values and methods that make Steppenwolf unique.

Residency runs June 11 - August 17, 2012

Application deadline February 10, 2012

Auditions will be held in Chicago and New York in March 2012.

For more information regarding **The School** and the inaugural **Acting Fellowship** visit steppenwolf.org/education/school or call 312-654-5667.

Theater

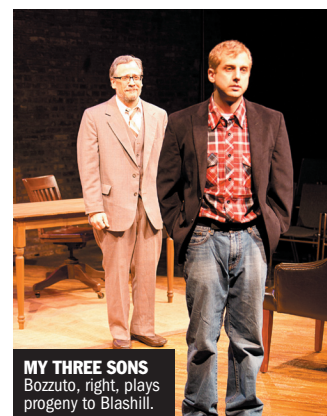
A Number



BackStage Theatre Company (see Fringe & storefront). By Caryl Churchill. Dir. Karen Kessler. With Patrick Blashill, Tony Bozzuto. 1hr; no intermission.

Caryl Churchill's neat but untidy cloning conversation piece, written in 2002 at the height of the Dolly-the-sheep media frenzy, is no sci-fi affair. The playwright instead uses the conceit of human cloning as a keenly focused new lens for viewing parent-child relations. At the play's opening, a young man (Tony Bozzuto) is telling his father (Patrick Blashill) about the unsettling news he's just received from the hospital: There are more of him out there. The revelation that his son has genetic twins scattered about—not just one or two, but “a number”—unnerves the father, but in a different way; his first move is to assign blame, to anyone but himself.

In BackStage's production, played out on scenic designer Angela M. Campos's claustrophobic, hexagon-shaped stage, Blashill is nicely understated as a once-failed dad who wanted to scrap it and start over again—surely an instinct many parents have felt at desperate moments, even if most wouldn't



MY THREE SONS
Bozzuto, right, plays progeny to Blashill.

dream of following through. Bozzuto sharply differentiates three characters who share the same chromosomes: One is timid and passive, another coldly violent, carefree and confident, each with his own subtly discrete physicality and vocal quality. Director Karen Kessler leaves a bit too much air in each of the play's five movements; even at one hour the production feels just slightly overinflated. But as Blashill crumbles under mounting guilt and, soon, grief, Churchill's harrowing bioethics fable leaves us with a number of things to chew on.—*Kris Vire*

Ironmistress



Oracle Theatre (see Fringe & storefront). By April De Angelis. Dir. Karen Yates. With Katherine Keberlein, Sarah Goeden. 1hr 10mins; no intermission.

“Transactions should be gray and without feeling, like iron,” says Martha (Katherine Keberlein), a widow who inherits her husband's iron foundry in British playwright April De Angelis's 1989 feminist verse drama. Written at the tail end of Margaret Thatcher's time as prime minister, *Ironmistress* examines the transformation a woman makes to gain authority in a male-dominated world. Martha is a Victorian Thatcher, presiding over her establishment with a rigid severity that is necessary if she's to protect herself from male competition.

On the eve of her daughter Little Cog's wedding, Martha takes a journey through her memory, reliving key moments of dominance and rebellion in her past. With its nonlinear structure and broad scope, De Angelis's script requires clarity, but Karen Yates's direction distracts from the story with its focus on stage pictures. The actors occasionally freeze in strange poses midconversation, cutting off



MOTHER-DAUGHTER BONDAGE
Keberlein, right, keeps Goeden on a short leash.

momentum and making it difficult to connect with the twisting dialogue.

Keberlein portrays Martha with a steely disposition that never bends; her lack of tenderness prevents a relationship between mother and daughter from fully forming. Sarah Goeden shows impressive versatility playing a range of characters, from a brash foundry worker to Martha's naive daughter, whose softness contrasts with the characters' bleak world.—*Oliver Sava*

PHOTOS: TOP, HEATH HAYS; BOTTOM, BEN FUCHSEN