

BY PHILIP BRANDES

A 'Bestseller' worth perusing

The essentials: Observing a writer at work might sound as engaging as watching paint dry, but playwright Peter Quilter has inventively met the challenge with his new comedy, "Bestseller." At an isolated writers retreat, struggling scribes argue and vent as their emerging crime thrillers and rom-coms spring to life in over-the-top enactments, amusingly exposing their personal foibles and creative limitations. Stage and screen veteran Wendy Worthington stars as the insightful hostess who understands her guests better than they know themselves.

Why this? International City Theatre's relationship with Quilter includes well-received productions of his biographical portraits: the tragically gifted Judy Garland in "End of the Rainbow" and the hilariously untalented Florence Foster Jenkins in "Glorious!" Despite its whimsical satire, this fictional follow-up is billed as celebrating writers' passion for "trying to be authentic in a world where everything is a lie."

Details: ICT at the Long Beach Performing Arts Center, 330 E. Seaside Way. 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, through June 30. \$47-\$55. (562) 436-4610, InternationalCityTheatre.org



TRACEY ROMAN

A SCENE from International City Theatre's new comedy "Bestseller."