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IMPERFECT LOVE

The tightrope between love and ambition is delineated with passion, charm, and wit in this retelling of the story of the great Italian actress Eleonora Duse and her playwright lover Gabriele D'Annunzio (here called Gabrielle Torrisi), written and directed by Brandon Cole. Cole also co-wrote last year's movie "Illuminata," which explored the same territory on a larger canvas; as a miniature, in which every detail counts, every aspect of this drama—from the sumptuous costumes to the perfectly turned lines to the splendid acting—is just right. The cast includes Leslie Lyles, Christopher McCann, Ed Hodson, Peter Dinklage, and John Gould Rubin. (New York Performance Works, 128 Chambers St. 969-0166.)