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Dispatches from The Fringe - I Am Martin Sharry inhabits spaces between spaces

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I Am Martin Sharry
Martin Sharry

I Am Martin Sharry

Rating: ★★★★★

On an old, scratched and worn table, centre stage, stand two clear, empty wine bottles and three clean jam jars. Protruding from each are twisted coat hangers with corks attached to their ends. Sharry says they are replicas of found items in his uncle's bedroom on the Aran Island of Inishere. To him they are objects of conceptual art. They may have no apparent rhyme or reason, nor do they need any, yet there they are nonetheless, demanding our attention and engagement. The same could also be said of *I Am Martin Sharry*, where concepts of art and alienation loom large in this disconcerting and brave one man show.

The set is simple. The aforementioned table, a microphone stage left and a computer stage right. Behind, a large drop down screen relays random photos of Islanders, seaweed, tabloid headlines and extracts from books. Sharry, who looks decidedly uncomfortable on stage and who

occasionally moves stiffly through the space, uses overly wrought verbose to tell his disjointed and fractured narrative. There is more of poetry and the novel here than script. His delivery is deadpan, devoid of emotional engagement, and helps reinforce a sense of alienation.

On the evidence of *I Am Martin Sharry*, Sharry would appear to be one of the dullest people to spend any time with in a bar. Aesthetically, he is one of the more interesting. Born and raised in Ballymun till he was seven, he was then raised on the Island of Inishere, with his grandfather and uncle who both shared the same name. With detours via Ballinasloe, Cork and Limerick Sharry returned to the Island to continue the family tradition of seaweed harvesting whilst also making theatre. But all this is incidental. Forget the talk of three generations and the loss of language. In truth, Sharry is a liminal creature inhabiting liminal spaces. As is his one man show, *I Am Martin Sharry*, which bravely inhabits the spaces between many worlds including those of theatre, poetry, prose and performance art. The result is not always sharp or engaging, it may not always allure or seduce, but in its stark, brave and disturbing honesty, its effect lingers long after you've left the theatre.



Chris O'Rourke

Tulsa Theater Examiner