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'Silent' is golden

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Pat Kinevane in Fishamble's *Silent*
Maria Falconer

Fishamble's "Silent" written and performed by Pat Kinevane and directed by Jim Culleton

Rating: ★★★★★

The 2016 Olivier Awards will fondly be remembered for Pat Kinevane's visceral reaction upon receiving the Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre for "[Silent](#)." Kinevane, along with director Jim Culleton, graciously received the award on behalf of themselves and Fishamble the New Play Company, before returning to Dublin with Larry for a bit of a party. Back in Dublin, with the party now over, Kinevane is taking his trilogy of excellence, "Forgotten," "Silent" and "Underneath," along with his Olivier Award on tour. Saturday night saw the Draíocht host the multi award winning, "Silent" having recently hosted "Forgotten" and soon to host "Underneath" on June 11th.

Like Kinevane's "Forgotten" which referenced Japanese culture, "Silent" references something

larger than itself by way of silent movies, and features recognisable Irish characters while touching upon taboo subjects in a deeply humane way. If "Forgotten's" exploration of the elephant graveyards known as nursing homes was moving and disturbing, where the discarded and forgotten geriatric bits and pieces are left to die, "Silent" pushes things even further, striving for even greater depth, humor and humanity.

On the streets of Dublin, Cobh boy Tino McGoldrick, named after the silent movie star Rudolph Valentino, lives homeless, battling the ghosts of his past, his mind and his memory. Addressing the audience directly, Tino asks big questions about sexuality, suicide, bullying, homelessness, mental illness, as well as government indifference. There's a wife and child he no longer sees and a brother Pearse he can't stop remembering. Fractured narratives blend with audience interactions as Tino charts his path from loving brother to being a guilt ridden, merlot drinking hobo, traveling from his childhood in Cobh, through the mean streets of Dublin and onto the Garden of Remembrance on Parnell Square.

Low on spectacle, "Silent" aims to astonish rather than dazzle. Referencing of black and white movies marries light and shadow, crafting mood through minimalism, against which Kinevane walks, dances and glides with grace in a world where a bib is a baby and a blanket a wife. Extraordinarily funny and moving, "Silent" makes you laugh even when you know you shouldn't. Weaving and twisting its complex tale, marrying the personal and political, "Silent" is a living thing all of itself, where all the joins and seams are so flawlessly merged as to be almost invisible. Kinevane's excellent script made flesh by his extraordinary performance is perfectly complimented by Jim Culleton's exceptional direction. Denis Clohessy's suggestive soundscape evokes Tino's multi voiced, inner landscape along with the emotional sensibility of a silent movie.

The idea "that there but for the grace of God go I" runs through both "Silent" and "Forgotten," with Tino reminding us in "Silent" that we may only be two wage packets away from joining him in a doorway or a hostel. Central to both is Kinevane himself, possibly the hardest working actor at the moment, whose presence, ingenuity and genuine sincerity make it almost inconceivable seeing anyone else fill these roles. Equally, Jim Culleton's excellent contribution cannot be underestimated, with "Silent" confirming Culleton, whose body of work has been consistently extraordinary, as one of Ireland's most outstanding and most important theatre directors.

"Silent" is one of those rare gems that confirms and reconfigures what is best about theatre. It will make you laugh, make you think, shock you, rock you and break your heart all at the same time. It is a joy when first discovered and an even deeper joy when revisited for a second, third or fourth time. Like a perfect Christmas morning in the middle of winter, "Silent" delivers more than you could possibly wish for. Not to be missed.

Fishamble: The New Play Company's productions of "Silent," "Forgotten" and "Underneath" written and performed by Pat Kinevane, directed by Jim Culleton and produced by Eva Scanlon are currently on tour.

"Silent" next plays at Visual in Carlow, The Pavilion in Dunlaoghaire, Town Hall in Galway and Nenagh Arts Centre.

For more information on dates, times and venues visit [Fishamble](#)



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