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# Dispatches from The Fringe – Set Adrift On Memory Bliss

September 9, 2014

4:53 PM MST



At Sea by Just The Lads

*Just The Lads*

## At Sea by Just The Lads

Rating: ★★★★★

Parallels between Just The Lads latest production, *At Sea*, and Ernest Hemingway's classic novella, *The Old Man And The Sea*, are never far from sight. Like Hemingway's weather beaten Santiago, *At Sea's* central character, Roger, is an old fisherman determined to catch a great, big fish. He sets out one September morning on a voyage that soon becomes a voyage of discovery. But similarities end there as *At Sea* veers off to carve its own course through strange, dark waters. The result is a wonderfully inventive study of memory and memory loss, of age and lost youth in an entrancing production that thoroughly deserves to be seen.

In *At Sea*, narrative plays second fiddle to performance, where physical images are carefully and painstakingly crafted to powerful effect. As we follow Roger on his sometimes joyous, sometimes torturous journey to reclaim the young man he was and the life he led, fractured moments haunt,

tease and delight. Humor gives way to sorrow, to fear, to exuberance as memories fade and reappear, crackling in and out of clarity like a short wave radio station, or lie buried at the bottom of a teacup of sand waiting to be discovered.

*At Sea* appears to have no writing credits, suggesting this was an ensemble piece devised by the company. Co-directed by Darren Sinnott and Liadain Kaminska, *At Sea* bravely brings together many disparate theatrical ingredients. Fusing live music, a rich soundscape, projected images and one amazing mask, *At Sea* conjures its own perfectly realized universe. Molly O’Caithain’s set design is a cornucopia of sea faring paraphernalia that perfectly evokes *At Sea*’s mood and atmosphere, ably supported by Jonathan Shanahan’s subtle lighting design. If, on the night, speech occasionally struggled to be heard over music and sound, music by guitarist, Cameron Macauley, and cellist, Anna Clifford, added another layer of richness, as did their brief acting cameos. All of which revolved around an outstanding performance by Peter Corboy as Roger. His portrayal of Roger, an exuberant soul trapped beneath age and the fading of memory, crafted through painstakingly detailed, physical articulations was a sheer joy to behold.

*At Sea* is a welcome reminder that the Fringe is about companies being unafraid to be inventive and daring. Just The Lads, *At Sea*, takes a leap of faith into the deep and the risk pays off handsomely. Funny, touching, memorable, with a terrific central performance, *At Sea* is one of the stand out productions of the Tiger Dublin Fringe. Get tickets now if you still can.

*At Sea* by Just The Lads runs as part of The Tiger Dublin Fringe at The New Theatre until Saturday, September 13th

Doors open 8.15 p.m.

Tickets €15.00 Concessions €13.00

For more information go to <http://fringefest.com/festival/programme>



**Chris O'Rourke**  
Tulsa Theater Examiner

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