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Dispatches from the Fringe: daddy's girl needs to 'Remember to Breathe'

September 10, 2015

7:24 PM MST



Remember to Breathe by Orla Murphy

Photo by Patrick Redmond, used with kind permission from Tiger Dublin Fringe

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Rating: ★★★★★

There's a recurrent theme running through a number of shows at this year's [Tiger Dublin Fringe](#). Namely the experience of twenty first century Irish emigrants leaving home and family for foreign shores. This year the festival has also seen a number of outstanding female performances. In Orla Murphy's production of her impressive debut play "Remember to Breathe" both of the above are to be found, and the result is a thoroughly engaging and deeply moving production.

Following the devastating earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, Irish architect Maeve decides to accompany her Kiwi husband back to his homeland to see what help they can offer. There's nothing left here at home, the bust has seen to that. Only Maeve's father Johnny represents any real ties to home, but things have been strained lately and sure there's always Skype. But greener

pastures can turn out to be nothing more than rubble where salvation might only be found in a broken promise. In "Remember to Breathe" Orla Murphy crafts a multi-layered, father and daughter tale in which one woman's search forces her to confront herself, her past, her fears and her future in a swimming pool in New Zealand.

With "Remember to Breathe" Murphy has delivered an intelligent and deeply engaging story which sees Maeve move seamlessly between past and present as she seeks to let go. Action moves fluidly from present to past and the characters of Maeve and her swimaholic swimming instructor Doreen are wonderfully realised. In contrast, Maeve's single minded father Johnny feels less nuanced and their relationship feels a little one sided at times. With Johnny rarely offering more than an incessant insistence on Maeve's financial security, the connection feels less powerful than it might have been. But it's there nonetheless, and its impact on Maeve forms the core of her search.

Murphy takes the helm as director of "Remember to Breathe" and in doing so makes good the case for writers directing their own work, at least in this instance. Aside from some sound issues during the sirens and Claxton scene which almost drown out the actors, Murphy makes some smart choices in staging, maximising the possibilities of the Boys School space in Smock Alley. Raymond Keane as Johnny, an uncomplicated man with a complicated daughter, is always engaging, if a little too restrained on occasion, but when he lets loose, as in his dance scene, he's irresistible. Geraldine McAlinden as Doreen, a damaged woman rebuilding her life is a joy to watch. As is Liz Fitzgibbon as the soul searching Maeve. Utterly captivating throughout, Fitzgibbon shifts effortlessly between deeply contrasting extremes in a richly nuanced and delightful performance.

"Remember to Breathe" is a captivating and deeply moving production blessed with a mesmerizing performance by Liz Fitzgibbon. Like her central character Maeve, Orla Murphy has taken a brave leap of faith into the perilous depths, writing, producing and directing her own work. And thank God she did. For with "Remember to Breathe" Murphy shows she has some serious talent and is most certainly one to watch out for in the future.

"Remember to Breathe" by Orla Murphy runs at [Smock Alley Theatre](#) as part of the Tiger Dublin Fringe till September 12th.

Show begins at 8.45 pm

Tickets: €14/€12

For further information go to [Tiger Dublin Fringe](#)



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