

Review – Heaven at The Traverse

It's a Saturday afternoon and one theatregoer is enjoying a large glass of Chardonnay. "Size large darling", she tells the bar staff. Moments later we are introduced to Mairead played by Janet Moran.

Her monologue is like a cross between eavesdropping on a pub conversation and Alan Bennett's Talking Heads. Mairead is a larger-than-life character with no filter but is immediately likeable.

With Irish charm and much wit, she paints a grim picture of a middle-class and middle-aged lifestyle and a poor relationship with her daughter. When an old flame from her youth shows up she remembers Nick Cave posters in his room at his granny's house while admitting "I was more of a Whitney girl myself." This beguiling journey into her past leads her to reflect on her marriage to Mal, played by Andrew Bennett.

While Mairead considers her lost love we are then introduced to Mal, a teacher from Limerick. He is an uptight and repressed character who starts confronting an inner intensity that suggests a midlife crisis. He admires Mairead and supports her role as a social worker but the marriage is more of a friendship than a love story.

When they spend the day at a wedding, the drama of the occasion and a range of colourful characters force them to

confront what is really going on in their marriage. The wedding, in many ways, lances a boil for both of them but can things ever be the same again once they have confronted a deeply personal reality?

It's a powerful and well-written slice-of-life drama that seems much shorter than its 90 minutes.



Heaven – Andrew Bennett and Janet Moran PHOTO Leo Byrne



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