



## Mairead – brain gymnastics for the emotions at Sorte Hest

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**THEATRE // REVIEW – You need to have your wits about you at Teatret ved Sorte Hest this month – not only because MAIREAD is performed in English but also because you need to be able to get all the nuances. Or, as the title role character says about falling in love: It’s not about the heart, but about that chemical cocktail that gives the mind a wonderful “high”. Imagine a theatre production about the subsequent “low”.**



Let me make it clear: MAIREAD is not easily digestible entertainment. What it is, however, is a lovely piece of mind gymnastics that lasts a little under one and a half hours in Teatret ved Sorte Hest's intimate theatre. Wonderful one-liners fly around about different philosophical opinions on love, coexistence, fidelity and obligations.

There are echoes of Sartre and "Hell is other people" in the play, which has four characters waking up in separate cells. Isolated from the world and from each other, but able to talk to each other. How did they end up in this prison and who brought them here?

## **Four people locked up in prison**

The finger is quickly pointed at the title role character Mairead. She is the woman who once offered Peter a passionate relationship - so different from the loveless one he had had with his father. But the restless Peter soon abandoned Mairead when she was home alone with their baby son.

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Because it doesn't make sense that – as Noah, the atheist, suggests at some point – they have in fact ended up in Hell?

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Mairead quickly looked for love elsewhere and of course found another lover who was distant and unattainable – Noah – whom she could only see when they were on holiday together or when they occasionally visited each other in England and Canada. But that first time he touched her in that sports bar.....

And then there is the “other woman” – the considerably older Kate, whose connection with Mairead appears at first to be peripheral, but who seems to know Noah pretty well. She is the constant voice of reason.

There must be a logical reason to why they are all locked up together.

Because it doesn't make sense that – as Noah, the atheist, suggests at some point – they have in fact ended up in Hell?



## **Dangerous liaisons**

The four actors argue, reason with each other and go over the past – from their different perspectives and expectations. Time and again

we come back to our modern relationships. How do we reconcile non-committal sex with committed relationships and obligations towards the children who result from these relationships?

Is it best to meet, love and part? Or is it best to accept an open relationship....which could be more open for one than the other? Or is happiness being able to share everything with your one and only? Where, on the other hand, one can keep a little bit of oneself to oneself and the partner need never know about it?

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We all need to sit down in a bar and talk openly about how we view intimate relationships: what we give, and what we take. What we leave behind and how we let go.

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MAIREAD manages to elegantly look at all possibilities and not make any of the characters heroes or villains. Or at least shares the villain role more or less equally between the four characters, all of whom only act in accordance with their individual life philosophies. Or, psychologically speaking, act in ways they always act in relationships.

## **What do you get out of it?**

When we audience members rise from our seats at the end of the show, mentally beaten up, we are perhaps not cleansed or redeemed, because MAIREAD has offered us a clear message:

We all need to sit down in a bar and talk openly about how we view intimate relationships: what we give, and what we take. What we leave behind and how we let go.

I give MAIREAD at Sorte Hest Theatre five stars, for courageous and challenging theatre, that certainly doesn't make life easy for its audience.

Do we get something out of it?

*Perhaps we could do better ...*

*Top photo and from the show.  
Photographer: Aleksandar S. Mastilo.*

***Photos: Aleksandar S. Mastilo  
Mairead plays at Teatret ved Sorte Hest until march 9  
With: Kerry Norton Griffith, Nathan Meister, Kevin  
Kiernan Molloy, Sue Hansen-Styles  
Director: Nina Larissa Bassett  
Writer: Tanja Mastilo  
Produced by Why Not Theatre Company***