

## **The Almond and the Seahorse**

Sherman Cymru, Cardiff

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Throughout Kaite O'Reilly's tremendous new play about the emotional aftermath of serious head injury, pockets of the gloomy set are lit in isolation. It becomes clear, as the drama reveals two couples living with this bewildering scenario, that it is intended as a reflection of how only parts of the brain might work after a devastating blow or illness, and how aspects of the person you were, or knew, can be snuffed out...

These extraordinary scenarios are tenderly drawn and powerfully realised in Phillip Zarrilli's beautifully judged production. Fiona Watt's set shows past, present and future colliding - as it does for the couples - and all the performances are uniformly affecting. The couples' lives alter irrevocably as we watch, and this is not a play with any sunny, easy resolution.

"That is what makes our lives: memory," says Sarah. This unmissable drama - which promises much for the future of new writing company Sherman Cymru - confronts the uncomfortable reality of what happens to life, and even the most patient love without it.

**Elisabeth Mahoney**