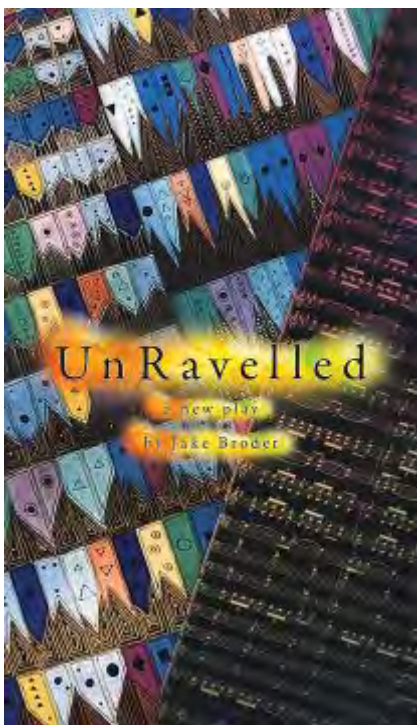


Theater: **UNRAVELLED (Global Brain Health Institute / UC San Francisco / Trinity College Dublin)**



by [Tony Frankel](#) on ~~March 5, 2021~~

in [Theater-Los Angeles, Virtual](#)

Art, music and science intersect in *UnRavelled*, a new drama by award-winning, Los Angeles-based playwright **Jake Broder** (*Louis & Keely Live at the Sahara*) and directed by **Nike Doukas** (Pinter's *The Hothouse* at Antaeus) is now [playing on demand](#) through March 31, 2021.

Based on true events and incorporating research and interviews conducted by Broder as a Hellman Visiting Artist at UCSF's Memory and Aging Center, *UnRavelled* explores the fascinating connection between the work of Canadian painter **Anne Adams** (1940–2007) and French

composer **Maurice Ravel** (1875–1937), both of whom suffered from the same rare brain disease.

According to Memory and Aging Center director and GBHI co-director **Dr. Bruce Miller**, “Ravel and Dr. Adams were in the early stages of primary progressive aphasia, a form of frontotemporal dementia, when they were working. The disease apparently altered circuits in their brains, changing the connections between the front and back parts and resulting in a torrent of creativity.”

“The science is fascinating — the idea that this rare form of dementia allowed Anne to experience music so vividly that she felt compelled to begin painting pictures of her auditory experience — but the real themes of the play revolve around identity and love,” says Doukas. “The beauty of the writing, the humanism paired with science, and the wonderful cast are what make this project so compelling.”

Lucy Davenport (*Gangs of New York*) is Adams, a renowned scientist, who, in her fifties and at the height of her career, lost interest in science and began painting. Starting out with simple works — houses, strawberries — Adams became suddenly, inexplicably obsessed by Ravel’s famous symphonic masterpiece, *Boléro*, and began to paint in a wildly different style. The result was Adams’ most famous work, *Unravelling Boléro*, a virtuosic painting of brilliant design and color, in which she transcribed Ravel’s music bar by bar. **Rob Nagle** (*The Judas Kiss* at Boston Court) stars as Anne’s husband, Robert, who, in his attempt to understand and navigate Anne’s radically changing sense of self, eventually brought her to see Dr. Miller, portrayed in the play by **Leo Marks** (*The Hothouse* at Antaeus). **Conor Duffy** (*Stoneface: The Rise And Fall And Rise Of Buster Keaton* at Sacred Fools) plays Ravel, whose one-movement orchestral piece, composed as a ballet for Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein (played by **Melissa Greenspan** of *Modern Family*) became his most famous work — in spite of the fact that it, too, was a radical departure in style for the composer. Also in the cast, providing narration, is **Michael Lanahan**.