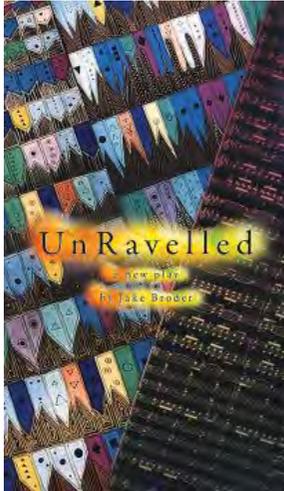


Theater Review: UNRAVELLED (Global Brain Health Institute / UC San Francisco / Trinity College Dublin)



by [Dale Reynolds](#) on March 11, 2021.

in [Theater-International, Virtual](#)

***BOLÉRO*: BEAUTIFUL SYMPTOM OF A TERRIBLE DISEASE FOR BOTH PAINTER AND COMPOSER**

Based on true events and incorporating research and interviews conducted by playwright Jake Broder as a Hellman Visiting Artist at UC San Francisco'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 lived and died with the same rare brain disease. Playwright Broder has taken facts and figures and weaved them into a thoroughly engrossing – both intellectually and emotionally – play that deserves observation. In this online production, filmed in COVID-demanding isolation on four separate screens, actors Lucy Davenport as Adams and Conor Duffy as Ravel, aided by Rob Nagle as Adams' husband, Robert, Melissa Greenspan as Ida Rubinstein (for whom Ravel composed his famous ballet), and Leo Marks as the intellectual focus for the play, Dr. Bruce Miller, in addition to Michael Lanahan's narration make for a striking production, now [playing on demand](#) for free through March 31, 2021.



And while obviously the two art-creators never met, Broder's genius is putting the two in touch while discussing their similar brain rearrangements. It's an invigorating piece, exploring what art is – or should be – even when it is based on neurological brain destruction.



Sponsored by the Global Brain Health Institute, based at the University of California, San Francisco; and Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, Ireland, this engrossing theatrical piece strongly investigates how repetitive patterns (more observable in Ravel's work than in Adams') managed to influence both works of art.



***Anne Adams painting UNRAVELLING BOLÉRO is a bar-by-bar representati
It provides a scientific window into the creative mind.***

Adams' take on Ravel's *Boléro* is perhaps her greatest work, with its vertical figures representing each bar of music, its height matching the note's volume, and the color reflecting the pitch of each note in the bar, which we see on the screen behind them. The technical aspects include the production design of Corwin Evans, sound design of Jeff Gardner and production coordination of Bree Pavey – all of which make this a daring and dynamic visual delight.



But of course director Doukas and the ensemble cast contribute mightily to making it such a strong work of art. Davenport, Nagle and Marks deliver pitch-perfect work, allowing the viewer to shed copious amounts of tears, knowing that those who create and maintain art must be recognized as valuable human beings.

