

NEW REVIEW GO FERNANDO RICHARDSON'S TREACHEROUS BRAIN

In playwright Monica Trasadés' poignant and humorous drama, a man undergoes brain surgery and, in the ensuing confusion, spills some secrets that threaten to shatter his marriage. Uruguayan Fernando (Roberto Montesinos, in an endearing performance) and his American wife Kate (Natalie Sutherland) are warned by his Surgeon that patients can be quite bewildered after a brain operation. But no one is prepared for the jumble of memories that comes tumbling out. At first it all sounds like nonsense, but Fernando's impassioned distress at the possible abduction of a woman named Elisa (a sultry Karla Zamudio), whom he met when visiting Argentina, prompts his best friend Patrick (Mark Slater) to pursue the mystery. But sneaky Patrick may have an ulterior motive for unearthing the truth. Director Andre Barron elicits superb performances from his well-cast ensemble and allows time for tender, non-verbal moments. Trasadés' compassionate and subtle storytelling approach reveals shreds of information while her intimate and warm dialogue illustrates the complexities of various devoted relationships. Above all, her carefully constructed play touches on deeper themes of culture clash and the burden of middle-class guilt and proves the heart is more powerful than the brain. Playwrights 6 and Open Fist Theatre Company, 6209 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; Thurs., 8 p.m.; through June 9. (323) 882-6912. openfist.org. (Pauline Adamek)