

LAWEEKLY

NEW REVIEW GO THE CROSSING



Photo courtesy of SST Productions

Whatever might be meant by a "Scottish national voice," say something between the Romantic lyricism of Robert Burns and the sentimental whimsy of filmmaker Bill Forsyth, writer-performer Rachel Ogilvy certainly speaks it fluently. Her hour-long, first-person, dramatic monologue fairly bristles with the saccharine-dipped eccentrics and evocative local colors of her story's Edinburgh setting. Chiefly, though, it echoes in the melodious burr of her hard-nosed, high-strung heroine, Rose. A young, substitute math instructor who finds herself thrust into the stress-torquing environs of a new job among hostile, teacher-eating 14-year-olds, Rose is not what one would call a "people person." Blame a severe, emotionally distant mother and the childhood trauma of her loving, half-remembered father's mysterious suicide, which has left her a haunted, withdrawn outsider primed for a nervous breakdown. Rather than heading for the nearest psychoanalyst's couch, Rose embarks on the somewhat quixotic pursuit of winning over her disinterested students by turning to her late father's obsession for the Golden Gate Bridge as the centerpiece of an elaborate lesson plan in analytic geometry. The effort quickly turns into a harrowing journey of relived memories that takes her to Edinburgh's Forth Rail Bridge -- the site of her father's fatal leap and a perilous emotional precipice of unresolved guilt which she must cross to survive. Ogilvy uplifts her potentially weighty tale with brittle humor and a sweetly affective performance in a production benefited by Paul Christie's fluid, economical direction. Sidewalk Studio Theatre, 4150 Riverside Dr., Burbank; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; (added perfs Thurs., Sept. 17 & 24, 8 p.m.; Sun., Sept. 20 & 27, 2 p.m.); thru Oct. 3. (818) 558-5702. (Bill Raden)