

LAWEEKLY

THEATER CALENDAR

PICK OF THE WEEK

RUM AND VODKA It's not that the unnamed central character in Conor McPherson's one-man show feels unhappy with his life — which includes his wife, his daughters and his government job. It's just that he's 24 years old and is starting to realize that this is as good as it will ever get. The flipside, however, is that things can still get worse, and a Friday afternoon misstep triggers a three-day bender around Dublin as he vomits and peels himself off the ground just in time for the next round. Sweaty and rumped with wide, guileless blue eyes, John O'Callaghan grubbily captures his character's shallow fragility and self-absorption. Under Jay Leggett's apt direction and O'Callaghan's empathetic performance, the audience feels the young man's wearying cycles of inebriation and hangover, like the pounding in his head. A latter-day John Millington Synge, playwright McPherson (*The Weir, The Good Thief*) strips Ireland of its green-frosted blarney, unearthing complex souls staggering through life on drink rather than dirty limericks and leprechauns. McPherson's Ireland includes much pavement and many shopping centers; Leggett flecks the view with a Euro-trash soundtrack made of two parts house to one part ABBA. Celtic Arts Center's Sean Fallon Walsh Theater, 4843 Laurel Canyon Blvd., Studio City; Sat., 8 p.m.; thru Feb. 22. (818) 760-8322. (Amy Nicholson)

RUM AND VODKA