

RediscoveriesUK

– November 2010–February 2011

A three month season of rediscovered plays by writers from
England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Snakebit Productions in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre presents

THE WORLD PREMIERE

Oh, To Be In England

by David Pinner.

Directed by Mel Cook.

Cast: Peter Broome. Jonathan Christie. Daniel Fraser. Natalie Lesser. Charlotte Thornton.

"If I was French, it would be simple; I'd commit crime passionel in a riot of garlic and vin ordinaire. And if I was German, I'd invoke the phantom of the Fuhrer and get hacking. In America, the husband generally shoots the family first, then takes a dozen high-powered rifles up some bell tower and blasts away at the town. But I knew the English way was the only way, God help me. You make a bloody great speech - and then you have a stiff drink."

Like Pinner's contemporaneous 1973 Stalin play *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, ***Oh, To Be In England*** was unproduceable at the time of its writing because of its unapologetic skewering of political extremism in the UK. Unlike *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, which finally ran in 1990 to press acclaim, ***Oh, To Be In England*** has remained lost. After thirty-five years, it is now receiving its world premiere after thirty five years at the Finborough Theatre on Sunday, 9 January 2011 (Press Night: Monday, 10 January 2011) for a strictly limited run of six Sunday and Monday performances as part of RediscoveriesUK, a three month season of rediscovered plays by writers from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Frighteningly prescient, and tragically current, ***Oh, To Be In England*** is a dark comedy examining what it means to live in an ex-empire in economic free-fall, and the political and personal extremism that results when all other belief is lost. A middle-aged Englishman, bred to believe in his innate superiority as a birthright of class, race, and gender, loses his job in the City. Left floundering impotently in a world that is no longer cricket, his family, security, and sanity follow close behind.

Playwright **David Pinner** trained at RADA as an actor, and has acted in many stage and television plays. His plays produced in London include *Fanghorn* starring Glenda Jackson (Fortune Theatre), *Lucifer's Fair* (Arts Theatre), *The Potsdam Quartet* (Lyric Hammersmith, and the Lion Theatre, New York), *The Last Englishmen* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond) with Kate O'Mara, *Cartoon*, *Shakebag* and *An Evening with the G.L.C.* (Soho Poly), *Sins of the Mother* (Grace Theatre) and *Lenin in Love* (New End Theatre) with James Faulkner and Frances Cuka. Other plays include *Dickon* (Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch), *Drums of Snow* and *Lightning at a Funeral* (Stanford Repertory Theatre, California), *Hereward the Wake* (Key Theatre, Peterborough), *Screwball* (Theatre Royal, Plymouth), *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* (Gateway Theatre, Chester) with Philip Madoc as Stalin, *Revelations* (Roberts Theatre, Iowa), *Skin Deep* (Gateway Theatre, Chester), *All Hallow's Eve* (Academy of Performing Arts, Hong Kong) and *Midsummer* (Brehmer Theatre, Hamilton, USA). *Dickon*, *Fanghorn* and *The Drums of Snow* are published by Penguin; *The Stalin Trilogy – Lenin in Love*, *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* and *The Potsdam Quartet*, *The Seasons' Quartet – Midsummer*, *Lady Day*, *Revelations* and *All Hallow's Eve*, and *Three Power Plays – The Drums of Snow*, *Richelieu* and *Prince of Traitors*, are published by Oberon Books. His novel *With my Body* is published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson/Corgi, *They'll Always be an England* by Anthony Blonde. The cult movie, *The Wicker Man* is based on his novel, *Ritual* (Hutchinson/Corgi), and *Ritual* is to be re-published by Finders Keepers next April.

Director **Mel Cook** returns to the Finborough Theatre following her sell-out run of William Saroyan's *The Beautiful People* (2008). Mel trained at RADA and Birkbeck, and is Resident Director of BoomBoom Club/33events, Associate Director of

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Press Information

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SPID, and Associate Artist of Coney. Mel is an experiential theatre maker working in site-specific, cross-media, devised, improvised, and interactive theatre, as well as creating live art and pervasive games. Mel has been a finalist for the JMK, ITV/C4, Arches, Bankside, and Leverhulme directing awards, and has assisted Gregory Doran and Anthony Clark. Recent productions include *First Impressions* (Theatre Royal, Margate), *Midnight Labyrinth* (site-specific in Madrid), *Superhuman* (SPID Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Courtyard), *In Flight* (Bridewell Theatre), *Echo* (site-specific in Meanwhile Gardens), and *Explore* (Tabernacle). Mel has created interactive work for National Theatre Studio, Glastonbury, Latitude, Nokia, Beefeater, Globe Theatre, Gideon Reeling, V & A, Hide & Seek and LIFT, and developed site-sympathetic theatre for BAC, Kensington and Chelsea, Shunt Vaults, Honolulu Theatre, and several museums, parks, fields, and derelict buildings.

The cast includes Peter Broome, Jonathan Christie, Daniel Fraser, Natalie Lesser and Charlotte Thornton. **Peter Broome's** credits include *Unsent Letters* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), *Murder Game* (Cambridge Theatre), *Feast of Snails* (Lyric Theatre), *King Lear* and *The Provoked Wife* (The Peter Hall Company), *As Is*, *Macbeth*, *Dangerous Liaisons* and *Prick Up Your Ears* (Actor's Temple) and *Jekyll and Hyde* (Il Palchetto Stage). **Jonathan Christie's** credits include *First Impressions* (Theatre Royal Margate), *Madness in Valencia* (Trafalgar Studios), *My Dad's a Birdman* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), *Miss Julie* (Albany Theatre), *Thinking Aloud* (ICA), *My Favorite Year*, *Black Comedy*, *Certain Young Men*, *Tales From Ovid*, *Bacchae*, *The Tempest* and *Company* (Guildhall School of Music and Drama), and rehearsed readings of *What You're Really Missing* (Soho Theatre) and *Monsters* (Leicester Square Theatre). **Daniel Fraser's** credits while training include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Victory: Choices in Reaction*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Keeping the Faith*. **Natalie Lesser's** credits include *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Love and Understanding* (The Courtyard) and *Hecuba* (New Diorama Theatre). **Charlotte Thornton's** credits include *After the Dance* (National Theatre), *Rise and Fall of Little Voice* (Vaudeville Theatre), *In the Club* (National Tour), *Woodlands* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *Timon of Athens* (White Bear Theatre Club), *Take Two* (Upstairs at the Gatehouse), *Runners - The Return*, *Macbeth* (Edinburgh Festival), *Romeo and Juliet* (National Tour), *Top Girls* (MAC), *Seven Brides* (BAC) and *Twelfth Night* (Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park).

The Press on David Pinner

"David Pinner's hybrid of Chekhovian comedy, with Stalin as a Marlovian hero, works superbly." *The Independent* on *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*

"The Teddy Bears' Picnic – despite its terrifying theme - is astonishingly funny." *The Daily Telegraph* on *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*

"David Pinner unmasks Uncle Joe brilliantly." *The Wall Street Journal* on *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*

"David Pinner's beautiful play is filled with the most wonderfully unforced humour. The playwright is a recording angel with a mean pen." Clive Barnes, *The New York Post* on *The Potsdam Quartet*

"David Pinner's 'Potsdam Quartet' is a glorious comedy in the circumstances of tragedy." *The Daily Telegraph* on *The Potsdam Quartet*

"The play is stuffed with acerbic wit, ratty-back biting and conflict, and rises gloriously to its theme." *Time Out* on *The Potsdam Quartet*

The Press on Mel Cook's production of *The Beautiful People*

"In a league beyond anything the National has had to offer in several years." Gyles Brandreth

"Four Stars...A remarkably unusual, very special piece." *WhatsOnStage*

PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 10 JANUARY 2011 AT 7.30PM

Finborough Theatre, The Finborough, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office 0844 847 1652. www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Sundays and Mondays, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24 January 2011

Evenings at 7.30pm. Tickets £13, £9 concessions.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

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Press releases and images are available to download from

<http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/pressresources.htm>

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