

"In Their Place"

A three month season of work by women playwrights

Take Note Theatre Ltd and Claire Evans in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre present

The European Premiere

## BED AND SOFA

Music by Polly Pen

Libretto by Laurence Klavan

Based on the film by Abram Room

Directed by Luke Sheppard. Musical Direction by Candida Caldicot. Movement Direction by Lucy Cullingford. Designed by David Woodhead. Costume Design by Simon Anthony Wells. Lighting by Howard Hudson. Sound by Edward Lewis.

*Bed and Sofa* received its world premiere at the Vineyard Theatre, New York City.

Presented by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.

Cast: Alastair Brookshaw. Kaisa Hammarlund. Alastair Parker.

With the voice of **Penelope Keith** as The Announcer.

*"Arriving early can be worse than being late... especially if you are attending a dinner party or your wife is having an affair with your friend."*

The European Premiere of the off-Broadway musical *Bed and Sofa* with music by Polly Pen and lyrics by Laurence Klavan, and directed by acclaimed young music theatre director Luke Sheppard, opens at the Finborough Theatre on **Tuesday, 29 March 2011 (Press Night: Thursday, 31 March 2011 at 7.30pm)** for a four week run at the multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre as part of "In Their Place", a three month season of work by women playwrights and composers.

Nikolai works and lives with Ludmilla, a housewife who stays at home dreaming of romance. Moscow has a housing shortage, so when Volodya arrives with nowhere to live he is invited to share the couple's cramped quarters with surprising results.

This enchanting three-character "silent movie musical", based on Abram Room's scandalous 1926 Russian film comedy, is an elegant homage to the genre. Using some of the words from the title cards in the film and weaving these with new material, it's a truly unique piece of music theatre that brings to life a ménage-a-trois with a twist. Played without an interval, its whimsical score and haunting libretto is at once both comedic and heartbreaking.

*Bed and Sofa* originally premiered at the Vineyard Theatre in New York, where it garnered two Obie Awards (including Distinguished Music) and seven Drama Desk nominations (including Best Musical). It has since been revived several times off-Broadway and across America. This new production at the Finborough Theatre marks the European premiere of this captivating and innovative piece.

### Praise for *Bed and Sofa* Off Broadway

"A delight...First rate...A classy treat... A new work that both honors the original and gives it a sternly funny stage life of its own." *New York Times*

"Wonderful...A must see...So perfectly done it is almost unfair to the rackety hacks who infest our musical theater." *Village Voice*

"Enchanting...Exquisite...A wholly original piece of musical theatre!" *NY Newsday*

"Fresh and endearing...As original as it is impudent..The show has jaunty music by Polly Pen and a jazzy text by Laurence Klavan." *NY Magazine*

Composer **Polly Pen** is an Obie Award winner for the score of *Bed and Sofa*, which received seven Drama Desk nominations. Her first Off-Broadway production as both composer and co-author, *Goblin Market*, received five Drama Desk nominations and the Best Plays Special Citation for Musical Composition and Adaptation. Other works include *The*

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e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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## Press Information

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*Night Governess* (McCarter Theatre), *Her Lightness* (Sarasota Opera), *The Dumb Cake* (a radio musical for NPR), *Embarrassments* (Wilma Theatre) and *Christina Alberta's Father* (Vineyard Theatre, which received a Richard Rodgers Award, an Obie and a Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Music. Polly is the recipient of several NEA grants, The Kitty Carlisle Hart Award, the Flora Roberts Award and the Gilman and Gonzalez-Falla Award for Musical Theatre. She has been a National Theatre Artist-in-Residence at McCarter Theatre as a recipient of a PEW/TCG Grant. Polly's current project *Open Mouth Ceremony* has been honoured by the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio residency. She has served on the board of Dramatists Play Service and on the Council of The Dramatists Guild. In another life, Polly has worked extensively as an actor on Broadway, Off-Broadway and in regional theatres throughout the country.

Lyricist **Laurence Klavan** received two Drama Desk nominations for the book and lyrics to *Bed and Sofa*. Other writing credits include *The Magic Act*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Show Must Go on*, *If Walls Could Talk*, *Gorgo's Mother*, *Brave New World: American Theater Responds to 9/11*, *Speakeasy*, *Hurricane Season*, *Battle of the Bards*. His one-act play *The Summer Sublet* is included in Applause Books' *Best American Short Plays 2000-2001*. He was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and received commissions from the Actors Theatre of Louisville, Vineyard Theatre and the Wilma Theatre, where he wrote the musical, *Embarrassments*, with composer Polly Pen. It was developed at the O'Neill Music Theatre Conference and premiered at the Wilma in December 2003. Laurence also writes novels and for television. [www.laurenceklavan.com](http://www.laurenceklavan.com)

Director **Luke Sheppard** was the inaugural recipient of the Noël Coward Trainee Director Bursary and spent a period training at Salisbury Playhouse, having graduated with a first class degree in Drama from Bristol University. He was a finalist in the JMK Award 2010 and was invited to take part in the National Theatre Director's Course. As Artistic Director of Take Note Theatre, Luke directed the premieres of *Jet Set Go* (Theatre503 and Jermyn Street Theatre - *Time Out* Critic's Choice) and *The Great British Soap Opera* (Jermyn Street Theatre and Edinburgh Festival), which was nominated for Music Theatre Matters:UK Best Production and Best New Musical, as well as *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (Edinburgh Festival). Other directing includes *24 Hour Plays* (Old Vic), *Fantastic Mr Fox* (Wilde Theatre), *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* and *A Girl In A Car With A Man* (Wickham Theatre) and *Handbag* (AR2). Credits as Assistant Director include the new musical adaptation of *Matilda* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Into The Woods* (Open Air Theatre), *Private Lives* (Salisbury Playhouse) and *Hamlet* (Tobacco Factory). Luke has also worked as Movement Director on *First Lady Suite* (Union Theatre), *Peter Pan* and *Wizard of Oz* (Wilde Theatre), *Force 9 ½* (Upstairs at the Gatehouse) and *Music of Chance* (National Theatre Studio). Luke also works regularly with Youth Music Theatre UK.

Musical Director **Candida Caldicot's** credits include *The Vaudevillains* (Les Enfants Terribles), *Hansel and Gretel* (New Wimbledon Studio), *First Lady Suite* (Union Theatre), *A Man of No Importance* (Associate - Arts Theatre and Union Theatre), *Jet Set Go* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *Cinderella* (New Wimbledon Theatre), *All Bob's Women* (Arts Theatre, London) and *The Marilyn Monroe Show* (Brighton Spiegeltent). She works with various drama schools, most notably Trinity College of Music where her credits include *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Lost and Found*, *Best Friends and Butterflies*. Recently she worked with Climar Productions to create *West End Glee Club*, and composed music for *The Wind in the Willows* (Iris Theatre), *The Hostage* (Southwark Playhouse), *Macbeth* (Marau, Austria) and *Alcestis* (Actor's Church, Covent Garden).

Set Designer **David Woodhead** graduated from LIPA with a first class degree in Theatre and Performance Design and was a finalist in the Linbury Prize for Stage Design. Credits include *Love and Understanding* (BAC), *Twelfth Night* (Greenwich Playhouse), *Falsettoland* (Edinburgh Festival), *Six Ways* (Jermyn Street Theatre and Edinburgh Festival) and costume for *Knives in Hens* (Arcola Theatre). David is currently designing *Kindertransport*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* and *Hedda Gabler* which will play in rep at the Linbury Studio at LAMDA. As an assistant to Christopher Oram, his credits include *Passion*, *King Lear*, *Spelling Bee* (Donmar Warehouse) and *Don Giovanni* (Metropolitan Opera).

The cast includes **Alastair Brookshaw**, **Kaisa Hammarlund**, **Alastair Parker**, with the voice of **Penelope Keith**.

**Alastair Brookshaw.** Theatre includes *Shoes* (Sadler's Wells), *Hot Mikado* (Watermill Theatre) *Blood Brothers* (Phoenix Theatre), *Cabaret* (Lyric Theatre), *Through The Door* (Trafalgar Studios), *A Very Private Beach* and *For The Public Good* (English National Opera), *57 Hours* (National Theatre Studio) and *Mathilde* (Vaudeville Theatre). Recordings include the *West Side Story 50th Anniversary Recording* and he can be seen in Rufus Norris' short film *King Bastard*.

**Kaisa Hammarlund.** Theatre includes *The Three Musketeers* (Rose Theatre), *A Day Before Spring* (Sadler's Wells), *A Little Night Music* (Garrick Theatre and Menier Chocolate Factory), *They're Playing Our Song* (Menier Chocolate Factory), *Take Flight* (Menier Chocolate Factory), *Sunday In The Park With George* (Wyndham's Theatre and Menier Chocolate

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e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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Factory), *Desperately Seeking Susan* (Novello Theatre), *Cabaret* (Lyric Theatre) and *Mamma Mia* (Prince of Wales and International Tour).

**Alastair Parker** Theatre includes *Matilda* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *BBC Proms – Sondheim at 80* (Royal Albert Hall), *The Secret Garden* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Silk* (Orange Tree), *The Wizard of Oz* (New Vic), *Alice In Wonderland* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Two Woman for One Ghost*, *Cymbeline*, *Twelfth Night*, *HMS Pinafore* (Open Air Theatre, Regents Park), *Jerry Springer – The Opera* (National Theatre, BAC and Edinburgh), *Honk!*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Villains Opera* (National Theatre) and *Oliver* (London Palladium).

**Penelope Keith** who has just completed a run in *The Rivals* in the West End, lends her distinctive voice to the role of the Announcer and guides us through the proceedings. While she will not appear in person in the production, her pre-recorded contribution lends a characteristically British tone to this UK Premiere.

Lighting Designer **Howard Hudson** has just won an Off West End Award for Best Lighting Design for his work on *Me and Juliet* at the Finborough Theatre.

**Take Note Theatre** exists to bring lesser known musical works to new audiences as well as encouraging, producing and developing their own shows through to full production. *Bed and Sofa* marks their third UK premiere of an off-Broadway success, following *First Lady Suite* (Union Theatre) and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (Edinburgh Festival). The company developed and produced *Jet Set Go* which transferred to Theatre503 for a limited run, and then Jermy Street Theatre in an all new production attracting critical acclaim. This was followed by *The Great British Soap Opera* and *Chat* which both played the Edinburgh Festival and short London runs. Neil Franklin, producer for Take Note Theatre, is delighted to be partnering with **Claire Evans**, Resident Producer at the Finborough, and Co-Producer of the recent *Me and Juliet*. [www.takenotetheatre.co.uk](http://www.takenotetheatre.co.uk)

**PRESS NIGHT: THURSDAY, 31 MARCH 2011 AT 7.30PM**

**PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 29 MARCH 2011 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM**

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

Box Office 0844 847 1652 Book online at [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

**Tuesday, 29 March – Saturday, 23 April 2011**

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.00pm. Saturday matinees at 3.00pm (from the second week of the run).

**Prices for Weeks One and Two (29 March – 10 April 2011) – Tickets** £15, £11 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £11 all seats, and Saturday evenings £15 all seats.

Previews (29 and 30 March) £11 all seats.

£5 tickets for under 30's for performances from Tuesday to Sunday of the first week when booked online only.

£10 tickets for residents of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on the first Saturday of the run only.

**Prices for Weeks Three and Four (12 - 23 April 2011) –** £18, £15 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £15 all seats, and Saturday evenings £18 all seats.

Performance length: Approximately 90 minutes with no interval.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

**Neil McPherson** on e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) or **07977 173135**

Press releases and images are available to download from

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

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