

The Finborough Theatre is now FULLY AIR CONDITIONED

Summer Season
June to August 2011

Mark Cartwright in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre presents
The UK Premiere

Blue Surge

by Rebecca Gilman

Directed by Ché Walker.

Cast includes: James Hillier.

The UK premiere of Rebecca Gilman's acclaimed play **Blue Surge** opens at the multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre on Tuesday, 2 August 2011 (**Press Night: Thursday, 4 August 2011 at 7.30pm**) for a limited four-week season.

He's a 38 year old cop. She's an 18 year old prostitute. They're in love. What could possibly go wrong?

Curt is a small-town cop in Midwest America under pressure to close down the local massage parlor. But after an encounter with one of its occupants, Sandy, his job suddenly becomes anything but clear-cut. As Curt and Sandy embark upon an unlikely relationship, they realize they might just achieve the American Dream. Yet when events begin to get out of control, they find escaping the past is much more difficult than it seems...

Set against challenging questions about the class struggle in America today, this moving love story between cops and hookers is a tale of expectations missed and overcome, a play about the narratives we all write for ourselves and how fortune and single moments can change our lives.

Playwright **Rebecca Gilman** plays include *The Glory of Living*, *Spinning into Butter*, *Boy Gets Girl* and *The Sweetest Swing in Baseball*. She was the first American playwright to win an *Evening Standard* Award for *The Glory of Living* (seen in the UK at the Royal Court Theatre), which also won the George Devine Award, was named one of *Time* magazine's Best Plays of the Decade, and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. *Spinning into Butter* (also seen at the Royal Court) received a Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Play and the Roger L. Stevens Award from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays. Her other plays include *Boy Gets Girl* and *The Sweetest Swing in Baseball*, both seen at the Royal Court in the UK. Her work has been produced in the US at such venues as the Lincoln Center Theatre in New York, the Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Manhattan Class Company, as well as other theatres internationally. A native of Alabama, she was awarded the 2008 Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Most Distinguished Writer of the Year. *Blue Surge* was originally presented at the prestigious Goodman Theatre, Chicago, and was subsequently seen at the New York Shakespeare Festival's Public Theater. This production marks its UK premiere.

Director **Ché Walker** returns to the Finborough Theatre where he made his directorial debut with *Achidi J's Final Hours* in 2004 and where he directed the sell-out *Etta Jenks*, starring Daniela Nardini and Clarke Peters (2005). Other Theatre includes *Been So Long* (Young Vic and English Touring Theatre), *Extended Family* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *The Glory of Living* (BAC), *Estate Walls*, *Little Baby Jesus* (Oval House), *Lovesong* (English Touring Theatre and Edinburgh Fringe), *Car Thieves* (National Theatre Studio) and *Dance for Me* (Tricycle Theatre). Ché's writing includes *Been So Long* (The Young Vic and Royal Court Theatre), *The Frontline* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Iphigenia* (Southwark Playhouse), *Flesh Wound* (Royal Court Theatre), *Crazy Love* (Paines Plough), *Car Thieves* (National Theatre Studio), *Carmen* (Open Air Theatre), *Dance For Me* (Theatre Royal Stratford East) and *Rootz Spectacular* (Belgrade Theatre, Coventry). He is also writing the book for *The Eighth*, a new musical with music and lyrics by Paul Heaton of The Beautiful South for this year's Manchester International Festival as well as writing his own musical adaptation of *The Bacchae* with Arthur Darvill for English Touring Theatre. This year, Ché will direct the feature film adaptation of his original musical, *Been So Long* from his own screenplay for Greenacre Films/UKFC and is also developing an original television series with the BBC.

The cast includes **James Hillier** who last performed at the Finborough Theatre playing the leading role in the sell-out UK

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e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

Press Information

premiere of Tennessee Williams' *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*, directed by Tamara Harvey, in 2003. Other Theatre includes *Lulu* (Almeida Theatre), *The Homecoming* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester), *Closer* (Royal and Derngate Theatres, Northampton) and *A Clockwork Orange* (Citizens Theatre, Glasgow). He is a familiar face on television following his long running role as Sergeant Christian Young in *Holby Blue* as well as appearing in numerous TV programmes and films including *Great Expectations*, *Survivors*, *The Four Feathers* and *Blackbeard*.

The Press on previous US productions of *Blue Surge*

"*Blue Surge* never cheats and yet manages to surprise as it unfolds with increasing intensity. The climax is persuasive, shatteringly beautiful, and absolutely right." Peter Rainer, *New York*

"Remarkable...Gilman is – quite unabashedly – an old-school dramatist, conjuring recognizable characters and situations...She does not think theater should be a metaphor for life or a poetic expression of life, but rather that it should BE life." --Joanne Kaufman, *New York*

"A writer of surprising gifts" *Chicago Tribune*

"Gilman has the undeniable virtue of focusing with lucidity and evenhandedness on subjects that are more often sensationalized in the popular arts." Ben Brantley, *The New York Times*

"Gilman's characters resist simple cliches, and their progress – or lack of it – is detailed with compassion and wit." Elysa Gardner, *USA Today*

"Gilman's writing is heartfelt and the narrative crackles along with plenty of surprises." Chris Jones, *Variety*

The Press on playwright Rebecca Gilman

"A dangerous, searching, brilliant play" John Peter, *Sunday Times* on *Spinning into Butter*

"This is a drama that will send audiences arguing into the night, and one that cries out to be seen". Charles Spencer, *Daily Telegraph* on *Spinning into Butter*

"Exerts a fiercely intelligent grip... an engrossing play" Michael Billington, *The Guardian* on *Boy Gets Girl*

"What can one say? Except that plays don't come much tougher, or more compassionate, than 33-year-old American Rebecca Gilman's *The Glory Of Living*... It's a viscerally powerful piece... Gilman's real theme in this powerfully unnerving play is the desolation of her native soil." Michael Billington, *The Guardian* on *The Glory of Living*

PRESS NIGHT: THURSDAY, 4 AUGUST 2011 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 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

Tuesday, 2 August – Saturday, 27 August 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 (2-14 August 2011) – Tickets £15, £11 concessions, except Tuesday Evenings £11 all seats, and Saturday evenings £15 all seats.

Previews (2 and 3 August) £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 (16-28 August 2011) – Tickets £18, £15 concessions, except Tuesday Evenings £15 all seats, and Saturday evenings £18 all seats.

Performance length: Approximately 120 minutes.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Neil McPherson on e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07977 173135**

Download press releases and images at <http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/press-resources.php>

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