

The Finborough Theatre is now FULLY AIR CONDITIONED

Part of the Finborough Theatre's
Celebrating British Music Theatre
series

Blue Shale Theatre in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre
by arrangement with Samuel French Limited presents

PERCHANCE TO DREAM

'A Musical Romance'

Devised, Written and Composed by Ivor Novello.

Directed by Max Pappenheim. Musical Direction by Ross Leadbeater.

Designed by Gregor Donnelly. Sound by Edward Lewis. Lighting by Elliot Griggs.

Cast: Michael Burgen. Clare Louise Connolly. Laura Hanna. Amanda Hootman. Natalie Langston. Annabel Leventon. James Marchant. Rachael McCormick. Natalie Langston. Martin Milnes. Kelly Price. Claire Redcliffe. Robert Rees. James Russell. Gemma Sandzer. Katy Treharne.

The Finborough Theatre's acclaimed 'Celebrating British Music Theatre' series continues with Ivor Novello's most romantic musical, *Perchance to Dream*, opening at the Finborough Theatre for a limited run of eight Sunday and Monday performances on Sunday, 4 September 2011 (**Press Night: Monday, 5 September 2011 at 7.30pm**). This rediscovery is the first professional London production in more than 25 years, and also commemorates the 60th anniversary of the death of composer Ivor Novello.

Spanning the Regency, Victorian and post-war eras, and featuring a score filled with some of Novello's most ravishing songs including *Love is My Reason*, *When I Curtsied to the King*, *A Woman's Heart* and the classic *We'll Gather Lilacs*, *Perchance to Dream* is a classic Novello musical - an escapist 'musical romance' whose original 1945 run in the West End played for 1,022 performances.

In 1818, Sir Graham Rodney, an impoverished womaniser, is the owner of Huntersmoon, a magnificent old country house, but seeks relief from his life of leisure by masquerading as the dread highwayman "Frenchy". Just at the moment when he finally finds love, the law runs him to ground with tragic results. A generation later, his estate has passed to the wrong side of the family and tragedy strikes a second time. More than a century must go by before the ghosts of Huntersmoon can finally be laid to rest...

Welsh-born composer, author and actor **Ivor Novello** (1893-1951) was one of the most eminent British entertainers of the 20th century. As a composer, he trained in Cardiff, Gloucester (alongside eminent British composers – Ivor Gurney and Herbert Howells) and at Magdalen College School, Oxford. His musicals include *Glamorous Night*, *Careless Rapture*, *Crest of the Wave*, *The Dancing Years*, *Gay's the Word* and *King's Rhapsody*; his more than 250 songs include *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, *I Can Give You the Starlight*, *Waltz of My Heart*, *And Her Mother Came Too*, *The Land of Might-Have-Been*, *Why Isn't It You* and *Primrose*. His plays include *Symphony in Two Flats*, *I Lived With You* and *The Truth Game*. As an actor, he was one of Britain's first major film stars, appearing in over twenty films including *The Call of the Blood* and playing the title role in the original silent version of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Lodger*; while his long stage career included many of his own plays and musicals. Novello's musical legacy is commemorated in the Ivor Novello Awards, established in 1955 to honour excellence in British music writing. This production commemorates the 60th anniversary of his death.

Director **Max Pappenheim** recently assisted on *Beating Heart Cadaver* and *The Goodnight Bird* at the Finborough Theatre. Directing includes *The Charmed Life* (King's Head Theatre), *An Evening With Opera* (Southwark Cathedral), *Arcadia* and *Sweeney Todd* (Rugby School), and, as Musical Director for Open Door Opera, *The Enchanted Child* (Edinburgh Festival and St John's, Smith Square).

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The cast includes: **Michael Burgen** *All Male Iolanthe* (Union Theatre and Wilton's Music Hall), *Alice in Wonderland* (Erasmus International Theatre), *Zaide* (Sadler's Wells), *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (New Vic Theatre), *Sweeney Todd* (Union Theatre); **Clare Louise Connolly** *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers* (Theatre Royal Haymarket), *Next Door's Baby* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), *Six Characters In Search Of An Author* (Headlong), *The Crimson Petal And The White*; **Laura Hanna** *A Short History of the Royal Court* (Royal Court Theatre), *Into the Woods*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Romeo and Juliet* (LAMDA); **Amanda Hootman** *Epsom Downs*, *Her Naked Skin* (Guildford School of Acting); **Natalie Langston** Trained at Guildford School of Acting. Theatre includes *Evita* (National and European tour), *Grease* (Piccadilly Theatre), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (National tour and Theatre Royal, Haymarket), *Jekyll & Hyde* (National tour), *Spirit of Broadway* (China tour). Television includes *West Side Story* in *Howard Goodall's 20th Century Greats* and backing vocals for *Enya*. **Annabel Leventon** *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Pillars Of The Community* (National Theatre), *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell* (Old Vic and Apollo Theatre), *New Tricks*; **James Marchant** *The Same...But Different* (Pleasance Islington), *The Straits* (Paines Plough), *Waking The Dead* (BBC); **Rachael McCormick** *Oliver!* (Theatre Royal, Drury Lane); **Martin Milnes** *Utopia Limited* (Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Festival, Buxton), *The Yeoman Of The Guard* (Tower of London), *Promises And Lies* (Birmingham Rep), *The Andrew Marr Show* (BBC); **Kelly Price** *Zack* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester), *The Misanthrope* (Ambassadors Theatre), *A Little Night Music* (Menier Chocolate Factory and Garrick Theatre), *Chicago* (Cambridge Theatre), *Guys and Dolls* (Donmar Warehouse and Piccadilly Theatre), *Desperately Seeking Susan* (Novello Theatre), *Waterloo Road, Doctors*; **Claire Redcliffe** *When We Are Married* (Garrick Theatre), *Great Expectations*, *Tom's Midnight Garden* (Library Theatre, Manchester), *Question Time* (Arcola Theatre), *EastEnders* (BBC); **Robert Rees** *Peter Pan* (New Wimbledon Theatre), *All the Fun of the Fair* (Garrick Theatre), *State Fair* (Finborough Theatre and Trafalgar Studios), *Shakespeare Sonnet Walk* (Shakespeare's Globe); **James Russell** *Namaskar*, *Quality Street*, *Miss Lily Gets Boned* (Finborough Theatre), *Lewis* (ITV); **Gemma Sandzer** *Les Miserables* (Palace Theatre), *HMS Pinafore* (King's Head Theatre), *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*; **Katy Treharne** *The Phantom Of The Opera* (Her Majesty's Theatre).

The Celebrating British Music Theatre series at the Finborough Theatre

In 2006, the Finborough Theatre began the Celebrating British Music Theatre series with a sell-out production of Leslie Stuart's *Florodora*. Productions since then have included sell-out rediscoveries of Lionel Monckton's *Our Miss Gibbs*, Harold Fraser-Simson's operetta *The Maid of the Mountains*, A "Gilbert and Sullivan" *Double Bill* featuring Gilbert's play *Sweethearts* and Sullivan's opera *The Zoo*, Dame Ethel Smyth's opera *The Boatswain's Mate*, Sandy Wilson's *The Buccaneer*, Oscar Asche's *Chu Chin Chow*, and Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley's *The Roar of the Greasepaint – The Smell of the Crowd*.

PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2011 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: BY ARRANGEMENT. PLEASE EMAIL admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk

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

Sundays and Mondays, 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26 September 2011

Evenings at 7.30pm. Tickets £18, £15 concessions.

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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