

**The Finborough Theatre is now fully air conditioned,  
and offers STAGETEXT captioned performances.**

Summer Season | April to July 2012

Rigden Entertainment  
Adam Blanshay, Natalie Macaluso, and Ken Denison  
present  
The European Premiere

# HIS GREATNESS

by Daniel MacIvor.

Directed by Ché Walker. Designed by Jean-Marc Puissant. Lighting by Arnim Friess.

Cast: Russell Bentley. Matthew Marsh. Toby Wharton.

*"Look at who you are man, that's your name on that book. All those people up there on that stage last night, that's you. That's magic. You do magic."*

An European premiere from one of Canada's pre-eminent playwrights, Daniel MacIvor, *His Greatness* opens at the Finborough Theatre on Tuesday, 24 April 2012 (**Press Night: Friday, 27 April 2012 at 7.30pm**) for a four week limited season.

Inspired by a 'potentially true story' during the declining days of Tennessee Williams, *His Greatness* is an intimate insight into the mind of a familiar public figure, grappling with the loss of former glory and desperate for a return to form and success.

Three men; a great American playwright, his trusted and loyal assistant, and a young Canadian street hustler find themselves together for two days in a hotel room in Vancouver. The ensuing battle for power, love and loyalty is frequently funny, engagingly dark and ultimately moving. This is the story of living with greatness and the pain of its inexorable decline.

Celebrated Canadian playwright **Daniel MacIvor** has written and directed numerous award-winning productions including *See Bob Run*, *Wild Abandon*, *2-2-Tango*, *This Is A Play*, *The Soldier Dreams*, *You Are Here*, *How It Works* and *A Beautiful View*. With long time collaborator Daniel Brooks, he created the solo performances *House*, *Here Lies Henry*, *Monster* and *Cul-de-sac*. Daniel's play *Never Swim Alone* won the award for overall excellence at the New York Fringe in 1998 and, in 2002, he won a GLAAD Award and a Village Voice Obie Award for *In On It*, which was presented at PS122. His play *Marion Bridge* received its off-Broadway premiere in New York in 2005. From 1987-2007, with producing partner Sherrie Johnson, he ran Da Da Kamera, a respected international theatre touring company that has brought his work to Australia, Israel, Europe, the UK, and extensively throughout Canada and the US. In 2007, *His Greatness* was critically lauded in its premiere production at the Arts Club Theatre in Vancouver and has subsequently been seen in New York City in a sell-out production. Both *House* and *See Bob Run* have been produced at the Finborough Theatre, while *His Greatness* received a staged reading at the Finborough Theatre in April 2010 to complement its London premiere production of Tennessee Williams' *The Notebook of Trigorin*.

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 has directed three other critically acclaimed sell-out productions – *Etta Jenks*, starring Daniela Nardini and Clarke Peters (2005), *Blue Surge* (2011) and *Fog* (2012). 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

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[www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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## Press Information

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.

Designer **Jean-Marc Puissant** designs sets and costumes for opera, theatre and dance, and his work has been seen across the UK, Europe and the USA. He trained at Motley Theatre Design Course and studied Art History at La Sorbonne. Designs for Opera include *Madama Butterfly* (Santa Fe Opera), *Aida* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Valencia and Oslo) and *A Night at the Chinese Opera* for which he received aTMA Award nomination (Scottish Opera). Designs for theatre include *Pippin* (Menier Chocolate Factory) and *All My Sons* for (The Curve, Leicester). Designs for The Royal Ballet include *Jewels* – (Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production, and The South Bank Show Award nomination); *Tryst* (Olivier Award nomination) *DGV* (Olivier Award nomination and The South Bank Show Award); *Electric Counterpoint* (Critics' Circle Award). Other designs include *God's Garden* (Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, and Ipswich) *Nopalitos* (co-winner Critics' Circle Award) and *Paseillo* (Venice Biennale), *Romeo and Juliet* and *Chansons* (National Theater, Mannheim) and *Swan Lake* (Badisches Staatstheater, Karlsruhe). He has also designed for Birmingham Royal Ballet, New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater 2, Rambert Dance Company, Phoenix Dance Theatre and Opéra National du Rhin Ballet. Jean Marc has also given talks about his design work at the V and A and Guggenheim Museums, and is a member of the Board of Directors for Dance Umbrella Ltd, UK. Future productions include *The Pearl Fishers* (Santa Fe Opera) and two new Wheeldon Ballets for New York City Ballet and The Royal Ballet.

Lighting Designer **Arnim Friess** returns to the Finborough Theatre where he was Lighting Designer for *The Grapes of Wrath* (2000) and *Fog* (2012). Trained at the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design. Theatre includes *The Death of Harry* (Ouroboros Theatre), *National Holocaust Memorial Day*, *Lucky Seven* (Hampstead Theatre), *Joe Guy* (Soho Theatre), *Looking for JJ* (Unicorn Theatre), *One Night in November*, *Monged*, *Puntilla and His Man Matti*, *The Mysteries* (Belgrade Theatre, Coventry), *The Suicide*, *An Inspector Calls* (Clwyd Theatr Cymru), *Mine* (National Tour), *The White Album* (Nottingham Playhouse), *The Pitchshifter* (for leading Dutch contemporary music ensemble Insomnia), *Rumblefish*, *Road*, *Lord of the Flies* (Pilot Theatre), *Amour* (Oval House Theatre and the Dance Centre, Toronto), *Moll Flanders*, *Metropolis*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Kaos Theatre), *Paradise* (Birmingham Rep), *Angels in America* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), *Oliver* (Liverpool Playhouse), Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* (Birmingham Royal Ballet), *My Beautiful Launderette* (Snap Theatre), *The Wall*, *King*, *Satyagraha* (MAC Birmingham), *Shot Through The Heart* (Pentabus Theatre) and *Hard Day's Night* (Hull Truck Theatre Company). Other work includes the bricks-in-space spectacle, *Life on Mars* at Legoland's worldwide, and the appearance of hundreds of angels inside St Paul's Cathedral for the City of London Festival.

The cast includes:

### **Russell Bentley.**

At the Finborough Theatre, Russell appeared in Larry Kramer's *The Destiny of Me* (2002) and Jason Sherman's *Patience* (2005).

Trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre includes *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Liverpool Playhouse), *League of Youth* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Drowning on Dry Land* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *Life After* (New End Theatre), *Death of A Salesman* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Six Characters in Search of An Author* (Headlong at the Bristol Old Vic and National Tour), *Three Sisters in Hope Street* (Everyman Theatre, Liverpool, and Hampstead Theatre), *Sit and Shiva* (Hackney Empire), *Chicken Soup with Barley* (Nottingham Playhouse and the Tricycle Theatre), *Violent B* (Royal Court Young Writers Scheme), *Old Wicked Songs* (Bristol Old Vic and Gielgud Theatre), *Tower of Babel* (Soho Theatre), *Roaring Lions* (Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith), *Angel* (Old Vic New Voices at The Old Vic), *Spoils of War* (The Young Vic), *Bitter Fruits of Palestine* (The John Caird Company) and *Waiting for Lefty* and *The Cradle Will Rock* (BAC).

Film includes *Kick Ass*, *Proof*, *Below*, *Biodiversity*, *Lone Clouds*, *Lost Battalion* and *Carmela*.

Television includes *Footballers Wives*, *EastEnders*, *The Bill*, *The Eustance Brothers*, *Joy to the World*, *Clitheroe* and *Cuban Conflict in America*.

BBC Radio includes *Normandy*, *The Other Man*, *Women's Hour*, *Voyage* (Sony Award for Best Drama), *The Whore of Mensa*, *Disordered Minds*, *Goal* and *Ring Around the Bath*.

Audiobooks include *The Time Traveller's Wife* and *Homage*.

*Continued....*

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[www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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## Matthew Marsh

Theatre includes *Blood and Gifts*, *The Overwhelming* (National Theatre), *Copenhagen* (National Theatre and West End), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Apollo Theatre), *No Naughty Bits* (Hampstead Theatre), *This Isn't Romance* (Soho Theatre), *Now or Later* (Royal Court Theatre), *The Lightning Play and Conversations After a Burial* (Almeida Theatre), *The Exonerated* (Riverside Studios), *The Little Foxes* (Donmar Warehouse), *Us and Them* (Hampstead Theatre), *The Shawl* (Arcola Theatre), *A Buyer's Market* (Bush Theatre), *The Goat* (Almeida Theatre and West End) and twelve productions at The Young Vic including *Bingo*, *A Prayer for My Daughter* and the title roles in *Hamlet* and *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs*. Film includes *The Iron Lady*, *In Clear Sight*, *Treacle Junior*, *The Special Relationship*, *Red Tails*, *Dead Man Running*, *Endgame*, *Beyond Friendship*, *An American Haunting*, *Land of the Blind*, *O Jerusalem*, *Bad Company*, *Miranda*, *Quicksand* and *Spygame*.

Television includes *Hotel Taliban*, *Hidden*, *Shirley*, *The Other Child*, *Lead Balloon*, *Here*, *New Tricks*, *Luther*, *Law and Order*, *Turning Point*, *The Philanthropist*, *Masterworks*, *How Not to Live Your Life*, *Heartbeat*, *Lewis*, *The Street*, *Spooks*, *Marie Lloyd*, *Midsomer Murders*, *The Commander*, *Service*, *Hotel Babylon*, *Surviving Disaster*, *Belonging*, *Return of the Dancing Master* and *Wall of Silence*.

**Toby Wharton** recently had a huge success at the Finborough Theatre in the title role of *Fog*, which he also co-wrote with Tash Fairbanks. Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Theatre includes *Days of Significance* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Ajax* (Riverside Studios), *Transient* (Pleasance Edinburgh and Shunt Vaults Theatre), *Home* (Tristan Bates Theatre), *Shalom Baby* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *Home* for Rikki Beadle-Blair (Tristan Bates Theatre) and *Six Days* (Camden Peoples' Theatre), as well as readings and workshops at the Royal Court Theatre, Young Vic Theatre, Soho Theatre and National Theatre Studio. Film and Television includes *Postcode*, *Bashment*, *Silent Witness*, *The Bill and Gates*, a new sitcom for Sky One.

## Adam Blanshay Producer

Broadway theatre includes *Evita*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*, *Jerusalem* (Tony nomination), *Catch Me If You Can* (Tony nomination), *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Tony nomination) and *The Scottsboro Boys* (Tony nomination). Off-Broadway theatre includes *Tales From the Tunnel* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London theatre includes *Pippin* (Menier Chocolate Factory). Fringe in New York City includes *All Day Suckers* and *His Greatness*. Australian theatre includes *Doctor Zhivago*. Cast Recordings include *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Grammy nomination). A graduate of McGill University, Montreal, Adam was on last year's Old Vic T.S. Eliot Exchange.

## Natalie Macaluso Producer

Trained at The Oxford School of Drama. She is currently Assistant Producer at the Criterion Theatre. Theatre includes *Pippin* (Menier Chocolate Factory), *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Rover* (Southwark Playhouse), *London Calling* (Vineyard Theatre NYC), *The 24 Hour Plays* (Old Vic New Voices at The Old Vic). Radio Production includes *The Afghan and the Penguin*, *Waves Breaking on a Shore* (Promenade Productions for BBC Radio 4). Natalie was on last year's Old Vic T.S Eliot Exchange.

## The Press on *His Greatness*

"*His Greatness* is a great piece of theatre. More than mere homage to Tennessee Williams, Daniel MacIvor's superb study of a fading Southern playwright is a finely detailed story with nuance to spare." Peter Bernie, *Vancouver Sun*.

"Daniel MacIvor's *His Greatness* is a beautiful play, made up of equal amounts of laughter and tears... MacIvor reveals layer upon layer of complexity and resentment, gradually letting us see how a great love can corrode into an even greater hate. ...Daniel Mac Ivor's play is the toast of New York City" Richard Ouzounian, *Toronto Star*

Four Stars in *Time Out New York*

"Stunning...like a well-crafted handmade watch....simply genius." *Nytheatre.com*

## The press on director Ché Walker's previous productions at the Finborough Theatre

"Fringe theatre is bristling with creativity and flare but is often overlooked. This seething mass of talent has risen to the surface at the Finborough with this transfixing production. Making his directorial debut, Che Walker creates a wonderfully tragic journey...this production is a triumph for all involved." Rob Speight, *The Stage* on *Achidi J's Final Hours*

"This is, by some distance, the best play that I have seen this year. Bracing, intense and tragic...compellingly, convincingly performed" Glen Baker, *Morning Star* on *Achidi J's Final Hours*

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**FINBOROUGH | THEATRE**

"This sensitive and highly effective production. Walker, directing a persuasive cast...creates a dark and compelling onstage world." Sam Marlowe, *The Times* on *Achidi J's Final Hours*

"Superbly directed by Ché Walker...an exciting, darkly comic evening." Aleks Sierz, *What's On in London* on *Etta Jenks*

"Ché Walker has revived it at the Finborough with great panache and a very strong cast." Philip Fisher, *British Theatre Guide* on *Etta Jenks*

"Ché Walker's spirited and thoroughly entertaining production" Robert Shore, *Time Out* on *Etta Jenks*

*Blue Surge* – *Time Out* Critics' Choice, \*\*\*\* Four Stars in *Time Out*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *London Theatre Reviews*, *The Public Reviews*, *WhatsOnStage* and *Evening Standard*.

"The direction is fluid and beautifully paced while the lights are carefully blended into the scenes... It is the Finborough at its best" Blanche Marvin, *London Theatreviews* on *Blue Surge*

"Ché Walker's intimate production is lit up by intelligent performances." Henry Hitchings, *Evening Standard* on *Blue Surge*

"Powerfully served...by Ché Walker's direction...An evening of great theatre." Jeremy Kingston, *The Times* on *Blue Surge*

"Ché Walker's production hits exactly the right note of pained intimacy." Michael Billington, *The Guardian* on *Blue Surge*

*Fog* – *Time Out* Show of the Week and Critics' Choice, \*\*\*\*\* Five Stars *WhatsOnStage*, \*\*\*\* Four Stars *The Daily Telegraph* and *Time Out*

"Che Walker's sizzling and stunning production." Aleks Sierz, *The Stage* on *Fog*

"Ché Walker's gripping production" Howard Loxton, *British Theatre Guide* on *Fog*

"Che Walker's cleverly heightened production jangles your nerves and twists your heart." Paul Taylor, *The Independent*

"Fog has a tenderness and subtlety - drawn out beautifully in Che Walker's rhythmic, observant production - which deepens its impact." Caroline McGinn, *Time Out* on *Fog*

"Ché Walker's production...is intimate, tender, terrifying" Kate Bassett, *The Independent on Sunday* on *Fog*

**PRESS NIGHT: FRIDAY, 27 APRIL 2012 AT 7.30PM**

**PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 24 APRIL 2012 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM**

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED  
Box Office 0844 847 1652 Book online at [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

**Tuesday, 24 April – Saturday, 19 May 2012**

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 (24 April–6 May 2012) – Tickets £14, £10 concessions, except Tuesday Evenings £10 all seats, and Saturday evenings £14 all seats. Previews (24 and 25 April) £9 all seats.

£6 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 (8 May–19 May 2012) – Tickets £16, £12 concessions, except Tuesday Evenings £12 all seats, and Saturday evenings £16 all seats.

STAGETEXT captioned performance for deaf and hard of hearing people – Saturday, 12 May 2012 at 3.00pm

Performance Length: Approximately two hours with one interval of fifteen minutes.

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**

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

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