

Alces Productions in association with Concordance present **THE UK PREMIERE**

Blackwater Angel

by Jim Nolan. Directed by Mark Giesser.

Designed by John Scheffler. Associate Design by Alex Marker. Costume Design by Nell Knudsen. Assistant Direction by Kate Wasserberg.

Cast: Sean Champion. Stephen Cavanagh. Kevin Colson. Riona Kearney. Aaron McCusker. Vicky Ogden. Fiona O' Shaughnessy. Joseph Rye. Catherine Walker.

The UK debut of one of Ireland's most acclaimed contemporary playwrights...

"I had been chosen. But I did not know why. All I did know was that even as the maimed and the diseased and the scarred were already clamouring at the gate for my touch, a price would one day be exacted for a gift I had neither sought or desired but which was now irrevocably mine."

In the summer of 1666, Valentine Greatrakes returns to his estate in rural Ireland, greatly shaken by a sojourn in London which has expanded his fame and exposed him to charges of treason. For Greatrakes is a former Puritan soldier who apparently has the ability to heal by touch. In a time when "the world is rational and wonders have ceased," people are calling this ability everything from divine gift to magician's trick to an assault on Royal power. With his family in turmoil as thousands besiege his home in search of cures, Greatrakes struggles to make sense of who or what he has become. An English troupe of players visiting the area may have an answer in the form of Angel Landy, a mysterious young woman with an exemplary gift of song. But Greatrakes' attempt to understand Angel and what she might mean to him threatens to destroy them both...

Based on a true story, the play premiered at The National Theatre of Ireland's Abbey Theatre in 2001, and now receives its UK premiere at the Finborough Theatre, increasingly well known for its production of Irish drama including the UK premiere of Frank McGuinness' *Gates of Gold* and the first UK revival of Tom Murphy's *The Gigli Concert*.

The cast includes **Sean Champion** whose most recent roles were at the Donmar Warehouse in *The Cosmonaut's Last Message...* and for the Oxford Stage Company in Kathy Burke's production of *The Quare Fellow*. Sean was a member of the original *Stones in His Pockets* cast for which he was nominated for an Olivier Award in London and a Tony Award in New York.

Playwright **Jim Nolan** is Writer-in-Residence at The National Theatre of Ireland, where his newest drama, *Dark Star*, will premiere in 2006. He is a founding member and former Artistic Director of Ireland's noted Red Kettle Theatre Company, and has written and directed for companies such as Field Day. Previous plays include *The Gods Are Angry Miss Kerr*, *The Black Pool* (which won the O.Z. Whitehead Award), *The Boathouse*, *Moonshine* (RTÉ/Bank of Ireland Award), *The Guernica Hotel* and *The Salvage Shop*, which won the *Sunday Independent*/Ford Spirit of Life Award for Play of the Year, and was nominated for the *Irish Times*/ESB Best New Play Award. **This is the first production of Jim Nolan's plays in the UK.**

Blackwater Angel sees the UK debut of two leading New York Off-Broadway artists - director **Mark Giesser's** previous productions include *How to Build A Better Tulip*, *Code of the West*; *Hansen's Cab*, *The Night They Burned Washington* and *Pledge of Allegiance*; while OBIE award-winning designer **John Scheffler** has designed Off-Broadway and for major opera companies around the US including Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera and San Francisco Opera.

PRESS ACCLAIM FOR THE ABBEY THEATRE PRODUCTION

"In a darkened theatre in a dark wood, I saw a theatrical miracle take place and it was as ordinary as you could imagine it and as powerful as you could want it to be" *Munster Express*

"This powerful new play from Jim Nolan...it is an ambitious landscape to paint, and Nolan succeeds compellingly." *Sunday Tribune*

"Powerful, strong, deep...A major achievement for Jim Nolan and a fine addition to the canon of the National Theatre." *Munster Express*

PRESS NIGHT: THURSDAY, MARCH 2ND 2006 AT 7.30PM
PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH 2006 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM

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Press Information

finboroughtheatre

Box Office 0870 4000 838 www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Tuesday, February 28th-Saturday, March 25th 2006

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.30pm.

Tickets £12, £9 concessions. Tuesday Evenings £8 all seats. Saturday evenings £12 all seats.

Previews (February 28th and March 1st) £8 all seats.

Performance Length: Approximately 2 hours.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Neil McPherson on **020 7244 7439** or e-mail **admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk**

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