

Shapeshifter, Berwick House Productions and Concordance present

Lark Rise to Candleford

by Keith Dewhurst, from the books by Flora Thompson

Directed by John Terry and Mike Bartlett. Designed by Alex Marker.

New musical arrangements by Tim van Eyken.

Movement by Kitty Winter. Costumes by Penn O'Gara.

Cast includes: David Brett. Hugo Cox. Rosalind Cressy. Hannah Emanuel. Susie Emmett. Nicky Goldie.

Michael Lovatt. Gary Mackay. Tom Murphy. Owyn Stephens. Anna Tolputt. Sophie Trott.

TWO PROMENADE PLAYS IN REPERTOIRE!

THE FIRST REVIVAL OF BOTH PLAYS SINCE THE ORIGINAL NATIONAL THEATRE PRODUCTION WINNER OF THE PETER BROOK EMPTY SPACE MARK MARVIN AWARD

"As she went on her way, gossamer threads, spun from bush to bush, barricaded her pathway, and as she broke through one after another of these fairy barricades she thought, "They're trying to bind and keep me." But the threads which were to bind her to her native county were more enduring than gossamer. They were spun of love and kinship and cherished memories."

Lark Rise to Candleford is a lively two-play adaptation for the theatre of Flora Thompson's classic trilogy of Oxfordshire life at the end of the 19th century, recalling an era when the traditional ways and values of rural society were disappearing beneath the clamour of modern life and finally vanishing forever in the carnage of the First World War. The two plays can be seen in any order, separately or together.

Shapeshifter's dynamic promenade staging, featuring extensive live folk music, immerses the audience in the forgotten communities of a vanishing England. *Lark Rise to Candleford* creatively re-invents the tiny Finborough theatre as the highways, outhouses and smoky taverns of Flora Thompson's Oxfordshire hamlet, bringing every aspect of this lost lifestyle to the stage, from the midwinter fox hunt to the midsummer harvest, from climbing trees to throwing snowballs.

Connecting with our continuing struggle for a national identity, the two plays are a unique opportunity to experience the rites, rituals, poverty and celebrations of a true rural community. In a period of great debate about the national values that we practice at home and abroad, they are a fond but painfully honest recreation of the sensory world that underlies the concept of what it is to be English.

Reuniting the team behind the *Time Out* Critics' Choice production of Rolf Hochhuth's *Soldiers*, a sell-out at the Finborough Theatre in August 2004, the Finborough Theatre's Artistic Director, Neil McPherson, has now commissioned Shapeshifter to bring this hugely ambitious revival to the stage as part of the 25th anniversary year - the very first time that both parts of the play have been seen together since the 1978 National Theatre production.

This production has partly been made possible by the award of the 2004/5 winner of the Peter Brook Empty Space Mark Marvin Award, judged by such theatre luminaries as Thelma Holt, Peter Wilson, Blanche Marvin and Michael Attenborough, specifically designed to support and develop an existing partnership between an outstanding new company and a producing theatre presenting a new project. The production is also supported by the Jerwood Space.

Directed by acclaimed young director **John Terry**, whose recent work has been seen at The Orange Tree Theatre, the BAC, and who is a member of the 2005 National Theatre Studio Director's Programme, and Shapeshifter Associate Director **Mike Bartlett**, and designed by **Alex Marker**, Associate Designer of the Finborough Theatre. New musical arrangements have been commissioned from BBC Young Folk Music Award winner **Tim van Eyken**, a well respected composer and performer well known for his solo work and collaborations with Martin Carthy and Norma Waterson.

Author **Flora Thompson** was born in Juniper Hill, a hamlet in north-east Oxfordshire, in 1876. In 1938 she sent essays on her country childhood to the Oxford University Press. These were published as *Lark Rise* (1939), the story of the Oxfordshire hamlet where she was born. *Over to Candleford* (1941) was followed by *Candleford Green* (1943), the whole published as *Lark Rise to Candleford* (1945). She died in 1947.

Playwright **Keith Dewhurst** has written seventeen stage plays including *Luggage*, *Lark Rise*, *The World Turned Upside Down*, *Don Quixote* (starring Paul Scofield) and *Black Snow* were premiered by the National Theatre, and *Pirates* and *Brecht In '26* by the English Stage Company at the Royal Court.

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439 Fax 020 7835 1853
e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

Lark Rise:

Laura is a ten year old girl, living in the tiny village of Lark Rise. The village is full of characters that Laura knows well: lewd farmers, singing drinkers, shouting beekeepers and gossiping women. But as she watches old men removed to the work house, soldiers returning from war, and overhears her father speaking of Gladstone and workers rights, she realises that this way of life cannot last forever, and that change may be inevitable.

Candleford:

In the small town of Candleford, Laura is now fourteen and working in the Post Office. Her world is becoming larger and more complicated, and she is beginning to encounter grown-up problems. As she earns trust from adults, she watches them hunting, bullying, lying and leaving, and she discovers that the town is full of secrets and contradictions. She must find a way through this new world, and discover her own place within it.

PRESS ACCLAIM FOR JOHN TERRY'S PRODUCTION OF *SOLDIERS*

***Time Out* Critics' Choice *The Times* Theatre First Choice**

"Skilfully directed by John Terry" *The Times*

"John Terry's clear, committed production" Paul Taylor, *The Independent*

"Dramatic dynamite . . . In London's highly politicised theatrical climate, John Terry's mature, thought provoking production"

Rachel Halliburton, *Time Out*

"John Terry's admirable revival . . . This is concentrated theatre and highly recommended." John Nathan, *Jewish Chronicle*.

"This thoughtfully directed play, with its obvious relevance to the Iraq Shock and Awe campaign, remains more than a period piece and...makes for a gripping, stimulating evening." Colin Shearman, *The Stage*

"John Terry has concocted some chilling moments, not to mention some atmospheric lighting and sound, and this revival at the Finborough Theatre is well worth catching" Michael Caines, *Church Times*

"You have to salute the bravery of Finborough supremo Neil McPherson for giving this difficult play its first London revival since the 1960's" Aleks Sierz, *What's On in London*

"This fluid and beautifully acted production by John Terry" Rhoda Koenig, *Evening Standard*

PRESS ACCLAIM FOR *LARK RISE TO CANDLEFORD* FROM THE NATIONAL THEATRE PRODUCTIONS, 1978-9

"Sheer amazement...what a beautiful piece of work" Irving Wardle, *The Times*

"A lyrical and marvellously uplifting account of Victorian life" *Punch*

"It is so steeped in the details of country life that it will send most spectators out wiser and happier human beings... A most extraordinary event...It is one of those rare theatrical occasions with a genuine healing quality." Michael Billington, *The Guardian*

"As the evening progresses, we relax into acceptance of the reality of this vanished world...By the time cast, audience and band launch into the final wild round dance you are wishing that it would start all over again" *The Stage*.

"A thoroughly charming, enchanting experience" Catherine Itzin, *Plays and Players*.

"There is a real and unsentimental feeling for values which we have possibly lost today." Charles Spencer, *Evening Standard*.

www.shapesifter.org.uk www.concordance.org.uk

PRESS NIGHT FOR *LARK RISE*: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH 2005

PRESS NIGHT FOR *CANDLEFORD*: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7TH 2005

PRESS NIGHT FOR BOTH PLAYS: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8TH 2005

PHOTOCALL: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH 2005 AT 1.00-1.30PM

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

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

or, for urgent enquiries only, please, mobile **07977 173135**

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Lark Rise to Candleford

LISTINGS INFORMATION

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

Box Office 0870 4000 838 Book online at www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Wednesday, September 28th-Saturday, October 29th 2005

The plays can be seen in any order, separately or together.

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Saturday and Sunday Matinees at 3.00pm.

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

Previews £8 all seats.

Performance Length of each part: Approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes.

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 28th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	preview
Thursday 29th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	preview
Friday 30th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	press night

OCTOBER

Saturday 1st	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Sunday 2nd	3.00pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Monday 3rd	No Performance		
Tuesday 4th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Wednesday 5th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Thursday 6th	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	preview
Friday 7th	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	press night
Saturday 8th	3.00pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	press night
	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Sunday 9th	3.00pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Monday 10th	No Performance		
Tuesday 11th	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Wed. 12th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Thursday 13th	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Friday 14th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Saturday 15th	3.00pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Sunday 16th	3.00pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Monday 17th	No Performance		
Tuesday 18th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Wed. 19th	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Thursday 20th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Friday 21st	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Saturday 22nd	3.00pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Sunday 23rd	3.00pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Monday 24th	No Performance		
Tuesday 25th	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Wed. 26th	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Thursday 27th	7.30pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	
Friday 28th	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	
Saturday 29th	3.00pm	<i>Lark Rise</i>	last performance
	7.30pm	<i>Candleford</i>	last performance

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