

The world premiere

# DIAGNOSIS

by Athena Stevens.

Directed by Ché Walker. Designed by Juliette Demoulin. Lighting design by Mark Dymock. Sound design by Julian Starr. Presented by Sarah Lawrie for Aegis Productions in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre. Cast: Athena Stevens. Ché Walker. Ted Walliker.

After four years of creative exile, Finborough Theatre Playwright in Residence **Athena Stevens** returns to the stage with the world premiere of **Diagnosis**, opening at the multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Tuesday, 13 May 2025 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 15 May 2025 and Friday, 16 May 2025 at 7.30pm**).

A London police station, late at night. A vulnerable woman with a disability is brought in. But is she making a confession, a plea, a threat, or is she just plain mad?

After spending years flying surveillance drones through the tunnels of London's Underground, she begins seeing things – glowing words above people's heads, predicting their future injuries and diagnoses.

And when she sees a countdown above a stranger's head at a bar – one that's ticking down in minutes – she knows she has to act...

Gripping, taut and unsettling, *Diagnosis* is a speculative fiction thriller that asks...if you knew what was coming, would you be able to change it?

*Diagnosis* marks the return to the theatre after four years of creative exile for Olivier Award nominated and OffWestEnd Award Best Play winner **Athena Stevens**, and is directed by the multi-award-winning **Ché Walker** whose sell-out production of **Burnt-Up Love** at the Finborough Theatre in November 2024 was selected by *The Observer* as one of the UK's Top 10 Productions of 2024. This production coincides with the publication of Athena's autobiography *What's Done Cannot Be Undone* to be published by HarperCollins on 5 June 2025.

Playwright and performer **Athena Stevens** returns to the Finborough Theatre where she is a Playwright in Residence. Her productions at the Finborough Theatre include writing and performing in *Scrounger*, winner of the OffWestEnd Award for Best New Play; *Schism* which transferred to the Park Theatre, was nominated for an Olivier Award and an OffWestEnd Award for Best Female Performance in a Play; and *Late Night Staring at High Res Pixels*, streamed during lockdown in 28 separate episodes, winner of the OffWestEnd OnComm Award. Other writing includes *Reluctant Spirit* (BBC Radio 3) and *Hello to the Trolls* (National Youth Theatre). Acting includes understudying for *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* (Trafalgar Studios), Juliet in *Redefining Juliet* (Royal Shakespeare Company at the Barbican Theatre) and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* (RADA). Film and Television include the feature documentary *Day of Small Things* (Channel 4), *EastEnders* (BBC), the short film *The Conference* (BBC) and three web series for YouTube. In addition to her theatre career, Athena is a neuropsychology student at the Harvard Extension School, where her research focuses on basal ganglia injury and its effects on emotional regulation. She is the co-host of *NeuroBlast!*, a podcast that makes neuroscience accessible to a broad audience. She also worked as a consultant to the London Underground for seven years. Her autobiography *What's Done Cannot Be Undone* will be published by HarperCollins on 5 June 2025 in hardback, e-book, audiobook and trade paperback.

Director and performer **Ché Walker** recently wrote, acted and directed *Burnt Up Love* at the Finborough Theatre. Productions at the Finborough Theatre as an actor include *Etta Jenks* and *Venetian Heat*; as a director, *His Greatness*, *Etta Jenks*, *Blue Surge*, *Fog* and *Achidi J's Final Hours*; and as director and playwright, *Time Is Love/Tiempo Es Amor*.

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439  
e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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Registered Charity no. 1071304. Registered address: 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED. A member of the Independent Theatre Council.

## PRESS INFORMATION

Trained at the Webber Douglas Academy. Theatre includes *Othello* (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse/Shakespeare's Globe) and *Love's Labour's Lost* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Christmas* (Bush Theatre), *Tuesday Night Poker* (Theatre Row, New York), *French Toast* (Riverside Studios), *2:22 A Ghost Story* (Gielgud Theatre), *The Prince* (Southwark Playhouse), *Intra Muros* (Park Theatre), *Biloxi Blues* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Last Sortie* (New End Theatre, Hampstead), *Pitchfork Disney* (Citizens Theatre, Glasgow) and *Wait Until Dark* (Theatre Royal Plymouth). Film includes *Deadmeat*, *January 2nd*, *Kiss Kiss*, *Circus* and *Beyond Bedlam*. Television includes *Riches*, *The Chelsea Detective*, *Youngers*, *Holby City*, *Eastenders*, *The Office*, *The Vice*, *Madsen*, *Lipstick On Your Collar*, *Killing Time*, *The Ruth Rendell Mysteries*, *Supply and Demand*, *Little Napoleons*, *State of Affairs*, *The Bill*, *Between The Lines*, *Class Act*, *Soldier Soldier*, *Casualty*, *Minder*, *Rules of Engagement* and *Dangerfield*.

Performer **Ted Walliker** trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Theatre includes *Near To* (Camden People's Theatre), *Dot Dot Dot Dash* (Rosemary Branch Theatre), *Pimms and Piety* (Etcetera Theatre) and *Phone* (Courtyard Theatre). Film includes *The Hollow Bind*, *The Florist*, *It Had To Be You*, *Rach*, *Night Shift*, *Taste the Sun*, *Nightshade* and *Quicksand*, and producing and co-writing *Quicksand* for ArtHouse Jersey.

### The press on Athena Stevens' *Scrounger* at the Finborough Theatre

Winner – OffWestEnd Award for New Play

*Time Out* – Show of the Week

*The Stage* – Top Five Theatre Shows

★★★★ Four Stars, *Time Out*, *London Living Large*, *Close-Up Culture*, *Reviewsgate*, *The Spy in the Stalls*, *The Upcoming*, *A Younger Theatre*, *London Pub Theatres*, *Breaking the Fourth Wall*, *The Londonist*.

"A stimulating, challenging evening...terrific." William Russell, *Reviewsgate*

"*Scrounger* does for disability what *Fairview* does for the white, liberal gaze on race. It is unashamedly provocative; justifiably angry." Lyn Gardner, *Stagedoor*

"Athena Stevens's excellent new play...provocative, smart and calls out its liberal audience...and that's something so little of the theatre that's on stage is doing right now. Instead of preaching to the converted...it sinks its teeth into the hypocrisies of people who tell themselves they're doing good without actually doing anything." Rosemary Waugh, *Time Out*

"Stevens aims for the jugular with a straight-shooting political touch." Cindy Marcolina, *Broadway World*

"An impassioned – and provocative – piece of work...No one is spared from the force of nature that is Stevens...Playwright Athena Stevens is one ballsy individual. She's not scared of anyone or anything. Attitude and anger course through her veins." Jeff Prestridge, *Close-Up Culture*

"We came away richer for seeing Athena's play and, especially, her stunning performance." David Saxon Jones, *London Living Large*

"It's all told with humour, warmth and a healthy amount of outrage." Paul Ewing, *The Londonist*

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

*Burnt-Up Love* – One of *The Observer's* Top 10 Productions of 2024. ★★★★★ ½ Four ½ stars, *London Pub Theatres*

★★★★ Four Stars, *The Stage*, *The Observer*, *London Theatre I*, *The Reviews Hub*, *Everything Theatre*, *Plays to See*, *Morning Star*, *Squirrp*, *The Arts Desk*, *ajhlovestheatre*

"Extraordinary." Susannah Clapp, *The Observer*

"A highly recommended watch, bordering on exceptional." John Montgomery, *London Pub Theatres*

"One of the very finest three-handers I've seen for a long time." Simon Jenner, *Fringe Review*

"Beautiful and moving play. I am SO glad I went. If you're looking for an evening out I really, really recommend going." Raye.

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

"Ché Walker's sizzling and stunning production." Aleks Sierz, *The Stage*

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

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

*Blue Surge* – *Time Out* Critics' Choice, ★★★★★ Four Stars, *Time Out*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *WhatsOnStage* and *Evening Standard*.

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

*Greatness* – *Time Out* Critics' Choice – ★★★★★ Four Stars *The Sunday Times*, *WhatsOnStage* and *Time Out*

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

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## PRESS INFORMATION

*Achidi J's Final Hours* – "Fringe theatre is bristling with creativity and flair but is often overlooked. This seething mass of talent has risen to the surface at the Finborough with this transfixing production. Director Ché Walker creates a wonderfully tragic journey...this production is a triumph for all involved." *The Stage*

**PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 15 MAY 2025 AND FRIDAY, 16 MAY 2025 AT 7.30PM**  
**PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 13 MAY 2025 AT 1.00PM–1.30PM**

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Book online at [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

Box Office 020 7244 7439

No booking fees

**Tuesday, 13 May – Saturday, 7 June 2025**

Tuesday to Saturday evenings at 7.30pm. Saturday and Sunday matinees at 3.00pm.

**Prices for Week One** – Tickets £20, £18 concessions.

Previews £15 all seats.

£10 tickets for Under 30s for performances from Tuesday to Sunday of the first week when booked online only.

£15 tickets for residents of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham on the first Saturday evening of each run, when booked online only.

**Prices for Weeks Two and Three** – Tickets £23, £20 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £20 all seats.

**Prices for Week Four** – Tickets £25, £23 concessions. No concessions on Friday or Saturday evenings.

Group Bookings for all performances – 1 free ticket in every 10 purchased.

Performance Length: Approximately 75 minutes with no interval.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

**Finborough Theatre** on e-mail [press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) or **020 7244 7439**

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

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