

November 2023-February 2024 season at the Finborough Theatre

The European premiere

1979

by Michael Healey.

Directed by Jimmy Walters.

Presented by Proud Haddock in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

"You're a forgettable blank. A complete nobody. You're the leader of this country, and the vast majority of Canadians couldn't pick you out of a police line-up. And that's good. As long as the leader is as still, silent, and blank as possible...he can do whatever he wants."

In a production commissioned by the Finborough Theatre, the European premiere of Michael Healey's hit satirical political comedy **1979** opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Tuesday, 2 January 2024 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 4 January and Friday 5 January 2024 at 7.30pm**).

In May 1979, Progressive Conservative Joe Clark was elected as Canada's youngest ever Prime Minister.

By Christmas 1979, it looked as though it was all over.

But Clark is young and idealistic, resolute on making his mark in office, and governing for the whole country, not just his own party supporters. Faced with a critical decision, his colleagues – including his predecessor Pierre Trudeau – take the opportunity to steer him in completely different directions...

As the UK heads into what will almost certainly be another General Election year, this fast-paced satirical political comedy is a dazzling insight into the rapidly changing world of Conservative party politics.

A European premiere from multi-award-winning playwright Michael Healey in his fourth production at the Finborough Theatre.

Playwright **Michael Healey** returns to the Finborough Theatre which has seen three productions of his work including his UK debut with *Generous* (2009, revived by popular demand in 2010), the London premiere of *The Drawer Boy* (2012) and the UK premiere of *Proud* (2016). Michael Healey trained as an actor at Toronto's Ryerson Theatre School. He began writing for the stage in the early nineties, and his first play, *Kicked*, was produced at the Fringe of Toronto Festival in 1996, subsequently toured across Canada and internationally, and won the Toronto's most prestigious theatre award, the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best New Play. *The Drawer Boy*, his first full-length play, premiered in Toronto in 1999, again winning the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best New Play, as well as the Chalmers Canadian Playwriting Award and Canada's highest literary honour, the Governor General's Literary Award. It has been translated into German, French, Japanese and Hindi and continues to be produced regularly across North America and internationally. Healey's other works include *The Road To Hell* (co-authored with Kate Lynch), *Plan B*, *Rune Arlidge*, *The Innocent Eye Test*, *The Nuttalls*, *Are You Okay*, and *1979* which received six Betty Mitchell Award nominations on its world premiere in Calgary in 2017, and subsequently ran in Toronto in 2019. His trilogy focusing on Canadian values and politics, entitled *Generous*, *Courageous*, and *Proud* met with great critical success and have had multiple productions. In all, his plays have won the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best New Play five times. He has also adapted works by Chekhov, Molnar, Hecht and MacArthur, Dürrenmatt and Bernard Shaw for the Stratford Festival, the Shaw Festival and Soulpepper,

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

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PRESS INFORMATION

Toronto. He continues to work as an actor occasionally. Michael's newest play *The Master Plan*, will premiere at Crow's Theatre, Toronto, in Autumn 2023.

Director **Jimmy Walters** returns to the Finborough Theatre following his acclaimed productions of two plays by Tony Harrison – *Square Rounds* and *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* – as well as Jordan Hall's *How To Survive An Apocalypse* and John Osborne's *A Subject of Scandal and Concern*. Direction includes *The Skin Game*, *Billy Bishop Goes To War* and *The Dog Beneath The Skin* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *Mrs Orwell* (Southwark Playhouse), *Julius Caesar* (Saatchi Gallery), *A Naughty Night With Noël Coward* (Old Red Lion Theatre) *Improbable Fiction* (Courtyard Theatre), *Hamlet* (Bedouin Shakespeare Company), *I the Jury* (Hen and Chickens Theatre), *Watching Paint Dry* (Barons Court Theatre), *Breaded Butler* (Troubadour) and *Dear Ray* (Edinburgh Festival). Assistant Direction includes Young Shakespeare Company tours of *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Bloomsbury Theatre), *Othello* (Riverside Studios) and *Knock Yourself Out* (Courtyard Theatre).

The Canadian press on 1979

"A terrific political satire... We both recommend it highly. Go see it, you'll laugh. Always a good thing in January."

Mooney on Theatre

"Genuinely moving, sincerely funny." *The Globe and Mail*

"One of the most theatrical, entertaining, insightful, beautifully crafted, superbly staged and devilishly acted productions I've seen." *Calgary Herald*

"A hilarious play about trust, power, and ambition" *Broadway World Toronto*

"Such a clever and enjoyable play." *Parliamentum*

"Highly entertaining." *Grid City Magazine*

The press on playwright Michael Healey's *Proud* and *The Drawer Boy* at the Finborough Theatre

★★★★ "Satirical yet tender, this is a small delight" *The Times* on *The Drawer Boy*

★★★★ "It's no surprise that this inspiring work from the under-exposed Healey has returned to the London stage" *Whatsonstage* on *Generous*

★★★★ "An original, entertaining and intelligent play, certainly up to the standard of what we have come to expect from the excellent Finborough Theatre" *London Theatre 1* on *Proud*

"Bright, sharp, witty and well acted." Michael Billington, *The Guardian* on *Generous*

"A satirical skewering of Harper and an exposé of the dark machinations of the Prime Minister's Office" *British Theatre Guide* on *Proud*

"Directly relevant" *Exeunt Magazine* on *Proud*

"Full of profanity, wit and political insight" *Broadway World* on *Proud*

"Funny and moving...a welcome reminder of Michael Healey's importance as a national storyteller" *British Theatre Guide* on *Proud*

The press on director Jimmy Walters' productions of Tony Harrison's plays at the Finborough Theatre

On *Square Rounds* –

★★★★ "Jimmy Walters's expressive production." Michael Billington, *The Guardian*

★★★★ "Jimmy Walters' inventive production." *Jewish Renaissance*

★★★★ "A resounding success." *Close Up Culture*

★★★★ "The all-female cast were exceptional under the direction of Jimmy Walters." *North West End*

On *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* –

★★★★ "Timely relevance." *Breaking the Fourth Wall*

"Vibrant, heartfelt and provocative." Sam Marlowe, *The Times*

"Even if the mock penises in this revival tend to dangle, there is nothing limp about Jimmy Walters' production."

Michael Billington, *The Guardian*

"A joy." Sarah Hemming, *Financial Times*

"I loved this. I enjoyed it enormously." *Saturday Review BBC Radio 4*

PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 4 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM and FRIDAY, 5 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM

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PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 2 JANUARY 2024 AT 1.30PM-2.00PM

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Book online at www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Box Office 020 7244 7439

No booking fees

Tuesday, 2 January – Saturday, 27 January 2024

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

Prices until 14 January 2024 – Tickets £20, £18 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £18 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £20 all seats. Previews (2 and 3 January) £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 Saturday, 6 January 2024 at 7.30pm when booked online only.

Prices from 16 January 2024 – Tickets £23, £20 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £20 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £23 all seats.

Performance Length: Approximately 90 minutes with no interval.

Covid Safe – Masks are mandatory at all Sunday matinee performances.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Ellie Renfrew on e-mail press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07799 642410**

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