

July-September 2024 season at the Finborough Theatre

#VoicesFromUkraine | #Українськіголоси | #Ukrayins'kiholosy

The world premiere

DIARY OF A UKRAINIAN MADMAN

or, The Innocence of the Pangolins

by Liudmyla Tymoshenko.

Inspired by Nikolai Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*.

Translated by John Farndon.

Directed by Chris Loveless.

Set and Costume Design by Amy Mitchell. Lighting Design by Venus Raven. Sound Design by Hoxa Sound.

Presented by Stepping Out Theatre in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Edmund Dehn. Lottie Furzer. Kristin Milward. Archie Redford. Kevin Trainor.

'And by the way gentlemen, Putin's head is bald now because he had scabies as an adult. Do you understand how this changes everything?...'

The world premiere of ***Diary of a Ukrainian Madman or The Innocence of the Pangolins***, a new comedy inspired by Nikolai Gogol's classic *Diary of a Madman* by Ukrainian playwright and artist Liudmyla Tymoshenko, opens at the Finborough Theatre for a three week limited season on Tuesday, 13 August 2024 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 15 August 2024 and Friday, 16 August 2024 at 7.30pm**).

A fabulously surreal reworking of Ukrainian-born novelist and playwright Nikolai Gogol's original, reimagined for a contemporary Ukraine racked by Covid and war.

Lonely, eccentric pharmacist Vasyl Petrovych works long hours and night shifts in the dingy pharmacy that is almost his home.

Harassed by his dreadful boss Serhiy, the boss's wife Valentina and junior colleague Stepan, he retreats into a rich fantasy life where he is on the verge of discoveries that will change the world.

His sanity might have survived the pandemic and the Russian invasion, just...until he falls in love with the boss's beautiful daughter Stefania...

On a set that is part modern pharmacy, part alchemist's laboratory and part madhouse, a gallery of Gogolian grotesques drifts through time and space in a headlong flight of wild imagination and fantastical humour.

The cast includes an array of Finborough Theatre favourites including **Kevin Trainor** (*Yes So I Said Yes*), **Kristin Milward** (OffWestEnd Award nominated Best Actor for *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness*) and **Edmund Dehn** who appeared in the opening production of the Finborough Theatre in 1980 and has since appeared in more Finborough Theatre productions than any other actor; alongside new talent **Lottie Furzer** and **Archie Redford**.

Playwright **Liudmyla Tymoshenko** was born in North Kazakhstan in 1978. She is a playwright, screenwriter, artist and university lecturer from Kyiv, and was also a co-founder of the Playwrights' Theatre of Kyiv. Her productions

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include *Once Upon a Time in Morske* (Sviya Theatre Zaporizhzhia, Garmyder Theatre, Lutsk), *Five Songs of Polissya* (Maria Zankovetska Theatre, Lviv), *Uncle Misha Passes by* (Maly Theatre, Kyiv), *Refugee Cats* (Bavka Transcarpathian Regional Puppet Theatre, Sunshine Children's Theatre, Kyiv, Water is Memory Festival, Vichy, and Rivne Regional Puppet Theatre). She has been a nominee and winner of numerous national and international playwriting competitions and festivals. *Five Songs of Polissya* received the Grand Prix in the *July Honey* competition, and won the *Drama on the Move* competition from the Ukrainian Institute, and she was twice finalist in the 'UA' playwriting competition. *Diary of A Ukrainian Madman* was shortlisted for both the Polish 'Aurora' playwriting competition for writers from Central and Eastern Europe, and the Ukrainian 'UA' Drama Competition in 2023. Two premieres of her plays were scheduled for February-May 2022 in Kyiv and Lviv, cancelled due to the war.

Novelist and playwright **Nikolai Gogol** (1809–1852) was Ukrainian by birth and upbringing, the son of a gifted father who wrote plays, poems and sketches in Ukrainian. The trilingual Gogol's life and works (Polish was his third language) epitomize the complex relationship between Russia, Ukraine and Poland. Best known for his novel *Dead Souls* and plays *The Government Inspector* and *The Marriage*. Gogol's prose is characterized by imaginative power and linguistic playfulness. As an exposé of grotesque in human nature, Gogol has often been compared with Hieronymus Bosch, and is seen by most critics as the first Russian realist whose biting satire, comic realism, and descriptions of provincials and petty bureaucrats influenced later masters like Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and especially, his fellow Ukrainian renegade, Mikhail Bulgakov. Gogol's 1835 masterpiece *Diary of a Madman* can be seen as an eerie premonition of his own demise. In his later life, he came under the influence of a fanatical priest, and, after refusing to eat and enduring various horrific medical 'treatments', he died on the verge of madness.

Translator **John Farndon** returns to the Finborough Theatre where he translated Neda Nejdana's *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness* and Inna Goncharova's *The Trumpeter*. He is a writer, poet, playwright, songwriter and translator of literature from Eurasia, including many plays for the Worldwide Ukrainian Play Readings series, including Polina Pologonceva's *Save the Light* and Andriy Bondarenko's *Fox Dark as Light Night* (Baron's Court Theatre), *Neda Nejdana's He Who Opens the Door* (A Play, A Pie and A Pint at Òran Mór, Glasgow, and Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh) and *Neda Nejdana's Closed Sky* (Wiesbaden Staatstheater in a Ukrainian production from Kyiv). His own plays include *Anya* (Donmar Warehouse), *High Risk Zone* (Almeida Theatre), *The Naked Guest* (Pleasance Edinburgh), Lope de Vega's verse play *Dog in a Manger* (Cockpit Theatre), an adaptation of Mozart's *Il Seraglio* (Plymouth Theatre Royal, Salisbury Playhouse and Riverside Studios, London) and Puccini's *La Bohème* (Arcola Theatre). He was joint winner of 2019 EBRD Literature Prize for translating poetry in Uzbek writer Hamid Ismailov's *The Devil's Dance*, and finalist for 2020 US PEN Translation Award for Kazakh writer Rollan Seysenbaev's *The Dead Wander in the Desert*. He is also a judge for the OffWestEnd Theatre Awards. He has written over a thousand books on science, nature and other topics. He has been shortlisted five times for the Young People's Science Book Prize. www.johnfarndon.com

Director **Chris Loveless** returns to the Finborough Theatre where his productions include *Lullabies of Broadmoor – A Broadmoor Quartet* and *The Demon Box* (*Vibrant – A Festival of Finborough Playwrights*). London theatre includes *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (New Wimbledon Studio), *Bel-Ami* (Charing Cross Theatre), *Diary of a Madman* (New Wimbledon Studio and national tour), *Five Kinds of Silence* (White Bear Theatre), an *Evening Standard* Critics' Choice for *The Remains of the Day* (Union Theatre), a *Time Out* Critics' Choice's for both *Moonshadow* and *The Custom of the Country* (White Bear Theatre), *Stairway to Heaven* for which he was nominated for the OffWestEnd Award for Best Director (Blue Elephant Theatre) and *Dracula* (White Bear Theatre). Regional and international theatre includes *The Beast Will Rise*, *People are Cats People are Dogs*, *The Tragicomical 'istory of 'Arry* (all Edinburgh Fringe), *Ne dis rien a personne* (Saint Pierre Lycée, Vichy), *Normal* (Tobacco Factory, Bristol), *Ray Collins Dies On Stage*, *Dust to Dust* (Alma Theatre, Bristol) and *24 Hour Plays* (Ustinov Studio, Theatre Royal Bath). He trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, and is an Associate Director of Stepping Out Theatre, and a former Associate Director of both the White Bear Theatre and The Ashton Group.

Stepping Out Theatre are the UK's leading mental health theatre company working with theatre professionals and mental health service users to put compelling human stories on stage. Their Associate Director **Chris Loveless** returns to the Finborough Theatre where he directed Stepping Out Theatre's production of Steve Hennessy's acclaimed quartet of plays about famous murderers, *Lullabies of Broadmoor – A Broadmoor Quartet*.

The cast is:

Edmund Dehn | Serhiy Serhiyovych

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include *Joe* – the opening production of the Finborough Theatre in 1980. Since

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e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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then, he has appeared in more Finborough Theatre productions than any other actor including *The Police*, *The Alternative*, *Don Juan and the Non-Don Juan*, *The Optimist's Daughters*, *The Women's War – A Centenary Celebration*, *Coyote Ugly*, *The Representative*, *Summer 14: A Dance of Death*, and *Death of A Hunter* (also online for FinboroughFrontier and Theater Auf'm Kahn, Berlin).

Theatre includes *Lear Alone* (Edinburgh Festival), *What I Really Think of My Husband* (Golden Goose Theatre), *The Tempest* (Regional Tour), *The Book of Job* (Theatre Royal, Norwich), *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Beggars Opera* (Duchy Opera, Cornwall), *Coriolanus*, *The Alchemist* (Courtyard Theatre), *Pygmalion*, *Hedda Gabler* and *Gaslight* (Byre Theatre, St Andrews), *The Cherry Orchard*, *Candida* and *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* (English Theatre, Hamburg), *On the Couch with Enoch* and *The King and I* (BAC), *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear* (National Tour), *The Merchant of Venice*, *Measure For Measure*, *The Taming of the Shrew* (National Tour), *The Soldier's Tale* and *Façade* (South West Theatre), *The School For Scandal* and *Bent* (Northcott Theatre, Exeter), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (West End, Hull and Belfast), *The Servant*, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Human Rites* and *The Pixie Led* (Southwark Playhouse), *Educating Rita*, *Mare Liberum* (Tusk Theatre, Netherlands), *The Bends of the Danube* (Merlin Theatre, Budapest), *When Knights Were Bold* (West End), *This Story of Yours* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *Così* (Kings Head Theatre), Winston Churchill in *Austerity* (Milton Keynes) and Charles Laughton in *Orbits* (White Bear Theatre, Hoftheater Sigmaringen, Germany, Kolberg, Poland and OSO, Barnes).

Film includes *Say Nothing*, *Jingle Bell Heist*, *The F**k It Bucket*, *Vesper*, *Spoon*, *Brothers Of War*, *Olive Green*, *With Love From Suffolk*, *Cradle of Fear*, *Kid Gloves*, *Lovelorn*, *Seven Africans*, *The Meeting*, *Junta*, *Afterlife* and *The Judge Minty Fan Film*.

Television includes *The Containment*, *The Curse*, *State of Happiness*, *Brothers of War*, *Speer und Er*, *The 10%ers*, *Nightmare*, *Lovejoy*, *Strange Landscape*, *The Secret Agent*, *Light Fantastic*, *Capital City*, *Bramwell*, *Oil Storm* and *London: The Greatest City*.

Edmund is also a successful voice actor for commercials, games and audio books including the game *Final Fantasy XVI*, and he was the sole reader on the unabridged *Gormenghast Trilogy*.

Lottie Furzer | Stefania | The Nurse

Trained at Italia Conti, graduating in 2024.

Roles in training include *Elf The Musical* and *Rodgers and Hammerstein Cinderella* (Rhoda MaGaw Theatre, Woking), and *Pretty Woman* (Italia Conti at the Piccadilly Theatre).

This is her professional debut.

Kristin Milward | Mrs Lesya | Valentina

Previous productions at the Finborough Theatre include *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness* first seen at the Finborough Theatre in 2022, it was revived by popular demand in 2023, and was nominated for both 'Best Play' and 'Best Lead Performance in A Play' in the OffWestEnd Awards. It subsequently became the first foreign production to perform in Ukraine since the Russian invasion began, and has been seen internationally in Germany, Portugal, the USA and again on a second visit to Ukraine. Other productions at the Finborough Theatre include *The Trumpeter*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Gynaecologic Oncology Unit at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center of New York City*, *Love Child*, *I Wish To Die Singing*, *Natural Inclinations*, *The Early Hours of A Reviled Man*, *The Woman of Troy*, *Portraits* and *Child of the Forest*.

Theatre includes *The Massacre at Paris* (Rose Playhouse), *Huis Clos* (King's Head Theatre), *The Illustrious Corpse* (Soho Theatre), *Woman of Troy* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), *The Snow Palace* (Tricycle Theatre), *Wounds to the Face* and *Uncle Vanya* (The Wrestling School), *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* (Latchmere Theatre), *La Chunga* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *Les Liaisons Dangerous* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Burleigh Grimes* (Bridewell Theatre), *The Chance* (Belfast Festival), *The Merchant of Venice* (Phoenix Theatre, Leicester), *A View From a Bridge* (Library Theatre, Manchester), *When We Dead Awaken* and *Nijinsky* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), *The Triumph of Death* (Birmingham REP), *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* (Contact Theatre, Manchester), *Devour the Snow* (Bush Theatre) and *Plunder* (National Theatre).

Film includes *Freestyle*, *A Little Chaos*, *Poppyland*, *City of the Dead* and *The Fool*.

Television includes *Arabs in London*, *New Tricks*, *To the Lighthouse* and *EastEnders*.

Archie Redford | Adyo | Stepan | The Doctor

Trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes *Shakespeare's Sonnets In Action* (Norden Farm and Clement James Centre).

Roles in training include *Anna Karenina*, *The Electric*, *The Writer*, *The Moors*, *Measure for Measure*, *Road* (Richard Burton Company at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama).

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Film includes *Radiance* and *The Black Pill*.

Television includes *Enid a Lucy*, *Britannia* and *Morning Has Broken*.

Kevin Trainor | Vasyl Petrovych

Productions at the Finborough Theatre includes *Yes So I Said Yes*, and its subsequent transfer to The MAC, Belfast. Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes *An Octoroon* (National Theatre and Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), *Twelfth Night*, *Solstice*, *Eric LaRue* and *The Comedy of Errors* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Drama at Inish* (National Theatre of Ireland – Abbey Theatre), *Playboy of the Western World* and *Six Degrees of Separation* (The Old Vic), *Stones in His Pockets* (Theatre Royal Bath, Rose Theatre, Kingston, Ireland and UK Tour), *Saint Joan* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast), *Gladiator Games* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *Lost Monsters* (Everyman Theatre, Liverpool), *2,000 Feet Away* (Bush Theatre), *Bent* (Trafalgar Studios), *Love's Labour's Lost* (Rose Theatre, Kingston), *The Lovers of Viorne* (The Theatre Room), *Doctor Faustus* (West Yorkshire Playhouse and Citizens Theatre, Glasgow), *Titanic* (The MAC, Belfast), *Canary* (Hampstead Theatre, Liverpool Playhouse and English Touring Theatre), *By Jeeves* (Landor Theatre), *Fishbowl* (Theatre503) and *Duck* (Playground Theatre).

Film includes *Make It New John*, *Hellboy*.

Television includes *The Café*, *Sherlock*, *John Adams*, *Endeavour*, *Utopia*, *Vera*, *London Irish*, *The Catherine Tate Show*, *Tripping Over*, *Titanic: Birth of a Legend*, *The Commander* and *Wodehouse in Exile*.

Radio includes *Ulysses*, *The Royal Game*, *Tommies*, *The Hares in the Old Plantation* and *Rasselas*.

VoicesFromUkraine #Українськіголоси #Ukrayins'kiholosy

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Finborough Theatre began the **#VoicesFromUkraine** #Українськіголоси #Ukrayins'kiholosy programming strand in 2022.

Online releases include *Otvetka* and *He Who Opens The Door* by Neda Nejdana, *The Peed-Up on Armored Personnel Carrier* by Oksana Gritsenko, *A Dictionary of Emotions in a Time of War* by Yelena Astasyeva, *A (Ukrainian) Midsummer Night's Dream* – Shakespeare's play performed in Ukrainian, *I Want To Go Home* by Oksana Savchenko; poems as part of the Pro-English Theatre of Ukraine's **Stus-Festival 2024**; interviews and responses to the war in Ukraine. All online releases are available on the Finborough Theatre YouTube channel, and available with subtitles on Scenesaver.

Live productions included July's production of *The Trumpeter* by Inna Goncharova, and the 2022 production of **Two Ukrainian Plays** featuring Natal'ya Vorozhbit's *Take The Rubbish Out, Sasha* in a double bill with Neda Nejdana's monologue *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness*, pairing Ukraine's leading contemporary playwright together with a Ukrainian playwright making her UK debut, which played at the Finborough Theatre in August 2022. *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness* also returned for a solo full run in March 2023. In December 2022, *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness* became the first play performed in Ukraine by a foreign company since the Russian invasion, and has since toured to the United States, Portugal and Germany.

The press on Voices from Ukraine

'Did any theatre bother to even mention the second anniversary of a war entailing ultra-violent fascism in the heart of Europe? Well at least the Finborough did. Otherwise, pretty much tumbleweed.' Dominic Cavendish, *The Telegraph*

The press on the Stepping Out Theatre's Lullabies of Broadmoor at the Finborough Theatre, directed by Chris Loveless

'Compelling stuff, performed by a strong cast. Genuinely moving one moment and darkly funny the next.' Alistair Quaile, *Three Weeks*

'A piquant mix of witty Gothic ghoulishness and serious moral questioning...absorbing and atmospheric' Paul Taylor, *The Independent*

'One of those rare moments in theatre where it all jells into a complete whole. Import and export for radio, foreign festivals, or Off Broadway!' Blanche Marvin, *London Theatreviews*

'Hennessy offers four hours of drama that is disturbing, distressing, and richly absorbing.' Sam Marlowe, *The Times*

'Author Steve Hennessy has created a cycle of morality plays for the modern psyche - a steady, occasionally witty, yet stylised quartet of plays that are eminently watchable, deeply moral and yet refuse to preach or exact any retrospective reform.' Paul Vale, *The Stage*

'This quartet of plays travels deep into psychosis, showing effects and suggesting causes, not flinching from the horror but with compassion as well as with superb theatricality...surprisingly funny and moving as well as shocking and

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disturbing...But the most memorable aspect of all four plays is the scripts, crafted with insight, anger, sadness, and compassion.' Crysse Morrison, *Plays International*

'It does what theatre should: it's demanding, challenging, absorbing and entertaining. Small scale theatre at its large scale best.' Jill Glenn, *Optima Magazine*

PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 15 AUGUST 2024 AND FRIDAY, 16 AUGUST 2024 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 13 AUGUST 2024 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Book online at www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Box Office 020 7244 7439

No booking fees

Tuesday, 13 August – Saturday, 31 August 2024

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

Prices until 25 August 2024 – All seats £15 each.

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

Prices from 27 August 2024 – All seats £20 each.

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

Performance Length: Approximately 75 minutes.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Caitlin Carr on e-mail press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07919286594** or

Steve Hennessy on email steve@steppingouttheatre.co.uk or **07790 980688**

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

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