

ReDiscovered – July-October 2023 season at the Finborough Theatre

The first London productions in more than 100 years

MAKESHIFTS AND REALITIES

A triple bill of ***Makeshifts*** and ***Realities*** by Gertrude Robins, and ***Honour Thy Father*** by H. M. Harwood. Directed by Melissa Dunne. Set Design by Alex Marker. Costume Design by Carla Evans. Lighting by Jonathan Simpson. Sound Design by Farokh Soltani. Intimacy Direction by Tian Brown-Sampson. Presented by Andrew Maunder for Aardvark Theatre in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre. Cast: Poppy Allen-Quarmby. Joe Eyre. Andrew Hawkins. Beth Lilly. Philippa Quinn. Akshay Sharan. Suzan Sylvester.

“Men fight shy of girls like me. They think we’re too clever.”

Makeshifts and Realities, a triple bill of one-act plays unseen in London for almost one hundred years, opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Tuesday, 8 August 2023 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 10 August 2023 and Friday, 11 August 2023 at 7.30pm**).

***Makeshifts* by Gertrude Robins**

A London suburb, 1908.

Two unmarried sisters, Caroline and Dorothy, face uncertain futures unless they can find husbands.

They have suitors, but are these vulgar, manipulative, dull men really what they want? How far must they compromise in order to survive? Or are they better off throwing aside convention and striving for independent lives?

***Realities* by Gertrude Robins**

It’s two years later in the same setting. We catch up with Caroline as she reviews the choices she has made. But, when a figure from the past reappears, she starts to doubt the decision she made...

Makeshifts and Realities are a moving and unexpectedly humorous look at the sexual double-standards and the pressures imposed on women in the early twentieth century.

First performed by Annie Horniman’s Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, *Makeshifts and Realities* saw female playwright Gertrude Robins acclaimed as an important new talent, ranking alongside her contemporaries George Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, Cecily Hamilton and Stanley Houghton.

***Honour Thy Father* by H. M. Harwood**

1912. An upper-class English family, ruined by the father’s gambling habit, have fled to Bruges where they live in exile in straitened circumstances.

They anxiously await a visit from their eldest daughter, Claire, an independent woman whose career provides them with their only income.

Family relations are already strained and resentful, but a chance meeting with a visitor with an inclination for blackmail plunges them into chaos and recrimination – with devastating results...

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

PRESS INFORMATION

Honour Thy Father was one of the most controversial plays of the day, unflinching in its exposure of male hypocrisy and of women driven to desperate measures to survive. Refused a license for public performance until 1934, it was first performed privately by the Pioneer Players in 1912, directed by Edith Craig, the daughter of leading actor (and previous resident of Finborough Road), Ellen Terry.

The cast includes Olivier Award winner **Suzan Sylvester**, **Andrew Hawkins** (Royal Shakespeare Company, Chichester Festival Theatre, The Old Vic) and **Akshay Sharan**, winner of *The Stage* Debut Award for 'Best Actor in a Play'.

This production contains sexual references and sensitive subject matter.

Playwright of *Makeshifts and Realities*, **Gertrude Robins** (1880-1917) was a dramatist, actor and pioneer aviatrix. She was already well-known as a performer when *Makeshifts*, her very first play, premiered to great acclaim in 1908 at the ground-breaking Gaiety Theatre, Manchester. Artistic Director Annie Horniman called it "one of the best one-act plays...performed at my theatre." *Makeshifts* went on to receive thousands of performances all over the world. Its sequel *Realities* premiered in Manchester in 1911. Her subsequent plays included *After the Case*, (1909), *Loving as We Do* (1914) and the Ibsen-influenced *The Plaything* (1914). Despite her considerable success, Gertrude Robins is now little-known. Her playwriting career was cut short by tuberculosis, and she died aged just 37 in 1917.

Playwright of *Honour Thy Father*, **H.M. Harwood** (1874-1959) was a fixture of the West End from 1910 to 1940. His string of successes included *Please Help Emily* (1916), *Theodore & Co*, written with Ivor Novello (1916), *A Social Convenience* (1921), *Eileen* (1922), *Excelsior* (1923), *The Golden Calf* (1927), *A Girl's Best Friend* (1929), *The Man in Possession* (1930), *Lady Jane* (1934), *The Old Folks at Home* (1934), *These Mortals* (1935), *Promise* (1936), *So Far and No Father* (1937) and *The Innocent Party* (1937).

Some of Harwood's most successful work was written with his wife, the celebrated novelist F. Tennyson Jesse (1888-1958). Their plays together included the horror drama *The Mask* (1915), *Billeted* (1917), *The Hotel Mouse* (1921), *The Pelican* (1924), *How to be Healthy Though Married* (1930), and *A Pin to See the Peepshow* (1948), a controversial adaptation of Tennyson Jesse's 1934 novel about the infamous Edith Thompson-Frederick Bywaters murder case of 1922. Harwood was also a journalist and a screenwriter. His films included *Queen Christina* for Greta Garbo.

Director **Melissa Dunne** returns to the Finborough Theatre where she directed Cicely Hamilton's *Just to Get Married*, named in *The Observer's* 'Best Theatre Of 2017' list, and *Masterpieces* by Sarah Daniels. Melissa is a director, writer and dramaturg for theatre. Direction includes *Lola*, and *Dangerous Lenses* (Vault Festival), staged readings of *Phantom of Normality* and *The Drive* (The Yard), and *I'm Not Jesus Christ* (Theatre N16). Writing includes *Everybody Cares*, *Everybody Understands* (Vault Festival). She is Artistic Director of Papercut Theatre. She is a Lecturer at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama where she teaches on the MA Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media. She has read scripts for the National Theatre, Bush theatre, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Graeae Theatre and Verity Bargate Award and the Soho Theatre among others. Her work explores social inequality and intersectional feminism.

Producer **Andrew Maunder's** productions at the Finborough Theatre include the world premiere of Robert Graves' *But it Still Goes On*, the first London production since 1944 of St John Ervine's *Jane Clegg*, and, most recently, the first London production since 1926 of Kate O'Brien's *Distinguished Villa*. He also teaches at the University of Hertfordshire. He is the author of *British Theatre and the Great War 1914-1919* (2016), *R.C. Sherriff's Journey's End*, *A Guide* (2017) and *Enid Blyton. A Literary Life* (2021).

The cast is:

Poppy Allen-Quarmby | Dolly Parker and Claire Morgan

Trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes *Unscathed* (Southwark Playhouse), *Re/Sisters* (Yellow Arch Studios), *Work Makes You Free* (Rialto Theatre, Brighton) and *Wunderkammer* (Matchstick Piehouse).

Film includes *Rye Lane*, *Rebecca*, *Kill or Be Killed* and *Great Expectations*.

Television includes *Gentleman Jack* and *Secrets and Deals*.

Joe Eyre | Albert Smythe

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439

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

Registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee, no. 03448268.

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

PRESS INFORMATION

Trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes *The Homecoming* (Theatre Royal Bath and National Tour), *Henry IV* (Old Red Lion Theatre and Willow Globe, Powys), *Skin a Cat* (National Tour), *Crocodile* (Vault Festival and Old Red Lion Theatre), *Everybody Cares*, *Everybody Understands* (Vault Festival), *Gallowglass* (National Tour), *Richard III* (National Tour and French Tour), *Shakespeare Within the Abbey* (Shakespeare's Globe), *French Without Tears* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, and English Touring Theatre), *Three Short Plays by Samuel Beckett* (Old Red Lion Theatre) and *King Charles III* (Wyndham's Theatre).

Film includes *2.0 Lucy* and *The Art Collector*.

Writing includes *Tiger* which will be staged this autumn at the Omnibus Theatre.

Andrew Hawkins | Edward Morgan

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include *I Have Before Me A Remarkable Document Written By A Young Lady From Rwanda*.

Theatre includes *Five Characters in Search of a Good Night's Sleep*, *Who Do We Think We Are?* (Southwark Playhouse), *Heldenplatz* (Arcola Theatre), *The Recruiting Officer* (Garrick Theatre, Lichfield), *King Lear* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester), *Time and the Conways* (The Old Vic, National Tour and Toronto), *A Patriot for Me*, *Time and the Conways*, *Julius Caesar* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *The Clandestine Marriage* (Compass National Tour and Albery Theatre), *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* (Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre and Plymouth Theatre, New York), *The Suicide*, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre), *Baal*, *Pericles* (Royal Shakespeare Company at the Donmar Warehouse), *Robin Hood*, *The Merchant of Venice* (The Young Vic), *The Cenci*, *Katerina* (Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith), *A Wedding Story* (Soho Theatre, Birmingham and National Tour), *Naked, Live... And Never Again* (Pleasance Edinburgh), *Married Love* (Wyndham's Theatre and National Tour), *Edward II* (Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh), *The Complaisant Lover* (Watford Palace Theatre), *Letter from a Soldier* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), *Crippen*, *Small Change* (Mercury Theatre, Colchester), *David Copperfield*, *The Alchemist*, *Confusions*, *French Without Tears*, *The Threepenny Opera* (Ipswich Arts Theatre), *Red Cross and Chicago* (Little Theatre, St Martin's Lane).

Film includes *The Art of Love*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, *Shadowlands*, *Son of the Pink Panther*, *The Object of Beauty*, *Top Secret* and *Chariots of Fire*.

Television includes *Foyle's War*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Bugs*, *Heartbeat*, *Tropical Heat*, *Bliss*, *Citizen Locke*, *Making News*, *The Black Tower*, *Napoleon and Josephine*, *A Spiritual Barge*, *If Tomorrow Comes* and *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*.

Beth Lilly | Rose Smythe and Madge Morgan

Trained at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts.

Theatre includes *Hay Fever* (The Mill at Sonning), *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Duchess Theatre and National Tour), *The Game of Love and Chance* (Arcola Theatre), *Away in a Danger* (Garrick Theatre, Lichfield), *The Railway Children* (King's Cross Theatre and Theatre Royal York), and *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Cambridge Shakespeare Festival).

Film includes *The Railway Children*.

Television includes *Granchester*.

Philippa Quinn | Caroline Parker and Madame Pellet

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include *Just To Get Married* and *Square Rounds*.

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes *Crime* (Arcola Theatre), *Control* (Gielgud Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bridge Theatre), *Because We Want To* (Rose Theatre, Bankside), *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bard on Board* (National Tour), *Jubilation* (Sotheby's), *Writers Block* (Battersea Arts Centre), *Random Acts of Kindness* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *Breathing Space* (Courtyard Theatre) and *Block 59* (Glastonbury Festival).

Film includes *Faux Pas*, *Atomic Hearts*, *The Long Day Killer*, *Diamond Dolls*, *Dark Lights*, *The Silver Serpent*, and *Olive Branch*.

Akshay Sharan | Henry Thompson and Richard Stearns

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439

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

Registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee, no. 03448268.

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

PRESS INFORMATION

Trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the National Youth Theatre.

Theatre includes *Jack Absolute Flies Again* (National Theatre), *BOYS* (Barbican Centre), *The Bee in Me* (Unicorn Theatre), *Notes from a Small Island* (Watermill Theatre, Newbury), *Three Sisters*, *The Treatment* (Almeida Theatre), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* for which he won *The Stage* Debut Award for 'Best Actor in a Play' (Yard Theatre, Bradford Literature Festival and Edinburgh Fringe Festival), *Sara Pascoe's Christmas Assembly* (Battersea Arts Centre) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (Darlington Civic Theatre).

Film includes *The Effects of Lying* and *Story Seekers*.

Television includes *Granchester*, *Shiny Floors* and *Guerrilla*.

Writing includes *The Waiting Room* (Jermyn Street Theatre) and *Roobaroo* (The Space).

Suzan Sylvester | Jane Morgan

Trained at The Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre includes *Broken Glass* (Tricycle Theatre and Vaudeville Theatre), *Kindertransport* (National Tour and Luxembourg), *The Glass Piano* (Coronet Theatre), *The Price*, *Macbeth*, *The Winslow Boy* (Octagon Theatre, Bolton), *3 Sisters on Hope Street* (Hampstead Theatre), *Othello* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Heartbreak House* (Watford Palace Theatre), *Crystal Springs* (Park Theatre), *Crooked*, *Card-boys*, *Shang-a-lang*, *Little Baby Nothing* (Bush Theatre), *Frankie and Johnny at the Claire de Lune* (Sound Theatre), *Tabloid Caligula* (Arcola Theatre and 59E59 Theaters, New York), *Cleansed*, *Black Milk*, *Terrorism* (Royal Court Theatre), *The Real Thing* (National Tour), *The Secret Rapture*, *Three Sisters* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Betrayal* (Northcott Theatre, Exeter), *Love's Labour's Lost* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester), *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Theatr Clwyd), *All My Sons*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Romeo and Juliet* (The Young Vic), *An Enemy of the People* (The Young Vic and Vaudeville Theatre), *As You Like It*, *The Seagull*, *A Government Inspector* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), *Pericles*, *All's Well that Ends Well* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*, *A Small Family Business*, and *A View from the Bridge* (National Theatre) for which she won a 'Best Newcomer' Olivier Award and which transferred to the Aldwych Theatre.

Film includes *Bilingual* and *Streets of Yesterday*.

Television includes *Silent Witness*, *A Touch of Frost*, *Pie in the Sky*, *Kingdom*, *Misterioso*, *Holby City*, *Casualty*, *Wycliffe*, *EastEnders*, *The Quatermass Experiment*, *The Bill*, *London's Burning*, *Maisie Raine*, *Peak Practice*, *Doctors*, *Where the Heart Is*, *Family Affairs*, *Call Me Mister* and *Rides*.

The Press on *Makeshifts and Realities*

"A perfect little work of art." *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*.

"A brilliantly written one-act comedy...a perfect little gem of characterization, with humour and pathos so closely knit that one can smile through one's tears." *The Clarion*.

"Miss Robins' comedies...are among the gems of English dramatic literature." *West London Gazette*.

"Certainly one of the best one-act pieces which have been seen in London for many years." *Morning Post*

"Anything which comes from the sparing pen of Miss Gertrude Robins the most accomplished of our women dramatists is worth reading... *Makeshifts* – the standby of every repertory company in the country – is probably the most perfect little gem of ironic observation that the naturalistic method has yet given us." *Manchester Courier*.

"Plays like these are certainly the harbingers of a brighter day for the British Drama." *Glasgow Herald*

"*Makeshifts* is a grand little comedy, authentic, convincing and sincere, full of understanding and sympathy." *The Manchester Guardian* (now *The Guardian*).

"Clever and original...very poignant in its unaffected way and humorous too." *The Standard*

"Well written, original in theme and treatment...a gem of dramatic literature." *Daily Graphic*

The Press on *Honour Thy Father*

"Of quite remarkable merit.....like a short story by Guy de Maupassant translated straight to the stage." *Westminster Gazette*.

"Terse, vivid and powerful...a fine play...almost painfully cruel." *Daily Herald*.

"Regarded from one point of view...rather nauseous." *Pall Mall Gazette*.

"A cynical little play of sordid intrigue." *The Stage*.

"H. M. Harwood's strong and very bitter one-act play." *The Stage*.

The press on director Melissa Dunne

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439

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

Registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee, no. 03448268.

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

PRESS INFORMATION

For *Just To Get Married* at the Finborough Theatre

★★★★ *Evening Standard*. ★★★★★ *The Times*. ★★★★★ *The Observer*.

'Best Theatre Of 2017' list, Susannah Clapp, *The Observer*

"Staged with wit and efficiency by Melissa Dunne." Ben Brantley, *The New York Times*

"Catch this now or risk waiting a century." ★★★★★ Fiona Mountford, *Evening Standard*

"This is a terrific production and, indeed, since it is the first in the UK since 1918, that is just as well. Melissa Dunne directs and keeps it moving." ★★★★★ Ann Treneman, *The Times*

"Cicely Hamilton's forgotten feminist drama hits home." ★★★★★ Susannah Clapp, *The Observer*

"Eminently worth reviving." Michael Billington, *The Guardian*

"A welcome rediscovery." Julia Rank, *The Stage*

and

"Crisply staged with a good eye for spatial tension by Melissa Dunne" Lyn Gardner, *Stagedoor, on Lola*

"This is stirring stuff, and is one of the stand-out shows of the Vault Festival so far." ★★★★★.5, *Reviews Hub*, on *Everybody Cares, Everybody Understands*

The press on Andrew Maunder's production of *Distinguished Villa* at the Finborough Theatre

"A thumping good play quite superbly acted and directed... as good a play as you will currently find in London." Michael Billington, *Country Life*

"A dark and angry play, as cross as Osborne in its way...real emotional chaos and tragedy." Libby Purves, *Theatre Cat*

"Superbly acted and directed...a play not to be missed." *London Theatre*.

"This sparkling revival at the Finborough...a tremendous piece of writing." *Reviews Hub*.

"A production full of class...the chance to see such top-notch craft shouldn't be missed." *Once a Week Theatre*.

Covid Safe

In order to ensure that the Finborough Theatre remains still accessible for those who are CEV (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable) or those who would just prefer it, **mask wearing remains mandatory for all Sunday matinee performances.**

PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 10 AUGUST 2023 AND FRIDAY, 11 AUGUST 2023 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 8 AUGUST 2023 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, 8 August – Saturday, 2 September 2023

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

Prices until 20 August 2023 – Tickets £20, £18 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £18 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £20 all seats. Previews (8 and 9 August) £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, 12 August 2023 at 7.30pm when booked online only.

Prices from 22 August 2023 – Tickets £23, £20 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £20 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £23 all seats.

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

Performance Length: Approximately two hours with one interval of fifteen minutes.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Finborough Theatre on e-mail press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **020 7244 7439**

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

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439

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

Registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee, no. 03448268.

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