

Penny Dreadful Theatre Company and Berwick House Productions in association with Concordance presents

## **MASKS AND FACES OR, BEFORE AND BEHIND THE CURTAIN**

by Charles Reade and Tom Taylor. Directed by Caitriona McLaughlin. Designed by Cordelia Chisholm. Lighting by Alex Watson. Produced by Henry Angell-James.

Cast includes: Simon Coleman. Victoria Gillmon. Ian Groombridge. Catherine Hayes. Bea Holland. Asa Joel. Jon Lisle. Andrew Michell. Thomas Power. Charlotte Pyke.

"Full marks to the Finborough for dusting this piece off" *Evening Standard Metro Life*

The Finborough Theatre presents the first professional London revival for more than 70 years (we think!) of the classic Victorian theatrical comedy, *Masks and Faces*. Set among the theatrical world of London's West End in the eighteenth century, *Masks and Faces* was inspired by the life story of the real actress Peg Woffington, best known for playing leading roles opposite David Garrick, her sometime lover.

Country gentleman Ernest Vane comes to London and is seduced into the celebrity lifestyle of a group of players - discarding his new wife for the more obvious charms of the great actress Peg Woffington. In the tradition of *The School for Scandal* and *The Rivals*, *Masks and Faces* is a fascinating look at the 18<sup>th</sup> century theatre with characters ranging from the hapless failed playwright, Triplet, and his hungry family, to real-life writer Colley Cibber and the ghastly critics Soaper and Snarl.....

First performed in 1852, and continually revived during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Masks and Faces* provided Ellen Terry with one of her first and most acclaimed leading roles. The play was filmed in 1920 with Johnston Forbes-Robertson. The production is supported by the Friends of Brompton Cemetery, next to the Finborough Theatre, where the actors Ben Webster and Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft – all known for their roles in *Masks and Faces* – lie buried.

Playwright **Charles Reade** (1814-1884) was known as both playwright and novelist. His works include the novel *The Cloister and the Hearth*, and the play *The Courier of Lyons*. He wrote *Masks and Faces* in collaboration with **Tom Taylor** (1817-1880) who remains best known for his plays *The Ticket-of-Leave Man* and *Our American Cousin* – the play that Abraham Lincoln was watching when he was assassinated.

Acclaimed young Irish director Caitriona McLaughlin returns to the Finborough Theatre, following her productions of *Frank Pig Says Hello* in 2002, *Unsung Lullaby* in 2001 and *Lullabies of Broadmoor* and *Allport's Revenge* in 2004. "A wildly wondrous and macabre creation, that takes dark humour to far-flung and tragic depths....mesmerising performances..." *Time Out*

"Caitriona McLaughlin's absorbing and atmospheric production" *The Independent*

"Caitriona McLaughlin's unsentimental production is assembled with care and played with vim." *Time Out*

**PRESS NIGHT: THURSDAY, APRIL 8TH 2004 AT 7.30PM**

**PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, APRIL 6TH 2004 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM**

Finborough Theatre, The Finborough, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED  
(Five minutes from Earl's Court Underground and West Brompton Underground and National Rail)

Box Office 020 7373 3842 [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

**Tuesday, April 6th-Saturday, May 1st 2004**

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.30pm.

Tickets £10, £8 concessions. Tuesday Evenings £8 all seats. Saturday evenings £10 all seats. Previews (April 6th and 7th) £8 all seats.

Performance Length: Approximately 2 hours.

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e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

# Press Information

**finborough**theatre

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

**Neil McPherson** on **020 7244 7439** or e-mail **[admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk)**

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