

February-July 2025 season at the Finborough Theatre

The world premiere of a new adaptation

## THE PASSENGER

by Nadya Menuhin.

Based on the novel by Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz.

Directed by Tim Supple.

Designed by Hannah Schmidt.

Presented by Toby Parsons Productions in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

*'Perhaps their idea is to undress us carefully before killing us, so that our clothes won't be bloodstained and our banknotes ruined. Murder is carried out economically these days.'*

The world premiere of ***The Passenger*** by Nadya Menuhin, based on the critically acclaimed novel by **Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz**, opens at the multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre for a five-week limited season on Monday, 10 February 2025 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 13 February 2025 and Friday, 14 February 2025 at 7.30pm**).

Shot through with Hitchcockian tension, ***The Passenger*** is the terrifyingly absurd story of Otto Silbermann, a criminal on the run who hasn't committed a crime.

*Kristallnacht*, Berlin, November 1938. The streets of Germany are an orgy of state-sanctioned violence.

As Nazi storm troopers batter down his door, respected businessman Otto flees his home and finds himself plunged into a new world order, his life dissolved overnight.

Betrayed by family, friends and colleagues, and desperately trying to conceal his Jewish identity, he takes train after train across Germany in a race to escape his homeland that is no longer home...

23 year old **Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz** wrote ***The Passenger*** at breakneck speed in 1938 in the immediate aftermath of *Kristallnacht*. Rediscovered 70 years later, *The Passenger* became an international hit, was translated into over twenty languages and was a *Sunday Times* Top Ten bestseller more than 80 years after it was originally published.

Playwright **Nadya Menuhin** makes her full-length debut at the Finborough Theatre. She studied languages at University College London, and currently works as a literary agent. She was part of the Royal Court Theatre Writer's Group, mentored by Stef Smith, and BBC Writersroom London Voices cohort. Her previous plays include *I, Mother* (Fuel Residency at Druid Theatre, Galway), *The Second Rule* (Mercury Theatre, Colchester) and *Tremors*, starring Tamsin Greig (Online for Bitter Pill Theatre).

Novelist **Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz** (1915-1942) was born in Berlin. In 1935, Boschwitz's uncle, the lawyer Alexander Wolgast, was murdered in the street after criticizing the Nazi's anti-semitic Nuremberg Laws. Shortly thereafter, Boschwitz and his mother fled Germany for Norway; his sister, Clarissa, had already left Germany for Palestine when the Nazis came to power. In Norway, Boschwitz wrote his first novel *Menschen neben dem Leben* (*People Alongside Life*), which was first published in Swedish, under the pseudonym John Grane, in 1937. From Sweden, he and his mother moved to Luxembourg, France, and Belgium, before fleeing to Britain in 1939. Boschwitz wrote *The Passenger* (*Der Reisende*) in 1938, and it was published in French, Swedish and English. At the outbreak of the Second

# PRESS INFORMATION

World War, Boschwitz and his mother were interned as 'enemy aliens' on the Isle of Man. In July 1940, Ulrich was deported to Australia, where he was interned at a camp in New South Wales. On the voyage there, a crew member threw the only draft of his latest work, *Das Grosse Fressen* (*The Big Feast*), into the ocean. In Australia, Boschwitz worked on revising a second edition of *The Passenger* and began a new novel, *Traumtage* (*Dream Days*). In 1942, he was freed and allowed to return to Britain. On 29 October 1942, the vessel he was on, *MV Abosso*, was torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine U-575. Boschwitz, aged 27, was one of the 362 people onboard who died. His last works died with him.

Director **Tim Supple**'s awards and nominations include Olivier, BAFTA, *Evening Standard*, *Time Out*, TMA, Herald Angel, Dora Mavor Moore Award in Toronto, and Yapi Krede Afifi in Istanbul. He was the former Artistic Director of The Young Vic where he directed *A Servant to Two Masters* (also West End, National and International Tours), *As I Lay Dying*, *Twelfth Night*, *Blood Wedding*, *The Jungle Book*, *Grimm Tales* (also International Tour), *More Grimm Tales* (also Broadway), *The Slab Boys Trilogy* and *Oedipus*. For the Royal Shakespeare Company, he directed *Midnight's Children* (Barbican, National Tour and Apollo Theatre, New York), *Love in a Wood*, *Tales from Ovid* (The Young Vic), *The Comedy of Errors* (The Young Vic, National and International Tours) and *Spring Awakening* (Barbican Theatre). For the National Theatre, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Billy Liar* (also National Tour), *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (also National Tour), *Whale, Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Villains Opera*. For the Donmar Warehouse, *The Cosmonauts Last Message...* For Kenneth Branagh's Renaissance Theatre Company, *Coriolanus* and John Sessions' *Traveling Tales*. Other theatre includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *One Thousand and One Nights* (Dash Arts and Edinburgh Festival), *Freedom on the Tyne* (Tyne Bridge), *The Tempest* (National Centre for Performing Arts, Beijing). *Dmitry* (Marylebone Theatre), *What We Did To Weinstein* (Dash Arts and Menier Chocolate Factory), *As You Like It* (Dash Arts and Curve Leicester), *Beasts and Beauties*, *Too Clever By Half* (Norwegian National Theatre, Bergen), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Maxim Gorki Theatre, Berlin), *The Comedy of Errors* (BBT, Istanbul), *Oh What a Lovely War*, *Guys and Dolls* (Haymarket Theatre, Leicester) and *Billy Budd* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield). He has directed, adapted, researched and taught theatre across the world in a wide range of languages – including in Europe, India, North Africa and the near East, Iran, Turkey, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Russia and the post-Soviet States, and North and South America. Tim is the recipient of a NESTA Invention and Innovation Award for experiments in film.

## The press on the novel *The Passenger*

"Gripping." *The Telegraph*

"Extraordinary." *The Sunday Times*

"A story that is part John Buchan, part Franz Kafka and wholly riveting." *The Guardian*

"Vibrating with fury...a highly accomplished work, filled with vivid characterisation, sharp dialogue and intensely observed scenes." *Financial Times*

"All too chillingly real...a deserving bestseller." *Daily Mail*

"A riveting, noirish, intensely filmic portrait... a jewel of a rediscovery." *Wall Street Journal*

"By turns claustrophobic, dizzying and symbolic, *The Passenger* is a work with sufficient pace to be a thriller, yet possessed of enough nuance and psychological depth to be of real literary weight." *The Spectator*

"This brilliant rediscovered thriller is up there with the best Second World War novels." David Mills, *The Sunday Times*

## The press on director Tim Supple

"The leading storyteller in British Theatre" *Financial Times* for *1001 Nights*.

"A production that's already entered the annals of theatrical history" *Time Out* on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

"An evening full of wonder and delight." *Time Out* on *A Servant to Two Masters*.

"A triumphant recreation of Goldoni's comedy. One of the gems of the season." *The Sunday Times* on *A Servant to Two Masters*.

"An enthralling production - one hangs on these tales as if they had never been told before." *Financial Times* on *Tales from Ovid*.

"This dark, beautiful show offers more rough magic than any in living memory... One of the most gripping and exciting productions of the year." *Daily Telegraph* on *More Grimm Tales*.

"Not a single line feels familiar...everything feels new, but also true. A lesson to all London theatre." *Financial Times* on *Twelfth Night*.

"The National Theatre should be very proud of this enchanting, beautiful production." *The Sunday Times* on *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

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

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

“Challenging, tough minded and dramatically thrilling, this is the kind of show that restores one’s faith in the power of theatre...I left the theatre in a state of awe.” *The Daily Telegraph* on *The Jungle Book*.

“A complete triumph...The best demonstration all year of the living power of theatre.” *The Observer* on *Spring Awakening*.

**PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2025 AND FRIDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.30PM**  
**PHOTOCALL: MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 1.30PM-2.00PM**

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

Performance Length: Approximately 90 minutes.

**Monday, 10 February – Saturday, 15 March 2025**

Monday, 10 February at 7.30pm. 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 Monday to Saturday 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 and Five** – Tickets £25, £23 concessions. No concessions on Friday or Saturday evenings.

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

**Covid Safe performance – Masks are mandatory at the first Sunday matinee performance.**

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

**Alison Duguid PR** on e-mail [alison@aduguidpr.co.uk](mailto:alison@aduguidpr.co.uk) or **07934 375492**

**OR Finborough Theatre** on e-mail [press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) or **020 7244 4739**

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](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://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.