

July-October 2024 season at the Finborough Theatre

#VoicesFromUkraine | #Українськіголоси | #Ukrayins'kiholosy

The UK premiere

THE TRUMPETER

by Inna Goncharova. Translated by John Farndon.

Directed by Vladimir Shcherban.

Cast: Kristin Milward.

Presented by Stone Wolf Productions in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

'I write music, Kolya. Composers always and everywhere write music. Even in the bunker. Even during the war.'

The UK premiere of ***The Trumpeter***, a new solo play from Ukraine, starring **Kristin Milward**, following her success in the internationally acclaimed ***Pussycat in Memory of Darkness***, opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Tuesday, 9 July 2024 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 11 July 2024 and Friday, 12 July 2024 at 7.30pm**).

Trapped beneath the Azovstal steelworks during the siege of Mariupol in Spring 2022, the battered remnants of Ukraine's 36th Marine Brigade endure the never ending barrage of Russian heavy artillery.

The trumpeter, the only survivor of the Brigade's brass band, shares the terrifying darkness with two compatriots. As the shells fall threatening death at any second, the trumpeter desperately tries to find the harmony in the noise that will enable him to compose a symphony of war...

Inspired by true events, this new play by Ukrainian writer **Inna Goncharova** bears witness to Russia's devastating attack on Mariupol, and is also a moving and timeless reflection on the role of art in war.

Kristin Milward's solo performance of another Ukrainian play at the Finborough Theatre – Neda Nejdana's ***Pussycat in Memory of Darkness*** – first seen in 2022, and revived by popular demand in 2023, received huge press acclaim, 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.

Vladimir Shcherban of **HUNCHtheatre** and **Belarus Free Theatre** directs.

Free to ticketholders, following performances in the second week of the run, we will be presenting a varied and exciting programme of Ukrainian music, poetry, short dramas and discussion. Details will be announced very shortly.

The original German production of *The Trumpeter* at the Wiesbadener Staatstheater was supported by the Pitrimka Ukrainian Support Group in Wiesbaden as part of the Ukrainian Cultural Days festival in the city in February 2024.

Performed by **Kristin Milward**. Kristin's previous productions at the Finborough Theatre include the OffWestEnd Award nominated *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness*, and *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*,

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

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*.

Playwright **Inna Goncharova** is a playwright, writer, actress, director, theatre and public figure. Her play *The Trumpeter* began its long run in Kyiv featuring celebrated actor Peter Mironov in 2022. Her other plays include *A Night with Casanova*, *Queen of Detectives*, *Formula of Love*, *The Pilot and a Rose*, *Not Chekhov*, *Free Love*, *The Little Prince*. She has directed over fifteen theatre plays including *Christmas Eve* after Gogol, *Boule de Suif*, *The Days of the Turbins*, *The Little Prince*, *The Dangers of Tobacco*, *Free Love*, *Living in the Rhythm of Tango*, *The Red-Headed Lover*, and *Vivaldi*. Films include *The Very Same Munchhausen*, *Legends of the Kyiv Fortress* and *Assassination of Stolypin*, *A Curious Episode*. She was also the Producer for *Freedom on Fire*, directed by Oscar-Nominated Director Yevhen Afineyevskyi. She is the leader of acclaimed Kyiv-based performance art company Theater Maskam Rad, Project Coordinator at the International Theatre Festival JoyFest and the Children's Theatre Festival JoyFest, Project Director at the International Festival of Historical Films Out of Time, Director of *Smalta*, a Ukrainian classical music festival in Kyiv, and head of the International Charitable Fund Obriy (*Horizon*), providing aid to the Armed Forces in the east of Ukraine. She is a board member of the Guild of Independent Theatres of Ukraine, and of the International Monodrama Festival Solo Plays Festival.

Director **Vladimir Shcherban** graduated from the Belarusian State Academy of Arts in 1997, specialising in Drama Direction. From 1997-1999, he worked at the Regional Dramatic Theatre in Mogilev, Belarus. From 1999, he worked as a director at the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre, Minsk, until 2006 when he was dismissed for joining the Belarus Free Theatre. He directed the majority of Belarus Free Theatre productions including *4.48 Psychosis*, *Being Harold Pinter*, *Minsk 2011*, *Zone of Silence*, *New York '79*, *King Lear*, *Price of Money* and *Tomorrow I Was Always A Lion*, touring internationally to huge critical acclaim. His productions have won a Fringe First at the Edinburgh Festival and been nominated for a Drama Desk Award in New York. He was the co-founder of Laboratory Fortinbras, an underground drama school in Minsk. In 2011, he received refugee status in the UK. In 2018, Vladimir Shcherban left Belarus Free Theatre and together with actor and playwright Oliver Bennett he founded a new international theatre company, HUNCHtheatre. Their first show *A Hero of Our Time* was listed as one of the 'Best Pieces of Theatre of the Year' by *Broadway World*. His recent show *P for Pischovsky* was premiered at Berlin's famous HAU Theatre with artists who were forced to leave Belarus and Ukraine.

Translator **John Farndon** returns to the Finborough Theatre where he translated Neda Nejdana's *Pussycat in Memory of Darkness*. He is a writer, poet, playwright and songwriter living in London, and a translator of literature from Eurasia, including many plays for the Worldwide Ukrainian Play Readings series. He has written over a thousand books on science, nature and other topics, translated into most languages, and include many international best-sellers. He has been shortlisted five times for the Young People's Science Book Prize. His plays include *Anyia* (Donmar Warehouse), *High Risk Zone* (Almeida Theatre), *The Naked Guest* (Pleasance Edinburgh), Lope de Vega's verse play *Dog in a Manger* (Cockpit Theatre) and an adaptation of Mozart's *Il Seraglio* (Plymouth Theatre Royal, Salisbury Playhouse and Riverside Studios, London). His translations of the poetry of Lidia Grigorieva were nominated for five major awards, including the Griffin. He was joint winner of the 2019 EBRD Literature Prize for translating the poetry in Uzbek writer Hamid Ismailov's *The Devil's Dance*, and finalist for the 2020 US PEN Translation Award for his translation of Kazakh writer Rollan Seysenbaev's *The Dead Wander in the Desert*. He has also translated the lyrics of Vladimir Vysotsky. A large bilingual collection of his own poetry is published in Uzbek and English. He ran the Arc venue at the Edinburgh Fringe and also the Cauldron series of poetry and music events. He was a Royal Literary Fellow at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, and City and Guilds in London and was chairman of the Eurasian Creative Guild 2019-2021. He is also a judge for New Plays, Most Promising New Playwrights, Production and Performance Pieces for the OffWestEnd Theatre Awards. Recently, his translations of Ukrainian plays have been presented in readings all over the world. Recent productions have included Polina Pologonцева's *Save the Light* and Andriy Bondarenko's *Fox Dark as Light Night*.

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(Baron's Court Theatre), Neda Nejdana's *He Who Opens the Door* (A Play, A Pie and A Pint at Òran Mór, Glasgow, and the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh) and Neda Nejdana's *Closed Sky* (Wiesbaden Staatstheater in a Ukrainian production from Kyiv). www.johnfarndon.com

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 *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 The Trumpeter with Kristin Milward at the Wiesbadener Staatstheater, Germany

'Touching and brilliant...ovation and tears' Henrik Junge, *Wiesbadener Kurier*

'An amazing and heartbreaking performance.' Anne-Madeleine Plum, *Christian News*

'An incredible play about the meaninglessness of war.' Larissa Itina, *Ukrainian Cultural Days Festival*

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 Finborough Theatre production of Pussycat in Memory of Darkness

★★★★★ Five Stars, *The Stage*

★★★★★ Five Stars, Libby Purves, *theatreCat*

★★★★★ Five Stars, *London Pub Theatres*

★★★★ Four Stars, *The Guardian*

★★★★ Four Stars, *Ajlovestheatre*

★★★★ Four Stars, *West End Evenings*

★★★★ Four Stars, *Jewish Renaissance*

★★★★ Four Stars, *Close-Up Culture*

★★★★ Four Stars, *The UpComing*

Off West End Award Nomination Lead Performance in a Play – Kristin Milward

Off West End Award Nomination New Play

'Honour to the Finborough... Bigger theatres have done a lot less.' Libby Purves, *theatreCat*

'Huge kudos to the Finborough...for showcasing the very culture that Vladimir Putin wants to destroy.' Nick Curtis, *Evening Standard*

'Blisteringly truthful and deeply moving.' Alun Hood, *ajlovestheatre*

'Unbearably emotive.' Mark Lawson, *The Guardian*

'Timely, enterprising, emotionally shattering, politically shaming.' Libby Purves, *theatreCat*

'Nothing but praise should be lavished on the Finborough Theatre ... Yet again it leads where others follow and its choice of work is both bold and brave.' *Close-Up Culture*

'Confrontational, sometimes shocking and distressing, but completely compulsive...*Pussycat In Memory Of Darkness*, translated with edgy flair by John Farndon, is utterly riveting.' Alun Hood, *ajlovestheatre*

'*Pussycat in Memory of Darkness* delivers multiple emotional punches.' Zuzanna Chmielewska, *West End Evenings*

'A long monologue can be hard going. This was not: it is stunningly done.' Libby Purves, *theatreCat*

'In the capable hands of London writer and translator John Farndon it is an extraordinary cri de coeur.' Christopher Walker, *London News Online*

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'This is an acting masterclass.' Alun Hood, *ajhlovestheatre*.

'Pussycat is a marvellous vehicle for a versatile actress, and Kristin Milward is simply superb.' Christopher Walker, *London News Online*

'This virtuoso performance by Kristin Milward.' Neil Norman, *Daily Mirror*

'An extraordinary central performance.' Nick Ferris, *The Stage*

'Kristen Milward delivers this cri-de-coeur in a powerhouse performance.' Gary Naylor, *Broadway World*

'Milward is astonishing.' Alun Hood, *ajhlovestheatre*

'Kristin Milward gives a dynamo of a performance.' John Cutler, *The Reviews Hub*

'Searingly delivered by Kristin Milward.' Mark Lawson, *The Guardian*

'Kristin Milward delivers a bravura performance.' Alun Hood, *ajhlovestheatre*

'Performed with quietly hypnotic intensity by Kristin Milward.' Judi Herman, *Jewish Renaissance*

'A monumental performance from Kristin Milward.' *Close-Up Culture*

'Milward's wholly committed, riveting, and deeply affecting performance as the woman carries the monologue forward with an intensity that is palpable.' John Cutler, *The Reviews Hub*

'Forty-five minutes of inflamed, impassioned, articulate writing, delivered in a blistering performance by Kristin Milward.' Vera Liber, *British Theatre Guide*

'A quite extraordinary, constantly gripping, grim but sometimes blackly humorous performance by Kristin Milward.' Libby Purves, *theatreCat*

PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2024 AND FRIDAY, 12 JULY 2024 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 9 JULY 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, 9 July – Saturday, 3 August 2024

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

Prices until 28 July 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 30 July 2024 – All seats £20 each.

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

Performance Length: Approximately 60 minutes.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Caitlin Carr on e-mail press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07384 379624**

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

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