

ReDiscovered – July-October 2023 season at the Finborough Theatre

The first professional London production for over 80 years

THE WIND AND THE RAIN

by Merton Hodge.

Directed by Geoffrey Beevers. Set and Costume Design by Carla Evans.

Presented by Julia Blomberg for Gabriel Entertainment Limited in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Lynton Appleton. Harvey Cole. David Furlong. Mark Lawrence. Jenny Lee. Joe Pitts. Naomi Preston-Low. Helen Reuben.

"Our paths lie different ways now. You see, these years have nothing to do with the main stream of your life. That's all ahead..."

A unique rediscovery of one of the biggest hits of the 1930s, Merton Hodge's ***The Wind and the Rain*** opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Tuesday, 11 July 2023 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 13 July 2023 and Friday, 14 July 2023 at 7.30pm**).

Edinburgh, 1933.

Charles Tritton, an eighteen-year-old medical student about to begin his studies, arrives at Mrs McFie's boarding house.

Before him lie five years' of swotting for exams and sweating over dissections, alongside his fellow residents – eternal student Gilbert Raymond who would rather be drinking and chasing girls than passing his exams; the studious sportsman and frightful bore, John Williams; and the sage older postgraduate student, Frenchman Dr Paul Duhamel.

Charles begins his course counting down the days until he can return to the life he's left behind in London, and Jill, the girl whom he has promised to marry.

Until sculptor Anne Hargreaves walks into his study...

And Charles is suddenly torn between the life that has been mapped out for him and the unexpected possibility of another path...

Inspired by the playwright's own experiences of training at Edinburgh Medical School, and arguably by his own love life as a bisexual man in the 1930s, *The Wind and the Rain* is a gentle but universal coming-of-age of student life – and growing up.

One of the biggest international hits of the 1930s, *The Wind and the Rain* starred Celia Johnson when it opened in the West End in 1933, running for over a thousand performances in London at three different theatres – the St. Martin's, the Queen's and the Savoy Theatres. It played for six months on Broadway, toured internationally, was translated into nine languages, was televised multiple times, and remained a staple of British repertory theatre for decades.

PRESS INFORMATION

Playwright **Merton Hodge** (1903-1958) was a playwright, actor and medical practitioner. Born in Taruheru, Poverty Bay, Aotearoa/New Zealand, he graduated as a doctor from Otago Medical School in 1928, and completed his postgraduate studies at Edinburgh University which inspired the setting for *The Wind and the Rain*. Hodge combined his playwriting career with the busy life of a working doctor. An Australian newspaper wrote, "By day he works as an anesthetist in a big hospital at Hyde Park Corner: at night he has been writing plays which are the success of the season." His other plays include *Grief Goes Over*, starring Dame Sybil Thorndike (Globe Theatre), an anglicised adaptation of Sidney Kingsley's *Men In White* (Lyric Theatre), *The Orchard Walls* (St James Theatre), *The Island*, written with actor Godfrey Tearle (Comedy Theatre), *The Story of An African Farm* from Olive Schreiner's novel (New Theatre, now the Noël Coward Theatre), *To Whom We Belong* and *Once There Was Music* (Q Theatre, Kew). Hodge mingled in bohemian and theatrical circles, partying with Ivor Novello, Noël Coward and Tallulah Bankhead. He lived with actor Geoffrey Wardwell in Ebury Street, close to Noël Coward. In 1952, Hodge returned to Aotearoa/New Zealand, married the mother of his child, and settled in Dunedin. He committed suicide by drowning near Dunedin six years later.

Director **Geoffrey Beevers** returns to the Finborough Theatre where he directed an acclaimed production of John Galsworthy's *Windows*. Other Direction includes *The Middlemarch Trilogy - Dorothea's Story, The Doctor's Story* and *Fred and Mary, Audience, Adam Bede* for which he won a *Time Out Award*, *The Beggars Opera, Silas Marner, The Neighbours* and *Pere Goriot* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), *Adam Bede* (Derby Playhouse and Theatre Royal York), *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Arms and the Man* and *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Guildhall School of Music and Drama) and *The Country Wife* and *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (Drama Studio London). His original plays for theatre include *Steak and Microchips* and *The Story of Jude*. Adaptations for theatre include *Adam Bede* which won a *Time Out Award*, *Pere Goriot, Silas Marner, The Middlemarch Trilogy*. Original writing for radio includes *Steak and Microchips, The Story of Jude* and *Unintelligent Design*. Other plays for radio include an adaptation of Turgenev's *Rudin*, and drama documentaries on Gerard Manley Hopkins, James McNeil Whistler, and George Eliot. He has written four novels, *The Progress Road, The Forgotten Fields, Superseeds* and *The Withdrawal*, all published by Fantom Publishing. Primarily known as an actor, he has made hundreds of appearances across theatre, television, film and radio, including *Amadeus* (National Theatre), *The Audience* (West End and Broadway) and *The Heresy of Love* (Royal Shakespeare Company), and playing The Master in *Doctor Who* opposite Tom Baker.

This cast includes **Lynton Appleton** (*Richard III* at Royal Shakespeare Company); **Harvey Cole** (*Mercury Fur, Much Ado About Nothing* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at Guildhall School of Music and Drama); **David Furlong** (*Break of Noon* at Finborough Theatre and *Emmeline* at The Cockpit and UK tour); **Mark Lawrence** (*Hedda Gabler* and *The Tempest* at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art); **Jenny Lee** (*The Straw Chair, I Didn't Always Live Here, The Flou'ers of Edinburgh, Little Red Hen* at the Finborough Theatre and *It Is Easy To Be Dead* and its subsequent transfer to the Trafalgar Studios, Òran Mór, Glasgow and the Tivoli Theatre, Aberdeen); **Joe Pitts** (*Spring Awakening* at Almeida Theatre); **Naomi Preston-Low** (nominated for 'Best Supporting Actress' at the British Short Film Awards); and **Helen Reuben** (*King Rodolfo* at Soho Theatre and *Love All, Savior* and *Pictures of Dorian Gray* at Jermyn Street 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.**

The press on the original 1933 production of *The Wind and the Rain*

"Highly entertaining, *The Wind and the Rain* has a quiet strength and unforced reality, which makes it both absorbing and truly amusing." *Daily Mirror*

"One of the most charming love stories ever told on the stage, romance and comedy are skilfully blended." *The Star*.

"Enchanting...A charming play, *The Wind and the Rain* has the first-hand observation and freshness of characterisation of *Journey's End* and for the same reasons, for both authors have written of what they know." *News Chronicle*

"A delightfully acted and interestingly written first play." *Daily Herald*

"The *Wind and the Rain* is new proof that some doctors make fine dramatists." *Reynolds News*

"A charmingly simple (in the complimentary sense) of student life in Edinburgh with a serious thread running through it. Mr Merton Hodge is a new name to me. If this is his first play, he has a future before him." *Truth*

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.

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PRESS INFORMATION

"One of the freshest and most attractive works to be seen...for several years...full of humour and humanity." *The Star*
"What gives the play its warmth and charm is the reticent naturalness in Merton Hodge's writing." *Time*

The press on Geoffrey Beevers' production of *Windows*

★★★★★ Five Stars, *The Reviews Hub*

★★★★★ Five Stars, *London-Olios*

★★★★★ Five Stars, *ActDrop*

★★★★ Four Stars, *The Guardian*

★★★★ Four Stars, *London Pub Theatres*

★★★★ Four Stars, *Everything Theatre*

★★★★ Four Stars, *Reviews Gate*

★★★★ Four Stars, *Paul In London*

"Geoffrey Beevers' production of a little-known play about the moral fissures within an upper middle-class family is a razor-sharp take on a quietly subversive work." Michael Billington, *The Guardian*

"Geoffrey Beevers' stylishly fluent and welcome revival brings John Galsworthy's still provocative play out of the shadows of theatrical history to spark debate and be enjoyed in equal measure." Peter Brown, *ActDrop*

"This production, confidently directed by Geoffrey Beevers, ensures that we leave questioning whether ideals like liberty, equality and democracy are still worth fighting for today." Richard Maguire, *The Reviews Hub*

"Let's hope on the back of this thoughtful and exceptional production we see a few more plays by this overlooked playwright." Richard Maguire, *The Reviews Hub*

"The prevailing trend in our theatrical culture at the moment is for new writing and after that comes radical rethinking of the classics. But where does that leave straight revivals of lesser-known British works? The National Theatre is certainly not fulfilling that part of its remit, to the detriment of the entire theatrical ecosystem. Thank goodness the plucky Finborough valiantly continues on this lonely but worthy path." Fiona Mountford, *Evening Standard*

PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 13 JULY AND FRIDAY, 14 JULY 2023 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 11 JULY 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, 11 July – Saturday, 5 August 2023

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

Prices until 23 July 2023 – Tickets £20, £18 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £18 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £20 all seats. Previews (11 and 12 July) £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, 15 July 2023 at 7.30pm when booked online only.

Prices from 25 July 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 and 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>

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