



#FinboroughForFree

The first production in more than thirty years

LEATHER

By Peter Scott-Presland

Directed by Patrick Kealey

Presented by Homo Promos in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Keith Bursnall. Peter Boyle. Will Forester. Matthew Hodson. Denholm Spurr.

*"I loathe violence. I don't understand how people can inflict it on each other voluntarily."
"Nobody knows what they're truly capable of. Isn't it better to use it in play-acting than keep it under some hatch
which is bound to blow anyway one day?"*

Following its hugely controversial run at the Finborough Theatre in 1990, Homo Promos presents a Zoom staged reading of Eric Presland's **Leather**. The reading will be live streamed on **Tuesday, 15 June 2021 at 7.00pm**, and will then be available from **Tuesday, 22 June to Tuesday, 20 July 2021** on the Finborough Theatre YouTube channel, and concurrently with subtitles on Scenesaver.

Phil befriends Gordon, a rape survivor, and they become lovers. But Gordon is drawn to Phil's best friend, Terry, who is into heavy sadomasochism.

When Phil is arrested at a demonstration and kept in the police cells overnight, Terry and Gordon have sex, and Gordon realises that SM sex is a way for him to deal with his feelings as a rape survivor.

Gordon tries to keep this from Phil, but when Gordon discovers Phil's secret, he wreaks a terrible revenge...

A brave and groundbreaking play about gay domestic abuse, redolent of pain and violence in all its forms, consensual and non-consensual, as physical abuse is paralleled by mental control, and the erosion of any sense of worth.

Two members of the original cast, **Matthew Hodson** and **Keith Bursnall**, will be appearing in the Zoom reading, with the author, **Peter Scott-Presland**, present. The Zoom reading will be followed by a chance to discuss the issues involved with the cast and author.

The most controversial play Homo Promos ever produced, and the one which people keep asking to see again. It played to packed houses at the Finborough Theatre, despite an attempt by Whitbread, the brewery that owned the Finborough Arms building at the time to close it. Section 28, preventing the 'promotion of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship' was also waved at the company.

Male rape was first highlighted by *Capital Gay* in two 4-page centre spreads after Heaven nightclub used a rape scene as its Halloween 'entertainment' in 1981. Author of *Leather*, Peter Scott-Presland was one of the journalists who worked on that exposé, and the experience fed into the writing of the play which was completed in 1987, although it took three years to get a company together to stage it. When it was performed it was the first play to deal with the subject within the gay community. Many objected violently to any suggestion that it was a common occurrence. Nowadays male rape and domestic abuse is acknowledged as a major stain on LGBTQ+ life: the latest statistics suggest 18% of gay men have suffered it at some time.

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

There are now several charities which work to support male survivors of abuse and violence. The Zoom reading will be a benefit for Stay Brave, a volunteer-led charity providing support and advice to survivors.

To donate, please go to: <https://www.staybrave.org.uk/donate>

To be sent a copy of the Zoom link, please email homopromos@gmail.com.

The press on the original 1990 production of *Leather*

"This squalid little play." Paul Davies, *Evening Standard*

"Very well constructed...and very well performed...Interesting, moving and erotic...I can honestly claim that the show taught me a bit more about myself as a gay man – and you can't say fairer than that." David Campion, *RelayNet*

"Peter Scott-Presland is an institution – one of the pillars of the gay anti-establishment. In this long and harrowing play he again boldly faces up to a very difficult subject – male rape." Laurence Brown, *Capital Gay*

"Peter Scott-Presland's 'revenge comedy' contains a set of...fascinating ideas on pain, love and suffering, and boldly tackles issues such as gay rape and the politics of S/M." Nick Curtis, *Time Out*

"A talented writer." Lujbima Woods, *What's On*

"The cast of four give strong, convincing performances." Lujbima Woods, *What's On*

"Peter himself and Matthew Hodson as the two protagonists are excellent in very demanding roles." David Campion, *RelayNet*

"Matthew Hodson gives a strong portrayal." Laurence Brown, *Capital Gay*

"A special mention goes to a delightfully funny Keith Bursnell." Lujbima Woods, *What's On*

"The best drawn character is Clive...played by Keith Bursnell," Laurence Brown, *Capital Gay*

Playwright **Peter Scott-Presland** founded Homo Promos in 1988, after previous companies One In Ten (1976–1979) and Consenting Adults In Public (1980–1987). He is the author of over twenty plays and six musicals including *Teatrolley*, the first of four *Plays for Hampstead Heath*, the award-winning *Sir Herbert Macrae: A Tribute*, the OffWestEnd Award-nominated musical *La Ronde*, the DORA-nominated *Dorothy's Travels*, *Desire*, a musical with score by Peter Murphy based on Edmund White's *States of Desire*, and *Free*, an anti-requiem with London Gay Symphony Orchestra. He directed, and collaborated on, *Anti Body*, the first play in the world to deal with HIV/AIDS issues. Most recently he has been working with Robert Ely on a cycle of seventeen mini-operas *A Gay Century: Vignettes of Gay Life 1900 – 2001*. homopromos.org
@homopromos

Director **Patrick Kealey** has been a writer, director, actor and teacher for over forty years. With Group K, which he also founded, he has produced, among others, Kafka's *Amerika* (Southwark Playhouse and US), *As I Lay Dying* (BAC), and *Presto* (Riverside Studios and National Tour). He has been dramaturg for Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental's *17 Border Crossings* (Bogotá, Philadelphia and Edinburgh), *We Are For Sale* and *Band of Gold*. Patrick is the Artistic Director of Hastings-based Theatre Nation, and is currently rehearsing for *The Life and Rhymes of Archie and Mehitabel* for Hastings' Stable Theatre and the Brighton Festival. He is working on a three-year collaboration with the David Glass Ensemble based on the works of Beckett. He has been involved in Homo Promos Zoom performances since Spring 2020, both as an actor and a director.

Homo Promos was founded in 1988 to throw down the gauntlet to Section 28, the Conservative government's anti-gay legislation. It has now triumphantly survived the Bigots' Charter by eighteen years. In addition to Peter Scott-Presland's plays above, it has promoted work by Ian Lucas (*Triptych*, *Dolphins Can Swim*), Doric Wilson (*Street Theatre*), Claire Purkiss (*Flying Lessons*), David Roddis (*Hot, Hung and Horny*) and Timothy Mason (*Levitation*). It programmed the cabaret tent at Pride in London for ten years, and has organized numerous benefit events in collaboration with other performers. In 1995, it recorded fifteen episodes of *Quiche on the Rocks* by Peter Scott-Presland and David Roddis for the Pride radio station Freedom FM. It has been performing a weekly Zoom play since March 2020, and has notched up over 50 performances, winning the International Lesbian and Gay Cultural Network's 2021 Award.

The cast is:

Peter Boyle

Graduated in English and Drama in 2001.

Theatre includes local theatre groups in Manchester and, most recently, in Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire, *Witness for the Prosecution*, various online plays with Out in the Valley in Hebden Bridge and with Homo Promos Zoom Series 3 and 4 since January 2021.

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PRESS INFORMATION

Peter is also a Manager for a Mental Health Charity in Calderdale, West Yorkshire.

Keith Bursnall | Clive

Keith appeared at the Finborough Theatre in the original 1990 production of *Leather*.

Trained at Wimbledon College of Art before gravitating to performance in touring companies around Greater Manchester, including children's theatre company Krazy Kat. Theatre with Homo Promos includes *Teatrolley*, the musicals *Wednesday Matinee* and *Escape from Planet Mary*, *Hot Hung & Horny*, and the Christmas show, *We Three Queens*. With Toby Collins he also formed the popular cabaret duo, *Bent Double*, which appeared regularly at Pride in the 1990s.

Will Forester | Terry

Theatre includes *Hamlet on the Beach* (Rotherhithe Beach), *Peace in Our Time* (Union Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (Rose Theatre, Bankside), *Dictating to The Estate* (Playground Theatre), *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* (St Mary's, Barnes), *Sweeney Todd* (The Ditch in Shoreditch), *The Winter's Tale* (Bridewell Theatre), *Dracula* (The London Theatre), *Necessity* (Bread and Roses Theatre) and *Othello* (Oxford House Theatre).

Film includes *The Deathless Woman* and *Small Blue Disc*.

Music Videos include *Ballare* and *Haunted Car*.

Matthew Hodson | Phil

Matthew appeared at the Finborough Theatre in the original 1990 production of *Leather*.

Theatre includes *The Chemsex Monologues* (King's Head Theatre and Above the Stag Theatre), *Queers* and *The Clinic* (King's Head Theatre), *Kissed by a Flame* (Above the Arts Theatre), *Superficial* (The Glory), *The Mousetrap* (St Martin's Theatre), *Watch Out for Mr Stork* (Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park), *Chief Swollen-Foot* (Tristan Bates Theatre), *The Sound of Music* and *The King and I* (BAC), *Oedipus*, *Androcles and the Lion*, *Agamemnon*, *Treasure Island*, *Children of Hercules* and *The London Nativity* (The Steam Industry at The Scoop) and Homo Promos' *The Gay Century: Lockdown Readings*.

Film includes *Common People* and *Breaking the Code*.

Television includes *The Grass Is Always Grindr*.

Webseries include *Flatshare*.

Matthew is also the Executive Director of the HIV information charity NAM aidsmap.

Denholm Spurr | Gordon

Theatre includes *No Sweat* (Pleasance London), *The Chemsex Monologues* (King's Head Theatre and International Tour), *The Past Is A Tattooed Sailor* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *Cathy Come Home* (Barbican Theatre) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Secret Theatre).

Film includes *Clarissa*, *Stone*, *When Pigs Die*, *Remembering Daisy*, *Meniscus* and *Extra Time*.

Television includes *The Grass Is Always Grindr* and *Ex, Drugs and Murder*.

Denholm is a three-time nominee for an OffWestEnd award.

He is also a director and producer, most recently on the international award winning show *Happily Ever Poofster*.

LIVE on Zoom. Tuesday, 15 June 2021 at 7.00pm, followed by a post-show discussion

Recorded on the Finborough Theatre YouTube Channel and with subtitles on Scenesaver

Tuesday, 22 June to Tuesday, 20 July 2021

Performance Length: Approximately two and a half hours.

***Leather* is not suitable for children. This performance includes sensitive subject matter including depictions of sexual and domestic violence.**

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Livvy Perrett on e-mail press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07889 794858**

or

Homo Promos on e-mail at homopromos@gmail.com or **07444 311695**

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

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