



FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT **NEW WRITING** | UNIQUE **REDISCOVERIES**
September–November Season 2018

The European premiere

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY UNIT AT MEMORIAL SLOAN-KETTERING CANCER CENTER OF NEW YORK CITY

by Halley Feiffer

Directed by Bethany Pitts.

Set and Costume Design by Isabella Van Braeckel. Lighting Design by Doug Mackie. Sound Design by Jon McLeod.

Presented by Arsalan Sattari Productions in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Cara Chase. Rob Crouch. Cariad Lloyd. Kristin Milward.

“I can make cancer jokes. Because I have cancer”

A European premiere from acclaimed American playwright **Halley Feiffer**, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Gynecologic Oncology Unit at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center of New York City* opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Tuesday, 2 October 2018 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 4 October 2018 and Friday, 5 October 2018 at 7.30pm**).

Karla, a foul-mouthed twenty-something comedian, and Don, a middle-aged man embroiled in a nasty divorce, are brought together unexpectedly when their cancer-stricken mothers become roommates in the hospital.

Together, this unlikely duo must negotiate some of life's biggest challenges... while making some of the world's most inappropriate jokes.

Can these two very lost people learn to laugh through their pain and lean on each other, when all they really want to do is run away?

Playwright **Halley Feiffer** returns to the Finborough Theatre following last year's sell-out production of her Outer Critics' Circle Award nominated **I'm Gonna Pray For You So Hard**.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Gynecologic Oncology Unit... received its critically acclaimed New York Times Critic's Pick world premiere Off-Broadway in 2016 at the MCC Theater at Lucille Lortel Theatre before its West Coast premiere at the Geffen Playhouse.

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439 e-mail
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Press Information

Playwright **Halley Feiffer** is a New York-based writer and actress. Her full-length plays include *I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard* (Atlantic Theater Company, directed by Trip Cullman), which was nominated for the John Gassner Playwriting Award at the 2014-2015 Outer Critics Circle Awards, and received a sell-out production at the Finborough Theatre in 2017; and *How to Make Friends and Then Kill Them* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, directed by Kip Fagan). Her plays have been developed by Second Stage, New York Theatre Workshop, the O'Neill and elsewhere; and are published by Dramatists Play Service and Overlook Press. Her work has been commissioned by Playwrights Horizons, Williamstown Theater Festival and three times by Manhattan Theater Club. She teaches Playwriting at New York University. She has written for the Starz series *The One Percent* (co-created by Alejandro Iñárritu), the Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle*, the Showtime series *Purity* (based on the novel by Jonathan Franzen) and original pilots for FX and TNT. She is currently a producer on the upcoming Showtime series *Kidding*, starring Jim Carrey, and directed by Michel Gondry. She is a graduate of Wesleyan University. She is a former Playwright in Residence at Stella Adler Studio, and a winner of the Young Playwrights Competition and the Lotos Foundation Prize.

Director **Bethany Pitts** is an award winning theatre director. Theatre includes *Fuck You Pay Me* (VAULT and Assembly Festival - VAULT People's Choice Award), *Brutal Cessation* (Theatre 503 and Underbelly), *Spine* (Soho Theatre, Underbelly and National Tour – winner of Fringe First, Herald Angel and Stage Award), *Tether* (Underbelly), *Much Further Out Than You Thought* (Underbelly and National Tour – IdeasTap and Underbelly Award Winner), *FreeFall* (Pleasance Islington – nominated for OffWestEnd Best Director) and *Desert* (National Tour and Latitude Festival). Assistant and Associate Directing includes *Frogman* (Shoreditch Town Hall, Norwich Playhouse and UK Tour), *The Here and This and Now* (Southwark Playhouse and Theatre Royal Plymouth), *Dark Vanilla Jungle* by Philip Ridley (Soho Theatre and Pleasance Theatre - Fringe First Winner 2013) and *Theatre Uncut* (Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, and *The Young Vic* - Fringe First Winner 2012). She was Assistant Director at Theatre Royal Plymouth from 2012–2013, working under Artistic Director Simon Stokes, and also a former Resident Assistant Director at Theatre 503.

The cast is:

Cara Chase | Geena

Theatre includes *Rope* (Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch), *A Murder is Announced* (King's Theatre, Edinburgh), *Animals and Life's Word* (Theatre503), *In Memory of Edgar Lutzen* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Goodbye Love* (Southwark Playhouse), *Henry V* (Rose Theatre, Bankside), *A Life of the Mind* (BAC), *Random Acts of Malice and Tube* (Union Theatre) and *Mountain Language* (Royal Court Theatre).

Film includes *Gareth Jones*, *Subject and Stargirl*.

Television includes *Agatha Christie - A Life in Pictures*, *Island at War*, *Welcoming Arms*, *April Rhapsody* and *Sex, Guy and Videotapes*.

Radio includes *First World Problems*, *Ingrid* and *Listen with Murtha*.

Commercials include *Terry's Chocolate Orange - Bang Bang*, *Lloyd Pharmacy*, *Nationwide Current Account*, *Wales Tourist Board - Big Country Commercial* and *Millennium Dome*.

Rob Crouch | Don

Theatre includes *King Kong* (Vault Festival), *Trumpets and Raspberries* (Chickenshed Theatre), *Oliver Reed: Wild Thing* (St. James Theatre, Gilded Balloon, Edinburgh, and National Tour), *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (Vault Festival and Pleasance Edinburgh), *The Circus* (Assembly Festival, Edinburgh), *Around the World in 80 Days* (National Tour), *Hi Ho* (Gilt and Grime), *Moll Flanders* (Perth Festival and Tour), *A Fan's Club* (New Wimbledon Theatre and Edinburgh Festival), *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (National Tour), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Open Air Theatre, Sheffield), *Apple Pie* (Tricycle Theatre), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Strand Theatre), *Bouncers* (Mainbrace), *Burke and Hare* (Brockley Jack Studio Theatre and Edinburgh Festival), *Frankenstein* (New Wimbledon Studio Theatre), *Homeland* (Theatre503), *Rhinoceros* (National Tour), *Stone and Ashes* (White Bear Theatre), *Table Manner* (National Tour), *The Country Wife* (Courtyard Theatre), *The Flood* (Southwark Playhouse), *The Happiness Compartment* (NXT Theatre), *The Man Who Went to Buy a Book* (Cockpit Theatre), *The Sea and the Mirror* (Edinburgh Festival) and *Three Short Blasts* (Arcola Theatre).

Film includes *Purge of Kingdoms*, *My Best Friend's Wedding*, *England*, *My England* and *Her Story*.

Television includes *Lovesick*, *The Rack Pack*, *Wasted*, *Gallivant* and *Lead Balloon*.

Comedy includes *The Retreat*, *Blowhole* and *Clarkson and Crouch*.

Cariad Lloyd | Karla

Theatre includes *Austentatious* (Savoy Theatre, Piccadilly Theatre, Leicester Square Theatre, Underbelly, Edinburgh, and National Tour), *Cariad and Paul: A Two Player Adventure* (Soho Theatre and Pleasance Edinburgh), *Lady Cariad's Characters* which was nominated for the Comedy Awards Best Newcomer 2011 (Soho Theatre and Edinburgh Festival), *Cariad and Louise's Character Hour* (Soho Theatre), *Daniel Rigby: Berk in Progress* and *Comedy Store Players* (Comedy Store), *Danny's Deal* (The Old Vic), *Studio 50: The London Improvathon*, *We Are Amused*, *Pack up Your Troubles: 50*

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Hour Improv, MSC Cruises and Save the Car! (The Sticking Place) and The Bristol Jam 30 Hour Improvathon (Bristol Old Vic). Cariad has also performed at Upright Citizens Brigade, New York and Los Angeles, and The Pit, New York.

Film includes 0507 which she also wrote and which was nominated for BIFAS – Best Short Film, Hallo Panda, Mister Biscuits, The 1ST and Kitty, Kitty Romford.

Television includes This Time With Alan Partridge, Hospital, Murder in Successville, Walliams and Friend, The Catchment, The Agency, Drunk Histories, Joseph Morpurgo's Christmas, That's So Last Century, I Want My Wife Back, Peep Show, Virtually Famous, Marley's Ghosts, Ruby Robinson, Inside No.9, The Delivery Man, Toast of London, Crackanory, Crims, Vodka Diaries, Siblings, Gameface, The Cariad Show, Give Out Girls, Badults, Fit, Dawson Bros. Present Funtime, Cardinal Burns, Would I Lie To You, The Last Leg Correspondents, Josh, 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown, Have I Got News For You and QI.

Radio includes Comedy of the Week, Austentatious, The Comedy Club, Museum of Curiosity, Newsjack, A Good Read, The World of Simon Rich, Spotlight Tonight, The News Quiz, Small Scenes, With Great Pleasure, Sisters, Here Be Dragons, Poetry Puh-lease, Victoria Van Helsing and the Curse of Crossmyloof, Small Scenes, The Cariad (Radio) Show, The Guns of Adam Riches, The Horse Section, Chatshow Roulette, Legend of the Holyrood Vampires, Little Monster, The Guessing Game, The Nowshow, Newsjack and My First Planet.

Podcast and online includes Griefcast as creator and host, which won Best Podcast 2018, Best Entertainment and Best Interview, Learn with Andrew, Dirty Dancing, Jacque Le Cock, The Proposal, Lamb and Macaroni, The Vows, The Freudian Complex and Roisin Conaty Blap.

Kristin Milward | Marcie

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include Love Child, Natural Inclinations, The Early Hours of A Reviled Man, Portraits and Child of the Forest.

Theatre includes The Massacre at Paris (Rose Theatre, Bankside), Huis Clos (King's Head Theatre), The Illustrious Corps (Soho Theatre), Woman of Troy (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), The Snow Palace (Tricycle Theatre and Sphinx Theatre Company), 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 Dangereuses (Royal Shakespeare Company), Berleigh 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 (Contract Theatre), 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.

The press on the A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Gynecologic Oncology Unit...

"Painfully irresistible! Makes a convincing case that hard laughter is an absolutely appropriate response to those moments when life seems like too bad a joke not to respond otherwise." The New York Times

"Halley Feiffer's daring romantic comedy... is as defiantly unconventional as its title, but it is also satisfying in traditional ways. Imagine Neil Simon's situational craftsmanship crossed with an indie sensibility that's not so much feminist as female-centered." Los Angeles Times

"Funny and moving! An audacious mix of crude humor and deep feeling... Halley Feiffer's distinct voice is on fine display throughout." TheaterMania

"Outrageously funny! An off-the-wall comedic treat." StageSceneLA

The press on Halley Feiffer's of I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard at the Finborough Theatre

"It is that rare and thrilling thing – a work with the unmistakable voice of a real writer." Gerald Berkowitz, TheatreGuideLondon

★★★★★ "Remarkable, witty, heartbreaking, significant theatre." Catherine Sedgwick, The Upcoming

★★★★★ "Insightful, sometimes uncomfortably relatable theatre." Cindy Marcolina, Broadway World

★★★★★ "Emotionally stunning... powerful... compelling... great writing" Everything Theatre

★★★★★ "Thought-provoking drama at it best and highly recommended." Act Drop

★★★★★ "An extraordinary play which is funny, gritty, and self-aware." London Pub Theatres

★★★★★ "Interesting, funny, extremely unnerving" Reviewsgate

★★★★★ "A blazingly impressive piece of writing, immaculately staged and acted to the hilt." WhatsOnStage

★★★★★ "Hits home with a sense of primal instinct." Tom Birchenough, The Arts Desk

The press on playwright Halley Feiffer

"Feiffer is building a reputation for fearlessness, and it's on full display here." The New York Times.

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"Thank God for the warped creative mind of playwright/actress Halley Feiffer... an uproarious and deeply unsettling...dark comedy." TheaterMania on How to Make Friends and Then Kill Them

"Viciously funny... Brutally effective."Time Out New York on I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard

"One of the best plays I've seen this season... Provocative, sensitive, shocking... The writing is polished and probing... A tense thriller that left me shaking" New York Observer on I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard

"Spectacular tension and real danger" Entertainment Weekly on I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard

The press on director Bethany Pitts

★★★★★ "Outstanding." Philip Fisher, British Theatre Guide on Spine

★★★★★ "Spine isn't afraid to wear either its heart or its politics on its sleeve. It's all the better for it." Lyn Gardner, The Guardian on Spine

★★★★★ "Directed by Bethany Pitts with a near relentless sense of pace" The Stage on Spine

★★★★★ "Weaving together the personal and the political in the most heartbreaking, chest-thumping of ways." WhatsOnStage on Spine

★★★★★ "A deeply humane celebration of community, tradition, and the imagination" The Scotsman on Spine

★★★★★ "Vicious, sad and excellently acted" The Stage on Brutal Cessation

★★★★★ "You are left dazed and shaken" BritishTheatre.com on Brutal Cessation

PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2018 AND FRIDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2018 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2018 AT 1.00PM–1.30PM

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Book online at www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk - No booking fees on online, personal or postal bookings

Box Office 01223 357851. (Calls are free. There will be a 5% booking fee.) Lines are open Monday– Saturday 10.00am-6.00pm

Tuesday, 2 October – Saturday, 27 October 2018

Tuesday to Saturday evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.00pm. Saturday Matinees at 3.00pm (from 13 October 2018).

Prices until 14 October 2018 Tickets £18, £16 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £16 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £18 all seats. Previews (2 and 3 October) £14 all seats.

£10 tickets for Under 30s for performances from Tuesday to Sunday of the first week when booked online only.

£14 tickets for residents of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on Saturday, 6 October when booked online only.

Prices from 16 October 2018 – Tickets £20, £18 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £18 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £20 all seats.

Performance Length: Approximately 80 minutes with no interval

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

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Antonella Petrancosta on e-mail press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or 07512 609614

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