

FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT **NEW WRITING** | UNIQUE **REDISCOVERIES**

The English language London premiere

BREAK OF NOON

by Paul Claudel.

Directed by David Furlong. Set Design by Ninon Fandre. Lighting by Alastair Borland. Costume Design by Sarah Habib.

Presented by Exchange Theatre with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Elizabeth Boag. David Durham. Matt Lim. Connor Williams.

"Noon at the sun. Noon at the centre of our lives."

During 2018, the Finborough Theatre celebrates 150 years of the Finborough Theatre's building – and its birthday also coincides with the 150th anniversary of the birth of French symbolist playwright Paul Claudel. As part of the #Finborough150 celebrations, the London premiere in English of Paul Claudel's **Break of Noon (Partage de Midi)** plays for six Sunday and Monday evenings and Tuesday matinees from Sunday, 27 May 2018 (**Press Night: Monday, 28 May 2018 at 7.30pm**).

Set in Hong Kong and China at the turn of the 20th century, against the backdrop of the age of Empire and the first whispers of revolt and decolonisation, **Break of Noon** follows the inner journeys of four people who together depict all the multifaceted faces of Love.

Ysé is at the centre of a romantic entanglement with three men: De Ciz, her unstable husband who is obsessed with business and will do anything to open new trade markets in the East; Mesa, devoted to his Catholic faith, but who was rejected for the priesthood and feels abandoned by God; and Amalric, a fortune-seeking explorer, and Ysé's old flame, who seems to be pushing Ysé into other men's arms, whilst still hoping she will return to him one day...

Written in 1905, **Break of Noon** is a semi-autobiographical romance, based on Paul Claudel's own real love affair with a married woman, and his experiences as French consul in China. A modern French classic, it is a unique poetic and symbolist manifesto, in verse, on the human frailty of ambivalence and the conflicts and contradictions between physical love and spiritual faith.

Break of Noon was banned from the stage by Claudel himself for forty three years (following a recommendation from his priest during confession), until his friend, famous actor and director Jean-Louis Barrault, after he'd successfully created the epic *Soulier de Satin*, convinced him to allow him to produce the play in 1948. Barrault's production, in French, for the famous Renaud-Barrault Company was seen in London in 1951. It was revived at the Comédie Française as recently as 2007.

Playwright **Paul Claudel** was born in 1868, 150 years ago, and was the younger brother of sculptor Camille Claudel was one of France's leading writers, as well as working as a diplomat. In addition to being French consul in China, Japan, Brazil, the United States and many other countries, Claudel wrote thirty plays, twenty essays and fifteen volumes of poetry. Among his many successful plays was *Tête d'Or* (1890), *The Exchange* (1893), *L'annonce faite à Marie* (1910), and *Le Soulier de Satin* (1931), a ten-hour long exploration of human and divine love and longing, which was staged at the Comédie-Française in 1943. His work was closely associated with leading French director and actor Jean-Louis Barrault and his Compagnie Renaud-Barrault. Claudel was elected an 'Immortal' of L'Académie française in 1946. A devout Catholic, he dedicated the last part of his life to the study of biblical scriptures. He died in 1955.

Translator **Jonathan Griffin** (1906–1990) wrote books on military matters in the 1930s. He served as the director of BBC European Intelligence during World War II. He was ultimately responsible for the V-sign campaign, later adopted by Churchill. Following the war, he served as Cultural Counsellor at the British embassy in Paris. Griffin was a distinguished poet and dramatist. His selected poems *In Earthlight* was published in 1995. In addition to Paul Claudel's *Break of Noon*,

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www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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Press Information

among the works Griffin translated were plays by Montherlant and Kleist, poetry and fiction by Jean Giono, René Char, Fernando Pessoa, Camoens and Nikos Kazantzakis, and memoirs by General de Gaulle and Jean-Louis Barrault.

Translator **Susannah York** (1939-2011) was a star on film, television and film. She performed lead roles in plays by Shakespeare, Bernard Shaw, the solo Human Voice by Cocteau. And Tennessee Williams. Her many films included The Greengage Summer, The Maids and The Killing of Sister George. She also directed and appeared in plays on the fringe and compiled a stage anthology - The Loves of Shakespeare's Women. She wrote two books for children. She was a political radical and activist, and was particularly preoccupied with nuclear issues.

Director **David Furlong's** production of Moliere's Doctor In Spite Of Himself was nominated for Best Director at the OffWestEndAwards 2017. Direction includes The Exchange (Hackney Empire), Misanthrope (Drayton Arms Theatre), The Flies (Camden People's Theatre), Square(d) (New Wimbledon Theatre), Business (Pleasance London) and I Live With Freddie Mercury (Café-Théâtre des Chartrons, Bordeaux). David was Resident Director at the Institut Francais in South Kensington from 2010 to 2013 for which he wrote and directed twelve productions for young audiences. He has also written four full-length plays. David was Observing Staff Director to Moshe Leiser at the Royal Opera House, and is Stage Directors UK 2017's mentee under Phelim McDermott. He trained at the National Theatre of Chaillot in Paris and is still a performer, regularly touring France and about to tour Mauritius and India in 2018 with Border Crossings Theatre.

Exchange Theatre was founded in 2006 by Fanny Dulin and David Furlong. The company produces new or forgotten translations of major French plays for their first English productions (Jean-Paul Sartre, Claudel, and, Off Broadway in 2011, Xavier Durringer). It was resident company of the Institut Francais in 2012-2013. Since 2014, they have also produced parallel productions in both English and French with bilingual casts. Most recently, Moliere's The Doctor in Spite of Himself was nominated at the OffWestEnd Award 2016 for Best Direction.

FINBOROUGH150. 2018 marks 150 years of the Finborough Theatre building, originally designed by prominent Victorian architect George Godwin. We will be celebrating our birthday throughout the year with an anniversary selection of the best plays from 1868. #finborough150

The cast is

Elizabeth Boag | Ysé

Trained at Mountview Conservatoire.

Theatre includes Invincible (National Tour and 59E59 Theaters, New York City), Arrivals And Departures, Farcicals, Confusions, Hero's Welcome (Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough, National Tour and 59E59 Theaters, New York City), Roundelay (National Tour), Stella (Southwark Playhouse and Douglass Theatre, Georgia), Lilies On The Land (Arts Theatre), Same Time Next Year (Esk Valley Theatre, Whitby) and The 24 Hour Plays (The Old Vic).

Film includes Chasing Robert Barker, Scrawl and Mission London.

Television includes Casualty, Doctors, Joe's Palace and Stuart: A Life Backwards.

David Durham | De Ciz

Trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes As You Like It (Nottingham Playhouse), Descent (Ovalhouse), Deathwrite (Sherman Cymru, Cardiff), Jesus Christ Superstar (National Tour), The Lion King (Lyceum Theatre), Follies (Royal Festival Hall), Ragtime (Piccadilly Theatre), Flowers For Mrs Harris (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield) and Sweeney Todd (Mercury Theatre, Colchester).

Opera includes Trouble In Tahiti (Brunel Museum, Bristol), La Traviata (Soho Theatre), Pagliacci (King's Head Theatre), Don Giovanni (The Theatre, Chipping Norton), Tosca (Saint John's Smith Square), Macbeth and Il Tabarro (Midsummer Opera), Eugene Onegin and Carmen (Whitgift Foundation).

Television includes Law and Order, Merlin, EastEnders, Casualty, Doctors and A Touch Of Frost.

Matt Lim | Mesa

Trained at the University of Cambridge.

Theatre includes Love In The Past Participle (The Other Palace), In My Head (Brockley Jack Studio Theatre), Edward! (Westminster Abbey), Yerma and Bodas De Sangre (Barons Court Theatre), 2 Complicated (National Tour) and Jack And I: The Jack the Ripper Musical (National Tour and Edinburgh Festival).

Film includes The Confusion of Tongues, Three Dots And A Dash, 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover, Yoof and LUCID: The Dreamwalker.

Connor Williams | Amalric

Trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

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Theatre includes King For A Day (Theatre Royal Haymarket), Awake (Theatre503), Twelfth Night, Romeo And Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth (The Lord Chamberlain's Men), The Revenger's Tragedy (Southwark Playhouse), The York Realist (English Touring Theatre) and One Hell Of A Life (National Tour).

Film includes Nightshooters, The Rizen: Possession, Fan and Eider And Steeps.

Television includes Shallow Graves, Derren Brown Live, Casualty, The Bill, Great Escape: The Untold Story.

The press on Paul Claudel

"The play is now mythical, and even fifty years after its creation, it stands the test of time...An exceptional event"

Philippe du Vignal, Theatre du Blog

"A play which will surely be counted among the great creative works of our time." The Spectator on The Satin Slipper

The press on director David Furlong

"Masterful comedic style, clever, very funny." ★★★★★ Four stars, The Upcoming on The Doctor in Spite of Himself

"High voltage energy of the staging and the clever direction of David Furlong." ★★★★★ Four stars, London Theatre 1

"Original and entertaining, this rather wonderful production encapsulates Moliere's brilliance." ★★★★★ Four stars,

London Pub Theatres on The Misanthrope

"The play, intelligently directed by David Furlong stands the test of time" Theatre Bubble on The Misanthrope

"It's commendable to see so much invention and energy...an amazingly intense production" The Scotsman on The Flies

PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 28 MAY 2018 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: MONDAY, 28 MAY 2018 AT 5.00PM–5.30PM

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

Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, 27, 28, 29 May and 3, 4, 5 June 2018

Sunday and Monday evenings at 7.30pm. Tuesday matinees at 2.00pm.

Tickets £18, £16 concessions.

Performance Length: Approximately one hour and forty minutes with one interval.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

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

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

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