

FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT NEW WRITING | UNIQUE REDISCOVERIES

Winter 2015-2016 | November 2015–February 2016 at the Finborough Theatre

Part of the Finborough Theatre's

THE GREAT WAR 100

series'

The World Premiere

STONY BROKE IN NO MAN'S LAND

Written and Directed by John Burrows.

Presented by Vertical Man Productions in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: David Brett. Gareth Williams.

"Let us honour if we can the vertical man, though we value none but the horizontal one." W. H. Auden.

Returning to the Finborough Theatre by popular demand, ***Stony Broke in No Man's Land***, the world premiere of a new play from acclaimed playwright John Burrows, runs at the Finborough Theatre, playing nine Sunday and Monday evenings and Tuesday matinees, from Sunday, 10 January 2016 (**Press Night: Monday, 11 January 2016 at 7.30pm**).

Stony Broke in No Man's Land stars David Brett and Gareth Williams, both original members of the Number 1 chart-topping group, **The Flying Pickets**, in a fast-moving, comic-yet-poignant piece of storytelling.

Dressed in shabby great coats with medals pinned to their chests, two jobless ex-Tommies busking on a London street, tell in words, song and music the story of Private Percy Cotton and the love of his life, bogus-spiritualist Nellie Mottram.

The young soldier and the dubious medium... plucked from the mean streets of Woolwich in 1916, and propelled via the battlefields of France and the grand squares of Mayfair, to the highest echelons of power and the funeral in 1920 for The Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey ... the funeral that might just have never happened without them.

Stony Broke in No Man's Land reunites the writer/director and two of the cast members of ***One Big Blow***, the acclaimed play about coal miners and their brass band that John Burrows wrote for 7.84 Theatre Company in the early 1980s, and which spawned the a cappella group, **The Flying Pickets**, best known for their Christmas Number One hit, *Only You*.

The Press on ***Stony Broke in No Man's Land*** at the Finborough Theatre

"A beautifully compact piece of theatre, owing much to the energy of its accomplished performers." *British Theatre Guide*

"It's a pleasure to see something done so simply and so well, by a writer and cast who care about every moment of the story." *Partially Obstructed View*

"Burrows' original and understated play ... consummately performed" ★★★★★ *International Theatre Reviews*

"By focusing on the aftermath of the war and the fallout of national grief, Burrows' imaginative piece comes at the era from its own idiosyncratic angle, and achieves a fresh, funny, sad rekindling of a hundred-years-old tragedy. ★★★★★ *The Public Reviews*

"Over twenty characters are brought to life by Brett and Williams in a genuine, shared tour de force... With a plethora of films and plays about the tragedy and waste of the Great War I wondered initially whether there would be scope for the themes addressed here to touch me. But in its oblique yet quietly insistent way this two-hander brought home the lingering effects of war on the bereaved and on those left behind more powerfully than many big-budget dramas.

★★★★★ *BritishTheatre.com*

"In both the direction and the acting, a vaudevillian beauty is presented that really does make fringe theatre so rewarding. It's something of a lost tradition in our theatre and brings a uniqueness to this production that holds, and keeps hold of the audience from the moment Brett and Williams come onto the stage. ★★★★★ *The New Current*

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439 e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk

www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

Press Information

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"It's a pleasure to see something done so simply and so well, by a writer and cast who seem to care about every moment of the story." ★★★★★ *Plays to See*

John Burrows is a playwright, director and actor. His many plays include *For Sylvia* (with John Harding) about the Battle of Britain, which started life in a room above a London pub, toured the country, and went on to be screened on BBC TV as a *Play For Today*; *The Golden Pathway Annual* (also with John Harding) about a working class boy growing up in post war Britain, which was commissioned by the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, transferred to the Mayfair Theatre in London, was televised, and has had many subsequent productions in the UK and abroad; *One Big Blow*, about a colliery brass band, written and directed for 7:84 Theatre Company, a all-male a cappella musical which toured the UK, won a Festival First at Edinburgh, was televised by Granada TV, and brought together the six actors who went on to become the chart topping group, The Flying Pickets; *It's a Girl!*, about a group of women having their first babies, was another a cappella musical, this time with an all female cast, written and directed for the Duke's Theatre Lancaster, it transferred to the Bush Theatre and went on to receive many further productions in the UK and abroad; and *Viva Espania*, about Club 18-30 holidays, which was written and directed for Hull Truck, toured the UK, won the award for the Best Musical on the London Fringe and transferred to the Arts Theatre. John also writes for radio and television. He has been a writer on Channel 4's *Hollyoaks*. His plays *Whitlock's Walk*, about the 1936 Olympics, and *Glyndebourne*, about a production of Don Giovanni at the famous opera house in 1939, were both heard on Radio 4.

David Brett has appeared extensively on the London stage, including three previous productions at the Finborough Theatre, in repertory theatres throughout the country, and he has toured internationally with companies such as the English Shakespeare Company and Oxford Stage Company. He has also appeared in all five of Simple8 Theatre Company's productions at the Arcola Theatre, most recently *The Cabinet Of Dr Caligari* and *Moby Dick*. He appeared with John Burrows in John's previous two-hander, *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang*, the story of two monks at the time of the Dissolution of the monasteries. Television includes *Chucklevision*, *Seriously Funny* and the BBC3 comedy series *Dogtown*. Film includes the title role in *Stanley Spencer: A Painter in Heaven* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. As a singer and musician he was a founder member of The Flying Pickets, with whom he recorded, arranged, and toured widely in the 1980s.

Gareth Williams is an actor and musician. He began his career in the 1970s in rep and community touring theatre, (seven years in a transit van) including John Burrows' *One Big Blow* which spawned The Flying Pickets, (seven years in a luxury transit van). Since then he has worked in theatre including *Stags and Hens* (Liverpool), English Shakespeare Company, Open Air Theatre Regent's Park, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (English Touring Theatre), *The Winter's Tale* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), Open Air Theatre, Chester, and No. 1 tours of *South Pacific*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Jolson*, *Jailhouse Rock*, *My Fair Lady* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. Television includes *Place of Execution*, *The Bill*, *EastEnders*, *Touching Evil* and *Silk*.

THEGREATWAR100

THEGREATWAR100 series is a new occasional series of works about – or written during – the Great War to be presented by the Finborough Theatre from 2014 to 2018 to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 11 JANUARY 2016 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: MONDAY, 11 JANUARY 2016 AT 5.00PM-5.30PM

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office 0844 847 1652 Book online at www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26 January 2016.

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

Tickets £18, £16 concessions.

Performance Length: Approximately two hours with one interval.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Neil McPherson on e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07977 173135**

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

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www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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