

The Steam Industry and the finboroughtheatre present

# THE LOWER DEPTHS

## SCENES FROM RUSSIAN LIFE

by Maxim Gorky. The world premiere of a new version. Written and Directed by Phil Willmott.

Designed by Nicky Bunch. Lighting by Hansjorg Schmidt. Costume Design by Nell Knudsen.

Cast: Andrew Colley. James Folan. Victoria Gee. Richard Gofton. Dean Kelly. Scott Macbain. Olivia Macdonald. Ursula Mohan. Peter G Reed. Richard Sandells. Louise Shuttleworth. Neil Stewart. Charlie Watts.

Recent productions of Maxim Gorky's plays have sparked a resurgence of interest in the playwright and social reformer. The multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre now presents a rare opportunity to experience his undisputed masterpiece ("One of this century's great seminal works" *The Guardian*), opening on May 15 for a four week run.

Set amongst the whores, alcoholics, cynics and dosshouse dreamers of a Russia on the brink of revolution, *The Lower Depths* is a harrowing, violent and uncompromising portrayal of the human spirit at its lowest ebb, with destitution and death an ever present spectre. Can this gang of misfits and losers find any nobility in their hand to mouth struggle for survival? With no easy answers, neat plot twists or satisfying resolution, this ruthless depiction of an underclass without hope shocked audiences in infamous Moscow, London and Berlin premieres. Over a hundred years later, it still feels searingly relevant whenever poverty drives ordinary people to addiction and despair...

Director **Phil Willmott** makes his annual visit to the Finborough Theatre following his acclaimed productions of *Loyalties* and *Trelawny of the Wells*. In 2006, he was awarded a Peter Brook Empty Space award for his productions of Euripides, Brecht, Sophocles and Shaw at The Scoop open-air amphitheatre on the South Bank. Other recent productions include *Billy Liar* and *Much Ado About Nothing* at Liverpool Playhouse, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Dubai, *The London Nativity* and the tenth anniversary year of *Fame* at the Aldwych Theatre

**Maxim Gorky** (1868-1936), Russian author and revolutionary. *The Lower Depths* (1902) was first produced by Konstantin Stanislavski at the Moscow Art Theatre and became one of that company's best known productions. It has also been filmed by Jean Renoir and Akira Kurosawa. Gorky's other plays include *Summer Folk*, *Philistines*, *Barbarians*, *Enemies* and *Vassa Zheleznova* - as well as his autobiographical trilogy - *My Childhood*, *In the World*, and *My Universities*.

### Press Acclaim for Phil Willmott's Productions at the Finborough Theatre

"Phil Willmott's excellent revival" Michael Billington, *The Guardian* on *Loyalties*

"Phil Willmott's graceful and impeccably detailed production" Lucy Powell, *Time Out* on *Loyalties*

"Willmott's production is gripping and pacy" Sam Marlowe, *The Times* on *Loyalties*

"The Finborough has also rediscovered an absorbing play...meticulously brought to life in Phil Willmott's production" Susannah Clapp, *The Observer* on *Loyalties*

"Phil Willmott proves why he is one of the most versatile, best and amazingly prolific directors around..." *The Guardian*

"It's hard to top a Phil Willmott show" *The Daily Mail*

"This triumphant revival...a production bursting with theatrical atmosphere" Carole Woddis, *What's on in London* on *Trelawny*

"An exuberant celebration of the irrepressible urge to make theatre" Michael Portillo, *The New Statesman* on *Trelawny*

**PRESS NIGHT: THURSDAY, 17 MAY 2007 AT 7.30PM**

**PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2007 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM**

Finborough Theatre, The Finborough, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office 0870 4000 838 Book online at [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

**Tuesday, 15 May - Saturday, 9 June 2007**

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.30pm.

Tickets £12, £9 concessions. Tuesday Evenings £8 all seats. Saturday evenings £12 all seats.

Previews (15 and 16 May) £8 all seats.

Performance Length: Approximately 2 hours.

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e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

# Press Information

**finboroughtheatre**

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

**Neil McPherson** e-mail [press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) or **07977 173135**

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