

**The Finborough Theatre is now fully heated and air conditioned**

Rediscoveries2012 Season

February to April 2012

Cassie Hodges for Bloomsday in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre presents  
The first London production in 80 years

# Autumn Fire

by **T.C. Murray**

Directed by Veronica Quilligan. Designed by Philip Lindley.

Lighting by Miguel Figueiredo. Costume Design by Sophia Anastasiou.

Cast: Maureen Bennett. Frank Fitzpatrick. Eoin Geoghegan. Luke Hayden. Valene Kane. Dylan Kennedy.  
Aoife Lennon. Aoife McMahon.

*"I warn you in time: Every day of your life you'll rue it if you come between us and our father"*

Following the huge sell-out success of our recent productions of rediscovered Irish drama – *Mixed Marriage* by St John Ervine and *Drama at Inish* by Lennox Robinson – we present the first professional production in the UK for 80 years of the starkly tragic *Autumn Fire*, the classic 1924 Irish tragedy by T.C. Murray, opening at the Finborough Theatre for a limited run of six Sunday and Monday performances on Sunday, 4 March 2012 (**Press Night: Monday, 5 March 2012 at 7.30pm**).

Rural Ireland, the 1920s. Farmer Owen Keegan, a middle aged widower with two grown up children, is famed throughout the county for his strength and vigour. When he falls in love with Nance Desmond, an attractive young woman half his age, he must fight the disapproval and hostility of his neighbours and relatives, as the lives of Owen, Nance, and Owen's son and daughter are torn apart by his passion.

*Autumn Fire* was first seen at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 1924 starring Sara Allgood, F.J. McCormack and Barry Fitzgerald. It was subsequently seen in both the West End and on Broadway, and was last seen in London at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, in 1931.

Playwright **Thomas Cornelius Murray** (1873–1959) was an Irish dramatist who enjoyed international popularity from 1912 to about 1950. A reclusive Roman Catholic schoolteacher, he has been called "the voice of rural Ireland", and who was closely associated with the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, Éire's national theatre. Born in Macroom, County Cork, his first play, *The Wheel of Fortune*, was produced by the Little Theatre in Cork in 1909. His play *Birthright* was performed in the Abbey Theatre in 1910 and established him as a major Irish dramatist. In all, he wrote fifteen plays, all of which were produced by the Abbey Theatre. His two most highly regarded works are *Maurice Harte* (1912) and his masterpiece *Autumn Fire* (1924). Both of these and *Birthright* were also seen in New York on Broadway. He was also the author of many short stories, articles and an acclaimed semi-autobiographical novel, *Spring Horizon* (1937).

Director **Veronica Quilligan** was until recently a Resident Assistant Director at the Finborough Theatre as part of a placement through the Birkbeck MFA in Theatre Directing course. Her directing includes *The Words Upon The Windowpane* (Phoenix Theatre, Leicester). As Assistant Director, theatre includes *The Way of the World* and *Measure for Measure* (LAMDA) and – at the Finborough Theatre – *Perchance To Dream*, *Drama at Inish* and *Foxfinder*.

She began her career as an actor making her debut at the Royal Court Theatre in *A Pagan Place* for which she won the *Plays and Players* Most Promising Newcomer award. She went on to appear in *The Way of the World*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *Spring Awakening*, *Other Rooms Other Voices* (National Theatre), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Phoenix Theatre and Garrick Theatre), *The Key Tag*, *From Cockney To Toffs*, *The School Leaver* (Royal Court Theatre), *Looking At You Revived*, *Please Shine Down On Me Again*, *Zigomania*, *Loved* (Bush Theatre), *Salome* (Gate Theatre and Riverside) *The Riot Act*, *High Time* (Field Day Theatre Company, Derry), *Faith Healer* (Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh), *Colours* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin) and *Rosmersholm* (Almeida Theatre). Television includes *Peak Practice*, *Rough Justice*, *The Wild Duck*, *City Sugar*, *The Vanishing Army*, *Tears Before Bedtime*, *Red Shift* and *The History Man*. Film includes *My Zinc Bed*, *Memento Mori*, *The Wildcats of St Trinians*, *Call At Corazon*, *Angel*, *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*, *Hostage* and *Maria's Song*.

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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

The cast includes:

Maureen Bennett | Mrs Desmond

Trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre includes *A Servant of Two Masters*, *Pygmalion*, *I Don't Believe in Love*, *Bad/Nature Knows Best*, *Joanne*, *One Act Wonders*, *Funny Boy* (Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham), and *The Selfish Giant and The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs* (Queens Theatre, Barnstable)

Film includes *A Handful of Dust*, *The Zip*, *Crush* and *The Secret Life of Mrs Beeton*.

Television includes *The Mirror Crack'd*, *Inspector Morse*, *Mistresses* and *The Bill*.

Frank Fitzpatrick | Morgan

Trained at Drama Studio London.

Theatre includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Roar Theatre), *Peer Gynt* (Pleasance Theatre), *Making History*, *Waiting For Godot*, *Money From America* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *The Shadow of a Gunman* (East 15), *The Road to Remembrance* (Shadow Road Productions), *Perfectly Frank* (Show of Strength Theatre Company), *A Talk in the Park*, *Gosforth's Fete* (Falmouth Arts Centre), *Down Bottle Alley* (White Rock Theatre, Hastings), *American Psycho Party* (Courtyard Theatre) and *Storm In The Willows* (Albany Theatre)

Film includes *The North London Book of The Dead*, *A Time to Heal* and *The Awakening*.

Television includes *Hustle*, *Casualty*, *The Wolf Man* and *Blood in the Water*.

Eoin Geoghegan | Michael

Trained at the Arts Educational Schools.

Theatre includes *Setanta* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin), *Diarmuid agus Grainne* (An Taibhdhreach), *An Cearrbhach Mac Caba* (Fibin), *Translations* (Decadent), and *Gormenghast*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Month In the Country*, *Betrayal*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Arts Educational Schools).

Film includes *Infliction*, *Moster*, *Merely Players*, *The Watchers* and *Truth in the Rumour*.

Television includes *Setanta in the City*, *Corp Agus Anan*, *The Passion*, *City of Vice* and *Seacht*.

Luke Hayden | Owen Keegan

Trained at Brendan Smith Academy, and has worked in Ireland, Britain, Poland, Lithuania and Mexico.

Theatre includes *Juno And The Paycock* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and the National Theatre, London), *Boris Godunov* (Royal Opera House), *La Chunga* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast), *Hamlet* (Cork Opera House), *I Do Not Like Thee Dr Fell* (BAC), *At Swim Two Birds*, *She Stoops to Conquer* (Gate Theatre, Dublin), *The Man Who Boxed Like John McCormack* (UK Tour), *Lovers*, *The Poker Session*, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *I Do Not Like Thee Doctor Fell*, *The Hostage* (Tricycle Theatre), *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Birmingham Six*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Educating Rita*, *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *Public Enemy*, *How I Learned To Drive* (Andrews Lane Theatre, Dublin), *The Balcony*, *All My Sons*, *Buried Child* (Focus Theatre, Dublin), *The Iceman Cometh* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin), *Tearing the Loom* for which he received a Best Actor nomination at the Irish Film and Television Awards (Lyric Theatre, Belfast) *Oliver!* (Opera House, Cork), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Helix Theatre), *The Quare Fellow* (New Theatre, Dublin) and *Hamlet and Bouncers* (Tivoli Theatre).

Film includes *In The Name Of The Father*, *One Man's Hero*, *Michael Collins*, *Borstal Boy*, *Veronica Guerin*, *About War*, *Evelyn* and *The Escapist*.

Television includes *The Governor*, *September*, *Father Ted*, *Poirot*, *Aristocrats*, *The Family*, *The Shadow of the Gun*, *Jake's Progress*, *The New Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Edward No Hands*, *Runway One*, *A Very Peculiar Practice*, *Casualty*, *Val Falvey* and *Father Ted*.

Valene Kane | Nance

Trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre includes *The Night Chauffeur*, *The Black Diamond* (Punchdrunk), *The Lonesome West* (Mercury Theatre, Colchester), *The Crows Wake*, *The Miracle Killer* (Union Theatre), *20 Cigarettes* (National Youth Theatre at Soho Theatre) and *The Rivals* (Mr Hart's Theatrical Company).

Film includes *The Canal*, *Jump*, *War Games*, *Paris @ New Yorker*, *Jack Malchance*, *The Canal* and *The Fading Light*, named Best Irish Film Critics' Choice at the 2010 Jameson International Dublin Film Festival.

Dylan Kennedy | Tom

Trained at East 15 Acting School.

Theatre includes *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh), *Peter Pan* (National Theatre of

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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

**FINBOROUGH | THEATRE**

Scotland), *Alice In Wonderland* (New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth), *Rinaldo* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera), *All Over Town* (Calipo Theatre), *A Skull In Connemara* (National Tour), *The Bay* (Fragments Theatre at Theatre 503) and *The Comedy of Errors* (Warhorse Theatre).

Film includes *Plasticine*, *Banshee Blacktop*, *Inside Out* and *I Love You*.

Television includes the title role in *The Young Graham Norton*.

Aoife Lennon | Molly

Trained at Drama Studio London.

Theatre includes *Romy and Julian* (Vienna's English Theatre), *If It's A Boy* (Brick by Brick Theatre Company), *Troilus and Cressida* (Lost Theatre), *Ring Around The Moon*, *The Shagaround*, *Find Me*, *The Man of Mode*, *Two Gentleman of Verona*, *No Dancing Please* and *Macbeth* (Drama Studio London).

Film includes *Fassbinder Journey*.

Television includes *Online and Inlove*.

Aoife McMahon | Ellen

At the Finborough Theatre, Aoife appeared in *Gates of Gold* (2004).

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes *Henry VIII* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Goodnight Mr Tom* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Translations* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin), *Think Global, F\*\*\* Local* (Out of Joint at the Royal Court Theatre), *Beauty in Beauty and the Beast* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Scenes from the Big Picture* (National Theatre), *Andorra* (The Young Vic), *The Playboy of the Western World* (Liverpool Playhouse), *The Great Theatre Of The World* (Arcola Theatre), *Nine Objects* (Theatre 503), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (RADA, Greenwich Theatre and the Watermill Theatre, Newbury)

Film includes Mary in *Holy Cross*.

Television includes *A Touch of Frost*, *Doctors*, *Bad Girls*, *My Dad's the Prime Minister*, *Steel River Blues*, *The Clinic* and *Random Passage*.

**PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 5 MARCH 2012 AT 7.30PM**

**PHOTOCALL: By arrangement. Please email [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk)**

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

Box Office 0844 847 1652. [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

**Sundays and Mondays, 4, 5, 11, 12, 18 and 19 March 2012**

Evenings at 7.30pm

Tickets £14, £10 concessions.

**Please note change of price**

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

**Neil McPherson** on e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto: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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