

FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT NEW WRITING | UNIQUE REDISCOVERIES

Spring Season – January–April 2017

The UK premiere

# I'M GONNA PRAY FOR YOU SO HARD

by Halley Feiffer.

Directed by Jake Smith. Set and Costume Design by Anna Reid. Lighting Design by Jack Weir. Sound Design by Jon McLeod. Presented by Joe C. Brown in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Adrian Lukis. Jill Winternitz.

"Everything I did – every decision I made – led me right here – right to this moment, here with you."

The UK premiere of an award-nominated black comedy from American playwright Halley Feiffer, **I'm Gonna Pray For You So Hard** opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Tuesday, 28 February 2017 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 2 March and Friday, 3 March 2017 at 7.30pm**) with **Adrian Lukis** and **Jill Winternitz**.

Ella is a precocious and fiercely competitive actress whose sole aim in life is making her famous playwright father, David, proud. Over the course of a wickedly intense evening, Ella and David deliberate whether to read the reviews of her off-Broadway debut. But that decision could shatter their relationship forever.

A hilarious and gut wrenching black comedy which sheds new light on the eternal struggles of family life. **I'm Gonna Pray For You So Hard** reminds us that you don't have to be part of a theatrical family to know that life is filled with drama. And for that, there's no dress rehearsal.

**I'm Gonna Pray For You So Hard** received its critically acclaimed Off-Broadway premiere in 2015, breaking box office records and earning Feiffer a nomination for an Outer Critics' Circle Award. It is directed by **Jake Smith**, previously Staff Director on *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Theatre Royal Haymarket and National Tour), who returns to the Finborough Theatre following his sell-out revival of *Andy Capp the Musical*.

Playwright **Halley Feiffer** began her writing career at a young age when she won the National Young Playwrights' Contest in 2002. Full-length plays include *How to Make Friends and Kill Them* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater) and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Gynecologic Oncology Unit* at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center of New York City (MCC Theater). Theatre as actor includes *The House of Blue Leaves* (Walter Kerr Theater, Broadway) for which she won a Theatre World Award, *Tigers Be Still* (Roundabout Theatre Company), *Some Americans Abroad*, suburbia and *Election Day (2ST)*, *Still Life* (MCC Theater) and *None of the Above* (Lion Theatre).

Director **Jake Smith** began his career at Hull Truck and was a founding member of Assemble Fest, a large-scale theatre festival launched following Hull's winning City of Culture campaign. He was the Trainee Director in Residence at Chichester Festival Theatre from 2014-2016. Jake is currently Resident Director at the Almeida Theatre and was recently Staff Director on *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Theatre Royal Haymarket and National Tour). Productions at the Finborough Theatre include *Andy Capp the Musical*. Direction includes *The Tempest* (Petersfield Shakespeare Festival), *Citizenship* (National Theatre Connections, Chichester Festival Youth Theatre and The Capitol Theatre, Horsham), *The Boy Who Built Clock* (Arts Theatre), *A Christmas Carol* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Smoke (and mirrors)* (Derby Theatre for Theatre Uncut), *The Little Match Girl* (Assemble Fest, Hull), *Alice's Site* (Hull Truck) and *The Coronation of Poppea* (Middleton Hall,

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439 e-mail [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk)  
[www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

The Finborough Theatre is managed by The Steam Industry. Registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee, no. 3448268. Registered Charity no. 1071304. Registered address: 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED. A member of the Independent Theatre Council.

# Press Information

Hull). Readings include Arthur (Theatre Royal Haymarket), Swan Song (Minerva Theatre, Chichester, and Chichester Festival Theatre), I am Scratch (Old Red Lion Theatre) and Betjeman with Edward Fox (Chichester Festival Theatre). Jake has worked as Assistant Director with Howard Davies on For Services Rendered and Jamie Glover on Miss Julie and Black Comedy (Minerva Theatre, Chichester, and Chichester Festival Theatre), Nadia Fall on Way Upstream, Dale Rooks on The Hundred and One Dalmatians and Jonathan Kent on Gypsy (Chichester Festival Theatre), Max Stafford-Clark on Pitcairn (Chichester Festival Theatre and Out of Joint), Christopher Morahan on Stevie (Hampstead Theatre), and Sarah Louise Davies on Whale Music (Hull Truck).

The cast is:

**Adrian Lukis** | David

Trained at Drama Studio London.

Theatre includes The Seagull (Chichester Festival Theatre and National Theatre), Dinner (Wyndham's Theatre), The Philadelphia, Cloaca (The Old Vic), The Taming of the Shrew (Royal Shakespeare Company), The Relapse, Sleep with Me (National Theatre), Versailles (Donmar Warehouse), Dead Funny, The Front Page, (Chichester Festival Theatre), Sherlock Holmes – The Best Kept Secret (West Yorkshire Playhouse), Orson's Shadow (Southwark Playhouse), Pygmalion (Theatre Royal Bath), As You Like It, Hay Fever (Rose Theatre, Kingston), The Winslow Boy and Arthur and George (Birmingham Rep).

Film includes City Slacker, Victim, Nine Miles Down, Innocent, Nightwatching, 7 Seconds, Me Without You, Young Blades and The Trench.

Television includes The Crown 2, Grantchester, Red Dwarf, Judge John Deed, Downton Abbey, Death in Paradise, Silk, Pride and Prejudice, Midsomer Murders, Agatha Christie's Poirot, Silent Witness, Doctors, Fresh Meat, Outnumbered, Lewis, Heartbeat, A Touch of Frost, The Bill, Spooks and Foyle's War.

**Jill Winternitz** | Ella

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

West End Theatre includes Girl in Once (Phoenix Theatre) and Baby in Dirty Dancing (Piccadilly Theatre).

Other theatre includes Dark Tourism (Park Theatre), A Handful of Soil (Drayton Studio Theatre), Hamlet, The Canterbury Tales (Cunard Queen Mary 2) and The Seagull (Moscow Art Theatre School).

Film includes 10x10, A Streetcat Named Bob, Relics, The Sorrows and The Replacement Child.

## **The press on the 2015 production of I'm Gonna Pray For You So Hard**

"Bone-chilling... A potently acted, punishing drama by Halley Feiffer" Charles Isherwood, The New York Times

"Viciously funny... Brutally effective... Feiffer takes a tough look at the forces that can bring us to our knees" ★★★★★

Four Stars, Time Out New York

"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

"Spectacular tension and real danger" Entertainment Weekly

"It's a fearless piece of work, riveting and hilarious!" Bergen Record

## **The Press on Director Jake Smith**

"The young director Jake Smith is one to watch." Terri Paddock

"A moment of artistic genius by director Jake Smith. Mirrors loveable rogue is brought to life in stunning style"

Daily Mirror on Andy Capp The Musical

"Jake Smith's witty production on the tiny Finborough stage gives it plenty of warmth, and a versatile cast frequently double as actor musicians to give the two person band added heft" Mark Shenton, The Stage

"Wonderfully inventive staging by Dale Rooks and Jake Smith" ★★★★★ Five Stars, The Argus on A Christmas Carol

"It is rare to see such a stunning piece of theatre among professional productions nowadays... A charming retelling of Dickens' classic tale" ★★★★★ Five Stars, The Reviews Hub on A Christmas Carol

**PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 2 MARCH 2017 AT 7.30PM and FRIDAY, 3 MARCH 2017 AT 7.30PM**

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# Press Information

**FINBOROUGH | THEATRE**

**PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 1.30PM-2.00PM**

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED  
Box Office 0844 847 1652 Book online at [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

**Tuesday, 28 February – Saturday, 25 March 2017**

Tuesday to Saturday evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday matinees at 3.00pm. Saturday matinees at 3.00pm (from 11 March 2017).

**Prices until 12 March 2017** – Tickets £16, £14 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £14 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £16 all seats. Previews (28 February and 1 March) £12 all seats.

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

£12 tickets for residents of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on Saturday, 4 March 2017 when booked online only.

**Prices from 14 March 2017** – Tickets £18, £16 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £16 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £18 all seats.

Group Bookings – 1 free ticket for every 10 tickets booked.

Performance Length: Approximately two hours with one interval of fifteen minutes.

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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