

FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT **NEW WRITING** | UNIQUE **REDISCOVERIES**
May-August 2019 Season

The first London production in over 120 years

AFTER DARK; OR, A DRAMA OF LONDON LIFE

by Dion Boucicault

Based on *Les Oiseaux de Proie* by Eugène Grangé and Adolphe d'Ennery.

Directed by Phil Willmott.

Presented by Iona Purvis for The Phil Willmott Company in association with the Finborough Theatre.

"It's hardly the place to take a gentleman. The night- birds of London roost there...."

Written in 1868, the year that the Finborough Theatre's building was constructed, The first London production in over 120 years of Dion Boucicault's rip-roaring Victorian melodrama, **After Dark; or, A Drama of London Life**, directed by the multi-award-winning Phil Willmott, opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Wednesday, 12 June 2019 (**Press Nights: Wednesday, 19 June 2019 and Thursday, 20 June 2019 at 7.30pm**).

After losing his wife and daughter to the seductive charm of his fellow army officer Chandos Bellingham, Frank Dalton turns to drink and now lives homeless on the streets of London.

Dalton's only daughter Eliza, having lost her mother in the workhouse and with the wicked Bellingham transported to Australia for a felony, is now married to the unprincipled George Medhurst. When Eliza learns her husband intends to abandon her so that he can claim his dual inheritance of both a baronetcy and a fortune, she decides to attempt suicide by jumping into the River Thames, but is saved by a group of tramps – including her own father.

As the characters search for meaning and happiness whilst trying to escape the mistakes of their past, Captain Gordon Chumley, recognising Dalton as a former army comrade, agrees to help Eliza...only to fall foul of the villainous Bellingham who ties him across the rails in a tunnel of the (newly built) London Underground just as an oncoming train is approaching...

Last seen on stage in London in 1896 and filmed twice in both the UK and Hollywood in 1915, **After Dark; or, A Drama of London Life** is a classic Victorian melodrama by Dion Boucicault, one of the greatest theatrical figures of the 19th century, but is also startlingly contemporary with its thrilling climax on the London Underground, and its sympathetic portrayal of London's homeless community.

Playwright **Dion Boucicault** (1820-1890) was a legendary, writer, actor and theatre manager. Born into a middle-class family in Dublin, he moved to London to study, and his first play, *A Legend of the Devil's Dyke*, opened in Brighton in 1838. He had a string of successful productions in London at Her Majesty's Theatre from 1841-1854. most notably *London Assurance* (1841) and *The Corsican Brothers* (1852). He continued a successful career as actor, playwright and theatre manager in both the United States (1854-1860), and in England (1860-1875). In his later years, he was popular on both sides of the Atlantic, finishing his acting career in London. Some of his other famous works include *The Octoroon* (1859), recently seen in London in a new version by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, *The Coleen Bawn* (1860) and *The Shaughraun* (1874). The *New York Times* hailed him in his obituary as "the most conspicuous English dramatist of the 19th century."

After Dark; or, A Drama of London Life is based on *Les Oiseaux de Proie* (1854) by French authors Eugène Grangé and Adolphe d'Ennery. **Eugène Grangé** (1810-1887), a playwright, librettist and singer, wrote over 350 plays and 300 songs. **Adolphe d'Ennery** (1811-1899) was a playwright, novelist and librettist, and wrote over 200 plays, most notably *The Two Orphans* (1875) which was adapted in 1921 by D.W. Griffith as the film *Orphans of the Storm*. He also wrote librettos for Charles Gounod, Jules Massenet and Adolphe Adam.

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www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

Press Information

Director **Phil Willmott** is a multi-award winning director, artistic director, playwright, composer, librettist, teacher, dramaturg, arts journalist and performer. He trained as an actor at Rose Bruford in the 1980s and was made a fellow of the college in 2012. Alongside his innovative reinterpretations of the classics, musical theatre revivals and new musical development his notable productions of contemporary and recent drama include *F**cking Men* (Finborough Theatre, Kings Head Theatre and West End), *Liza, Liza, Liza* (UK tour for Bill Kenwright), *Billy Liar*, *Athol Fugard's Master Harold...* and *the Boys* (Liverpool Playhouse), *Angels in America* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), *Finishing the Picture*, *Incident at Vichy*, *The American Clock*, *The Notebook of Trigorin*, *Country Magic*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Lower Depths*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Trelawny of the Wells* and *Loyalties* (Finborough Theatre), *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, *Three Sisters* in a version by Tracy Letts, *Heartbreak House* and *The Cherry Orchard* (Union Theatre) and *Encounter*, a new gay love story inspired by *Brief Encounter* (Above the Stag Theatre). As a writer, many of his plays, musicals and adaptations have been published and are regularly produced around the world. The adaptation of *Lysistrata* he wrote with Germaine Greer was presented as part of the Almeida's Greek Season starring Tamsin Grieg, and his adaptation of Gorki's *The Lower Depths* is published by Oberon Books.

The press on Phil Willmott's production of Arthur Miller's Incident at Vichy at the Finborough Theatre

★★★★★ Five stars, Everything Theatre, The Jewish Chronicle, ActDrop

★★★★ Four stars, The Telegraph, Time Out, Reviews Gate, The Reviews Hub, LondonTheatre1, Jewish Renaissance and BritishTheatre.com

"This long-forgotten Miller play receives a powerful fringe revival... This is buried treasure." Dave Calhoun, Time Out

"This excellent revival...The tension, assisted by the Finborough's cramped confines, is stoked to perfection by director Phil Willmott." Dominic Cavendish, The Telegraph

"A marvellous production...Compellingly staged and beautifully acted." Matthew Lunn, BritishTheatre.com

PRESS NIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 19 JUNE 2019 AND THURSDAY, 20 JUNE 2019 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: WEDNESDAY, 12 JUNE 2019 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM

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 is a 5% booking fee.) Lines are open Monday-Saturday 10.00am-6.00pm.

Wednesday, 12 June – Saturday, 6 July 2019

Tuesday to Saturday evenings at 7.30pm. Saturday and Sunday matinees at 3.00pm.

Prices until 23 June 2019 – Tickets £18, £16 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £16 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £18 all seats. Previews (12-18 June) £15 all seats.

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

£14 tickets for residents of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on Saturday, 15 June 2019 when booked online only.

Prices from 25 June 2019 – Tickets £20, £18 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £18 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £20 all seats.

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

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Daniel Lewis on e-mail press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07835 098190**

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