

# FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT **NEW WRITING** | UNIQUE **REDISCOVERIES**

Spring Season – January-April 2017

**Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Victorian classic**

# CASTE

by T. W. Robertson

Directed by Charlotte Peters.

Directed by Charlotte Peters. Designed by Georgia de Grey. Lighting by Robbie Butler. Original music and sound design by Theo Holloway. Presented by Project One Theatre Company in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Paul Bradley. Neil Chinneck. Rebecca Collingwood. Isabella Marshall. Duncan Moore. Susan Penhaligon. Ben Starr.

"My dear fellow, nobody's a mistake.  
He don't exist.  
Nobody's nobody.  
Everybody's somebody."

In a new production commissioned by the Finborough Theatre to mark the 150th anniversary of T. W. Robertson's 1867 comedy – and the first UK production in over 20 years – **Caste** plays at the Finborough Theatre for nine Sunday and Monday evenings and Tuesday matinees from Sunday, 2 April 2017 (**Press Night: Monday, 3 April 2017 at 7.30pm**).

1867. George D'Alroy is a soldier and the son of French nobility. Esther Eccles is a beautiful ballet dancer from a poor family. When the two fall in love, two very different families are brought together.

After George leaves to serve in India, Esther must deal with a drunken father, a sister with a fierce temper and a terrifying mother in law. Not knowing whether she will ever see her love again, Esther must confront the class prejudices of Victorian England, whilst coping with the chaos created by her increasingly exasperating family members...

Widely considered both as T. W. Robertson's masterpiece and a ground-breaking milestone in British theatre, *Caste* was described by George Bernard Shaw as "epoch making", whilst W. S. Gilbert said it "pointed the way for a whole new movement", and when William Archer and Harley Granville Barker planned the programme for their proposed National Theatre, they were agreed that the mid-Victorian period should be "inevitably represented by its one masterpiece, *Caste*."

Playwright **T.W. Robertson** (1829-1871) was a theatrical revolutionary. His works include *Society* (1865), *Ours* (1866) which was revived at the Finborough Theatre in 2007 for the first time in over a century, *Play* (1868), *Progress* (1869), *School* (1869), *Birth* (1870), *M.P.* (1870) and *War* (1871). Robertson was the first playwright to treat contemporary British subjects in realistic settings, and also directed his own work. Many of his most successful works were produced for the management team of Squire Bancroft and his wife Marie – buried just minutes from the Finborough Theatre in Brompton Cemetery – who were instrumental in creating the West End theatre that we know today with their innovations in the fields of stage design, theatre decoration, ensemble acting and long runs of single plays, with matinee performances. Robertson was a huge influence on later theatre makers including Arthur Pinero, who based the character of Tom Wrench in *Trelawny of the 'Wells'* on Robertson; and W.S. Gilbert, who said that "I look upon stage management [i.e. theatre direction], as now understood, as having been absolutely invented by him."

Director **Charlotte Peters** is currently Resident Director on *An Inspector Calls* in the West End, and will shortly be Resident Director on the National Tour of *War Horse* (National Theatre). Direction includes *By My Strength*, *Jog On* (Frederick's Place Theatre), *Constellations* (Bread and Roses Theatre), *Dram* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *Bark* (53two), *How To Make Money From Art* (Phoenix Artist Club), *Fame* (Tallink Silja, Scandinavia), *Interval* (Camden People's Theatre), *And The Little One Said...* (Cock Tavern) and *Art and What The Butler Saw* (Edinburgh Festival). Charlotte has worked as Assistant Director with Steve Marmion on *Only The Brave* (Soho Theatre).

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[www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk) Artistic Director Neil McPherson

# Press Information

and Wales Millennium Centre) and I'm Not Here Right Now (Soho Theatre and Edinburgh Festival), and for Steven Blakeley on Aladdin and Jack and the Beanstalk (Theatre Royal Windsor). As Associate Director, she has worked with Alastair Whatley on Birdsong and The Private Ear / The Public Eye (National Tour) and Iqbal Khan on The Importance of Being Earnest – The Musical (Theatre Royal Windsor).

## The Cast

### **Paul Bradley** | Eccles

Theatre includes Journey's End (Comedy Theatre), Noises Off (Piccadilly Theatre), The Relapse (National Theatre) The Threesome (Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith), A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Pirates Of Penzance and Twelfth Night (Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park), Much Ado About Nothing, Bulldog Drummond, Around The World in 80 Days (Nuffield Theatre, Southampton), Charley's Aunt (York Theatre Royal), Romeo and Juliet (The Young Vic), Dead Sheep (UK Tour) as well as repertory seasons at Manchester University and Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester.

Film includes playing Yehuda Zsiskind in Multi Academy Award and BAFTA winning film, The Pianist.

Television includes playing Professor Elliot Hope for ten years in Holby City and Nigel Bates in EastEnders for six, Bradley (his own childrens' TV show), Bottom, Smith and Jones, Birth Marriages and Deaths, The Kate Robbins Show, Stop That Laughing At The Back, The Young Ones, Murder Most Horrid, Boon, Comic Strip and C.U Byrne.

Paul sings and plays guitar and sellotape in the twenty-five year old band the hKippers.

### **Neil Chinneck** | Sam Gerridge

Trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.

Theatre includes Handbagged (Vaudeville Theatre), A Clockwork Orange (Soho Theatre and International Tour), Spitting Image (King's Head Theatre), The Rules (Theatre503 and Edinburgh Festival), A Killing in Kintyre (Arcola Theatre), The Cow Play (Rosemary Branch Theatre), Titus Andronicus (Edinburgh Festival), More Light (Rose Playhouse, Bankside) and Oliver Twist (Lion and Unicorn Theatre).

Film includes Putting on the Dish.

Television includes Murder Maps.

### **Rebecca Collingwood** | Polly Eccles

Trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes Much Ado About Nothing and Love's Labour's Lost (Royal Shakespeare Company, Chichester Festival Theatre and Theatre Royal Haymarket) and Widowers' Houses (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond).

### **Isabella Marshall** | Esther Eccles

Trained at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes Hamlet, All's Well That Ends Well and Cinderella: A Fairytale (The Tobacco Factory, Bristol), Peter Pan, Dancing at Lughnasa, She Stoops To Conquer, An Inspector Calls and Vincent In Brixton (Theatre By The Lake, Keswick) and Flowers of the Field (White Bear Theatre).

Television includes Grantchester.

### **Duncan Moore** | George d'Alroy

Trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.

Theatre includes The Nine O'Clock Service and The Green Quilt (Theatre503), Inside Out Festival (The Curve, Leicester), Political Pageantry (Old Red Lion Theatre) and A Yorkshire Tragedy (White Bear Theatre).

### **Susan Penhaligon** | Marquise de St.Maur

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include Martine and Hindle Wakes.

Trained at Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes The Real Thing (Strand Theatre), Three Sisters (Albery Theatre), The Mysterious Mr Love and The Maintenance Man (Harold Pinter Theatre), Dangerous Corner (Whitehall Theatre and National Tour), Of Mice and Men (Mermaid Theatre), Rehearsal for Murder, And Then There Were None, All Creatures Great And Small, Having a Ball, Bedroom Farce, The Constant Wife, Mrs Warren's Profession, Death Trap, Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, Agatha Christie's Verdict and The Madness of George III (National Tours), The Complacent Lover, A Doll's House, Time and the Conways, The Lower Depths and The Cherry Orchard (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester), Broken Glass (West Yorkshire Playhouse), Romeo and Juliet (Jermyn Street Theatre) and Misery (King's Head Theatre).

Film includes Top Dog, The Uncanny, The Confessional, The Land that Time Forgot, No Sex Please We're British, Leopard in the Snow, Nasty Habits, Patrick, Soldier of the Queen, Private Road, Citizen Versus Kane and Say You Love Me.

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Television includes *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Tales of the Unexpected*, *Bergerac*, *Remington Steele*, *Casualty*, *Wycliffe*, *Doctors* and *Doctor Who*. Susan played Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew* for the BBC's Shakespeare season, and Prue in *A Bouquet of Barbed Wire*. Other leading parts were in Fay Weldon's *Heart of the Country* and Stan Barstow's *A Kind of Loving*. She played Lucy in *Dracula* for the BBC and Judi Dench's sister Helen in four series of the award winning sitcom *A Fine Romance*. She also played the regular role of Jean Hope in *Emmerdale*.  
Writing includes a first novel, *For the Love of Angel*.

## **Ben Starr** | Captain Hawtree

Trained at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes *Stop!* (Trafalgar Studios) and *Yellow Face* (Park Theatre and National Theatre).

Television includes *Jamestown*, *Dickensian*, *Casualty*, *The Musketeers* and *Father Brown*.

Film includes *Pursuit* and *Survivor*.

## **The press on the Finborough Theatre's production of T.W. Robertson's Ours**

★★★★ Four Stars, *Time Out* and *Time Out Critics' Choice*

"More than an object of archaeological interest...A thoroughly entertaining, gripping play." Mark Ravenhill, *Night Waves*, Radio 3

"A little gem of Victorian theatre...Wonderfully witty dialogue." Sandra Giorgetti, *British Theatre Guide*

"Robertson set the pattern for the 'modern' play. This is the template for naturalistic British theatre before the 'in-yr-face' brigade...I am amazed at just how modern it seems." Howard Loxton, *Rogues and Vagabonds*

"Revolutionary realism...Like most mid-Victorian dramatists, Robertson is a neglected figure today. Judging by *Ours*, that's a pity." Robert Shore, *Time Out*

## **The press on director Charlotte Peters**

"Through the direction of Peters...we're privy to a piece of compelling theatre...this one-woman show has all the ingredients of an irresistible tale" ★★★★★ Five Stars, *Female Arts on By My Strength*.

"So lively and engaging that this 80-minute play seems soon over, though it has packed a lot in... a fluid production that constantly refocuses attention and always sustains interest." *British Theatre Guide on By My Strength*

"Wonderfully snappy, pacy scenes – a joy to watch...The direction and production here are top class" ★★★★★ Four Stars, *Fringe Review on And The Little One Said...*

"A resonating version...The laughs come thick and fast." ★★★★★ Four Stars, *British Theatre Guide on Art*

"Expertly directed...with a masterful command." ★★★★★ Four Stars, *Three Weeks on Art*

## **PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 3 APRIL 2017 AT 7.30PM**

## **PHOTOCALL: MONDAY, 3 APRIL 2017 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](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

## **Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18 April 2017**

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

Tickets £18, £16 concessions. (Group Bookings – 1 free ticket for every 10 tickets booked.)

Performance Length: Approximately 90 minutes with no interval.

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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