

The Finborough Theatre is fully heated and air conditioned

FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

March to June Season 2013

Lightbox Productions in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre presents
The first London production in over 50 years of the classic Ulster play

OVER THE BRIDGE

by Sam Thompson

Directed by Emma Faulkner. Designed by Philip Lindlay. Lighting by Elliott Griggs.

Costume Design by Emily Stuart. Sound by Tom Meehan.

Cast: Caolan Byrne. Robert Calvert. Nick Danan. Drew Dillon. Caitriona Hinds. Lawrence McGrandles Jnr. Melanie McHugh. Amy Molloy. Dan Mullane. Kevin Murphy. Michael Neilson. Sean O'Callaghan. Chris Robinson

"I sometimes compare people with a story my father used to tell me when I was a wee girl. About how they built a boat in the shipyard, how they started from her keel plate and built her up, riveting and welding her plates to a sound structure... And when she was finished, she'd sail down Belfast Lough and into the ocean to be lashed and buffeted by storms. But dad always said that he could be sure of one thing, she'd come through it all in one piece. Isn't it a pity people couldn't be like that?"

The first GB production in over fifty years of the classic Ulster sectarian drama, *Over The Bridge* by Sam Thompson, opens at the Finborough Theatre for a limited run of nine Sunday and Monday evening and Tuesday matinee performances from Sunday, 28 April 2013 (**Press Night: Monday, 29 April 2013 at 7.30pm**).

Set in the Belfast Shipyard of the 1950s and against the backdrop of the IRA's Border Campaign, Sam Thompson's seminal 1960 play is a powerful exposé of Ulster's sectarian bigotry and violence before the eruption of the Troubles.

Peter O'Boyle, a Catholic shipyard worker, has become the target of a vicious whispering campaign. Veteran Trade Unionist Davy Mitchell, a Protestant who has spent his life fighting for others' right to work, is keen that the Union does what it can to protect him. As tensions mount and the union begins to split on sectarian lines, mob rule starts to take over...

First staged in Belfast in 1960, the play was produced against a backdrop of controversy when the Ulster Group Theatre withdrew it for being a play that 'would give rise to sectarianism of an extreme nature'. Its original production, directed by James Ellis, and starring J. G. Devlin, Joseph Tomelty and Harry Towb, played to an audience of 42,000 people during the six-week run, far greater than had attended any play in Belfast previously. It was seen on tour in Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Brighton and the West End, and was adapted for both radio and television.

Described by The Irish Times as "a brickbat hurled violently against bigotry", this Northern Irish classic continues to provoke uncomfortable questions about unity, tolerance and the rules we live by today.

Playwright **Sam Thompson** (1916-1965) was a seminal Northern Irish playwright, best known for his first play, *Over the Bridge* (1957). The play was first staged in Belfast in 1960, in the troubled aftermath of the Ulster Group Theatre's decision to withdraw it for production. The play went on to have runs in Dublin, Brighton and London. Thompson's other plays include *The Evangelist* (1961) and the television play, *Cemented with Love* (1964). A draft of a further play, *The Masquerade*, set in London, was completed just before his death. Thompson wrote several plays for radio which were broadcast by the BBC including *Brush in Hand* (1956), *Tommy Baxter*, *Shop Steward* (1957), *The General Foreman* (1958), *The Long Back Street* (1959), *The Fairmans: Life in a Belfast Working Family* (1960-1). Thompson spent most of his working life as a painter in the Belfast shipyards, starting aged 14 at Harland and Wolff, and was an active trade unionist all of his life. He also ran for the Northern Ireland Labour Party in the 1964 General Election.

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439 e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk
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Press Information

Director **Emma Faulkner** received the 2010 Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme bursary in association with The Young Vic. Her directing includes London 2012: Glasgow (Theatre Uncut at the Bussey Building), Christmas The Musical (Battersea Mess and Music Hall), The Scared Ritual of the Nymphs of Natterjack, part of Bush Bazaar (Bush Theatre), Different is Dangerous (Tamasha), After the End (Dundee Rep and Pleasance, Edinburgh), The Miracle (Dundee Rep), Forfeit, What Love Is (Óran Mór and Dundee Rep), The Ruffian on the Stair, Making Good, Absolute Return (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond) and Knives in Hens (St Marys at BAC). Associate Direction includes Sunshine on Leith (National Tour). As Assistant Director, she has assisted Alan Ayckbourn on Taking Steps and other credits include Sleeping Beauty; A Doll's House (Dundee Rep), Alison's House, Spring Shakespeare, The Lady or the Tiger and The Ring of Truth (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond). She is also a script reader for the National Theatre of Scotland and Tinderbox.

The Press on director Emma Faulkner

"Urgent ... and so well performed that it should not be missed" ★★★★★ Five Stars, WhatsOnStage on After the End
"Dennis Kelly's script is realized skillfully here ... an absorbing and sharply delivered exploration of human behaviour pushed to extremes" ★★★★★ Four Stars, The Independent on After the End
"A fine production" ★★★★★ Four Stars, The Scotsman on After the End
"A tense intriguing debate ... immaculately performed" ★★★★★ Four Stars, The Scotsman on Forfeit
"A pleasure... Faulkner has polished it up nicely, too...sustaining the serio-comic mood right up to the hilariously blithe, cynical ending." The Times on The Ruffian on the Stair
"Worth crossing London to see.. played with such finesse" British Theatre Guide on The Ruffian on the Stair

Cultural commentators on Over The Bridge and playwright Sam Thompson

"At last the unclean spirit of sectarianism had been dragged before the floodlights and examined with passion, pity and corrosive laughter" Sam Hanna Bell in Causeway: The Arts in Ulster
"A landmark in the cultural history of Northern Ireland and ... prophetic of the Troubles to follow;" James McAleavey in Irish Playwrights, 1880-1995: A Research and Production Sourcebook
"A powerful indictment of the failure of labour politics against religious fundamentalism." Lance Pettitt in Screening Ireland: Film and Television Representation
"Sam Thompson changed the face of Ulster theatre and influenced later playwrights...It is a mark of Sam Thompson's importance to Northern Irish drama that everything he wrote caused frissons of alarm among the sensitive members of our ruling class." John Keyes

PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2013 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: By arrangement. Please email admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office 0844 847 1652 Book online at www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, 28, 29, 30 April, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13 14 May 2013

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

Tickets £14, £10 concessions.

Performance length: approximately two hours.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Neil McPherson on e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07977 173135**

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

THE CAST

Caolan Byrne | Archie

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes The Cherry Orchard (Acting Shakespeare Company), King Lear (Royal Shakespeare Company and West End), Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet (Royal Shakespeare Company), A Tale For Winter (National Tour), The Flags (Hull Truck Theatre), The Playboy Of The Western World (Nuffield Theatre, Southampton), The Tempest, Love Labour's Lost (Guildford Shakespeare Company), Scenes From The Enquiry (The Mac, Belfast) and The Magic (Theatre 503).

Film includes The Comedian, Mr Nice, Round Ireland With A Fridge, Swansong: The Occi Byrne Story, Titanic Town and This Is The Sea.

Television includes An Innocent Abroad, Titanic - Blood and Steel and The Message.

Robert Calvert | Davy

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Theatre includes Thank You For Not Thinking Outside The Box (Landor Theatre), Sabbath (Duke's Playhouse, Lancaster & Tour), The Wind In The Willows (Library Theatre at The Lowry, Manchester), Comus (London Handel Festival), What The Butler Saw, Shining City, Bus Stop (Theatre by the Lake, Keswick), The Lady In The Van (Salisbury Playhouse), Animal Farm (West Yorkshire Playhouse), London Assurance (Watermill Theatre, Newbury and Tour), The Cherry Orchard, Amadeus, Teeth 'n' Smiles (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), Blue Remembered Hills (Belgrade Theatre, Coventry), Of Mice And Men, Family Voices, A Midsummer Night's Dream (Mercury Theatre, Colchester), Dealer's Choice (New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme), Waiting for Godot (National Tour), Noises Off, The Winter's Tale, Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, The Rise & Fall of Arturo Ui, A Marginal Affair (Library Theatre, Manchester), Troilus and Cressida (Royal Shakespeare Company) and The Memory Of Water (English Theatre, Vienna).

Film includes Titanic Town.

Television includes EastEnders, Hollyoaks, Emmerdale, Good Man Yer Da!, Titanic Town, The Bill, Coronation Street, Always and Everyone, Casualty, Brookside, The Harringham Harker and Family.

Nick Danan | Billy

Theatre includes The Titanic Boys (Grand Opera House, Belfast), Holding Hands At Passchendaele (White Bear Theatre), Macbeth (Winner Best Actor Award- Buxton Festival), The Tempest, A Midsummer Night's Dream (Butterfly Theatre) The Proposal (C Company and The King's Head Theatre), Antony and Cleopatra (Shakespeare's Globe), From Both Hips (Old Red Lion Theatre), The Shadow Of A Gunman (Tricycle Theatre), The Quare Fellow (Oxford Stage Company), Lieutenant Of Inishmore (Royal Shakespeare Company), This Lime Tree Bower (Belgrade Theatre, Coventry), One Last White Horse (Union Theatre), Juno and The Paycock (Haymarket Theatre, Leicester) and Gym and Tonic (Hull Truck).

Television includes The Challenge, The Authentick and Ironical Historie of Henry the Fifthe and Safe.

Drew Dillon | Ephraim

Trained at Mountview Academy Of Theatre Arts.

Theatre includes The Comedy Of Errors (Theatre At The Mill), The Playboy Of The Western World (The Old Vic), The Beauty Queen of Leenane (Etcetera Theatre), The Tale of The Beauty and The Tail of The Beast (Lyric Theatre, Belfast) and Elegies for Angels, Punks & Raging Queens (Black Box, Belfast)

Film includes The Hollow Crown: Henry IV.

Television includes Hollyoaks and Doctors

Recordings include the Northern Irish Cast Recording of Elegies for Angels, Punks & Raging Queens.

Caitriona Hinds | Nellie

Theatre includes Anna, Women on the Verge of HRT (Derby Live), Playing For Time, Dancing At Lughnasa (Salisbury Playhouse), Dancing At Lughnasa, Big Maggie (New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme), The Misanthrope (Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds), Top Girls (Drum Theatre, Plymouth, and Salisbury Playhouse), A Moving Destiny (Yew Theatre Company), The School On The Green (Big Telly Theatre Company), All My Sons and Put Out That Light (Lyric Theatre, Belfast).

Film includes A Further Gesture, Titanic Town and Once Again.

Television includes Moving On.

Radio includes Daisy The Cow Who Talked, Passage To More Than India and The World Will Thank Me.

Lawrence McGrandles Jnr | Mob Leader

At The Finborough Theatre, Lawrence appeared in Men Without Shadows (2007).

Trained at Drama Centre London.

Theatre includes The Accomplice (Menier Chocolate Factory), The Cure At Troy (Cockpit Theatre and Greece tour), The Bacchae (Cockpit Theatre and Cyprus tour), Card Index (BAC), The Merchant Of Venice, Treasure Island (Palace

Theatre, Westcliffe), Amadeus (The Old Vic) and Il Turco In Italia (The Newcastle Opera House).

Television includes Poirot, Dreamteam, EastEnders, Road To Riches and Secrets Of The Great Plague.

Melanie McHugh | Martha

Trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes Durang/Durang (Jermyn Street Theatre), Twelfth Night (Creation Theatre Company, Oxford), Shining City (Greenwich Theatre and National Tour), Dancing At Lughnasa (New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme), Pedro The Great Pretender, Tamar's Revenge, The Dog in the Manger (Royal Shakespeare Company at the Swan Theatre), The Art

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of Success (Arcola Theatre), The Playboy of the Western World, Peer Gynt, Romeo And Juliet (National Theatre), Silas Marner (Tivoli Theatre, Dublin), Blood Wedding (Northern Stage, Newcastle), Playgirl, Rumpelstiltskin (Abbey Theatre, Dublin), The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs, Summerhouse (Druid Theatre, Galway), The Illusion (Charabanc Theatre Company, Belfast), The Lament for Arthur Cleary (7:84 Theatre, Scotland) and Translations (Chandler Theatre, Glasgow) Radio includes Burnt Bolognaise, Brush Up Your Shakespeare and Never Say Die. Writing includes three short plays, Bungalow, Clocked and Blushing, performed at the Landor Theatre. Voiceover includes audiobooks for Audible.co.uk and the RNIB.

Amy Molloy | Marian

Trained at Mountview Academy Of Theatre Arts.

Theatre includes My Cousin Rachel (Gate Theatre, Dublin), Big Maggie (Druid Theatre, Galway), Belfast Girls (King's Head Theatre), October, Building Site (Arcola Theatre), John Gabriel Borkman (B.A.M Harvey Theatre, New York, and Abbey Theatre, Dublin), The Lieutenant Of Inishmore (The Curve, Leicester), Black Milk (Prime Cut Productions), Kitty And Damnation (Lion and Unicorn Theatre), The Surveyor (New End Theatre, Hampstead), Once A Catholic (Upstairs at the Gatehouse), The Seagull (Chelsea Theatre) and 'Come On Over' (Old Vic New Voices at Tristan Bates Theatre). Film includes The Sea and Black Ice.

Dan Mullane | Fox

Trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre includes The Memory of Water (Lion and Unicorn Theatre), A Skull in Connemara, Macbeth, Ajax (Riverside Studios), Character (Decadent Theatre), The Playboy Of The Western World, Brothers Of The Brush (Nuffield Theatre, Southampton), Waiting For Godot (The Godot Company), Art (Everyman Palace Theatre, Cork), Phaedra's Love (Bristol Old Vic), The Weir (Octagon Theatre, Bolton), The Rivals (Northcott Theatre, Exeter), Someone Who'll Watch Over Me (Clwyd Theatr, Cymru), Comedians (Belgrade Theatre, Coventry), Medea (Almeida Theatre, West End and Broadway), The Terrible Voice of Satan, Three Sisters (Royal Court Theatre) and Juno and the Paycock (Contact Theatre, Manchester).

Film includes Tonto Woman and Woody Allen's Mighty Aphrodite.

Television includes Joey Musgrove in Brookside and Three Miles Up.

Kevin Murphy | Peter

Trained at LAMDA.

Theatre includes Juno and the Paycock (National Theatre and the Abbey Theatre, Dublin) The Lieutenant of Inishmore (The Curve, Leicester) Much Ado About Nothing (Creation Theatre Company), True West (English Theatre Company, Essen), Dancing at Lughnasa (Linbury Studio at LAMDA), Open House (Kensal House with Riverside Studios and Spid Theatre Company), Faustus (Etcetera Theatre), Extremities and This Lime Tree Bower (Dublin).

Other work includes rehearsed readings for the National Theatre Studio, Hampstead Theatre, The Gate, The Curve, Leicester, and for Steven Berkoff.

Television includes Doctors, The Whistleblower, The Bill, The Year London Blew Up and The Long Walk.

Radio includes The Burial at Thebes, Space 1889 and Red Devils.

Michael Neilson | George

Theatre includes The Rat Pack Live from Las Vegas (Strand Theatre and Savoy Theatres), South Pacific (Prince of Wales Theatre), The 1988 Royal Command Performance (Victoria Palace Theatre), Blood Brothers (Phoenix Theatre), The Fields of Ambrosia (Aldwych Theatre), Oliver! (London Palladium), The Erpingham Camp, Billy's Last Stand, The Music Man (Theatre Royal Plymouth), Sexual Perversity in Chicago (Grand Theatre, Swansea), Another Country (Haymarket Theatre, Basingstoke), The Provok'd Wife (Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich), The Ruffian on the Stair, The Good and Faithful Servant (Belgrade Theatre, Coventry), Guys and Dolls, Baby (Library Theatre, Manchester), The Wind in the Willows (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), Privates on Parade (Coliseum Theatre, Oldham), Carousel (Westcliff Palace Theatre), Annie (Civic Theatre, Guildford), The Sound of Music (White Rock Theatre, Hastings), What Now Little Man (Greenwich Theatre), Calling Your Name (Notting Hill Courtyard Theatre), The Rocky Horror Show (National Tour), Aspects of Love (Gordon Craig Theatre, Stevenage) and Singin' in the Rain (National Tour).

Film includes Distant Fear and Dope Opera.

Television includes The Bill, Lipstick on your Collar, True Crimes and Grange Hill.

Voiceover includes Mad about Mambo, Old New Borrowed Blue, Jason and the Argonauts and Snatch.

Sean O'Callaghan | Rabbie

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Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes *The Seafarer* (Perth Theatre and the Lyric Theatre, Belfast), *Doing The Idiots* (National Theatre Studio), *The Beasts* (Theatre 503), *Shining City* (Derby Playhouse), *The Crucible*, *Popcorn* (Octagon Theatre, Bolton), *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Lonesome West*, *The Beauty Queen Of Leenane*, *The Plough And The Stars*, *The Bright and Bold Design*, *Twelfth Night* (New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme), *Noises Off* (Coliseum Theatre, Oldham), *Ursula, Gertrude*, *Wounds To The Face* *13 Objects*, *Ecstatic Bible* (The Wrestling School), *The Bells* (Northern Broadsides), *The Playboy Of The Western World* (Liverpool Playhouse), *The Daughter*, *Warcrime* (The Wedding Collective), *Tender* (Hampstead Theatre), *Henry V*, *Richard II*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Son Of Man*, *Zenobia*, *The Storm*, *After Easter* and *Pentecost* (Royal Shakespeare Company).

Film includes *Maria Graham*, *Shaftesbury Players* (Best Actor at the Granada Film Festival), *Bigga Than Ben* and *A Brand From The Burning*.

Television includes *Neverwhere*, *Supply And Demand*, *Casualty*, *Medics* and *The Last Romantics*.

Chris Robinson | Baxter

Theatre includes *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hush* (Theatre at the Mill, Newtownabbey), *Pvt Wars* (Grand Opera House, Belfast), *Forget Turkey*, *Brendan At The Chelsea* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast), *Diary of a Madman*, *Pick N Mix* (The MAC, Belfast), *The Miniaturists* (Arcola Theatre), *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, (Rawlife), *Loot* (Belfast Theatre Company), *Robin Hood* (The Waterfront, Belfast), *Have A Nice Life* (Pleasance London) and *Murder In The Cathedral* (Ulster Theatre Company).

Film includes *Breakfast on Pluto*.

Television includes *Wee Three Cranes*, *City Hall*, *Jason Byrne Hates...* and *The Day Mountbatten Died*.

Radio includes *How to Cope*, *Romantics and Revolutionaries* and *Don't Make Me Laugh*.

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Over Bridge, also known as Telford's Bridge, is a single span stone arch bridge spanning the canalised West Channel of the River Severn near Gloucester. It links Over to Alney Island. Although there was a crossing at Over recorded in the Domesday Book, this famous bridge was built by Thomas Telford between 1825 and 1828, to carry traffic east-west. It was opened in 1830 and remained in use for traffic until 1974. Until the Severn Bridge was built in the 1960s this was the lowest point downstream that