

**FINBOROUGH | THEATRE**

VIBRANT **NEW WRITING** | UNIQUE **REDISCOVERIES**  
Summer Season – July–September 2017

The European premiere

# DOLPHINS AND SHARKS

by James Anthony Tyler.

Directed by Lydia Parker. Designed by Anna Driftmier.

Presented by Over Here Theatre Company in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

"My first supervisor was a African girl named Ann, and she had the nerve to tell me that I don't have a right to call myself African American. I had to tell that heffa just because your people sold my people doesn't mean I don't got African roots."

The European premiere from new African-American playwright James Anthony Tyler, **Dolphins and Sharks** opens at the Finborough Theatre for a three week limited season on Tuesday, 12 September 2017 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 14 September and Friday, 15 September 2017 at 7.30pm**).

Yusuf needs a break – his philosophy degree from NYU isn't opening any doors, but his new job would help him pay his overdue rent; Xiomara doesn't want to settle for the marriage scenario her Dominican mother keeps pushing on her; and Isabel needs her job to put three kids through school, but still manages to keep her sense of humour.

All three are employees of Harlem Office, New York, a neighbourhood copy shop where promotions are rare, raises are even rarer, and racism is often on display.

But when one staff member is given the chance to move up to manager, friendships are tested and loyalty turns out to be less valuable than cold hard cash. Soon cutbacks and office politics have everyone fighting to keep their jobs and their sanity...

A searing new comedy about clocking in, clocking out and rising up.

**Dolphins and Sharks** receives its European premiere following its reading as a part of Vibrant 2016 – A Festival of Finborough Playwrights. It won the 2015 Fire This Time Festival in New York City, was developed through staged readings and workshop performances as part of Labyrinth's 2015 Up Next and 2016 Barn Reading Series and recently enjoyed a successful run at Labyrinth Theater, New York City. It was also a finalist for the 2016 O'Neill Playwrights Conference.

Playwright **James Anthony Tyler** is an award-winning playwright who holds a MFA in Film from Howard University and a MFA in Dramatic Writing from New York University. His work has been presented by OBIE Award-winning playwright Israel Horovitz at the Cherry Lane Theatre (Hand Held Out) and La MaMa Theatre (Some Old Black Man), all in New York City. Some Old Black Man was also produced at the Berkshire Playwrights Lab. His play The Drop Off was featured as part of The Classical Theatre of Harlem's Playwrights Playground and their Future Classics Series. You're Sitting In The Dark and hop tha A have been recent semi-finalists for the O'Neill Playwrights Conference. James is one of the first recipients of the 2015 First Round Fellowship presented by Open Bar Theatricals, and his honours include being selected by the OBIE award-winning '48 Hours in Harlem' Festival, the Paul Robeson Award, and a John Golden Award for Excellence in Playwriting from NYU. He is a proud member of Harlem's Emerging Black Playwrights Group and a 2014-2015 Dramatists Guild Fellow. Recently, he was awarded The Playwrights Center's Many Voices Fellowship, and accepted to the 2016 Ars Nova Play Group and The Juilliard School's Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program.

Director **Lydia Parker** is Artistic Director of Over Here Theatre Company which produced ObamAmerica, a festival of new American writing at Theatre503 in 2014 and Our American Cousin at the Finborough Theatre in 2015. Originally from New York, Lydia has written and directed A Better Pronoun (Old Red Lion Theatre), directed Love, Sex and Apps (Bread and Roses Theatre), Rebranding Britain, Witch Hunt, Ice Cream, We Really Should Do Something and Love (all at Southwark Playhouse), A Big Fridge (Hen and Chickens Theatre and the Park Theatre), Something There That's Missing

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

# Press Information

(Theatre503 and Edinburgh Festival), Skinhead (Brockley Jack Studio) and Our Children Will Be Next (Theatre503). She is also an Associate Director of new writing company, Little Pieces of Gold. For three years, Lydia produced The American Actors UK Playreading Festival of New American Work (Tristan Bates Theatre). Before moving to London, Lydia founded an English language theatre in Puerto Rico which produced Steve Martin's Picasso at the Lapin Agile.

## **The press on playwright James Anthony Tyler**

"A brilliant new play...Encapsulating the cruelty of 21st-century capitalism in one retail outpost, Tyler conveys a gut-level understanding of this world in which more and more is expected for less and less." Theatermania

"The play is a fiercely comic, provocative, and, at times, harrowing work that explores with great insight the tense socio-economic and racially charged landscape." Talkin Broadway

"It is going to be my best show of 2017. I cannot imagine how another show is going to be able to top the experience ...This seminal work blew me right out of my skin...Chilling and uncompromising...This play is a working-class anthem that needs to be sung everywhere." New York Theater Guide

"A Harlem copy shop becomes the crucible for surging tensions over race, class, and economic opportunity, offering humane insight into historical forces of vast proportions." The Village Voice

"A stunning new play...In a superb examination of the intersections between race and socioeconomic class, playwright James Anthony Tyler's work opens up the internal workings of a customer service job, questioning the validity of a system in which it is impossible for any of the players to win. Tyler crafts nuanced characters supported by sharp dialogue." Theater Buddy

"Tyler has an exciting new voice in the theatre" Front Row Center

## **The press on director Lydia Parker**

"Over Here Theatre Company has much to say and a bedrock of talent from which to do so compellingly" Time Out on American Dream/Gringo

"This production is filled with a wonderful variety of wit and humour, clever concepts and poignancy" Everything Theatre on Our Children Will Be Next

"These Americans...really succeed in showing us Brits the standards that are achievable at Fringe level. Parker's writing is snappy, fast moving, funny and incisive and the acting is of the highest level." Theatreworld on American Dream/Gringo

"A bitter-sweet double-bill – an impressive debut for the material, and the company." Jane Hutchinson, WhatsOnStage on American Dream/Gringo

**PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2017 AND FRIDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 7.30PM**

**PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 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, 12 September – Saturday, 30 September 2017**

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

**Prices until 17 September 2017** – Tickets £16, £14 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £14 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £16 all seats. Previews (12 and 13 September) £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, 16 September 2017 when booked online only.

**Prices from 19 September 2017** – Tickets £18, £16 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £16 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £18 all seats.

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