The London Premiere

A SUBJECT OF SCANDAL AND CONCERN

by John Osborne.

Directed by Jimmy Walters.


"I have injured no man’s reputation, taken no man’s property, attacked no man’s person, violated no oath, taught no immorality. I was asked a question and answered it openly."

In a production commissioned by the Finborough Theatre, the London premiere – and the first production in over 40 years – of John Osborne’s A Subject Of Scandal And Concern will run at the Finborough Theatre, playing nine Sunday and Monday evenings and Tuesday matinees from Sunday, 22 May 2016 (Press Night: Monday, 23 May 2016 at 7.30pm)

Cheltenham, 1842. George Jacob Holyoake is a poor young teacher, making his way from Birmingham to Bristol to visit a friend who has been imprisoned for publishing a journal that criticises the establishment. When he makes a stop in Cheltenham to address a lecture, his words and his overwhelming commitment to speaking the truth will change his life forever.

Arrested and tried for blasphemy, and separated from his starving wife and child, Holyoake is faced with the choice of conforming to the establishment or staying true to his beliefs during in a time of injustice and intolerance.

Based on the true story of the last man to stand trial for blasphemy in England, A Subject Of Scandal And Concern was originally written for television in 1960 starring Richard Burton and Rachel Roberts, and directed by Tony Richardson, and was first seen onstage in Nottingham in the early 1960s. This production marks the first theatrical staging of the play in over 40 years and its long overdue London premiere.

Playwright John Osborne was born in Fulham in 1929. His best known works include Look Back in Anger (celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2016), The Entertainer, Luther, Inadmissible Evidence, West of Suez, A Sense of Detachment, Watch It Come Down, A Patriot For Me and The Hotel In Amsterdam, his screenplay for the film Tom Jones which won him an Oscar, and his autobiographies A Better Class of Person and Almost A Gentleman. Osborne died in 1994.

Director Jimmy Walters’ previous productions include A Naughty Night With Noël Coward (Old Red Lion Theatre), Julius Caesar (Saatchi Gallery and Chelsea Theatre), Improbable Fiction (Courtyard Theatre), Hamlet (United Arab Emirates Tour and Network Theatre), I the Jury (Hen and Chickens Theatre), Breaded Butler (Troubadour) and Dear Ray (Edinburgh Festival). Assistant Direction includes Young Shakespeare Company tours of Twelfth Night and Romeo and Juliet (Bloomsbury Theatre), Othello (Riverside Studios) and Knock Yourself Out (Courtyard Theatre).

The cast is:

Ralph Birtwell | Bubb/Mason/Erskine/Jailer
Trained at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Theatre includes Macbeth (National Tour for Tara Arts), The Man of Mode, Market Boy and The Royal Hunt of the Sun (National Theatre), Aladdin and Sleeping Beauty (Theatre Royal Stratford East), East Is East (Haymarket Theatre,

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone 020 7244 7439 e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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An exceptionally good play” Maurice Richardson, The Observer

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The press on playwright John Osborne
“John Osborne liberated theatrical language” Michael Billington, The Guardian
“The man who turned anger into art” BBC
“John Osborne spoke out in a vein of ebullient, free-wheeling rancour that betokened the arrival of something new in the theatre – a sophisticated, articulate lower-class.” Kenneth Tynan, Tynan Right And Left
“Osborne...changed the course of British theatre and earned him a reputation as one of the most forceful voices among a new generation of rebellious post-war dramatists” The New York Times
“John Osborne famously kick-started the theatrical trend for 'Angry Young Men' and drama that put society's discontents at centre-stage.” BFI Screen Online
“A Subject of Scandal and Concern and Luther, emerged out of the author's anti-nuclear activism and his anger regarding the role of Britain's political leaders in the escalation of Cold-War tensions that led to the Berlin Crisis of 1961.” Jonathan Bolton

The press on director Jimmy Walters
"Jimmy Walters has kept Coward's concept at the core of his production" ★★★★ The Upcoming
"Both plays...allowed the audience to be transported back to a bygone era.” ★★★★ Musical Theatre Musings
"Jimmy Walters' direction is spot on" ★★★★ LondonTheatre1
Director Jimmy Walters has brought to life two works of Noël Coward. You'll feel as if you've been pulled back to the 1920's." ★★★★ GAY UK
"This evening of two of Noel Coward's one-act plays cannot be faulted.” The Stage
"The evening is really an homage to the genius of Noël Coward and the passion of the cast and creative team for the writing is unmistakable” LGBTQ Arts and Culture
"Director Jimmy Walters has developed an infectiously funny double bill, which says something honest about love and marriage.” The Culture Trip
"A thoroughly absorbing evening in the theatre with high professional values across the board” British Theatre Guide
"Full marks to Jimmy Walters” Camden Review

PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 23 MAY 2016 AT 7.30PM
PHOTOCALL: MONDAY, 23 MAY 2016 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
Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31 May, 5, 6, 7 June 2016
Sunday and Monday evenings at 7.30pm. Tuesday matinees at 2.00pm.
Tickets £18, £16 concessions.
Performance Length: 70 minutes.

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