

FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT NEW WRITING | UNIQUE REDISCOVERIES

The first London production in more than 20 years

BEAST ON THE MOON

by Richard Kalinoski.

Directed by Jelena Budimir. Set and Costume Designed by Sarah Jane Booth.

Presented by All Ignite Theatre in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: George Jovanovic. Zarima McDermott. Hayward B Morse.

“So some are beheaded and some are crucified and some are slaughtered,
and who wins the battle of who died the worst death? Who wins?”

In a production commissioned by the Finborough Theatre, Richard Kalinoski's **Beast on the Moon** opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four-week limited season on Tuesday, 29 January 2019 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 31 January and Friday, 1 February 2019 at 7.30pm**).

Milwaukee in the 1920s. Aram believes he will begin a new life when his teenage 'mail-order' bride, Seta, arrives to join him. They are a couple united by history – both survivors of the Armenian Genocide. But their painful, shared experience does nothing to promote domestic harmony as Aram is obsessed with creating a family to replace the one he lost in such savage circumstances, and Seta, just fifteen and trapped by the traditions of the old ways, struggles to embrace her new life in a new country...

Richard Kalinoski's beautifully written, universal story of hope and healing, has been performed in more than twenty countries. Last performed in London in the 1990s, *Beast on the Moon* remains a play for our times – a powerful exploration of legacy for so many refugees.

The Armenian Genocide of 1915-16 was perpetrated by the Ottoman Turkish Government against the Armenians, a Christian minority in a Muslim state. Up to one and a half million people died. To this day, the Turkish government refuses to admit that genocide ever took place.

Playwright **Richard Kalinoski's** *Beast on the Moon*, won the 2001 Best Play from the Repertory prize at the Moliere Awards and four other Moliere Awards. Since emerging as a "triumph" (Ben Brantley, *The New York Times*) at the 1995 Humana Festival in Louisville, Kentucky, *Beast on the Moon* has been translated into twenty languages and produced in venues all over the world including Athens, Brussels, London, Moscow, New York (Off-Broadway), Prague, Sao Paulo, Toronto and Tallinn, Estonia. It has garnered a host of awards including the Osborn Best New Play in America by an Emerging Playwright, awarded by the American Theatre Critics Association in 1996, and, in 2001, five Ace Awards including Best Play in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 2005, the President of Armenia Robert Kachadian awarded Kalinoski the Khorenatsi Medal for Contribution to the Arts from the Country of Armenia.

His other plays include *Between Men and Cattle* developed at the National Playwrights Conference (1995) and later produced at the Detroit Repertory Theatre and at Milwaukee's Next Act Theatre (2004), *My Soldiers*, a play about a female soldier returning from Iraq which was produced at the Detroit Repertory Theatre (2010) and was featured at the Regional American College Theatre Festival of the Kennedy Center at Michigan State University (2011), *The Boy Inside* which earned Second Place in the Kennedy Center's Mark David Cohen National Playwriting Contest (2016) and *Front Room* (2018) which was named as one of only eighteen new plays to be audio produced by the Ashland New Plays Festival in Ashland, Oregon, the home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Wisconsin native Richard Kalinoski is Resident Playwright at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh in Northeastern Wisconsin where he teaches playwriting and theatre history.

Director **Jelena Budimir** returns to the Finborough Theatre following her acclaimed production of Bruce Graham's *White Guy on the Bus* which was nominated for four Off West End Awards including Best Director in 2018. She also directed Athena Stevens' new play *Genie* for Vibrant 2017 – A Festival of Finborough Playwrights. Recently, she also devised and

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www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

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directed Back to the Future – a Celebration of Education with members of Clean Break Theatre. Jelena was Associate Director at Chickenshed Theatre for 22 years where she developed the Studio Theatre, and led on Chickenshed's emerging writers' programme Write Here, Write Now. Direction includes Benjamin Zephaniah's Refugee Boy adapted by Lemn Sissay, Sarah Daniels' Gut Girls, The Comedy of Errors, Dario Fo's Can't Pay! Won't Pay!, Lysistrata, Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker, Yard Gal by Rebecca Prichard and Ariel Dorfmen's Widows (Chickenshed) and Life After Death by Antunel Thompson (Camden People's Theatre). She has also written extensively for young people and children. Jelena originally trained as an actor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama – her performance work includes fringe, rep and West End alongside film, TV and radio.

POST SHOW DISCUSSIONS

Discussions are after the evening performance and are free to ticketholders for that evening's performance.

The run will be accompanied by the FINBOROUGHFORUM, a series of informal post-show discussions and debates. All events are free to ticketholders for that evening's performance of the play. FINBOROUGHFORUM events will be twitter friendly with live tweets from @FinboroughForum. Using the hashtag #finfor, the speakers will also answer questions posed on Twitter so everyone can be included, no matter where they are in the world. The events feature discussion with academics, writers and members of the cast and company.

The Armenian Genocide and Refugees

Saturday, 2 February after the evening performance

Hosted by Ara Sarafian (Gomidas Institute) and Misak Ohanian (Centre for Armenian Information and Advice).

The Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the modern era. It led to the destruction of an entire nation on its ancestral lands and created a refugee crisis of biblical proportions. Hundreds and thousands of women and children who survived the genocide were eventually collected in safe-houses, orphanages and refugee communities - and then dispersed throughout the world in what became the Armenian diaspora we know today.

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Wednesday, 13 February after the evening performance

Hosted by Ara Sarafian (Gomidas Institute)

Despite the bitter legacy of the Armenian Genocide, many civil society and political groups in Turkey broke ranks with their own government in recent years and initiated a reconciliation process with Armenians. The Municipality of Diyarbakir, one of the largest cities in Turkey, took the lead in this process by showing contrition and beginning a healing process. This included the reconstruction of one of the largest churches in the Middle East in the city - Sourp Giragos Armenian Apostolic church - and inviting Armenians to call the city their own.

The press on Beast on the Moon

"Humane, funny and touching, Beast on the Moon presents the claims of both past and future with fairness and empathy." Paul Taylor, The Independent

"Beast on the Moon builds with such tension and heartbreak, celebrates the gift of life with such wisdom and power, that an audience simply has no recourse but to shout its joy and gratitude...You can't afford to miss it." William Mootz, Louisville Courier Journal

"The play has garnered worldwide acclaim. New York was long overdue... simply magnificent." Harry Forbes, BackStage

"This is a deep and moving piece that educates while it entertains." Christopher Kidder-Mostrom, Newcity Stage

"Compassionate and humane" The New Yorker

"One of five must-see plays in New York...The play moves from tragedy and turmoil to a profound sense of promise."

Howard Kissel, The New York Daily News

The press on director Jelena Budimir's White Guy on the Bus at the Finborough

"Jelena Budimir's lean, swift production is very well acted... It's a play that provokes thought while keeping you entertained." Michael Billington, The Guardian

"Philadelphia-based Graham deftly crystallises the characters' surface-deep prejudices and privileges, asking big questions about power and race. It's politically charged and exhilarating." * * * * Fergus Morgan, The Stage

"Thought-provoking, surprisingly unpreachy and will live in the mind long after other plays have faded." * * * * Gary Naylor, Broadway World UK

The cast is:

George Jovanovic | Aram

Trained at The Oxford School of Drama.

Press Information

Theatre includes How to Hold Your Breath (Royal Court Theatre), Screens (Theatre503), Cornermen (National Tour), Richard III (Blue Elephant Theatre), Romeo and Juliet (Hen and Chickens Theatre) and Market Boy (Stockwell Playhouse).

Film includes Teen Spirit.

Television includes Kiss Me First, Holby City, Ultimate Worrier and Doctors.

Zarima McDermott | Seta

Trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre includes It's a London Life For Me (Greenwich Theatre), Seven Wonders (Theatre N16), The Seagull (Abbey Theatre, Dublin), The House of Bernarda Alba and The Caucasian Chalk Circle (Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin). Theatre while training includes The Devils, Arachne, Phaedra's Love, When All My Words Are Gone and A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Film includes Shoebox Memories and The Shaken.

Television includes Fair City and The Take.

Hayward B. Morse | Gentleman / Vincent

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include But It Still Goes On, The Melting Pot, Eden's Empire, Weapons of Happiness and Magnificence.

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes Barking in Essex (Wyndham's Theatre), Bar Mitzvah Boy (Upstairs at the Gatehouse), Travels With My Aunt (Birmingham Rep), Barefoot In The Park (Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford), The Rocky Horror Show (Kings Road Theatre), The Canterbury Tales (Phoenix Theatre), What The Butler Saw (Queen's Theatre) and the Broadway production of Butley (Morosco Theatre, New York) for which he received a Tony Award nomination.

Film includes Blank Canvas, The Scared of Death Society, Agency and Death Wish 3.

Television includes Autopsy: The Last Hours of Lou Reed, The Secret Files and James May's Man Lab.

Audio work includes The Killing School, The Life of the Buddha, The Theban Plays, The Man on the Mountaintop and over one hundred audiobooks for the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 31 JANUARY AND FRIDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2019 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 29 JANUARY 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 will be a 5% booking fee.) Lines are open Monday– Saturday 10.00am-6.00pm.

Tuesday, 29 January – Saturday, 23 February 2019

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.00pm. Saturday matinees at 3.00pm (from 9 February 2019).

Prices until 10 February 2019 – Tickets £18, £16 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £16 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £18 all seats. Previews (29 January and 30 January) £14 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, 2 February 2019 when booked online only.

Prices from 12 February 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

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

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