

FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT **NEW WRITING** | UNIQUE **REDISCOVERIES**
February-May 2019 Season

The first London production for over 75 years

JANE CLEGG

by St John Ervine.

Directed by David Gilmore.

Presented by Andrew Maunder in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

“I used to think you were so fine before I married you.”

In a production commissioned by the Finborough Theatre, **St John Ervine's** 1913 drama **Jane Clegg** opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four-week limited season on Tuesday, 23 April 2019 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 25 April 2019 and Friday, 26 April 2019 at 7.30pm**).

London, 1913.

Travelling salesman Henry Clegg has taken his wife, Jane, for granted for most of their marriage, as she endures his dishonesty, infidelity and neglect, as well as his demanding mother.

But when Henry is accused of embezzling money from his firm and his latest affair is revealed, Jane realises she must finally escape her life of domestic abuse for herself and her children...only to find that for women without money and connections breaking free isn't so easy.

Written in 1913 at the height of the campaign for votes for women, **Jane Clegg** premiered at Manchester's famous Gaiety Theatre, before transferring to the Royal Court Theatre – where it was compared to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Dame Sybil Thorndike created the title role and performed it all over the world, including in a BBC Radio broadcast in 1967.

Unseen in London since 1944, **Jane Clegg** now receives a long-overdue new production, directed by renowned director **David Gilmore**. The Finborough Theatre has also previously rediscovered two acclaimed plays by **St John Ervine**, most notably his play **Mixed Marriage** in 2011.

Playwright **St John Ervine** (1883-1971) was a dramatist, novelist, biographer and critic. Born in East Belfast to a Protestant family, he was for a time an unlikely choice as Literary Manager at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, under W. B. Yeats. His many plays include *Mixed Marriage* (1911) and *John Ferguson* (1915), both of which were also recently rediscovered by the Finborough Theatre. In later life, Ervine turned his back on Ireland and its politics, serving in the First World War (where he lost a leg). He settled in England where he became a West End dramatist of drawing room comedies, as well as a noted drama critic for *The Observer* and *The Morning Star*, and a biographer of both Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw.

Director **David Gilmore** has directed seventeen West End productions including the original award-winning productions of *Daisy Pulls It Off* and *Lend Me a Tenor*, and the award-winning musical *The Hired Man* by Melvyn Bragg and Howard Goodall, all produced by Andrew Lloyd Webber. His production of *Grease* (Dominion Theatre, Cambridge Theatre and Victoria Palace Theatre) recently completed an almost unbroken UK run of 20 years, and has also played in many European and Asian cities. Other West End productions include *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, the long-running hit starring Frank Finlay (Queen's Theatre); *Radio Times* starring Tony Slattery (Queen's Theatre); *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* starring Griff Rhys Jones (Queen's Theatre); *Neil Simon's Chapter Two* starring Tom Conti and Sharon Gless (Gielgud Theatre); *Rick's Bar Casablanca* (Whitehall Theatre); *Annie Get Your Gun* starring Suzi Quatro (Aldwych Theatre); the Cole Porter revue *A Swell Party* (Vaudeville Theatre); *Out of the Blue* (Shaftesbury Theatre); *Fatal Attraction* starring Susannah York and Denis Quilley (Theatre Royal Haymarket); *All The Fun Of The Fair* with David Essex (Garrick Theatre); and *Sinatra* (London Palladium). His production of *Defending the Caveman* (Apollo Theatre) won an

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www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

Press Information

Olivier Award for Best Entertainment. He has also directed Beth Henley's *Crimes of the Heart* (King's Head Theatre), Machiavelli's *Mandragola* (National Theatre), Sir Anthony Quayle in *Pinero's Dandy Dick* (Compass Theatre), Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* and Robert Harling's *Steel Magnolias* (National Tours), *The Winter's Tale* (New Shakespeare Company), and Noël Coward's *Cavalcade* (Chichester Festival Theatre) with a cast of over two hundred. He also directed the farewell tour of the band Harvey and the Wallbangers.

He has worked frequently in Australia, on the musical *Footloose* (Capitol Theatre, Sydney), Jamie Oliver's hugely successful performances, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song and Dance* (Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide) and *Happy Days* (Olympic Superdome, Sydney). His arena and stadium productions in Australia and South Africa have played to audiences of 20,000-30,000 people at each performance. Other international productions include *La Haut*, a French comedy operetta, which was subsequently filmed for French television (Theatre des Celestins, Lyon, and Theatre de Variétés, Paris), *Hair* (Palais des Sports, Paris, and National Tour of Germany), *As You Like It* (Shakespeare Repertory Company, Chicago), David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Royal Flemish Theatre, Brussels), Ben Elton's *Gaspang* (Hong Kong and Peking) and *Gaslight* (Mirvish Theatre, Toronto).

As Artistic Director of the Nuffield Southampton Theatres, Southampton, for five years, he directed *The Tempest*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Candida*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Summer and Smoke* and other productions by authors such as Rattigan, Coward, Frayn, Wedekind and Christopher Hampton and half a dozen musicals. Prior to this, he was also Artistic Director of the Watermill Theatre near Newbury for three years. More recently, he was the inaugural Artistic Director of the new St. James Theatre, steering it through to opening and through its first two seasons.

He has also adapted De Rojas' *Celestina* for the stage.

The press on previous productions of Jane Clegg

"We would feel sorry for any man whose conscience was not stirred to the depths by Jane Clegg." Northern Whig

"Powerfully dramatic and tragic." Sheffield Daily Telegraph

"Jane Clegg should be seen by all lovers of the drama." Birmingham Daily Gazette

"Engrossing and genuinely human". Pall Mall Gazette

"Compelling...a great evening." The Observer

"Admirably constructed and equally well-written...a work of art that challenges...brilliant writing." The Sunday Times

The press on St John Ervine's *Mixed Marriage*, rediscovered by the Finborough Theatre in 2011

★★★★ Four Stars, Time Out, The Guardian, WhatsOnStage, Fourthwall Magazine and Exeunt Magazine

Time Out Critics' Choice

"Not for the first time, one looks to the Finborough to come up with the most compelling play in London... It has a raw, visceral power." Michael Billington, The Guardian

"Not for the first time, the Finborough demolishes the myth of twentieth century British theatre being an effete wasteland pre-Look Back in Anger... A lean, potent drama that does not deserve to be forgotten." Andrzej Lukowski, Time Out

"A bruiser of a play; one that grabs you by the collar and simply shakes for an hour and twenty minutes." Matt Trueman, *Carousel of Fantasies*

"It also anticipates Sean O'Casey in showing...that women were models of pragmatic endurance in an Ireland being destroyed by headstrong men." Michael Billington, The Guardian

The press on St John Ervine's *John Ferguson*, rediscovered by the Finborough Theatre in 2014

"Proof that Ervine, who went on to become The Observer's theatre critic, was a natural dramatist." Michael Billington, The Guardian

"This is the second Ervine play that has been put on in recent years and on this evidence you hope there are more rediscoveries to be made...an outstanding production of a powerful work." Robbie Lumsden, *Bargain Theatre*

"St John Ervine's powerful 1915 Ulster classic, now receiving its first English revival since 1920 in Emma Faulkner's strongly cast, atmospheric production." Paul Taylor, The Independent

"The tiny Finborough Theatre has a reputation for resurrecting forgotten plays and making them seem essential. It has succeeded with *John Ferguson*, which hasn't had a professional production for a hundred years. It's terrific." Peter Graystone, Church Times

PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 25 APRIL 2019 AND FRIDAY, 26 APRIL 2019 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 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

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FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

Tuesday, 23 April – Saturday, 18 May 2019

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

Prices until 5 May 2019 – Tickets £18, £16 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £16 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £18 all seats. Previews (23 and 24 April) £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, 27 April 2019 when booked online only.

Prices from 7 May 2019 – Tickets £20, £18 concessions, except Tuesday evenings £18 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £20 all seats.

Performance Length: Approximately two hours including one interval.

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>