

# FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

VIBRANT **NEW WRITING** | UNIQUE **REDISCOVERIES**

Winter Season 2016-17 | October 2016 – January 2017 at the Finborough Theatre

**The first London production in nearly 30 years**

# THE TRACKERS OF OXYRHYNCHUS

by Tony Harrison.

Directed by Jimmy Walters. Designed by Philip Lindley. Lighting by Rob Mills. Music by Piers Sherwood Roberts. Choreography by Amy Lawrence. Presented by Proud Haddock in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre.

Cast: Peta Cornish. Nik Drake. Richard Glaves. Sacha Mandel. Dylan Mason. Tom Purbeck. Dannie Pye. James Rigby. Adam Small.

"I'm a God, Apollo, but I was tipped  
On a rubbish tip inside this manuscript.  
I've spent two thousand years asleep  
On an Oxyrhynchus rubbish heap."

In a new production commissioned by the Finborough Theatre, the rediscovery of Tony Harrison's **The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus** in its first London production for nearly 30 years opens at the Finborough Theatre for a four week limited season on Tuesday, 3 January 2017 (**Press Nights: Thursday, 5 January and Friday, 6 January 2017 at 7.30pm**).

Egypt, 1907. Two archaeologists, Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, are searching for ancient fragments of poetry and plays, next to an old rubbish heap.

Until the Greek God, Apollo, descends from the skies...

Apollo is furious that they have failed to unearth the fragmentary text of a lost Satyr play by Sophocles. As he forces the two papyrologists to find the lost play, Grenfell and Hunt become part of the story they have discovered.

Multi-award-winning poet and playwright **Tony Harrison** remakes the ancient Greek original into a play for our times – and rediscovers the satyr play. Originally written to follow performances of all the great Greek tragedies, the satyr play is a short tragicomedy featuring a chorus with goat-like features and erect phalluses which is an essential and often neglected part of ancient Greek theatre.

Originally written for a unique one-performance world premiere in the ancient stadium of Delphi in 1988 with a cast including Jack Shepherd, Barrie Rutter and Juliet Stevenson, and subsequently seen at the National Theatre in 1990, this production is the first London production in nearly 30 years.

Playwright **Tony Harrison** was born in Leeds in 1937. He has written extensively for the National Theatre, New York Metropolitan Opera, BBC, Channel 4, Royal Shakespeare Company, and for ancient spaces in Greece, Austria and Japan. His volumes of poetry include *The Loiners* (Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize), *v.* (Royal Television Society Award), *The Gaze of the Gorgon* (Whitbread Prize for Poetry) and *Laureate's Block*. His film *Black Daisies for the Bride* won the 1994 Prix Italia. He was awarded the PEN/Pinter Prize 2009, the European Prize for Literature 2010 and the David Cohen Prize for Literature 2015.

Director **Jimmy Walters** returns to the Finborough Theatre following his acclaimed production of John Osborne's *A Subject of Scandal and Concern*. Other direction includes *Julius Caesar* (Saatchi Gallery and Chelsea Theatre), *Improbable*

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

# Press Information

Fiction (Courtyard Theatre), A Naughty Night With Noël Coward (Old Red Lion 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 press on The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus

"One of the most brilliantly original things the National has ever done." The Sunday Times

"Harrison has created a glorious piece of total theatre." Time Out

"One of the most thrilling and adventurous theatrical events in years." The Guardian

"Likely to furnish a rude, public, funny and extrovert text for our times, to match the precise, private and grief-stricken V." The Observer

## The cast

### Peta Cornish | Kyllene

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include After October.

Trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

Theatre includes Play/Silence (The Other Room, Cardiff), Future Conditional (The Old Vic), Fever (Jermyn Street Theatre), 10 Women (Ovalhouse), To Sir With Love (Royal and Derngate Theatres, Northampton), The Dugout (The Tobacco Factory, Bristol), Oscilloscopes (HighTide Festival Theatre), The Welsh Boy (Theatre Royal Bath) and The Great Gatsby (King's Head Theatre). Workshops include Keep The Aspidistra Flying (Royal Shakespeare Company), Lucy (Tricycle Theatre) and Testament (Arcola Theatre). Rehearsed Readings include Air Swimming (Theatre Royal Haymarket), Eva (HighTide Festival Theatre) and Water Wings (Ovalhouse).

Film includes Two Feet and Frail.

Television includes Queens: Virgin and Martyr, Victoria Wood Christmas Special and William and Mary.

Voiceovers include Dr Who: And You Will Obey Me, Mohammed and Bristol M-Shed Museum.

### Nik Drake | Fellaheen/Satyr/Football Hooligan

Trained at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

Theatre includes Confusions and Heroes Welcome (Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough), Wine, Wit and Mrs Wellfed (Wilton's Music Hall), Rough Justice (Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford), Julius Caesar and The Tempest (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), Impotent (Lion and Unicorn Theatre), The Wild Goose Chase (White Bear Theatre), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Bridge House Theatre, Warwick), The Cherry Orchard (Greenwich Theatre), Ordinary Lads (Etcetera Theatre), The Shadow Within (Edinburgh Festival), Obama On My Mind (Hen and Chickens Theatre), The Choir (Above The Stag Theatre) and Much Ado About Nothing (The Old Sorting Office Arts Centre). Rehearsed Readings include Hanging Ayaz and Chimeraz.

Film includes Hounded, Do You Feel Like Punk? and Waiting For The Window.

Voiceover include Britain's Venues.

### Richard Glaves | Hunt/Silenus

Trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes King Charles III (Almeida Theatre), Oh! What A Lovely War (Theatre Royal Stratford East), Enjoy (Theatre Royal Bath and Gielgud Theatre), The Oresteia (Bard SummerScape), A Midsummer Night's Dream and Macbeth (Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park), As You Like It (Royal Shakespeare Company), Scuffer (West Yorkshire Playhouse), The Tempest (Liverpool Playhouse), Journey's End (National Tour), Candida (Oxford Stage Company), Twelfth Night, Richard II and Edward II (Shakespeare's Globe), Habitat (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester), The Accrington Pals (Chichester Festival Theatre), The Clandestine Marriage (Watermill Theatre, Newbury), Spike (Nuffield Theatre, Southampton), The Boy Who Left Home (Actors Touring Company) and A Midsummer Night's Dream (Neuss Globe Theatre, Germany).

Film includes Atonement.

Television includes Black Mirror, Doctors, Holby City, The Tudors, Housewife, The Roman Mysteries — Assassins of Rome, Conscript and Oxygen of Terror.

Television includes Call The Midwife, Catastrophe and The Honourable Woman.

### Sacha Mandel | Fellaheen/Satyr/Football Hooligan

Trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.

Theatre includes As You Like It and Romeo and Juliet (National Tour) and Passing By and Frankenstein (Chocolate Factory 2). Rehearsed Readings include Between Empires (Theatre Royal Stratford East).

Film includes Starvecrow and Rubbish.

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**Dylan Mason** | Hermes/Satyr/Football Hooligan/Fellaheen/Pale Boy

Trained at Arts Educational Schools, London.

Theatre includes 42nd Street (Theatre Royal Drury Lane), The Wind In The Willows (National Tour), wonder.land (National Theatre), Seven Brides For Seven Brothers (Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park), Anything Goes (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), Flowers For Mrs Harris (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, and The Old Vic) and Son Of Rambow (Nuffield Theatre, Southampton).

Workshops include Helen, Love and The Threepenny Opera (National Theatre Studio) and Wildwood.

**Tom Purbeck** | Grenfell/Apollo

Productions at the Finborough Theatre include Foxfinder.

Trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Theatre includes Tender Napalm (Southwark Playhouse), The Tempest (Theatre Royal Haymarket), Salome (Headlong Theatre), Les Parents Terrible (Donmar Warehouse), None But Friends (Rose Theatre, Kingston), The Spanish Tragedy (Arcola Theatre), The Revenger's Tragedy and Major Barbara (National Theatre), Almost Near (National Theatre Studio) and Playtime (Hampstead Theatre).

Film includes Grand Street.

Television includes: Tyrant, The Hollow Crown, A Room With A View and The Bill.

**Dannie Pye** | Fellaheen/Satyr/Football Hooligan

Trained at East 15 Acting School.

Theatre includes Pride and Prejudice The Panto (Cockpit Theatre), Everybody's Talking About Jamie (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), Madame X (Theatre Royal Stratford East), London Tales (Lost Theatre), Belfry (The Space), Marquis De Sade and The Seagull (The Lord Stanley Theatre) and Revolting Rhymes (Corbett Theatre, Loughton).

Film includes Sauna The Dead, Life And Death Of The Invisible Man, The Guest and Brace.

Television includes Unforgotten, Blue Steel and Lol.

**James Rigby** | Fellaheen/Satyr/Football Hooligan

Theatre includes Young Bloods (Gielgud Theatre), Struck and Word Play Revolution (Arcola Theatre), The Boss Of It All (Soho Theatre), Fragments (Riverside Studios), The Railway Children (Waterloo Station), Medea (Camden People's Theatre), Exterminating Angels (The Lowry, Manchester, and Theatre503), Love Bites (Southwark Playhouse), Pages (Union Theatre), Eric's (Liverpool Everyman), The Wizard of Oz (Haymarket Theatre, Basingstoke), The Floods (BAC) and Little Malcolm And His Struggle Against The Eunuchs (Warwick Arts Centre). Rehearsed Readings include The Colony (BAFTA), Fencing (Soho Theatre), 1996 (Nottingham Playhouse) and The Messiah (English Touring Theatre).

Film includes Gourmet, The Fool, The Guest and Locked Up.

**Adam Small** | Fellaheen/Satyr/Football Hooligan

Trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.

Theatre includes A Feast With The Gods (Almeida Theatre) and Paper Hearts (Edinburgh Festival).

Theatre whilst training includes Jane Eyre, Kiss Me Kate, First Lady Suite, Steel Pier, As You Like It, The Winter Guest and Oklahoma. Workshops include American Jesus.

Film includes Christmas Lights.

**The press on playwright Tony Harrison**

"In the front rank of contemporary British poets...His range is exhilarating, his clarity and technical mastery a sharp pleasure" Melvyn Bragg

"A voracious appetite for language. Brilliant, passionate, outrageous, abrasive, but also, as in the family sonnets, immeasurably tender." Harold Pinter

"Three decades on Tony Harrison's angry but exquisite poetry still has the power to chill." The Guardian

"A powerful voice bursting with passion, courage and anger." The Independent

"The first genius working-class poet England has produced this century." Blake Morrison, London Review of Books

"A poet of great technical accomplishment whose work insists that it is speech rather than page-bound silence" The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry

**The press on director Jimmy Walters' production of A Subject of Scandal and Concern**

"The staging of this piece is sublime." ★★★★★ Theatre Weekly

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# Press Information

**FINBOROUGH | THEATRE**

"Director Jimmy Walters, who has adapted this stage version, marshals the crowded thoughts and action with a fluid sense of tension." ★★★★★ Mark Shenton, The Stage

"Director Jimmy Walters has given Osborne's legacy the most handsome and elegant staging." ★★★★★ Johnny Fox

"Jimmy Walters' direction and Philip Lindley's ingenious design create physical energy" ★★★★★ Libby Purves, Theatre Cat

"Jimmy Walters' production handles the multiple shifts of scene with great ingenuity." Michael Billington, The Guardian

"Walters' imaginative direction." The Reviews Hub

"Expertly directed by Jimmy Walters" Sardines Magazine

"Intelligently and fluently directed by Jimmy Walters" Traffic Light Theatre Goer

**PRESS NIGHTS: THURSDAY, 5 JANUARY 2017 AT 7.30PM and FRIDAY, 6 JANUARY 2017 AT 7.30PM**  
**PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 3 JANUARY 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, 3 January – Saturday, 28 January 2017**

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.00pm. Saturday matinees at 3.00pm (from 14 January 2017).

**Prices until 15 January** – Tickets £16, £14 concessions, except Tuesday Evenings £14 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £16 all seats. Previews (3 and 4 January) £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, 7 January 2017 when booked online only.

**Prices from 17 January** – Tickets £18, £16 concessions, except Tuesday Evenings £16 all seats, and Friday and Saturday evenings £18 all seats.

Performance Length: Approximately 75 minutes with no interval.

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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Inspired by the fact that in 1907 scholars Bernard Grenfell (Tom Purbeck) and Arthur Hunt (Richard Glaves) discovered fragments of a Sophocles satyr play during an archaeological dig in Egypt, Trackers opens with the two men frantically sifting through scraps of papyrus. They make instant assumptions about what is and isn't valuable, discounting endless, distressing petitions from homeless ancients as they track down art. Harrison's repetition of "petition" in the verse is typical of his sharp irony, forcing the dons to voice, unwittingly, those lost pleas. Throughout, Harrison considers the poet Tony Harrison's play "The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus" gets its first London production since 1990. Paul Taylor. Friday 6 January 2017 12:45. Trackers was premiered in the ancient stadium of Delphi in 1988 and two years later appeared in the Olivier. It has not had a major London revival since then. So the theatrical year gets off to a bracingly counter-intuitive start now with this punchily persuasive production by Jimmy Walters that manages to convert a piece associated with big public arenas into a powerful close-up assault. How the various strands hang together tonally could, at times, be clearer, and the fine company could give the audience permission to laugh more often. But I did not find the experience overbearing and the poet Tony Harrison's play The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus is revived at London's Finborough Theatre 87 year old Chilean film director Alejandro Jodorowsky's latest film Endless Poetry is the second instalment of a planned five part autobiographical series Tom Hardy stars in BBC TV's new drama Taboo, Emily Fridlund's History of Wolves is the growing-up tale of a lonely Minnesota schoolgirl BBC Radio drama On Kosovo Field is a 5-part fantasy play by Finn Kennedy which includes a score by PJ Harvey, whose notes, photos, poetry and songs helped to inspire it Tom Sutcliffe is joined