

"It is impossible not to enjoy Icarus Theatre Collective's production of Ionesco's one-act play."

THE STAGE



THE LESSON

Booking Brochure



Supported using public funding by



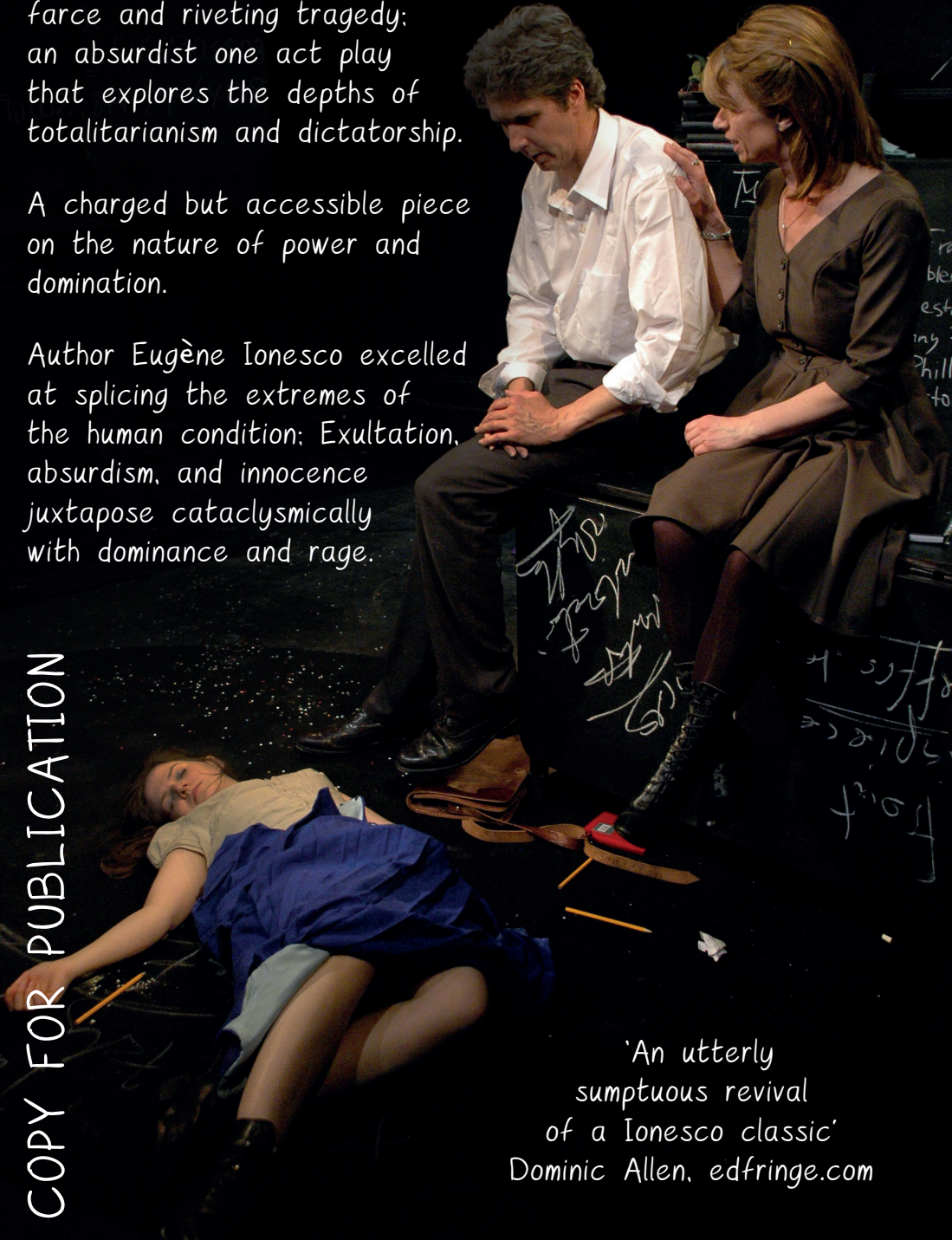
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

The Lesson is both hysterical farce and riveting tragedy; an absurdist one act play that explores the depths of totalitarianism and dictatorship.

A charged but accessible piece on the nature of power and domination.

Author Eugène Ionesco excelled at splicing the extremes of the human condition; Exultation, absurdism, and innocence juxtapose cataclysmically with dominance and rage.

COPY FOR PUBLICATION



'An utterly sumptuous revival of a Ionesco classic'
Dominic Allen, edfringe.com

An affectionate and optimistic professor teaches his vivacious student the rudiments of mathematics. He finds himself awestruck by her vast intellect; the young woman can not only combine one and one without prompting, but correctly identify the capital of France from memory.

But when the innocent pupil outwits him, their world is turned upside down. His chalkboard scribbles bleed outside their regimented lines and seep insidiously across the walls. Mania and self-doubt spiral into a brutal crescendo until the lesson comes to an abrupt halt; and outside the door, the next pupil knocks.

Written as a stark warning against fascism, *The Lesson* is seen in a new light in today's nebulous political climate. The audience are invited to draw their own conclusions on how the lens of 2021 should interpret Ionesco's references to the cyclical human nature of totalitarianism, the acquiescence of ordinary people, and the brutal effects of power in the wrong hands.

'50s absurdism made
over as '90s-in-ya-face'
apocalypticism'

Time Out

The Lesson is presented by seasoned director Max Lewendel, after over a decade of successful touring. His extensive record of critically acclaimed work includes Pearson Playwright Award winning *Albert's Boy* by James Graham ("Theatre at its best", *The Stage*), *Gates of Gold* (Critics' Choice, *Time Out*), and *Coyote Ugly* (Critics' Choice, *Time Out*).

SHOW LENGTH 70 minutes,
excluding optional
interval and
post-show Q&A.

GET-IN LENGTH Ideally 6 hours

GET-OUT LENGTH <1 Hour

If you are interested in booking a visit from us, our Tour Booker Nancy Ghosh would be delighted to discuss further with you on
+31- (0)646177546 or at
ngosh@icarustheatre.co.uk.

Coronavirus

As our presentation of *The Lesson* is intended as a response to the Covid pandemic and contemporary political turmoil, we are eager to begin touring as soon as possible. We are currently booking for Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022, and will happily negotiate coronavirus contingency arrangements; in particular, we will consider limited capacity audiences, in line with government guidelines and WHO recommendations.

In an effort to protect our team, all rehearsals and design meetings have been conducted using Covid-safe techniques.



POST-SHOW Q&A SESSION

Free of Charge

Give your audiences a chance to meet the team. Our cast and crew can stay behind after the show ends for a Q&A session led by either our Education Officer or a member of your staff.

WORKSHOPS

Our team of workshop leaders are professional actors, directors, and designers, and trained in a wide range of techniques.

We would love to discuss tailoring a specific workshop to suit your needs.

We run 4 standard workshops:

Theatre of the Absurd: Beckett, Genet, Ionesco!

How is Theatre of the Absurd different from classic realism and epic theatre?

We get students on their feet, improvising, reading text, and discovering for themselves the world of the Absurd.

SUITABLE FOR AGES 13+

Game Theory

Before the text, before each rehearsal, before the really hard work, the actor prepares.

Explore acting exercises that expand the mind, free the body, and heighten the senses.

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES

Method Acting & Stanislavski: Stop pretending, start taking action!

An introduction to the principles of Stanislavsky, Meisner, and Strassberg.

SUITABLE FOR AGES 14+

Taking Clowning Seriously

The world of the Clown and the world of the Absurd in perfect harmony and extreme juxtaposition.

Explore how clowning is more honest than classic realism.

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES



PAST WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

"The students were engaged from beginning to end... Fantastic!"

Ben Read, Drama & English
Teacher, George Farmer
College, Lincolnshire

"Very successful; [the workshop leaders were] enthusiastic and we are all thinking about the characters' objectives now in each scene. The students were taken out of their comfort zone and some have suggested we borrow the drama studio more often so that we can act out the scenes properly. Thank You!"

Evelyn Roberts (English
Teacher), Norwich City
College


"It was a fantastic experience and I really enjoyed it."

Student, Purbrook Park
School

"[The workshop was] well directed to the questions shared in advance of the workshop. Good balance of warm-up/individual activities and paired acting out.

Session was thoroughly enjoyed and went fast."

Head of Sixth Form, St
Dominics School



A REIMAGINING

After the resounding critical success of our 2007 production, we present *The Lesson*: reinvented for a contemporary audience.

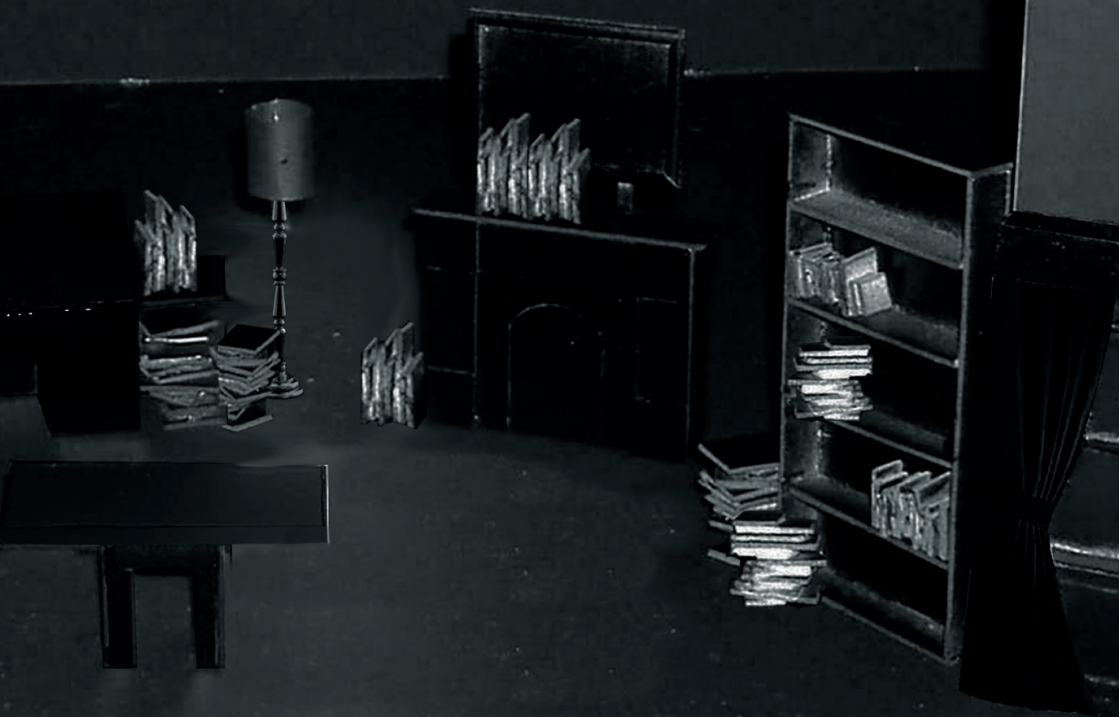
Design Concept

The stage begins as a warmly-lit and inviting front room in the Professor's home. As the play goes on, the set deconstructs, expanding and collapsing under the weight of the professor's frenetic chalk scribbblings. Using the playing space as a gigantic blackboard, he surrounds, imprisons, and then torments the increasingly pitiful young pupil.



Soundscape

The sound – inspired by Bach’s fugue series – transforms perhaps most significantly, acting as an additional character in the story. Dulcet harpsicord notes morph into more invasive piano ones, and soon sharp stabbing notes begin to pierce the stage. The ballet between the pupil and professor is perfectly complimented, the violent notes interweaving with the pupil’s increasingly plaintive pianissimo appeals.





REVIEWS

- | | | | |
|-------|---------------------|------|----------------------------|
| ★★★★★ | Vince, edfringe.com | ★★★★ | Jeremy Kingston, The Times |
| ★★★★★ | Curierul National | ★★★★ | Rebecca Banks, Ham & High |
| ★★★★★ | Metropotam | ★★★★ | Diseara |
| ★★★★★ | Realitatea.net | ★★★★ | 9pm.ro |
| ★★★★★ | Stiri.Acasa.ro | | |

SOUNDBITES

“It is impossible not to enjoy Icarus Theatre Collective’s production of Ionesco’s one-act play.”

“Absurd theatre that will leave you scratching your head in wonder.”

“John Eastman plays the professor with the right balance of menace and hilarity.”

Francesca Whiting, THE STAGE

“Ionesco’s strange parable of sex’n’violence.”

“Max Lewendel’s touring production succeeds by the strength of its acting and the steadily increasing tension.”

“His direction introduces a more vivid sexuality than Peter Hall would have been permitted in 1955.”

“This remains a timely and fascinating play.”

Jeremy Kingston, THE TIMES

“These larger-than-life characters, in this illogical scenario, are living and breathing right at your feet.”

“Brilliant”

“Powerful”

“Genius”

“The very particular way [the music] is introduced establishes music as an innate aspect of the play.”

“The concise set (designed by Christopher Hone) fits perfectly with the action and almost becomes a character in itself.”

“[The music is] implemented effectively throughout”

“An extremely effective metaphor for the deterioration of the lesson and the loss of control.”

“Comedy, tragedy, fear, mystery, sex, violence, disturbance: The Lesson has them all.”

Eleanor Weber, RADDEST RIGHT NOW

Read full reviews on our website www.icarustheatre.co.uk

PAST AWARDS

Best Actress in a Leading Role

Amy Loughton in Romania

Special Jury Prize

Romania





MARKETING

Absurd theatre is the ideal genre for building new audiences. Classic theatre fans are drawn in by the apparently traditional English farce, with its exaggerated characters, extravagant situations, and nonsensical humour. For others, the appeal comes from the symbolism which underpins the farce. They view the characters through a contemporary lens; the totalitarian hiding behind an egalitarian facade, intoxicated by rage and hatred; the shift from optimistic promise to persecution; the oppression of free thought and destruction of opposing ideas.

Traditional and novel viewers alike are swept along on a tempestuous emotional carpet ride. How did the kindly old professor become a tyrant, without any obvious points of change? How did the vivacious student become so brow-beaten that she was unable to defend herself, or even leave the room?

These are just some of the reasons we believe that *The Lesson* will be ideally suited for presentation at your theatre. We aim to work with our venues to create tailored marketing plans.

STRATEGY

To promote this show to as many people as possible, we will employ the following marketing strategies.

Press

In conjunction with our PR Firm Chloe Nelkin Marketing, we will distribute Press Releases in hard copy and email, make follow-up phone calls to reviewers, organise radio appearances, and produce features for listing in leading magazines.

Social Media

Using our dedicated Social Media budget, we are working with a film director to produce a professional trailer for our show. We will use incremental teaser releases, cross-platform promotion, and a discount-based sales strategy to ensure The Lesson reaches as many people as possible.

FabUK Magazine

We are thrilled to have received support from FabUK magazine who have agreed to run an interview and advert for the show. Their worldwide audience will provide a fantastic opportunity to promote our show to an entirely different pool of potential customers.

Print & Programme Distribution

Icarus provides a large number of leaflets and posters in a variety of formats (A5, A3, B2/A2, etc), free of charge. Additionally, each audience member will receive a complimentary programme to take home and share with friends and family. This will include the full dates of our run, details on the show, and a voucher for discounted admission.

Mailing Lists

Icarus will assume responsibility for distributing newsletters to both our mailing list of 2,500+ contacts, and any contact lists you have privately curated.

Discounted Tickets

Using the channels previously mentioned, Icarus proposes to offer a 'Discounted Ticket Deal' to select audiences on certain performances. A discount for schools and education groups should help us attract large audiences.





ARTISTIC POLICY

The Icarus Theatre Collective explores the harsh, brutal side of contemporary and classical drama. We choose to relish in what others shy away from, show what others aren't, and destroy boundaries when others would create rules.

We choose to prioritise the individual artist above all else. Paramount to achieving any goal is respect for artists and their differences, commitment to honesty and integrity, and devotion to the work produced.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Icarus Theatre Collective believes that theatre should be at the forefront of social change. We strive to promote access, inclusion, and collaboration in all aspects of our creative endeavour, both on and behind the stage.

INCLUSION

Icarus believes in the fair and equitable representation of minority groups. We recognise and celebrate that diverse voices both on and behind the stage are needed to create an accepting and creative atmosphere.

In line with this, The Lesson will present a diverse cast as representative of the UK population as possible. We also ensure disability and demographic are no barrier to making art by maintaining extensive Equal Opportunities monitoring.

COLLABORATION

Icarus has a collaborative spirit that we use to engage with our partners on all levels. We understand that this show would be produced in your domain, and would value your expertise, experience, and enthusiasm.

All suggestions herein are open to discussion, and we are happy to follow marketing initiatives advised by you. No one knows your domain and your audiences better than you.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Max Lewendel

Following completion of his BA (Honours) in Theatre Arts from the Illinois Wesleyan School of Theatre Arts, Max moved to London and founded the Icarus Theatre Collective.

After directing a Time Out Critics' Choice show at the Finborough Theatre, Max was commissioned to direct James Graham's *Albert's Boy*, starring the late Tony award winner Victor Spinetti ("Theatre at its best" *The Stage*). The show won the Pearson Playwright award, and Max went on to produce several highly successful national tours.

PREVIOUS CREDITS:

The Trials of Galileo (Icarus Tour) | How to Be a Bad Girl (Edinburgh Fringe) | The Tragedy of Macbeth (The Globe Theatre (Germany), The Bord Gáis Theatre (Dublin), Large International Icarus Tour) | Othello (Icarus Tour) | Hedda Gabler (Icarus Tour)

CREATIVE PRODUCER

Hazel Caulfield

Hazel is a producer and actress graduating from the GSA. Her favourite role to date was Jess (Lead), in the BBC's *The Lives I Lead - a Docu-Drama* telling the story of a young woman and her 6 alternate identities.

Hazel and Max have worked together since 2018 and began discussing producing *The Lesson* when Max offered her the role of the Pupil in this production.

PREVIOUS CREDITS:

Juliet, Romeo & Juliet (Brighton Open Air Theatre) | Alice, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Gwendolen, The Importance of Being Earnest (This is My Theatre UK Tour) | Olivia, Twelfth Night (Bowler Crab Productions)

SET DESIGNER

Christopher Hone

Design veteran Christopher Hone returns to Icarus' accomplished team for the 13th time. His designs can currently be seen on the BAFTA Award winning ITV show *This Morning*.

Having worked on past Icarus productions from London Fringe venues to 2000 seaters in Ireland, Christopher's work has consistently proved adaptable, intelligent, and innovative.

PREVIOUS CREDITS:

Art Director (ITV *This Morning*) | Set Designer, Othello (Icarus Tour) | Set Designer, Hedda Gabler (Icarus Tour) | Art Director, Bank On It (Barbican Centre)





LIGHTING DESIGN

Stevie Carty

Stevie joined Icarus' creative team on Hamlet as the assistant lighting designer, after having been stage manager and re-lighter on The Trials of Galileo. She is a lighting savant and quickly progressed to be the Lighting Designer for Icarus' next tour, Macbeth. Alongside her work with Icarus, Stevie has designed and programmed lights for The Humans at the Hampstead Theatre, Mayfly at the Orange Tree, and Here at Greenwich Theatre.

SOUND DESIGN

Matt Downing

Matt's sound design has earned him great acclaim, and Icarus are very excited to welcome him back on this production. Max has an ear for subtlety and detail, and his understanding of audience senses allows his sound design to blend deeply into a production, becoming an omnipotent character woven into the narrative.

COSTUME DESIGN

Isabella Van Braeckel

After graduating from Central St Martins, Isabella has carved a career specialising in designing for New Writing, Opera and Dance across Fringe Theatre and in the West End.

Isabella is a Jerwood Young Designer, long-listed for the Old Vic 12 and was featured in the UK Exhibit 'Staging Places' at the Prague Quadrennial and V&A. Her design for Kings Head Theatre's Production of 'Aida' was due to premiere in May 2020.

PROJECTION DESIGN *(funding dependent)*

Ben Glover

Ben is a deaf video designer who uses his creative and technical skills to produce innovative and often expressive works, typically informed by his dual background in theatre and computing. He has developed a particular interest in work that explores contemporary issues and more personal topics such as his deafness. He has previously received the Mead Fellowship award for his Virtual Reality project Simple Misunderstanding which has exhibited at BST, Latitude, End of the Road and Secret Garden Party.

LIGHTING DESIGN & CONTROL: The Tempest (The Orange Tree) | The Happy Mondays (The Roundhouse) | The Rifles & BBC Radio 6 Music Festival

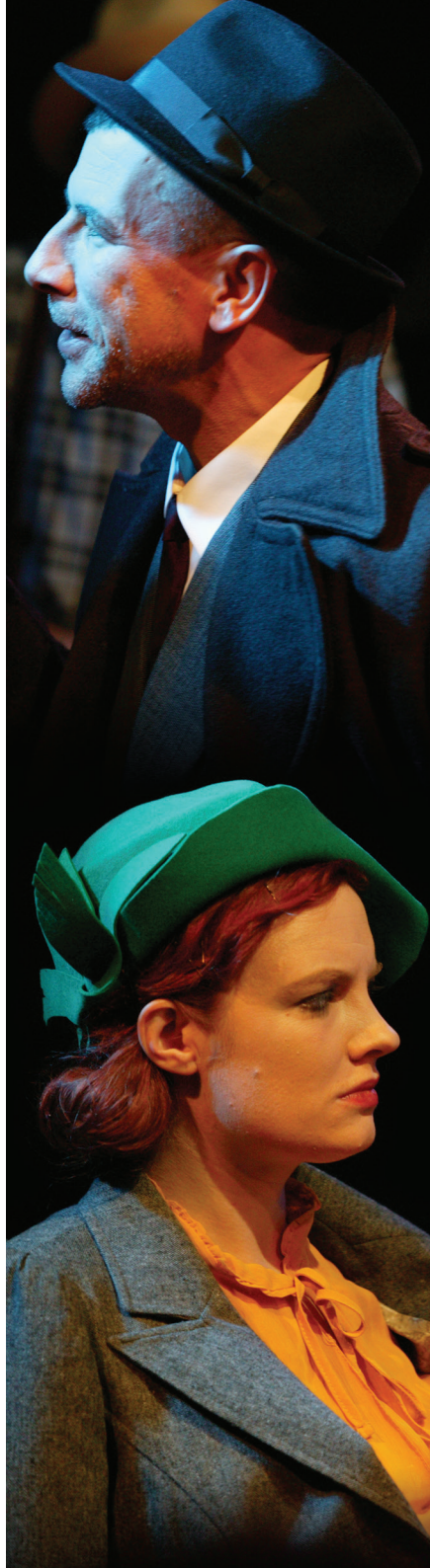
LIGHTING PROGRAMMING: Hive City Legacy (The Roundhouse + tour)

PREVIOUS CREDITS: Gates of Gold (Trafalgar Studios) | Year 10 (Théâtre National Bretagne, Théâtre National de Strasbourg, Battersea Arts Centre) | The Revenger's Tragedy (Southwark Playhouse) | The Canterville Ghost (Southwark Playhouse) | Twelfth Night (tour) | Hamlet (Tivoli, Dublin)

PREVIOUS CREDITS FOR ITC: Macbeth (2017 Production, UK/ Ireland Tour) | Hamlet (2016 Production, UK/ Ireland Tour)

PREVIOUS CREDITS: DUAL, Invisibles (Vault Festival 2020) | The Dog Walker (Jermyn Street Theatre) | Finishing the Picture (Finborough) | Red INK (Leicester Curve/ Southbank Centre) | The Boys in the Band (Park 200/Vaudeville Theatre/ Tour) | Eclipsed (Gate Theatre) | Blush of Dogs (Tabard Theatre) | This Is Living (Edinburgh Fringe/Tour)

PREVIOUS CREDITS: Mee & The Band (Eventim Apollo) | Hear My Soul Speak (RADA) | Americana! (Hellenic Centre) | Vessel of Light (Burning Man Festival) | Medea (Cockpit Theatre)





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