

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Primavera presents
FORGOTTEN CLASSICS
At the King's Head Theatre, Islington

The greatest classic plays you've never seen

London's fringe and off-West End theatres are crammed with new writing, but some of our greatest writers of all time wrote scandalously neglected plays which deserve a life on stage. Season One of Primavera's *Forgotten Classics* series features six outstanding plays which have rarely – if ever – been performed since they were written. Some are chosen because they are of historical and literary importance; others are written by famous writers known primarily as novelists or poets rather than playwrights; others were smash-hits in their own time, but ignored today.

World premieres and undiscovered gems

The first season of Primavera's *Forgotten Classics* features: the **world premiere of the first play written in English by a woman**; a **play written by Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins**, not performed for over 100 years; **Virginia Woolf's only play**; the **greatest play of the Romantic age**; the **source for several of Shakespeare's comedies**; and the **British premiere of plays by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Tennessee Williams**.

'A hugely talented company'

Primavera is an active producing company established in 2003, described as '**a serious influence on drama**' (*The Oxford Times*) and '**a hugely talented company**' (*The Scotsman*). The plays will be presented monthly as rehearsed readings on Sunday evenings at the King's Head Theatre, Islington, and will be directed by Primavera's **Artistic Director Tom Littler**, whose recent work includes *Passion* (Scotsman Critics' Choice, Edinburgh Festival 2006), and associate directing on *Treats* (starring Billie Piper, Laurence Fox, and Kris Marshall) and *The Letter* (starring Jenny Seagrove and Anthony Andrews). The **full-scale casts will feature a variety of experienced West End actors** (details will follow in subsequent press releases).

A landmark event

Tom Littler said: 'We are delighted to be working with the King's Head to produce this very special programme of rehearsed readings. We have very exciting casts lining up and we have every hope that the *Forgotten Classics* series will become an established part of London's off-West End theatre life. This is a rare and special chance to see truly great drama by writers of formidable talent and influence on theatre and literature.' **Stephanie Sinclair, Artistic Director of the King's Head, said:** 'Primavera has collected a fascinating assortment of extremely interesting material which we are delighted to be playing host to at The King's Head Theatre. Exploring the deepest roots of our literary tradition is every bit as urgent as developing new work - this is a very relevant and important presentation.'

www.primaveraproductions.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MANFRED, by Lord Byron

Written 1817, banned and never staged

MANFRED is the most unjustly neglected play of the Romantic age, banned from the stage in its author's lifetime. Byron's tragic hero sets out across the Alps on a lonely quest to escape the memories of an incestuous night of passion. Accompanied by music by Tchaikovsky and Schumann that was inspired by this dark, Faustian story, MANFRED is a thrilling, darkly erotic piece featuring achingly beautiful poetry and passionate desires.

8pm, Sunday 11 March

FRESHWATER, by Virginia Woolf

Written 1935 for private performance

This quirky and hugely enjoyable comedy is Virginia Woolf's only play. The most iconic female writer of the twentieth century serves up a delicious cocktail of sharp satire and sparkling wit, with a magnificently silly cast including Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Ellen Terry, and Queen Victoria! Performed originally by leading members of the Bloomsbury Set in the Woolfs' own sitting room.

8pm, Sunday, 22 April

GALLATHEA, by John Lyly

Written and last performed in London 1594

A blockbuster hit in its own time, GALLATHEA is the source for Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream and Twelfth Night: a comic drama of sexual identity and confusion. In a wood, three hunters seek the love of three beautiful nymphs, who will do anything to stay chaste. Meanwhile, two maidens run into the wood to escape a virgin sacrifice demanded in the town - but one of the girls is disguised as a young man... One of the outstanding comedies of the age.

8pm, Sunday 13 May

NO THOROUGHFARE, by Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins

Written 1866, last performed 1904

A gripping Victorian melodrama written jointly by the two most famous novelists of the Victorian age. Set in London and Switzerland, it is the thrilling tale of a lost inheritance, and a man who will stop at nothing to get what he wants. Not seen in Britain for over a century, this is a remarkable opportunity to see Dickensian drama on stage.

8pm, Sunday 3 June

MARIAM, by Elizabeth Cary

Written 1613, World Premiere

The first play written in English by a woman. Elizabeth Cary's explosive 'closet drama' provides a new, feminist viewpoint on the Biblical household of King Herod and the infamous Salome. The conflict between Mariam, descendant of the rightful Jewish ruler, and Herod, her Roman-appointed husband, resonates powerfully in the charged atmosphere of the Middle East today.

8pm, Sunday 22 July

PORCELAIN AND PINK AND OTHER ONE-ACT COMEDIES, by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Tennessee Williams

Written 1922-1940, British Premieres

Three delightful short comedies by the author of The Great Gatsby highlight F. Scott Fitzgerald's trademark dry wit and eye for social detail. They are combined with Tennessee Williams' funniest, darkly comic one-act plays, finally performed in Britain seventy years since their creation.

8pm, Sunday 12 August

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOTES FOR EDITORS

All plays are performed at 8pm on Sundays on the following dates:

MANFRED, by Lord Byron, 8pm Sunday 11 March

FRESHWATER, by Virginia Woolf, 8pm Sunday 22 April

GALLATHEA, by John Lyly, 8pm Sunday 13 May

NO THOROUGHFARE, by Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins, 8pm Sunday 3 June

MARIAM, by Elizabeth Cary, 8pm, Sunday 22 July

PORCELAIN AND PINK AND OTHER ONE-ACT COMEDIES, by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Tennessee Williams, 8pm Sunday 12 August

Press are welcome at all performances; notice of any reviews is politely requested.

Full cast lists are available on request around a fortnight prior to each performance.

Please contact **Chantelle Staynings**, Marketing Director, on **020 7233 7634** or **07769 906096** or email primaverapress@hotmail.co.uk to book **complimentary tickets**. Chantelle can also arrange to send you **JPEG images** as necessary.

Tickets are priced at £7 (full) or £5 (concession). Concessions are available for U25s, students, members of university faculties, Equity members, registered unemployed, registered disabled, and senior citizens. **A ticket for all six performances costs £25.**

Tickets are available from the King's Head Box Office:

Website: www.kingsheadtheatre.org

Telephone: 020 7226 1916

Address: The King's Head Theatre,
115 Upper Street
Islington
N1 1QN

Nearest tubes: Highbury and Islington; Angel

Buses: Upper Street N19, N43

END