

Backstory Ensemble Productions presents

# I, Minnie Lansbury

A new play by Bren Gosling



When a year ago, Pippa Catterall on behalf of the Trust approached me to write a new play for the centenary of the Poplar Councillor's Revolt, I must admit I knew nothing about Minnie Lansbury. I had to Google to find out what the Revolt was all about. Boy, did it lead me on a journey...In 1921 British society had been shaken down by war and the Representation of The People Act, which widened the franchise. This empowered more ordinary folk, especially women to challenge the status quo, which favoured privilege, wealth, and Establishment. Sound familiar? Poplar Council led the way, and Minnie Lansbury was its heroine.

I'd like to thank the many who helped me in my background research for this new one act play, especially: Janine Booth - Biographer of Minnie Lansbury and author of the book about Poplar's rebel Councillors 'Guilty and Proud of It!'

Various members of the George Lansbury Memorial Trust

Selina Gellert - whose Great Aunt was Minnie Lansbury

If you already know about The Poplar Councillor's Revolt, then I hope you will learn something more about the personal narratives of the key women involved. If you know nothing, then prepare to be mightily inspired!

Bren Gosling October 2021

## Bren Gosling Writer



Studied play writing with John Burgess. Bren's monologues & plays have been performed at The Pleasance, Arcola, OSO Barnes, Rose & Crown E17, New Wimbledon Theatre, Bloomsbury Theatre & Brighton Fringe. He is an award-winning short story writer (Exeter, London, Brighton Short Story Prizes), three times winner of City Writes short story competition. His play Moment of Grace recounting the day Princess Diana opened Britain's first AIDS Unit - told through the eyes of a nurse, a patient, and a Chingford fireman - showcased to acclaim at Bloomsbury Festival 2018 and won the NO: INTERMISSION International One Act Play Competition. During lockdown the play was re-imagined as a film, streamed from the Actors Centre, and awarded an ONCOM commendation by The Offies. The play had an article in The Guardian and received stellar reviews.

Summer/autumn 2019 Bren wrote with Royal Court Theatre's WF Listen Local.

Bren's play PROUD about a black gay dad, his immigrant lover and the dad's gifted, 15-year-old son, has been selected by ATG for their Autumn Premieres Season of bold new writing.

I, Minnie Lansbury is a commission from The George Lansbury Memorial Trust.  
Twitter @bregosling

# Cast



## **Lizzie Frain - Pearl Barker**

Lizzie trained at Rose Bruford College (2015) and The National Youth Theatre (2007) Theatre credits include: *Paddy Flynn* (Vault Festival), *On Behalf of the People* (UK Tour 2017/18), *Crime & Punishment* (The Scoop, Southbank), *The Wavel Dragon* (The Scoop, Southbank), *Gangbang* (Southwark Playhouse), *Confessions of a City* (Sheffield's Crucible Theatre).

Film credits include: *Peterloo* (Thin Man Films)

## **Carly Halse - Minnie Lansbury**

Carly trained at Royal Central School of Speech & Drama and has a passion for devised theatre and new writing.

Theatre credits inc: Kathryn in *Splendour*; *Second Movement* at The Barbican; *The Wind in the Willows*; *Presto & Clown*; Nora in *A Doll's House*; *Paper Dolls*; *Carnesky's Tarot Drome*; *Proper Night*; *Neon Fairytale*; *Your Number's Up*; *Bare Essentials*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo & Juliet*.

She is also an Associate Artist with The Play's The Thing Theatre Company and will next be appearing with them in *Hidden Stories: Now You See Me* as Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain.



## **Holly Joyce - Nellie Cressall**

Holly's credits include *Estimated Waiting Time* (Lauren Reed Productions - uk tour), *Communicating Doors* (Swanage/Leatherhead Rep), *Burkas and Bacon Butties* (Tara Finney Productions), *Lipstick* (dir Kevin McNally) and *AntiMatter* (dir Keir Burrows).

Holly is a voice-over actor, regularly producing short story readings for Retreat West Publishing.

She has recently made her screen directorial debut on short films *Napoleon* and *Game of Life*, both hitting the festival circuit next year.

## **Ray Murphy - Edgar Lansbury**

Ray trained at Guildford School of Acting and has worked with several established and emerging theatre companies. Most recently, he toured in The Festival Players production of *Henry V*, playing Fluellen & the King of France. He has appeared in several productions for Guildford-based Triple C Theatre Company, inc Alan Ayckbourn's *Way Upstream* as Vince, Professor Bhaer in their adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, and their Victorian Music Hall show, *Ghosts in Greasepaint*. He has also performed in site-specific productions and rehearsed readings with LynchPin Productions, Artifice, & Farnham Rep. This November, he will reprise the role of Lieutenant Osborne in Theatre Revival's returning production of R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End*.



# Creatives



## **Su Gilroy - Director**

Su is a freelance theatre director with more than 50 productions to her credit, ranging from short rehearsed readings to full scale productions in number one venues. She enjoys the diversity of projects this means she gets to work on, including new writing, classics and panto. She also enjoys working with young people.

## **Theresa Burke-Findlay - Assistant Director**

Theresa studied at The Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Since then she has worked extensively backstage in the West End. She recently gained her Masters in Theatre Directing at Mountview. She is delighted to part of this production of *I, Minnie Lansbury*.



With thanks to: Cathryn Sherman, Neil James, Caroline Burke-Findlay  
Lantern Costume Store <https://www.lanternarts.org/the-costume-store>  
Kris Benjafield, Guildford Opera Company <https://www.guildfordopera.com>

The performance runs approximately 1 hour with no interval