

IF I SHOULD DIE, THINK ONLY THIS OF ME...

VERGE of STRIFE

THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE AND POETRY OF

Rupert Brooke



Verge of Strife

Assembly George Square (Studio Two), Edinburgh, EH8 9LH

Thursday 4th – Monday 29th August 2016, 14:15

Jonny Labey (*EastEnders*, *In the Heights*) leads this poetic and spirited ensemble production, based on the life and works of WWI poet, Rupert Brooke. A man who exploited and despaired at his ability to play the parts required of him is put centre stage for the first time in this dynamic production.

On his death in 1915, Brooke was feted as 'the voice of England'; his patriotic sonnets had caught the imagination of a people in the early days of the war with his voice of early-war naivety. His poetry depicts the struggle to find a voice capable of expressing all he experienced, a struggle shared by all young contemporary artists caught amongst the conflicts of human nature.

Based on his letters and told through his poetry, *Verge of Strife* goes back to Brooke's early years, looking at the young poet who embraced Socialism, atheism and the counter-culture of Edwardian England. Described as 'the handsomest man in all of England' his looks, charm and wit left a trail of bruised egos and broken hearts right to the upper echelons of British society.

His life and inspirations are reflective of so many classic and contemporary artists and reveal an extraordinary man whose star burned incredibly brightly during his short lifetime.

Joining Jonny Labey on-stage are Fergus Leathem (*Game of Thrones*), Kirsten Callaghan (*Table*, Stratford Circus), Emma Barclay (*One Million Tiny Plays*, Watermill) and Sam Warren (*Vessel Curve*, Leicester).

Director Quentin Beroud (*Richard II*, House of Parliament) comments, *I'm amazed we haven't explored Brooke on stage like this before - he was a mystery that everyone around him, and even he himself, seemed to be constantly trying to figure out. Nick Baldock's brilliant script is an amazing moving portrait of a flawed genius who's been sidelined by history in a way that he*

never was during his lifetime. Brooke's poem are the backbone of the piece and I want to build an ensemble piece around the poet and his words, flashes of his life that reveal more and more about him. I'm really looking forward to putting Rupert Brooke back where he belongs – right in the forefront of people's minds.

To encapsulate the many facets of Brooke, the creative team gained access to his poems and private archived letters in King's College, Cambridge, where Brooke was a student.

Notes to Editors

Title	<i>Verge of Strife</i>
Performance Dates	Thursday 4 th – Monday 29 th August, 14:15
Running time	75 minutes
Location	Assembly George Square (Studio Two), Edinburgh, EH8 9LH
Box Office	Tickets are available from www.assemblyfestival.com Previews: £7 Monday-Thursday: £11 (£10) Friday-Sunday: £12 (£11)
Twitter	@BaldockNick, @QBeroud, @ASattariProds, @AssemblyFest, #VergeOfStrife
Notes	Ages 14+, contains nudity and strong language
Writer	Nick Baldock
Director	Quentin Beroud
Producer	Arsalan Sattari
Casting	Ben Newsome
Cast	Jonny Labey Fergus Leathem Kirsten Callaghan Emma Barclay Sam Warren

Nick Baldock

Nick Baldock is a Cambridge University and Yale graduate with a PhD in History. He went on to train at New York's American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA) and is an alumnus of Royal Court's Young Writers' programme. Nick is a playwright, lyricist and librettist. His latest musical, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Winer's Tale*, was performed at a rehearsed industry reading in New York early 2015, composed by Leo Hurley, following the success of *The Better Part* in late 2012. His work has been seen in London, New York and Boston, most recently at Manhattan's Duplex Cabaret in late 2014. Nick's future work includes *Mrs Fleming & Mrs Mallowan*, about a meeting between Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers, *Nothing to You*, a thriller set in an alternate reality of 1949 and two other commissioned pieces.

Jonny Labey

Jonny can be seen in the role of Paul Coker as a regular in EastEnders. He was nominated for the British Independent Film Awards best newcomer as David in *Soft Lad* (Brown Boy Productions). Jonny trained at Bird College of Dance, Music and Theatre Performance. Theatre credits include: Graffiti Pete in *In The Heights* (Southwark Playhouse); Eddie Cochran in *Rock'n' Roll Heaven* (UK Tour); *White Christmas* (Dominion Theatre).

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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