Clarion

by Mark Jagasia



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Arcola Theatre presents

Clarion

by **Mark Jagasia**

Cast
(in order of appearance):

Verity
Clare Higgins

Albert
Jim Bywater

Josh
Ryan Wichert

Morris
Greg Hicks

Pritti
Laura Smithers

Clive
Peter Bourke

Dickie
John Atterbury

Additional Company:
Diego Benzoni
Vix Dillon
Katerina Elliott
Camilla Harding
Damien Killeen
Ali Wright

Director
Mehmet Ergen

Designer
Anthony Lamble

Lighting Designer
David Howe

Sound/Music Designer
Neil McKeown

Assistant Director
Kay Michael

Production Manager
Tammy Rose

Stage Manager
Nicola Buys

Voice and Accent Coach
Marj McDaid

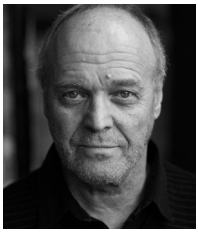
Costume Supervisor
Suzanne Burlton

Photography
Simon Annand

Image Design
Richard Scarborough

First performed:
Wednesday 15 April 2015
Arcola Theatre, London

A rehearsed reading of *Clarion* was performed in January 2014, as part of Arcola's *PlayWROUGHT* festival of new writing. The cast were: Will Barton, Simon Dobson, Paul Leonard, Danusia Samal, Bernice Stegers and Daniel West. The director was Kay Michael.



Jim Bywater
Albert

Previously at Arcola: *Don Gil of the Green Breeches, A Lady of Little Sense, The Painter, Ghosts, Lady from the Sea, An Enemy of the People, Chasing the Moment, A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Other theatre work includes: *The Crucible* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *The Bacchae/The Blood Wedding* (Theatre Royal Northampton); *As You Like It, Merry Wives of Windsor* (GB Theatre Co.); *Three Sisters* (Lyric Hammersmith and Filter Theatre); *Uncle Vanya* (Young Vic Studio); *Only When I Laugh* (Love and Madness); *The Merchant of Venice, Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Trackers of Oxyrhynccus* (National Theatre); *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Wyndham's Theatre, West End).

Film work includes: *The Last Horror Movie; Hotel Clerk*.

Television work includes: *Henry IV Part I & II; Wallander III; Coronation Street; Dalziel and Pascoe; Deadly Ernest Horror Show; Accidental Death of an Anarchist.*

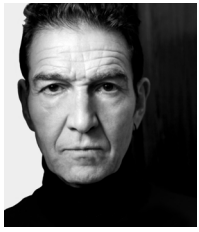


Peter Bourke
Clive

Theatre work includes: *The English Game* (Headlong Theatre); *Our State Tomorrow* (Pleasance/Edinburgh Festival); *Elsie & Norm's Macbeth* (Salisbury Playhouse); *A Christmas Carol, The Sea, Merry Wives* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Touring Consortium); *Racing Demon* (Chichester & Toronto); *Dial M for Murder* (West End/Tour); *Cavalcade* (King's Head Theatre); *Peace in Our Time; Endgame* (Fair Play/West End); *Woman in Mind* (Watford Theatre/ Wilmington); *Donkey's Years* (Sheffield Crucible Theatre); *Exclusive, When We Are Married* (West End); *Henry IV Part I*

& II, Henry V, Perkin Warbeck (RSC); *Harlequenade, On the Razzle, The Browning Version, The Elephant Man, The Provoked Wife* (National Theatre).

Television work includes: *Doctor Who; The Bill; All About Me; Bugs; Jazz Detective; Traffik; The Black Tower; Nicholas Nickleby; Brittas Empire; Love Hurts; The Mayor of Casterbridge; David Copperfield; The Bill; Reluctant Chickens; The History of Mr. Polly.*



Greg Hicks
Morris

Previously at Arcola: *In Blood – Bacchae, Small Craft Warnings, An Enemy of the People.*

Other theatre work includes: *All's Well That Ends Well, Hamlet, Little Eagles, Anthony & Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, Winter's Tale/King Lear, Macbeth, Poor Beck, Coriolanus, Tantalus, Family Reunion, Romeo & Juliet* (RSC); *Bacchae, Absolute Hell, The Cherry Orchard, Coriolanus, Animal Farm, You Can't Take it With You, Oresteia, Lorenzaccio*, (National Theatre); *Play Strindberg* (Unistov Studio Bath Theatre Royal); *Don Quixote* (The West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Angels in America* (Headlong/Lyric Hammersmith); *The Lady of Leisure* (Liverpool Playhouse); Missing Persons (Trafalgar Studios); *Tamburlaine the Great* (Bristol/Old Vic/Barbican); *Messiah* (Old Vic); *Enrico IV, Private Lives, 1954, Design for Living* (Glasgow Citizens Theatre).

Winner of the Critics' Circle Theatre Award for Best Shakespearian Performance - *Coriolanus* (2003). Nominated for the Olivier Award for Best Actor - *Coriolanus* (2004).

Film work includes: *Snow White & the Huntsman.*

Television work includes: *Citizen Charlie; Burton & Taylor; The Bible; Trial and Retribution; Tiberius Gracchus; The Ten Commandments; Jason & the Argonauts; The Echo; The Knock.*



Clare Higgins
Verity

Clare is the winner of three Olivier Awards for Best Actress for her performances in *Sweet Bird of Youth* (also London Critics' Circle Theatre and Time Out Readers' Awards), *Vincent in Brixton* (also London Critics' Circle Theatre and Evening Standard Awards), and *Hecuba*. She was nominated for a Tony Award for her performance in *Vincent in Brixton* (National Theatre) and three Olivier Awards for *Napoli Milionaria* (National Theatre), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Greenwich/Mermaid), *Death of a Salesman* (West End).

Other theatre work includes: *A Delicate Balance* (Broadway); *Other Desert Cities* (Old Vic); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Theatre Royal Bath); *Oedipus, All's Well that Ends Well, Richard III, King Lear, Hamlet, The Absence of War, The Children's Hour, A Slight Ache/Landscape* (National Theatre); *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan, The Night of the Iguana, A Letter of Resignation* (West End); *Phaedra* (Donmar Warehouse); *Mrs. Klein* (Almeida); *The Fever* (Royal Court); *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Anthony and Cleopatra* (RSC).

Film work includes: *The Golden Compass*; Woody Allen's *Cassandra's Dream; Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont; Stage Beauty; The House of Mirth; Hellraiser; Hellbound: Hellraiser II; The Libertine; I Give It a Year.*

Recent television includes: *Downton Abbey; Shameless; Parade's End; Rogue – Series II*.



Laura Smithers
Pritti

Laura trained at Drama Studio: Lyric Theatre Belfast.

Theatre work includes: *Punk Rock, 55 Days* (Lyric Theatre Belfast); *Paradise Lost* (Brian Friel Theatre).

Film work includes: *Swinging with the Finkles.*



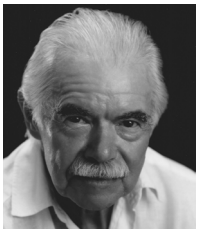
Ryan Wichert
Josh

Previously at Arcola: *Shrapnel: 34 Fragments of a Massacre, Punch & Judy.*

Theatre work includes: *King Lear, Little Pieces of Gold* (Cockpit Theatre); *RETZ's The Trial* (Barbican); *The Significant Other Festival* (Park Theatre); *Click* (Riverside Studios), *The Woyzeck* (UK Tour), *The Fantastical Adventures of [Not] Being with You* (Blue Elephant Theatre); *Debris* (Brockley Jack); *Old Rabbis in the Sky* (Tristan Bates); *As You Like It* (White Bear Theatre).

Film work includes: *Abschussfahrt; Reign of the General; The Redeeming; Own Worst Enemy; Hi Fonyod!; Demon; Geschwister (Siblings); Maria an Callas.*

Television work includes: *The Unlikely Events In The Life Of...; Flirt English 2.*



John Atterbury
Dickie

Theatre work includes: *The Unquiet Grace of Garcia Lorca* (Drayton Arms); *Dead Funny* (Old Red Lion); *The Woman in Black, Our Town, Rolls Hyphen Royce, Mr. Cinders* (West End); *Buried Child* (Upstairs at the Gatehouse); *Studies for a Portrait* (King's Head); *Ivanov, The Wild Duck* (Donmar Warehouse); *Macbeth, Two Princes, Arcadia, The Birthday Party* (Theatr Clwyd); *84 Charing Cross Road, Salad Days* (UK Tour); *Guys & Dolls, Carousel* (Leicester Haymarket); *Bent* (National Theatre/West End); *Cinderella* (Players' Theatre); *Hamlet* (Millfield Theatre London); *Sleuth* (English Theatre of Hamburg); *Black Comedy* (Theatre Museum); *No Sex Please, We're British* (Strand Theatre); *Bourne in a Handbag* (Key Theatre Peterborough).

Film work includes: *Anna Karenina; Robin Hood; Gin & Dry; Harry Potter & the Order of the Phoenix; The Golden Age; Gosford Park; Parent Trap; Nasser of Egypt*.

Television work includes: *Midsomer Murders; The Jump; Scarlett; The Changeling; Blind Justice; Doctor Who*.

Mehmet Ergen
Director

Mehmet Ergen has been Artistic Director of Arcola Theatre since founding it in 2000. Previously he was Artistic Director of the Southwark Playhouse (which he co-founded) from 1993 to 1999, and Associate Producer at BAC. Mehmet is also Artistic Director of Arcola Istanbul (Talimhane Theatre), which he founded in 2008. He has won a variety of awards for his work including: the *Time Out* Award for Outstanding Achievement, a *Time Out* Award for Best Fringe Production, the Angela Carter Award, the Peter Brook Empty Space Award and the WhatsOnStage Award for Best New Musical. His recent productions at Arcola Theatre include: *Shrapnel:*

34 Fragments of a Massacre, Don Gil of the Green Breeches, Mare Rider, Sweet Smell of Success and *The Painter.*

Mark Jagasia
Writer

Mark Jagasia is a former staff journalist on the *Evening Standard*, a former showbusiness editor of the *Daily Express* and a contributor to other newspapers including the *Guardian* and *Sunday Telegraph*. He is originally from Bolton but has lived in London for the past 20 years. *Clarion* is his first stage-play.

Anthony Lamble
Designer

Previously at Arcola: *Shrapnel: 34 Fragments of a Massacre, Ghost from a Perfect Place.*

Theatre work includes: *Boa* (Trafalgar Studios), *The Devil Masters, Spoiling* (also Stratford East) Ciara, T*he Artist Man and The Mother Woman, The Arthur Conan Doyle Appreciation Society* (Traverse Theatre); *Peter Pan and the Designers of The Caribbean* (Bloomsbury); *The Tempest* (RSC and Ohio); *Omeros* (The Globe Theatre); *Three Sisters, Shivered* (Southwark Playhouse); *The One* (Soho Theatre); Charlie F (UK tour and Toronto); *Jackie The Musical* (Gardyne Theatre, Dundee); *Shush, The Passing, The East Pier, Bookworms, The Comedy of Errors and The Playboy of the Western World* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin); *For Once* (Pentabus); *Relatively Speaking* (Watermill); *The Complaint, Everything is Illuminated* (Hampstead); *The Price* (West End/Tricycle/Tour); *The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Translations, Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads, A Midsummer Night's Dream, As You Like It* (National Theatre); *Measure for Measure, Richard III, The Roman Actor, King Baby* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *The Entertainer* (Old Vic) as well as numerous productions for the Royal Court, Menier Chocolate Factory, West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Bush Theatre.

Dance and opera work includes: *Facing Viv* (English National

Ballet), *L'Orfeo* (Japan tour), *Palace in the Sky* (English National Opera) and *Broken Fiction* (Royal Opera House).

David Howe
Lighting Designer

West End credits include: *Quartermaine's Terms: Bette & Joan, Birdsong, My Trip Down the Pink Carpet, Sweet Charity, Mrs Warren's Profession, Private Lives, A Christmas Carol, The Norman Conquests, The Last Five Years and Tick Tick Boom, Maria Friedman Re-Arranged, Rent, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Pageant, Forbidden Broadway,. Sweet Charity,*
Maria Friedman, La Cage aux Folles, Take Flight, The Last Five Years.

Broadway credits include: *Private Lives, The Norman Conquests Trilogy, Primo.*

UK tours include: *Chin Chin, 42nd Street, The Man from Stratford, Oklahoma, Little Shop of Horrors, Singing in the Rain, Seven Brides For Seven Brothers, Our House, Fiddler on the Roof, South Pacific, Disney's Beauty and the Beast, Me and My Girl, Carousel.*

Neil McKeown
Music and Sound Designer

Previously at Arcola: *Mahmud ile Yezida, The Intruder & The Bald Prima Donna, Between Us, Say Your Name, Theatre Uncut, Mare Rider.*

Other work as Sound Designer: *Troilus & Cressida / Coriolanus* (Tristan Bates); *The Water's Edge, When the Bulbul Stopped Singing* (Talimhane); *Dead in the Water* (Brighton Fringe); *Shang-a-Lang* (King's Head); *The Door* (Park Theatre); *Merchant of Venice, Mandrake* (Jack Studio Theatre); *Iron* (Old Red Lion Theatre); *You Me Bum Bum Train* (Empire House, Stratford).

As Sound Engineer: *The Blues Brothers Live, Soul to Soul,*

The Rat Pack Live (Edinburgh Fringe).

Other work includes: Sound No 2 for *Assassins* (Menier Chocolate Factory); *Sound Operator for 1984* (Headlong / tour); Sound/Lighting Operator for *A Conversation* (Yard Theatre), *Bad Boy Eddie* (Edinburgh Fringe) and *The Secret Garden* (The Space); Assistant Technician for N.O.W.'14 Festival (Yard Theatre).

Kay Michael
Assistant Director

Kay Michael trained as a director at Drama Centre London and read English & Theatre Studies at Warwick University.

Directing credits include: *A Local Boy* (Pleasance); *Then Silence* (Tristan Bates); *Property* and *Clarion* (PlayWROUGHT, Arcola); *True or False* (Theatre Uncut, Arcola); *Free Fall* (for Invertigo, Guildhall School of Music and Drama); *The Lodger and Home* (Ovalhouse); *Just One* (Lost Theatre); *The Nth Degree* (Old Red Lion and Rosemary Branch); *Mercury Fur* (site specific, Leamington Spa).

Credits as assistant director include: *2071* (Royal Court); *An Intervention* (Paines Plough, Watford Palace Theatre); *Don Gil of the Green Breeches* (Theatre Royal Bath, Arcola, Belgrade Theatre Coventry); *Tender Napalm* (Southwark Playhouse).

Marj McDaid
Voice and Accent Coach

Previously at Arcola: *Shrapnel: 34 Fragments of a Massacre, Sweet Smell of Success, Goodbye Barcelona, How the World Began*.

Other work includes: *Portia Coughlan* (Old Red Lion); *Once* (Phoenix Theatre, West End); *Peer Gynt* (BBC); *Top Girls* (Out of Joint tour); *A Hard Rain* (Above the Stag); *Frozen* (Fingersmiths tour); *A Boy's Life* (King's Head Theatre); *Goodnight Mrs Calabash, Guys and Dolls, The Drowsy Chaperone* (Upstairs at the Gatehouse).

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by Mark Jagasia

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This script was published during the rehearsal process so that there will be minor differences between the printed version and the staged version.

Special thanks go to Angeli Macfarlane and Gabriel Range for all the years of work in Newburgh Street, to Charles Harrison for his invaluable advice and to Mark Rylance for reading an unsolicited manuscript and acting on it.

I would also like to thank: Jack Bradley, Lucy Briers, Ralph Britton, Nick Connaughton, Mehmet Ergen, Sonia Friedman, Kathryn Knight, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Jenny McCartney, Kay Michael, Leyla Nazli, Mel Shewan, Terri Paddock, Sara Putt, Lee Magiday, Peter Thompson at PlayerPlaywrights, Jane Villiers and all at Sayle Screen.

For Mum, Dad and Orla

SUGGESTIONS FOR STAGING

A suggested set backdrop is a screen of semi-opaque black glass across the entire back of the stage.

Silhouettes of o/s cast members are seen moving behind this screen to give the impression of an office behind the foreground action.

At the start of each scene a laser surtitle is projected onto the glass giving the location and time of the scene.

A large illuminated red sign reading the *"Daily Clarion*" hangs above the frosted screen at the rear of the set. Ideally the letters should be about 6' tall. At full brightness the sign dominates the set, burns with fierce intensity and casts a sulphurous glow over the action. It should be dimmed during scenes so as not to become consistently obtrusive.

As the play progresses the lights on the sign should fizzle out, spark and fuse to reflect the descent into chaos.

A large office table on castors, one smaller table and eight office chairs will suffice as furniture. One of the chairs should be stable enough to stand on. A significantly larger throne-like office chair is used as the editor's chair in the conference room scenes and his personal chair in his office scenes.

The large table occupies centre stage during the conference room scenes.

It is pushed upstage towards the rear screen in the newsroom scenes and placed diagonally stage left / downstage left and (if possible) made smaller to represent the editor's desk in the editor's office scenes.

Computer monitors and desk telephones are used as set dressing on the table for the newsroom scenes / editor's office scenes.

In all three locations downstage facing the audience represents the office windows.

"Is it not the case that many of the notabilities who have done the world most scaith were men of appearance and manners so eccentric as to awake it to the loudest laughter in the intervals of the groans they have wrung from it?".

Lewis Spence, 1940.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

MORRIS HONEYSPOON	Newspaper Editor, Sixties
VERITY STOKES	Newspaper Columnist, Sixties
ALBERT DUFFY	News Editor, Fifties
CLIVE PUMFREY	A Corporate Executive, Fifties
JOSHUA MOON	A Journalist, Late Twenties
PRITTI SINGH	A Trainee Journalist, Early Twenties
COLIN HAYWARD-MURRAY	A Ghost, Fifties
DICKIE DUFOIS	An Astrologer, Late Sixties
FELIX	A Radio Journalist, Forties
KEV	A Comedian, Thirties

TWO DRUMMER BOYS

JOURNALISTS

Scene One

The action takes place on a single day in a newspaper office in central London in 2015.

AT RISE: *Conference Room, 7.40am.*

VERITY STOKES *stands and looks out through the conference room window.*

VERITY *is a striking woman in her sixties. She has been badly battered by life, but retains the autumnal vestiges of what must have been a smouldering glamour.*

She is expensively dressed and uses a silver topped cane to support a bad leg.

VERITY*'s expensive handbag sits on the table.*

There is a telephone on the conference table.

An unseen radio is heard in the background.

RADIO: A spokesman for Hezbollah warned the latest Israeli action would provoke 'unprecedented' retaliation.

VERITY *turns and goes to the conference table. She produces a bottle of wine from her handbag and a small cup.*

She pours the wine into the cup and takes a swig.

Allegations of violent intimidation in the latest round of elections in Ukraine have been dismissed by a

government spokesman. But opposition activists claim corruption and instability –

VERITY *produces a compact from her handbag. She studies her face sorrowfully.*

VERITY Oh, darling.

VERITY *puts down the mirror. She knocks a lipstick onto the floor.*

Oh balls.

RADIO: In America federal investigators have announced a third round of charges against the investment arms of three Wall Street banks –

In reaching for the lipstick **VERITY** *spills the wine on the desk.*

VERITY Double balls! For God's sake!

A voice is heard through the speaker of the telephone on the desk.

PRODUCER *(Off)* Okay Ms Stokes. You're live in ten seconds.

VERITY *attempts to mop up the wine with a pair of tights from her handbag.*

VERITY Right, right. Christ.

The loud disembodied voice of **FELIX**, *the presenter of the news programme.*

FELIX *(Off)* It's coming up to seven forty five am. Now are newspapers on the brink of extinction and are they worth saving? With yet another think-tank predicting the demise of the industry we're joined in the studio by political stand-up Kev Homer and on the line by the veteran columnist Verity Stokes.

VERITY *leans into the phone.*

VERITY Good morning one and all.

We see the silhouettes of **FELIX** *and* **KEV** *sat opposite each other across a small table stage right in an area representing a radio studio.*

VERITY *can only hear these characters through the speaker phone.*

KEV *is a self-righteous man in his late twenties.*

FELIX *is urbane and in his forties.*

The dramatic focus is on **VERITY**. *The others remain shadows.*

KEV Yeah.

FELIX Verity Stokes. You're about to celebrate your hundred and twenty fifth birthday.

VERITY Good grief.

FELIX Let me clarify that: the *Daily Clarion* is about to celebrate one hundred and twenty five years as a national newspaper.

VERITY *(good humour)* I expect a bouquet by way of apology. A big one.

FELIX Absolutely. So Verity. Birthdays aside: scandals, police investigations, plunging circulation, vanishing revenue and an online generation who have never bought a newspaper and never will. It's the end, isn't it?

VERITY Only a fool would claim there's no problem. But what I would say is –

KEV Verity Stokes is here under false pretences.

VERITY What I would say is –

KEV She's from the *Clarion* and the *Clarion* isn't a newspaper.

VERITY I'm sitting in the office. It seems very like a newspaper to me.

KEV It's a pathetic comic. Anyone who works for it should be ashamed.

FELIX Rather strong stuff. Verity Stokes, do you feel ashamed?

VERITY Oh I never believed in shame. Despite the best efforts of Sister Perpetua.

KEV No, you should be ashamed, right.

VERITY Sorry, who is this excitable gentleman?

KEV A bloke who's seen the damage caused by your so-called journalism.

VERITY You seem very full of pep. What did you have for breakfast?

KEV Camomile tea. You don't fool anyone. The right wing press is –

VERITY I don't want to fool anyone. I expected a civilised discussion about –

KEV No because –

FELIX Let Verity have her say, we'll come to you next.

VERITY Thank you. The press – right wing or left wing – is a mainstay of the democratic process in this country –

KEV No it isn't right –

VERITY – and speaking as someone who spent the majority of her career as a foreign correspondent –

KEV If you were this great foreign correspondent, right, why do you work for such a diabolical paper? Paedophiles, Islam, asylum seekers, house prices.

VERITY The *Clarion* is an issue-led newspaper. My wonderful editor, Morris Honeyspoon, is a man of strong convictions and –

KEV And your proprietor –

VERITY The proprietor –

KEV What's the name of his other business?

VERITY The proprietor is –

KEV Piggy Honkers. "Britain's Bounciest Chain of Topless Hamburger Restaurants". You must be so proud.

VERITY I think that –

KEV And he's Cypriot. Cypriot, right?

VERITY So what?

KEV So what? Hypocrisy. Benny Panagakos is an immigrant. And you've splashed anti-immigrant stories on the front page for over three hundred days in a row. It's insane. That nut-job – the 'patriotic suicide bomber'. I bet he read the *Clarion*.

VERITY Do you have any evidence for that?

KEV Not specifically but –

VERITY Then be extremely careful.

FELIX Yes of course we'd clarify for the record there is absolutely no suggestion that Colin Hayward-Murray was influenced by the *Clarion* or indeed any other newspaper. But, Verity, it is true to say that the *Clarion* has run one of the most vociferous campaigns in newspaper history. The paper has splashed on immigration and related issues every single day for a year.

VERITY Well –

KEV Yeah, right this is the editorial from the *Sentinel* two weeks ago.

FELIX The *Sentinel* being a newspaper of which left wing comics presumably approve?

KEV More or less, yeah.

VERITY The *Sentinel* is a very good newspaper. I wouldn't disagree.

KEV Right, this is what the *Sentinel* says about your editor. "Only the fact the *Clarion* is so palpably failing prevents Morris Honeyspoon's neo-Mosleyite posturing from being a profound cause of concern. The *Clarion* possesses the editorial authority of a drunk attempting to punch himself on the nose – and missing".

VERITY Utter tosh.

FELIX Still you must admit the *Clarion* has the reputation of being one of the more eccentric national newspapers –

VERITY I'll admit nothing of the sort thank you very much. British newspapers have always been combative. One thinks, doesn't one, of the rumbustious energy of Hogarth and Gillray. And moreover –

KEV So you reckon you're proud, do you? Proud of working for the *Daily Clarion*?

VERITY Oh for heaven's sake! I refuse to be traduced by the disembodied voice of some agit-prop malcontent. Yes I'm proud. I'm proud of British newspapers and you can cancel the hearse and stand down the mourners because I fully expect the *Clarion* and its fine journalists to be around for a long time yet. Longer than you anyway.

FELIX Well on that emphatic note I think we better leave it. Kev Homer and the redoubtable Verity Stokes thank you very much.

KEV Whatever.

VERITY *leans into the phone and raises her voice.*

VERITY Who on earth was that appalling little shit?

KEV *(fading)* You what?

VERITY *(faux innocence)* I'm not still on air, am I? Silly me, how mortifying.

FELIX *(fading out)* We apologise for the, er, glitch. So over to Alex for the weather. And Alex we should brace ourselves for something rather dramatic by the close of play –

The light dims in the conference room, leaving **VERITY** *in near darkness.*

Two drummer boys enter, one at each side of the stage.

The boys each have a single drum hung round their chest.

They are dressed in long shorts and uniform shirts that suggest non-specific twentieth-century militarism.

The boys beat out a tattoo with disciplined but exaggerated arm movements and march on the spot… The drum skins are dusted with white powder.

The ghost of **COLIN HAYWARD-MURRAY** *enters centre stage right. He is spot-lit, the area around him is in darkness.*

HAYWARD-MURRAY *is a fat man. His appearance suggests something Pickwickian and John Bull-ish has risen from the grave. He wears a large navy blazer, maroon trousers and a plastic Union Jack bowler hat. His face is white with dark circles round the eyes. He wears a fixed, dead smile. A watch chain hangs from his blazer.*

HAYWARD-MURRAY *carries a small bugle.*

HAYWARD-MURRAY *stands down stage centre.*

The drumming stops.

Facing first left, then right, then towards the audience **HAYWARD-MURRAY** *plays a call to arms on the bugle – a few notes that sound militaristic and stirring.*

Blackout.