

NVT
Newsletter

MAY
2008

NEXT
PRODUCTION

"The Anniversary"

21 - 28 June

Box Office (24hr)
01273 746118
Other enquiries
01273 808353

NEW VENTURE
T H E A T R E

Bedford Place
Brighton BN1 2PT
Info@newventure.org.uk
www.newventure.org.uk

Two Fringe productions in May



Mojo

by Jez Butterworth
Directed by Frank McCabe
3-17 May 2008

Jez Butterworth's Olivier-award winning play, written in the early 1990s, is an acknowledged classic of the 'in-yer-face' genre. The story is set at The Atlantic Club, Soho, in the late '50s, and charts the grisly events of a drug-fuelled weekend bookended by two murders.

Silver Jonny is a teen singing sensation on the brink of fame and fortune, and his friends who work at The Atlantic are desperate for a stake in his success. On the brink of deal being struck with a West End impresario to take Jonny to America, there's a small hitch - the club's owner is found sawn in half in two dustbins, and Jonny is 'stolen' from under their noses. What follows for the boys at the Atlantic is a white-knuckle weekend of breathless terror (exacerbated by the consumption of vast amounts of stolen slimming pills), as they barricade themselves inside the club and wait for the inevitable return of the murderers.



Matthew Houghton (Potts) & Janna Fox (Silver Jonny)

Photo by Wiz

Mojo pushes each of its six characters (each beautifully drawn) to their emotional and psychological extremes, and charts the crumbling of their allegiances and friendships with appalling clarity. Its comedy is reliant on highly skilled performances and an accelerated, heightened naturalism that forces the play to crackle with pace and energy.

Butterworth's first full-length play has the "atmosphere of cartoon Tarantino" (*Time Out*), and is "a jet-black comedy, which arouses shudders of amusement and laughter. It describes a breed apart - bantering, bickering ruffians who usually do the indecent thing." (*Evening Standard*).

(Please note that Mojo contains frequent and extreme bad language.)



Photo by Strat Mastoris

Martin Kiss & Debbie MacKenzie

Intimate Encounters

Devised and choreographed
by Saskia Ulrike Schilling
20 - 25 May

Intimacy

n. the condition of being intimate; a close, familiar, and usually affectionate or loving personal relationship with another person or group.

There are no spectators at the New Venture Theatre's second 2008 Fringe festival production, only participants.

Intimate Encounters is an interactive meditation on the concept of intimacy,

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Ticket reservations -
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Maud Jinks and Ernie Boxall

Long-term NVT members will be sorry to learn of the deaths recently of two of our strongest supporters, Maud Jinks and Ernie Boxall. The funerals of them both were remarkable for the large numbers of people attending and representing the many different aspects of their lives, including contingents from the theatre.

Both devoted their lives to their families and to public service. - Maud as a teacher and Ernie as an airman and police officer, and both were NVT members for several decades. Ernie was an actor who was particularly good at comedy. His last appearance was a comic masterpiece in Barefoot in the Park.

Maud's husband, Reg, and Ernie's daughter, Pat, are two of our most admired actor/directors. We send them both, and their families, our deepest sympathy.

IN MEMORIAM ERNEST JOHN BOXALL



1920 - 2008
with Sheelagh Baker
in FILUMENA 1981

Intimate Encounters (continued from page 1)

offering every individual a unique, tailor-made journey. Each audience member is individually led through a series of interactive experiences with performers, each of which explores different aspects of intimacy.

The production builds on a previous, similar and very successful performance installation I have directed for my Degree show in 2006. That show received warm praise from participants, with feedback including "moving and heartfelt...I felt beautiful when I left", "now that's what I call a relaxing ex-

perience...the atmosphere was intoxicating", to even "nothing can happen today to destroy this positive feeling...this show should be available on prescription on the NHS"!

The studio will be transformed into an adventurous, unfamiliar space that allows participants a safe, private, sensual experience where imagination and emotion will unfold. By exploring light and space, touch, taste, smell and sound, the 'audience' will look afresh at concepts of intimacy - their relationships with others and their surroundings. By exciting different senses, the various

stages of the journey will reveal and explore different aspects of intimacy. Performers' responsiveness to the individual will mean that every person's intimate encounter will be unlike any other.

With installations in the South Hall also examining individuals' relations and the body, this production is something new and original for the theatre. Be daring; be challenged and rewarded - come and be part of it!

Performances involve physical contact with performers and extreme darkness.

Ulrike Schilling

Tickets

**For "INTIMATE ENCOUNTERS" - please telephone
the Brighton Dome box office on 709709**

To: The Box Office Manager, NVT, Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

Please reserve for me _____ tickets for "MOJO"

Saturday 3 May to Saturday 17 May at 7.45 pm

Matinees on Sundays 4 May & 11 May (no performances on Mondays)

Tickets: £7.50 (Friends £6.50) (Last Friday & Saturday £9 & £8)

DATE: _____

NAME: _____ Membership no. _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE: _____

"Advice to Actors"

"Stage acting is the art of keeping a large group of people from coughing."

Ralph Richardson

"What happens nowadays is that audiences have become the least important people in the theatre; actors tend to work for their own enjoyment and that is fatal."

Joss Ackland

"You can't really know how to act until you get in front of an audience. They will tell you what you can do. Sometimes you mustn't give way to them because they want you to be sentimental or something, but it's not until you get that relationship with an audience that you know your own power, you know how far you can take things."

Eileen Atkins

"If, when you start as an actor, you do not have consistent exposure to performing in front of an audience, you cannot make decisions, you cannot come to an understanding of how the relationship with that audience works, not only on you and your nerves, but on you and the character you're playing and the characters you're playing with in the play. You cannot understand how to dominate them, how to provoke them, how to romance them.

The audience is where you learn - in comedy, for instance, where the laughs are. In acting, alone among the interpretive arts, the audience is the fourth player, the fifth dimension in the actor's art. You can sit and talk about acting, you can do it in class, but until you hit the audience you do not begin to learn how to act. Most actors will tell you, if they have any intelligence, that the audience is the maker of the play."

Daniel Massey

Hedda Gabler in 2008 - by guest reviewer Barry Hewlett-Davies

Housewife, 37, bored (married to wrong guy) seeks economist, revolutionary, poet or similar, for action-packed relationship. Contact H. Gabler. Box

Had Hedda Tesman (née Gabler) been alive now, she'd have put an ad along those lines in The Guardian. But Hedda's not a 21st century girl. She's firmly where Ibsen put her, trapped in middle class provincial Norway in the 1890's.

Which is where I put my cards on the table. I don't go along with Helen Caton's view of this production. The play's truths may be universal and timeless; Hedda's situation is specific. Dressing the play in a contemporary setting makes Hedda out to be indulged and silly. And it raises questions which don't arise in the original text. Like why does Hedda marry a man she doesn't like?

Having said that, I acknowledge this production has some good acting. Vicky Jarvis's Hedda, the most destructive woman in the theatre since Lady Macbeth, is

glacial in the manner of a 1930s Hollywood movie star. You expect to see her smoke a cigarette in a long black holder as she drapes herself about the furniture. Her ice maiden approach to her husband, Tesman, makes you wonder how they got around to conceiving a child. Tesman is a thankless part, down-trodden wretch that he is. You feel glad for David Richards playing him that he comes into his own eventually.

It has never occurred to me that Judge Brack might be gay. As played here by Doug Devaney, he comes over camp and roguish. It makes you think again about what he says to Hedda about three-way relationships. Ibsen was writing pre-Freud, but Hedda does threaten to shoot the judge for "coming in the back way". Better not to go down that route, perhaps, but it does give another slant to his relationship with both Hedda and her former lover, Lovborg.

Lovborg is Nick Richards, doing a

big, blustering Jack the Lad, over the top. Could this man really have put together an impressive thesis about the economic future? His PA, Thea, is in love with him, and, like Tesman, she gets something redemptive to do at the end.

Sheelagh Baker and Melanie Cooke have minor parts and do them well.

I didn't hear everything. Hedda's feeding the manuscripts into the stove ("I'm burning your child, Thea!" is inaudible.

Hedda keeps her father's pistols (and the Lovborg manuscript she steals) in a box like a baby's coffin. Meaningful plotting or inspired accident?

I think it is a major mistake to announce in advance that Hedda is pregnant. As an actress, it robs her of part of her performance. It also looks as if the director doesn't credit the audience with enough intelligence to work things out for themselves.

A melodramatic but absorbing evening in the theatre.

Core Productions

To submit a written text and put yourself forwards to direct it please send copy of the script accompanied by a covering sheet not more than one A4 to include:

Your name and contact details

Dates when you are unavailable to rehearse or perform

Your creative vision for the play

If you wish to submit a piece of work that is yet to be created please send in an A4 sheet covering the following:

Your name and contact details

Dates when you are unavailable to rehearse or perform

A description of the piece intend to create

You may also send in; images, a short video, or other source material to support your submission.

If you wish to put yourself forwards as a director but have no play in mind. Please send your C.V.

If you wish to submit a play but do not wish to direct please forward a copy of the play.

Entertainment Events

These events will have close links with the acting and directors classes and will provide a safe and supporting platform for actors and directors to show their work and hone their skills. The evening events will offer an opportunity for the community as a whole to come together and - as an added bonus - they will form an integral part of our fundraising activities.

NVT Events Co-ordinator

If you would like to co-ordinate this series of events please send an A4 sheet listing your vision and what you would bring to this endeavour.

NVT Naked

NVT Naked will take the shape of a series of scheduled directed performance evenings which will enable artists; singer song-writers, (acoustic only), stand up, sketches, new writing, etc to develop and hone their acts. We will be working with people who

have the basis of an act which they wish to develop to its fullest potential. The projects will entail mentoring.

NVT Naked Co-ordinator

If you would like to co-ordinate the NVT Naked series please send your C.V. including also an A4 sheet explaining how you would deliver and shape this series of events throughout the season.

NVT Naked Directors/Coaches

To put yourself forwards to direct or coach acts and artists within the NVT Naked series please send a C.V. and a paragraph describing why you wish to do so and what you would bring.

Talks and Master Class Events

A series of talks and master-classes on various aspects of theatre craft and industry related topics. Arts professionals and arts organisations will be invited to share their knowledge and experience with our members. We hope to cover things such as; casting, directing, stage craft, professional photographs & CV's, stage presence. As a part of this series we will be inviting longstanding members to share their unique experience of the theatre with us.

Talks & Master Class Co-ordinator

If you would like to be considered to co-ordinate the series of talks and master-classes over the course of the season please send in an A4 sheet covering your vision for this.

Acting Class & Master Class Tutors

If you would like to be considered to deliver a series of acting classes or a master-class please send your C.V. in addition to a short paragraph stating the type of class you would like to deliver.

NOTE: Please note that any of these roles could be filled by more than one person, we welcome innovative working partnerships.

Please mail all submissions to:

Helen Caton – Artistic Director

New Venture Theatre

Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

Welcome to the NVT!

For all members who recently joined the theatre and for everybody who would like to get involved, we will be hosting an **OPEN THEATRE** evening on Tuesday the 29th April 2008 at 7.30pm.

This is your chance to meet some of the people running the theatre and talk to them about possibilities to get involved in all aspects of the theatre and its productions. Further you can explore the

theatre on a little tour. We are looking forward to meeting you!!!

Ulrike Schilling,
NVT Production Manager

Dear Editor,

I was amused by the newsletter advertisement for The Theatre Booty sale on 29th March and decided to come along on the bus from Lewes. It's no big deal for Lewesians to come to Brighton by bus, but I know to Brightonians the reverse journey is comparable to travelling to the further reaches of Outer Mongolia - the world finishes at the city boundary, but at the end of such a perilous journey I had a really enjoyable morning meeting the people running the stalls, a free cup of tea, a delicious lunch with wine, and, oh yes, I won the raffle. But where were other members of NVT? Was it the attitude that is common to so many societies? "Oh, I don't need to go. Somebody else will be there." The stallholders certainly outnumbered the customers during the two hours that I was there. It's obviously the theatre's loss that not more members were around spending money, but I can't help feeling that the theatre's supporters(?) missed out on a very pleasant social occasion and a pleasurable way to help New Venture.

Yours sincerely,

Anon of Lewes

Dear Editor,

As an occasional visitor to the theatre over the years I have enjoyed many performances in both the venues. The Main Theatre I have thought was perfect for some of your plays and felt sad to hear that it needed to be closed for fire regulations (I think).

I read in one of your newsletters last year that you were hoping to reopen the Main Theatre in the not too distant future. Since then there seems to be silence in the newsletter and I am wondering if it is likely to be functioning again this year. Perhaps someone could give me some up to date information regarding the progress.

Best regards,

Rosie Gordon

FUNDRAISING

A big thank you to Liz Brunt who not only has sent a donation but backed this up with some interesting fundraising ideas. One is that we might design our own greetings cards . . . Anyone up for organising this?

Mike Stubbs

Editor's notes:

Theatre Booty raised **£151.04** excluding the bar. Members report that it was a fun day, those that didn't attend missed a treat.

Also, 37 people have "adopted a brick" for a total of £185.

Credit for the amazing giant poster photograph of the outside of the NVT building goes to Strat Mastoris.

Action Theatre

The Friends' Centre, Brighton, is offering a one day workshop on 10th May, 10am - 4pm at their Ivory Place venue.

"Action Theatre is a starting point for body-orientated theatre improvisation, which develops movement, vocal and language skills. It encourages playful and spontaneous expression". £25 (reduced fees available in some circumstances).

Details contact 01273 689265 (office hours).

Dear New Venture Theatre,

Please accept the enclosed cheque which I am giving to the Theatre in memory of my husband, Derek Mason, who died 25th October 2004.

Derek was as founder member of the club, joining soon after he left school, and his first acting role at 17 was a man of 85! He went on to play many parts, and fittingly, his last at New Venture was Lear in Martin Nichols' production. He also was at various times Admin Director and Artistic Director. He edited the newsletter for over thirty years and was Membership Secretary for about the same length of time.

I am grateful to New Venture for the kindness shown to me since his death, and am proud to be a member of the 'stuffing team'.

With every good wish,

Christine Mason

National Mills' Day

is when all UK-wide windmills (and all mills otherwise powered) open to the public for the day. This year on 11th May, the West Blatchington Windmill at Holmes Avenue, Hove, will be open from 11am until 5pm, including events of; radio hams at work, working engines and steam pumps, lace-making, flour grinding, teas, cakes and more.

Please support this local event if you can and publicise it where you can. From the 11th May onwards, the mill will then open each Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday from 2.30 until 5pm. Volunteer guides and tea-makers are still required if you can spare any time: if interested please contact Peter Hill on 01273 776017.

'Friends of the Mill' membership, allowing free entry is available at £1 (individual) or £5 (family) per annum.

Chris