

Coming
5 - 12 March
The Well
By ??????????
Directed by
Jonathan Brown

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NEW VENTURE
T H E A T R E

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“Speed-The-Plow”

By David Mamet

Directed by Steven O’Shea

22-29 January

“Language as dramatic action”. I’ve heard and read many attempts to define David Mamet’s particularly acute, precise and idiosyncratic use of idiomatic dialogue, but this phrase I believe best sums up his particular approach to the dramatic interaction of his characters. Nowhere is his skill for dialogue more dazzlingly deployed than in his brutally satirical black comedy ‘Speed-the-Plow’.

Photo by Strat Mastoris



L-R Steven O’Shea as Fox, Robert Cohen as Gould,
and Marie Ellis as Karen

David Mamet has over the past thirty years or so established himself as one of America’s most influential, provocative and widely performed contemporary playwrights. As an actor I have been fortunate to have participated in several productions of Mamet’s plays and I found each of these experiences to be both thrilling and challenging, in particular with regard to delivering his distinctive, energetically pulsating and evocative language.

Having read and enjoyed ‘Speed-The-Plow’ on numerous occasions and having also been lucky enough to have seen the original New York production, (famous for its inclusion of Madonna in

the cast), and the original National Theatre production, I jumped at the chance when presented with the opportunity to direct it at the NVT.

The plot revolves around the perennial conflict of ‘art versus commerce’, in this case within the world of the Hollywood movie industry. Charlie Fox, a struggling movie producer, brings to his long-time friend Bobby Gould, a newly promoted studio boss, a sure-fire hit movie project with a major star attached. Gould appears certain to attain the necessary ‘green light’ to begin production until the unexpected intervention of his temporary secretary. It’s a chillingly caustic, Faustian study of moral temptation presenting a perceptively coruscating dissection of the corrupt world of the American movie making business and the society it claims to represent. Throughout it is permeated with Mamet’s trade mark expletive-filled, rapid-fire dialogue, or to put it another way, his use of “language as dramatic action”.

This is my first production at the NVT and my immense enjoyment of the experience has been greatly enhanced by the wonderful effort and support shown to me by the staff and crew, and the cast including NVT veteran, Robert Cohen and Marie Ellis in her first appearance at the NVT.

Steven O’Shea

The Studio
New Venture Theatre

7.45pm - Saturday 22 January &
Tuesday-Saturday 25-29 January
Matinee: Sunday 23 January – 2.30pm
(no performance Monday 24 January)

Calling all directors

If you have not submitted a proposal for the season 2011-2012 and would like to do so, please contact me. The deadline for submitting proposals is February 19th and if you would like to have a chat about a play, the production process or the proposal, please contact me in good time before submitting your proposal.
ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk

Acting Classes

10, 17, 24, 31 January and 7 February – Five Characters in Search of Actors – Andrew Allen
14, 21, 28 February and 7, 14 March – Exploring masks – Sarah Davies

Seance in the Main Theatre

On Saturday, 12th February 2011 we are hosting a Séance in the Main Theatre as part of Fundraising for the refurbishment of the theatre. Spaces are limited.

For more information please contact Sam at samjholland66@aol.co.uk

Working Toward Performance

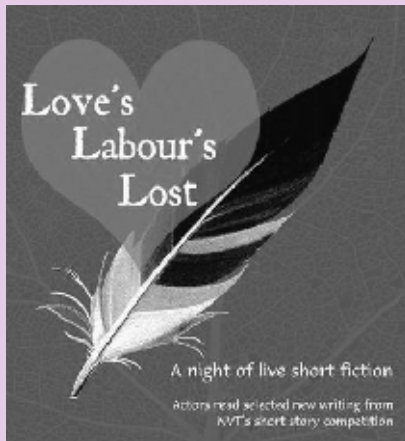
A course of eight classes, (plus a performance night), designed to replicate the creative process undertaken when engaged on a professional theatre production, right from the initial read-through to the eventual performance.

Particular emphasis will be placed on the process of how to effectively break-down and analyse text ensuring a complete understanding of the given circumstances of the action and how best to communicate the story to the audience in the most believable and compelling way possible, and to the full potential of the actor's own creative talents and dramatic imagination.

Steven O'Shea is a teacher, actor and director. He was formerly a member of the Royal National Theatre Company and Artistic Director of the Mandrake Theatre Company.

Places are limited, please book at ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk

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Love's Labour's Lost

A night of live short fiction

Friday 11 February 7.45pm £6 (£5 NVT Associates)

Please submit your short stories of 1500 words maximum on the theme of 'Love's Labour's Lost' (feel free to interpret it 'as you like it'). Selected stories will be read on the night by NVT actors.

Please send your story in the body of an email or as an attachment to:

brightonnewshound@hotmail.co.uk

AVAILABLE SPACE AS AT 21 DECEMBER

"I'VE SAID GOODBYE TO MY PAVILION"

In memory of Denny Vans Agnew

GOING THROUGH THE WORMHOLE

I've said goodbye to my pavilion
Now you'll find me riding pillion on
a worm

(On a worm, on a wiggly, wiggly
worm)

And it's quite a funny feelin'
Just to know that you're a million
miles from home

(On a wiggly, wiggly worm!)

Riding out among the stars
See the planets whirling past
There are sights to entertain us
As we circle round Uranus
And we wave hello to Mars.

Going up, going down, wiggle,
wiggle round and round

'Cos we're GOING THROUGH THE
WORMHOLE

Going left, going right, wiggle,
wiggle through the night,
Yeah, we're GOING THROUGH THE
WORMHOLE

What the bleep do we know, what
the bleep do we care?

When you wiggle through a worm-
hole you can end up anywhere
But we're going to have a party on
the way from here to there
Because we're going through the
wormhole tonight!

Going up, going down, wiggle,
wiggle round and round

'Cos we're GOING THROUGH THE
WORMHOLE

Going left, going right, wiggle,
wiggle through the night,
Yeah, we're GOING THROUGH THE
WORMHOLE

You can wiggle on your own, you
can wiggle with a friend

You'd better hold on to your
breeches 'cos we're going round
the bend

And we don't know where we're
going but we'll get there in the
end

Because we're GOING THROUGH
THE WORMHOLE tonight!

Yeah, we're GOING THROUGH THE
WORMHOLE tonight!

Going through the wormhole to-
night!

It was an NVT work- ing weekend,

about eight years or so back, when
I first met Denny. Tim
Brooking introduced us:

"Penny and Denny. They're
going to help scrape wallpaper
off". Well, for a start, I
never understood a word Tim
said, on account of the cigar
permanently stuck to his
bottom lip; secondly, rhym-
ing names – I can't remem-
ber names at the best of
times, but *rhyming* names?
Forget it! How would I ever
tell them apart?

Fast forward a few months to
The Last Resort and I wonder
how I could ever have
had such a problem! Some
weirdly inspired hunch made
me and Dermot cast Denny
as the absurd, larger-than-life
Prince Regent, in this Brighton-
themed musical fantasy. We al-
ready had ourselves a somewhat
unorthodox dame, in the shape of
Carl Boardman; I had never liked
the idea of principle boys, so we
didn't have one of them . . . but a
woman as the Prince: could it
work? Then we got Laura Bennet
as Prinnie's celebrity-obsessed,
chavvy mistress, Mrs Fitzherbert,
and suddenly we had a fantastic
character couple, who were to
prove utterly unforgettable! In-
deed, after the success of that
first panto, I was so inspired by
them that I went on to write the
sequel: *Through the Wormhole*.

As Prinnie, Denny created a hilari-
ous, cartoon buffoon; she filled
the theatre with her un mistake-
able, booming voice. Now, as I re-
read my *Last Resort* script, I can
hear that voice so clearly in my
head, that I find it unbearably
hard to believe I'll not hear it
again.

Offstage, too, Denny projected a
larger than life character – a big
person with a big heart. She con-
tributed hugely to the NVT, not
only on stage, but also with stir-
ling work front of house. Those of
us who knew her well understood
that beneath the booming extro-



L to R Denny Vans Agnew with Laura Bennet

Photo by StratMastoris

vert was a more vulnerable per-
son who, like so many of us, had
some pretty fearsome demons
and difficulties to overcome. And
whereas it's straightforward in
pantos – the baddies get biffed
and the goodies win the day –
real life can be a lot more com-
plicated!

I've felt really privileged to
spend time with Denny over the
frightenly brief period from the
diagnosis of her cancer in Au-
gust, up to her passing on Friday
26th November. To experience
her stoicism, acceptance and
good humour has been a true
inspiration to me and - I know
- to the huge number of friends
who saw her in recent months.
Very shortly before her death
she told me she'd really like to
get home and have a party.
Sadly, she didn't manage that,
but I have the feeling that her
spirit will inspire quite a few of
us to have some good times to-
gether in her memory. In the
words of the panto song: "we're
going to have a party on the
way from here to there!"

Denny was dearly loved by so
many and will be sorely missed
by us all.

Eleanor Gamper

ALL INVITED -

Kick off meeting for Main Theatre proposals - 10:00 am Saturday 19 February 2011 in the Main Theatre

You will have noticed that we are launching our fundraising effort for the Main Theatre. In parallel with that we are putting together ideas of how we want our Main Theatre to look like.

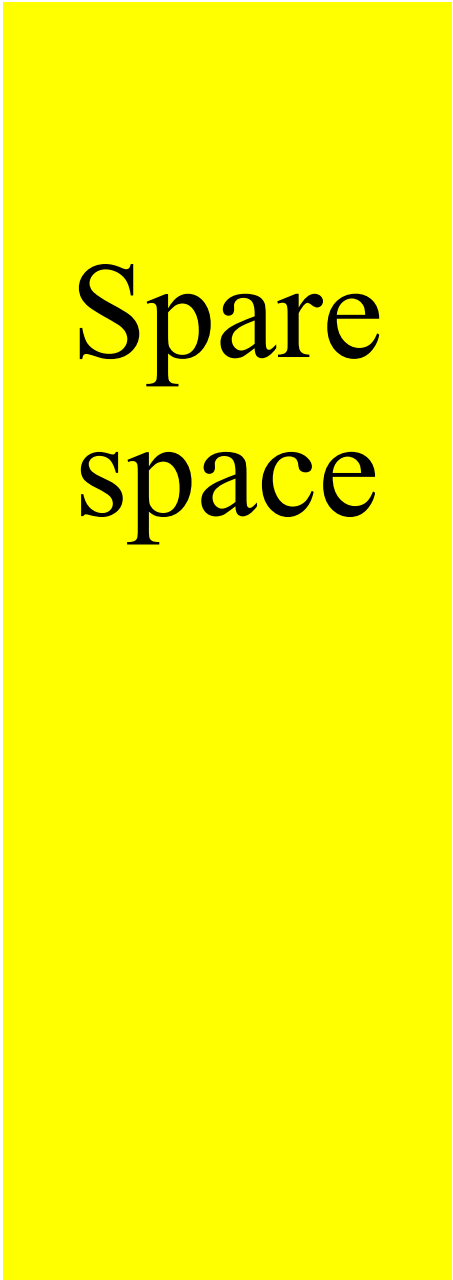
Our initial thoughts are to keep the audience and stage areas as flexible as possible but keep some of the feel of a proscenium arch theatre. We need to consider modular seating, the lighting rig, lanterns, dimmers, sound systems and control boards. We need to think how it will feel like up

there, so interior design is a major consideration. There will also be discussions on widening the Studio.

So why not come along and share your thoughts and be part of the team for this major refurbishment.

Please note though, we have no money at present so we have to manage a staged refurbishment plan with resources as they become available.

For further information contact Jerry Lyne 01273 446574; mob 07762916888; jerry.lyne@btinternet.com



Spare
space

Fund raising is not just for Christmas!

Want to help me get grants to help fund the new theatre?

I have a number of grant applications under way but there are more to pursue than I can handle on my own.

So I need help from someone who's a competent adminis-

trator, to share the task with me. Most of the work can be done from your own home, provided you are comfortable working on line, and only a few hours a month would make a big difference.

Please email mikestubbs2000@yahoo.co.uk if you want to get involved.

Three awards for 'Of Mice and Men'

Our entry for the Brighton and Hove Arts Council Drama Awards, 'Of Mice and Men' competed with 6 other local productions and gained 3 awards. The adjudicator, Damien Goodwin described the production to have bravely taken on the challenges of this classic tale and regarded the traverse staging as bold and experimental. He praised production, cast and crew and pointed out that it is great to see a company experimenting and taking risks.

NVT received awards for 'Best Costume Design', Kirsty Elmer and 'Best Lighting Design', Strat Mastoris. Tim McQuillen-Wright and Richard Gamber were nominated for 'Best Stage Set Design'. Hannah Brain was nominated for 'Best Young Actress', which was awarded to Sarah Charsley for another production

staged in Lewes. Both had won the 'Best Newcomer' Award at NVT in the last 2 years. The award for 'Best Actor' was received by Andy Bell with the words. "Looks like I have done a good thing, not a bad thing." in true George style.

Congratulations to all mentioned, Award holders and the whole production company.

We had a great night out and enjoyed a reunion of cast and crew as well as meeting with other clubs.

Ulrike Schilling
Artistic Director

Barrie Jerram reviews 'The Steamie'

Once again the New Venture's festive offering proved to be a cracker of a show. This play with songs takes place on New Year's Eve in the 1950's and is set in a Glasgow washhouse where four women are working hard to get the washing that they take in finished in time.

While they work the audience is privy to their gossiping, dreams and fears. What comes out depicts the hard life that working class women were subject to in an environment that offered little leisure. Whilst the subject matter may have appeared depressing the show was far from it and proved to be sheer delight. It was full of wonderful fun and, like a seasonal punch; it was a warming mixture of friendship, humour, pathos mixed with the fiery spirit of survival.

The action was sprinkled with songs – some highlighted the previous scene and were delivered with the character stepping out of the action whilst others remained within and were sung whilst they worked. The singing of *Roses of Picardy* led to a comical debate as to where *Picardy* was. A reminiscence of cinema visits segued to *The Big Picture*, a number that gave each character a chance to express a personal comment. *Labour of Love* was a cynical number describing

a women's working day - the hardship endured and the suffering engendered through their men folk and drink.

Whilst the writing was remarkable it was the talents of the quartet of actors who breathed life into the women and made them so believable. Laura Scobie's Doreen was bright and bubbly with a youthful optimism that looked to the future – a house in a better area with new labour saving gadgets of which she's heard. This was well expressed in the number *Dreams Do Come True*. By contrast Sheelagh Baker's Mrs Culfeathers, lonely, exhausted through old age and a lifetimes' hard work, looked back to golden days of neighbourliness. Baker's performance was magnificent – one could almost feel her exhaustion and her loneliness. She also provided comedy with the character often being out of sync with the conversation of the others and in sequences that involved the telling of tales regarding mince and taties and the taking of a peat bath.

There were equally well defined performances from Sarah Davies and Charlotte Grimes as Dolly and Magrit. Dolly is a chatterbox who is slightly dim and Davies gets this across to superb effect in the scene that looked forward

to owing telephones. A conversation, using scrubbing brushes as phones, took on a life of its own and ended with her believing the conversation to be real. Magrit, having to support a drunken husband, is cynically realistic and Grimes brought this out well. Her delivery of *Labour of Love* proved to be one of the production's highlights. Again a good sense of comic timing uplifted the bleak side of the character.

Ben Pritchard completed the cast as the token male who provided the butt of the women's jokes. The part, written as a caricature, lacked the reality afforded to the women. Pritchard did well within this limitation but his drunken scene, notoriously difficult to get right, could have been improved with a little more subtlety.

The production's direction was exceedingly well handled by Leanne McKenzie with the assistance of Mark Green who, I believe, was responsible for designing the set. It was one of the most realistic accomplished within the constraints of the Studio. The individual washing stalls with their rusty water tanks were realised well and, along with the period props, soon had one believing that they were inside a steamie. Congratulations to the construction team.

Barrie Jerram

NVT Box Office and Bar Opening

To aid the purchase of tickets for those who prefer not to use the Online System, we will be opening the Box Office and Bar as a trial at the following times prior to *Speed The Plow*:

11:00am to 2:00pm. Wednesday 12 January, Saturday 15 January, Wednesday 19 January and Saturday 22 January

The Box Office will be open for both personal and phone sales - during these times only.

Why not drop by for a lunchtime drink and chat with other members.

All Credit Card sales will incur a 50p handling charge.

Christmas Party a great success

- **Over £2000 raised on the night**
- **Thanks to the many people who made this possible**
- **Thanks to our generous angels**
- **Thanks to our generous volunteers**

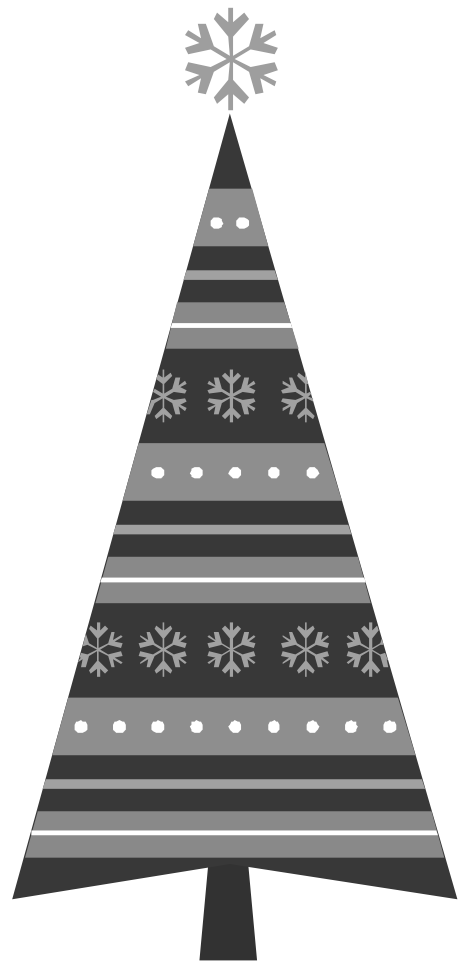
The Fundraising Launch for the Main Theatre Refurbishment on Saturday 18th December was a great success.

There was live music, thanks to Izzy and Tom, a raffle of donated promises, such as meal out for 2 (thank you to those who generously donated), raising over £200, was marshalled superbly by Linda and Uli, and we saw the arrival of our new wonderful Angels who have donated over £1900 with one Archangel donating £500, others sums of £200 and £100. We earlier have had a separate £500 and £200 donation and we thank those Angels for that. Everyone had a ball with the bar raising over £700.

Many, many thanks to the team who worked so hard to make it a great success, Gerry McCrudden, Susie Dole, Dan Walker our very able compere, Mike Stubbs, Andrew Allan, Sam Holland and Justin who put together the 'thank you' board and all the other supporters who tirelessly toiled to make the evening a success. As we know, without you NVT would just fade away.

Jerry Lyne

For NVT



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SPACE**

Our sponsors

Our sponsorship deal is £250 for a year's advertising on our website and in our brochure, newsletter and show programmes, plus 2 free tickets for each production in that year.

We need more sponsors, so please email mikestubbs2000@yahoo.co.uk if you have any ideas in that direction.



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