

Coming in July

'Woman in Mind'

by Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Pat Boxall

16 - 23 July 2011

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NEW VENTURE
T H E A T R E

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'The Servant'

By Robin Maugham

Directed by Ken Potter

18-25 June 2011



LOTTERY FUNDED

"...if you want to condescend to me, my lad, you'll do it somewhere else and not down here in my kitchen!"

Nephew of literary giant, William Somerset Maugham, Robin produced a prodigious output of writing – short stories, novels, plays, films, biographies – and for over thirty years was one of Britain's top authors. He earned acclaim from such notables as John Betjeman and Graham Greene. 'An expert and ingenious storyteller,' stated the Sunday Times in 1955.

Nowhere was his ingenuity more obvious than in his magnum opus, *The Servant* – a powerful, imploding social drama with dark visceral undercurrents swirling beneath the quaint superficiality of 1950/60s Chelsea society. The shifting triangular relationships within *The Servant* have the characters vying for status, power, and control, keeping the observer in a constant state of guessing what will happen next.

The play, as with Pinter's classic 1963 film adaptation, had its origins in Maugham's 1948 novella which, at the time, was considered risqué. 'Obscene and a disgrace!' stated his conventional father, Lord Chancellor Maugham of Hartfield who, totally thrown by his progeny's literary foray, suggested that young Robin might take leave of the family residence. On another level, the play provides an insight into the British class system of the day.

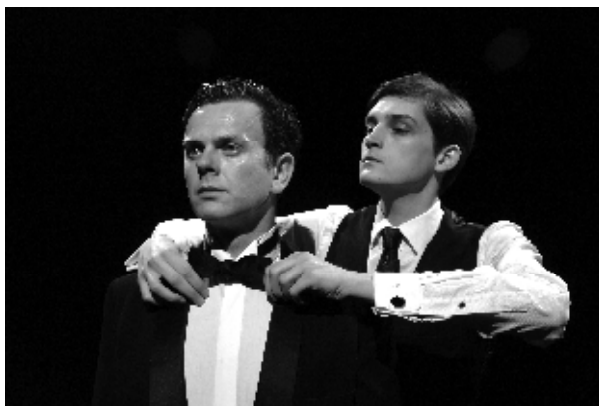
Tony, a young, wealthy socialite, returns to England to collect his inheritance after six wasted years in Africa. His friend lines up a house in Chelsea ready for his arrival and also sets up a meeting to interview a prospective manservant. He takes on the manservant.

Never invite the devil over your doorstep!

The 'gentleman's gentleman' turns out to be an artist of comfort, capable of taking care of the decorating and plumbing as well as dishing up a mean chocolate soufflé. But his meticulous artistry

masks designs of a darker nature. In pandering to Tony's every whim, he gradually takes over his insouciant master and a fascinating role reversal begins to take place.

This production has been the result of a team effort. I have been blessed in having Ulrike Schilling and Kirsty Elmer alongside who have proved indispensable. God knows what I would have done without them and the excellent stage manager, Gemma Gale, and the excellent Production Manager,



Daniel Lane as Tony, Colin Elmer as Barrett

Hannah...no..no..no..dammit! I'm not going to go down the Oscar route. Suffice to say that my first time experience confirms what I've always suspected – that the theatrical gem that is the NVT is crammed full of talented people doing what they love just for the hell of it. Thank you all.

At the core of my casting are Daniel Lane and Colin Elmer. Colin is well known to NVT members from his performances in *Art* and *Festen* and here turns in a crisply Mephistophelian portrayal of the titular servant. It's Daniel's first time at the NVT and he admirably fills the shoes of the metamorphic Tony around whom the rest of the fine cast – Sophie McCallum, Sophie Harding, Claire Pontet-Picolomini, and Daryl Buckley - gravitate. May I invite you to enjoy the suspense.

Robin Maugham's happiest years were spent in Brunswick Terrace, Hove. He died in the Brighton Hospital March 13, 1981.

Ken Potter

**GALA photos and report
on page 3**

**NVT presents its 2011-2012
season schedule
on page 5**

Go on - be an Angel

The Oxford English Dictionary defines an angel as "an attendant spirit, especially a benevolent one", and equally important "a financial backer of a theatrical or business enterprise". You will notice on this page a list of NVT Angels. So what are these angels?

When we were chatting before Christmas about ways to help raise funds and support the reopening of the main theatre I thought why not go with the creation of our own NVT angels - an idea no doubt born from my love of 'It's a Wonderful Life'. There is nothing like a benevolent spirit wishing to support theatrical efforts. So with Mike Stubbs and team we decided to give it a try. I have been amazed at how it seemed to strike a chord not only with the loyal NVT members but also those new to our special theatre.

We developed the concept of various types of angels. For £100 you could be an angel, £200 for a fallen angel, £500 for an Archangel and £1000 to be Archangel Gabriel. All you get in return is a certificate, a name on a seat in the upstairs theatre and lots of thanks. But essentially you have made these generous contributions to support the work of the NVT and, hopefully, these new links will continue. Angels are forever.

We hosted two events; one in December and the bigger gala in April to encourage the Angels. The April Gala was a particular success and the whole effort has raised in excess of £7,000 so far. The Angels will continue to be a central part of our fundraising as much more funding is needed.

So go on, be an Angel!

Gerry McCrudden MBE

Our wonderful NVT Angels signed up and paid up as at 13th May 2011:-

Uli Schilling
Linda Potter
R Williams
Rev. Tony Otterwell
Vaughan Rees
Peter Watkins
Pat Lyne
Neeraj Bali
Gerry McCrudden MBE
Javier Ureta
Penny Bailey
Peter Lawson (& Theo)
Paddy O'Keefe
Andrew Newman & Chris Jessop
Dennis Cumming
Mike Stubbs
Sarah Garbutt
Lou & Moog
Michael Graney
Sheila Hill
David Jewell
Brian Gannon
Mike Chowney
Helen Chowney
Tim & Alex McQuillen-Wright
Meiner MacFadyen
David Beard
Thomas Carmichael
Phil Palmer
Nick Brice
Peter Dennis
Sarah Charsley
Sue Buckoke

Fundraiser – time for a change

I've been doing this job for four years now and have decided to stand down at the AGM in October.

I'm pleased that, over those four years, we've raised over £40,000 and this has enabled NVT to carry out a number of vital projects.

We own our building and, therefore, pay no rent but it's a listed Victorian structure and constantly needs money spent on it. We also need to improve our facilities to support our artistic work and have obtained an Arts Council grant of £9,000 towards the cost of improvements in the studio – climate control, double glazing and new blinds. We've been able to raise the money to match this from our own resources and we hope this work will be carried out in August.

Currently the major project is the reopening of the upstairs theatre and, including a very generous anonymous donation of £10,000 promised by a member of NVT, we now have £20,000 to spend on phase 1. Designs and cost estimates are being prepared to be put before members at the AGM.

This fund raising success has been a team effort and I'm grateful to the many people who've given so generously of their ideas, time and money to enable us to raise more money than we ever thought possible when we started. There are too many people to name individually but you know who you are – thank you very much.

The job is not done yet and, actually, it never will be. If we stop fund raising not only will we be unable to invest in improvements but the building and its facilities will deteriorate,

because we do not generate enough income from our various activities to fund more than basic maintenance work.

So we need a new fund raiser, but we also need a team to support that person if we're going to succeed - it's too much for one person but if there's a team it can be fun.

The purpose of this newsletter piece is to invite readers who are interested in leading or being part of this team to call me to discuss it – let's see if we can put a good team together in time for the AGM in October/November.

Mike Stubbs

07990 514949 or email

Mikestubbs2000@yahoo.co.uk.

Gala a great success!

In April, the upstairs theatre was transformed into a 50's style nightclub, and 75 guests, led by The Mayor and Mayoress, danced to wonderful Jane Reeves and The Swing Street band and donated over £6,000 to our funds for the reopening of the old theatre. Because this money took us over £10,000 it triggers the £10,000 donation promised by a very generous, but anonymous, member, so you could say that this event actually raised £16,000. At least, that's Gerry's argument!

This success was made possible by a large number of members (and indeed non-members) giving their time unstintingly, not only on the night, but throughout the months of planning beforehand and, on behalf of the Committee, I'd like to say a heartfelt "Thank You" to all of you. And to those volunteers who were unable to get the free food and wine on the night, as we promised, I'm very sorry for that. It was not intentional but caused by huge pressures on the night. You were a superb volunteer team and deserved better :-).

I keep saying I won't single out any volunteers by name, but I'm going to break that promise for Chris Pugh, Strat Mastoris and Daniel Stevens, whose efforts during the preceding week and at the get-out were simply exceptional.

Here are some pictures - if you took some good ones of your own please send them to The Editor for possible inclusion in the next newsletter.

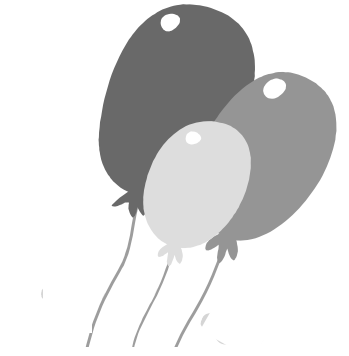
Mike Stubbs



A song from Jane Reeves



Gerry McCrudden and Mike Stubbs



Charmaine Davies ("Marilyn") and our Patron, Matthew Macfadyen



Some of the party people



A TV camera crew with the Mayor and his wife



L-R The Mayor of Brighton & Hove, Gerry McCrudden and Matthew Guy Wright



The Swing Street Band

Barrie Jerram reviews 'All My Sons'

Arthur Miller's play that questions the ethics of war profiteering has been described as an Ibsenian drama. It also bears the inevitability of a Greek tragedy with a family doomed to be torn apart.

Successful business man, Joe Keller, knowingly allows defective aircraft parts to be supplied during World War II resulting in 21 dead pilots. Released through lack of evidence he lets his partner take the blame and receive a prison sentence. A guilty secret that Kate, his wife, is having to live with. The play is set some three years later when the truth begins to unravel with tragic consequences.

Also overhanging the Keller household is the loss of son, Larry, a war pilot missing in action. His absence has an effect in the play through his mother's insistence that he is still alive, despite Joe and the other son, Chris, believing the contrary. It also overshadows Chris' love for Larry's childhood sweetheart, Anne, the daughter of the imprisoned partner.

Miller's emotionally gut wrenching and powerful writing provides

actors with roles that require performances to match and in James Newton's spell-binding production they exceeded expectation. As well as giving sensitive direction Newton managed to inspire his entire cast to achieve perfection. Based on the company's previous Miller productions the anticipation was of good acting but what was delivered reached beyond the level of excellence.

Tim Blissett effortlessly slipped into the role of Keller as though it was tailor made – he captured all the bluff heartiness and smugness of the self made man as well as the delusion created by the self-centred justification of his action. As his wife, Kate, Lyn Fernee, gave what was probably the best performance I have seen from her. She attained a glorious balance of neurotic helplessness and steely resolve. Her final scene was heart wrenching.

Equally magnificent were Mathew Lawson and Emily Gallichan. As Chris, Lawson gave us a man truly desperate to break free from his brother's suffocating shadow. He fairly shone

with idolization of his father and one felt for his devastation when he found out the truth about what Joe had done. His anger was beautifully tempered with his moments of loving gentleness with Anne. Gallichan's Anne was delightfully charming and brought a refreshing uplift to the stifling tension within the Keller home.

Daryl Buckley gave a strong performance as George, Anne's brother, whose arrival late in the play is the catalyst that produced a magnificent, turbulent last act – the emotion discharged by the actors was almost suffocating.

Four other actors completed a fine cast by providing contrasting cameos. Kirsty Elmer was able to lighten the drama with the humour she obtained from playing the sexually predatory and money obsessed wife of the local doctor – a role naturalistically underplayed with spot on sensitivity by Alistair Lock. Humour also came from Moog Gravett as a well meaning but geeky neighbour with his astrological charts whilst Louise Preecy, as his wife, sweetly turned matronly homeliness to girlish flutter when George, a childhood sweetheart arrives.

A superb production that I felt moved to nominate for an Argus Angel when I submitted my review. I was delighted to see that that they were awarded one.

'Talking Dog' - workshops & audition

Saturday 11 and 18 June 10 am to 4 pm

Talking Dog is a devised piece directed by Sarah Davies (recent mask workshops at Monday acting classes) using masked and unmasked characters. Interested parties are invited to attend the Saturday workshops at NVT on June 11 and 18 to find out more about the project. They will run from 10am-4pm. Bring lunch, water, clothes you can throw yourself around in. From the first two workshops we hope to find our cast (4-6 performers). A further two workshops will be held on 2nd and 9th of July to start developing ideas for the piece itself, before the summer break.

Please come along and play if you are interested in/ have experience of devising performance work, wish to

explore mask, enjoy physical theatre, are willing to have a go, enjoy the sublime and the ridiculous. We are looking for people who muck in, have good ensemble skills and who are open to exploration and improvising. It'll be a good day's training whatever the outcome.

Experienced/budding/willing to learn puppeteers also sought!

If you've any further questions drop me an email: croft17@hotmail.com

Sarah Davies

Volunteers for monthly newsletter stuffing party urgently needed. Please contact Linda Potter at email address: linda.potter4@ntlworld.com or phone 01273 306641

NVT presents its **2011-2012 Season**

8-15 October 2011

Love Letters

by A. R. Gurney

directed by Strat Mastoris

19-26 November 2011

Iron

by Rona Munro

directed by Jerry Lyne

10-17 December 2011

Talking Dog (working title)

devised & directed by Sarah Davies & Co

21-28 January 2012

Gangster No.1

by Louis Mellis and David Scinto

directed by Steven O'Shea

18-25 February 2012

The Permanent Way

by David Hare

directed by Kirsty Elmer

31 March - 7 April 2012

The Rise and Fall of Little Voice

by Jim Cartwright

directed by Pat Boxall

5-19 May 2012

The Madness of George III

by Alan Bennett

directed by Mark Wilson

23-29 May 2012

To be confirmed

16-23 June 2012

Medea

by Euripides

directed by Andrew Allen

14-21 July 2012

10 Minute Play Competition

New writing staged at NVT

Acting Classes

Five Characters In Search Of Actors

Andrew Allen

Monday 6, 13, 20 and 27 June

There are many ways to approach the creation of a character, and it's not always the most obvious way. Using script, improvisation, game-playing, movement, and a variety of acting techniques, we will explore over the course of four weeks the toolbox of skills that can be utilized to improve confidence and creativity on the stage : there is no one 'right way' to play a part, and even mistakes can lead to something wonderful. We hope to celebrate plenty of mistakes in these workshops.

Theatre of Fooling

Katie Lambert

Monday 4, 11, 18 and 25 July

Despite a long and revered tradition of Fooling in this country and throughout the world, it is still a misunderstood and undervalued art form. The art of Fooling is one of the most profound and difficult ones of all. Fooling is about communicating truths in their purest form. It demands fearlessness and dedication from the performer, yet reaches out with simplicity when engaging with the audience.

Jonathan Kay has created a unique theatrical structure over the past 37 years to bring this tradition into the present day and enable people from all walks of life to discover their Fools.

Throughout the month of July, class participants will learn to tread the foothills of the fooling structure, rediscover their imaginative selves and learn how to engage with the audience. I look forward to working with you!

Katie has been learning about and performing with this structure in the Nomadic Academy of Fools for the past four years. She is now touring the results of this work with public workshops, fooling performances and a foolish version of Shakespeare's Richard II with 6 other Fools as part of the Theatre of Now.

Stage Management/Production Management Workshop

Saturday 25 June 2-6 pm

Would you like to learn about producing a show and all aspects involved backstage? Come and have a look behind the scenes and find out what is involved in getting a play from the script to stage. From 2-6pm we will be explaining the roles of Production and Stage manager, looking around the various areas of the theatre and are sharing examples and experiences from previous shows. For more information contact

ulrike.schillilng@newventure.org.uk

Some words to come
from Uli by Wednesday
afternoon!

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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probably weren't worth meeting anyway.*

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