



NVT Newsletter

March/April 2012

MAY FESTIVAL
'A Streetcar
Named Desire'

By Tennessee
Williams

Directed by
Mark Wilson

5-19 May 2012

Box Office (24hr)
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Other enquiries
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NEW VENTURE
T H E A T R E

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Brighton BN1 2PT
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'The Rise and Fall of Little Voice'

By Jim Cartwright
Directed by Pat Boxall
31 March - 7 April 2012

**"Winner of The Evening Standard
and Laurence Olivier Awards for
Best Comedy"**

Originally commissioned and presented by Britain's Royal National Theatre, this play-with-music subsequently transferred to the West End at the Aldwych Theatre.

The play received the UK's two, top drama awards for Best Comedy – The Laurence Olivier Award and The Evening Standard Award. It was nominated for a further five, Olivier Awards.

Wonderfully funny and incredibly moving, the play tells the story of a shy, reclusive girl named Little Voice who lives with her man-hungry mother Mari. Desperately missing her dead father, Little Voice spends her time locked in her bedroom listening to his old record collection and perfecting astonishing impersonations of famous female vocalists. When Ray Say, a small time hustler and Mari's current boyfriend, hears Little Voice sing, he thinks she's a star and his long-awaited ticket to the big time.

I have been fortunate to have assembled a talented cast including David Peaty [Ray Say] who last appeared in "Woman in Mind", Frank Leon [Billy] who you saw last in "Talking Dog", Andy Bell [Mr Boo] who, you may remember, won the B&H Arts Council Best Actor Award for Of Mice and Men and Culann Smyth [Phone Man] last seen in Kvetch.

Making a welcome return to the NVT is Lex Hills [Mari] who has appeared in over 20 productions at NVT and elsewhere. In 2010, she was one of 5 actors short listed as 'Best Female Performer' in The Latest's Brighton Festival Awards.



Photo by Strat Mastoris

Since our current season was announced, the question everyone asks me is "How will you find someone capable of playing Little Voice"? Well we have and I'm delighted to welcome Jenny Lee-Delisle in her debut performance for NVT. Also making her debut performance and equally welcome is Debbie Frisby [Sadie].

This was always going to be an extremely challenging production and I've been blessed with a superb Design Team and Production support. I am also hugely grateful to Emma Kilby for all her help and guidance with the performance of the songs.

So, I look forward to seeing you in Mr Boo's nightclub with "Jean on her organ and Manolito on the drums" for a night to remember!



STARTING A NEW FEATURE:
Mini biographies of NVT people. See pages 2 & 3

Thoughts from a South Hall Chair

Spotlight on Jerry Lyne, Secretary



What decided you to join NVT?

They were short of actors.

How long have you been a member?

Since 1992

What have been the highlights for you?

Acting and Directing

What have been the most satisfying roles/positions on or off the NVT stage?

Willy Loman in 'Death of a Salesman' and Eddie Waters in 'The Comedians'

What are your major interests outside of NVT?

Walking, golf, reading, eating and drinking

What has been your greatest life achievement?

Still being here at 66

What does your current role involve/cover?

I am Secretary so help run the administration and am a trustee so work to ensure we have a successful theatre

What are you looking forward to at NVT?

The re-opening of the Main Theatre

Over the past month we have seen a few more changes. Gaelle, our recently married treasurer, has resigned due to a work move to Australia – the commute would be a bit too much. We wish her well in both her married life and enjoying the pleasures of Oz. Ollie Donovan has agreed to take up the mantle of Treasurer on a temporary basis, but we are looking for someone to undertake this role. If you are interested please contact me. Also resigning this month is Hugh McDowall, half of our Publicity Team. Dan Walker has agreed to expand his online publicity brief and take on the aspects covered by Hugh. Our thanks to both Gaelle and Hugh for their contribution to the NVT over the past months.

As you may recall we recently carried out a survey of members and what they want from the NVT in the future. The response to the survey wasn't spectacularly high, just 58 from a membership of 350; 75% of these were from full members. However we did get some feedback and will act on what we have.

The majority of responses to the multi-choice questions reflect what we would hope, that there is a general acceptance of how the NVT is run, a willingness to contribute to this by action and/or suggestion. Interestingly a Social evening with the AGM was welcomed more than a straight AGM, we will see how this change can be brought about this year.

The text based responses brought up some interesting views, many of which we will consider over the

coming months. Some of the comments asked for things to happen at the NVT that already do happen, which we can't do much about that.

There does appear to be a feeling from some that the NVT is cliquy and not open to the members to make decisions. Although the committee are elected to make the day to day decisions on the running of the NVT, we are happy to have open forums and steering groups to discuss large developments when they come up as we have done with the main theatre. However we do need members to participate in such forums. As for cliquy, that is not something I was aware of and would like suggestions of how it could be addressed.

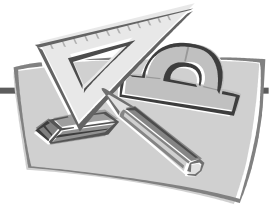
There were several comments about having a Youth Theatre again. The complications of setting this up with the child protection legislation are considerable, but if we had a small team who were interested it may be a possibility.

It seems quite a number of members would like to see and be involved in more one-off and social events. The limiter to this is having someone to plan and organise them. We have had a role for Social Secretary vacant at the NVT for a number of years and we clearly need this role, possibly a team to be in place so such events can be put on. Any takers?

Many thanks to all who participated in the survey and we look forward to a positive and exciting future for the NVT, as the majority of comments endorsed.

Ian

MAIN THEATRE UPDATE



To all our Lovely Angels, Sponsors, Members and Supporters -

Progress is being made with the refurbishment of the Main Theatre, using mainly volunteers.

Progress to date

- * New rake has been installed
- * New lighting box installed
- * New doorway with archway installed

In progress

- * Wall cladding of stage walls
- * Stage area by Main Door and Window

Planned

Cyco-Tabs: New Black Curtain and Tab Track. As well as acting as a 'Reveal' curtain it will run around the sides and back of the stage becoming a Cyclorama at the back. It will be motor powered.

Wings (flats) side of the stage.

New Grid System above the Stage. This will support redesigned Lighting Bars and the Cyco Tabs. (Subject to Structural Approvals)

New Electrics

A new supply to be installed and the Main Theatre completely rewired including lighting rigs and dimmers.

New Sound System

New Seating (flexible)

Upgrading Stairway

THE BUDGET

Many thanks to you all, we have raised over £23,000. This has included 2 large donations, 1 of which was a legacy donation of £10,000 (half of which goes to the Main Theatre Restoration Fund) from a sadly missed member, Anne Poupard.

However, the total cost has been budgeted at over £47,000 so we have a long way to go.

YOUR HELP: DONATIONS

You can become an Angel for £100, Fallen Angel for £200 or an Archangel for £500. Any donation is wel-

come and if you acknowledge that you will Gift Aid your donation, then we get another 20% from the tax man if you are a tax payer. (We have just raised over £2.5K in Gift Aid from donations already received). You can contact us via **fundraising@newventure.org.uk** or 01273 808353 or contact me, Jerry Lyne or Judy Milton, our Fundraiser on 01273 728069 or when at the theatre, any one of our volunteers.

YOUR HELP: VOLUNTEERS

We need volunteers to paint and decorate and do general labouring jobs from time to time. Please contact me, Jerry Lyne **jerry.lyne@btinternet.com** 01273 446574 07762916888.

Thanks again for your support.

Jerry Lyne
on behalf of the Trustees

Spotlight on Ulrike Schilling, Artistic Director



What decided you to join NVT?

Seeing the amazing Studio Theatre and its use during 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in the Festival 2006

How long have you been a member?

Since 2006

What have been the highlights for you?

Meeting and working with lovely, interesting people and being able to develop my own creative work. Teaching the Acting Class and leading workshops

What have been the most satisfying roles/ positions on or off the NVT stage?

Swinging the whip as Stage Manager for great shows with amazing fun casts! But most roles at NVT are satisfying and enjoyable if you work with nice and talented people

What are your major interests outside of NVT?

I enjoy spending good times with friends, dancing, visual art and holidays!

What has been your greatest life achievement?

My show 'Intimate Encounters'

What does your role involve/cover?

As Artistic Director I put the season together and schedule additional events such as socials, workshops and one off events. I further coordinate the acting classes and facilitate training.

What are you looking forward to at NVT?

Meeting friends, the cheap bar, working on 'Medea' and coming to see 'The Rise and Fall of Little Voice'

'The Permanent Way'

reviewed by **Barrie Jerram**

David Hare has created a powerful piece of "verbatim theatre" that deals with the privatisation of railways and subsequent train crashes – Southall, Ladbroke Grove, Hatfield, and Potters Bar. A wide range of statements from Ministers etc and accounts from survivors and the bereaved form the narrative with Hare providing the links. Many of the first hand accounts arose from interviews carried out by the actors in the original National Theatre production.

The early humour that poked fun at the private sector's officials and the Treasury and Civil Service's enthusiasm for privatisation, despite lack of knowledge of running a railway, soon evaporated as the horror of the crashes flashed up through projected vivid footage and ear shattering sound effects. The buffoons became villains.

The shocking visual images and horrendous sounds heightened the narratives, especially the heart wrenching ones from the "victims" - a term used by officials that both survivors and bereaved found offensive.

What was surprising to learn were the different attitudes of the two parties - the bereaved seeking someone to blame and punish whilst the survivors just wanting someone to say sorry and to ensure that these accidents never happened again. A vain hope for, as one character points out, a repeat pattern

emerges – accident; inquiry; recommendations – no action.

A cast of ten switched characters seamlessly and their excellent performances and collective effort makes individual naming invidious. Every actor had a chance to make an impact especially when they stood in the limelight with heartbreaking monologues, angry tales or self serving excuses, bland platitudes or attempts to shift the blame.

Still vivid in the memory are the stories of:

The young man who went straight on to work after a crash and whose life only changed for the worst three months after when the realisation of what he had been through kicked in;

The bereaved mother determined to campaign long after her husband wanted to draw a line;

The Transport Policeman whose initial indifference changed to a crusade for change that was so frustrated by officialdom that he gave up and resigned;

The young lady whose facial injuries were so bad that she had to wear a plastic mask and who had to hide for five days when her picture was splashed all over the newspapers;

The writer, Nina Bawden, unconscious after the crash and the moving account of the loss of her husband who she never saw die.

.....and many more.

What the cast and director, Kirsty Elmer, produced was a mesmerising experience that showed ensemble playing at its very best. They were a company who successfully accomplished, collectively and individually, every demand made upon it.

It was not just the words that had a powerful effect but also the dumb show and mime taking place in the background- slow motion and frozen action. No set was needed just an acting space and a raised platform bestrewn with rubbish and used rail tickets. The programme in the style of a timetable was an inspired touch as was the use of station tannoy announcements and instructions to the audience.

February 2012 marks the tenth anniversary of my writing reviews for New Venture. This production was a fitting celebration as it summed up what I have seen over the years – high quality acting and challenging productions.

It was particularly pleasing to see in the cast so many familiar and respected faces – Sheelagh Baker, Carl Boardman, Lyn Snowden (Fernee), Nik Hedges and Janet Hewlett Davies. My thanks go to them, their newer colleagues and to all those, on stage and off, who have over the last decade given so much pleasure to me.

Barrie Jerram

May 2012 newsletter

Copy deadline:	Sunday 15 April
Printing:	Wednesday 18 April
Stuffing & Posting:	Saturday 21 April

News and notes from our Artistic Director, including comments on the recent NVT Survey

In the recently conducted NVT survey one request was: More workshops geared toward producing / set making / directing etc. as well as acting. And: More classes, perhaps focusing on skills such as accents, stage combat, comedy, dance, etc.

It is very nice to see that training is most of the time well attended and wanted by the membership as well as attracts new members. But as with everything, it can only be offered if resources are available and in our particular situation that means members who are happy to and able to offer these workshops and training in various areas.

First of all a massive thank you to all the people who have offered and supported training and workshops in the past and are continuing to do so!

Secondly I would like to hear from members who either have ideas for workshops or even better, who can offer training within the different areas of NVT.

One member suggested the creation of working groups for example for Directing, Lighting, Acting etc. Again, if you feel you can contribute to such a working group, please contact me.

Most productions are offering hands-on training by having

mainly new members assist in a specific role or offering shadowing for technical areas and directing. So if you would like to try something new or get involved in a production, please contact directors or production managers and get a feeling for all the different roles within a production.

Another issue raised in the survey related to the general involvement of members within the theatre, which is often guided by time constraints. There are many roles and offices that can be shared and if you would like to contribute on a regular basis smaller but very important tasks are in need of you! Some of the options are for example the stuffing team or certain tasks of the volunteer liaison office, other roles could relate to organising or helping with events like rehearsed readings, comedy nights, themed/speciality one-off events, social events or quiz evenings. Many options are available and it would be great if our members could take some of them on to help us expand NVTs activities and continue with the current ones offered.

One member expressed their thought with the following words: "Some of the huge brunt being taken off the amazing main individuals who dedicate so much of their time and lives to the NVT. These folks are so, so brilliant, but it seems unfair that they have to do so much." - After having had not a lot of feedback at the AGM such comments, as

well as constructive feedback regarding the running and development of NVT, expressed in the survey helps us, the committee, to identify what works, what needs addressing and where we need the membership to support NVT more actively in order to deliver what the membership requests.

And finally looking at ticket sales for our current season, I can only suggest you book your tickets as soon as you can! Our last two seasons showed many productions were selling out very fast, sometimes even before the opening, and I am confident that this trend will continue. To support your planning and keep members and theatre friends informed our lovely Tamsin created an amazing flyer with all information - plays, authors, directors and dates - for each season, so you can prepare your diary accordingly and ensure you get to see them all! These flyers are sent out every year with the Newsletter and can be found at the theatre as well.

I look forward to seeing you at "The Rise and Fall of Little Voice" or any other NVT event and activity.

Ulrike
Artistic Director

An NVT member recently wrote:

***"It means a great deal to me - the people;
the chance to be creative and profound.***

NVT is a large part of my life."

'Altered Egos'

Reviewed by Strat Mastoris

The work of photographer Cindy Sherman features one woman appearing in many different roles. Her 'Untitled Film Stills' creates images that simulate stills from Hollywood B movies, with a single female figure (Cindy herself, in costume and wig) looking anxious or pensive, waiting for the (inevitable) trouble that will arrive in the next scene. The point of the photos is that we don't know the back-story so we are drawn to imagine it for ourselves. In 'Altered Egos', Bernadette Cremin takes an alternative approach. She portrays six women, each delivering a stream-of-consciousness monologue telling us what her life feels like. We see each character in real time, rather than as a single still image.

Cremin herself is rather small, with an incredibly mobile face that seems to change shape when it registers different emotions. She uses clothing and wigs to alter the shape of her body too, with some of her women looking much taller and slimmer than others. We first meet Trudy, tall, round-faced and blonde in a red and black striped blazer - a spoilt Daddy's girl recounting predatory sexual adventures in Barcelona as she languidly sips champagne. Then there's a blackout and a quick change to Sophie, dark haired in a dull brown skirt and off-white jumper; body language completely defensive as she clutches her arms around herself while she tells of discovering her husband's infidelity. She seems incredibly vulnerable, a small seated figure in a pool of light, surrounded by darkness.

This is probably the point to mention the sound. It's an integral part of this production, flooding the Studio space with a patchwork of noises and voices suggesting context and supporting the mood. For example - as Sophie attempts to come to terms with her betrayal, we hear her insistent inner voice out of the surrounding darkness, her Superego really, cutting through her evasions

- "Oh, Sophie - head in the clouds - head in the sand ..." and "a man has needs, Sophie, you should have taken care of them ..." And as Val, the final character of the six (short hair - Cremin's own, glasses, looks like a teacher), sits at the interview table in what must be a prison or police station, the voice of her investigator is soft but insistent out of the dark, while Val keeps her eyes down and doodles compulsively on a pad as she recounts abuse by her partner, his murder of their baby and that she eventually ("he taught me how to wait ...he taught me how to hate ...") killed him.

These are all very damaged women. After Trudy and Sophie, we meet Patsy. She seems to have suffered abuse at the hands of her uncle, been driven to self-harm which has led to her hospitalisation. We see her lying on the floor curled up in a foetal position, in a hospital nightgown under a single stark hanging lamp. She remains completely still, only her eyes and mouth work as she speaks softly into a microphone which makes her voice huskier and is mixed with distorted sounds of the hospital, as experienced by the drugged-up Patsy - "sending me back to the chemical circus ..."

Starting the second half Cremin gives us Tina, a wonderfully drawn chav in pink velour, with hair that seems to be made out of metal - shiny red-purple in a way that nature certainly never intended. Tina's life revolves around booze, fags and daytime TV, "get home in time to watch Jeremy Kyle - where does he find those sad bastards? ..." Tina's been all round the country - Holloway, Pentonville, the Scrubs, Lewes, Brixton, visiting her man Jack (who's banged up again at the moment) - but "at least all

my kids are his kids" even if the eldest "invests his dole cheque at Ladbrokes". She is followed by Joan, whose husband David has just died after his third stroke. Joan has suffered a lot of heart-break but she out of all the women seems to have had a constructive relationship. In her grief, she remembers David saying - "Do not touch that impossible colour, kidnapped by the glaze in that ugly vase. If I stare long enough into that brush-stroke that lifts its long neck, I can hear a violin back stroke..." A beautiful poetic image from a happy marriage, I think, making Joan's loss keener.

For Bernadette Cremin is also a poet. Many images in these monologues are reworked from her poems. Her books were on sale afterwards and it was fascinating to look through them and find the sources of something Trudy or Sophie had said. Interesting too that Cremin, the sculptor of language, chooses to give all the women, except one, non-serious names. Trudy, Sophie, Patsy, Tina and Val are all diminutives - short versions of proper names like Gertrude, Patricia or Valerie - that we give to children, or women. The only character with a proper grown-up name is Joan, the one with the grown-up marriage. Bernadette (not Bernie, note), as a feminist writer is presumably interested in how women are categorised by society and also by how they perceive themselves. Her characters were mesmerising, if at times difficult to hear - her delivery was more suited to close-up TV in the style of Alan Bennett's 'Talking Heads' than performance in a studio space. I look forward to reading more of her poetry.

Strat Mastoris

Box Office volunteers needed!

Some of our regular box office volunteers have moved on to pastures new so we are once again looking for new faces to join the box office team!

Due to a lack of volunteers it has begun to look like staffing front-of-house will soon have to fall to the show's cast and crew (which is a heavy burden to carry during a run), so those of you in particular who have been involved with a show or will be involved with a show soon, please come and support front-of-house as you were or would expect to be supported yourself.

Full training is provided and we need people to offer less than two hours a month to support the theatre - and as we move towards the festival season we need as many pairs of hands as we can get so please, please do get in touch!

Natasha Borg

Box Office Manager



easyfundraising & NVT

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/nvt/

Sign up to **easyfundraising** for all your internet purchases.

You will still get the great discount prices you would receive going direct but will raise typically 5% of the purchase price towards funds for the theatre.

So whether it's the RAC for Car Insurance, Amazon for Books, Argos for goods, go via **easyfundraising** and raise money for the theatre. It's dead easy and it works, I've tried it.

Thanks,

Jerry Lyne
Secretary NVT

WORKSHOP REPORT

by Bernard Briant:

Use of Sound in Theatre –Workshop Saturday 18 February

Mark Hewitt kicked off by talking us through the basics of sound in the theatre very thoroughly. He also showed us the sound tool options available on computer etc., and demonstrated some of them.

This got me to think about improvisations, using sound as a creative stimulus, and then perhaps repeating or altering the sounds in various ways, building up a dialogue.

The last part of the day was spent on developing a dialogue. Assistance was available from Mark and Bernadette Cremin. I worked with someone on an excerpt from George Orwell's 'Down and Out' in Paris and London. We separated the dialogue from the text, and 'layered' the voices, which produced an interesting result.

This workshop opened my eyes to a vast tranche of the theatre process that as an actor and writer, I'd never previously encountered. If I were writing for the theatre I'd be very open to developing the use of sound in any of my work. I feel that it was a day well spent.

COMING SOON

Saturday 5 May–Saturday 19 May

A Streetcar Named Desire

By Tennessee Williams
Directed by Mark Wilson

Set in America's deep South, Tennessee Williams' classic tale tells a story of the struggle for human survival set against the corrosive forces of jealousy and despair.

Saturday 16 June-Saturday 23 June

Medea

By Euripides
Directed by Andrew Allen

Saturday 14 July-Saturday 21 July

Ten Minute Play Comp

Letter to the Editor

NVT newsletter edited and produced by Charles Gilson. Correspondence to: nvt.newsletter@gmail.com or by post to the theatre

Dear Charles,

Late Comers

As a matter of policy, I think the time has come to make it clear that late comers cannot be admitted to the studio until a convenient break in the performance or until the interval. This is a standard theatre practice and one that NVT should adopt.

When performances don't begin on time, often as not it is because of waiting for stragglers. It is discourteous to the patrons who have arrived to make them wait, and it is unfair to put the responsibility to delay the curtain on the director – who has no way of knowing whether the missing people are going to turn up or not.

It would be simple to install closed circuit TV in the bar.

I hope this is something the administration will accept. Not allowing free access to the theatre before the show, or delaying the performance while people wait in their seats, creates unease, an unnecessary burden on cast and crew.

Yours in hope

Barry Hewlett-Davies

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