

Coming in January:

'Far Away'
directed by
Tamsin Fraser
and
'Seven Jewish
Children' directed by
Strat Mastoris
by Caryl Churchill

19-26 January 2013

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T H E A T R E

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'Hansel and Gretel'

An adaptation by Helen Nelder

6-9 December 2012



There is no doubt about it: fairy tales have captured the imagination for centuries, and there has been a huge resurgence in – and reworking of – many of our most familiar tales in the last few years. Is it a coincidence that this has occurred in a time of economic depression? I don't think so! The original tales are dark, dangerous, often violent and rooted in grinding poverty, reflecting the sense that something is amiss in society – they confront our most basic fears of being lost and alone, abandoned by the very people who are meant to be taking care of us.

Possibly originating as an oral tale inspired by the Great Famine (1315 – 1317) Hansel and Gretel was first published by the Brothers Grimm 200 years ago, in December 1812, hence our performing it now in its bi-centenary year. In most versions it is explicit that the family are on the brink

of starvation following several years' famine.

Novelist and journalist Angela Carter wrote that "Until the middle of the 19th century most poor Europeans were illiterate or semi-literate and most Europeans were poor". She goes on to say that fairytales "recorded the real lives of the anonymous poor with sometimes uncomfortable fidelity – the poverty, the hunger, the shaky family relationships, the all pervasive cruelty and sometimes the good humour, vigour and straight consolations of a warm fire and a full belly."

These tales were not only about difficult times, greed and famine - they were also born out of a rigid social structure, with little or no social mobility. The opportunity for any kind of change was scarce: people were born and died in abject poverty, and the only way out was the intervention of the supernatural. In other words the power to change and transform was



Photo by Clive Gee

Left to right: Francesca Drew and Daniel Walford

-property books upon which western culture can be founded" and "next to the Bible in importance." Is that what drove me to present this play? Well, pensible, common-property books upon which western culture can be founded" and "next to the Bible in importance." Is that what drove me to present this play? Well, no!

Wilhelm Grimm thought that "the reason for telling fairytales is to awaken the thought and feelings of the heart". I have a six year old daughter and wanted to write a play that she could come and enjoy, without it shying away from the darker elements of the tales. I wanted to tell a good story. Have I changed things? Just a little, yes: the parents are not demonised and both are

Continued on page 2, column 1

'Hansel and Gretel'
continued from page 1



Poster by Tamsin Fraser

there at the end. There is no doubt that the Grimm brothers were both misogynists and held anti-Semitic values I didn't feel compelled to replicate for the sake of loyalty to the story. Other than that, it is wholly recognisable as Hansel and Gretel - the kind of play I would like any child (big like me or little like my daughter!) to enjoy at Christmas time: fast paced, magical, creepy, funny heart-warming and of course with a wonderful happy ever after.

I am delighted to introduce new acting members to NVT, not least Francesca Drew and Daniel Walford - they are incredibly talented young actors who have excelled as Hansel and Gretel, making me laugh and cry in turn with their performances. Thea Anderson, another NVT newcomer, is the warm and caring narrator who will guide us through the story, and in a powerful per-

formance Jo Spratley (Mother) proves she is as amazing on stage as she is behind the scenes. The 'newbies' are wonderfully supported by Janet Hewlett Davies who is terrifying and funny in turns as a spherical, doughy witch who truly believes she is being a wonderful surrogate mother, right before she attempts to eat the children! And the multi-talented Jez Bowden gives a subtle and moving performance as the father.

Joanna Burke is an outstanding musician and has one of those pure folk voices that it is a privilege to listen to. I am proud to say she is accompanying this production with original arrangements of traditional folk songs from the Copper family in Rottingdean, as well as creating original music on the piano and playing the Klezma and Hardanger violins. Moving, joyous and definitely magical!

So, it's not panto - although I love it, I can't compete with the Theatre Royal! But still I wanted to create a little bit of Christmas magic by telling an age old resonant story, engage the children with a thrilling and exciting tale and treat parents to a bout of nostalgia. And don't panic: the only audience participation involves eating large amounts of sweets!

Helen Nelder

An apology to Claire Armstrong and Laura Scobie

Last month I inadvertently chopped off the last line in the textbox of Barry's review of 'The Biloxi Blues' thus effectively erasing your two names from the cast list. I sincerely apologize for the error.

Charles Gilson, Editor

Thoughts from a South Hall

Here we are nearing the end of another year, with Christmas looming from every shop window.

Our season is heading towards its third production with two great sell out productions already gone. In fact both these productions have had an additional performance each to cope with the demand for tickets. The message here has to be book early to avoid disappointment.

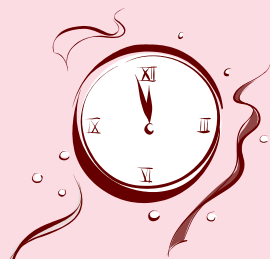
To this end, for those who prefer not to book online the booking form in the newsletter enables you to book a production in advance and therefore compete equally with the online bookers.

On the subject of tickets, don't forget to book your tickets for the New Years Eve Event at the NVT. It will be on the evening of Monday 31 December, just to clarify and it's shaping up to be a really fun evening.

The work on the South West corner of the theatre is nearing completion. This should stop the dampness in the corner of the South Hall and enable us to redecorate to match double glazing and blind that will be installed over the coming weeks. Next will be the kitchen, but probably not until the weather improves.

Ian

NVT



New Year's Eve Social Event

December 31 from 8pm-2am

a **Night (to try) to remember . .**

**Live entertainment (Comedy/Music and 'other stuff')
showcasing a range of NVT talent, and a late (cheap) bar**

Featuring for the first time the alternative '**Unwanted Christmas Presents**' Raffle bring along your unwanted presents and we'll try to find a better home for them than you could provide . . . and we promise not to make you take your own donations home!

Tickets in advance only (sorry, no tickets on the door) - £10, Entertainers £5 (Please do not book your ticket as an entertainer unless you have been in touch and it has been agreed.)

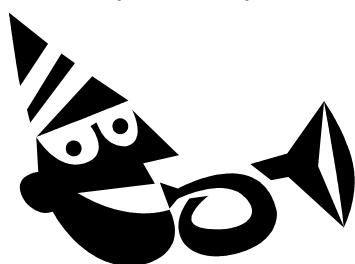
There will only be **150 tickets available** (including entertainers/staff). We will contact you if we can't fit you in.

This event will be open to Members plus 2 guests initially (i.e. each member can bring a maximum of two guests) – any tickets remaining unsold after 9th December will be available to additional guests.



We are looking for more entertainment – music, comedy, drama... and volunteers to staff bar shifts. Please contact me, tamsin.fraser@bt.com if you want to help or have any queries.

Please download/print/cut out/complete the attached form and return it to NVT along with your payment and SAE if you wish your tickets to be posted to you, otherwise they will be available



Full refund in the event of
the end of the world

Acting Class

Secrets of the sketch comedians - Andy Thomas

19, 26 November and 3, 10, 17 December

Have you ever wanted to know the secrets of how comedy sketches work? How long should they be? What is funny and what isn't? What risks can I take? How do I put a show to-together? Come on a journey as we try to answer those questions and launch you on your way. From The Goons, Cook and Moore, the Two Ronnies, Python to Little Britain and Armstrong and Miller we study the greats of comedy sketch performance and see what we can produce ourselves. Expect plenty of 'get up and go', dynamic games and activities, improv and script study for two hours of great fun. Inclusive and supportive, we work at our own pace and everyone is welcome!

Longform Improv Bootcamp - Andrew Allen

7, 14, 21 January 2013

These classes will be a great preparation for the auditions for Andrew's Improvisation show in this year's Fringe Festival at the NVT.

Finding Stories and Characters from All Sorts:

Dipping into Devising - Sarah Davies

28 January, 4, 11, 18, 25 February

Exploring different stimuli as creative springboards into inventing scenarios

and characters. Sarah invites you to come and invent together in the spirit of play. Lots of moving around to movement and silly games to get you into the mood of playfulness with others. Structures and scenarios will be given for you to explore and experiment with. Each session will end with a sharing of work.

Calling all directors 2013-2014

Our 65th season has seen already three very successful productions and we are about to have some Christmas and New Years Eve fun, but the time to think about the following season is coming as soon as the festivities are digested.

I have already had some proposals and suggestions for the season 2013-2014 but am looking for input from directors and members who would like to organise one off events or workshops.

If you would like to direct a production at NVT, please contact me ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk so I can send you a proposal form, or if you have any questions, we can meet up and go through everything.

If you do not have a production in mind, but would like to direct or get involved, let me know and we can discuss possibilities.

I am further interested in what the members would like to see included in next season, especially workshops and additional events.

The deadline for proposals is 15 February 2013.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Ulrike
Artistic Director**

'The Price'

By Arthur Miller

Directed by Rod Lewis

A review by Barry Hewlett-Davies

This is a solid, measured account of what Miller wrote as a meaningful comedy; the laughs are there in the script but not always sought after. Instead, the shouting matches and the closing grand guignol image of an old man spot-lit in an armchair, apparently laughing himself to death, are disturbing to say the least. The audience get their money's worth, even though they don't have as much to laugh about as they might.

We are in the attic of a New York brownstone, a place packed with all manner of treasure, the property of a man destroyed after the US financial crash in the 30s. His son, a NY cop, and his wife are waiting for an incredibly old antique dealer to come to value the goods. From them we hear about another brother, a successfully rich surgeon, who is thought not to have done enough to support the family.

When the dealer arrives, Miller plays his ace. Bingo – the star spot.

He is Solomon – "so old, you must have looked me up in a very old phone book" – and he is played by Jerry Lyne, giving the performance of his life. His appearance, gait, posture, delivery and gesture speak accurately of extreme old age - dotty, altogether wondrous and lovable – but no fool.

The other three members of the cast feel "right" as well. They all have meaty material to go at and relish it. What we could do with is some variation in their pace and delivery – the "light and shade." Then the laughs would come.

Andy Bell is the cop, a good guy, decent, wise, and honest according to his own rules; Janice Jones is his wife, fearful most of the time, engagingly so; and Des Potton is the successful bro, an actor who can fill a theatre just by being on the stage, a tremendous force, physically and emotionally.

It is fascinating to look at the set. Crowded with expensive goodies, it threatens to overwhelm the studio and I gather that when the show was at final rehearsal stage, it took up so much room, the seating capacity had to be cut to accommodate it, "Sold Out" was announced almost as soon as the Box Office opened. But common sense prevailed. It is mostly the work of Araceli Perez – and you might even say it deserves a curtain call to itself.

Unexpected weight aside, this is NVT hitting the button more or less on the head again. The year has been a good one due in part to Ulrike Schilling's planning as Artistic Director. It is not good news that she is standing down at the end of the season. The company owes her a lot.

Barry Hewlett-Davies

Tickets for next upcoming NVT productions

Ticket prices: £9 (£8 members)

Final Friday/Saturday: £10 (£9 Members) Tuesday evenings: tickets £7

Please note: On Sundays matinee only (except for 'Hansel and Gretel' below), and no productions on Mondays)

Evening performances at 7.45 pm
Sunday Matinees at 2.30 pm
(Except for 'Hansel and Gretel')

6-9 December: 'Hansel & Gretel'
Adapted by Helen Nelder

* Two performances - on both Saturday and Sunday 8/9 December at 2.30 & 7.45

Performance TIME & date?	How many?		Total Cost?
*	Member?	Non-Member?	£

19-26 January:

'Far Away' and 'Seven Jewish Children'
by Caryl Churchill

Performance date?	How many?		Total Cost?
	Member?	Non-Member?	£

23 February-2 March:

'How To Disappear Completely and
Never Be Found' by Fin Kennedy

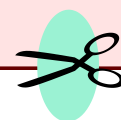
Performance date?	How many		Total Cost?
	Member?	Non-Member?	£

Name, Address, Postal code & phone number:

Membership
Number(s)

* PLEASE SEND or DELIVER YOUR CHEQUE and this coupon to:
New Venture Theatre, Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

* Please note there may be a delay in receiving confirmation of your tickets for bookings made more than a month in advance of the performance date.



MEMBERS FORUM

This month's subject:

Who is welcome at our AGMs? . . . Or not?



Dear Editor,

Re: Recent A.G.M./Membership.

I recently attended the A.G.M. on Saturday 22nd. with my wife, Christine, as associate members.

We were particularly interested in the proposed re-introduction of the Youth Theatre as set out in the previous letter from our granddaughter Izzy Aidallbery.

At the outset, we were informed-somewhat brusquely-that as associate members we were not entitled to vote.

During the meeting we felt increasingly like second class citizens and were made to feel uncomfortable, due to the views of some of the members which seemed to be very anti-involvement of associate members.

This seems to be a strange attitude for an organisation to take, as it should surely seek to involve as many people at all levels as possible in order to thrive. If you treat people who are not full members in this way, perhaps it's time for you to reassess what you mean by an associate member and whether you want to widen the potential membership or not.

We hope that this may be just a temporary "blip" and that the N.V.T. will continue to be as inclusive as it has been in the past.

We also note from the September-October 2012 calendar of events that the Pebble Trust has awarded a £5000 grant, and that "Louise and Jamie were very impressed by our vision for the main theatre and PLANNED YOUTH THEATRE DEVELOPMENTS"!!

Yours sincerely,

Roger A. Snowden

Dear Newsletter Editor

Who's welcome at NVT's AGMs? I've heard recently that someone wasn't treated with the normal friendly welcome at this year's AGM.

I haven't wanted to rock the boat before but now feel an urge to let you know how upset I have been at a couple of these events in the past. I know it is hard to believe but on two occasions, accompanied by my then beau, I wasn't recognised. To make matter worse I was then told "you shouldn't be here tonight - full members only". My beau, who was very quick thinking, pointed out to the less than welcoming person that anyone, member or not, can attend a charity's AGM. It's only that non-members or Associate Members can't vote. I was left with the feeling that we were there under sufferance and shouldn't speak - a big ask of me.

As so many of you know I have been an avid fan of NVT for about 15 years, and except for the above, have loved being part of this very special organisation.

I have since discovered from your wonderful Chairman that Associate Members can speak and put forward their thoughts and views. I may be one of the more elusive followers of NVT but I know some of the Associate Members put in many hours to help NVT run smoothly.

How about a change in the constitution to give both Full and Associate Members the right to vote at the AGM? Sounds like a super idea to me - why not?

Love to you all

Mary Jane Birdwhistle

Dear Editor,

Re: the recent AGM

My parents came along to support my daughter Izzy on the debate about the revival of the Youth Theatre. They've been 'Friends members' for a long time and I'm afraid I didn't really realise that they would be unable to vote (mea culpa), however they were told pretty unceremoniously that they wouldn't be able to vote. I had thought the AGM was open to everyone... it seems not, or certainly not encouraged.

I was shocked to hear a proposal to do away with associate membership - I believe it was overruled, hopefully so. Anyway, as first time attendees of an AGM, they commented that they had really felt like second-class citizens.

There was certainly no effort to make them feel included and in fact there were several members who just stared at them as if they were creatures in a zoo or something... as well as the debate about membership costs which certainly didn't help.

To me, there was the distinct feeling prevalent that everyone should be able to afford £25 per year;

a) that's not the point, we are meant to be a charitable organisation

b) not everyone can afford it - the people generally saying how affordable it is, as always, are the ones who don't need to worry about their outgoings...

I've heard people comment a few times about how cliquey NVT can be, must say it's the first time I've really seen it and it left a pretty nasty taste in my mouth.

P'd off of Hollingdean

See page 7

Calendar Boys – The Perfect gift this Christmas

This Christmas, don't feel like the last turkey in the shop. Give you and your loved ones a present to remember with an official New Venture Theatre nude male calendar.

Featuring twelve of our 'members' baring their all for 2013, there's no better way to fill your stocking this Christmas

After costs, all proceeds goes to the restoration of our Main Theatre. So even if you are feeling a bit of a Scrooge, you can gaze in wonder at these twelve good men and true, knowing that you've helped to restore one of Brighton's leading theatrical venues back

to its renewed glory.

'Calendar Boys' is **ON SALE NOW**. Available at the theatre during our productions, or online at <http://www.newventure.org.uk>

Grab them before they disappear!

Please note: Online purchases are £10 (to include postage and packing)

Any questions?

Email Colin Elmer on colinelmer@hotmail.co.uk

Colin Elmer



Photos by Tamsin Fraser and Strat Mastoris

Members' Forum Letters - The Chairman responds to page 6

This month has seen three letters on a very similar theme, so it would be only right to have a response, which may spark further letters or may not.

I feel there are two issues that come out of the letters, as the Youth Theatre was resolved at the AGM and is progressing through the necessary formalities. The issues raised are how Associate members are treated and the suggestion at the AGM to cease the grade of Associate Member.

Taking the second point first. At the AGM in 2011 the membership requested that we should move to a single membership grade in an attempt to make the membership more integrated. The only practical

way to do this, after looking at how other local groups manage their membership, was to suggest stopping Associate membership for new members – existing Associate members would be able to continue. This was not accepted for a wide range of reasons. This suggestion was not designed to alienate or ostracise Associate members in any way and I apologise if that is how this came across. In reality we have been trying to get Associate members more involved in the activities of the theatre for the last few years, albeit with limited success.

Moving on to the first point. I totally agree it is unacceptable to be treated badly and in an unwelcoming way when you come to a meeting of an organisation to which you are a mem-

ber. As things stand it is a fact that Associate members are not permitted to vote at the AGM and this must be made clear, but they are welcome to attend and contribute. I am sorry to hear that anyone was made to feel unwelcome at the AGM or at any other time. All members of the NVT are welcome to come along and participate. The only restrictions as to what are those stated in our constitution, such as voting at AGMs; this does not preclude any member from speaking and making their contribution. As far as the restrictions as concerned that is for a future AGM to consider and possibly change as members feel is appropriate.

Ian Black, Chairman



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JANUARY 2013 newsletter
 Copy deadline: Monday 17 December
 Printing: Wednesday: 2 January

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