NVT Newsletter FEBRUARY 2014

Coming in March

'The End of the Beginning'

By Sean O'Casey Directed by Rod Lewis 21 - 29 March

'The Winslow Boy'

By Terrence Rattigan, directed by Gerry McCrudden Friday 21 February 2014 - Saturday 1 March 2014

Ronnie Winslow, a cadet at the Royal Naval College in the years just prior to the First World War, is accused of the theft of a five-shilling postal order. An internal enquiry, conducted without notice to his family and without benefit of representation, finds him guilty. His father, Arthur Winslow, believes his son's claim of innocence and, with the help of his suffragette daughter, Catherine, launches a concerted effort to clear Ronnie's name.

The Winslows succeed in engaging the most highly sought after barrister in England at the time, Sir Robert Morton, known also to be a shrewd opposition Member of Parliament. Fighting the case demands a high price from each member of the family and those near to them.

Inspired by true events of the George Archer- Shee case in the years prior to World War One, The Winslow Boy is the story of a father's fight to clear his son's name. The battle between personal principles and conscience, plus an establishment under the media spotlight makes The Winslow Boy as relevant today as ever it was.

Rattigan wrote the play in the wake of the Second World War in a world struggling to come to terms with the trauma and slaughter. UN and European Human Rights conventions were being drafted. His choice of a story about a boy and a five shilling postal order was an inspired piece of lateral thinking. He understood that for rights to be universal, they have to apply all the way down the line.

The Winslow Boy is a classic piece of theatre by Terence Rattigan at his best. Rattigan spent many years living in Brighton and was part of 'the Olivier set'. He was a complex man and remains an enigmatic figure; the master of the 'well crafted play' of upper class manners and repressed sexuality. His plays dominated the West End stage throughout the 1940s and into the mid-1950s. But then the 'angry young men' arrived; a wave of young playwrights and directors who introduced a raw, radical style of theatre. His work fell totally from favour. Since his centenary year in 2011 however, his plays have enjoyed a revival amongst audiences, playwrights, critics and directors. The Winslow Boy was recently and beautifully revived at The Old Vic and on Broadway.

When it was first staged in Brighton's Theatre Royal in 1946 there may have been many who wondered, recalling the death and destruction and no doubt grieving for loved ones, what the suffering and sacrifice had been all about. Was it all worth it? Rattigan is in no doubt. The words 'Let right be done' echo through the play.

Some years back theatre critic Michael Billington summed up the particular qualities which make Rattigan's plays still worth performing and watching:

"Few dramatists this century have written with more understanding about the human heart than Terence Rattigan".

Rattigan is a superb and engaging storyteller. The Winslow Boy, like most of his work is a technical triumph - a courtroom drama that skilfully dispenses with the courtroom and which also contains an acclaimed theatrical whammy.

I was delighted that so many fine actors auditioned for the roles. They join a superb creative team, so I am doubly blessed; you will recognise some familiar names but also new ones too. The cast and creative team and I will certainly try to do justice to Rattigan's creation.

Gerry McCrudden



Strat Mastoris & Tamsin Fraser

'Old Times'

By Harold Pinter Directed by Steven O'Shea

Reviewed by Barry Hewlett-Davies

Torment in Bedford Place

Old Times was written 43 years ago and is the first of Pinter's full-length plays to be obviously "unreal."

In other hands, this would be a conventional ménage a trois, three people, a married couple and their friend, talk about their past. Kate and Deeley are challenged by Anna with conflicting accounts about their involvement with her. Fair enough. But Pinter wants to torment us with the idea that their memories are deliberately false and events may not have happened as they appear.



Janice Jones, Red Gray and Jim Calderwood

So we are not all in the same time and space, then...? It's not easy to tell. Reality has been distorted like it is in a dream – and anyway that's not altogether the point. Pinter is exploring how memory can be plundered and exploited.

It's not an evening to sit back and enjoy but there are welcome laughs now and again, and the trade mark Pinter pauses are well in evidence.



Red Gray and Janice Jones



Janice Jones and Jim Calderwood

Jim Calderwood is Deeley and it is good to see him back on-stage. He has the stuffing knocked out of him whenever he's cast in Pinter – he was tormented out of his mind by the terrorists in The Birthday Party – and he is under attack again here, not so much physically but enough to destroy him. He finds a certain amount of wry humour in what's going on. To begin with.

His attacker is Anna. As played by Janice Jones, she is elegantly, eloquently, even decoratively manipulative – and quite deadly, much in command. Red Gray's Kate is confident and dignified, almost an uncomplaining spectator until drawn in for the kill. She has an engaging stillness. Poor Deeley!



Janice Jones, Red Gray and Jim Calderwood

Pinter refused to discuss his work and Old Times has always seemed to me to be one of those plays furthest out of reach. Visconti infuriated him by mounting a production in which Anna and Kate were linked sexually – a reading of the situation which has always seemed to me to be reasonable. Where is the motive, otherwise, in eliminating Deeley quite so ignominiously?

We are overwhelmed by enigma. Anna assures Deeley: "I came here not to disrupt but to celebrate." In fact, she does both. But is she telling the truth? Who knows? The rules are far from clear when it comes to playing games the Pinter way.

This is the company's second production of the play and it works very well.

Photos by Strat Mastoris

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Thoughts on 'Old Times' by Strat Mastoris

"So what in God's name was it all about?" I can't remember an NVT production that caused such confusion as to its meaning - if indeed Pinter's play has one. Director Steven O'Shea wisely decided to avoid imposing any interpretation, preferring to let Pinter's enigmatic lines speak for themselves. I've read the text a number of times while working on the play; so here's my take on it, for what it's worth ...

I think that Deeley met Kate in London when she was a vivacious, exuberant young secretary, subsequently married her and took her to live deep in the country. He's a dominant, controlling personality, and over the years of their marriage he has crushed all the spark out of his wife. At the play's opening, Deeley and Kate anticipate the arrival of Anna, Kate's old London roommate from twenty years before; but - significantly - Anna is present on stage throughout this section, while the couple discuss her.

If Anna was truly coming to visit, why have her on stage before she arrives? But it makes sense if Anna is actually Kate's younger (London) self. Not exactly a split personality *per se*, and certainly not two different people or a ghost; but something more like Kate's memories from that previous time. A lot of dialogue is taken up with Anna's exotic life in Sicily, and I feel that this represents the future that Kate *could have led*, or hoped and expected to lead, before she met Deeley.

Anna constantly refers to the vibrant cultural life that 'they' led as secretaries in London, while Kate responds that - "I was interested once in the arts, but I can't remember now which ones they were." Deeley occupies himself - who knows how? - except that it takes him away from Kate for long periods. He's certainly not the world-renowned film-maker that his increasingly fantastic inventions suggest - "As a matter of fact I'm at the top of my profession, as a matter of fact ... I wrote the film and directed it. My name is Orson Welles."

He gets angry and dismissive about Sicily - "I've been there. There's nothing more to see, there's nothing more to investigate, nothing!" - as Kate questions Anna about her life there - "Do you drink orange juice on your terrace in the morning, and bullshots at sunset, and look down at the sea?" Sicily seems to be a metaphor for all the excitement that Kate <code>isn't</code> having in England.

Anna tells Deeley about Kate devouring the arts review papers when they shared a bedsit, and how one Sunday they went together to some obscure cinema and "almost alone, saw a wonderful film called Odd Man Out." But five minutes before, Deeley has recounted how he first saw and picked up Kate, on a Sunday afternoon in a cinema watching 'Odd Man Out', with Kate the only other person in the cinema.

Now obviously only one of these accounts can be true, so it's possible, as Anna says, that - "There are things I remember which may never have happened but as I recall them so they take place." I think Pinter's planting a misleading clue here, trying to lead his audience to think that all these 'memories' are false. But if 'Anna' is actually the part of Kate's psychological makeup that was the culture-vulture before she met

Deeley, then it's reasonable to think that *both parts* of Kate/Anna went to see 'Odd Man Out', but that Deeley met only the one woman, who was (of course) named Kate

Early on Kate tells of Anna stealing her underwear. Later, Anna recounts how - "I borrowed some of her underwear, to go to a party" where "a man at the party had spent the whole evening looking up my skirt." And that - "from that night she insisted, from time to time, that I borrow her underwear ... and each time she proposed this she would blush, but propose it she did, nevertheless." But a few minutes before this, Deeley has insisted that he had met Anna long ago, and that he had taken her to a party where he had spent the evening looking up her skirt.

If we think in terms of Kate/Anna, then Anna would seem to be the more sexual, adventurous part of the joint personality; the one that Kate suppresses - kills off - later when she starts a serious relationship with Deeley. A major theme of 'Old Times' is the man who appears one night in Kate and Anna's room, who sits sobbing in a chair before standing over both women's beds, looking down at them in the darkened room. Anna recounts the story first, in Act One, and it's returned to by Kate at the play's close. But Kate's ending is different - she says (to Anna) - "But I remember you. I remember you dead."

Kate continues - "I leaned over you. Your face was dirty. You lay dead, your face scrawled with dirt ... After all, you were dead in my room." Significantly, Kate refers to 'my room', not 'our room', and later she talks about the man - "When I brought him into the room your body of course had gone." ... "We had a choice of two beds. Your bed or my bed. To lie in, or on." Kate made a choice. As the saying goes - you make your bed and then you lie in it ...

Dirt as a metaphor for sex? Interesting that Kate takes a long bath in Act Two, and that Deeley is obsessive about how clean she gets herself, and whether she's 'properly dry.' Kate goes on - "He thought I was going to be sexually forthcoming ... I dug about in the windowbox ... and plastered his face with dirt. ... He would not let me dirty his face, or smudge it, he wouldn't let me. He suggested a wedding instead, and a change of environment." Is this why Deeley was sobbing?

This would seem to be the moment in Kate's life where she decided that her future lay with Deeley, and that she would have to give up the more vivacious aspects of her personality - possibly the more sexual ones, too. Deeley himself *talks* a lot about gazing at women's thighs and their underwear, but doesn't mention much actual sex (except the prostitutes in his film-maker fantasies). It's probably significant that Kate and Deeley appear not to have produced any children.

And a final thought. Given that Anna is actually Kate's memory of her pre-Deeley life in London, and represents her unfulfilled hopes for how her life might have been, the whole play could be seen as an extended argument between the couple about the state of their marriage and life. Maybe they have this same argument every night ...

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Behind the Scenes at NVT

Away from the glamour of acting and directing, many NVT members take on roles behind the scenes at the theatre.

Some form essential parts of the backstage crew behind each of our productions, while others tackle long term tasks as part of the committee or the management team. Many skilled and talented members give their time as part of the creative team behind NVT shows and events, and some take on the sociable task of helping out on the box office or behind the bar.

We often find ourselves questioned on why we give so much of our time for such 'thankless' tasks, and what we gain from our roles! Here some long term NVT members talk about their experiences.

Ollie Donovan

This is my final year as an officer and Trustee for NVT and I can safely confirm that I have thoroughly enjoyed almost every moment (in one way or another) of my half decade as arguably the 'most hated' member of the management team, The Treasurer!

I can assure you that I've only ever meant well whilst telling everybody what they can and cannot spend, whilst trawling through kilometres of figures, reports, budgets and forecasts. Out of it all, I have gained experience I could not have benefitted from anywhere else - as the responsible person for approaching £100,000 of turnover every year, and squeezing as much profit out of that as possible in order to develop our beloved building, this experience will sit pretty as a feather in my cap for the rest of my life. Pending audit, at least.

Ulrike Schilling

I remember the excitement of being involved in 'Dinner' in 2007 as Stage Manager and somehow I have found myself in every second show since, as either Stage or Production Manager or a mix of both. I have learned about handling guns, creating food props, costumes, sets, acting, directing, lighting and sound - every show have had something else to offer! I was even offered paid work as Stage Manager outside of NVT - networking within the NVT community can lead to all sorts of interesting theatre experiences.

Based on my experience within the theatre I became the overall NVT Production Manager in 2007, and after 2 years I was elected as Artistic Director. Both roles have offered me huge learning curves and opportunities; I could not only explore various areas of interest, but also shape NVT and observe many people working on shows, broadening my views and understanding of productions and theatre.

Following my involvement in many productions, and having filled almost every role within the production team at some point, I started to organise various training opportunities at NVT and am hoping to broaden them further. This includes the weekly acting classes, where for the past 5 years I have been teaching sessions focusing mainly on movement and physicality. When running such workshops with the chorus of

'Medea', I met a teacher from Northbrook College who offered me a teaching job there.

You never know who you might meet or what might happen at NVT, but it offers amazing opportunities to learn new things, get connections with people from the industry, explore your own potential and meet lovely friends as well as having fun and a great time!

Dan Walker

I have taken on a few backstage roles, and the one I have taken to most naturally is Lighting Designer. Something about the mix of artistic creativity and technical application just clicks with me. On the back of my experience gained at NVT I have been offered several paid freelance lighting design jobs in various local theatres, and I would love to take it further in future.

I have also taken on the roles of Sound & Light Operator (a lovely way to be part of a production) stage manager (you will get to know everybody) front of house Duty Manager (you will get to know what everybody is like after a few drinks) and right now I am Production Manager for our festival show 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch' (so far it is something like being in the centre of a whirlwind).

Most of my time is taken up as NVT Publicity Manager. This involves editing and sending out press releases, making sure we get listings, reviews and occasional articles in local and national press and on various websites. It can be a little thankless, slightly reminiscent of shouting into deep hole since very few replies are sent back and I don't know if something will be used until it appears in print...but it's really great when it does. I also manage NVT's social media, send email bulletins, and make plans with the Brighton Fringe (a two-man job with help this year from the indomitable Jeffrey Driver). Finally (well not really finally as there's always more to do) I sit as part of the Trustee Committee and contribute to raising our profile with various long-term projects. Previous Publicity Manager Tamsin Fraser still creates our brochures and posters.

Getting involved has had a profound effect on my life and I would encourage anyone thinking of contributing an existing skill or learning a new one to simply speak to an existing volunteer or get in touch with our volunteer liaison team.

Tim McQuillen-Wright

"What am I doing here?" A friend and fellow New Venturite recently said to me "If it's not fun, what am I doing here?". Thankfully, this was not said in response to any show I was involved with but simply to justify the long hours and the acceptance of missing out on other social activities. "Fun?", I thought. "If you want fun you should go and buy yourself a Lone Ranger costume and a Space Hopper", but each to their own. I'm not sure that all of us think of the NVT as fun, exactly, but I took his point. Although, I might just have to re-evaluate just how hard we are working him next time we are on a show together.

A number of us at the theatre do the same thing, or a variation of, in our professional careers. It has often been asked why we would spend what little free time we have doing precisely the same thing except without the pay. To compound this, last year I took on the role of Set Development Adviser, just in case I started having too much free time. The role entails my helping those designers who don't know how to get the most out of the NVT's resources and guiding them with how to look after what is available to them. Not all designers require or even want my involvement, probably, which suits me fine. To some, the role may look like a thankless task. To others, that I am trying to egotistically get my nose into productions that haven't invited me. I can understand both of these opinions but neither is true. I guess the truth is, it is always good talking with likeminded people. Being a sounding board for other designers to discuss their ideas is extremely exciting. Not just designers. Directors, production managers, lighting operators, stage managers and even, dare I say it, health and safety officers all have a significant input and a set of judgements from their own field which can change your opinion and we are extremely fortunate at the NVT that all are happy to discuss ideas, solutions and alternatives when limitations and problems arise. Nothing is formulaic. Everything is challenged. The constant need for invention, whether artistically or logistically, would daunt a lot of people but at the NVT it is accepted and embraced. For all the wonderful aspects of being part of putting a production together, there is a sense of needing to fight your own corner to protect your show's interests. In the committee, this same approach to invention is applied not just to one show, but to the sustainable future of the theatre. That is what I am doing here. Whether it is fun or not is still open to debate.

Natasha Borg

Considered by many members to be one of the least desirable roles at NVT, I in fact greatly enjoyed my years as Box Office Manager!

Initially assuming I would be giving up my time to benefit the theatre, I soon found I gained just as much in return—if not more. My role helped me to overcome my shyness and gain confidence in my abilities, and I quickly made many new friends. It was rewarding to be entrusted with the management of all of our ticket sales (around 4000 tickets sold each season, usually over £30,000 of income!) and eventually this experience enabled me to successfully apply for a much improved day job!

In addition I was introduced to great ways of utilising my design background, and have had the opportunity to construct a few stage sets as well as create lots of posters, programmes and tickets, which now sit in my portfolio. It's always hard work—but worth it.

Saturday 15 March 2pm - 6pm £5 (members) Introduction to Lighting & Sound Design Strat Mastoris & Chris Pugh

Have you ever been interested in how a production is lit and what enhances those amazing performances? Or what creates those atmospheres and moods subtly and how does a door bell ring if there is not even a door? This workshop will give you answers to those questions and many more and de-mystify the technical side of productions making it accessible to everyone. Find out if that is the area you would like to explore in an upcoming production!

To book a place, please email strat@stratmastoris.com

Saturday 29 March 3pm - 5pm Free Introduction to Production & Stage management Ulrike Schilling

What is happening backstage before, during and after show? Who is setting everything up for the audience to enjoy the production and what is actually needed to put a show on? We will be looking at the Management side of productions and the process to bring a show together - just in time for the next season so you can pick a show you would like to work on and explore those backstage roles.

To book a place please email <u>ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk</u>

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Acting Classes at NVT

Love The One You're With

17, 24 February, 3, 10, 17 and 24 March

Andrew Allen

Want to be a better actor? Make everyone else look brilliant!

Often we are told how to improve our acting through our voice, characterisation, and our physicality. This is all vital and necessary, but ignores one very important tool that can make our lives so much easier: each other.

So much of a performer's story comes from the people around them. You share the stage with geniuses, Gods and Goddesses. In this empowering and involving series of classes, you will utilise skills in listening, improvisation and devising to engender a positive and encouraging environment in which each performer, beginner or experienced, is given the confidence to create their best work.

Want to be a better actor? Make everyone else look brilliant...

Production Manager Mark Hyndman

Assistant PM Hannah Liebeskind

Set Design Tim McQuillen-Wright Araceli Perez

Stage Management Sophie Nunns Lighting Design Strat Mastoris Sound Design Alistair Lock

Costumes and Hair Julie Griffin, Liz Miller

Jackie Jones, Rosie Nicchitta

Programme Tamsin Fraser

Photography Strat Mastoris

Poster Design Strat Mastoris

Tamsin Fraser

Sound and Lighting Alex Epps, Tim Metcalf

Strat Mastoris Mark Hyndman

Choreographer Alexandra Worral

'The End of the Beginning'

A new addition to our newsletter!

We will now be listing castings for each production here in the newsletter, as soon as parts have been cast.

You can also keep a look out for vacant backstage positions—if you would like to get involved, or shadow a role please email: Darry Berrill Des Potton

Barry Derrill Carl Boardman

Lizzie Berrill Janice Jones

Production Manager Pat Boxall

Set Design Tony Shoesmith,

Tomasz Baraniecki George Walter Celi Perez Marta Gillner Gilewska

Special Effects Rick Moore

Stage Management Pauline Rospigliosi

George Walter Rick Moore, Barry Purchese Annique Tate-Doe

Lighting Design Chris Pugh

Sound Alistair Lock, Emma Sheil

Costume Imogen Forbes
Hair and Make Up Alex Mcleod
Marketing Dan Walker

'The Winslow Boy'

Ronnie Winslow
Violet
Janet Hewlett Davies
Arthur Winslow
John Tolputt
Grace Winslow
Dickie Winslow
Catherine Winslow
John Watherstone
Tom Slater

Desmond Curry Simon Messingham
Miss Barnes Sheelagh Baker
Fred Mark Hyndman

Sir Robert Morton Colin Elmer

Poster Design, Programme & Photography
Tamsin Fraser

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An update from NVT's Artistic Director

2014 may have started wet and windy with big seas lashing and crashing onto our beaches but none of this has deterred any of us at New Venture which is, as usual, a hive of activity.

With a fine production of Pinter's 'Old Times' playing in the Studio, the rest of the building is pulsing with rehearsals with Rattigan's 'The Winslow Boy' already into the deep and meaningful stage, while for those of us working on O'Casey's 'The End of the Beginning' it is still early days as we feel our way gently in.

The 'End of the Beginning' is a real gem of a comedy; an extraordinary blend of fine characterisation, sparky dialogue and physical sequences that verge on the slapstick, and it is these that invite especially creative handling from our actors, Des, Carl and Janice. But inventiveness is also required by all the team as there is also plenty of wit and humour to be found elsewhere in the production. Special effects have a trick or two, as does the set itself and a complexity of animal sounds are needed to evoke an extremely lively farmyard with one particular beast very much making its presence felt! All in all we hope `The End of the Beginning' will provide a heady mix that will make for an unforgettably hilarious evening that will, along with the Irish music and dance to be found in the bar - organised by Christine Stubbs - celebrate in fine style the opening of our freshly renovated Theatre Upstairs.

Of course, there is even more activity going on. Vital work continues apace to get the Theatre Upstairs ready in time with Chris Pugh leading a select team of electricians to finish the wiring and set up a new sound system. NVT's Fringe Festival shows are already in the pipeline – the exciting 'Hedwig and The Angry Inch' having already had its first,

hugely enjoyable, read through and 'Not About Heroes', already cast, about to start rehearsal. All this, with the continuing Acting Classes and Youth Theatre nights means all departments are being kept very busy. So, no quiet start to 2014 for NVT more, as in the words of the legendary Fats Waller, a case of "The Joint is Jumping!"

Apologies for not mentioning by name all those that are contributing so much – without you everything would grind to a halt.

Also; many thanks for the excellent Directors' proposals for 2014/15 that have been sent in so far. With several NVT directors currently involved with other work there are still several to come in the pipeline... and the door is still open for more. So let's keep up the NVT tradition of putting together a season of exciting, and varied theatre.

Rod Lewis



Carl Boardman and Des Potton

The End of the Beginning

APPEAL – Does anyone have a mandolin they would be prepared to lend us to be played in the production? Please contact Pat at:

pat.lyne 47@btinternet.com

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Hedwig and the Angry Inch

by John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask, directed by Frank Leon Friday 02 May 2014 - Saturday 17 May 2014



Hedwig is an East German rock 'n' roll goddess who also happens to be the victim of a botched sex-change operation, leaving her with just an Angry Inch. Now on their "British Tour" Hedwig and her band use music and conversation to tell us of her hilariously tragic life's search for The Origin of Love, inspiring anyone who has felt life gave them an inch when they deserved a mile.

We are aiming to make our Fringe Festival show this year truly spectacular. You can help by boosting the budget and spreading the word with NVT's first foray into Crowdfunding!

Have a look at what's in store at https://www.indiegogo.com/project/preview/43484545

Tickets for the next NVT production

Performances on Sundays are matinee only. No performances on Mondays. Evening performances at 7.45pm Sunday Matinees at 2.30pm

15 February 'Upstairs Downstairs' Story Evening (£7/£6) Performance How many? Total Cost?

Member? Non-Member?

21 February-01 March
'The Winslow Boy' by Terrence Rattigan

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

21-29 March
'The End of the Beginning' by Sean O'Casey

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

Seats £9 (£8 members) except final Friday/Saturday: £10 (£9 members): Tuesday and first Friday evening £7

Name, Address, Postal code & phone number: Membership

. Number(s)

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Using http://www.easyfundraising .org.uk/causes/nvt you will go straight to the NVT page, where you enter your details and sign up. You can also add the option to have a reminder popup on screen whenever you go to purchase an item from a retailer who is registered with the easyfunding scheme. There are over 2500 such online retailers, including many of the bigger ones.

Just add the *Find and Remind toolbar* to your browser so that you don't miss an opportunity to donate.

The NVT has many drains on its finite resources, the maintenance of the building as well as improvements to the infrastructure and the ongoing refurbishment of the Theatre Upstairs.

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

MANAGEMENT: Who we are and how to reach us

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Why not be an Angel or a Cherub donor - £100 or more to be an Angel, or £5 or more to be a Cherub. Pick up a leaflet at the theatre or send your donation to:

Angel/Cherub Appeal, NVT Bedford Place Brighton BN1 2PT

If you are a tax payer please let us know if you will Gift Aid your donation.

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