

'Hedwig & The Angry Inch'

by John Cameron Mitchell
and Stephen Trask
directed by Frank Leon

Friday 2nd - Saturday 17th
May

I was introduced to Hedwig in Bangkok by a man named Andrew Hunter in 2005. Andrew sadly passed last December. Andrew was a family friend, an ex-punk and a human rights activist, whom I had recently worked with in Cambodia as an Intern for the Asia Pacific Sex Workers Network. Together, we had facilitated a worker's rights workshop for marginalised women, mostly transgender sex workers who had arrived from 25 different countries, translators in tow. The best way of teaching them and communicating through the language barrier was by far theatre and arts & crafts, and for me, the three days that I was lucky enough to spend with these women were undoubtedly some of the most uplifting moments of life.

At the end of the workshop many visitors were given the opportunity to perform anything they liked. The lights were ready, the drinks were flowing and an incredible time was had by all. There was a lot of drag... but it wasn't drag as I knew it. It was something else – something so palpably transformative and empowering that I can barely begin to explain.

Two weeks later in Bangkok I was living with Andrew and editing the footage we'd created during the workshop; and there I watched 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch'. I understood it. I could see what she was. I could see exactly what she was saying and I fell in love. Ever since I've been dreaming of the day that I could be involved with a Hedwig production – an opportunity I've now been given by the NVT. I could not be happier with the team I have, and everybody onstage and off is making this mammoth undertaking look like child's play. Their commitment and professionalism is a testament to the theatre we are all so proud to be a part of. I must also mention here that our 'crowdfunding' campaign for Hedwig was a huge success, and this support has al-

continued on page 2

'Not About Heroes'

by Stephen MacDonald
directed by Jerry Lyne

Friday 23rd - Saturday 31st
May

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori",

'It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country'

Facetiously penned poet Wilfred Owen, who was to die just one week short of the Armistice in 1918.

WW1 poets, Owen & Sassoon, a story of poetry and loss.

When Wilfred Owen was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital for Nervous Disorders in June, 1917, he was suffering from shell-shock after four months in the trenches in France. It seems that his Commanding Officer equated shell-shock with cowardice. Owen was completely unknown. He aspired to be a poet, but had achieved nothing of note. He was killed in November, 1918. He had won the Military Cross a month before his death. He is now widely recognised as the greatest of the many British poets of the First World War.

The crucial event was the meeting with Siegfried Sassoon. He was a well-known, acclaimed poet and a soldier of remarkable courage, who had achieved notoriety by publishing a protest against the "evil and unjust" conduct of the war. He was sent to Craiglockhart Hospital at the end of July, 1917, possibly to undermine the strength of his protest by questioning his sanity. Wilfred Owen nervously introduced himself about two weeks later. They had little in common but a warm and affectionate friendship developed and gradually a relationship developed between the two which became not only a strong bond of affection but an inspiration for Owen to write his greatest poems.

Owen described it fully in his letters, but Sassoon waited many years after Owen's death before he was able to express the strength of his feelings in his memoirs 'Siegfried's Journey',

This moving play follows their journey with

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

lowed us to negotiate potentially crippling eventualities, and make Hedwig bigger and better than we could have hoped. We could not be more thankful to everyone who has donated.

Hedwig recaps the story of how a slip of a girlie-boy from East Berlin transformed into the wild-hearted Hedwig Schmidt, and continued her quest for love. Hansel's botched sex change operation left him with just an 'angry inch'. Now Hedwig tours with her hard rocking band 'The Angry Inch' - who have just arrived in Brighton for the first night of their unlimited East Sussex Tour - and their first show is at the New Venture Theatre!

John Cameron Mitchell, the writer, had derived the idea from seeing drag acts in downtown New York in 1993, and these acts were sometimes very punk and the performer would often disrobe at the top of the show, ripping the 'drag' off. John developed a character which also garnered some influence from one of his babysitters, a German divorcee who would often tell young John about the life she had led. She moonlighted as a prostitute and would often bring her tricks back to her trailer park home, and these somewhat disconnected events form the fabric of the show. His rock musical was finally realised on Broadway in 1998 and went on to win two Tony awards. John then went on to direct the film 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch' in 2001, in which he also starred as Hedwig, to even greater acclaim.

I can only thank all the people involved with the NVT for their support. For three years I've thought about putting it on here. How to stage it? How demanding would it be? I never thought it would be this fun. I couldn't be happier. So come and see our huge opening.

'And when it comes to huge openings, a lot of people think of me' - Hedwig.

Frank Leon



Moog Garvett, Johnathan stanger, Christophe Gau and Finton Shevlin

continued from page 1

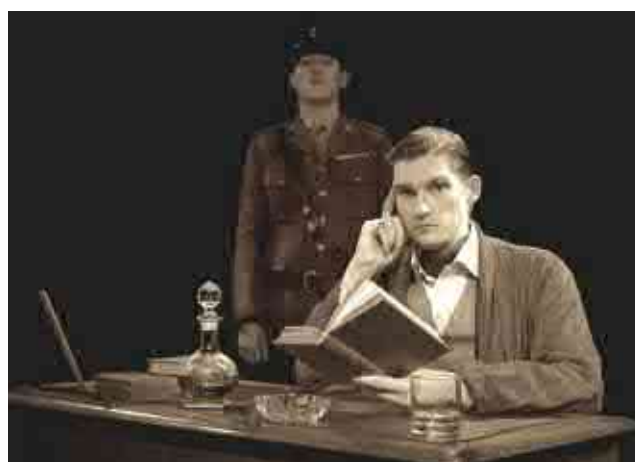
a dramatic mixture of action, poetry and prose.

There is a very creative and imaginative team supporting us and I am delighted to have the talented Colin Elmer playing Siegfried Sassoon and our up and coming newcomer David Eaton playing Wilfred Owen.

I am sure this will be a moving and memorable experience for us all.

We are producing this play as a Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Commencement of the 'Great War' in August 1914.

Jerry Lyne



Photos by Jez Bowden

David Eaton and Colin Elmer

NVT Awards Evening

This was discussed at the last committee meeting and there were opinions for and against continuing with the annual awards evening.

So it was agreed that we should ask NVT members for their views.

Please email me at mike.stubbs@newventure.org.uk and I'll pass your opinions on to the committee.

Mike Stubbs

Who Do You Think We Were?

'The Eagle With Two Heads' by Jean Cocteau

New Venture Theatre Group
September 1974

The first in a series of snapshots into the ongoing archiving project, which is now well underway! Gerry McCrudden has been hard at work painstakingly organising a huge volume of jumbled photos, programmes and newspaper cuttings to form a complete picture of the theatre's history.

Please do contact Gerry if you have any old photos, programmes or posters from NVT's past - there are still many gaps to be filled in our story. You can reach him at:

gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com



Queen's queen
was a ^{SEPT} 74
performance
in depth

EILEEN MILLER'S performance as the Queen in *The Eagle With Two Heads*, presented last week by the New Venture Theatre Group, was truly a great achievement.

The role of the Queen, whose husband was murdered on their wedding day and who has lived a life of seclusion in the ensuing ten years, is of inordinate length so that a valid, if superficial comment might be that even to have learned it so thoroughly was noteworthy.

Eileen did much more than that — hers was a reading in depth of a strange and complex character thrown completely off course by the arrival of the poet, Stanislas, fleeing from the police as the result of his poem written in despite of the Queen.

Len Holloway was this intense young man who today would be termed a left-wing agitator and handled equally well the variant moods of the character, the transition from fugitive to a man in love with the Queen.

The play depends on these two and on their establishing a rapport that would make an unlikely story credible. They succeeded.

Pauline Potter was Edith von Berg, the conniving reader to the Queen and tool of the Archduchess, and Ronald Newman the Queen's trusted equerry, Felix von Willenstein.

I was not quite so happy with Gerry Whitmore's Count von Foehn, the Chief of Police. While I appreciate the value of making him an apparently harmless and almost lackadaisical character, to me it would have been helpful to have seen the occasional glimpse of the iron hand.

Ron Hart appeared as the deaf mute, Tony, who did the Queen's bidding. James Burroughs had designed and constructed an excellent setting.

The play was directed by Granville Williams with respect for the story and with care to highlight the climatic moments. It may be a long time before this production is equalled.

Walter Hix

NEW VENTURE PRODUCTIONS
Sept 74
THE EAGLE WITH TWO HEADS
by JEAN COCTEAU

Stage Manager: Hilary Wight
Asst. Stage Managers: John Boyd, Jerry Perry, Alex Wright
Lighting: Ken Holt
Sound: Pam Denny

Wine: Grahams W. Wight Ltd.
Ice: (Ice House) John Chiswick
Honey: Cooch S. Phillips, West Street

ARE YOU THE QUERY OF A MEMBER? If so, we earnestly hope that you will enter your title to our Theatre and that you will also be having a ready receipt. Our teachers giving details of the advantages of membership will be available in the same theatre. Please take note: It includes a reasonable subscription here which you may terminate and return at your leisure. We look forward to seeing you regularly.

Production Members: Steve Miller, Patrick Henry, Harry Selman
Membership Secretary: Ian Dewart, Production Team: Harold Clifton
Theatre Manager: Roshale Hall

Directed by: Granville Williams
Set designed and executed by: Len Holloway

The location of the play taken place in Kingsley Centre.

ACT I: The Queen's Bedroom - Evening.
ACT II: The Dining Room - the next day.
ACT III: The same - the following morning, 11 o'clock.

EMERGENCY EXIT - TOP OF STAIRS



'The End of The Beginning'

by Sean O'Casey, directed by Rod Lewis
March 21 – 29, 2014

Review by Louise Schweitzer

The title's Irish, to start with. How can there be an end before a beginning? It's a clue to the reversal of the norm, the expectation confounded, an inversion of the natural order: and it's the point of Sean O'Casey's comedy. Then there's the balladeer singing in the bar as the audience wait to take their seats upstairs. Patrick Hannigan sang his lilting Irish folk tunes to the gentle accompaniment of clinking glasses and everyone joined in the chorus of Molly Malone. We could have been in Dublin. In fact, we were in Bedford Place, Brighton, to celebrate the opening of The Theatre Upstairs in The New Venture Theatre.

The play was a marvellous choice to launch theatre in the brand new spaces upstairs. Like all the best comedies, it is rooted in comprehension of character, and, like all the best comedies, it is not an entirely comfortable experience. My husband wriggled with recognition as Darry overwound the clock, hit it to make it go again and admired his biceps in the mirror. Do I quote that 'men just work 'til set of sun whilst woman's work is never done'? Probably.

Darry, irritated with his wife Lizzie, bets he can do her job better than she could do his. Mowing the meadow? Child's play. You try cooking, washing, feeding the pigs, and managing the household. Telling Darry not to forget the heifer which slips its halter, Lizzie stomps out. Darry practises calisthenics to a hilarious keep fit record for the doubtful benefit of local crumpet until his singing friend Barry appears with



Photos by Tamsin Fraser

Des Potton and Janice Jones

Director Rod Lewis first saw the play in German whilst working in Berlin more than twenty years ago. He thought it was one of the funniest shows he had ever seen – and he didn't speak German. There is a great deal of silent mime as Darry struts about in his braces, alone on stage, trying to exercise his torso or wash up and failing in both. Des Potton is sublimely inept, an Oliver Hardy figure of macho uselessness yet somehow infinitely touching and vulnerable. His Stan Laurel sidekick manages rather better with the gymnastics and rather worse with the dishes in a



Carl Boardman and Des Potton

a mandolin. Both men are equally inept and Barry can't see, with or without his spectacles. Disaster piles upon disaster and a fine mess they get each other into before a grand finale when the heifer, tied to a rope through the chimney, heaves Darry off his legs and up into the stack.



Des Potton

sidesplittingly funny performance by Carl Boardman. And then, just as any woman would write the pair of them off completely, they sing a charming duet 'Down where the bees are humming', accompanying themselves on the mandolin. Men, says O'Casey, may not be much use in the kitchen – but they can make your heart sing when they want to.

Meanwhile, comic tension grows as we await Lizzie's return. We guess the meadow will be perfectly mown, offstage. Anticipating Lizzie's reactions to the chaos, in a Casey coup de theatre, is largely left to our imagination and the curtain comes down, metaphorically, in The Theatre Upstairs. Poor Janice Jones, more than a match for Darry or Barry, has to be shrill and competent, yet we love her independence and her feisty courage. Her stance might not seem so heroic today, but Sean O'Casey wrote the play in 1937, in a rural Ireland where gender roles were written in stone. Is Lizzie a metaphor for Ireland itself, in those days of bitter struggles for national identity and freedom? Even if she doesn't represent a nation, she does stand for a sex oppressed by tradition and prejudice, something beautifully represented by Janice Jones in a performance both touching, tough and funny.

Huge credit to the creative team under the clever direction of Rod Lewis: the vintage set in particular was memorable for



Des Potton and Carl Boardman

Bakelite props, and lace antimacassars (who remembers those?). Another round of applause for dialect coach Paddy O'Keeffe; I would never have known that Des Potton, Carl Boardman and Janice Jones were not native Dubliners, a ruse highlighted by their clever Gaelic-ised names in the theatre programme. Manager Pat Boxall clearly overcame all the inevitable hiccups of a first night in a new theatre and the production looked as smooth as a swan gliding across a lake - if it was paddling furiously underneath, none of us in the audience would have known. Besides, we were laughing fit to burst.

Afterwards, there was Irish music off stage as Louise Wells and Adam Mould played the fiddle and the bodhran in the bar. Let's be having you, then.



Des Potton and Carl Boardman



Carl Boardman

Opening the Theatre Upstairs

How good it is to have our newly renovated Theatre Upstairs up and running again!

The idea was to try and mark this special occasion by having an evening that had a celebratory zing to it. What could be better than to herald in this new era in with the sound of laughter? So it was decided that the opening production should be a comedy but one that was brief enough to act almost as a centre piece, with live music to be played either side of it in the bar; this way everyone would have plenty of time to enjoy themselves with a drink and chat.

Sean O'Casey's 'The End of the Beginning' fitted the bill with its warm charm and simple, broad and based humour. It will certainly be memorable. What other play ends with a central character being dragged up a chimney by a cow!

But what about the space itself? Enter the auditorium and you are immediately struck by the sheer theatrical elegance of the place. With its deep and broad stage and the slope of its comfortable seating (more legroom than the National!) it is a design that gives rise to a thrill of expectation, that encourages a sense of immediacy between audience and performer; the on-looker can readily be drawn into the lives of the characters on stage.

We owe a huge thank you to all those volunteers * whose dedication, ideas and hard graft has, after so many years, made all this possible. It has resulted in a truly fine theatre space that will surely inspire many future NVT productions and give audiences much pleasure.

And what follows next? After 'Hedwig & The Angry Inch' in the Studio our next production in the Theatre Upstairs will be 'Not About Heroes' by Stephen MacDonald – a haunting piece that, with its tragic beauty, pays homage to the many that fell during the First World War.

With 'The Herbal Bed' and 'Decade' also already in rehearsal, and the acting classes and the youth theatre group very active – and on-going planning for next season - NVT is veritably buzzing yet again.

Rod Lewis

**I hope I'll be forgiven for not naming names. As well as those who were so hands on in the final months of the renovation work there were also many who also contributed much over the years. Not being able to name all it seemed the only fair to name none. Many apologies.*

Castings

'Not About Heroes' By Stephen MacDonald Directed by Jerry Lyne

Friday 23rd - Saturday 31st May

Cast

Colin Elmer Siegfried Sassoon
David Eaton Wilfred Owen

Crew

Jerry Lyne Director
Mike Stubbs Assistant to Director
Ollie Donovan Production Manager
Jezz Bowden Stage Manager
Celi Perez Set Design
Emma Shiel Lighting Design
Jezz Bowden Sound Design
(With Contributions from Colin Elmer)
Ollie Donovan Light and Sound Operation
Sophie Nunns Properties
Laura Scobie Theatre Dressing
Natasha Borg Poster & Programmes
Jezz Bowden Photographs
Jerry Lyne & Cast Costumes
Chris Pugh Technical Adviser

'The Herbal Bed' By Peter Whelan Directed by Tamsin Fraser

Friday 20 - Saturday 28 June

Rafe Smith Warren Saunders
Hester Fletcher Sarah Charsley
Jack Lane Jay Chappell
Bishop Parry of Worcester Gerry McCrudden
John Hall Simon Messingham
Susanna Red Gray
Barnabus Goche Alistair Lock
Elizabeth Hall Constance Starns
& Cordelia Brand

NVT Front of House needs YOU!

Hi folks!

Exciting times ahead with the Fringe Festival just around the corner, and two great shows at NVT to look forward to - 'Hedwig & The Angry Inch' and 'Not About Heroes'. However, for all this to run smoothly we need an army of backstage volunteers; not just light and sound operators, stage managers, hair and make-up, etc, but also no less than 96 people to man the box office and bar for the 24 performances! No, that isn't a typo! Ninety Six!

At the moment we are woefully short of that number so, if you have ever worked on the bar before and enjoyed it, or you haven't but fancy helping out, please drop me a line! It's easy, fun, and a great way to meet more

people at the theatre. If you feel like getting even more involved, we are also looking for a few more Front of House Managers to join our friendly little team. Of course, I hope to see some of you behind the bar, but for everyone else, we look forward to serving you this May!

Jezz Bowden

If you would like to volunteer, please email Jezz at jezz.bowden@newventure.org.uk

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

02-17 May

'Hedwig and The Angry Inch' by John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask

All tickets £10 (£9 members) for this show

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

23-31 May

'Not About Heroes' by Stephen MacDonald

All tickets £10 (£9 members) for this show

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

20-28 June

'The Herbal Bed' by Peter Whelan

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)

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



MAIL BOXES ETC.®

- Print & Copy
- Packing & Shipping
- Office Services
- Packing Materials
- Stationery
- Post & Parcels

Tel: 01273 70 60 20 www.mbebrighton.co.uk
 Email: print@mbebrighton.co.uk 91 Western Road, Brighton, BN1 2NW



Bringing business training alive through actors

www.bluestarfishconsulting.com 0845 017 0742
 email info@bluestarfishconsulting.com



DEEPDENE SCHOOL & NURSERY

*Nursery - 6 mths to 4 yrs
 School - 4 yrs to 11 yrs*

Traditional Caring Nursery & Primary Education

**Helping children become
 confident, competent, considerate & courteous**

195 New Church Road, Hove BN3 4ED
www.deepdeneschool.com Tel: 01273 418984

Donate when you buy online at no cost to you

Signing up to easyfundraising is very straight forward and is completely free to you.

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

Ian Black	Chairman	ian.black@newventure.org.uk
Jerry Lyne	Secretary	
Rod Lewis	Artistic Director	rod.lewis@newventure.org.uk
Iain Hay / Joanna Wolowicz	Treasurer	finance@newventure.org.uk
Mike Stubbs	Production Manager	prod.mgr@newventure.org.uk
Chris Pugh	Technical Manager	chris.pugh@newventure.org.uk
Vacant	Fundraising	fundraising@newventure.org.uk
Dan Walker	Marketing & Publicity	publicity@newventure.org.uk
Ulrike Schilling	Volunteer Liaison	volunteering@newventure.org.uk
Jezz Bowden	Front of House	frontofhouse@newventure.org.uk
Anne Gilson	Membership Secretary	membership@newventure.org.uk
James Macauley	Box Office	boxoffice@newventure.org.uk
Natasha Borg	Newsletter Editor	natasha.borg@newventure.org.uk
Pat Boxall	LTG Rep	
Vacant	Social Secretary	social@newventure.org.uk
GENERAL ENQUIRIES		info@newventure.org.uk 01273 808353

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.