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## 'THE GOD OF CARNAGE'

By Yazmina Reza

Directed by Ulrike Schilling

**"How many parents who stand up for their children, become infantile themselves?"**

After the success of 'Art' in 2009 I am delighted to have the pleasure of directing another Reza play at NVT. This is my first attempt of directing a scripted play by myself, and luckily I have had loads of support from an amazing cast, an outstanding crew, and many lovely outside eyes to ensure this production is fun. Previously I have created mainly devised work, but exploring the script and the characters Reza has created has been such pleasure and an adventurous journey, as the cast develop the characters and keep us all on our toes - and the text alive. There have been challenges along the way such as special effects and budget limitations - issues most volunteer run charity theatres are familiar with - and creative solutions to these, which added to our interesting journey into Reza's world.

A playground altercation between eleven-year-old boys brings together two sets of parents for a meeting to resolve the matter. At first, diplomatic niceties are observed, but as the meeting progresses, and the rum flows, tensions emerge and the gloves come off, leaving the couples with more than just their personal principles in tatters.

Yasmina Reza is an expert analyst of social hypocrisy, and her one act play (in Christopher Hampton's witty translation) starts out as a knowingly funny account of

two couples tiptoeing around their mutual dislike - until private matters become public. It is a delight observing actors Sarah Charsley, Sarah Davies, Colin Elmer and Barry O'Dea standing their ground, while the world around them turns crazy.

'The God of Carnage' was a success in its original French language, and has received equal acclaim in English-translated productions in both London and New York. It won the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy as well as the Tony Award for best play in 2009. Many people may also be familiar with the film adaptation of the script directed by Roman Polanski.

NVT's production is set locally in Brighton, and the intensity of the play and space will relate to the dilem-

mas of adulthood we all know. Set in the round in NVT's Studio, we aim to offer some different insights to previous productions. As with many contemporary plays, this show contains strong language and might therefore not be suitable for children.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the cast for their patience, boundless creativity and engagement, and the crew for their amazing support and input. I have the fortune of working with Natasha Borg as overall designer for the show with many assisting hands, Rick Moore as resourceful Stage Manager and special effects wizard, and Sally Merriott as Production Manager as well as many lovely helpers ensuring we are all set to go.

We are looking forward to seeing you in the Studio!

**Ulrike Schilling**

*Don't forget we now open on a Friday, with tickets at the same lower price as Tuesdays (£7 all seats)*



Barry O'Dea, Sarah Davies, Sarah Charsley and Colin Elmer

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## In Memory of Reg Jinks

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Reg Jinks, an actor and director for many years at NVT, died at his home in Temple Street, Brighton, on June 24th this year.

He and his wife, Maud, were both involved with education all their lives and Reg was a lecturer at City College. He was passionately devoted to Shakespeare and the Jacobean theatre and had considerable ideas of his own about how the plays were presented in their time and how they would have looked on the stage.

He is best remembered as a director and he was enthusiastic for any text from Shakespeare and Ibsen to Arthur Miller and Peter Shaffer. He was always eager to encourage new directors and actors and had no "favourites" when it came to casting.

Reg was always a dandy with his trade mark bow tie. He took great pleasure in being mistaken for a distinguished surgeon one afternoon, as he was spotted leaving hospital after he had recovered from heart surgery. He was also accident-prone. On one occasion he had to hand over a production to someone else; he'd stepped backwards with his head in the script, miss-judged the distance and fell off the edge of the stage. He damaged both ankles.

Maud predeceased him. She was, as are their children Veronica and Anthony, a keen theatre-goer.

A lot of people miss Reg – a well-informed and kindly gent, you might say, and full of benevolence.

**Barry and Janet Hewlett-Davies**

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## Annual General Meeting 2013

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This year's NVT AGM will be on Saturday 16 November at 7:30pm. This is your chance as a member to have a say about the direction in which the New Venture Theatre develops. We have had a busy year with many changes. Now is a good time to take stock and look forward to how we develop for the future.

With this newsletter are the AGM details - this includes minutes of the last meeting, the agenda and nomination forms for the coming year's roles. So if you have some time and would like to become more actively involved in the NVT, why not consider stand-

ing for one of the roles listed. All the roles have a brief explanation as page 2 of each nomination form.

Some people consider an AGM to be something to avoid or a necessary evil in an organisation like ours. However it can also be viewed as an opportunity to find out what has been going on during the past year and to have your say in how things should happen in the future. So don't miss your chance and come along to the AGM on Saturday 16 November at 7:30pm. The bar will be open too.

**Ian Black**

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## Treasurer Required!

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After four years (on and off) taking care of NVT's finances, I have decided to make the current season my last and pass on the role of Treasurer to a fresh pair of eyes. I have greatly enjoyed my time as a Trustee for NVT and will certainly miss being involved in the daily operation of the theatre.

The role demands approximately 5-8 hours of attention a week and responsibilities include: management of all theatre income and outgoings (including cash handling and regular use of internet banking), month by month accounting and recordkeeping, creation and monitoring of budgets for building maintenance and productions, participation with the theatre management committee which includes one general meeting each month, and participation in e-mails concerning any urgent matters arising related to the management of the organisation.

A basic level of accounting experience would be very useful however comprehensive training will be given to the right candidate over an extended period of time before they assume full responsibility for the role on the 1st September 2014. The role could also comfortably be split between two people if necessary, and training would start immediately, with aspects of the role slowly handed over one by one over the next year. Importantly, please note that this is an 'elected role' meaning election at an AGM is necessary to formally assume the post.

Please call 07709 303134 or e-mail me via [ollie.donovan@newventure.org.uk](mailto:ollie.donovan@newventure.org.uk) if you have any queries or if you would like to express an interest in the position.

I'll look forward to hearing from you!

**Ollie Donovan**

# Peta Williams— Props and Make-up Design

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Hi, my name is Peta Williams and I love making things for the NVT! I'd like to give you a little taste of what I do backstage.

Last year I was responsible for props and make up for 'How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found'. One of my most challenging roles so far; not only did I have to make three corpses, but I had to create a live nose bleed on stage - and a bleeding hand.

Luckily director Ian Black had a superb cast, and Scott Roberts (playing Charlie) managed to pull off the bursting of the blood capsule in his nose quite well. During the interval I had to paint a mortuary scar onto Scott's chest, and turn Sam Parsons (playing Mike) into a dead man which was so much fun.

For the corpses, I borrowed a couple of my lovely friends and took a cast of their chests with Mod Roc, which I then attached to mannequin heads with papier-mâché and painted them to look like corpses. As I was also responsible for props for this production, I sourced a real coffin which we strapped to some wheels, so that it could be moved around the stage with Sam inside.

In November 2012 I helped out with the production of 'Hansel and Gretel'. It was quite a magical set, and I made plaited flour dough window frames and fake chicken legs, as well as helping to create trees, stained glass windows and giant candy sticks. I also made a fat suit for our witch, played by the slender Janet Hewlett-Davies.

I am currently working on the biggest costume I have ever made, and it has kept me busy at the theatre for three weeks now! It is a giant bird almost 12 feet long (this is no ordinary Grouse), and it is to be worn by Chris Jones for the production of 'Hearts Desire'. I have made it out of bamboo canes, chair cane and various fabrics, and each fake feather has been stitched on for extra durability.

*If you fancy helping out with props, makeup, set design or any other aspect of a future production, get in touch with our Volunteer Liaison Officer, Rosie, at [rosie.nicchitta@newventure.org.uk](mailto:rosie.nicchitta@newventure.org.uk).*

**Peta Williams**



Peta Williams with her Grouse costume



'Hansel and Gretel' Janet Hewlett-Davies



'How to Disappear' Emmie Spencer and Scott Roberts



# Archiving Project at NVT

By Gerry McCrudden

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## So who do you think we were?

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"As in a theatre, the eyes of men,  
After a well graced actor leaves  
the stage,  
Are idly bent on him that enters  
next."

*Shakespeare's Richard II*

I am sure that like myself some of you will have spent many hours searching for props in bric-a-brac and junk shops. And I wonder if like me you have ever felt a pang of sadness when your eye is drawn to piles of old black and white family photographs? I find that a bittersweet moment; intrigued by a glimpse into the lives of others long gone, but also sad that these memories and records are now lost to their families, friends and descendants.

When pottering around at NVT I noticed some boxes and bags of old production photographs, programmes and press cuttings. The years had not treated them well and many were deteriorating. Most of the photographs were unidentified and would surely be lost to posterity if something was not done soon. The committee readily agreed to my offer to be historical archivist and take on the task. In preserving and collating this material we also repay a debt to all those who have helped make the NVT the place it is today. It is a fine story that will help inspire us and those that follow on all that those creative folk achieved down

the years. It will be a long term project but what a fascinating journey it has been so far.

I realised very quickly that if I was going to have any chance of success I would need to seek the support and memories of a number of long term NVT stalwarts. So aided by the prospect of evenings of good fellowship, some nice wine and the odd G and T, a small group has helped delve into their own recollections and scrapbooks to augment the stuff I already held. Granville Williams, Len Holloway, Pat Boxall, Sheelagh Baker, Janet Hewlett-Davies, Tamsin Fraser, Strat Mastoris and others have been a great help. Their keen memories are also helping me identify some of the thousand or so photos strewn over the floor of my flat. I must also mention Len Goldman, a sprightly 97 year old who was a pupil in the building when it was ChristChurch school. He studied there as a boy from 1924 to 1930, and his memories of the building from those times have been fascinating.

In tackling the task my first objective was to create a definitive list of every production from 1947 to date. This has now been done and I have counted over 600 productions; an amazing contribution to the cultural and creative life of our fine city. Think of all the work of directors, creative teams and actors who have contributed to that effort.

The new Newsletter editor Natasha has kindly invited me to contribute some occasional articles on stories from our archives. This will be the first of a series of pieces.

One intriguing and elusive gem to emerge from my research is a fleeting mention that an early Honorary President of the NVT was the Oscar winning actress Vivienne Leigh. I remember that line of hers from 'Gone with the Wind', something along the lines of "I swear I'll never be hungry again!". I would love to hear from anyone who has any information to offer on that. Vivienne Leigh was married to Sir Laurence Olivier, so a member of the Olivier set which graced the city and included others such as Terence Rattigan.

So if you have any old programmes, clippings or photos please do get in touch with me on [gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com](mailto:gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com). Once the hard copy archive has been completed we hope that it may also be digitised.

**Gerry McCrudden**

*Vivienne Leigh*



# 'SEAGULLS' and 'HEART'S DESIRE'

Plays by Caryl Churchill

Directed by Felicity Clements and Ian Black

Reviewed by Barry Hewlett-Davies

These two short plays, one with a big theme left under-developed - a fragment about an ordinary woman with extraordinary powers - and another which looks at grinding domestic monotony - are both thought provoking. But since they have to be presented non-realistically it is not easy to get near to them except intellectually.

'Seagulls' has the more substantial theme. The "ordinary" woman (Sandra Ventris) has the gift of telekinesis. She has used her power minimally (like when hitting her husband with a frying pan) but when we meet her, she is en route for America and bigger things. Harvard is about to assess her potential, asking her to set off a rocket just by thinking about it. Cue World War Three?



Caryl Churchill leaves that on the table for us to worry about and instead lets us know more about how the woman deals with herself. Which in this production is very well - Sandra Ventris has a comfortable confidence. She is supported by Sarah Charsley as her agent, and by Chris Jones. It

isn't clear who he is. A journalist? Informed admirer? Though he comes over with surprising aggression, all three actors work generously enough with each other.



I was worried about seeing the rocket on-stage. It was supposed to be in America. We weren't, and it was confusing - even in a non-real situation. And the rocket didn't work. When Sandra tried to magic it, nothing happened. Clearly, Houston, we have a problem.



In 'Heart's Desire' more ordinary people (Liz Stapleton and David Agnew) are waiting for their daughter to arrive home from Australia. And that's it. They wait. We listen. They wait

again. Every few sentences they stop, go back, and repeat the same conversation, repetition highlighting the frustration of life in the humdrum lane.

It's no easy dish to set before the audience. Ian Black who directs, avoids the trap of monotony but with the strong mechanical nature of the writing, it's hard to feel involved with any warmth. Caryl Churchill is always splendid value for actors and audience, even though she is here at her bleakest.

Both plays have humour and the audience loved the enormous bird who arrived unexpectedly from Australia. He was played by Chris Jones. I recognised his feet.



The full cast: David Agnew, Liz Stapleton, Lavanya Boon, An-nique Tate-Doe, Chris Jones, Alexandria McLeod, Sarah Charsley.

**Ed. - We are now looking for more reviewers to offer their opinion on any of this season's productions in the form of a short review, to run alongside Barry's regular monthly analysis. Please contact me via [natasha.borg@newventure.org.uk](mailto:natasha.borg@newventure.org.uk) if you would like to contribute!**

Photos by Tamsin Fraser

# NVT Awards 2013

At the New Season Opening social evening on Saturday 21 September we had the NVT Awards for last season. It was a well-attended evening with some great entertainment from The Wandering Players through the early part.

Once the votes had all been counted – thanks to Anne Gilson and her team for taking on this task for the second year running – the event moved into the Studio for the awards. A great atmosphere from the members present provided a fun and joyous reception for each award and their recipients. Thanks go to Tim McQuillen-Wright for creating some outstanding awards this year and maintaining our developing style for innovation in the awards design.

The awards winners for 2012/13 are listed opposite.

Best Production	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- Biloxi Blues - The Building - Celebration
Best Direction	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- Gerry McCrudden (Biloxi Blues) - Sarah Davies (The Building) - Rod Lewis (The Price) / - Kevin Moore (The Lover)
Best Actor / Male Performer	1st Place  3rd Place	- Tom Slater (Biloxi Blues) / - Moog Gravett - Frank Leon (Biloxi Blues) / - Jerry Lyne (The Price)
Best Actress / Female Performer	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- Lou Preecy (The Lover) - Janice Jones (Boston Marriage) - Kay Wetherilt (The Building)
Best Newcomer on Stage	1st Place 2nd Place	- Tom Slater (Biloxi Blues) - Scott Roberts (How to Disappear) / - Moira Bergman (Boston Marriage)
Most Effective Back Stage Team	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- The Building - Biloxi Blues - Celebration
Most Innovative Production	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- The Building - Biloxi Blues - A Beginning A Muddle & An End
Best Set Design	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- Biloxi Blues - The Building - The Price
Best Lighting Design	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- Biloxi Blues - Far Away - The Lover
Best Costume Design	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- Biloxi Blues - Boston Marriage - Far Away
Best Make-up Design	1st Place 2nd Place	- The Price - Biloxi Blues / - How to Disappear...
Best Sound Design	1st Place 2nd Place 3rd Place	- Hansel & Gretel - Biloxi Blues - The Building
Best Poster Design	1st Place 2nd Place	- Biloxi Blues - The Lover / Hansel & Gretel
Greatest Contribution - Non Production	Awarded to – Jez Bowden	





# NVT Youth Theatre update

I must confess to a sense of intrepidation last Friday morning at thoughts of leading the first Youth Theatre (YT) session at the NVT. Would anyone come? Who would be there? How would the planned exercises be received? Would it work? Did anyone know about it? A list of anxieties and niggles; pretty normal for me. I needn't have worried as the young people who showed up were full of creativity and courage. I was so impressed that each one came along without the support of a friend, driven by their own interest and passion for theatre. Within half an hour everyone was exploring new characters they'd created from exaggerating their own walking style. As these characters were developed through hot-

seating we laughed, cringed, took risks and pushed each other until the personas were ready to be put together in improvised paired scenes. The results were entertaining and engaging. I for one would like to see these scenes reworked into sketches suitable for public viewing.

Thanks guys. Great fun. A positive start simmering with potential. It was a good blend of young people and adults.

Hope to see you all there again next week. Bring a friend.

*First term's introductory price £30 for the term (10 weeks in total). 4.30-6.30 pm at NVT in South Hall.*

*NVTYT welcomes all young people (11-17) with a passion for or an interest in theatre. Discover life on the boards and behind the scenes. Explore and make your own theatre. Represent the voice of young people. Work with inspirational others. Be in it from the beginning and help to shape it.*

**Sarah Davies**

## Tickets for next NVT production

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

**1-9 November**

**'The God of Carnage' by Yasmina Reza**

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

**6-14 December**

**10-Minute Play Competition**

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

**6-14 December**

**'Old Times' by Harold Pinter**

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:**

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## Acting Classes at NVT

### Create Your Own Soap Opera

4, 11, 18, 25 November

Andy Thomas

Using fun, games, improv, solo and group work, we shall explore what makes a good soap opera successful. Looking at the right ingredients of plot, performance, twists and of course a legendary cliffhanger, we will devise a soap opera of our own! What made J.R Ewing, Mike Baldwin, Elsie Tanner, Den and Angie and Kylie and Jason tick? Come along and find out and have lots of fun along the way. No experience at emotional outbursts necessary!

**Mondays 7.30 - 9.30pm**

**£5 (members £2.50)**

### Characterisation and Text into Performance / Becoming an exquisite actor in four easy sessions

Mark Wilson

7, 14, 21 and 28 October

## MANAGEMENT: Who we are and how

NAME	ROLE	EMAIL	PHONE
Ian Black	Chairman	<a href="mailto:ian.black@newventure.org.uk">ian.black@newventure.org.uk</a>	
Jerry Lyne	Secretary		
Ulrike Schilling	Artistic Director	<a href="mailto:ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk">ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk</a>	
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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.**