

# NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | HAMLET by William Shakespeare | directed by Steven O'Shea | 16 - 24 January

## THE SNOW QUEEN

by Hans Christian Andersen | adapted & directed by Andrew Allen | 5 - 13 December



*The Snow Queen and Gerda at Brighton Pavilion's Ice Rink...*

*Shonali Rodrigues and Chelsea Newton Mounthey*

*Photo by Strat Mastoris*

*Makeup by angeli-que@beyondfoundation.co.uk*

It's the most wonderful time of the year. A chance to catch up with friends and loved ones, to eat, drink and be merry, and to be able to take a moment to reflect on what is most important. I'm not talking about Christmas, of course, but the moment when, as a director, you realise the cast and crew no longer need your meddling and interference and can work beautifully, gloriously, without you.

I was planning on doing a show with just two people in a black box. Honest. But then...well. I first had the idea of adapting 'The Snow Queen' a couple of years ago (long before I finally saw 'that' film with 'that' song) and realised pretty swiftly that I was asking for the pretty-much-impossible. There are special effects in this show. There's a talking crow. There are songs, for the love of Hans Christen Andersen. I've never written a lyric in my life before. What on Earth makes me think I can pull it off now?

Because, of course, it's not just 'I'. I've spoken a couple of times about my hopes for this production: that a child will

walk out of the theatre, wide-eyed and open mouthed, fizzing with the excitement of a life-long love affair with theatre having been ignited. By anybody's reckoning that's a pretty extreme petard with which to hoist oneself. But, as ever, I have been wide eyed and open mouthed too - by the generosity of the many amazing people involved with this show, some of whom I haven't even met, but who are all amazingly, tirelessly striving to create some magic on the stage.

It's been a pleasure to write Gerda's journey, and even more of a pleasure to take on a journey myself with a supremely wonderful cast and crew. I'm always more than humbled to be able to steal some of the stardust and shine that the New Venture Theatre appears to have in unending supply. When you see the programme for 'The Snow Queen', the list of credits and thanks will hardly do justice to the amount of hours, and love, these people have put in. For anything you love about this show, thank them. Anything that annoys you, you can blame me.

Wrap up warm, close the doors and windows...because The Snow Queen is on her way. And most important? Have a very Happy Christmas.

**Andrew Allen**

Sponsored by





## SOUTH HALL ART

If you're coming to a show at NVT during December and January, take a look at the art on display in the South Hall.

Polly's Brighton Beardsley Collection reflects her interest in the work of local boy Aubrey Beardsley. Her depictions of iconic buildings in Brighton known to Beardsley and Oscar Wilde's set, reflects their hedonistic, aesthetic, camp world. She peoples Brighton's wonderful buildings with visual references to subjects of La Belle Epoch and fin-de-siècle paintings by artists such as Toulouse-Lautrec that set would know. Inspired by the Brighton Pavilion, Polly uses metallic paints

and references to Oriental art. Contact [polly.ballantine@gmail.com](mailto:polly.ballantine@gmail.com)

Enchanted fairy castle or Georgian royal palace? Line drawing, etching or photograph? A selection of work by Strat Mastoris will be on display in the South Hall throughout December and January. You'll know Strat's love of theatre already, from performance pictures of many NVT productions. But he's interested in loads of other things too, and you can see a few of them in this exhibition. If you want to see more (or you can't wait), visit his website at [www.stratmastorisphotography.com](http://www.stratmastorisphotography.com)

1. Strat Mastoris
2. Polly Rhys Ballantine

## NEW YEAR'S EVE SOCIAL EVENT

Hot on the heels of our hugely successful 'A Night To Try to Remember' (well, not so hot – it was two years ago!), NVT now bring you... 'The Night Before the Morning After'

Live entertainment with comedy, sketches and music, showcasing a range of NVT talent and a late (cheap) bar.

Come and support your friends and fellow members - laugh at their songs, cry at their jokes, be the smell of the crowd, apply the roar of the greasepaint!

Also returning by popular request our 'Unwanted Christmas Presents Raffle' - donate your unwanted presents for re-homing.



Join your hosts, Tamsin & Debbie and our lovely compere Gerry McCrudden to bring in the New Year. What better way to say hello to 2015!

Tickets are £10 and will be available to Members, Angels and Sponsors of the theatre (plus 2 guests).

Please note, all tickets must be purchased in advance, no tickets will be sold on the door (and sorry, no under 18's)

**A Ticket booking form can be downloaded from the NVT website, or via a link the NVT Newsletter email.**

# THOUGHTS FROM A SOUTH HALL CHAIR

This year's AGM was an exciting evening missed by many. However, with a quorum reached we continued, receiving reports, discussing issues and electing trustees and role holders for the coming year.

The discussions about production budgets, an old favourite of our AGMs, came to the decision that budgets should be shared across the season enabling larger productions to have a greater share. To facilitate this, the budget estimates in the production proposal process will need to be much more detailed and structured.

Following the Fringe 2014 productions, the committee discussed the benefit of participation against the practicalities of providing the support for these productions, especially as Front of House is very stretched throughout May and getting more difficult to maintain each year. It was decided that we would raise the issue at the AGM prior to a decision on registration, however, at an away-day meeting in July, where other active members of the theatre were in attendance this matter was discussed further. As a result it was decided that to have one two-week production would be logistically feasible. Clearly this was not communicated enough, as we had a letter to the October newsletter on this issue. At the AGM it was confirmed that 'Parlour Song' will run for two weeks in May and will be registered in the Fringe Festival, but there would not be a second production as in previous years. This was agreed as a suitable way forward.

The issue of getting adequate Front of House cover was further discussed as this does become critical in May, but is still difficult during the rest of the year. There are two areas where training is required prior – Box Office and Front of House Manager - while the other roles – Bar Cover and Fire Steward – can be trained on the night when necessary. It was agreed to look for Bar Cover and Fire Stewards from the preceding by one production as well as the last production as has been the case. Training further Front of House managers is essential if we are to ensure the bar is open for every performance. Anyone interested with some experience of the working of the theatre should contact [frontofhouse@newventure.org.uk](mailto:frontofhouse@newventure.org.uk)

The elections were quite swift with only

two changes from last year. Ollie Donovan had stood down as treasurer in the last couple of months and Iain Hay had been co-opted into the role, with Joanna Wolowicz as finance assistant. Iain was formally elected as Treasurer. Mike Stubbs had decided to stand down from the role of Production Coordinator and his place was taken by Tamsin Fraser. Opposite is a list of the trustees and role holders.

The AGM concluded with agreement to create two new life members. Ollie Donovan for his work as Treasurer over the last few years and Natasha Borg for her work in setting up our new Box Office system and her subsequent and continuing role as Newsletter Editor.

Outside the AGM we have a great new season moving merrily on to its third production, with more delights to come in 2015. Talking of next year, if you are looking to direct next season now is the time to get your proposals in – you have until February, so don't delay.

**Iain Black**

## SID LESTER 18 & 19 December

Now in its third year, the 'Sid Lester Christmas Special' has become somewhat of a Brighton fixture, with The Nightingale, The Dome and now the wonderful NVT's Theatre Upstairs playing host to its old-style seasonal larks and festive family dynamics.

Inspired by music hall variety acts, Sid Lester began life as a solo show written by Sue MacLaine with Valerie, his daughter, originally a character on the page. She soon demanded to be let out... and thus the comedy partnership with Emma Kilbey began. Emma and Sue have a shared sensibility regard-

Chairman	Iain Black *
Secretary	Jerry Lyne *
Treasurer	Iain Hay *
Artistic Director	Rod Lewis *
Acting Class Coordinator	Ulrike Schilling
Box Office Manager	James Macauley
Buildings Manager	Chris Pugh *
FoH Coordinator	Jezz Bowden *
Fundraising Coordinator	Mary Allen
Health & Safety Manager	Iain Black *
LTG Representative	Pat Boxall
Marketing & Publicity	Dan Walker *
Membership Secretary	Anne Gilson
Newsletter Editor	Natasha Borg *
Production Coordinator	Tamsin Fraser *
Props Manager	Trish Bayliss
Set Development Advisor	Tim McQuillen-Wright
Technical Manager	Chris Pugh *
Volunteer Coordinator	Ulrike Schilling
Web Manager	Iain Black *

*Vacant role – Social Events Manager*

*\* Denotes those elected as Trustees*

ing the work, having been influenced by childhood evenings watching Summertime Specials and Royal Variety Shows – family entertainment with a homespun glitz and 'end-of-the-pier' sensibility.

There's tap dancing, patter and gags, singing, impersonations, balloon modelling, acro-balance, bird whistling, and sometimes even a dog, but the father/daughter co-dependent relationship keeps getting in the way. Like all successful double acts, the pair are bound by a 'can't live with, can't live without' dynamic.

Sue MacLaine and Emma Kilbey would be thrilled if you could come and join them along with some very special guests to help pull (off) another Christmas cracker!



Like all celebrated and surviving comedies, *Hay Fever* is more than just a laugh. It is funny, sometimes it is very funny indeed, as Noel Coward's waspish wit decorates a nightmare social setting. With almost algebraic precision, the four members of the Bliss family are set against four more earth-bound mortals - Clara links the quartets as a bridge over the footlights.

Although the situation makes for comedy even before a line has been uttered, *Hay Fever* is about questions of identity. It holds a candle up to hazy distinctions between fantasy and reality: when is Judith more real, on stage or at breakfast? Will Sandy Tyrell know the difference? Does Jackie know she is primary source material and not just David's guest? Can Sorel ever be 'a fresh English girl with a passion for games' instead of the will-o-the-wisp child of a famous actress? Will Simon ever grow up? Does Myra realise what a moment with David might involve? 'We none of us mean anything' says Sorel which is another way of saying we have no idea who we are.

Gerry McCrudden's brilliant revival explores these questions with a light touch and a stunning cast at The New Venture in November, 2014. Top of the bill must be Nikki Dunsford as Judith Bliss. Her performance is mesmerising as she flitters and flounces around the stage with an elegant charisma that dominates her family. A touch - a nod - a gesture - and all are her slaves. (Coward based on Judith Bliss on Laurette Taylor, a famous actress married to playwright Hartley Manners. She generously patronised the young actor/writer in the 1920's - and never quite forgave Coward for biting the hand that fed him.) Nikki's Judith has some of the best lines and she delivers them in perfect crisp Coward style. 'He's not dead', she comments on her husband, 'he's upstairs'. But we realise that her stable marriage is 'wearing a little thin' and that her flight to the stage and her terrible old play may be for comfort and consolation. Underneath Judith's bracing glamour lies a certain sadness.

Her husband, Gerry Wicks in splendid, tetchy mode, has coped for decades by disappearing into his study to write, appearing at intervals to eat, drink and flirt. Although apparently saner than his wife, David Bliss is almost completely self-absorbed. He doesn't really believe he has to marry Myra who is as shocked as he is by the turn of events, which might indicate this as a course of action. Red Gray is brittle and beautiful as Myra and flapperly theatrical - her

## HAY FEVER

directed by Gerry McCrudden | Review by Louise Schweitzer



air kiss, feet away from Judith - was hilarious.

Lex Lake and David Eaton are wonderful as the Bliss children who can't grow up because their parents never have. They are brilliantly good looking, athletic, gifted and funny and their joyous high spirits are perfect foil to the leaden antics of poor Sandy Tyrell or stony-faced Richard Greatham. In fact, Ben Pritchard nearly steals the show as a hapless stage-door Johnny whose hopeless infatuation for Judith is the most attractive thing about him - for Judith. Another scene stealer



1. Lex Lake, Nikki Dunsford, David Eaton  
 2. Gerry Wicks, Red Gray  
 3. Richard Conolly, Nikki Dunsford  
 4. Naomi Horsfall, Ben Pritchard

Photos by Tamsin Fraser



was Naomi Horsfall, ‘the abject fool, but useless type’ who makes us realise the horror of a family so fatally wrapped up in themselves that they have no idea of their impact on other people. Naomi makes us see her as very much a person, just as Richard Conolly is under his starchy front of diplomatist.

One surprise is that Judith’s dresser, now domestic maid Clara, has apparently become Austrian – or German? It lends a certain authority to Clara (who has little need of it) but I did feel it was tapping into cliché Nationalistic territory. Not all Germans bark and strut. Sheelagh Baker is convincing – but she always is and I longed for her to stop gutturally coughing consonants, drop her aitches and become cockney instead.

With that small reservation, I commend Gerry McCrudden heartily for his thoughtful revival. He resists, at every turn, the temptation to overdo Coward’s lines - they are part of the play, not captions for it. Quotes like ‘on a clear day you can see Marlow’ or ‘she uses sex like a shrimping net’ have something of the Lady Bracknell difficulty with ‘a handbag – on the Brighton line’ about them. The set is similarly pared down, although I slightly miss a theatrical staircase even if it were possible in the Upstairs Theatre at New Venture. The last act breakfast scene was beautifully staged – it can be a pantomime which misses the point. W.S.Gilbert used to instruct his actors to play his dottiness completely straight. ‘The audience will find out soon enough if you’re funny’ he told them. We know the Bliss family are mad. But as the guests tiptoe out, in famous Coward exit style, we are left with the question. Who is the most real? Who copes with life better? And who has more fun?

## CASTINGS

### Hamlet

This will be Steven O’Shea’s fourth directorial production at the New Venture Theatre following ‘Speed the Plow’ by David Mamet (2011), ‘Kvetch’ by Steven Berkoff (2012), and ‘Old Times’ by Harold Pinter (2014).

Hamlet.....Jonny Parlett  
 Claudius.....Jim Calderwood  
 Gertrude.....Sarah Davies  
 Ophelia.....Lily Crossfield  
 Ghost.....Mike Stubbs  
 Polonius.....Jerry Lyne  
 Laertes.....James Harkness

**NVT IS NOW ACCEPTING DIRECTOR PROPOSALS FOR THE 2015/16 SEASON!  
 DOWNLOAD A FORM FROM THE NEWSLETTER EMAIL, OR NVT WEBSITE**

# FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

NVT's 2014/15 season got off to a cracking start with our opening two productions, Michael Wall's 'Amongst Barbarians' and Noel Coward's 'Hay Fever.' These two plays gave audiences the opportunity to see extremely different forms of script, performance and production styles. In the Studio, 'Amongst Barbarians' - at some times with robust humour and at others with devastating bleakness - provided an intense exploration of contemporary life or death issues. In the Theatre Upstairs, the theatrical polar opposite occurred with 'Hay Fever', full of wit, flair and imagination, springing joyously to life. Full houses enthusiastically received both plays, indicating that NVT audiences are prepared to enjoy a very wide range of dramatic experience.

Next in line is yet another form of theatre, our very own 'home grown' Christmas show for all the family; Andrew Allen's fine adaptation, with music, of Hans Christian Andersen's classic 'The Snow Queen'. With 23 cast members and large support team, the Theatre Upstairs will definitely be bursting with activity as one and all set about transporting us all on a magical journey to a beautiful snowbound realm.

Now you might be forgiven for thinking that that would be it for 2014, but on 5 December the NVT Youth Theatre, led by Sarah Davies, will showcase their work in the early evening. On 18 and 19 December Emma Kilbey returns to NVT, with Sue MacLaine, with two nights of their charming, funny and highly original 'Sid Lester's Christmas Special'. After that ... NVT's New Year's Eve Party!

Now is also the time to have our first thoughts about the 2015/16 season! Underpinning NVT's artistic policy is the tradition that potential directors propose the play they would like to direct, and it is this which encourages such a wide range of work to be done. Directors' proposals will need to be submitted by next February, giving time for them to be discussed, assessed, and a balanced season worked out. This season has seen a blend of seasoned NVT directors, those new to NVT but who have had experience elsewhere, as well as directors who are established NVT members but relatively new to directing. Hopefully next season will be a similar, creatively healthy, mix. So, if you are interested in direct-

ing, download a proposal form from the newsletter email, which will give you an outline about the factors you will need to consider. We are all part of the same company so, if you feel in need of further advice, either get in touch with me or with any other experienced director that you know. Good theatre is a learning experience for us all, and those that have had the privilege of directing for NVT should be all too willing to help.

**Rod Lewis**

## CAN YOU HELP THE NVTYT?

Often NVT members ask me how the NVTYT (Youth Theatre) is going. I always answer with a version of "really well", "fine", "they are so creative and enthusiastic", and recently I've been saying "they are really excited to be involved in an actual production at the NVT". After all our USP is offering a youth theatre in an actual functioning theatre, which produces a range of work, houses talents, and hopefully offers opportunities in on-stage and backstage aspects of production. They were going to be in 'The Snow Queen'. You'll notice the tense - were. However changes in fortune and circumstance mean that three licensed people lined up to chaperone for the run are unable to do so, and therefore we had no option but to pull the NVTYT from the show. I've no need to tell you how disappointed the youngsters feel about this, given that for the last six weeks they have been learning the story of 'The Snow Queen', rehearsing musical, exploring the script and their versions of the characters.

Some people undoubtedly might sigh in relief, as there have been concerns about including young people in shows at NVT - often about the need to meet legal requirements - but also about the quality of young people in performance. As a teacher of young people and adolescents for nearly twenty years I always feel the back of my neck prickle at such attitudes. Perhaps it is because for so long I have held the position 'in locos parentis' in my daily work; our job is to ensure first and foremost their safety and well-being, so naturally we collectively endeavor to do so at the NVT, ensuring we meet

all legal requirements for the good of the youth and the organisation. To anyone who has concerns about quality in performance, feel free to pop into a Friday session (don't worry I have an enhanced DBS and am a registered chaperone and therefore can supervise your visit) and there you will witness great creativity, focus, commitment to pleasing audiences and telling tales. These young folk have sense of ease when asked, for example, to explore how Grandma's fire felt about the story of Kai and Gerda. Pausing for a second, one or two of them look at me askance, then they murmuringly huddle, fervently discussing how to create the flames movements, giggling over the possible names (Snap, Crackle, Pop) and vocal tones. Moments later the fire begins to form before my eyes, and through the freedom they use to explore abstract concepts and characters, I am transported to their world.

Help fan the flames of enthusiasm for live theatre; don't let the fire go cold in the grate. Support the pleasure to be gained from collectively solving creative problems. We need more chaperones. Please let me know if you'd be willing to do the training (half a day) and contribute to enabling our youth theatre to perform in 'real' shows at the NVT. Show your support to NVTYT by attending their end of term showing on 5th December - arrive at 5.45pm, ending by 6.30pm.

**Sarah Davies**

# ACTING CLASSES

**5.1, 12.1, 19.1 & 26.1**

Daniel Lovett - Contemporary movement techniques for the modern actor

**5.1, 12.1, 19.1 & 26.1**

Claire Lewis - Auditioning

# WORKSHOPS

**31.1.15 10-4pm**

Staying Present on Stage... How to Trust Your Instincts - Emma Kilby

**7.2.15 2-5pm**

Introduction to Production & Stage Management

# NVT TICKET BOOKING INFORMATION

book online at [www.newventure.org.uk](http://www.newventure.org.uk) or by post using the form below

• Ticket prices: £9 (£8 members) Final Fri/Sat £10 (£9 members) First Fri/Tue £8 (£7 members) • Evening performances 7:45pm Sundays are Matinees only 2:30pm No performances on Mondays • Please note that access to the Theatre Upstairs is only possible by 4 flights of stairs, and therefore may not be suitable for those with mobility difficulties.

-----  
Cut along the line, and return your completed slip together with a cheque to: New Venture Theatre, Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

**'The Snow Queen' by Hans Christian Andersen**

**5-13 December** \*Theatre Upstairs  
(tickets £5 for under 16's for this show)

**'The Sid Lester Christmas Spacial'**

**18 - 19 December** \*Theatre Upstairs  
tickets £12 (£9) for this show

**'Hamlet' by William Shakespeare**

**16 -24 January** Studio

	date	member	standard	total cost

It is important you provide your name, phone number and address, and email address where possible

## \*THEATRE UPSTAIRS ALLOCATED SEATING

Allocated seating is available for productions taking place in the Theatre Upstairs.

Please mark your preferred seat(s) with 1's, and a second and third option with 2's and 3's, in case your first choice is unavailable. If you leave this blank, seats will be allocated for you.

Allocated seating remains unavailable for productions in the Studio.



**S T A G E**

# CONTACT US

Bedford Place  
Brighton BN1 2PT

General Enquiries 01273 808353  
info@newventure.org.uk

Box Office Info 01273 746118  
boxoffice@newventure.org.uk

www.newventure.org.uk  
@nvt\_brighton

Chairman	Ian Black
Secretary	Jerry Lyne
Artistic Director	Rod Lewis
Treasurer	Iain Hay & Joanna Wolowicz
Production Co-ordinator	Tamsin Fraser
Technical Manager	Chris Pugh
Fundraising	Mary Allen
Marketing & Publicity	Dan Walker
Volunteer Liaison	Ulrike Schilling
Front of House	Jezz Bowden
Box Office	James Macauley
Newsletter Editor	Natasha Borg
Membership Secretary	Anne Gilson
LTG Rep	Pat Boxall
Social Secretary	position vacant
Youth Theatre	Sarah Davies

chairman@newventure.org.uk  
secretary@newventure.org.uk  
art.dir@newventure.org.uk  
finance@newventure.org.uk  
prod.mgr@newventure.org.uk  
tech@newventure.org.uk  
fundraising@newventure.org.uk  
publicity@newventure.org.uk  
volunteering@newventure.org.uk  
frontofhouse@newventure.org.uk  
boxoffice@newventure.org.uk  
newsletter@newventure.org.uk  
membership@newventure.org.uk  
  
social@newventure.org.uk  
youththeatre@newventure.org.uk

## 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.



**blue starfish**

*Bringing business training alive through actors*

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



### Windlesham School

An independent school and nursery for boys and girls from 5 to 11 years, with strong links to a range of state and independent secondary schools at scholarship level.

Contact the School Admissions Secretary on 01273 553645  
or email info@windleshamschool.co.uk

190 Dyke Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 5AA - www.windleshamschool.co.uk



**EMBE MAIL BOXES ETC.®**

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

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



### 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

## OUR ANGELS

Why not become an Angel, Archangel or even Archangel Gabriel to help us support the current and future improvements to our theatre. Our Angels have proven to be generous in the assistance they give us.

For further information please contact the Angels Coordinator Gerry McCrudden: gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com. If you are a UK tax payer your donation will also benefit from Gift Aid.

### We'd love to hear from you!

Please write in with any comments, articles or reviews of our productions and events to Natasha Borg, Newsletter Editor: newsletter@newventure.org.uk - or by post if you prefer.

Printed by RePrint (LCC) Ltd. 47 Highcroft Villas, Brighton BN1 5PT www.reprintbrighton.com