

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | THE THRILL OF LOVE by Amanda Whittington | directed by Pat Boxall | 24 April - 28 May

BENEFACTORS

by Michael Frayn | directed by Tess Gill | 20 - 28 March



Carrie Lambe,
Jeremy Crow,
Jen Ley & Steve
Adams

Photo by Strat
Mastoris

What do you want? What does anybody want?

“Nice little semis with nice little gardens.” But David cannot build the people of Basuto Road “nice little semis” as he needs to provide more housing not less.

‘Benefactors’ is ostensibly about creation and destruction. David, an architect, wants to build but is beset by problems both professional and personal. Jane his wife, an anthropologist, doesn’t want to help people but cannot help herself from doing so. In contrast David’s old college friend Colin, a journalist, wants the opposite of what anybody else wants while his wife Sheila wants to help people but is an inadvertent force of destruction.

The piece was written in 1984 but looks back to the late 60’s and 70’s, at the changes that were happening in society and architecture at the time. It is also funny, clever, and at points painful as it wraps this up the interactions of these four very different people in dry, wry humour showing how small actions can escalate into ridiculous extremes.

What is happiness? What is helping? Does anybody really know what they want or what is good for them or anyone else?

This is my first experience directing at NVT, though I have performed in a couple of plays here and enjoyed productions as an audience member many times over the past six years.

The space in the Studio, particularly for someone who has mainly directed for proscenium arched theatres, has always been exciting and so I have chosen to stage this intimate play in the round - a first for me and for some of the cast, which has been challenging and very exciting!

I have been lucky to be joined in this journey of discovery by new members to NVT in both the cast and crew. In the cast: Steven Adams, Carrie Lambe and Jeremy Crow plus old hand Jen Ley (Bridges) to show us all the ropes! In the crew: Myra Stuart (set design), Samantha Swithinbank (costumes), Nick Lazar (sound operation) and Leigh Ward (stage manager), tempered by great experience with Emma Shiel, Alistair Lock and Deborah Mead and mostly Annique Tate-Doe who has done an amazing job on showing us all (mainly me) the way.

We have already had great fun here and I hope that you will join us on our journey and have just as much fun.

Tess Gill

DENNIS EVANS

An Obituary

Dennis Evans was a long standing member of NVT. In his time he held a number of roles including Artistic Director and Secretary. He also developed a long association with Sussex Playwrights assuring a long and beneficial relationship with NVT.

Over many years, he appeared in numerous productions, being a fine actor and much in demand. He also produced and directed a large number of successful plays, winning awards for his productions.

It is because of the hard work by people like Dennis that we find ourselves in a relatively strong position both organisationally and financially.

The Theatre is most grateful to Dennis for his hard work and dedication during his time with us.

It is sad his last few years were marred by ill health but he died peacefully in a Nursing Home at the end of January.

Much missed by those who knew him.

Jerry Lyne

NVT STAYS WARM

In March a refurbished heating system will be installed at NVT at a cost of approx £12,000 - yes, just in time for summer!

The old system was becoming unreliable and did not extend to some areas (such as the stairs and the kitchen).

A local company, Safegas, has won the contract after a competitive bidding process managed by the committee's Major Projects Group. Chris Pugh will supervise the installation.

We should all be pleased and proud that the money has been provided from our own resources - a tribute to success in terms of audiences, bar sales, subscriptions and donations. The many dedicated volunteers who have created this success should take a bow.

Mike Stubbs

MARCH 2014



*Dennis Evans (L) as Gloucester & Derek Mason (R) as Lear
In Martin Nichol's
Yr. 2000 Production of King Lear*

PARLOUR SONG

Volunteers Needed

We are still looking for some help with sound operation for our Fringe show 'Parlour Song', running 15 - 30 May. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact: ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk



AT NEW VENTURE THEATRE

We are hosting Amnesty International on 7th March at 7.30 in the South Hall where they will be reading first hand accounts from Afghan women entitled "Even if we lose our Lives".

Tickets through brightonandhoveai@googlemail.com

Mike Stubbs

ACTING CLASSES

23 February, 2, 9, 16 & 23 March

Andrew Allen
Making Sense(s) Of Performance

Following the success of last years 'Love The One You're With' workshops, Andrew Allen ('The Snow Queen', 'Four Play', 'Iron Clad Improv') returns with a series of acting classes designed to give your performance skills a boost, empowering you to be a better actor/writer/director by treating everyone around you like a genius, and reacting honestly to your environment. This all adds to your performance toolbox and enables you to be a stronger performer: 'Making Sense(s) Of Performance'.

30 March

Steven O'Shea
Auditioning

CASTINGS

Richard III | 03 April - 04 April

In March 2015, Richard III's recently discovered bones will be reburied in Leicester Cathedral. To mark this occasion, we'll be presenting a rehearsed reading of an abridged version of Shakespeare's play. Villain and anti-hero, the play's protagonist allows the audience a window into his Machiavellian mind through confessional speeches; weaving a complex tale of personal and political ambition, jealousy, infanticide, seduction, betrayal and murder. Anyone with a passion for great story-telling and strong language should come along.

Colin Elmer is playing Richard III
Andy Bell as King Edward IV
Tom Robinson as Stanley
Warren Saunders as Richmond
Tom Slater as Catesby
Amanda Harman as Margaret
Anthony Arundell as Hastings

Also including new NVT members:
Will Rowlatt Allen, Jacqueline Harper, Helen O'Brien & Ingvilda Deila

Scott Roberts

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

As ever at NVT – our building is abuzz with 'Benefactors', 'Thrill of Love', 'Parlour Song' and 'The Arsonists', and the performed reading of 'Richard III', all at various stages of rehearsal and development. The Youth Theatre goes from strength to strength, the acting workshops continue to inspire, scripts for the 'Ten Minute Play Competition' flood in to be assessed and all this while, Spring-like, are the first stirrings of next season!

An exciting variety of proposals for 2015/16 productions have been steadily coming in throughout January and February from potential directors with more, at time of writing, promised. March will be a month busy with discussion as the pros and cons of each proposal are weighed up and the next season's programme eventually balanced out.

As mentioned in an earlier Newsletter, a major factor that underpins NVT's artistic policy, one that gives it its breadth and depth, is the tradition that directors put forward ideas for plays that they feel particularly inspired by. This results not only in a wide range of material being performed but also a deep commitment to each individual project and this, in turn, is necessary to fire up the ideas and fuel the energy that is required to deal with the tough challenge of mounting a successful production. There are many factors to evaluate. The blending of seasoned directors but also giving opportunities to relative newcomers to NVT, large and small cast plays, a fair mix of

male and female roles, distinctly different dramatic styles, modern, perhaps experimental - and traditional classics developed with a fresh approach... and the list of what need to be considered goes on.

So, want to find out what theatre pleasures next season will bring? Well come to our NVT Social Evening on Friday 17th April when all will be revealed. Should be a fun night, with one or two performance surprises too. Don't miss it... put it in your diary now!

Rod Lewis

This is early Peter Shaffer in Alan Ayckbourn territory with two very funny short plays written nearly half a century ago. Both depend for their effects on as much toe-curling embarrassment as theatrically possible.

'Private Ear' tells the tale of Bob who has invited Doreen to dinner in his flat. He doesn't know Doreen: he doesn't know what to do with girls and he can't cook. His passion is classical music, relayed by monster speakers into stereophonic sound: it never occurs to him that Doreen might not like the Brandenburgs (would she prefer the Goldberg?) or Puccini operas.

Scott Roberts does a brilliant impersonation of a truly inadequate male, tottering back and forward in agonies of anxiety about alcohol or tinned soup, neither of which he can manage. It is a wonderful role and he invests it with all the grim horror imaginable. Bob's ecstasy at the possibility of sharing Peter Grimes with poor Doreen is just weakly funny – she did say she preferred a good tune and she got a chorus of atonal Aldeburgh fishermen. Isabel Roffe-Silvester does a marvellous Doreen, full of nervy awkwardness in her new mini skirt, and primly inaccessible in unbearably refined accents. Her wondrously expressive facial gestures express that which even Shaffer's words cannot. It is 1962, just before girls like Doreen were bolder and brassier, but perhaps we can still identify a little with our younger selves, and share a nostalgic echo of a doomed date. Bob's friend Ted is on hand to open the soup and buy the gin and generally smooth the way to True Love. Steve Larkin is the perfect jack-the-lad, announcing his intentions from the moment he combs his quiff and tweaks the Botticelli breasts on a postcard. Although Doreen, rightly, doesn't trust him, he makes her relax and laugh. Ted is a cad but Steve invests him with a certain sympathy – we feel he must be nice if he is Bob's friend.

The cast of three are three stars. They act quite brilliantly under the direction of Dan Walker and skilfully overcome small reservations about the length of the play (could be edited slightly) or whether it has dated but I think not: it is a period piece, even if a period of our recent past, the oldest period of all.

'Black Comedy' is a more complicated story with a larger cast. It could take place anywhere, provided there is a bed and some moveable furniture and any time that antique china fetches a

PRIVATE EAR & BLACK COMEDY

directed by Dan Walker & Ian Black | review by Louise Schweitzer



premium. The plot loosely concerns a penniless sculptor who borrows his antique dealer neighbours' furniture to beef up his flat for a rich collector. Into the mix comes the sculptors' debby girlfriend, the sculptors' previous girlfriend, the debby girlfriend's choleric parent, a German electrician, a bisexual antiques dealer and a teetotal Baptist Minister's daughter drinking spiked bitter lemon Add a blown fuse and total blackness, portrayed to the audience as light, and any num-



1. Scott Roberts & Isabel Roffe-Silvester
2. Steve Larkin, Scott Roberts & Isabel Roffe-Silvester
3. Andy Thomas, Arwen Matthews, Lucy Mepsted
4. Michael Bramley, Arwen Matthews
3. Liz Stapleton, Nicholas Richards

Photos by Tamsin Fraser

ber of chaotic outcomes are the only possible consequence, it is just which one happens first.

Director Ian Black stage-managed the entire affair with consummate skill – moving a large cast and furniture around a small stage at speed is no mean feat, especially whilst pretending to be in a blackout.



The actors were hilariously over the top – particular fun was had with the Colonel, Andy Thomas permanently on guard or standing to attention, the debby girlfriend, Arwen Matthews managing an accent so squawkingly awful that it would probably break the china, even if Brindsley hadn't dropped it, and the electrician wrongly thought to be a multi-millionaire art collector. Michael Bramley as Brindsley almost over-did it as a desperate man in search of an exit but his mobile, eccentric manoeuvring held centre-stage with some force. Arwen Matthews was a wonderful figure of fun as was Liz Stapleton whose claims that mad old ladies are her speciality was entirely validated by her portrayal of Miss Furnival. Nick Richards made Harold Gorringe sophisticated, funny and nearly gay all at the same time - in contrast to the general barminess of everyone else, Harold/Nick appeared sane. Lucy Mepsted in debut NVT role as Clea carried off being decorative and designing with superb aplomb whilst chaos, in black and white, reigned all around.

Very, very funny which is so very, very hard to do well.





WHO DO YOU THINK WE WERE?

Winter Sunshine | 1954 | New Venture Theatre

Do you remember this production? Do you have a programme or press cutting to place alongside these images in our archive? If you have any material from this or any other NVT production, please get in touch with Gerry McCrudden

who is tirelessly constructing a comprehensive catalogue of NVT's 70 years. And don't forget to take a look at our new archive wall in the South Hall on your next visit to the theatre! Contact Gerry at: gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com



SOCIAL EVENING

Announcement of the New Season

Friday 17 April, 7pm

Join NVT for our first Social Evening of the calendar year, where Artistic Director Rod Lewis will be introducing our next season's programme!

As well as finding out more about the upcoming line-up, this year we'll be fortunate enough to be entertained by a couple of performances as well – more details to come in the next newsletter.

The evening will take place in the South Hall, and the bar will be open - so please come along and...well... be sociable!

PAINLESS FUNDRAISING

You might have notice that when you book tickets for NVT shows you have the chance to make a small donation towards our fundraising efforts.

Please give as generously as you can afford - we need the money to keep improving our theatre, and you can get your money back by using the best value bar in town!

NVT TICKET BOOKING INFORMATION

book online at 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

	date	member	standard	total cost
'Benefactors' by Michael Frayn 20 - 28 March <i>Studio</i>				
'Richard III' William Shakespeare 3rd - 4th April <i>Studio</i> <i>rehearsed reading - tickets £5</i>				
'The Thrill of Love' by Amanda Whittington 24 April 2015 - 02 May <i>*Theatre Upstairs</i>				

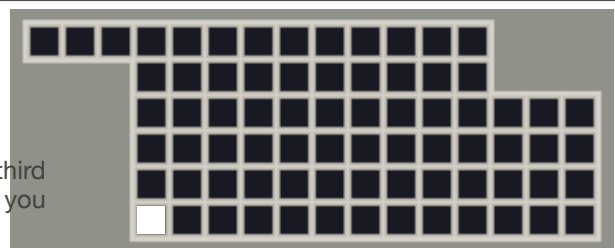
It is important you provide your name, phone number and address, and email address where possible

*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

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Treasurer	Iain Hay & Joanna Wolowicz
Production Co-ordinator	Tamsin Fraser
Technical Manager	Chris Pugh
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Why not become an Angel, Fallen 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.

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