

# NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | THE ARSONISTS by Max Frisch | directed by Sam Chittenden | 19 - 27 June

## PARLOUR SONG

by Jez Butterworth | directed by Claire Lewis | 15 - 30 May



Photo by Strat Mastoris

After many years of watching exciting theatre at New Adventure Theatre, it is a privilege to be directing here. I would like to thank everyone for making this such a positive experience, I've felt so welcome.

The first time I read Parlour Song, I knew it was a play I would love to work on – brilliant, contemporary writing – laugh out loud funny as well as touching a few nerves, revolving around the personal crises, tensions and anxieties of three intriguing and challenging characters. How lucky I have been to secure such a dedicated, experienced and talented cast as Ben, Sophie and Tony. They have been a delight to work with.

Rehearsals have been a blast - we've all enjoyed getting our teeth into the nitty gritty of the play and delving into the complex relationships.

Ulrike has been outstanding as Production Manager, putting together a wonderful team to work with me on the production and holding my hand through the whole process.

Jez Butterworth grew up on a new build housing estate, similar to where this play is set, and he was inspired to write this piece by listening to the Blues, taking their familiar theme of loss and revenge. We wanted to give this production, a parlour song "spirit" of the Blues and I have been thrilled to work with musician Adrien Rodes, who has composed evocative original music to complement the mood.

So, if you're looking to see something modern with a punch, that will also exercise your laughing muscles during the Fringe, please come along and give us your support.

**Claire Lewis**

# NVT ACTING CLASSES

**1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 June**

**Andrew Allen**  
*Earning Your Lines*

**6, 13 & 20 July**

**Sarah Davies**  
*Creative Play*

Using a range of drama games and mind-body-breath connection, we'll explore the notion of PLAY. We shall explore releasing our younger selves ability to play, to be in the moment and to experience flow. Each session shall then experiment with how this notion of play and the accompanying attitude can transfer to how we tackle text, discover ways of using the voice and our bodies in performance. All in the spirit of fun, curiosity and discovery.

Sarah is an experienced Drama teacher, performer, director and deviser. She also enjoys a spot of clowning. She runs NVT's Youth Theatre and will be directing (and holding auditions for) 'A Christmas Carol' soon for a production this December at NVT.

Having been involved with NVT for over 9 years, I am always fascinated by the wide range of opportunities our theatre offers for training new members.

While hands-on backstage training is mostly given during the rehearsal process and run of a show, we also offer acting classes covering a wide variety of performance skills. These range from text analysis, auditioning skills, comedy and clowning, exploring different theatre styles and practitioners, and devising, to stage skills such as working with lights, vocal development and presence, as well as physical theatre and even stage combat. All reasonably priced too, at only £2.50 for members and £5 for non-members!

It is a pleasure to watch people develop and grow in our classes, and get involved in NVT productions as well as other shows and events. Throughout the season we see many people from acting classes become involved on-stage as well as backstage in productions, bringing all kinds of skills to the show as well as learning new ones.

Our classes are open to anybody and it is a brilliant way to get involved at NVT and find out what is going on. They also create an opportunity for directors to spot new talent, raise interest in upcoming productions, and find people to support a show as crew.

I am very grateful to the NVT members who help run classes and who share their knowledge and skills. If you would like to get involved, or have suggestions at to what we can explore and teach in classes, please do get in touch - classes are provided by members for members, and for prospective members too.

It would be great to see you there!

**Ulrike Schilling**

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW SEASON 2015/16

**Oct 2-10**

**The Miser**

by Moliere  
Steven Adams

**Jan 15-23**

**Loot**

by Joe Orton  
Steven O'Shea

**May Festival**

**Broken Glass**

by Arthur Miller  
Jerry Lyne

**Nov 13-21**

**Reasons To Be Pretty**

by Neil LaBute  
Tim McQuillen-Wright

**Feb 26-Mar 5**

**Women of Troy**

by Euripedes  
Ella Thompson

**Jun 18-25**

**Accidental Death of an Anarchist**

by Dario Fo  
Rod Lewis

**Dec 4-12**

**A Christmas Carol**

by Charles Dickens  
Sarah Davies

**Apr 8-16**

**How Many Miles to Babylon?**

by Jennifer Johnston  
Gerry McCrudden

**Jul 15-23**

**Love and Information**

by Caryl Churchill  
Kirsty Elmer

The very thought of you...Ms Ellis.

Who'd have thought it? Take some gin swirling London ladies of the night, the smoky film noir style, and the heart wrenching sounds of Billie Holiday, and what you have is an emotionally charged evening that packs a punch.

'The Thrill of Love' is the true story of Ruth Ellis, famously the last woman to be hanged in Britain. Its the 1950's, the era of Marilyn Monroe, the glitz and glam of the clubs and pubs of Hampstead. Ellis, the court club host, a mother, the blonde bombshell, and a victim who loved the company of 'many many' men. One such man was David Blakely her lover whom she murdered outside the Magdala pub in 1955. But why? What were her motives? Why did she not defend herself? Writer Amanda Whittington examines this, uncovering the real woman behind the stereotyped 'tart' the public and the newspapers portrayed her to be at the time.

Director Pat Boxall's production is a visually stunning interpretation of this tragic tale, led by her committed cast of actors who grabbed my attention and engaged me throughout.

I have to admit it was a slow start with the moody suited detective Jack Gale (Matthew Houghton) as he guided us through the facts of the case. Thankfully he knocked up the pace in Act two as the story continued, showing a strong presence interweaving the tables of the Court Club and the passage of time.

From the mist appears the petite Emmie Spencer as Ellis with her blonde locks and odd presence, capturing a woman longing for the 'Hollywood romance' but in reality has a gritty existence. Spencer gave us an intriguing Ellis, particularly moving when she wears Blakely's jacket to reveal the evidence of his handy work.

Emma Hutton portrayed a convincing Sylvia Shaw, the egg-drinking club manager with her confident brass exterior, keeping the ladies on their toes upholding the reputation of the club. Sylvia's farewell moment to Ellis in the prison knowing her eminent fate was a touching one.

Harriet Wakefield provided the alluring Vicki Martin with a dream of 'bright lights' showing some handy footwork on the dance floor. Finally Pamela Sian Evans added to this great cast of actors with her charming and upbeat Doris Judd bringing a warmth to the role as

## THE THRILL OF LOVE | reviews

by Amanda Whittington | directed by Pat Boxall



she pleaded with Ellis to put things right. She is one to watch.

Boxall's direction showed slickness through the flashback structure of this play with creative transitions between scenes, using sharp camera pops and flashes. Overall perhaps a touch more emphasis on the humour as it was lost in parts, as Whittington's text provides much needed light relief through some hilarious one liners. As the play closes Ellis's fate is

sealed and unlike the famous 'Roxy Hart' scenario, there is no escaping the wrath of the justice system with some 'razzle dazzle'. A powerful piece of theatre that is definitely worth a watch.

**Brian Sheridan**



“Someday he'll come along the man I love” sings Billie Holiday the background music for 'The Thrill of Love' by Amanda Whittington. Unfortunately for Ruth Ellis he did.

Ruth Ellis played by Emmie Spencer was the last woman to be hanged for murder in England in 1955. She was just a very ordinary girl with dreams of making it big, no different from the girls of today who dream of being the next Katie Price and to whom celebrity culture is all. Back in the 1940's and 50's the opportunities were not there for working class girls to aspire to, so a way out for some of them was to try their luck on the “glamorous” London club scene.

Ruth was one of these. Emmie shows her to be a very vulnerable girl, with a terrible inferiority complex. Although hard on top, underneath there is a girl who needs to be loved at any cost. Emmie is excellent in the role, although the make up appears to make her look older than the 28 years Ruth was and occasionally, while upstage some of the dialogue was a little hard to hear but Emmie gives a bravura and moving performance.

David Blakely was the man who Ruth adored. A bullying alcoholic from a privileged background played on her vulnerabilities to physiologically and physically control her. Although you don't see him, you feel his sinister presence throughout.

'The Thrill of Love' does a great job in recreating the sleazy club world of London in the 50's, the “little club” in Knightsbridge was no different to its counterparts in Soho. A top floor flat up endless flights of grimy stairs, where Ruth became the manager.

The play shows how girls like Ruth Ellis, fed on a diet of Hollywood films, became drawn to the glamour of the nightclub world. They did not realise it was just dressed up prostitution, a life of drink, drugs, and regular visits to back street abortionists.

A typical example is Vicki Martin,



played wonderfully by Harriet Wakefield, who demonstrates to perfection the cheeky, sexy, streetwise girl drawn to this way of life. Another is Sylvia Shaw the hard boss of the clubs, played admirably by Emma Hutton. Although Emma is perhaps a bit too pretty to totally convince as Sylvia, she does a great job in showing the ruthless and the kind side of the character - that and actually swallowing a prairie oyster live on stage every night deserves the gasps from the audience.

Matthew Houghton as the Chief Inspector Jack Gale has a formidable presence on the stage, and Pamela Sian Evans as the Cha lady Doris Judd provides some softness to the story along with some well timed comedic moments.

The play is gripping from the start; it doesn't lag and Pat Boxall's direction allows a smooth flow from one era to another with ease.

**Jeremy Goodchild**



1. Emma Hutton & Pamela Sian Evans
2. Emmie Spencer & Harriet Wakefield
3. Emmie Spencer & Matthew Houghton



4. Pamela Sian Evans, Emma Hutton & Emmie Spencer  
5. Matthew Houghton

Photos by Kellie Smith

Amanda Whittington's clever play takes a backward look at the story of Ruth Ellis, beginning with Ruth dressing for her execution. She was allowed to take off her prison tunic and wear pretty clothes, a headscarf covering the trademark peroxide blonde hair. Inspector Jack Gale examines the evidence. He doesn't feel Ruth is telling the whole story. As the drama unfolds, neither do we. Why has Desmond Cussen given her a loaded gun? Why is her background not taken into account? The playwright weaves wonderful period detail together with true facts. Ruth greatly admired Diana Dors and actually appeared with her in a bestforgotten film called 'Lady Godiva Rides Again'. There are references to the Cliveden set and Stephen Ward, a future scandal but curiously similar: beautiful girls at the mercy of educated and immoral older men. Who could forget Mandy Rice Davis when told of her wealthy lover's denial - 'He would, wouldn't he?' - became legend. Amanda Whittington's play is about women like Ruth and Mandy whose good looks and sparky style might take them into a different class, even if the only route upwards lay through the bedroom. We never meet racing driver David

Blakely nor Desmond Cussen: we meet club manageress Sylvia Hutton, glitzy newcomer Vicki Martin, charlady Doris Judd – and Detective Inspector Jack Gale.

Matthew Houghton as Jack Gale is the lynchpin of the play. On stage nearly the entire time, he watches as Ruth catapults towards tragedy, sometimes Narrator, sometimes Detective, sometimes silently in the shadows. He is just brilliant, a figure of sympathetic authority, helpless against Ruth's confession and intransigence. His final waltz with the doomed girl was almost unbearably moving, as in the last seconds of the play when, silently, he holds Ruth's glasses in his hand. Emma Hutton, perhaps too pretty and too young for club manageress Madam Sylvia, managed an icy authority with sisterly understanding. Her control was in sharp contrast to the nervy jitters of Emmie Spencer's Ruth, a performance which grew in stature as the play progressed. How well Emmie Spencer acted a tipsy Ruth and how cleverly she demonstrated obsession, kindness and damage. Beautiful Harriet Wakefield had a perfect part as the glamorous Vicki whose wings are burnt from flying too near the sun, a moral pointer if ever there was one. Pamela Sian Evans is charming as a cleaning lady whose affection for Ruth leads her to abandon her own fiancé. Nothing is too bad that can't be cured by cups of tea.

Director Pat Boxall lends all her considerable imaginative expertise to staging a 1950's period piece. Tiny details lend authority and mood: the lighting is low, the 78 rpm Billy Holiday record is scratchy, the stockings are seamed (they would have been held up with suspenders) and the dresses are tight. The Inspector wore a trilby hat and everyone smoked. Ruth's compulsive nerves were beautifully demonstrated when she folded a napkin – endlessly. Most impressive of all was the tension which built up, even though we all know the ending. Forsyth's 'Day of the Jackal' managed a similar thrill: although de Gaulle escapes assassination, the story grips. We know Ruth Ellis hangs – but this story, this production and these actors make us care.

**Louise Schweitzer**



# WHO DO YOU THINK WE WERE?

## The Ghost Train | NVT 1976



NEW VENTURE PRODUCTIONS  
present  
THE BRIGHTON & HOVE REPERTORY COMPANY

Sept 7

### THE GHOST TRAIN

by  
ARNOLD RIDLEY

#### CAST (in order of appearance)

SAUL HODGKIN (stationmaster at Fal Vale)	Harry Balston
RICHARD WINTHROP	Gerry Whitmore
ELSIE (his wife)	Julia Smith
CHARLES MURDOCK	John Mulcock
PEGGY, (his newly married wife)	Vicky Lywoodlast
MISS BOURNE	Carol Beverley
TEDDIE DEAKIN	John Griffiths
JULIA PRICE	Mollie Faulkner
HERBERT PRICE	Barry Leahy
JOHN STERLING	Philip Douetil
JACKSON	Leslie Alcom

The play directed by **Derek Mason**  
Set designed and executed by **James Burroughs**

The action of the play takes place in the small General Waiting-room at Fal Vale, a wayside station on the South Cornwall Joint Railway, during the course of four hours.

ACT I	10 p.m.
	15 minute interval during which coffee will be served
ACT II	11.30 p.m.
	Five minute interval
ACT III	12.30 a.m.

Production No. 204

Stage Manager	Pauline Potter
Asst. Stage Managers	Eileen Miller Sally McCarney Jerry Taylor Hannah Knight Gary Nye
Sound Effects	James Burroughs
Sound Operator	Alan Knight
Lighting Effects/Operator	Peter Meekings
Wardrobe Mistress	Pam Driscoll

The Company extends its grateful thanks to the following for the loan of properties:

Nestlé — Chocolate Bar Dispenser  
Blusbell Railway — Dispensers and ephemera of the Age of Steam  
Brunswick Animal Cateers, 30: Western Road, Hove — Parrot cage

At all times, but perhaps more particularly at the commencement of each season, we make a determined effort to attract new members and to persuade all last year's members that they can't afford not to renew. If you have not yet made up your mind, we hope tonight's performance will help you — in our favour. If it does, you are invited to complete the application form on our new brochure and return it with, of course, your subscription to the Membership Secretary. Associate membership entitles you to purchase tickets for yourself and friends for scheduled and non-scheduled productions, and to a copy of the Newsletter prior to each show and all for a mere 60p for the full year. Acting and Technical Membership at £2.00 per annum is required of all who wish to play an active part in the Company's operations in any of several capacities.

We are always open to welcome new members in either classification. We sincerely hope that you will enjoy your visit to our theatre, and if you are the guest of a member, will wish to take out membership in your own name. It is worthwhile, also, to go into the economics of the permanent booking system. We will gladly give you full details on request.

Co. Stage Manager	Barry Leahy	Co. Technician	James Burroughs
Producer's Secretary	Joan Gregory	Membership Secretary	Ivy Ganeil
Pufficity	Harry Balston	House Manager	Production Photos
			Tony Smith

**HELP!** It's worth a try. The Company stands in urgent need of a Front of House Manager/Managers. This is an important position and does require the expenditure of considerable time and effort in its expedition. If YOU are a good organiser with a strong personality and a capable manner, with time on your hands and the desire to do with it something constructive, please write to: The Administrative Director, or have a word with Derek Mason. This is an Honorary post but a rewarding one for a self-motivating person.

In the interest of general comfort  
WE INVITE YOU TO LIMIT SMOKING TO INTERVALS

EMERGENCY EXIT — TOP OF STAIRS

# 10 MINUTE PLAY COMPETITION

Many thanks to all who entered our 10-Minute Play Competition this year, we received a total of 183 entries. The shortlisting process has now been completed and it was not an easy task. Opposite are the plays that have been shortlisted, and from these eight plays will be chosen for performance in July.

We will announce here soon the plays that are selected to be performed.

*Blind*  
*Chance Encounter*  
*Choose Your Punishment*  
*Comfortable*  
*Contract Killer*  
*Crumbs*  
*Finn and Tilly*  
*Guilty Pleasures*  
*May Be Charlie, May Be Not*  
*RB4000*  
*Reunited*  
*Split Scene*  
*Tainted Love*  
*The Accidental Death of an Anti-Christ*  
*The Garden Of Earthly Delights*  
*The Gift*  
*The Informer*  
*Wish You Were Here*

## Every Little Helps

You might have noticed when booking tickets on line that you can add a donation to your payment.

Please do more than notice - especially if you think our prices are good value.

We need to raise a lot of money to keep our building weather-tight and your help would be much appreciated.

*Mike Stubbs*

# 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.

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 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
'Parlour Song' by Jez Butterworth 15 - 30 May Studio All tickets £10 (£9 members)				
'The Arsonists' by Max Frisch 19 - 27 June Studio				
10 Minute Play Competition 17 - 25 July Studio				

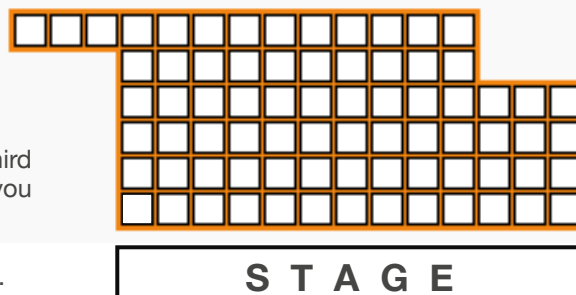
It is important you provide your name, phone number and address, and email address where possible

### \*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.



# CONTACT US

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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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