

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | THE SNOW QUEEN by Hans Christian Andersen | directed by Andrew Allen | 5 - 13 December

HAY FEVER

by Noel Coward | directed by Gerry McCrudden | 31 October - 8 November



David Eaton,
Lex Lake & Nikki
Dunsford.
Photo by Strat
Mastoris

Noel Coward self-deprecatingly described his delicious comedy “it has no plot at all, and remarkably little action”. Despite his protestations it is considered one of his funniest plays and a personal favourite of his.

The Blissés are by any measure a tad eccentric and avant-garde. Without mentioning it to each other David Bliss, a novelist, his wife Judith, a retired actress, their son Simon and daughter Sorel each invite a weekend guest to stay. Misunderstandings and tempers flare as Judith’s new flame and David’s newest literary ‘inspiration’ keep company - and their children and their amours follow suit. The Bliss family’s weekend inevitability comes to an exhausting and hilarious finale.

Coward penned Hay Fever in 1924, originally planning to call it Oranges and Lemons, but Hay Fever sounded more exciting. It set the seal on his reputation as a playwright and established him as a craftsman. He later wrote “The idea came to me suddenly in the garden, and I finished it in about three days, a feat which later on, when I had become news value,

seemed to excite gossip writers inordinately...” Laurence Olivier applied for a part in the touring version, but did not get that call back.

Coward achieved enduring success as a playwright, publishing more than 50 plays. Along with Hay Fever many of his works including Private Lives, Relative Values, Design for Living, Present Laughter and Blithe Spirit remain firmly in the theatrical repertoire, and are rarely out of production. So, we thought now was the time to bring Hay Fever back to the NVT, after a gap of 31 years since last staged in our theatre.

Given the current commemorations marking the Centenary of the First World War it is interesting to reflect that this play - written in the decade following the war - makes no mention or reference to it. Perhaps this was part of a deliberate attempt to leave all the sadness behind.

Coward reflected, “Hay Fever is far and away one of the most difficult plays to perform that I have ever encountered. I am very much attached to Hay Fever. I enjoyed writing it, and I have frequently enjoyed watching it.” So no pressure then! I am delighted to work with our talented creative crew and cast as they help bring this gorgeous play to the Theatre Upstairs.

Gerry McCrudden

“IT’S ENOUGH TO TURN YOU INTO A RACIALIST.”

Oddly billed as ‘wonderfully amusing’, this upsetting piece by Michael Wall is one of the strongest plays New Venture has offered for some time. It is about people who are not so much stupid as too poorly- informed to know how deep in dead trouble they are. What occasional humour there is comes from their hopeless optimism spiced with a great big helping of bigotry. They all firmly believe that because they are English, they are superior to any other race, unquestionably immune from the laws of any country other than this one.

We’re back in Thatcher’s Britain. Two young lads are about to be hanged in Penang for drug running. The dear old News of the World has paid the parents of Bryan, the younger one, the equivalent of £30,000 for their story, though, strangely, the newspaper plays no part in telling the tale. The boys and their families are on their own in Malaysia.

Bryan doesn’t know where Malaysia is and as far as he is concerned, they might all just as well be in Preston Park. Preston Park run by “Pakis”, that is – in his vocabulary anyone not white is automatically “Paki” – “It’s enough to turn you into a racist” as his mum puts it.

The casting throughout is mostly brilliant.

Louis Mallen-Curtis is Bryan, giving a really good performance in only his second role at New Venture since he was the 14 year old Winslow Boy. Ralph, his partner in crime, and equally foul-mouthed, is Tom Slater, older, more used to the world and a bit eccentric. They wear orange overalls like contemporary political prisoners, designed to deny their identity. Had they worn their own clothes, their predicament would have been even more heart-rending. We would have seen them as they really are – two lost and pitifully ordinary creatures being destroyed legally, not beyond rescue but denied it through ineptitude.

The occasional comedy comes mostly from their parents. Convinced they will take their son home with them, Bryan’s dad is looking forward to going down the pub with him again - and that is the measure of his grasp of what’s going on. Trevor Oakley is totally believable in the part, and so is Helen Pepper-Smith in hers as his wife. Her overwhelming grief when she has to say goodbye to Bryan is almost unbearable.

AMONGST BARBARIANS

by Michael Wall | directed by Sean Lippett-Fall
review by Barry Hewlett-Davies



Ralph’s mother is Sophie Dearlove, an enthusiastic hedonist married to a crook, into drugs, booze and sexy waiters on the make. Like the other parents, she has bought her son his ticket for the plane home, but she is worldlier, offering sex to the Governor at one point in return for a free pardon for the lads. A perceptive performance expertly done.

Chelsea Mountney positively flips through the evening as



1. Carla Aguis, Helen Pepper-Smith & Trevor Oakley
2. Louis Mallen-Curtis & Tom Slater
3. Ramesh Nair & Tom Slater
4. Chelsea Mountney & Trevor Oakley
5. Chelsea Mountney, Carla Aguis, Richard Foyster & Sophie Dearlove

Photos by Strat Mastoris



Bryan's flighty sister, but her loaded barbed spats with her dad hit home and tell you a lot about both of them.

There's a Sikh jailer, behaving as honestly and decently as the system allows him to, a performance of considerable dignity from Ramesh Nair. Richard Foyster is the oily barman/rented escort/drug pusher, not what you might call an attractive character – but handled with an easy manner.

The most 'straightforward' character is the Tamil lawyer, played by Carla Agius with a calm humanity, She has the only optimism the play can offer but her expertise is rejected

We lost pace now and then, particularly towards the end of the first half. Some of the duologues could have been improved, perhaps with a little cutting to avoid repetition – and could the furniture have been simpler? Having less of it to shove about would have avoided breaking into the action.

A tough and tragic evening in the theatre, not at all easy to take but expertly done.

When it was first aired, the New Straits Times of Malaysia denounced *Barbarians* as "a production from the gutter." Unfortunately, you can understand their point of view – and that is the measure of the play's success.



Recent visitors to the NVT Bar may have noticed that we are starting to display photographs and artifacts from our newly constructed archives. Much progress has been made in identifying thousands of photos and other memorabilia which throw a fascinating light on our creative history. With the passage of time sadly some of the photos from the earliest productions may never be fully identified. But they will be displayed too just in case an eagle eye might recognise them.

The photo display will be regularly changed showing the diversity of the 700 or so productions staged by the NVT. We will shortly display binders showing photographs, programmes and press cuttings of the majority of our past shows.

WHO DO YOU THINK WE WERE? Charley's Aunt | 1964 | New Venture Theatre



Never a Dull Moment in this 'Charley's Aunt' Production

THE classic English farce is, undoubtedly, Brandon Thomas's "Charley's Aunt." Since its premiere almost 70 years ago, it has been revived annually. There can be few amateur companies that haven't tried it once, just as there are few actors, who have never appeared in it.

The New Venture Theatre Club have four more performances to

give of this ever-green, which they are reviving at their theatre in Bedford-street.

Before the curtain went up on Thursday night, I heard a colleague murmur "There's nothing worse than a badly-done farce." He needn't have worried, the company got away with it very well indeed.

A Real Comic

Some excellent performance from the "undergraduates" helped, too. Derek Mason as Harry Leabey contrasted well with the love-sick young man. Wit Anthony Allen, who plays the destitute Lord Fancourt Babberl the company have a real comic find.

His face, reminiscent of No man Wisdom, carried away perfectly the deception of the noble Brazilian lady who holds the key to everybody's fortunes. He's a

a great sense of timing as comedy that saved the production from a single dull moment.

The action, of course, hinges on this unholy trio of ne'er do well students and their "scout," portly man-servant, played with great dignity and wit by Geoff Banner.

Representing age and estabishment are Harry Balston as Leslie Acorn, one as genial fat just back from India, and other as a narrow solicitor as fully guarding his own fortunes.

His ward and his niece attractively played by Lil Endicott and Beryl Grant, a pair of fluttery Victorian girls beautiful orphan girl is as played by Caroline Burne. Donna Lucia D'Alvadores, cotormanding lady from Br falls neatly into the hands Beryl Andrew.

—R.H.

PETER WHELAN

The death of Peter Whelan came on 3rd July. No doubt the many scheduled productions of The Accrington Pals will record the fact, in tribute to one of Britain's greatest, if under-sung, playwrights. Peter and his wife Frangcon have been members of Questors Theatre for many years.

"His best known work, *The Herbal Bed* (1996) was a scintillating retrieval of a case for sexual slander brought by Susannah Shakespeare against a neighbour. That play did find its way into the West End, but Whelan's six other plays for the RSC – the first five of them produced in a remarkable collaboration with the director Bill Alexander – remained in small spaces; a shame, perhaps, because there was an epic dimension and latent popular appeal to most of them. He was a very fine writer." Michael Coveney in *The Guardian*. (No mention however, was made of *Shakespeare Country*, the somewhat controversial play he wrote for the BT Biennial in association with the Guild, but which in retrospect could be seen as the most interesting and original of the various BT commissions.

from LTG Newsletter August 2014



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NVT and Brighton Fringe Festival

Is the NVT just another 'am-dram' club for people who need a hobby? Or is it a non-professional (i.e. unpaid) theatre with very high production values, constantly stretching our skills and pushing at creative boundaries? I'm sure we'd all agree with the second definition, and to me that's the essence of Fringe theatre, and of the Brighton Fringe Festival in particular.

But Brighton Fringe is more than that - it's a major cultural event, flooding Brighton with all kinds and sizes of theatre events during May. We are an important part of the theatre community in this city, and for years we've taken part in Fringe, often putting on two productions to cover the entire three weeks of the festival.

So when I attended the NVT 'Away Day' meeting back in June, I was shocked and horrified to hear that the NVT is considering pulling out of Fringe participation. It seems that the committee has decided - without reference to any members - that we should not take part any more. Bizarrely, after years of squeezing two Fringe shows into the Studio, now that we finally have two working theatre spaces we will only be putting on one production next May, during the last fortnight of Fringe and probably not as a Fringe event.

I have no idea what has driven this decision. Probably money - it costs money to register for Fringe, and to be involved in the brochure and ticketing administration - but some things are, surely, more important than saving a few hundred pounds (out of an annual budget of many thousands). Like a vision for our theatre as part of a wider community. Like having our name and brand up there with the other cutting-edge compa-

nies. Like being enthusiastic neighbours and partners in the Brighton theatre community.

Interestingly, the 'Away Day' meeting seemed to concern itself almost solely with money - budgeting for improvements or renovations to the building structure, and seeking new fundraising strategies. There was very little sense of any creative vision for the NVT. We were, though, given an 'Action Plan', one of whose points was to "increase working in partnership with other organisations to expand the range of activities / events available to our members and augment the NVT profile externally"

Just how does quitting our participation in Brighton Fringe help that aim?

This issue goes right to the heart of what our theatre should be about - our spirit and our vision - but none of this has been referred to the NVT membership. I intend to raise the matter at the October AGM on Saturday 18 October. This is too important to be left to a small group of committee members, and there has been no open discussion of the issue - have any of you heard it mentioned in public?

It seems that the final decision has not yet been made, so come to the meeting and help me get this shortsighted and small-minded policy changed. Cutting ourselves out of Fringe is being done in your name, remember, but without your consideration or your consent.

Strat Mastoris

ACTING CLASSES

27.10, 3.11 & 10.11

Ulrike Schilling - Where Are You Hiding?

Exploring stage presence through physicality and text.

17.11, 24.11, 1.12, 8.12 & 15.12

Andrew Thomas - The Seven Deadly Sins

Improv games and devised theatre based around the themes of each of the seven deadly sins.

WORKSHOPS

25.10.2014 2-5pm

Introduction to Costume Design

In this session we will look at the role of costume designer and how to work with the cast and crew to create the wardrobe within the budget and time scale.

Starting from the script and researching, we will address what to look for in it; including noting any references to clothing and quick changes. We will discuss sourcing and hiring costumes; suggesting pattern, fabric and trimming suppliers and where to obtain other accessories. This workshop won't be a sewing lesson, but it will include lots of information and tips on making costumes for the stage as well as how to cope with mid-run alterations and repairs.

9.11.2014 2-5pm

Set Design and Set Building

To book a place on a workshop please email ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk

Image by Tamsin Fraser



CAST ANNOUNCEMENT

The Snow Queen | 5-13 December

As the dark nights draw in, we invite you to a palace of snow and ice! Join Gerda as she journeys across the world and through the seasons to save her best friend Kai from the cold clutches of the Snow Queen.

10 MINUTE PLAYS

8 Plays. 8 Directors. 8 Performances.

In our recently refurbished 75 seater Theatre Upstairs!

Could your play be one of those performed? Why not submit and see what happens. The writing part of the competition is now open, closing at midnight on 31 January - enter online or by post.

Lisa Feldman	Blamor
Emma Ruggins	Ran
Alanna Manwaring	Tyveri
Annique Tate-Doe	Skald
Kirrily Long	Scream
Lisa Caira	Wilhelm
Helen O'Brien	Soldier
Ruth Bailey	Soldier
Milly Roberts	Robber Girl
Carl Blatch	Ensemble
Matt Swan	Kai
Linda Reynolds	Grandmother
Chelsea Newton Mountney	Gerda
Shonali Rodrigues	The Snow Queen
Amy Maynard	The Troll Headmistress
Samantha French	The Enchantress
Polly Ballantine	The Lapp Woman
Kay Wetherlit	The Finn Woman
Angela El Dezlin	The Princess
Matt Mulvay	The Prince
Mark Green	The Crow
Jeff Moody	Ba'

EASY FUNDRAISING

ALLOCATED SEATING Now Available in the Theatre Upstairs

With the recent refurbishment of the Upstairs Theatre, we are delighted to give you the option to choose your seats when booking your tickets! This means no more queuing before the start of a performance to try and get the best seats in the house. Please note that this facility will remain unavailable in the Studio, due to the flexible nature of the seating configuration.

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 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.

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
'Hay Fever' by Noel Coward 31 October - 8 November *Theatre Upstairs				
'The Snow Queen' by Hans Christian Andersen 5 - 13 December *Theatre Upstairs				
'Hamlet' by William Shakespeare 16 - 24 January				

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
Secretary
Artistic Director
Treasurer
Production Manager
Technical Manager
Fundraising
Marketing & Publicity
Volunteer Liaison
Front of House
Box Office
Newsletter Editor
Membership Secretary
LTG Rep
Social Secretary
Youth Theatre

Ian Black
Jerry Lyne
Rod Lewis
Iain Hay & Joanna Wolowicz
Mike Stubbs
Chris Pugh
Mary Allen
Dan Wlaker
Ulrike Schilling
Jezz Bowden
James Macauley
Natasha Borg
Anne Gilson
Pat Boxall
position vacant
Sarah Davies

chairman@newventure.org.uk
secretary@btinternet.com
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 663645
or email info@windlesham-school.co.uk

100 Dole Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 5AA www.windlesham-school.co.uk



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@mbbrighton.co.uk 31 Western Road, Brighton, BN1 2NW



DEEPDENE SCHOOL & NURSERY

Nursery - 4 yrs to 4 yrs
School - 4 yrs to 11 yrs

Traditional Caring Nursery & Primary Education

Helping children become
confident, competent, considerate & courteous.

192 New Church Road, Hove BN3 5ED
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