

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | HAY FEVER by Noel Coward | directed by Gerry McCrudden | 31 October - 8 November

AMONGST BARBARIANS

by Michael Wall | directed by Sean Lippett-Fall | 3 - 11 October



Louis Mallen-Curtis and Tom Slater
Photo by Strat Mastoris

Bewildered and slightly lost about my “Contemporary” piece to perform alongside my “Shakespeare” (Or “Willy-Shakey” as he became known at Arts-Ed) in my audition preparation for various London Drama Schools, I ended up in the British Library. Whilst looking for an Irish piece to match my half-heritage I stumbled across “Amongst Barbarians” stacked at a strange angle, hanging off of the shelf, waiting for a strange frog-faced hopeful to pick up, read and of course fall in love with. I began to re-write and knit two separate monologues from the play together, as there was not one single piece long enough for an audition. Feeling a little guilty about this, I decided to contact the author to gain his permission. Within two days of contacting his agent, Michael called me and we met only the one time the following week in London, where he gave his blessing to my mad re-writes, a signed copy of the play, “best of British” for my auditions and a request for me to act in and/or direct his play, if I made it through Drama School.

I am keeping my promise.

Michael died tragically young one year later, the year I began Drama School.

Set in Penang Malaysia and based upon a true story “Amongst Barbarians” focuses on two young Englishmen facing the death penalty for drug trafficking. We meet their respective family members, their lawyer and gaoler amongst others and follow their complex journey to a very uncertain destiny.

The play launched Kathy Burke’s career and is an often hilarious, but consistently thought provoking piece of theatre, that although set in the 80’s, is still highly relevant today. It takes foresight, huge commitment, bravery and dedication to put a piece like Amongst Barbarians on, and it is with this in mind that I would like to thank all of those who have made this possible - from the hugely helpful and forward thinking NVT hierarchy to the ever impressive Uli and my entire crew, and of course my beautiful, crazy cast. I have demanded a great deal of them all, and am nowhere finished yet. We have worked extremely hard to bring you our “Barbarians”. If you experience half the fun as an audience that we have had creating this piece, then we should all have a memorable and moving time in Malaysia.

“Never Say Never”.

Sean Lippett-Fall

NVT YOUTH THEATRE

On the 4th July, towards the end of last season, I had the great pleasure of attending the final showcase of the NVTYT, during which 12 or so young people from Brighton and France displayed their talents and skills. Under the guidance of Sarah Davies and her team, the group had devised a piece based on 'Alice in Wonderland', which included elements of physical theatre, comical scenes, and emotionally moving storylines of which the audience enjoyed every minute - and appreciated with great applause!

NVT spent over a year preparing for the restart of its Youth Group, ensuring all legal and safety requirements were adhered to. With her experience of and passion for working with young people in creative environments, Sarah put herself forward to run the project, undertook all the work leading up to the launch of NVTYT, and in autumn 2013 she delivered the first term.

Over the past year she has inspired other NVT members to support the project, and I would like to name a few who were crucial in producing the amazing final showcase; Guy Walsh, Mark Green and Sandie Armstrong who have been supporting Sarah on a regular basis with the weekly classes, and Lisa Feldman and Mark Green helped with costumes and make-up for two showcases performances. I would like to thank them all and of course the students and their parents for providing NVT with such a talented group of future actresses, actors, and creative theatre makers. I am very much looking forward to more exciting work during the coming season!

Ulrike Schilling

1. Megan Batchelor, Hannah, Ava & Esther
 2. Hannah
 3. Jess, Lillianne, Lili & Jake
- Photos by Jez Bowden

NVT AGM Saturday 18 October

The new season is just a few days away and hot on the heels of our first production – Amongst Barbarians – will be the Annual General Meeting, on Saturday 18 October at 7:30pm. A chance to meet with members you may not have seen for a while, discuss how the NVT has fared over the last year and have your input into its future direction.

Trustee and non-trustee roles are all available for nomination – except for the Artistic Director, which is a 2 years appointment. You will find a link to the nomination forms in the newsletter email and in the members section of the NVT website – www.newventure.org.uk

If you haven't been to an AGM before, you don't know what you've been missing. There have been full and frank exchanges of views at past meetings and this year is likely to be just the same. If you like or don't like something about NVT or you think the NVT should be doing this or that, the AGM is your chance to come along and voice your opinion. All are welcome, but only paid up Full members will be able to vote.



Time to welcome the 2014-15 season for NVT, and a glance through the programme for the forthcoming season will reveal a very broad range of plays. Although varying very much in content and style – I feel they all have one factor in common, they are all really excellent examples of playwrights succeeding in what they set out to do – and I don't think you can't ask for much more than that. From the dark, volatile humour of 'Amongst Barbarians', through the brilliant fizz of wit in Coward's 'Hay Fever', to the warm, magical charm of our premier of Andrew Allen's new version of 'The Snow Queen' – on to the glorious furnace of ideas and language in Steven O'Shea's extraordinarily focused version of 'Hamlet' and on and on, one fine work after another, right through to next Summer. There will be more about the later plays in other issues.

All this is very much in keeping with what NVT strives to do - to work towards excellent, and powerful, productions and provide a season of many opportunities ... and challenges. At a guess (and counting up to 24 new roles in the end of the season ten minute play competition) it will be a season that will have around hundred acting roles to be filled. Even more numerous will be the members who make these productions possible, the creative, backstage and technical teams, those who work the box office and the admin, bar and front of house, and let's not forget and those that help keep our trusty and wonderful old building afloat. There will be many, many people involved. To my mind, New Venture Theatre is not simply a theatre club, in reality it is a Company (yes, let's give it a capital 'C') – and a very large one at that. Few professional companies can offer active roles to so many participants.

As members of a Company such as ours, in whatever part we play, we depend very much on each other. When we appreciate this we will enjoy, even more, the journey that we, as a group, are on, and we can take pleasure in the dramatic terrain that we explore ... together.

Rod Lewis

WELCOMING THE NEW SEASON October 2014 - July 2015

3 - 11 Oct 'Amongst Barbarians' by Michael Wall
 31 Oct - 8 Nov 'Hay Fever' by Noel Coward
 5 - 13 Dec 'The Snow Queen' by Hans Christian Andersen
 16 - 24 Jan 'Hamlet' by William Shakespeare
 20 - 28 February 'The Private Ear' & 'Black Comedy' by Peter Shaffer
 20 - 28 March 'Benefactors' by Michael Frayn
 24 April - 2 May 'The Thrill of Love' by Amanda Whittington
 15 - 30 May 'Parlour Song' by Jez Butterworth
 19 - 27 Jun 'The Arsonists' by Max Frisch
 17 - 25 July 10 Minute Play Competition



Coming This February

We can now announce our production for 20th to 28th February 2015 will be a double of comedies by Peter Schaffer.

'The Private Ear', directed by Dan Walker, is a tragic comedy of manners. For his date with the perfect woman, Bob decides to invite ladies man Ted to be cook and 'facilitator'. What could possibly go wrong?

In 'Black Comedy', directed appropriately by Ian Black, an artist takes the opportunity to sell his sculpture to a wealthy collector and gain the approval of his fiancée's father in the same evening. Brindsley does everything he can, but when the power fails it's a blackout; only the audience can see what happens.

We need to recruit volunteers for the posts of Set Manager and Social Secretary so if you are interested or know someone who might be, please email mikestubbs2000@gmail.com for further information.

Join The Snow Queen Crew

Join us on a magical adventure as we create a wondrous production for Christmas 2014! We have a great production team on board for 'The Snow Queen', but could still do with some extra hands... So if you'd like to help with stage management, props, set building, animation, special effects, costume, lighting or sound, get in touch with Andrew Allen on [limerence.aa@googlemail.com](mailto:aa@googlemail.com) Our aim is to make this production awesome. Interested?

Image by Tamsin Fraiser



Take Part In Parlour Song

May at NVT brings a Jez Butterworth delight – 'Parlour Song' – an irresistible, blackly comic, three-hander with challenging and interesting characters to delve into. If you'd like to be involved with the production or read a copy of the script, please contact Claire Lewis claire.lewis@sky.com 07841 115250.

'Decade' is about reactions to 9/11. It is one of them itself: it is fourteen playlets describing events before, during and after two passenger aeroplanes were flown into the World Trade Centre. Some are dramatic, almost documentary reconstruction; some are imaginary: some blur the boundaries.

In 2011, Headlong Theatre Company commissioned twenty playwrights to mark the decade. Each would provide one short, unique and personal definition of the tragedy. The resulting dramas explored the obvious grief, shock and horror as well as some less expected and much nastier consequences. Canvases, both large and small, included political capital, tabloid exploitation, tour guide lechery – and raging eczema. Human nature was given no quarter and very few heroics. Here were no sacrificial firemen or selfless police officers: here was damage and destruction beyond glass and concrete. Not only did every character seem more or less out for themselves, but they vied to compete in sorrow. Who shall wear their widows weeds for longest? Who suffers survivors guilt? Who actually pretended to be there and wasn't?

Director Kirsty Elmer selected fourteen episodes for New Venture Company to create in promenade theatre. The production has taken over a year to produce and no one could have expected the certain grisly synergy of a crashed Malaysian passenger aeroplane, shot down over Ukraine. More predictable was the centenary commemoration of WWI, demonstrating with full canonicles that the evil men do, lives on. We are charged with remembering. We appear never to learn the lesson.

Overall, 'Decade' works as a stunning piece of theatre that engages with the audience at every level. Theatre goes sit at the café where the widows meet: they stand by the view from the 97th floor of the South Tower. They move up and down concrete stairs, eerily recreating the flight down dozens of stairwells when the tower lifts failed. Few real catastrophes had ever been caught on camera to such appalling effect – ingenious staging reminded us what that looked like and if you had never known what an aeroplane sounded like as it hit a skyscraper – you do, now. Clever production details recalled computers the size of small fridges, or forgotten celebrities like Keanu Reeves. Some playlets worked better than others: to me, the most effective were the group scenes which allowed a variety of perspective, notably stranded airport passengers and the newspaper office.

DECADE

directed by Kirsty Elmer | Review by Louise Schweitzer



If it felt a shade too long – perhaps that reflected our short attention span. 14 playlets took over three hours so the original 20 would have been a theatrical marathon and fitting tribute to the scale of the disaster. There might be a case for the complete set - herein might lie missing Muslims, Christian ethics or at least something more positive than fairly uniform bleakness.



10 MINUTE PLAY COMPETITION

In preparation for our July production the 10-Minute Play Competition 2015, we have just launched the writing part of the competition. The rules and all details can be found on the website, you can also enter online; or by post if you prefer this option.

If you plan to enter you have until the closing date of 31 January 2015 to submit your play.

Ian Black

<http://newventure.org.uk/what-s-on/10-minute-play-competition>

1. Emmie Spencer, Sheelagh Baker, Andy Bell, Amanda Harman, Paddy O'Keeffe & company.

2. Pat Boxall & Emmie Spencer

3. Paddy O'Keeffe & Emmie Spencer, Sam Parsons, Lyn Snowdon & Madi Dunne, Andy Bell, Pat Boxall & Emma Hutton, Scott Roberts

4. Scott Roberts

Photos by Strat Mastoris

One early playlet felt like a news broadcast from 2001 as Andy Bell recreated the real Scott Forbes outlining the power shut-down in the South Tower. Conspiracy? Bell convinced me that perhaps things might not have been quite what they seemed. More drama-documentary from Amanda Harman as Ground Zero Tour Guide: could her poignant loss be fake? She wasn't; she was brilliant. In Matthew Lopez' witty script, grief wore several shades of black for the marvellous trio of contrasting widows Pat Boxall, Emmie Spencer and Lyn Snowdon. Scott Roberts made a suitably Murdochian tabloid newspaperman (we have a duty to our readers) and a hilariously opportunistic tour guide – villains are fun to play and he made the most of them. Paddy O'Keeffe speculated loudly on the possibility of 39 – or was it 40? – virgins as reward for the suicide pilots, a brief moment of black humour, wonderfully well done. I needed the comic relief of the doomed speed daters but Emmie Spencer's brittle vulnerability was more tragic than funny.

All the cast demonstrated an astonishing versatility. In just a very few moments, Emma Hutton changed from stranded passenger to violently autistic daughter before becoming a sexually available tourist, Dan King cleaned up bulimic Madi Dunne's sick in the cafe as a waiter with loftier ambitions and a powerful stage presence, Stuart Flynn became an assertive speed dater, whilst Sam Parsons captured audience attention in each role. Sheelagh Baker elevated being a waitress and Harriet Hoad and Lola White managed to sleep through the racket of stranded airline passengers or dead Beatle lookalikes. (Now, they were funny...)

Where were you when you saw the aeroplanes fly into the Twin Towers? You will remember, just as you remember where you were when Kennedy was shot.

Now the audience in the New Venture Theatre will remember seeing it again. Decade later. The war unwon.

ACTING CLASSES

29.9, 6.10, 13.10 & 20.10

Mark Wilson - So What's This Acting Thing All About?'

A four-session course on becoming an even better actor.

This course aims to get rid of the mystery that can get in the way of us feeling that we can develop as actors. We'll look at how we can create character physically and vocally. We'll work towards making those characters believable, so that our audience comes to see 'the villain's vulnerability and the victim's strength.'

Each class will be run in a way that fits all levels of experience and as a discrete unit – perfect for those able to attend all or just one or two of the sessions. You will be working on your own and in small groups. There will be opportunities to present work and gain feedback on performance but there will be no pressure to perform – process being more important than product. The intention is that it should be a learning, skills-based process, ideal for the 'beginner' as well as those with more experience. It is my intention that all of us – me included – shall leave the programme with more than we came in with.

WORKSHOPS

20.9.14 2-5pm

Introduction to Production & Stage Management

This workshop will shed light on the roles involved backstage and look at individual responsibilities as well as time frames and NVT's best practice. Both roles are a great starting point if you are new to NVT and are fun and very rewarding as you will be right in the middle of the process of putting on a production.

We will look at both NVT's stages and behind the scenes at all backstage areas. If you would like to be involved in a show this season, this is your chance to find out what is available and how to get involved backstage.

25.10.2014 2-5pm

Introduction to Costume Design

All workshops are free for members, to book a space please email ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk



JOHN GRIFFITHS

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of John Griffiths in August. He was a long-standing company member and, for some years, our Artistic Director.

John was a fine and extremely versatile actor enjoying a huge range from Shakespeare and the Classics to Contemporary Theatre and Farce. His favourite playwright was Harold Pinter and he particularly relished playing in 'The Birthday Party' (twice!), 'The Caretaker' and 'Betrayal'.

As an actor, he was hard working and meticulous with a wonderful sense of humour. He was also patient, kind and thoughtful especially with less experienced actors and, when not cast, was always happy to support in a backstage capacity. His first production was 'Mandragola' in 1973 and his last 'The Weir' in 2005. The plays he appeared in, between those years, are too numerous to mention but are all recorded in the company's archive which will be available to view online in due course.

John was much loved and those of us who knew and worked with him were blessed indeed. Our heartfelt condolences go to his wife, Penny, and to all his friends.

Pat Boxall

CAST ANOUNCEMENT

Hay Fever | 31 October - 8 November

Sorel Bliss.....Lex Lake
Simon Bliss.....David Eaton
Clara.....Sheelagh Baker
Judith Bliss.....Nikki Dunsford
David Bliss.....Gerry Wicks
Sandy Tyrell.....Ben Pritchard
Myra Arundel.....Red Gray
Richard Greatham.....Richard Conolly
Jackie Coryton.....Naomi Horsfall

*King Richard III
by Unknown artist oil on panel
late 16th century (late 15th century)
National Portrait Gallery*

RICHARD III

Coming Soon !

New Venture Theatre will have a special performance of Shakespeare's Richard III next Spring to mark his reburial in Leicester cathedral - more details nearer the time.



Allocated Seating

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.

James Mcauley
boxoffice@newventure.org.uk

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
'Amongst Barbarians' by Michael Wall 3-11 October Studio				
'Hay Fever' by Noel Coward 31 October - 8 November *Theatre Upstairs				
'The Snow Queen' by Hans Christian Andersen 5-13 December *Theatre Upstairs				

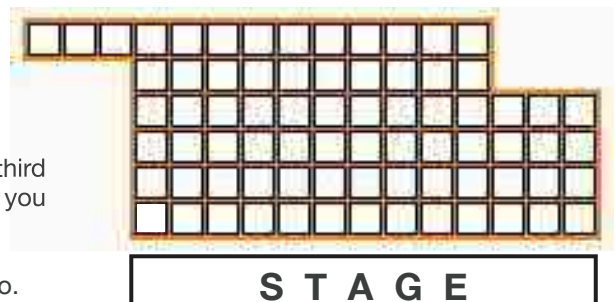
It is important you provide your name, phone number and address, and email address where possible

*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.



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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