

# NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Charles Dickens | directed by Sarah Davies | 4 - 12 December

## REASONS TO BE PRETTY

by Neil LaBute | directed by Tim McQuillen-Wright | 13 - 21 November



Fintan Shevlin  
& Pamela Sian  
Evans

Photo by Strat  
Mastoris

“But I don’t want a model, I want you!” is not from the play. It is a line that my fifteen year old self thought would be a nice thing for a girl to hear. Shortly after that, the conversation became a blur as I fought to reestablish what I had meant and how I could find the sequence of words which could, in effect, turn back time. The

young relationship did not blossom. Whether that episode had anything to do with it is impossible to tell but it is fair to assume it didn’t help.

In ‘Reasons To Be Pretty’, Greg endures a similar crisis but in this case, his words do prove to be the catalyst to a very challenging period in his relationship to girlfriend, Steph. Neither of them are able to communicate their feelings terribly well and when put into situations of high stress, they do not articulate a perfectly crafted soundbite like in some Renee Zellweger movie. They argue with confusion and panic like the rest of us and perhaps that is why I like the play so much.

Neil LaBute wrote the comedy to be about our fixation with physical appearance. There is a lot of confrontation in the play and you would be forgiven for thinking, on reading it, that it is an angry play. But we believe that could not be further from the truth. It shows how, in the real world, love is flawed, difficult and often ugly but love is also tender, beautiful and extremely funny.

We are presenting the play in the intimate space of the studio so that whether you side with Greg and feel his pain for saying the wrong thing, or with Steph for believing that, if you love someone, you are incapable of making such a mistake in the first place, the audience is in the thick of the argument.

The cast have proven to be wonderfully creative contributors to the entire process. Fintan, last seen as Hedwig, Pamela, fresh from her fantastic performance in ‘The Thrill of Love’, Scott, a regular NVT performer and recent director of ‘Richard III’ and Jen, from last season’s ‘Benefactors’, all bring a wealth of experience and charm to four challenging roles. We also have an incredibly strong backstage team who regularly pop into rehearsals and add to the blend of ideas. Between the script and the team, I am extremely lucky and proud to present this play.

If I can conclude with another quote, this time from someone far more erudite than I, which I feel sums the play up, Shrek in ‘Shrek-The Musical’ sings, “Beautiful isn’t always pretty”.

**Tim McQuillen-Wright**

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## 17 October 2015

The Annual General Meeting took place as advertised on Saturday 17 October. We had a turnout of 29 full members who heard an overview of how the NVT progressed over the past year. During this time we have installed a new central heating system, redecorated the external paintwork, made significant repairs to the roof, replaced the Studio floor cloth and redecorated the South Hall & rear corridor. Although we did have external contractors who undertook most of this work, thanks are due to Mike and Gerry who coordinated the work and led the teams of members that assisted in some of the redecoration and to Xeli, who has taken on the design. Many thanks are also due to The Pebble Trust who gave us a £15k grant towards this work. Thanks also go to Mary Allen and Gerry McCrudden for their help in getting this grant.

During last season over 4900 people attended our 10 productions. Another very successful year both artistically and financially, with a wide range of productions, directors and actors new to the NVT alongside more seasoned members made for a diverse and interesting year of high standard theatre. Our income surpassed expectations with the benefit of the extra capacity of the Theatre Upstairs adding to the draw of the season. Similarly our membership has continued to increase and a clear move towards more Full Members can be seen, suggesting a more active membership with respect to participation in productions.

The proposal to remunerate the Youth Theatre Coordinator was fully discussed. The aim here is to make the NVT sustainable in years to come. Discussions included the significant responsibility of the coordinator's role and the need for some degree of continuity as well as models to the future Youth Theatre structure. It was agreed that having a Youth Theatre is desired and should be integral to the NVT. It was decided that a sub group should be set up to progress this. It

was also stated that Pat Boxall has taken on the role of Child Protection Officer for the NVT

The new committee were elected and non-committee roles agreed. However, a number of roles have been left unfilled – see the full list below – if you are interested in any of the vacant roles please contact a member of the committee.

Many thanks to all who have contributed so much over the years in these roles.

**Ian Black**

<b>Committee</b>			
Chairman	Ian Black	Secretary	Jerry Lyne
Artistic Director	Rod Lewis	Treasurer	Iain Hay
Front of House Coordinator	Jezz Bowden	Social Events Manager	Scott Roberts
Web Manager	Tamsin Mastoris	Building Manager	Mike Stubbs
<b>Non-Committee Roles</b>			
Newsletter Editor	Natasha Borg	Props Manager	Mark Green
Volunteer Coordinator	Uli Schilling	Membership Secretary	Anne Gilson
Archivist	Gerry McCrudden	Fundraiser	Mary Allen
LTG Rep	Pat Boxall	Acting Class Coordinator	Uli Schilling
<b>Vacant Roles</b>			
Publicity & Marketing Coordinator		Production Coordinator	
Set Design Adviser		Box Office Manager	
Health & Safety Manager (Covered by Chairman)		Technical Manager	

## CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

We're planning on having a Christmas Social Evening on Saturday 19th December. The event will be free and welcome to all members. We hope to have a raffle, as well as a special prize for the most ridiculous

Christmas pullover/outfit. We'd love to see as many of you there as possible to join in the festivities. Anyone willing to contribute to raffle prizes or anything else regarding the evening, please email Scott: [social@newventure.org.uk](mailto:social@newventure.org.uk)

## BIG AMATEUR WEEKEND

### With the Royal Shakespeare Company

Join us for a weekend of workshops, masterclasses and backstage insight, tailor made for amateur theatre makers wanting to develop their performance skills and learn more about how RSC actors prepare, rehearse and perform.

Join us at our home in Stratford-upon-Avon, birthplace of William Shakespeare, for an unforgettable theatre experience working in the RSC's own rehearsal rooms with some of the teams behind our world-class productions.

Sessions will cover our approach to performing Shakespeare but also a wide range of performance techniques.

More information at <http://www.rsc.org.uk>



## QUOTE CORNER

“Learn your lines and don't knock over the furniture.”

- Noel Coward

Write in with your favourite theatrical quote to [newsletter@newventure.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@newventure.org.uk)

Moliere's seventeenth century comedy 'The Miser' isn't really funny. It is a farce, a theatrical genre invented by the French, which depends upon bizarre situations, convoluted plots and slightly cartoon characters who are usually propelled by panic around the stage at madcap speed. The American dramatist Freyda Thomas adapted 'The Miser' for contemporary theatre about twenty five years ago and it is this version which The New Venture Theatre produced in October, 2015. Despite the title, it is not a morality tale of redemption: the miser almost certainly remains one. 'Carry On Cash' would be a better indication of the fun to come.

Moliere's original play was reportedly fortunate in an excellent cast, something crucial to the success of this piece. The New Venture company proved more than equal, roaring around a small set whilst interacting with the audience and winning laughs from exaggerated accents, strange costumes or chorus-chanting particular lines. They never put a foot wrong - and there are a lot of feet involved. Everything was overdone to a degree short of madness, everyone was in technicolour 3D, every line was punched with physical energy into the air. Des Potton was simply superb as the appalling Harpagon, stern and unsmiling in his obsession with filthy lucre. No familial emotion clouded his determination to scrimp and save and shout loudly at anyone who threatened the all-concealing onions. Farce is the French word for stuffing and Moliere's miser is an archtypical French character, even prepared to consider marriage to an old crone with more (fake) money than he has. Harpagon's improbable son, the gloriously tattooed and chained Nik Balfe makes more of his mistress' eyebrow than could possibly be imagined in a riotous recreation of punk rock: all the characters strain credibility to the utmost but Cleante wins the laurels for going the extra, tortured mile. Chelsea Newton Mountney who makes an art form of blasé nonchalance is almost upstaged as Marianne in ripped fishnets but she grabbed the spotlight as pirate mascot - and lost daughter - in the last scenes.

Frank Leon's hilarious moustache quivers and wobbles with indignation as poor Maitre Jaques's talents are wasted on endless vegetable soup - one wonders if Moliere's fantasy chef used an English accent? Eventually few gold coins allow coq au vin and cheese soufflé and then we are in pantomime country as large papier machee pigs

## THE MISER | review

by Molière - adapted by Freyda Thomas | directed by Steven Adams



and headless chickens decorate the stage and the finally well-fed horses neigh loudly off it.

Kirily Long could make the telephone directory sound comical. A genuine comedienne, she brought new entertainment and some highly physical skills to her role as La Fleche and an oddly Teutonic Marriage Contract Lawyer with a recalcitrant hairstyle. Nicholas Farr and Kitty Fox Davis made traditional lovers with panache and style: we don't believe that Valere is Buttons for a moment, but we're





not sure about his pedigree until Gerry McCrudden swishes in as a gloriously ridiculous Spanish Grandee with a very hhSpanish hhaspiration. If the costumes had indicated 17th century punk up to that moment, Senior Anselme bucked the trend in truly theatrical flamenco rouge et noir.

Frosine felt very genuinely tout a fait Francaise, thanks to the skill of Amanda Harman, but perhaps the roles of both marriage broker and wealthy thrice-widowed woman are particularly French. She was genuinely funny as a bewigged coquette with a long nose, forever poking itself into other people's business. Someone had to play straight man, and James Macauley had two of them, although 'straight' is a relative concept in French farce. Furiously unpaid lawyers and idiotic policemen may be stock commedia dell'arte characters but James overdid them to great effect.

Steven Adams directed all the fun and games and a wonderful job he made of it.

**Louise Schweitzer**



1. Nick Farr & Kitty Fox Davies
2. Franks Leon & Kirrily Long
3. Chelsea Mountney Newton, Nick Farr, Des Potton (at back) Kitty Fox Davies & Amanda Harman
4. Nik Balfe & Kirrily Long

*Photos by Romain Ley*



## WHO'S THE NEXT BANKSY?

Not to be outdone by the refurbishment of the South Hall, the NVT garden has had a make-over too! New plants, shrubs and bulbs have been planted and there's now colour throughout the garden along with solar lighting. Up-cycled seating is next in the pipeline, plus some quirky 'planters' recently discovered during various clear-outs!

Speaking of pipelines... Perhaps you've noticed that there's one wall that seems to need completing? This wall was once an internal wall of the building in its school days, forming part of the girls' toilets. Rather than smooth it over and lose the history, Gerry McCrudden has provided a marvellous base on which we're hoping someone can elaborate.

So, come on you budding artists – maybe there's another Banksy in the Theatre!

**Chris Stubbs**

Gladrags Community Costume Resource celebrates its 21st Birthday with: **Fast Forward Flashback: a party through the decades from 1921 to 2021!**

Gladrags is a unique charity providing costumes to community groups, schools and health & wellbeing projects at subsidised rates. We further reach disadvantaged communities by providing them with children's dressing-up activities and interactive storytelling, sewing-skills workshops, and reminiscence sessions with older people.

Expect: dress-up corners and pop-up vintage salon; Photobooth and DIY mini silent movies; live music and DJs giving you jazz, swing, jive, soul, motown, disco, house and electronica; party dares, walkabout performance and birthday cakes! Plenty more on offer, and it's all free with your ticket entry. Auction bidding for a fabulous week's Beach Holiday and affordable bar, offering the usual tipples as well as a celebratory 21st Birthday Cocktail.

Huge thanks to the New Venture Theatre Team for hosting this shindig for free and providing a skilled team of volunteers to

## GLADRAGS 21ST!

### The Gladrags Big Birthday Charity Fundraiser

run it with us! The event of the year is coming soon...spread the word and get ready to party!

**Friday 27th November, 7pm - midnight.**  
**Tickets: £10** [www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/205949](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/205949)

*All proceeds to the Gladrags 21-21 programme, providing 21 creative projects and events to communities in deprived areas of Sussex between now and April 2016! For more info, check out [www.gladragscostumes.com/events](http://www.gladragscostumes.com/events)*



## CASTINGS

### A Christmas Carol | by Charles Dickens

Everyone knows Scrooge, right? Tight-fisted, old miser. Bah humbug! Come enjoy this creepy classic, seasonal ghost story retold with energy, music and a sense of fun. Adult members and our youth theatre work as an ensemble to recreate Dickensian London in this timeless tale of redemption and self-realisation.

Scrooge will be played by John Tolputt, supported by a fantastic ensemble cast of the following people and including the youth theatre;  
Chris Dangerfield, Jeremy Crow, Jeff Moody, Robert Purchase, Mark Green, Amy Maynard, Judey Bignell, Heather Andrews, Lisa Cairn, Jake Cargill

### Loot | by Joe Orton

Loot depicts the fortunes of two young criminals, Hal and Dennis. Playing with the conventions of popular farce, Orton creates a nihilistic, dark, chaotic world which attacks the most deep-seated myths of English culture concerning authority, religion and death.

**Cast:**  
Emmie Spencer  
Alistair Lock  
Frank Leon  
Jonny Parlett  
Andy Bell  
Tristan Wolfe



The NVT archiving team still has a small collection of photographs and material which remains unidentified, and we'd love to hear from anyone who recognises any of the productions.

Do you recognise the production below? The set? The actors?

Who do you think they were?

## WHO DO YOU THINK WE WERE?



“History is not what you thought. It is what you can remember” - 1066 and All That

I know some consider Archives as dusty, dry sorts of things. As you might expect I could not disagree more. They provide a fascinating insight to our past – the good, the bad, and the rest – and in assembling and delving into our NVT archives our investigative team have uncovered some lovely wee gems. Wonderful vignettes and stories bubble up from old press cuttings and photographs, and who would have thought that we would discover that Vivien Leigh was an Honorary President and that Constance Cox was a member and directed for us - or that we had staged over 660 productions since 1947.

Recently we found more old press cuttings, and what a find they were! In the Brighton and Hove Herald of 22 November 1947 was the first mention I could find of the NVT. The article stated our objectives and artistic vision:

“New Venture (Theatre Club) whose policy is to give intelligent and imaginative production of new plays and to experiment with all forms of theatrical presentations.”

Objectives that stand the test of time and which I am sure Artistic Director Rod Lewis, and all of us, would support to this day. We have kept faith with down the years.

We also found a press review of ‘Sabrina Fair’ from June 1956, where mention was made of a live parrot as a cast member. One of the Front of House team loaned her live parrot to take part in the play, and as the leading actress made her first entrance the parrot took a bow to great applause, stealing the scene and the show. Talk about upstaging!

Then there was the swastika incident of May 1957. The NVT was staging a play written by a Dutch playwright titled ‘He Sits by the Melting Pot’ about 1930’s Nazi Germany, and the publicity officer thought it would be a good idea to fly the Swastika flag above the theatre for the opening night. It nearly caused a riot and a fracas in the street! Members of the public were not amused, but it certainly attracted a lot of press coverage. The offending emblem was swiftly hauled down from the mast. In the same production there was a desk lamp used as part of the set, originally owned by Hermann Goering

and liberated from his desk by a NVT member who was a soldier and thence a member of the stage crew.

Len Holloway, who was a member at the time, remembers that the parrot was a great hit. It belonged to Mrs. Knight, mother of Howard Knight - and it was he who thought of flying the Swastika from the theatre flagpole. Len also told me he remembers Delia Cholerton riding through Brighton on horseback, in armour, for publicity when the theatre staged ‘She Passed Through Lorraine’.

We have now processed all the archive material that we have been able to gather, and we will continue to try to fill the remaining gaps in the record. There are still some photos to be identified! We are also planning to put the list of productions on our website, and in future to digitize the whole archive.

So the next time you are in the South Hall bar have a look at our archive folders and photographs.

**Gerry McCrudden**

# NVT ACTING CLASSES

**Mondays 7:30 - 9:30 PM**

Please arrive in good time to begin promptly at 7:30 PM

**COST: £5 (NVT members £2.50)**

In these drop in sessions you will be working with various teachers and cover acting techniques as well as theatre skills. We will be looking at audition techniques, working with text, movement, comedy and stage presence amongst other themes. The classes are mixed levels and open to anyone 18+, no previous experience needed. Attending the acting class is the best way to get involved with what we do and find out about auditions and productions. We encourage all our members as well as those who want to get involved in the theatre in anyway to come along.

To find out more, come along to a class or to request more information about a particular block of sessions, have a look at our website at [www.newventure.org.uk](http://www.newventure.org.uk), where you can sign up to our mailing list, or email: [actingclass@newventure.org.uk](mailto:actingclass@newventure.org.uk).

# CELLIST WANTED

Newventure is staging the Arthur Miller play 'Broken Glass' for the Brighton Festival in May (12th - 21st), and we are looking for a talented cellist who will play on stage between scenes.

Audition dates are 2, 3 & 5 January, and recalls on 9 January. Look out for the audition notice in the next newsletter and on the website in late November.

For more information please contact Jerry or Uli.

**Jerry:** [jerry.lyne@btinternet.com](mailto:jerry.lyne@btinternet.com) or 07762916888 / 01273 446574

**Uli:** [Ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk](mailto:Ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk)

# 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
<p><b>'Reasons To Be Pretty' by Neil LaBute</b> 13 - 21 November <i>Studio</i></p>				
<p><b>'A Christmas Carol'</b> 4 - 12 December <i>*Theatre Upstairs</i> Matinee performances on 4, 5 &amp; 12 Dec at 2.30pm All evening performances start at 7.30pm</p>				
<p><b>'Loot' by Joe Orton</b> 15 - 23 January <i>Studio</i></p>				

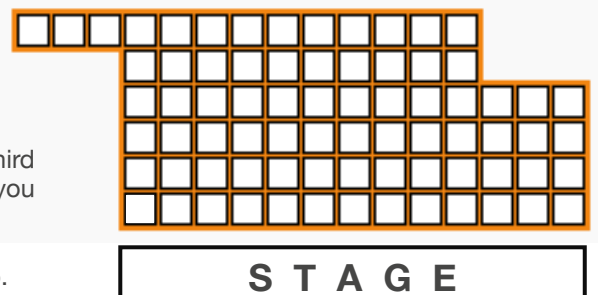
**It is important you provide your name, phone number and address, and email address where possible**

## \*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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@nvt\_brighton

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Secretary	Jerry Lyne
Artistic Director	Rod Lewis
Treasurer	Iain Hay & Joanna Wolowicz
Production Coordinator	<b>Vacant</b>
Technical Coordinator	<b>Vacant</b>
Buildings Manager	Mike Stubbs
Fundraising	Mary Allen
Marketing & Publicity	<b>Vacant</b>
Volunteer Coordinator	Ulrike Schilling
Front of House	Jezz Bowden
Box Office	<b>Vacant</b>
Newsletter Editor	Natasha Borg
Membership Secretary	Anne Gilson
LTG Rep	Pat Boxall
Social Events Manager	Scott Roberts
Youth Theatre Coordinator	Sarah Davies
Angels Coordinator	Gerry McCrudden
Acting Class Coordinator	Ulrike Schilling

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## OUR ANGELS

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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