

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | REASONS TO BE PRETTY by Neil LaBute | directed by Tim McQuillen-Wright | 13 - 21 November

THE MISER

by Molière - adapted by Freyda Thomas | directed by Steven Adams | 2 - 10 October



Des Potton

Photo by Romain Ley

The Miser' has been a favourite play of mine for many years - indeed I was in it nearly 20 years ago. When it was chosen for production I knew immediately that I wanted to set it in the studio theatre, with the audience as close to the action as possible. The style of the play is very broad farcical comedy and many of the lines are

directed at the audience as "asides". With this version we are trying to involve the audience in the action as much as possible and I hope they feel like they are taking part in the play rather than just watching it!

The setting of the play has caused a challenge - how do you do the 17th century on a budget with eleven characters to dress and style? The answer developed over the initial discussions that were held about the play. The word 'punk' kept coming up and I suddenly thought why not just do 'Punk'. So we are staging the play still in the 17th century but a 17th century that looks like 1977! The idea is that in this alternative timeline punk was the fashion in 1677, and was completely mainstream, so everyone dresses as punk. It's really no more extreme than real 1677 fashion, especially the wigs.

The characters are all very extreme in their nature and so we will be playing the piece in a very "heightened" manner, that will reflect the original 'commedia dell'arte' origins behind the piece. To fit in with the size of the performances the props, lighting and sound effects will also be larger than life.

I was delighted by the huge amount of talent that came to the audition and from which I was able to select an excellent cast. The cast includes New Venture Theatre "old" hands Frank Leon, Amanda Harman, Kirrily Long, James Macauley, Chelsea Mountney Newton and Gerry McCrudden. Along with some new faces in Nicholas Farr, Kitty Fox Davies and Nik Balfe. And as the Miser himself we were lucky to cast the very talented Des Potton, last seen at NVT in 'The End of The Beginning'.

I'm also blessed with a great backstage team lead by Annique Tate as Production Manager, who is guiding me through my first production at NVT. I've set the design and production team a very big challenge to realise this play in grand style but I'm sure they will all rise to the task!

This is a great fun play - definitely not to be taken seriously - and I hope you enjoy it as much as we are enjoying rehearsing it.

Steven Adams

NEW FACE FOR NEW VENTURE

This summer we've been busy spending about £30,000 on various building projects, including the £15,000 grant from Pebble Trust.

These projects have included substantial repairs to the roof and walls, redecorations of the outside walls, the South Hall and foyer, back corridors and toilets, and refurbishment of the kitchen, green room and garden and external walls. A new floor cloth has been laid in the studio and painted by a further group of volunteers despite a flood at a crucial moment.

The corridors, toilets and garden

project was driven by Gerry McCrudden supported by Chrissie Stubbs, both of whom put in weeks of hard work, with help from a number of volunteers. This saved NVT a substantial sum of money and has produced a splendid result.

These projects should be completed within two or three weeks from now with the exception of the South Hall where we have plans for improved lighting, wall paintings, mirrors and furniture. Because of our limited budgets we thought we'd ask for your help with providing some of these items. If you think you have something that might be suitable please let me or Xeli have a

photograph so we can see if we can use it. We're looking for period items with a hint of theatre about them.

A big thank you is due to the many volunteers who have helped achieve all this in two short months and to our contractors led by Simon Randall for their skills and help in all sorts of ways.

Mike Stubbs

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 17 October 2015

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 17 October starting at 7:30pm (doors and bar open from 7pm). This is your chance, as a member, to find out how the theatre is doing and shape the plans for the future.

At this meeting the committee for the next year will be elected, as well as the many non-committee roles. Should you wish to stand for any of these roles please complete and return one of the nomination forms, which have been sent out with this newsletter, to the Secretary by 10 October.

Some of the existing committee and role holders will be standing for re-election, this does not and should not preclude anyone who wish to stand for a role doing so. At this AGM there will be a number of roles that will become vacant, as the existing holder will not be standing for re-election. These role include:

Box Office Manager
Buildings Manager
Technical Coordinator
Productions Coordinator

See the nominations forms for details of the roles.

Also sent out with this newsletter is a copy of the draft AGM agenda. If you have an item to add to this agenda please ensure it is sent to the Secretary in writing by 26 September at the latest. If any items are received an updated agenda will be sent out to members, otherwise the draft Agenda will stand.

Ian Black

NVTYT

NVT'S Youth theatre in the autumn term will be focusing on the work in preparation and rehearsal of our first integrated adult and youth performance for a while at the NVT - 'A Christmas Carol'. No new members will be admitted during this period. If you're interested in seeing the type of work we do, then come along and see the show 4th-12th December.

The group will be open to new members again from January 2016.

Please send any enquiries to youththeatre@newventure.org.uk

QUOTE CORNER

'Theatre insists on the present tense - there's a sense of occasion and of being part of a community in any theatre performance. We go into a theatre as individuals and we emerge as an audience.'

- Richard Eyre

Write in with your favourite theatrical quote to newsletter@newventure.org.uk

What kind of drama can you make in 10 minutes? It's not much longer than a news bulletin or a queue for a beer. But the answer from these eight short new plays seems to be 'quite a lot.' Take a minimal stage, set up two or three characters, light the blue touch paper, and towards the end explode a reversal to our expectations.

That makes it sound too easy. All these plays had a gem of an idea at their centre. Take the fairy who turns up a like a door-to-door saleswoman doing badly on her performance related pay ('The Gift' by Lorraine Forrest-Turner). She's trying to convince a man to go for eternal youth – but will he, won't he? Sit alongside the couple on the Costa del Whatever with one half inseparably Facebooked to home ('Wish You Were Here' by Jonathon Skinner). Or consider the prison visit by the mother to forgive the killer of her son ('Comfortable' by Edwin Preece). The intention was sometimes comedic, sometimes tragic.

The key to making this work was for the characters to be almost instantly believable so that we moved swiftly into the plot. All credit to the actors too that this was nearly always achieved. But did the appearance of a full size fairy at the kitchen table demand a minute more of initial surprise from our hapless 40's something man? Probably, but despite this, its curious dangling of a Faustian-style pact was enough to keep us intrigued until the bitter sweet end. Elsewhere the curious world of 'The Garden of Earthly Delights' by Guy Wah brought in an acutely observed urban witch to tease our senses – could the train journey of one more couple to London possibly overfill the city leading to cataclysm? Just like the lead man, I was spooked enough to believe it was possible. Yet, the twist at the end left me with the feeling that I had missed something in the story. Would Tarquin's stereotypical chat up boasts really tempt Jennifer to go back to his place ('Chance Encounter' by Dorothy Lambert)? Well, yes, at the end I could go along with the inescapable romantic logic. Of course, the self-referential theatre review ('Finn and Tilley' by Eamonn Dolan) – where we as audience become part of the play – pokes a useful finger at the artifice we're all colluding in.

So, despite the micro-portions, there was always delight. But sometimes there was more. There was the parallel tragedy of lost love in distant places across a split stage: can forgiveness

10 MINUTE PLAYS | review

8 Plays, 8 Directors, 8 Performances | review by Mike Aiken





save? The script of 'Tainted Love' by Mary E. Davis demanded actors going to the edge. Emma Atakpa's cry, Sam Cartwright's howl – that reached beyond the intellect. I didn't touch my beer once. There was the political that's just behind the daily news in 'Crumbs' by William Patterson. You agree to sell your kidney to save your destitute mate's life - and find it's not going to be worth a stone. That's what its come to.

I didn't blink once.

These eight plays were selected from 180 entered into a competition run by NVT and Sussex Playwrights, with many new directors helping to realise the action.



1. The Garden of Earthly Delights by Stephen Connolly
Arwen Matthews, Rachael Sparkes, Simon Taylor

2. Wish You Were Here? by Jonathan Skinner
Lucy Mepsted, Tom Bonam

3. The Gift by Lorraine Forrest-Turner
Margarita Steinberg, Adam Kincaid

4. Tainted Love by Mary.E.Davis
Emma Atakpa, Sam Cartwright

Photos by Strat Mastoris

CASTINGS

The Miser | by Molière - adapted by Freyda Thomas

Elderly Harpagon obsesses over the feeling that he never has enough money, and unfortunately his obsession wreaks havoc on all around him. This includes his two children, Elise and Cleante, who are passionately in love with a valet and the girl next door, respectively. While Harpagon's arranged them to be married to absurdly mismatched types, the two smart children, with the help of some wily servants, plot against their frugal father.

A modern, fast-paced and larger than life adaptation of Molière's archetypal French farce which was first performed in 1688.

Harpagon
Cléante
Élise
Valère
La Flèche
Maitre Jacques
Senor Anselme
Marianne
Maitre Simon/
Inspector Sansclou
Frosine

Des Potton
Nik Balfe
Kitty Fox Davies
Nick Farr
Kirri Long
Frank Leon
Gerry McCrudden
Chelsea Mountney Newton

Carrie Lambe
Amanda Harman

NVT ACTING CLASSES

7 September

Ulrike Schilling
Introduction to the season

In this class we will be looking at the first plays of the season and explore various styles of theatre and acting.

Please wear comfortable clothes.

No previous knowledge required.

Ulrike has been part of NVT for 9 years and worked on many shows in various roles, including devising, directing and performing.

14 & 21 September

Claire Lewis and Graham Brown
Physical Theatre

For this pair of workshops we will explore enhancing text/character with movement.

Actors will gain practical tools and innovative ideas to create dynamic visual theatre. Participants will develop the ability to imaginatively use their physicality to communicate meaning to an audience.

We aim to promote physical confidence in a fun, safe and energetic environment.

Graham Brown - Graham graduated from Laban Contemporary Dance College in 1985 and joined The National Dance Company of Wales. He toured nationally and internationally with them for a number of years teaching and performing.

Since moving to Brighton, Graham has been busy choreographing and performing with many theatre companies and youth groups.

Claire Lewis - Claire is an experienced Drama Teacher and directs theatre locally, most recently Jez Butterworth's Parlour Song for NVT, Brighton Fringe 2015.

28 September, 5, 12 & 19 October

Sam Chittenden
Acting Inside Out

This four week course will explore different approaches & tactics to discovering & drawing the audience's attention to the heart of a character or story.

Focusing on emotional intelligence rather than 'technique' it will draw on the approaches developed by Dan Fauci (founder of the Actors' Institute in New York, & creator of The Mastery of Self Expression workshops) & other naturalistic acting styles (such as used by Declan Donnellan & Sanford Meisner), along with storytelling & stagecraft techniques such as mask & archetype.

Over the course we will cover the following themes:

Keeping It Simple:

- Finding out what happens when we trust our instincts, stop trying & start playing
- Using nonsense, gibberish & killer lines

Digging for Gold:

- Using a range of techniques to find the essence of a character
- Using the text as a treasure map; looking for clues

Spinning Tales:

- Stagecraft shorthand - telling stories & characters using archetypes, gestures & masks
- Developing subtlety & vulnerability - layering story and character

Projection and Presence:

- Drawing attention & pulling focus
- Showing up - developing emotional courage & creating real connection with an audience & fellow actors

Sam Chittenden is an actor/director & coach, & runs the creative company Different Development, based in Brighton. She is an accredited leader of The Mastery of Self Expression workshop (www.brighton-mastery.co.uk), & has also trained with Trestle theatre company, Keith Johnstone and Steve Jarand. She is scared of heights, spiral staircases and not knowing what to say, yet has done a parachute jump, an abseil and long-form theatre improv. She believes we learn most on the edge of our comfort zones.

CASTINGS

Reasons To Be Pretty | by Neil LaBute

“A hopelessly romantic drama about the hopelessness of romance”

Reasons To Be Pretty is a love story for the rest of us. It is a play for every guy who has ever said the wrong thing without knowing it and for every girl who has ever made sure he won't forget. It is a comedy of how difficult being in love can truly be.

**Steph
Greg
Kent
Carly**

**Pamela Sian Evans
Fintan Shevlin
Scott Roberts
Jen Bridges**

If you came along to a show at NVT last season, you may have taken the opportunity to look through some of the archive folders in the South Hall - a fantastic record of the NVT's 70 years.

Last season we showcased some archive material in our newsletter as a regular feature - and this season we're asking for your help! There is still a

WHO DO YOU THINK THEY WERE?

small collection of photographs and material which remains unidentified, and so we'd love to hear from anyone who recognises any of the productions.

Below are a couple of fabulous set designs, do you remember the plays?

The actors? Who do you think they were?

Write to gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com





FOLK AND FAIRY TALES

A night of live short fiction

NVT presents an evening of new short fiction on the theme of Folk and Fairy Tales. Eight short stories, selected from NVT's short story competition, will be read by actors for your entertainment. The evening includes a traditional story-telling experience from Harriet Wakefield.

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
'The Miser' by Molière 2 - 10 October <i>Studio</i>				
Reasons To Be Pretty 13 - 21 November <i>Studio</i>				
A Christmas Carol 4 - 12 December <i>*Theatre Upstairs</i>				

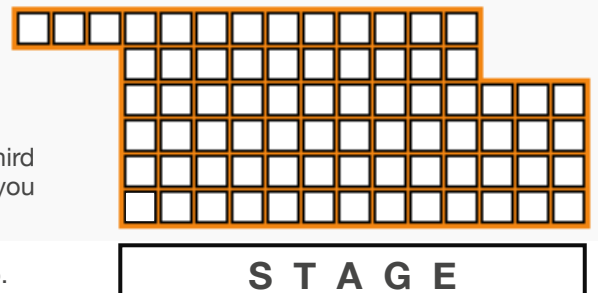
It is important you provide your name, phone number and address, and email address where possible

*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.



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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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