

# NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | BLOOD WEDDING by Federico Lorca | directed by Chris Dangerfield | 17 - 25 February

## THE HOMECOMING

by Harold Pinter | directed by Steven O'Shea | 20 - 28 January



Back row left to right, Scott Roberts, James Macauley, Bridgett Ane Lawrence, Chris Knight. Front row John Tulputt & Culann Smyth.

Photo by Dan Walker

*“There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false.” - Harold Pinter*

Eight years after his death, Harold Pinter remains arguably the most significant and influential British playwright of the post-war era. The Homecoming represents one of the high points of Pinter's creative output and ranks in the forefront of the body of work that continues to sustain his immense reputation. Challenging, disturbing, tantalisingly enigmatic and savagely funny, it represents the playwright at the height of his powers.

However, as so often with Pinter's work, one finds that defining what the piece is essentially about, is very much a matter of subjective conjecture. Particularly as the characters themselves struggle with the instability of their notions of the past and the difficulty of being able to verify where reality ends and dreams begin. The plot itself is straightforward enough. Having lived in the United States for several years, Teddy, a professor of philosophy, brings his wife Ruth back to meet his family at their home in North London. As the drama unfolds

Pinter examines the naked violence of the family's inter-relationships with a ruthless objectivity, devoid of any moral agenda.

Within this crackling hotbed of visceral tension, exchanges seemingly polite and genuine are in fact malicious and destructive in nature. Language is utilised and deployed as a weapon to control, dominate or humiliate. In the character of Ruth, Pinter portrays a woman able to remain elusively dominant by reflecting and subverting what is projected on her by the male characters of the play, providing an illustration of how femininity is so often defined by men to satisfy their desires or insecurities. As she increasingly becomes the central figure of the action, the play explores themes of manipulation, emotional impotence, Oedipal desires, personal loneliness, seduction and jealousy as the characters engage in their chosen form of psychological warfare with Ruth as the focus of the family's struggle for supremacy.

The play remains a modern classic and a landmark in twentieth century British drama.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my exceptional cast including NVT stalwarts James Macauley, Scott Roberts, Culann Smyth, John Tulputt and NVT debutantes Bridgett Ane Lawrence and Chris Knight, along with the entire crew and all the administrative staff at the NVT for their invaluable work and support throughout this production.

**Steven O'Shea**

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

## From the Artistic Director

Our current season got off to a flying start with Tom Basden's dark comedy 'Holes', Sarah Ruhl's extraordinarily original 'The Clean House', and Phil Willmott's 'Dick Barton and the Tango of Terror!' - a robust, ironic mix of ribald humour, fine music, cheeky/chirpy song and stylish dance. None of these three dramatists could exactly be called household names yet all their plays proved to be hugely successful for us, not only in box office terms but also in creative challenges being met and new horizons explored. 2016 was then nicely rounded off by the 'Fannytasticals' (with their players strangely familiar to many of us!) zooming in with their sparky and fearless show for a sell out two night stand. Finally, we saw out the old year with a warm hearted celebration - including special one off performances which brought much merriment - for our very well attended New Year's Eve party. A very big thank you to everyone at NVT, in all fields, whose talents and hard work during 2016 made all this possible.

The new year brings us to the beginning of the middle part of our season. In keeping with our policy of trying to offer as wide a range of theatre experience as we can for our audiences, and our participants, our next four productions

turn to having a fresh look at some of the finest work of better known, arguably modern classic, playwrights.

Late January starts with the vigorous humour and ferocity of Pinter's 'The Homecoming'; in February we have the sheer beauty of Lorca's poetic tragedy, 'Blood Wedding' (adapted by Ted Hughes); in March the insightful humanity and immense compassion of Rattigan's 'The Deep Blue Sea'; and in April a double bill of two One Act plays - probing the depths with Eugene O'Neill's 'Hughie' and then flying high on the brilliance of Stoppard's 'The Real Inspector Hound'.

Watch out too, at the end of March, for our very talented Youth Theatre's experimental production - working title 'Back to Back' - that promises to be highly original! Plenty of exciting drama to come to then and, if you don't want to miss any of it, remember to book early!

The larger landscape; with all the happenings in the world during 2016 many of us might greet 2017, and the future, with some trepidation, even a feeling of foreboding or perhaps, just a sharpened sense of uncertainty. Naturally, how this is dealt with is down to every individual in their own way. I find it does no harm to sometimes reflect on things a bit closer to home, things we're lucky enough to enjoy; the fine theatre building we have; to respect the work that we all try to do within it - and to appreciate and value everybody that helps make New Venture a rather special place.

Wishing you all a happy, and brave, 2017!

**Rod Lewis**



# DRAMA AWARDS 2016

## Awarded by Brighton & Hove Arts Council

The annual Brighton & Hove Arts Council Drama Awards evening took place on December 6th and the adjudicator this year, Trevor Jones, announced the fifteen award winners from the six local dramatic groups who took part this autumn.

Congratulations to the team behind NVT's production of 'The Clean House' who won Best Actress - Kerri Frost - and Best Backstage Team!

The production was also nominated for:  
Best Actress - Say Alvarez  
Best Set Design - Adam Kincaid  
Best Costume - Mark Green, Jackie Jones and Freia Metzger  
Best Lighting Design - Strat Mastoris  
And 'The Clean House' itself was also nominated for the Arthur Churchill Award for Excellence.

And a well done to our chairman Ian Black who was awarded Best Sound Design on behalf of Lancing Repertory Players' production, 'Bouncers'!



Gerry McCrudden troubles the world with this unveiling of plots against it. Happily 'Dick Barton and the Tango of Terror' lends some respite, though Phil Willmott's vivid witty text is merely the third of a series of homages he made around 2001. It specialises in cliff-hangers even at the end of a narrative. Steve Hoar's musical direction is crucial, Simon Glazier's shrewd recreation of a 1951 BBC studio including parqué floor in puce and peppermint is beautifully organised and meticulously sourced with old broadcasting bric-a-brac, down to the costumes of Mark Green and Jackie Jones. Strat Mastoris lights in neat period fashion.

Lovingly guyed, the constant undercutting of narrative with radio asides, intrigues and studio spats, square-jawed Dick Barton has to surmount not only EFIL (Evil Foreigners in London) but radio convention teetering to obligatory BBC disaster. Jack Edison makes a superb crack of this with rapid RP delivery, sings well and blasts a trumpet at least lustily. For that's the point; it seems the Light Programme has strayed wowing in from another frequency and this is a crazily-paved musical of sorts.

Not only that, of his working-class deferential sidekicks Snowy's actor has reverted to Soho gutters, and an actress Kirrily Long is brought in giving a spirited exhibition of sidekick shyness. Even more of a shock there's a lady announcer Genevieve (Lex Lake) who in one highlight dances with Edison's Barton despite his anxiety to pursue criminals, because there's a dead-air spot she won't let him leave her to. David Eaton as announcer and Alistair Lock Producer enjoys a flustered sexist continuity; they look horribly plausible.

So does Mark Green, here a poker-stiff Colonel Gardener in several senses, hapless MI5 spymaster who can't keep a briefcase or it seems a guardsman let alone what he does with Brussel sprouts.

Juan el Bigglesworth (Tom Slater's excellent here, in two accents and at least two chips balancing his sultry foreign shoulders), whose father's one great organ tune was stolen, has sworn revenge in guise of a tango master, seducing girls and their jewels. No-one's safe, not even Barton's housekeeper Mrs Horrocks (a fine turn by Kate McGann, you'll never eat crumpets the same way again). He's also pursuing all British agents and

## DICK BARTON AND THE TANGO OF TERROR

by Phil Willmott | directed by Gerry McCrudden | review



Rodger and Wilco (a charming camp double act Alex Williams and Matt Mulvay) are in mortal danger in Rio, but have they chanced on Mrs Horrocks' sister and her daughters?

When Robert Purchase enacts Jock the other sidekick you begin to tremble.

His hapless love for Daphne (pert but oh-so-helpless Emmie Spencer), threatened by Juan draws him into a series of gaffes, though he's not like Snowy prone to giving Barton's address so a bomb can be deposited, activated when Juan's father's organ piece is played over the airwaves.





Purchase though plays violin to augment the band Steve Hoar directs from the piano, with Sarah Elliot clarinet and sax, and Adam Kincaid. This is a wonderfully turned set of musical treats, jazzing Mozart's 'Queen of the Night' aria so Kirrily Long actually nails those dotted rhythms, to parts of Carmen to other popular period hits, where Fintan Shevlin's choreography makes maximum use of studio space. Sheelagh Baker's the sister of McGann whose daughters Laura Fosner and Jo Jameson make a stab at chortling and tangoing (Jameson's moment): they're all plotting to find the girls husbands.

How this all resolves, or not, who the Wireless Foley team are (Andy Osborn and Igor Goran Macukat jump up with props) how briefcases Brussel sprouts and Daphne's true passion works out you'll have to see for yourself. This is admirable high-quality festive fun; an excellent script well worth reviving and indeed sourcing again for others, a crack creative team particularly the musical numbers, and a cast who for the most part are at home with whiplash RP, particularly Jack Edison who's never tongue-tied once. McCrudden as ever keeps it all miraculously taut though knows just how to allow solos their flourishing, and this was essentially an ensemble – pirouetting with fiendish musical twirls.

**Simon Jenner**



1. David Eaton
2. Igor Goran Macukat, Andy Osbourne, Mark Green, Robert Purchase, Kate McGann, Sheelagh Baker, Laura Fausner, Emmie Spencer, Joanne Jameson, Tom Slater, Matthew Mulvay, Alex Williams & Lex Lake
3. Robert Purchase & Emmie Spencer
4. Jack Edison & Lex Lake
5. Tom Slater

*Photos by Strat Matoris*

# NEW YEAR'S EVE AT NVT

We had a fine turn-out for our New Year's Eve event. As a start, revellers were treated to live music from Steve Hoar and Bertie Purchase, followed by Colin Elmer who gave us Kenneth Williams in Rambling Sid Rumbold mode (accompanied by Laurent Robert on guitar).

Then we had some theatre - two short plays. First, a performance of Harold Pinter's play 'Victoria Station', with Scott Roberts and James Macauley. Then something quite different - Charly Sommers and Bertie Purchase had brilliantly created a bespoke theatre piece for us, hysterically funny, using a minimum of 10 lines from each of nine of the plays performed at NVT this season (no consecutive lines and no line repeated) - quite a feat and one that won't easily be forgotten.

The evening was rounded off with some karaoke, a raffle, and of course Auld Lang Syne at midnight. Thanks to all our helpers and performers for a grand evening - and a Happy New Year to all!

*Tamsin Mastoris*



# CASTINGS

## **The Deep Blue Sea by Terence Rattigan directed by Pat Boxall**

Mrs Elton:	Diane Robinson
Philip Welch:	Jack Lewellyn Roberts
Ann Welch:	Isabella Mccarthy Sommerville
Hester Collyer:	Emmie Spencer
Mr Miller:	Jeremy Crow
William Collyer:	Mark Lester
Freddie Page:	Neil Drew
Jackie Jackson:	Ben Pritchard

## **Hughie by Eugene O'Neill directed by Dan Walker**

The Night Clerk:	Steve Mallen
Erie Smith:	Simon Messingham

# PROPOSALS TO DIRECT

**NVT is still accepting proposals to direct in the 2017/18 season. You can find a 'Proposal To Direct' form on the NVT website.**

**The closing date is Sunday 12 February 2017.**



# CHARITY COLLECTION

## Breast Cancer Care

Congratulations to the cast and crew of NVT's 'The Clean House', who raised £425 for the charity Breast Cancer Care through collections after each of their performances.

Thank you to everyone who donated!

## Brighton Theatre To Close: WHAT NEXT?

We were sad to hear of the impending closure of 88 London Road, formerly known as The Emporium. The disused Methodist Chapel opened as a theatre in the spring of 2013 (it changed its name just before Brighton Festival last year) and could claim to be Brighton's only professional producing theatre.

Meanwhile its cafe has been an important venue for artistic activities, social events and community group meetings. James Weisz has been the Artistic Director and, with Nathan Potter, the co-producer of 88 London Road Productions. We caught up with James to hear what's happened and what comes next after the theatre closes its doors early in 2017.

### Why is No 88 shutting down?

We were given notice from the landlord. We have always, and continue to have, an excellent working relationship with the landlord who has been extremely understanding and accommodating when sometimes lack of revenue meant rent payment was delayed. Managing the constant demands and upkeep of a building such as 88 London Road has taken its toll on income for us, hence the decision to close the café-bar, which wasn't producing the required revenue. We had agreed a plan with the landlord which meant the theatre would have a separate street access and we could continue to bring quality home-grown productions to the city.

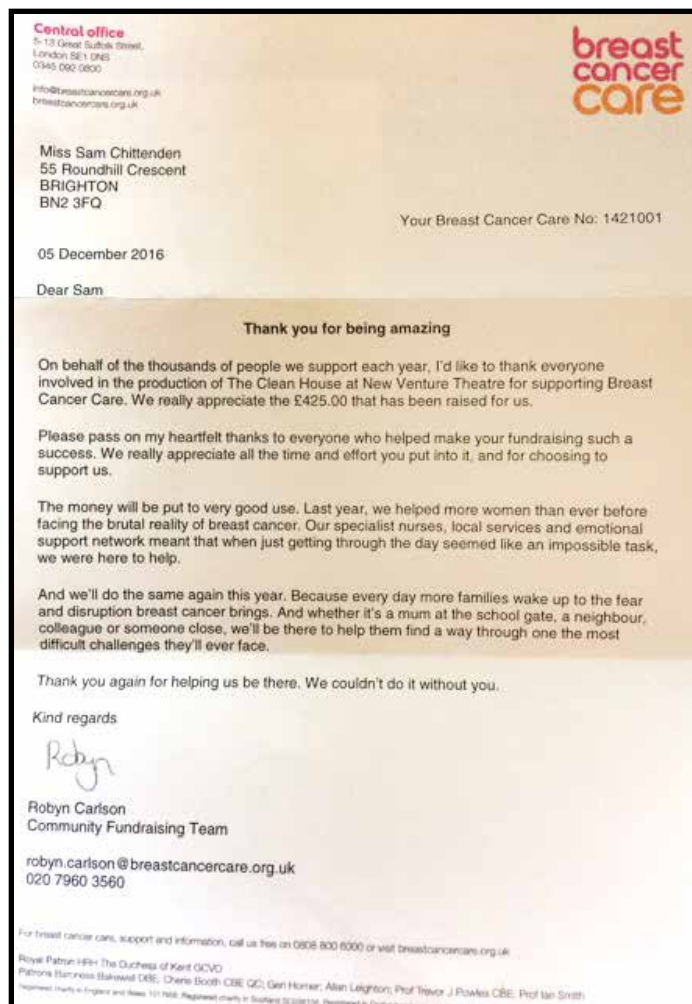
### Are there plans to move the theatre elsewhere?

We are on the search for a new building in which to take up residency and continue our work for the community.

### What will happen to the building?

My understanding is that the landlord will refurbish it and

January 2017



make the building available for new tenants in the coming months.

### What were the biggest challenges in running a theatre and a vibrant social meeting place?

We took a huge satisfaction from the delights of – and feedback from – each production. The challenges were mainly around maintaining the building (heating, lighting and so on) and the café-bar. We put on so many events in the café area, which included the ever-popular Cockney Singalongs, art shows, classes, groups, the Happy Café, all night writing clubs, Saturday evening cabaret shows. But sadly it didn't prove to be enough to keep afloat.

### What do you feel have been the biggest achievements you've made over the last few years?

It was an ambitious project, but I am immensely proud of creating a working theatre that employed so many professional actors in the area. Bringing panto back to Brighton was also a real highlight, and we will continue to produce one each year. Building a core audience who return again and again to our productions is a real achievement and very special.

### What's the message that you and the staff would like to convey to the public at this time?

The outpouring of support locally and nationally has been extremely humbling, and spurs us on. I am determined our productions will continue to go from strength to strength, so watch out for more news on that front.

Interview by Mike Aiken | Reproduced from The Brighton Source | <http://brightonsource.co.uk/news/brighton-theatre-close-next-88-london-road/>

# 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).

# 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
<b>'Homecoming' by Harold Pinter</b> 20-28 January *Theatre Upstairs				
<b>'Blood Wedding' by Federico Lorca</b> 17-25 February Studio				
<b>'The Deep Blue Sea' by Terence Rattigan</b> 17-25 March *Theatre Upstairs				

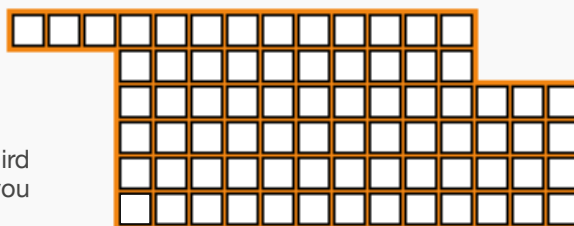
**It is important you provide your name, phone number and address, and email address where possible**

## \*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.



**S T A G E**

# CONTACT US

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Scott Roberts  
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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: [angels@newventure.org.uk](mailto:angels@newventure.org.uk). If you are a UK tax payer your donation will also benefit from Gift Aid.

## THE PEBBLE TRUST

**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](mailto:newsletter@newventure.org.uk) - or by post if you prefer.

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