COMING SOON | PROOF by David Auburn | Directed by Claire Lewis 16 - 24 June

LULUby Frank Wedekind | directed by Scott Roberts | 18-27 May



Lizzie Stanton

Photo by Strat

Mastoris

Wedekind conceived his 'gruesome tragedy' in Paris in 1892. He'd been influenced by the recent murders of 'Jack the Ripper' and his victims who walked the streets. By 1894 he'd temporarily moved to London for 'research' and finished his play, entitled "Pandora's Box: A Monster Tragedy".

The original name is an obvious reference to the Greek story about the large jar (not box) containing all the evils of the world. Once the jar is opened by the curious Pandora - all of the evil spirits fly out and afflict the world, leaving only hope left inside when it's eventually closed again. Basically...

Woman represents temptation. She doesn't consider the consequences that she inflicts on us. Our hope (our salvation), is still trapped in the jar. But it's definitely all her fault. Not ours.

Wedekind's version uses the same starting point with Luludesire. She is both beautiful and enigmatic. Uncontrollable and untrustworthy. But the writer then asks us to consider what it's like to be the object of desire. In the age of Freud, we're asked if she's the product of her environment? Is she a victim or a predator?

I choose to believe she's a survivor.

Her story explores strong themes, even for a modern audience; suicide, child abuse, sexual assault, murder, rape, incest – no publisher would touch it in its day, and eventually Wedekind split it into two and added 'softer scenes' to make it more palatable. Since then many people have attempted their definitive Lulu play. This is ours.

I decided on Lulu, because of the poignancy and relevance of those themes to today's society. Many people still believe if you're a confident, sexual woman then you're a slut. You deserve what you get. I believe Lulu asks us to explore our thoughts on this matter.

The style of our play is 'Epic'. This play is not naturalistic. There is no fourth wall – just a stage and some actors on it. There are points of reference but we're not attempting reality - anything but. We intend to alienate you. When we cry, you're welcome to laugh. We want to be judged, but we're not offering to answer any questions. When you come to watch - as we hope you will - you'll experience a 'New Venture'.

A massive thanks to Freia Metzger for her translation, and our very talented cast and crew.

Scott Roberts





BLOODY LIES/TEEN TWISTER Performed by NVT's Youth Theatre

Congratulations to the NVT Youth Theatre for raising £499.04 for charity!

All proceeds from their recent production 'Bloody Lies'/'Teen Twister' ticket sales will be donated to Mary's Meals.

The NVT Youth team were greatly inspired by the visit late last year by Keith Bartlett from the cast of Shakespeare's Globe world tour of 'Hamlet'. The 'Globe to Globe Hamlet' toured to every country in the world over two years. It was performed in front of President Barack Obama, 200 ambassadors at the United Nations, opened a new Shakespeare theatre in Gdansk Poland, withstood rocket attacks in Kabul, a sandstorm in Jordan and even played the jungle in Calais. As well as stories about this unique world tour Keith also told of his commitment to Mary's Meals, a no-frills charity with a simple idea that works: by providing one good meal in a place of learning, children are drawn into the classroom where they can receive an education that could one day free them from poverty.

It helps to provide a nourishing daily meal in impoverished communities for youngsters attending school in countries not so well off as our own.

The NVYT too wanted to use their creativity to help others, and chose to donate their ticket sales to Mary's Meals.

For more information go to: www.marysmeals.org.uk

1. Hannah Pascoe, Gabriel Phelan & Megan Batchelor 2. Gabriel Phelan & Lillis Franklin-Goddard 3. Harrison Jay Stonebridge, Lily Holliday

Photos by Strat Mastoris

HUGHIE

by Eugene O'Neill | directed by Dan Walker

The first hour of the April double bill in our Studio was for 'Hughie', a two piecer by one of America's greatest playwrights, Eugene O'Neill. Many of the audience, familiar with productions of 'Long's Day's Journey into Night' and 'The Iceman Cometh', were likely to be interested in seeing this one act play written at a similar time in 1941, yet first performed as late as 1959.

A fairly spartan set more than did its job by the production and stage management teams, in conjuring up well a run-of-the-mill, New York hotel foyer, just a notch or two above the status of a flophouse. The centrepiece was the hotel front desk, signifying an ever porous boundary between staff and guest as the play unfolds in the first meeting of the new Desk Man (Steven Mallen) and long-stay guest, Erie Smith (Simon Messingham).

A painting perhaps of pre-Depression times' glamour and merriment in a hotel ballroom or the like was a nice touch glimpsed to the left of the desk, while an arrangement of three, tired and unwelcoming chairs on the far right completed the framing of a small table and chair in stage centre. This is the "ring" around which Erie ponders, pontificates and provokes Charlie Hughes, the hapless Night Clerk, on his fifth day on the job. He is also alarmed by the seething sounds of the night-time city emanating from the other side of the hotel front door which opens once only on Erie's drunken entrance.

Charlie is used to handing out keys to No 492 to the Mr Smiths of many a city 'fleabag' hotel with minimal interruptions to his dreaming and dozing on night shift. Steve Mallen plays the Night Clerk with aplomb, dreaming while barely awake, with his head sliding down his shoulder, arm and to sought serenity on the desk. Only Erie is having none of this. His evenings don't end when falling through the door of the hotel at any hour of the night. He's just getting going, but he can't get a rise out of the new incumbent...

The play really has three characters and a production of 'Hughie' will succeed or fail on how well Erie conjures up the long-standing Night Clerk of this name. We hear from Erie's monologues about 'good old Hughie', dead and lamented, and his wife, 'a bum in spades', punctuated by ill-fared attempts to make the new Clerk his compliant and naïf foil.

Simon Messingham ably tells Erie's back story: 'dragged up' in eponymous Erie, in Pennsylvania; avoiding a shotgun

A DOUBLE BILL OF 1 ACT PLAYS

Review by Jason Lever





wedding with Daisy, being the unlucky winner of paternity lottery out of 'a thousand guys' names [thrown] into a hat'; and whose occupation is 'horse dealing and crap' (gambling) that just about pays the bills at this 'dead dump, homely as a morgue'.

More importantly, he revels in an inebriated

and so less inhibited recollection of Hughie. 'Boy scouts got nothing on me' was Hughie's watchword. Even when Erie kidnapped him to Belmont for a day at the races, he can't bring himself to spend the two bucks purloined from his wife no matter how much he loves the horses and excitement. Back at the hotel, with Erie's companion blondes, Erie beams proudly

that Hughie was 'tickled pink with raw ladies flirting at him'.

This little gem of a short play comes to life as the reality unravels that Erie is failing to convince himself - rather than the barely reactive Night Clerk - that instead of Hughie wanting Erie's glamorous (sic) life, in fact there is some envy the other way around emerging out of Hughie's sudden demise. Sure, Simon Messingham plays well Erie's antipathy that Hughie 'never suspicioned up nothing' when he cheats him with the dices and that he was a 'dumb simple guy'. His 'pal' even 'if he was a 'sucker'. Yet, he hated Hughie's wife for barring him from their crummy home as a bad influence on their 'quiet, well-behaved kids'. Erie 'kind of liked them', but they were hustled up to bed when he starts a story about a horse and is never invited back - hence he spits out that 'when you call her plain, you're giving her all the breaks'.

Simon massages such period quips and expressions well, without making them punch lines. The wisecracks are understated and so did not elicit audience laughter as much a wry chuckling. This played to the growing need for O'Neill to develop Erie's character as a morose reawakening after the funeral that maybe Hughie had it right – a 'sap', sure, but conceding he was lucky in a 'resigned' albeit 'contented' family life and stable job.

We're left unsure how much Erie did really go to town on an amazing flower display for Hughie's funeral cortège (probably too broke but would have liked to), to improve the 'punk's showing' of a few relatives. This is well portrayed as Erie showing vulnerability that no one would be there to do the same for him one day.

The play is well directed by Dan Walker as the two actors make the final turn most adeptly towards Erie not changing his ways ('I ain't slipping... I can still make it') despite having 'cursed bad luck' since Hughie fell ill and Brooklyn hard guys on his tail to call in debts. Self-recognition that he's nearly washed up and bumping along the bottom yields to the "old Erie" when the new Night Clerk takes up Hughie's mantle when believing (or pretending to believe) Erie's exaggerated claims of doing little jobs for the famous Arnold Rothstein and showing interest in a little dice game loaded in Erie's favour.

Echoing "The Game" as the motif of the great HBO TV series, 'The Wire', Erie resignedly but with some relief feels that things are back to normal. 'It's all part of the racket', as Erie says. The Night Clerk can entertain him as his pet dope, playing





along with his lapping up of tall tales of New York gambling life, and is adopted as the new Hughie. The Clerk's role is approbation. Erie's gain is the confidence to be the gambling shark and he's ebullient in adopting / adapting Charlie as his muse-cum-straight man. RIP Hughie, but life moves on and yet doesn't.

Simon Messingham and Steven Mallen play very well two guys not in control of their destinies in the big smoke, one from a small town and the other from the sticks. Despite his great career, culminating artistically in a Nobel Prize for Literature, O'Neill died in Room 401 of a Boston hotel in 1953, whispering his last words: 'I knew it. I knew it. Born in a hotel room and died in a hotel room'.

THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND

by Tom Stoppard | directed by Mary Allen

The second, slightly longer half of the April double bill of one act plays opens with a mystery corpse in attendance on the stage near the audience. This elicited a knowing, 'typical Stoppard!' from one lady returning from the interval.

This review could attempt to delineate the whole plot, but this would neither be easy nor that necessary for appreciating Tom Stoppard's aim of parodying the theatrical review process alongside exposing the diminishing returns of the classic whodunit.

Our wonderfully played pair of critics, Moon (Des Potton) and Birdfoot (Alistair

Lock) spend the first half of the play aloof, superior and more focused on their own tribulations and escapades than the play (barely) unfolding in front of them. Stoppard clearly revelled in formulating their exquisitely delivered lines. When nothing happens at the start of the play, they conjecture that 'surely it's stated that you can't start with a pause' and 'if it goes beyond five seconds it is self-indulgence'.

The critics have an exchange on ludicrous chocolate concoctions on offer ('hickory nut craving' flavour) reminiscent of later Two Ronnies or Rowan Atkinson lists of the verging on the ridiculous, momentarily distracting them and us from picking up on plot line 1. 'Where's Higgs', the number one critic for whom Moon is his paper's stand in, and is Birdfoot overstepping the line with a liaison with the "new on the scene" young actress, Felicity Cunningham (Keziah Israel), whose career he is offering to promote for her attentions.

There is a lovely, parallel soliloquy scene, with Moon obsessing about how hard done by he is by his nemesis Higgs and Birdfoot contemplating the extent he can push his dalliances without coming a cropper with his treasured wife, Myrtle. Des Potton does well with this reviewer's favourite lines of the play, in a dedicatory monologue for all the number twos and second raters in sport and history, culminating in the insurrectionary cry of 'stand ins of the world stand up'!

Deploying some of that laconic and earnest delivery perfected by Bird and Fortune (The Two Johns), Potton and Lock issue delicious lines that will form their play reviews: 'the skeleton in the cupboard is coming home to roost' and describing how Lady Cynthia Muldoon (Teresa Kuna) falls for the young stranger in their midst, Simon Gascoyne (Tom Cunningham) as 'the son she never had, transformed into lover'.

The ostensible main plot lines are who is the dangerous stranger on the loose, what happened to Lord Muldoon, who is the (belatedly discovered) corpse and who shot Simon. But that need not trouble us now. Or indeed at all. The poor corpse (Matthew Jeffrey) has a long exposure in situ until the play's denouement, when frankly the audience has by then lost track of whether he was indeed Lady Muldoon's missing husband or the premier critic Higgs.

Stoppard and the cast have great fun with the country house murder mystery trope. Zoe Edden plays Mrs Drudge sublimely, with the demeanour of Hilda

Ogden cloned with Mrs Overall. Her hilarious lines signal the ensuing send up of the country house play. 'This is all very mysterious and I'm sure it's leading up to something'. The enveloping fog is evoked in a menacingly expressed aeroplane motion. It made one wonder whether the late, great Victoria Wood derived some inspiration for Julie Walters' 'Acorn Antiques' creation from this play as well as by 'Crossroads'. The stranger / new neighbour to Muldoon Manor, Simon, who is to the delectation of both Felicity and Cynthia, confirms to the audience that this is indeed 'a strangely inaccessible house'. How helpful. He has a lovely scene with Felicity, played as an innocent tennis playing girl, who when the love triangle is exposed bewails him as 'you philandering coward' before running out distraught. Set over.

The parodic repetition of 'I'll kill anyone who comes between us' by first Simon (about Cynthia), then Cynthia's brother, Magnus (Culann Smyth) (about Cynthia) and finally Cynthia (about Simon) conveniently leaves a later clue for the murderer's motivation. This presages some farce as the wheelchair propelled Magnus runs down Simon, and their absurdist exchange: 'how long have you been a pedestrian', 'every since I could walk'. This is soon followed by wordplay as Cynthia, Felicity, Magnus and Simon make up a four for bridge and the actors savour the increasingly painful card puns and metaphors for the love triangle, or should that be quadrilateral. Confused, you should be....

The direction by Mary Allen is deft throughout to deliver all the genres Stoppard packs into just over an hour of 'The Real Inspector Hound'. A variety of props are supplied by the backstage team, central to which are the radio and telephone on and by the mantelpiece and below the inevitable mounted stag head. We have several iterations of the warning of a dangerous stranger on the loose from police bulletins on the wireless ('Don't be a mad man, give yourself up...'), followed up by several nonsensical phone calls.

Before the elision of critics and actors, and parallel plot lines, in the final scenes, a key entrance is that of Inspector Hound (Adam Kincaird), who may or may not be real. Playing a role reaching back to JB Priestley's calling inspector, Hound toys with the assembled household, until stumbling across the patient corpse. Loot's Truscott of the Yard (performed last year at the NVT) came to mind as Hound, struggling to maintain control of the situation, says 'I'll phone the police', with the retort, 'You are the police' introducing a Pythonesque aspect. This

comes to the fore when Birdfoot, fed up with no one answering it, enters the play and picks up the ringing phone only to find that it's his suspicious wife ('Myrtle, don't call me at work'). Moon follows and becomes a police inspector by default as the last man standing. Are you following?

A very well practised and drilled final ten minutes of the play requires the Higgs disappearance and playing out of the affair, and who was behind the country house murderer(s), to intersect. The cast excellently reprise the earlier scenes with the new protagonists, such as Birdfoot stepping into Gascoyne's shoes as the cad getting to enjoy the full force of Lady Muldoon's passionate kiss and having to let down poor Felicity jilted a second time owing to Myrtle being on the warpath.

At some point, Simon is shot to make two corpses. Moon nearly is killed too as the scene is reprised, but stays alive conveniently to see the unmasking of Inspector Hound as the killer of the first corpse (who turns out to be Higgs) by a chap I didn't quite catch the name of who is the third string critic and will stoop to two potential murders to make the number reviewer spot. A red herring of (the real?) McCoy from Canada features somewhere. You get the drift.

Stoppard relishes in the merciless sending up of the pompous and superfluous role of the critic, as well as the contribution of the dull, self-perpetuating whodunit stultifying the British theatre. This nine hander by a strong NVT company assembled by Mary Allen did Sir Tom proud. It was an engaging production that pirouetted between the footlights and the fourth estate, highlighting that both somehow need and nurture each other in a symbiosis that echoed the mutual interdependence of sap and chancer alike in its companion piece, 'Hughie'.

1&2. Steven Mallen & Simon Messingham

3. Culann Smythe, Zoe Edden, Des Patton, Alistair Lock, Adam Kincaid, Teresa Kuna & Keziah Israel

4. Des Potton, Alistair Lock, Tom Cunningham & Matthew Jeffrey

Photos by Dan Walker





NVT STREET SIGNS

Not is celebrating the return of its brown tourist street signs! We are now clearly signposted both on Western Road, and on the seafront.

The signs will help to raise awareness of our presence and increase footfall – as our building is quite hard to spot tucked away on Bedford Place.

Many thanks to Gerry McCrudden, who worked with the council to reinstate the signs as part of his preparations for our upcoming 70th Anniversary celebrations.

FROM THE MEDIA...

Half of teenagers 'never been in a theatre'

Almost half of teenagers coming to annual free Shakespeare performances for schools have never been inside a theatre before, research suggests.

More than 150,000 teenagers have been brought to Shakespeare's Globe in London over the past decade. But a study of the audience shows that for many of these youngsters this will be their first sight of a live play. The Social Mobility Commission heard warnings last week of "entrenched" inequalities in opportunities. There have also been warnings of social "segregation" in schools - with youngsters living close together but having very different experiences.

"We hear from teachers that some London school students who come to the Globe, living only two or three miles away, have never seen the Thames before," said Georghia Ellinas, head of learning at Globe Education. "While some families take going to the theatre for granted, there are a great many who never go and their children don't even see inside a theatre, let alone a production."

Despite most of these teenagers living in London, a survey of the audiences for school performances showed that 44% had never been to a theatre before. Last week, Education Secretary Justine Greening highlighted that social mobility remained a "really hard long slog" - and how some youngsters were cut off from opportunities to widen their horizons. The

annual Playing Shakespeare project gives free tickets to state secondary school pupils for plays at the reconstructed Elizabethan theatre on Bankside - with 20,000 teenagers this year seeing 'The Taming of the Shrew.'

The audience survey suggests the gulf in cultural experiences. For some teenagers this encounter with Shakespeare was nothing unusual - with more than a quarter already having been to see other Shakespeare plays and just over half having been to a theatre before. But for 44% this was their only experience of seeing a play on stage - and their teachers talked about how such trips could overturn expectations. Danielle Bumford, head of drama at St Thomas the Apostle College in Peckham, south London, said it had "changed students' expectations from a rather negative view of Shakespeare".

Ms Ellinas, head of learning at the Globe, said this was a way of young people getting to see Shakespeare if "theatregoing is not part of a family's cultural history". "Watching a performance with other people becomes a more visceral and vibrant experience. It is something every student should experience before they leave school," she said. The free tickets, worth £2m, have been funded by Deutsche Bank, and Nicole Lovett from the bank said that as well supporting teenagers' academic studies, such trips benefited "personal development and future employability".

The Social Mobility Commission has investigated differences in access to cultural activities - seen as helping young people get into university or raise aspirations for jobs. It found that trips to the theatre, galleries, the cinema or the zoo were all more likely for wealthier families - with the likelihood of such visits rising and falling in a way directly linked to family

income.

The researchers were able to compare this data with cinema visits in the late 1960s. Going to the cinema in the 1960s was not particularly linked to social background - and the very lowest earners were more likely to go to see films than the families of top professionals. But the most recent figures show the cinema attendance is now closely related to income, with the wealthiest the most likely to see films.

Reprinted from BBC News Website By Sean Coughlan, Education correspondent | 5 April 2017 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/ education-39479035

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, where you can sign up to our mailing list, or email: actingclass@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
'Lulu' by Frank Wedekind 19-27 May *Theatre Upstairs				
'Proof' by David Auburn 16-24 June Studio				
Short Play Festival 21-29 July *Theatre Upstairs				

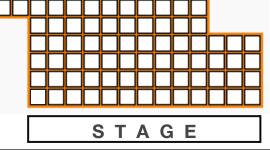
It is important you provide your name, phone number and address, and email address where possible

*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.



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 Coordinator** Technical Coordinator **Buildings Manager** Fundraising Marketing & Publicity Volunteer Coordinator Front of House Box Office Newsletter Editor Membership Secretary LTG Rep & CPO Social Events Manager Youth Theatre Coordinator Angels/Archives **Acting Class Coordinator**

Ian Black Jerry Lyne Rod Lewis Iain Hav Tom Kitch Technical Team Mike Stubbs Mary Allen **Publicity Team** Melissa Noble Jezz Bowden James Macauley Natasha Borg Anne Gilson Pat Boxall Scott Roberts Sarah Davies Gerry McCrudden

chairman@newventure.org.uk secretary@newventure.org.uk art.dir@newventure.org.uk finance@newventure.org.uk prod.mgr@newventure.org.uk tech@newventure.org.uk buildings@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 pat.boxall@newventure.org.uk social@newventure.org.uk youththeatre@newventure.org.uk angels@newventure.org.uk Ulrike Schilling & Kasha Goodenough actingclass@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





Finding an investment manager needn't be a performance.



Contact Paul Morley on 01273 322 435 or email paul.morley@thesis-plc.com

www.thesis-plc.com

Professional investment partners

Authorised and regulated by the FCA





Long or Short Stay & Convalenceme Breaks, Large Individual Rooms All With Colour TV (Sandline TV Available). Lift Servicing All Floom-Attractive Cardens & Balconies First Class Food Prepared By In House Chef. Optional Social Programme. Visiting Heinfresser And Chiropodist. 24 Hour Care By Pully Trained Staff, Family Owned. Highest Standards of Care, Support & Service



Patcham, Brighton East Sussex BNI 8NA Tel: (01273) 565821

DUR 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: 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 - or by post if you prefer.

Printed by RePrint (LCC) Ltd. 47 Highcroft Villas, Brighton BN1 5PT www.reprintbrighton.com