

# NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

**COMING SOON | OUR LADY OF SLIGO by Sebastian Barry | Directed by | 16-24 February**

**TRUE WEST by Sam Shepard | directed by Steven O'Shea | 19-27 January**



portrayal of sibling rivalry, the story centres on two brothers. Austin, a successful screenwriter, is working on a movie project for a Hollywood producer, Saul, while house-sitting for his mother who is vacationing in Alaska. When his estranged older brother Lee, a drunken petty thief, unexpectedly arrives to stay, the two engage in a lethal battle of wills.

Shepard manages from this simple plot line to further explore many of the themes and motifs that characterised his work over the years: The ideal of the old West as opposed to the West as it is today; the painful necessity of having to break away from a father's influence; the perennial friction between the concept of art as a business and as an ideal; isolation; notions of identity and the fallibility of the American Dream. The play represents in many ways the quintessence of Shepard's artistic output and stands as a fitting memorial to a uniquely individual talent.

As always I am deeply indebted to the hard work and commitment of the theatre staff, production team and outstanding cast, Janice Jones, Stuart Lee, Will Cooper and Martin Ryan. I would like to express my immense appreciation to them all.

**Steven O'Shea, Director | Photo Strat Matoris**

"I wanted to write a play about double nature. I just wanted to give a taste of what it feels like to be two-sided. I think we're split in a much more devastating way than psychology can ever reveal."

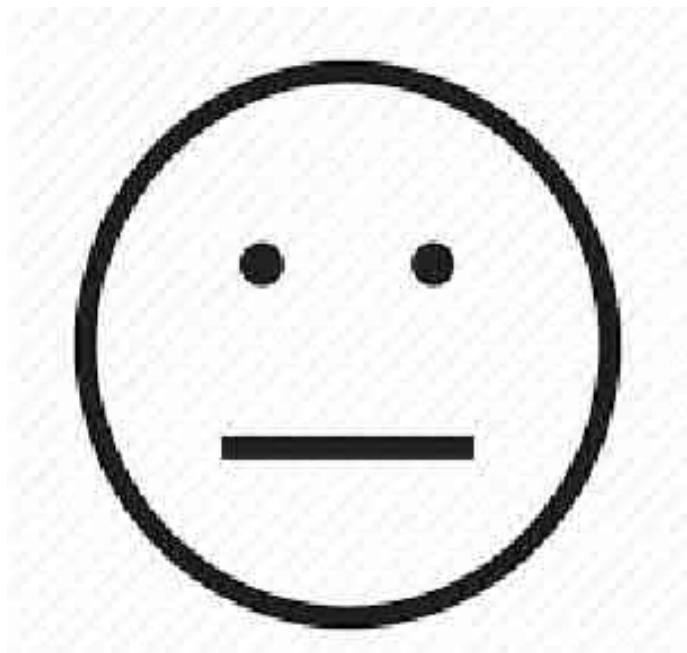
**Sam Shepard**

I had always been a huge admirer of Sam Shepard's work and so was delighted to have the opportunity to direct one of his plays for the first time. The news of his death in July last year merely added a greater sense of poignancy to the whole undertaking.

Author of some forty-four plays, Shepard remains one of the most celebrated, prolific and important playwrights of his generation. As a playwright, screenwriter, director, musician and Hollywood film star, he enjoyed an outstandingly

varied career. In 1979 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his play *Buried Child*. By the age of forty he had become the second most widely performed American playwright after Tennessee Williams. With appearances in over fifty films, he was nominated for an Academy Award for his performance as test pilot Chuck Yeager in *The Right Stuff*. As a musician he played drums for the band Holy Modal Rounders and later toured with Bob Dylan with whom he collaborated on the song *Brownville Girl*. He directed two feature films, *Far North*, (starring his then wife Jessica Lange), and *Silent Tongue*. But it is as a playwright that he will be best remembered and *True West* stands at the forefront of his outstanding body of work.

A coruscating, funny and violent



## **NEW APPOINTMENT**

Michael Stubbs has taken over as Fundraiser of the New Venture. The next major project is the refurbishment of the kitchen which we hope to do next August.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Following on from the request at the AGM that we look at Membership issues, the Trustees have decided at their Trustee Meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup> to reduce Company Membership Fees from £25 to £15 and the Unwaged / Student Fees from £13 to £10.

Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

Existing Company members will benefit from the changes on their renewal dates. This is initially a trial that will run for at least a year to ensure all members renewing will benefit from this lower rate. The former Associate Members fees remain the same as this grade of membership is gradually being phased out.

We hope this will make it more attractive to become a member and to stay a member and enjoy all the facilities we offer.

**NVT Management Trustees.**

## **FULL BEAM** **Directed by Mike Stubbs | review Emmie Spencer**

Car journeys have a tendency to bring out the worst in people, though you'd have to go some to match the drama (and laughs) that ensued in David Smilow's Full Beam. This full throttle playlet, adapted by Barry Purchase, enjoyed its British premiere at the NVT's Theatre Upstairs on 1st December 2017.

Set in a moving car, Full Beam takes us on a breakneck and at times very funny journey along a dark countryside road, illuminated only by the ominous full beam headlights from the vehicle behind.

What begins as a fairly innocuous, if awkward car journey with two couples, quickly descends into something more sinister before making a sharp diversion into pure farce.

In the driving seat is Adam Kincaid, wild-eyed and manic, who convinces as a man experiencing the worst car journey of his life. As his wife, Deborah Slot – last seen in the Short Play Festival earlier this year – is the perfect picture of wifely tolerance in the face of some pretty wild revelations from hubby.

NVT regular Kasha Goodenough – looking like a modern day Bonnie without her Clyde – sparkles as the sharp-tongued girlfriend in the backseat who soon begins to regret her decision to get in a car with this motley crew.

Playing her obnoxious out-of-work actor (and amateur badminton champion) boyfriend is newcomer Andy Grant, who delivers some of the play's best one-liners with confidence and verve.

It was all steered by director Mike Stubbs, who skilfully navigates the shifts and plot twists of this nifty little script to create moments of genuine suspense and laugh out loud comedy.

Strat Mastoris' and Jezz Bowden's simple but effective design of just four chairs and the full beam light of the title lets the writing and performances take centre stage.



Resident NVT voice coach Chris Stubbs has made sure every actor filled the large stage – no mean feat in the vocally demanding upstairs space.

Praise should also go to lighting operator Scott Roberts for making sure the fifth Beatle of this four hander – the all important full beam lamp – got some good laughs from the audience too.

There's a wealth of budding acting talent at NVT's Monday evening acting classes. This production of Full Beam puts it front and centre. Hopefully there'll be another outing for this rumbustious road trip soon – it was over far too quickly.

**Emmie Spencer**

# AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR DAVID THACKER HOLDS WORKSHOP AT NVT

(former Director of Royal Shakespeare Company, Young Vic, National Theatre, Octagon Theatre, now Professor of Theatre Bolton University)



Diane Robinson, Mark Lester, Sam Chittenden, Emmie Spencer, Tom Slater-H, Martin Ryan, John Tolputt, Rod Lewis, Jeremy Crow, David Thacker, Jerry Lyne, Bryony Weaver, Tess Gill. Participating but not in picture Bob Ryder, Tom Kitch, Jez Bowden, Claire Lewis, Dan Walker, Gaby Bowring and Barry Purchase.

NVT were delighted to have the services of David Thacker hosting a workshop for Directors and Actors on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

The link with David Thacker started with questions that arose regarding one of the characters (Dr Hyman played by Olivier Maigniez) during rehearsals of Broken Glass. David had worked with Miller on the text of Broken Glass and was the closest we could get to Arthur Miller for an answer.

To our surprise we got an instant response and after further contacts, he offered to view a run though we had planned and workshopped a number of scenes for us afterwards. A great experience indeed.

This autumn he was directing his Miners' Strike production for the Labour Party Conference Fringe and needed a rehearsal space. He got in touch and instead of the

cash payment he had offered, we asked if he could run a Directors' workshop for us. He was more than happy to oblige and Uli, myself and Rod set about organising it.

(Many thanks to Olivier Maigniez for the initial contact and the follow up this year).

He was most generous not wanting any money for expenses, so the fees for the workshop went to the Kitchen Restoration Fund.

## A Very Brief Summary of the Day

It was a full day starting at 10 am and finishing just after 5 pm - a comprehensive interactive workshop. We covered the areas from auditions to casting to rehearsals. He started by asking what our objectives were.

We worked on the scripts of 'Hamlet' and 'Death of a Salesman', two plays David has directed a number of times.

It was fascinating seeing his approach, discussing how you reach personal best, a shared vision, and the methods used to achieve this.

He is a great believer in interactive auditions, working on character with the actor, gauging if they know the part and can interpret the meaning of what they are playing.

Interestingly he is not a believer of a full read through, rather he takes time with all the company and examines every line of text. What does the character think is a fact, indisputable from the text or not sure, so considered an interpretive fact?

He feels this helps the whole company get to know each other better. Totally engage right from the start, know the play faster and more intimately. It makes you understand what the important facts are. If you don't understand the play, how can you contribute?

We looked at actors' objectives, ask 'I want you to tell me.....not my objective is'. Look at objectives in the lines, demand from the other actor in a scene and say what you want.

He emphasised the importance of knowing the lines, only once the lines are automatic, without thinking, can you fully involve. He is a great believer in allowing scenes to naturally develop, no pre-set moves let the lines take you there.

He talked about his four stages of the Circle of Trust, involving all actors, a Deputy Stage Manager and Director sitting in a circle, when 80% of the lines are learnt.

**Stage 1** Line run, DSM prompts

**Stage 2** Know the lines, no pauses, but NOT a speed but a

clarity run.

**Stage 3** Break to move it how you feel

**Stage 4** Give and take between actors with your lines, work off each other.

Speeches, look at the speech, don't think of it as a long speech. Everything you say is new, it just happens. Paraphrase what is being said to get the meaning, look at the text, talk about what is going on, feel it and put that into the speech.

He usually works chronologically through the play - depending on how he has to work around actors' availability (matinees, auditions etc.) or have to factor in music/dance/fight rehearsals etc. Once they have completed the Circle of Trust he usually puts the scene on its feet and intervenes in whatever way he feels is appropriate. The next rehearsal of that scene would follow the same process - first Circle of Trust (though taking much less time now), then playing on the floor. He employs his 'box of tricks' in whatever way seems appropriate. Sometimes he will say or do very little if he thinks we will make the best progress by actors getting more familiar and confident with the material. He will respond to their needs as they reveal themselves. When we have worked through an act in this way (2 or 3 rehearsals per scene) he will usually run the act. Then work on the priorities. Then move on to the next act. Once this is complete he will run the play (usually the Wednesday/Thursday of the last week. He always has a final run-through on the Saturday morning before they open. The following Monday is usually intensive work on the priorities. The technical starts on Tuesday, usually.



We finished the day by summing up our objectives to ensure we had covered them.

### **Some comments from those taking part**

"Many thanks to David for an absolutely brilliant day. A privilege and pleasure for us all to have such an experienced and genuinely talented director generously sharing his skills and wisdom with us. An exceptional experience."

"To say it was a superb experience is a gross understatement! Having such an opportunity to work with so generous and instructive a director, with such professional experience and willingness to share it, is an experience that will stay with me for a long time.

And I really enjoyed having the chance to work with you - wish I had been at NVT when u played Willy Loman; would have relished seeing u in the role."

"Thank u so much, Jerry and Uli. A day to treasure."

"Thank you SO much for hosting such a valuable and session for us all today. It was such an immense privilege to get to see a true master of the theatre take us through his process. I've learned a ton, both as an actor and theatre practitioner more generally and there are techniques I can put into practice right away. I'd have been happy to have paid several times the price I did for that experience! Please pass on my thanks to David, and thanks to Jerry and Uli for organising."

"I completely agree with Emmie. It was an absolutely brilliant and informative day and I thought David was such a generous, entertaining, energetic and inspirational teacher. I also felt I learnt such a lot as a director and an actor that I can use. So a big thank Jerry Lyne, David Thacker, Bryony Weaver, you from me Uli and Jerry for organising the day and please pass on my thanks, respect and appreciation."

"Just to say I have only since the workshop, discovered how prolific David Thacker is.

Genuinely impressed by his unstuffy and common sense approach to the business of directing and acting. Have learnt a lot in one day and will most certainly never be intimidated by Shakespeare or the other great playwrights, after gaining an insight to his approach to same! Very impressed you got him down!"

"Wholeheartedly agree with the praise for today's workshop. It was informative and fun and provided some interesting insights- as well as some highly practical ideas. Likewise, please pass on our thanks and positive feedback to David."

"It was an excellent day, thank you. Completely packed with helpful and practical ideas and so interesting that I only realised after we finished that we had not got into the last section of rehearsal and how he pulls it all together into a complete performance. So if you could ask David whether he pulls scenes together scene by scene when they are still in the early stages or whether they work really intensely until every actor is secure and confident in that scene and then run as a whole play (and why he does whatever method he chooses) that would be really interesting and helpful.



Dan Walker, Jerry Lyne, David Thacker & Bryony Weaver



Jezz Bowden, Claire Lewis, Dan Walker, Jeremy Crow, David Thacker, Barry Purchase, Diane Robinson

## DAVID THACKER



David Thacker with Arthur Miller

### THEATRE

He was the artistic director at the Octagon Theatre Bolton until July 2015, when he stepped down to become the first Professor of Theatre at the University of Bolton. He will continue as associate director, directing two productions per year, until 2018. He has directed over one hundred theatre productions including plays by William Shakespeare, Arthur Miller, Samuel Beckett, Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov, Tennessee Williams, Tom Stoppard and Eugene O'Neill.

Building on the success of the Octagon's 40th anniversary season, Thacker planned a year-long programme of work for his first season. The wide-ranging repertoire of productions includes plays by Shakespeare, Ibsen and Miller, a world premiere, a co-production, a revival of one of Mark Babych's (Artistic Director 1998 - 2008) most successful productions, contemporary classics and a musical.

### BACKGROUND

Thacker has worked at eight producing theatres including the Royal Shakespeare Company (Director-in-Residence), the Young Vic (Director), the Dukes Playhouse, Lancaster (Theatre Director), and the National Theatre. Seven of his productions have transferred to the West End. He has won Olivier Awards for Best Director (Pericles) and Best Revival (Pericles) and the London Fringe Award for Best Director (Ghosts) and Best Production (Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?).

He had a long association with Arthur Miller Thacker directing a number of HIS UK productions, including Salesman with Warren Mitchell. Miller trusted him and worked with him many times. Notably Miller and Thacker worked on the text of Broken Glass and Thacker directed the UK premiere at the National in 1994 winning him another Olivier Award. (Previous award was for Pericles).

### TELEVISION

Thacker is also a prolific television director. He has directed more than thirty TV productions, including episodes of The Vice, Silent Witness, Foyle's War and Waking the Dead. He has also directed

# NVT ACTING CLASS

**Mondays 7:30 - 9:30pm**

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

**Cost: £5 (NVT members £2.50)**

In these drop in sessions you will be working with various teachers and cover acting 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 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 - [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)

# OUR ANGELS

Why not become an angel, Fallen Angel, Archangel or even Archangel Gabriel to help us support our 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 Angel Coordinator Gerry McCrudden: [angels@newventure.org.uk](mailto:angels@newventure.org.uk). If you are a UK tax payer your donation may also benefit from Gift Aid.

# 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>'True West' by Sam Shepard 19-27</b> <i>January Theatre Upstairs</i>				
<b>'Our Lady of Sligo' by Sebastian Barry 16-24</b> <i>February Studio</i>				
<b>'Bad Jews' by Joshua Harmon 16-24</b> <i>March Theatre Upstairs</i>				

It is important you provide your name, phone number & 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 1s and a second and third option with 2s and 3s, 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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## OUR SPONSORS

Our sponsorship deal is £250 for a year's advertising on our website and in our brochure, newsletter and programmes, plus 2 complimentary tickets for each production in that year.

### We would love to hear from you!

Please write in with any comments, articles or reviews of our productions and events to the Newsletter Editor - newsletter@newventure.org.uk or by post to the New Venture Theatre.

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