

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | BAD JEWS by Joshua Harmon | Directed by Bob Ryder | 16-24 March

**OUR LADY OF SLIGO
by Sebastian Barry | directed by Mark Wilson | 16-24 February 7.45pm.
Matinee Sunday 18th 2.30pm | No performance Monday 19th**



Lyn Snowdon and Helen O'Brien

It's been a delight to have returned to NVT to direct Sebastian Barry's 'Our Lady of Sligo' and find myself working with a group of people who, for the most part, are also either returning to work at NVT or appearing for the first time. So we all get to be new together.

If a little-known play can be described as 'new' - in the sense that it seems to be 'new' to pretty well everyone I talk to about it - then as a Company, we're also involved in working with an Irish writer better known for being a novelist than a playwright on a piece of work that has not been staged since it appeared at The National in 1998.

What is also new, for me at any rate, is the extraordinarily lyrical

language Sebastian Barry employs at times; it's like a poem in places, like something by James Joyce or Lorca.

The play's characters are compelling for their simple humanity. From her room in a Dublin cancer ward, Mai looks back across her tempestuous life - her disastrous marriage, the loss of her child, the alcoholism and the hoped-for Ireland that lost its way in the politics of division. She does so, however, without the least self-pity but rather with a savage quick humour, sparing no-one but the idolised Dada and the motherly Maria, both long-dead, whom she conjures from within her morphine-troubled mind.

What we have is a play in which

each character is able to leave the stage with the audience's forgiveness - we really do understand. There's no-one to blame; no 'goodies and baddies'; there's no-one there for the audience to dislike or hate, no-one who does anything terribly wrong or wicked. It's simply peopled by characters trying to do their best which, I think, is what most of us, knowingly or otherwise, wake up each morning intending to do. So what's left but to understand and to forgive?

We're staging it 'in the round' with all of the immediacy and potential for connection between audience and actors that that can involve. As with Promenade, it also allows audience response to become part of the story-telling process. As audience we not only connect with what the actors are doing but with each other's response to what is taking place before us.

This is a fast-moving play full of humour, love and the most tender, heart-breaking pathos.

Mark Wilson, Director | Photo Strat Mastoris

TRUE WEST by Sam Shepard | Directed by Steven O'Shea

Review by Simon Jenner



New Venture possess real form with American drama, and this is a vintage production. Sam Shepard's 1980 *True West* comes just after *Buried Child* and before *Fool For Love* and *A Lie of the Mind*.

Directed by Steven O'Shea, with Simon Glazier's lovingly detailed kitchen in the Upstairs, and lighting used to moody and finally spooky effect by Strat Mastoris and Margarita Steinberg it underlines how this space often brings out an extra notch in productions. Tim Metcalfe's sound design, so crucial in establishing the country and western mood, is supported by a team and it shows: ideal calibration, not a blast as can happen. Like the distressed costumery, even Kasha Goodenough's batty parent costumes breathe denim and chiffon in bizarre conjunction.

This is spare Shepard, only four characters. And move over Baby Jane, it's a classic sibling fight, pitching a flip-over in roles between drifter and petty thief Lee and his younger successful brother, screenwriter Austin down to look after their mother's house in California. Its bleak comedy has a way of making you laugh at what might be blue murder. You incidentally wonder what on earth their mother's doing vacationing in Alaska for instance: never mind. The pot plants fail to get watered after Lee arrives. The father's watered somewhere else, a terminal alcoholic.

There's worse. Stuart Warwick's dangerously psychotic Lee covets all his suave younger brother enjoys, and whilst menacing and cajoling Austin

moves in on of all people Austin's agent Saul Kimmer, the seasoned Martin Ryan producing a craggily nuanced drawl of big bucks. Kimmer's slippery man seems hard-boiled but is more credulous than anyone else. He's bizzarely charmed by Lee, whose entrapment takes the form of inviting him to a round of golf, something Austin's reduced to caddy for, Shepard delighting in the vulnerability American men display over their lack of authenticity: Austin by possessing none of these dubious qualities nor esteeming them; Kimmer for being impressed with Lee's gross display. But Lee's also jealous of Austin's sedentary old typewriter. Later on it comes into cultural collision with those golf clubs and neither win.

Kimmer's also dazzled by Lee's 'authentic' hokum western. So much so that he ditches Austin's love story in favour of Lee's preposterous plotline. We find out how much when Austin reads out part of it. Two men chasing each other over an adulterous affair switch from exhausted cars to their horses somehow in trailers behind them all along. Shepard's sense of the absurd – that Kimmer falls for it – is only matched by logic whereby Kimmer ditches all his hard-boiled caution and Lee's the one with the advance, Austin hired for a flat fee to write up the script. Stranger things have happened out there.

This is where Will Cooper's Austin comes even more into his own. Playing off Warwick's psychotic Lee is a gift and Cooper shows how Austin moves from nerves to temper to bravura emulation of his brother's thieving, to something more Lee-like; he runs a virtuoso gamut Austin never promises. You'll have to wait for the great coup in the second act. Catastrophe theory doesn't do it better.

Cooper's more than up for this. His every watchful movement, the way he arcs his voice, continually ratcheting up his own transformative move, down to his collapses and rolling around, make this the outstanding performance in an exceptionally strong cast. It's completed by Janice Jones' distracted Mom entering late on, who simply refuses to comprehend the mayhem she returns to and vanishes blithely as unspeakable events transpire around her. Her reaction completes the play.

The plot through all Shepard's pauses, arrests and lateral crawl to coherence, never quite lets up. But there are superb pauses where Shepard's characters blow through their own roles, as if we're taking five from the given plot and seeing the individuals released into a strange real-time eddy of themselves. In reality, every calibration is beautifully poised over disaster. Thus most touching is the drunken bonding at the end of Act One where the two brothers come together over their father. It's a necessary still point, a rare communing, a glimpse into what might have been. Another winning piece of Americana from NVT, now the go-to on the south coast for anything pointing true west.



Review by Simon Jenner | Photos by Strat Mastoris

Review also published on www.fringereview.co.uk

AUDITION NOTICE - JUMPY

Jumpy by April de Angelis

Directed by Diane Robinson

Audition dates: 25th, 27th, 28th of Feb

Call backs – Sunday 4th March (pm)

Production Dates: 15th to 23rd June 2018, including a matinee on Sun17th June

A frank and very funny family drama, which questions parental anxieties and life after 50. Hilary, just turning 50, once protested at Greenham Common and sees herself as a feminist. Now her protests tend to focus on persuading her teenage daughter to go out fully clothed. Married to Mark for far too long – they rub along in a comfortable but sterile relationship. Their daughter, Tilly, is going through the typical teenage tantrums of many girls of her age, but when Hilary and Mark discover that she has started sleeping with her boyfriend they have to decide if they want to be liberal or bring in some discipline.

Jumpy premiered at the Royal Court in October 2011 to rave reviews.

Cast:

Hilary (F) Playing age: 50. On stage most of the time.
Mark (M) her husband: 50
Tilly, (F,) Their daughter: Playing age:15/16, although actor will need to be 16+
Frances (F,) Hilary's best friend: 50. Very funny. Dances.
Lindsay, (F,) Tilly's friend: Playing age:15/16, although actor will need to be 16+
Josh, (M,) Tilly's boyfriend: Playing age:15/16, although actor will need to be 16+
Bea, (F,) Joshs' Mum: 45-50
Roland, M,) Josh's Dad 45- 50
Cam, (M,) A student, 20's Appears semi clad at one point.

Auditions will be timetabled, please let the production manager, Tam know which session you would like to attend and which character(s) you would like to audition for at and she will send you the audition pieces and allocate a time for your audition.

Sunday 25th, 2pm – 7pm

Tuesday 27th, 7 – 9.30pm

Wednesday 28th 7-9.30 pm

Call backs will be Sunday 4th March at 3pm.

Please prepare the audition pieces suggested, but do not feel you have to learn them. Other characters may be played by other auditionees or read in by Tam/ myself.

Hilary and Mark:

Page 4 from Mark: 'You got on the tube' to Page 6 Mark 'What's the point.'

Page 23 Beg of scene to page 24 Mark, 'You're talking.'

Hilary and Tilly:

Scene 5 , all

Page 33 beg, to p. 35, Tilly 'Oh my God,'

Hilary and Frances:

Page 14 from Hilary, 'What are you doing?' to page 15, 'I haven't got a pension.'

Page 61, 'This isn't working' to page 62 'the interesting stuff,'

Frances; speech on page 40.

Lindsay, Tilly, (Hilary is in this but doesn't need to learn it,)

Lindsay - Speech page 71

Page 7 beg to page 9, 'When they went brown'

Page 55, 'You won't know it, Fabric' to Page 56 'My fat legs,'

Josh and Roland (Hilary is in this but doesn't need to learn it,)

From page 47, Josh and Roland enter to page 48 'Get a torch mark.'

Bea and Roland, (Hilary are in these but doesn't need to learn them,)

Page 18, 'I found them,' (Hilary,) to page 21 'I have to go and get changed,' (Bea,)

Page 66, 'Josh isn't coming,' (Bea,) to page 67 'What effect does that have? (Bea.)

Roland speech: page 30.

Cam and Hilary

Page 72 (Beg) to Page 75 'It's an old photo.' (Hilary.)

Cam – speech page 86.

If you would like any further information please contact Tamsin at tamsin.mastoris@outlook.com or the Director at therobinsoncrew@hotmail.com .We will be using the Faber and Faber edition of the play.

FULL BEAM by David Smilow

Adapted by Barry Purchase | Directed by Mike Stubbs

Review by 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.

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

BRIGHTON AND HOVE ARTS COUNCIL DRAMA AWARDS

NVT's production of Eugene O'Neill's Anna Christie was an extremely successful entry to the annual Brighton and Hove Arts Council Drama Awards. We won four awards:

Best Actress - Isabella McCarthy Sommerville

Best Actor - Mark Lester

Best Sound Design - Ian Black

Best Lighting Design - Phil Palmer.

We were further nominated for:

Best Costume Design - Pat Boxall

Best Set Design - Adam Kincaid

Best Stage Crew - Gabrielle Bowring, Bryony Weaver, Michelle Harris and Amanda Harman
and for Best Technical Achievement.

Well done Team Anna Christie!

Uli Schilling

Production Manager Anna Christie



Proposals to Direct - 2018/19 Season

**We are now open for directing proposals for next Season
October 2018 to July 2019
closes end of February 2018**

See the website for more details or email art.dir@newventure.org.uk

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 where you can sign up to our mailing list, or email 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. 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 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
'Our Lady of Sligo' by Sebastian Barry 16-24 February Studio				
'Bad Jews' by Joshua Harmon 16-24 March Theatre Upstairs				
'1984' by Robert Icke & Duncan Macmillan 11-19 May Theatre Upstairs				

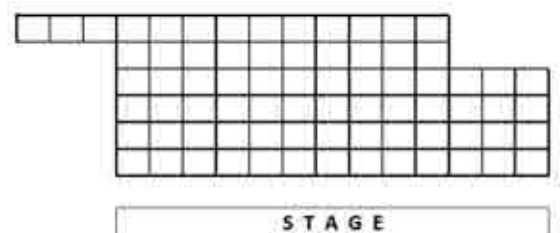
It is important you provide your name, phone number & address, and email address where possible.

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.



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