

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | Jumpy by April de Angelis | Directed by Diane Robinson | 15-23 June

1984 by George Orwell | Adapted by Matthew Dunster | Directed by Nicholas Richards | 11-19 May

In George Orwell's 1984, people live under ignorant oppression in Oceania a country caught in a perpetual war. This is a place where the Party scrutinizes human actions with ever-watchful eye of Big Brother. Defying a ban on individuality, Winston Smith a Records clerk at the Department of the Ministry of Truth, his job is to rewrite historical documents according to the Party's demands, dares to express his thoughts in a diary. His hatred of Big Brother, the Party and the Thought Police manifests itself when he decides to risk everything in a search for the real truth and pursue a heart thumping clandestine relationship with the mysterious girl with the dark hair, Julia. These criminal deeds bring Winston to the attention of an Inner Party member named O'Brien who may be involved with an underground resistance group called the Brotherhood. In a world where cheap entertainment keeps the proles ignorant but content. Where the government is always watching, can Winston possibly hold onto what he feels inside? Or will he renounce everything, accept the Party's reality and learn to love Big Brother?

It seems that ever since its publication in 1949 the novel Nineteen Eighty Four has always been relevant depicting the times whatever the era up to and past the actual year 1984.

I first read the book in 1994 while working on a construction site in Stevenage (a new town). We were building a pharmaceutical research centre, a monolith of a structure that could have easily doubled as the Ministry of Truth. The work was monotonous and we all had to wear blue boiler suits. I spent lunch breaks reading 1984 and everything I read resonated with me and my surroundings. I identified with Winston Smith and found myself being politicized in a



very different way. This was the year the lottery came into being in this country and listening to my fellow workers share their misguided fantasies of what they would do with their winnings 'when they won.' was astounding. The brain washing of the 'It could be you advertising campaign was predicted here in a book written in 1948!

When the 2003 Gulf War took place there were echoes of the book again with the wars against Eastasia and Euroasia and so it went on and on and on. And right up to today there is always a feeling we are living out the world constructed by Orwell.

The story and its themes have always stayed with me and now I have been given a wonderful opportunity to bring it to life on the stage.

I hope you not only enjoy but also take something away from our interpretation of Matthew Dunster's arresting adaptation of this hugely-influential mid-twentieth century political novel. It not only delves into human condition but also the fragility of life itself through social, global, political and economic comments that capture the zeitgeist that make the play satisfying and unnerving. We follow some fascinating characters as they are faced with a series of morally complex dilemmas. We rediscover a seminal dystopian fantasy that indicates just how ubiquitous

Orwell's predictions have become, from the Lottery to CCTV cameras and the denuded lexicon of text-messaging (Newspeak under a different name). There is cold realization of how dangerous it is to be a citizen in a totalitarian state. The real life nightmares of our contemporary world. This as the 21st-century hurtles headfirst into some sort of catastrophe which we can't see, yet here it is right in front of us on stage ostensibly from a very British standpoint.

'Modern authority is based on a system of lies that are accepted by the general population. Any monitoring system that is invisible, pervasive, automatic and permanent gives those in power the means to create a modern surveillance state. You don't need to watch everyone if everyone believes they're being watched. True freedom is tolerant. It gives people the right to live and think in new ways. Almost every important choice in our lives is really just an expression of hope.' John Twelve Hawks

1984 has never been more relevant and is compelling as it is terrifying. Introducing the watchwords for life without freedom:

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU.

Elephant's Graveyard by George Brant | Rehearsed Reading | Directed by David Eaton 1st and 2nd June



There was a town. There was a circus. There was a railroad. There was an elephant. And there was a man with red hair. In 1916, a tiny town in Tennessee will experience the greatest show on Earth. A sight never before seen by any man and it's going to put them on the map, forever. Combining historical fact and legend, this poignant and revealing play sheds a harsh spotlight on mankind's lust for spectacle, violence and revenge.

This amateur production of 'Elephant's Graveyard' is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.

FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS - Round Up

There was no April production this year. Instead, to mark the New Venture Theatre's 70th anniversary, there was a Festival of the Arts. This three-week celebration of the diverse artistic talents of NVT members and friends saw comedy, theatre, film, poetry and panel interviews across eight nights. Here's our roundup of what went on....

The festival kicked off on April 6th with a night of comedy featuring local stand-ups William Stone, Rebecca Turner, Sha Wylie and Katherine Atkinson, before NVT-incubated Fannytasticals took to the stage in one of their final shows before they hit Brighton Fringe.

Saturday 7th saw the NVT back in familiar territory with a bumper night of theatre, including revivals of recent hits 'Full Beam' and 'The Swing', plus a Barry Purchase adaptation of old classic 'Tons of Money'. The packed house also got to enjoy an advance preview of a new Noel Coward inspired play 'Mad About The Boy' written by local playwright Edwin Preece, and featuring Jeremy Crow as Mr Coward and Warren Saunders as 'the boy'. Dennis Cumming and Fernando Pucci provided some song.



Gerry McCrudden



Warren Saunders & Jeremy Crow



Sheelagh Baker, Kate McGann & Ben Pritchard



Kate McGann, Sarah Charsley & Nicholas Richards

The sold out short film night on Wednesday 11th celebrated the celluloid successes of NVT members including Simon Messingham, Sarah Charsley, Fintan Shevlin and Sophie Dearlove.

It was back to live performance on Friday 13th with the New Venture Youth Theatre's mash-up of scenes from iconic plays by Chekhov, Steven Berkoff, Alan Bennett and more. That was followed by a poetry evening, curated by Sam Chittenden and featuring the poetic and performing talents of Melissa Noble, Culann Smyth, Len Goldman, Sarah Drew, Eleanor Gamper, Des Potten and Jerry Lyne among others.

Saturday 14th saw Andrew Allen and Michelle Donkin's Cast Iron takeover of the NVT with a number of rapid response plays performed on the spot and unrehearsed by audience members, before a live recording of Cast Iron Theatre podcast with guests Janice Jones, Chelsea Newton Mountney and Alex and Tim McQuillen-Wright. (Head over to 'Cast Iron Theatre Podcast' on SoundCloud to listen to the show)

Weds 18th's Archives and Anecdotes evening was a highlight for many, with a stage debut from Alex Epps and her PowerPoint, plus a welcome return to the NVT stage for some much-loved faces from NVT's past including Tony Loveless, Peta Taylor and Katie Brownings in a Q&A session hosted by Gerry McCrudden.



Kasha Goodenough, Adam Kincaid, Deborah Slot & Andy Grant

The final event of the festival on Friday 20th saw directors Mark Wilson, Martin Nichols, Alex McQuillen-Wright, Ulrike Schilling, Anita Sullivan Fearnside and Tim McQuillen-Wright putting their money where their mouths are and performing scenes from some pivotal plays of NVT's past. It was followed by extracts from six new Brighton Fringe shows, including performances from Heather Rose Andrews, Fintan Shevlin, Chelsea Newton Mountney, Culann Smyth, Helen Pepper Smith and Simon Messingham.

Congratulations to the festival team, not least production manager Melissa Noble who made sure this eclectic mix of events ran seamlessly.



Warren Saunders & Jeremy Crow

It was left to Artistic Director Rod Lewis to sum it all up: "So much talent has come out this month. It's been an open house for people to come in and read poems, act, and sing. A brilliant opportunity for the talent and the good will that just emanate from this theatre to shine."

Happy 70th New Venture Theatre – here's to the next 70 years.

Photos by Patrick and Sandy pksyart@gmail.com

BAD JEWS by Joshua Harmon | Directed by Bob Ryder

Review by Dr Simon Jenner

Joshua Harmon's 2012 *Bad Jews* is his breakthrough play – effectively his first, he quips, to last more than three nights. It's fast becoming a piece that barely comes off, produced everywhere. Despite the London Underground's initial refusal to allow posters advertising it - misreading it as inciting racial hatred - the very title, provocative and edgy, alerts you to the act that it's a quintessentially Jewish American dark comedy. More than that, it's a quintessentially coming-of-age play, the bit where you argue and grow up. Bob Ryder's cracking production confirms NVT's unrivalled form in American drama.



Simon Glazier's studio flat details a blue-toned bedsit of three beds improvised for relatives descending after a beloved grandfather's funeral. A finely detailed kitchen area with stools, where the missing square's in fact a bathroom we glimpse as people disappear into it and predictably hear everything. It's beautifully executed. Strat Mastoris's lighting neatly glares a night bulb over weariness, lit by tenebrous windows and at the end a closing down into stillness and unexpected shock of tenderness. David Miller's and Max Videux' sound mainly consists of brief bursts of music; ideally discreet



It's Jonah's flat. Emmie Spencer's Cousin Daphna neatly trashes his temerity in having parents rich enough to buy it from him, living on the same floor as they do; Daphna's are poorer schoolteachers, not so rich that Joshua's mother who's never worked can now set herself up as consultant of nothing-in-particular. Daphna is clearly the type who wars with the world. Consumed with injustice collecting she's first snacking on her cousins.

'Bad Jew' is a term for those who don't observe, who don't transmit their culture intact in an increasingly homogenized robotic world. Daphna in advancing these arguments makes her case powerfully. But in this comedy, as Ibsen said of tragedies, everyone is right.

Spencer's unrecognizable from the incipiently middle-aged Hester Collyer of *The Deep Blue Sea* she played at NVT recently. Here, she's a gloriously brash big-haired young Zionist with an extraordinary Chicago snarl, impeccably but energetically delivered. Unlike Collyer too, she's never still: like her cousin Jonah she twitches, though to a purpose. Her next assault, her next parry, her inner scream of injustice simmers visibly as if Spencer's about to blow her very big-hair top. Hers is a barnstorming performance, the finest single one since Isabella McCarthy Somerville's performance in the title role of *Anna Christie*, itself one of the finest seen at NVT in recent years, Spencer's previous performance being another. Like *True West*, another NVT triumph, the directors grip and quality of production incubates the finest performances possible, and it's not just Spencer's.

Chris Knight's Jonah is clearly geeky, furrowed over his Apple laptop. In fact Jonah's clearly slightly on the spectrum, which Knight attempts to convey in small twitches and refusal to make eye-contact. He's quite commanding in height and compensates by greying himself out, though the (emerging) convention is to go for the traditionally weedy, flinching type. It's an ungrateful part, punching a non-verbal coup.

Into this already charged atmosphere Jonah's elder brother and his gentile girlfriend burst like a water mains. Daphna with no right whatsoever – it's not her flat – demands they sleep on the small single bed. Matthew Wyn



Davies' Liam already simmers with resentment, but Daphna's been needling Jonah on the whereabouts of their grandfather's precious Chai, the one item of inestimable personal value he's hidden in his tongue for two years in Auschwitz (we assume) where he was branded.

That motif returns at the end but for now it's the large treble clef on girlfriend Melody's calf that draws attention. Jews don't do tattoos except the imposed ones, Daphna starts on the hapless

sweet-natured and unintellectual Melody – Sarah Drew's fine portrait of a young good-natured woman wholly unprepared for the verbal needling and onslaught that outrages Liam. And she'd not Daphna, but Diana, he counters – to her assertion that Liam's real Hebrew name is Schlomo – Solomon. It's also a play about claiming and disavowing birthrights.

When alone Daphna asks Melody her origins. Melody's 'Delaware... forever' means her ancestors committed genocide on the indigenous population and so on. It's not so much virtue-signalling but vice-pointing. Your very ethnicity is a criminal existence, Daphna suggests. It's uneasily very funny, especially when Drew is pushed to revisit her brief opera-singing degree and render a terribly pinched and literally-pointed 'Summertime'. It's a consummate Florence Foster Jenkins performance and deserves its round of applause.

Daphna keeps up her onslaught. We laugh at her, certainly, but are with her too as she lands tellingly on the unexamined life, the bland assumptions of cuteness and unblinking reach-me-down robotic American identity. 'We're all Americans' as even Liam and certainly Melody pleads, isn't quite enough.

But Daphna's met her match in Liam. Wyn Davies only sheaths his fury at the behest of Melody and Jonah but breaks out when Melody's not present, since the two countervailing dynamics are the ownership of the chai and the unexpected interventions of Melody. Furious at Daphna's overweening assumption of rightness Liam's equally sure the chai should be awarded to the man who's going to do with it what poppy did: bestow it on his fiancée as he proposes. Daphna and Melody guess at different moments in his monologue, with the most electrifying results. What falls out after that will have to be seen. In particular Melody's sweet-natured insistence that everything is brought out. And in superb catastrophic fashion it is.

Wyn Davies wholly convinces as the towering yet fury-hunched intellectual – Liam's off for a PhD, funded by ma and pa – and as waspishly alert to Daphna's failings as she is of his family. For one Liam punctures her fantasy of marrying an Israeli soldier who had one-night drunken sex with her, and says more tellingly that her furies stem from never having loved, and probably never loving in the future. It's certainly George and Mildred for cousins. Wyn Davies energizes, hunches and uncoils in a watchful, forever steaming and barely-contained rage. The electricity and animosity he and Spencer generate together is mesmerising. It's not a time for healing. Yet the final scene is the play's reward, an extraordinary revelation and answering gesture. You'll have to see it.

This is a play supremely worth seeing: for its flayed comedy, acerbic wit, farce-dipped dynamics, monster roles, wincing and raw truths. It's a triumph from all parties in the best NVT American vein. Don't miss it.

Review by Simon Jenner | Photos by Strat Mastoris | Also published on www.fringereview.co.uk

MIKE GRANEY TALENTED WRITER, ACTOR & FAMILY MAN

Mike Graney a long standing and talented member has sadly died. Mike was a writer and actor of many attributes and all here at NVT will greatly miss him. To demonstrate how much he meant to us at NVT, his family and friends, here are some thoughts; first from Laura Scobie the second from Andy Thomas, both good friends of his and their words echo all of our thoughts for Mike.

Dearest Sweet Michael.

I'll miss you, Dude. I'll miss your wisdom, your wit and your warmth.

I've been lucky enough to know you for eight years. It all started when we treaded the boards together playing 'Stage Daughter' and 'Stage Dad' (ssh, that was our little plot device). You took this 'Stage Dad' malarkey to the max when, after that NVT Gala the other year, you turned to me and cautiously asked "are you seriously going to get the bus home dressed like that?". Wisdom at it's best. If you all saw the costume I was wearing, I would have froze right enough.

We then played Bro and Sis in an Andy Thomas sketch where you put on a hilarious voice and pulled the best pubescent faces the world has ever known. In another sketch, you wore some memorable, but quite frankly, dreadful socks. Your performance, however, was memorable (even if it did put me off train tickets for life).

You always excelled yourself in the wit department. I remember once someone couldn't make it to one of our get-togethers and we were told "sorry he can't make it. He had to go back to Haywards Heath", to which you replied (as only a Brighton person could) with "No. Tell him WE'RE sorry he had to go back to Haywards Heath". Genius. In all seriousness, though, you were a pretty near-perfect human being (apart from your fondness for Marmite, which I will never understand). I'm convinced you may have actually been The Doctor. I swear you must have had two hearts as you carried so much love for Amanda Geraldine Graney, Sylvana Amber West, gorgeous baby Olivia, your two feline fur-babies, all your family and friends. You also carried so much hope in your heart for the world and cared about social justice. Jeez, you were The Doctor after all! Thank you for your support, encouragement, creativity and for enriching all our lives.

I'm a better person for knowing you. I shall carry on watching 'Doctor Who', old and new, in your honour (plus it gives me an excuse to perv over David Tennant).

Love you Mike. Love your beautiful family, the family you've created and all your wonderful friends. You are a magical marvel and you'll be in my heart forever. Shine bright like a star! Allons-y! Love Laura xxxxxx

Like many others I'm thinking of our friend Mike Graney, who has sadly passed away. Mike was such a sweet man and didn't have a bad bone in his body. He was really supportive of creative projects and has a connection to the NVT that goes back two decades. My earliest memory of him was when he updated a few gags in my first comedy play 'The Therapists' in 2006 ("People buy DVDs now, not videos" for example) and he was immensely supportive in the double act I did with Robert Maloney where he was always there, in the front row, never missed a show and would give us feedback. He talked about our act to others. Mike was part of a hub of writers and performers who came from the NVT who wanted to experiment with sketches and short plays and try something new and different. He knew that you had to take risks. His play 'Descent', which was put on that the NVT was mysterious, surreal and entertaining and a lot of people who became influential at the NVT first met during that production. People became friends through Mike.

Later on we put on a sketch night 'A nightmare on Elm Grove' in town and Mike played a teenager haunted by Freddy Tutor, a dead maths teacher played by Colin Elmer. Mike was hilarious and stole the show with his lines and breaking voice. And he worked really hard too. Going over lines and scenes again and again until he was happy with it. And as hapless romantic 'Mike Cookie', he gave an outrageous French accent that Peter Sellers would have been proud of ("We shall "engage" in lovemaking at midnight!") and Mike was good at pathos too, mastering crestfallen characters. Mike's play 'Ill Duce' which explored the period of Mussolini's life when he was struggling with his health along with running a dictatorship of Italy was another example of a well imagined, nuanced piece about human behaviour. And 'Ill Duce; will be seen again at some point.

I loved listening to Mike and he was great to turn to if you had problems. I used to hook up with him and talk about relationships and the banality of life before going to see the new Bond movie. He never failed to cheer me up. I never saw him down. His stories from working at airports were always engaging and hilarious and a bit dark and we used to ask him to repeat them, they were so enjoyable. When he became ill he faced his battles bravely and never without humour and a sense of perspective. I don't know how he managed that. I shake my head. But that was Mike. But I remember thinking that it was a definition of 'humanity', that he had an otherworldly wisdom, a good man, a handsome man and another life affirming personality I'm glad I met through that remarkable New Venture Theatre. He was so delighted that he got married and became a father. He said to me "I've done my job, Andy". That was Mike. He had no agenda, no ego, he loved his life, his family and friends, Doctor Who, and he wanted to help. I smiled every time I saw him. Along with Richard Gamper I've lost two people I relied on always being there. They will continue to inspire me and give me strength. We won't forget Mike Graney. This was someone else it was far too early to say goodbye to. Grateful for all the 'Hellos' then. Catch up one day, Mike. Do repeat the stories. And thank you. Andy Thomas

NVT ACTING CLASS

Mondays 7:30 - 9:30pm

NO CLASSES IN MAY RESTART ON 4 JUNE

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
'1984' by George Orwell, Adapted by Matthew Dunster 11-19 May Theatre Upstairs				
'Elephant's Graveyard' by George Brant Rehearsed Reading 1-2 June Studio				
'Jumpy' by April de Angelis, 15-23 June Theatre Upstairs				

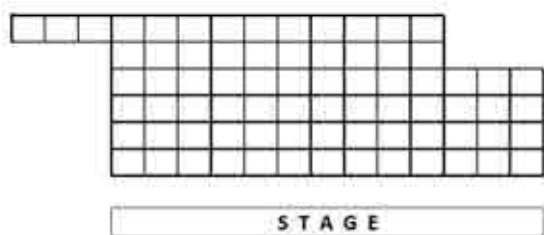
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Theatre Upstairs Allocated Seating

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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