

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | Lovesong by Abi Morgan | Directed by Kirsty Elmer | 20-28 July

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

'You're having a crisis. It's called being 50. You must be having it too!'

The more I have worked on this play with my very talented cast, the more I appreciate what a brilliant play April de Angelis has written. The text is so well crafted and the characters so rich and layered, 'It's incisive,' 'it's intelligent' and its 'very, very funny,' but it is also a deeply moving look at relationships.

It's a frank and very funny 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 stale 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.

As soon as I read *Jumpy*, I knew I wanted to direct it. It's a brilliant example of how a play successfully manages to hit that line between comedy and drama absolutely spot on. It also, unusually, has a woman experiencing a mid-life crisis at the centre of it... It's a play that everyone can identify with; that is - everyone who has ever been a teenager or knows any teenagers! I imagine there will be gasps of uncomfortable recognition amidst the laughter when the cracking dialogue, often deliciously rude, hits a nerve.

On one level, *Jumpy* is the simple and funny story of a mother and her wayward daughter. But on another level it explores what it means to be a woman in the modern world.

Jumpy premiered to rave reviews in 2011 with Tamsin Grieg in the lead role at The Royal Court.

'Funny, deliciously rude and piercingly moving.' Daily Telegraph

I have directed over 30 productions (including Award winning productions: 'Brief Encounter,' October 2017, and 'Daisy Pulls it off' June 2015, for the Wick Theatre Company) but this is my first full length production for NVT.



Maya Bowles as Tilly, Sharon Drain as Hilary

My thanks and appreciation go out to all those involved in this production of 'Jumpy,' It's been a real privilege working with such a talented cast and crew. A special thanks to Simon for his innovative set design, Adam Hewitt for the original music created especially for this show and to Cherry Shakewell for the burlesque choreography. We hope you'll love the show as much as we do.

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



Alex Williams, Mark Green, Diana Banham,
Alice Ringholm Heder

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.

Photo by Emma Bailey

AUDITION NOTICE | Orphans by Dennis Kelly Directed by Charly Sommers

Performance dates: 2nd-10th November

Auditions: Monday 9th / Tuesday 10th July, from 7pm, Main Theatre

Recalls: 14th / 15th July, from 3pm, Main Theatre

Rehearsals: Prep work from early August; rehearsals from early September 3/4 times a week; dates to be confirmed once cast.

Synopsis: Plunging straight into a thrilling, contemporary suspense story, *Orphans* takes you on a chilling journey... While Danny and Helen eat dinner, the lights go up and we see Liam... Helen's brother stands before them soaked in blood. But whose is it? And what is Liam hiding? As events unfold, the outside world seems ever-more dystopian, and the night turns far darker than any of them could imagine...

Kelly is a master of naturalistic writing: the characters make mistakes, repeat themselves and leave sentences unfinished... With beautifully inarticulate dialogue, encroaching tension and unfolding secrets throughout, *Orphans* is both stark and intense.

Characters:

HELEN: Helen has a young child and is in the early stages of pregnancy. She and her brother, Liam – the eponymous orphans – went into care after their parents died in a fire. Mid 20's to late 30's, working class dialect – probably London.

DANNY: Helen's partner. Won't make waves; muddles though... Danny is looking for ways to cope with an emasculating feeling: he has an ever-shrinking sense of control. Mid 20's to early 40's.

LIAM: Unhinged. Two years younger than his sister, Helen, Liam is both the more vulnerable and reckless of the orphans. Early 20's to mid 30's, working class dialect – probably London.

If you like the sound of the play, and can see yourself in one of the roles, please contact me for a script and more details. Charly Sommers, charlysomers@me.com, 07752 903030

We're also looking to build a positive, proactive crew so please get in touch if you're interested in a backstage role.

1984 by George Orwell | Adapted by Matthew Dunster Directed by Nick Richards | Review by Peter Poole

With some powerful television and cinematic precedents, it was both unusual and exciting to see a recent stage production of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as *1984*, from an adaptation by Matthew Dunster and performed at the New Venture Theatre, Brighton, in May 2018. Given the book's multiple locations, could a stage play be little more than an improvised version, perhaps well acted but leaving too much to the imagination? Fortunately, this was not the case given the ingenious theatrics deployed. The upstairs proscenium theatre featured a simple grey set of angled walls, a projected 'ingsoc' logo and rows of red chairs. These were used by the boiler-suited cast to evoke the hall of records where Winston works, tea trays doubling for speak-writes and suggesting gigantic iPads. The set's deceptive nature was revealed as the left wall folded inwards to reveal Winston's home, while the right concealed a very effective depiction of a seedy bedroom where Winston and his girlfriend Julia find momentary refuge from the state.



Knowing the story, I wondered at which point the play would choose to place the interval. There were several where this could have been done, such as after the couple's trip to the golden country beyond London, or their induction into the rebellious Brotherhood by O'Brien. Without spoiling too much of the plot, suffice to say that the bedroom set provided more than the expected climax in a scene which, to me, is always the most shocking in any version (go and read the book!)

We were then literally ordered from the auditorium by barking figures in black balaclavas, as if attending some official Party function. There were a few nervous titters from playgoers at this unexpected oozing of drama into reality, breaking the 'fourth wall', but we were left in no doubt by the figures in black: leave no item behind.

The reason became clear after the interval, when we were unexpectedly shown into the





downstairs studio theatre, its black floor painted white for the Ministry of Love. Knowing the story, I had somewhat dreaded the second half given the interval's placing, and indeed it proved to be unremitting. Winston was now in an orange jumpsuit, with a nod to contemporary Guantanamo detainees, while other suspects told their stories of capture before being led to Room 101, the place of everyone's nightmare. There were a few unexpected laughs from the audience, given the almost comical pathos of the tales, but these stopped once the prolonged interrogation of Winston by O'Brien began.



After an initial assault with a cattle prod, a rather overdone strobe light making it hard to watch, Winston was strapped to a rack, electrocuted and told how to please the Party – or Big Brother, a distant figure of authority, supposedly benign, who

the Party forever serve. He was also beaten by O'Brien, vomiting on the floor, an audience member beside me in the front row visibly distressed. When these methods failed to work, the ultimate sanction was Winston's worst fear – rats.

How would this be done on stage? The live BBC television version had used a filmed insert, but clever manipulation of a cloth sack and a horrific device strapped to Winston's face convinced us the hungry rodents were there.

This being a dystopian story, the opposite of a utopia, it is not giving away too much to say Winston eventually complies to the state - tragically betraying Julia who herself betrays him, according to a last conversation. At which point, both can only love Big Brother. Usually portrayed by gaunt or older actors - Peter Cushing, Edmund O'Brien, John Hurt - Scott Roberts was a more youthful, plucky Winston. A rebellious proto-geek, perhaps, given his mastery of the speak-write machines. Jim Calderwood was a sharply dressed, urbane O'Brien, exuding an initial air of genial authority and then a calm, confident menace. Charlotte Anne Atkinson was excellent as Julia, giving the production's most naturalistic performance – totally believable. Smaller parts and cameos were effective, with clever doubling for minor roles and masking behind sinister balaclavas. Clearly, this was based on a novel: Orwell could never have cast so many parts in an original play!

Lighting effects were exemplary, especially during an air raid scene, along with the use of video projection to simulate giant telescreens. Perhaps the voice announcements lacked a sufficiently authoritarian tone, and we never had a visual impression of Big Brother except a brief glimpse of a poster depicting what appeared to be a CCTV camera. The production's own poster has a silhouette that, on second glance, is a stylized Donald Trump! But there is no need to impose a contemporary analogy: Orwell's work is critical of any tyranny, left or right.

However, these are minor points. Overall, 'doubleplusgood'.

Review by Peter Poole
Photos by Strat Mastoris

Review of The 2018 - 2019 Season by Rod Lewis

With exciting productions of April de Angelis's *Jumpy* and Abi Morgan's *Lovesong* still to come, we will soon be nearing the end of our highly successful 70th Anniversary season. Successful not just in excellent box office returns but also in the way that all at NVT have risen to the many challenges are part and parcel of aiming to present a wide variety of drama to an extremely high standard! Successful too in terms of the amount of pleasure both given and taken. Thanks to all for a fine achievement!

So, now our 71st season is already just around the corner - 2018 -19 - with its fresh set of opportunities and experiences to be enjoyed. As ever I am indebted to all who have put forward their creative ideas and also to those who have helped balance out all the knotty logistical problems involved with who can do what, when and where.

5 - 13 October 2018

Happy Now by Lucinda Coxon

directed by Claire Lewis

TU - 4M / 3F

2 - 10 November 2018

Orphans by Dennis Kelly

directed by Charly Sommers ST - 2M / 1F

30 Nov - 8 December 2018

Be My Baby by Amanda Whittington

directed by Jerry Lyne

TU - 6F

18 - 26 January 2019

Lone Star & Laundry and *Bourbon* (Double Bill) by James McLure

directed by Mark Lester & tbc

TU - 3M & 3F

15 - 23 February 2019

The Language Archive by Julia Cho

directed by Sam Chittenden

ST - 2M / 3F

15 - 23 March 2019

The Father by Florian Zeller

directed by Mary Allen

TU- 3M / 3F

12 - 20 April 2019 *Pickwick and Weller Dickens*/Barry Purchase - directed by Rod Lewis

ST - large cast -

* 17 - 25 May 2019 TBC

* 14 - 22 June 2019 TBC

19 - 27 July New plays - 4-6 short developed plays TU - 10-18 mixed cast

* Unfortunately, due to very last minute London productions being scheduled which involve rights issues - at time of going to print - May and June productions are up in the air at the moment but hopefully these issues will be resolved soon.

Watch this space!

Find out much about the nature, and details, of each of the individual productions by coming to the Social Evening on Friday June 8th when next season's directors will be telling us much more about their productions. Look forward to seeing you there!

Let's all help make 2018-19 yet another great NVT season!

Rod Lewis

AUDITION NOTICE | Happy Now? by Lucinda Coxon Directed by Claire Lewis

Production Dates: 5-13 October 2018

Auditions: Sunday 24 June, 3pm

Recalls: Tuesday 26 June, 7pm

Rehearsals: Prep work & 1:1s during August. Rehearsals to start 31 August, four times a week. Days/times tbc once cast.

Synopsis: A chance encounter at a conference hotel plays upon Kitty's mind as she struggles to balance personal freedom with family life, fidelity and a testing job.

Wonderfully funny and painfully accurate, Happy Now? is a wise and darkly comic take on contemporary life.

Characters

Michael - Business executive. Colourful, charming, charismatic. Possible slight regional accent. Late 40s/Early 50s

Kitty - High-flying working mum. Sardonic, strong-minded, intelligent. Late 30s/Early 40s

Johnny - Kitty's husband. Ex-Lawyer now teacher. Good-natured, intelligent, conscientious. Late 30s/Early 40s

Miles - Friend to Kitty & Johnny. Lawyer. Flamboyant, acerbic, cynical, alcoholic. Late 30s/Early 40s

Bea - Miles' wife. House-wife, undervalued and bullied by her husband. Late 30s/Early 40s

Carl - Lawyer. Kitty's gay best friend. Caring, witty. Late 30s/Early 40s

June - Kitty's infuriating mother. Hypochondriac, attention seeking. Possible slight regional accent. 60+

If you are interested in the play and would like to know more, please contact me for a script and further information.

(e) claire.lewis@sky.com (m) 07841 115 250

If you would like to be involved in this production as crew, please contact the Production Manager Uli.

ulrike.schilling@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
'Elephant's Graveyard' by George Brant Rehearsed Reading 1-2 June <i>Studio</i>				
'Jumpy' by April de Angelis, 15-23 June <i>Theatre Upstairs</i>				
'Lovesong' by Abi Morgan, 20-28 July <i>Studio</i>				

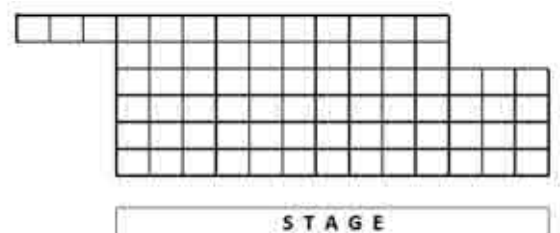
It is important you provide your name, phone number & address, and email address where possible.

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

Bedford Place Brighton BN1 2PT	General Enquiries 01273 353808 info@newventure.org.uk	Box Office Info 01273 746118 boxoffice@newventure.org.uk	www.newventure.org.uk @nvt_brighton
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Chairman	Ian Black	chairman@newventure.org.uk
Secretary	Jerry Lyne	secretary@newventure.org.uk
Artistic Director	Rod Lewis	art.dir@newventure.org.uk
Treasurer	Iain Hay	finance@newventure.org.uk
Production Coordinator	Tom Kitch	prod.mgr@newventure.org.uk
Technical Coordinator	Jezz Bowden	tech@newventure.org.uk
Buildings Manager	Peter Meekings	buildings@newventure.org.uk
Fundraising	Michael Stubbs	fundraising@newventure.org.uk
Marketing & Publicity	- Vacant-	publicity@newventure.org.uk
Volunteer Coordinator	Melissa Noble	volunteering@newventure.org.uk
Front of House Coordinator	Jezz Bowden	frontofhouse@newventure.org.uk
Box Office Manager	Christine Stubbs	boxoffice@newventure.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Gill Balfour	newsletter@newventure.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Anne Gilson	membership@newventure.org.uk
LTG Rep & CPO	Pat Boxall	pat.boxall@newventure.org.uk
Social Events Manager	Scott Roberts	social@newventure.org.uk
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