

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | Lone Star & Laundry and Bourbon by James McLure
Directed by Mark Lester and Bryony Weaver

Be my Baby by Amanda Whittington |
Directed by Jerry Lyne | 30 November - 8 December



Ella Verity, Rosie Blackadder, Lizzie Troon and Diane Robinson

It's 1964 but the sixties aren't swinging for Mary Adams, 19-years-old, unmarried and pregnant. She is sent by her mother, intent on keeping up appearances, to St. Saviours, a Church of England mother-and-baby home in the North of England run by a formidable Matron. Mary is set to work in the laundry and shares a dormitory with the tough-talking Queenie. Mary, along with other girls in the home, has to cope with the dawning realisation that she may well have to give up the baby for adoption, so she plots her escape.

The girls bond over their love of girl-groups of the times, such as the Ronettes and the Chiffons, and the music entertains, consoles and inspires them as they try to dance away their cares as the birth of their babies approaches. When Mary finally gives birth to her baby she puts up a desperate fight to keep her child. Despite all this, Mary and the other girl's youthful effervescence shines through so we share their laughter and tears as they dance their troubles away in this emotional and bitter sweet comedy.

The Playwright, Amanda Whittington, was exploring the plight of adopted children and wanted to write a play about them. But as she delved deeper, she felt herself needing to find out how it was for those teenage girls, coerced into giving up their child by social pressures, not really understanding the consequences of adoption and the emotional cost of giving up a child forever.

Be My Baby is a popular GCSE and 'A' level choice in English Literature and Theatre Studies.

Her well known work, *The Thrill of Love*, the story of Ruth Ellis's tragic love affair which ended up with her execution, was recently performed at NVT, directed by Pat Boxall, receiving excellent reviews.

Amanda Whittington began her writing career as a freelance journalist for titles including Nottingham Evening Post, New Statesman, Society and The Face. In 2016, her radio drama *D for Dexter* won



Ella Verity, Rosie Blackadder & Lizzie Troon

Best Series/Serial in the BBC Audio Drama Awards, and the fourth series was broadcast in November 2017. She is currently co-chair of the Writer's Guild Radio Committee.

Uli and I are delighted to have such a talented cast, crew and production team who have the creativity and dedication to make this show a success. So don't miss this show, we are sure you will catch the infectiousness of the girls' laughter and tears during the short time we share with them.

We look forward to seeing you.

Jerry Lyne

Photos by Strat Mastoris

Orphans by Dennis Kelly | Directed by Charly Sommers Review by Simon Jenner

Gary Owen's *Violence and Son* is just one of his plays showing a profound kinship with Dennis Kelly. It's an apt summary of their respective progeny. It's difficult to think of a play of theirs where violence doesn't smash into an audience's solar plexus.

Kelly's achieved an outstanding hit this year with his Royal Court *Girls & Boys* – even more shocking than his 2009 *Orphans*. In nine years he's gained even more cunning, craft and conviction. *Orphans* also unpeels an act of violence, though by stripping back and resolving, rather than straight narrating. It takes more risks and being a (mainly) three-hander, not a solo performance, owns a visceral dynamic. In the right hands, Kelly's mastery of dialogue is thrilling.

No pressure then for debut director Charly Sommers, known as actor and playwright (in the NVT shorts series of

2017). She's blessed with Tim McQuillan-Wright's set constructed for the NVT Studio by Simon Glazier and team, a sweep of diagonals, all diamonds to crack diamonds. A table and two chairs in dove grey flare a white and yellow suggestion of food, white wine; a light-grey rhomboid beneath is envired by deeper grey. Behind, there's a skew-mounted rectangular white frame where shadows of chairs and table suggest themselves. After the interval it's stripped to reveal an identical black diptych of chairs with table, at a steep-raked angle. Which then falls into total shadow. Another chair's fetched. Strat Mastoris suffuses dinner lighting with sheer blackouts. Saira Yates' costumes ensure downbeat t-shirts for the men; only Helen the single female protagonist asserts sartorial killer dress: one black number and grey-green robe.

Jonathan Howlett appeared just once here in *1984*, the only one of the trio to do so. His Liam is joined by Stuart Curlett making his stage debut as Danny, and Cerys Knighton's Helen.

Liam's arrived at his sister Helen's house in a t-shirt dripping with blood. He's not quite articulate, blathering about helping a man who's been hurt. He suffers from some distress and it seems learning disability. Helen's rational liberal husband Danny tries to pin down what's happening



Stuart Curlett & Cerys Knighton



Cerys Knighton & Jonathan Howlett



Jonathan Howlett, Stuart Curlett & Cerys Knighton

dialogue spinning like plates; some smash. This cast outstandingly make them sing too. The ensemble is extraordinarily tight; pauses too are on point.

Helen's threats of violence match anything she suspects in her brother. If Danny calls the police she threatens to terminate her second pregnancy. Kelly's excellent at showing Helen's manipulative use of language: 'No I'm not saying don't call' morphs to threaten Danny with what she'll do if he does. Desperately thinking about how to contain Liam's latest run-in – it transpires she lied to the police about another incident when Danny was away – her ferocity knows few bounds.

The clue's in the title. Their parents dying in a fire (typically violent, no explanation) Helen stayed with Liam although she had been offered an attractive family. At the time Liam violently assaulted another boy, Brian; they lost their only good school. Later it transpires why he did this, what Helen lost.

Liam's life revolves around Helen and Danny whom he says he'd 'do anything for'. He expresses love mawkishly, at the edge of saying. His axes of inarticulate hang-dog and cloying fantasy of a close family are riven by what he in fact does. He needs Helen close. You might feel it's merely incestuous desperation. Helen's all he's got. But deeper than that, violence is all he possesses.

Helen will do anything for Liam, lie to the police, caring nothing for any victim. 'He's nothing to do with us.' Kelly depicts primal, selfish clan loyalties. Outside too, she suggests, the world is more violent than now; Danny's been assaulted for some dim reason. Liam claims he's acted from loyalty.

Stripped back to truth, as Danny finally asserts it, backed by Helen worried at the DNA trail, Liam admits what we suspected plainly. But is he, and who is the man he assaults, still alive?

Liam and Danny between them depict Liam's Nazi-memorabilia-obsessed friend Ian. There's a connection. And Danny's asked to make a decision.

Here's where Kelly's psychology fails. He suggests we've all got thuggery, even racist abuse, deeply coiled. I'm not entirely convinced of certain actions at this point, and sketched a mental alternative before it unfolded. But the outfall's utterly convincing and the cast know no bounds in depicting it. There's three volte-faces from Danny, and one each from Helen when she learns more truth and Liam, when co-operation isn't forthcoming.

and the fiercely loyal Helen rounds on him, rebuking his probing questions however delicately phrased. Like, can we help this injured man Liam held? Helen gets at the truth Danny doesn't quite want to see, calling Danny then later Liam a piece of shit.

Overlapping dialogue, elliptical phrases and incomplete statements are kerned here to an inch of comprehension. It's beyond Pinter or Mamet since it's not indicative of a hidden narrative of which these are disiecta membra. It's happening, out of control and this is



Stuart Curlett & Jonathan Howlett

Howlett's Liam is outstandingly good in his halted and lame speech gnarled with a simmering fury just beneath. Everything in him's bunched, verbally and physically. Like Greek tragedy, he has a coil. The others are more than foils to this, and stopping Liam's full unleashing – both himself and what's he brought to them – becomes a panicky priority. He has to be the key to the work. Kelly's wholly convincing portrayal of a pathologically-motivated man, Liam's use of broken half-sentences and mewling retreats is beautifully written. Howlett seizes on it.

Knighton's hardly less remarkable. Her taut body, snappy lines and range, from explosive temper to wheedling, echoes her brother. Kelly makes her far more articulate, suggesting something mentally distressed in Liam. Knighton's intensity is like Medea's. She's riveting as an unlikeable manipulative woman whose disdain for her husband suggests she married him to gain the professional liberal family life she missed out on; and is redeemed by the dawning realisation of whom she should love, perhaps does. But will she be too late? She takes redemptive action



Jonathan Howlett & Stuart Curlett



Cerys Knighton

anyway.

It's difficult to credit this is Curlett's stage debut as Danny. Whilst his speech patterns are normative – typically liberal for much of the play – he too is forced to enter pitch black territory and recount horrors with a mind suddenly clenched against itself. It's a remarkable performance, increasingly so when Danny's range is widened and his own dark is allowed play. We should see more of him – and clearly Knighton and Howlett. Sommers too doesn't direct in the least like a debut creative. As an experienced actor she clearly values letting the cast find their own rhythms, then tautening.

This is an ensemble – and production – of distinction. There's also a surprise addition to the cast. But you'll have to see that. Another Kelly masterstroke handled with delicacy and aplomb. It might be nearly sold out but queue for returns if you possibly can.

By Simon Jenner
Previously published in Fringe Review
Photos by Strat Mastoris

Proposals to Direct for 2019/20 Season now open.

Please see the website for details or email

art.dir@newventure.org.uk

Audition Notice | 'The Father' by Florian Zeller |

Directed by Mary Allen

PRODUCTION DATES - 15th - 23rd March 2019 in the Theatre Upstairs.

AUDITIONS

Part of the Father: Sunday 21st October 2pm - 5pm in the South Hall NVT

Other characters: Saturday 24th November 2pm - 6pm and Sunday 25th November 2pm - 5pm in the South Hall NVT

Please book an audition time with the Production Manager Uli: ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk

SYNOPSIS - Andre, a man with dementia, is wrestling to control or even understand his daily life. The audience shares Andre's uncertainty about his multiple confusions, as the play is seen from Andre's point of view. Is the action taking place in Andre's flat or his daughter Anne's? Is Anne about to abandon him to live in London with her lover, or does she remain in Paris, taking her dad in to live with her? And what happened to his watch? His daughter and her partner are each played by two different actors, so Andre is never sure who he's talking to. Different items of furniture keep appearing and disappearing on the set, until finally the stage is bare, apart from a hospital bed in a care home. Scenes are played and replayed, the action going backwards and forwards.

When I saw *The Father*, I was completely blown away by the quality of the writing, and the way in which the audience is effectively inside Andre's head: rather than being 'told' about Andre's dementia we experience it with him, and this in turn makes the play both funnier and more moving.

CAST- A key to the play's success will be ability of Andre to engage with each reality presented to him, puzzling how to connect it with what he previously thought. The other characters will each be inhabiting their own reality, even if this differs within a scene, and they must be able to convey the non-negotiable nature of that reality in conversation with Andre.

ANDRE - THE FATHER - Andre has dementia, he inhabits a world of contradictions: circumstances continually perplex him, and the audience sees him as thoughtful, creative, trying to make sense of what is happening, often holding two or more possible realities in his head, confused as to which - if either - is the right one. He can come across as sweetly eccentric; he can be very charming, he is capable of both a fierce lucidity and a senile cantankerousness. Despite his frequent bewilderment he can sense the emotional realities of those around him: the love of his daughter Anne, and the resentment shown by her partner Pierre. Playing age anywhere between late 60s and early 80s.

ANNE - Anne is Andre's daughter. She's kind, frustrated, loves her father very much, feels guilty she's prepared to consider putting him in a care home. At times the audience has the impression she's at the end of her tether. She veers between exasperation and compassion, one night even having a fantasy that she's murdered Andre. At any stage in the action she has a firm, non-negotiable grasp of her reality, which she tries to persuade Andre to accept. During the play Anne's reality changes, but each time she inhabits the reality of the moment with complete conviction. The play pivots around Anne's relationship with Andre, her father. Playing age dependent on who is cast as the father, probably around late 30s and early 40s.

PIERRE - Pierre is Anne's partner, often not recognised by Andre. He doesn't feel much affection for Andre, and is emphatic that he should go into a care home. He is quite emotionally withdrawn, from Andre and at times from Anne, although at other times he's very affectionate towards her. He can be hostile towards Andre, even sinister when he implicitly threatens him. Anne jokes that both she and Andre are sometimes frightened of Pierre. Playing age mid 40s.

LAURA - Laura is the carer. She is affectionate and tolerant, even when Andre mocks her for speaking in a silly voice, as though Andre is retarded. Sometimes she engages with Andre's reality, although she's astonished when Andre delivers a long speech saying he doesn't need her to look after him and she can bugger off. Playing age around 30.

WOMAN - The Woman has two roles. First she plays Anne, profoundly confusing Andre who doesn't recognise her. She inhabits a shifting reality during which characters change, events contradict themselves. She is very loving to Andre. In addition, near the end, she comes on in the role of Laura, Andre's new carer, then the role of the nurse in the care home, kind towards Andre but also briskly efficient. Playing age early 30s.

MAN - The Man is the other actor playing the role of Pierre. He is kind in a cursory sort of way, replying laconically to Andre's confusions about his role in Anne's life. Later he is threatening Andre and is abusive. He has another role in the final scene as the doctor in the care home. Playing age mid 40s.

We will be using the Faber and Faber edition of the play.

CREW - We are still looking for volunteers to help with the production, especially with costume, set building, operations and backstage.

If you are interested in getting involved, please email Uli, the Production Manager.

ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk

New Venture Theatre Youth Theatre

NEW VENTURE YOUTH THEATRE

Do you love Theatre? Want to take part rather than just watching?
Then New Venture Youth Theatre might be just the thing!

We run a weekly theatre class for young people aged 13 to 17. We teach a range of skills and expert professional standards from our pupils.

They can expect:

- Quality structured sessions led by trained drama specialists working in the field.
- Exposure to different theatre styles and techniques: physical theatre, improvisation, texted, devised.
- Diverse experience in our theatre spaces: studio and end-on theatre.
- Experience with lighting, set, props, costume, sound.
- Public performance opportunities.

All in a friendly, calm and supportive environment.

It's affordable - £50 per term of 12 weeks running term time + 2 fees per annum. And you can try it without commitment - the first session is free.

The Youth Theatre (NYTT) is located in our theatre on Bedford Place, Brighton and is conveniently serviced by a wide range of public bus services.

If you are interested in becoming part of our vibrant and friendly youth theatre classes, contact the NYTT co-ordinator nytt@newventure.org.uk

New Venture Theatre Youth Theatre (NVTYT) is accepting new pupils between the ages of 13-18 to join its exciting and inspiring classes. Our next term begins on 18/01/2019.

The class is led by Chelsea Newton Mountney (A fellow of The Young Vic Directors Programme) and previous members have gone on to work with the National Youth Theatre, as well as perform in NVT's flagship productions. Chelsea says "They are such a joy for me to teach. Their freedom and creativity are a constant source of inspiration to me."

During a period of tightened purse strings, classes are £50 a term which compare very favourably to similar classes in Brighton. In addition to this, students get the opportunity to perform in a space specifically catered towards performance, as well as classes covering many different styles and aspects of theatre. New Venture Theatre has always put engagement with the local community at the forefront of its agenda. As a part of the community the youth play a fundamental and exciting role in the future of the theatre.

If you know any teenagers between the ages of 13-18 that would be interested in attending, the classes take place Fridays from 16:30-18:30, please see the NVT website for more details!



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 improvemnets to our theatre. Our angels have proven to be generous in the assiatnce 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 ~ Access to the Theatre Upstairs is only possible by 4 flights of stairs and therefore may not be suitable for those with mobility difficulties. PLEASE NOTE: From 1st January, 2019, ticket prices will be: Members £9, Non-Members £10, for all performances.

Cut along the line and return your completed slip together with a cheque to: New Venture Theatre, Bedford Place, Brighton, BN1 2PT.

	date	member	non-member	total cost
'Be my Baby' by Amanda Whittington, 30 November - 8 December Theatre Upstairs				
'Lone Star & Laundry and Bourbon' by James McLure, 18 - 26 January Theatre Upstairs				
'The Language Archive' by Julia Cho, 15 February - 24 February Studio Theatre				

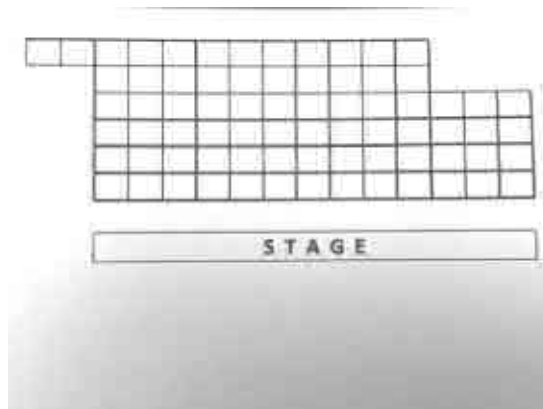
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Theatre Upstairs Allocated Seating

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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