

NEW VENTURE

T H E A T R E

COMING SOON | Be my Baby by Amanda Whittington |

Directed by Jerry Lyne | 30 November - 8 December

**Orphans by Dennis Kelly | Directed by Charly Sommers
2 - 10 November**

Love. Lies. Family Ties...

Let's not beat about the bush: Dennis Kelly's *Orphans* is Dark with a capital D. Opening the script for the first time makes you feel curious and uneasy before any of the characters so much as draws breath. Imagine the scene: Danny and Helen's candlelit meal is immediately interrupted: her brother, Liam, appears beside them, practically dripping with blood. No one speaks...

Picturing that, I had to know more! Whose blood? Why's it on Liam? What's he hiding? Unable to put down the script, I read it through in one sitting, anxious to see how the drama

develops. It's a chilling and suspenseful story that presents emerging truths and buckling trust... Liam and Helen, the eponymous Orphans, share a complex dynamic. They have colourful, turbulent histories, the reach of which insidiously envelops Helen's partner, Danny.

As their evening unfolds, it feels less and less like you're watching a play; it's more like you're bearing witness. The characters evoke so many emotions: everything from admiration and disgust to pity and fear. By the end, the pain of the characters' dysfunction leaves you questioning not only their choices and values, but also your own. No wonder it's won awards.

Kelly's back catalogue is as vast as his talent is broad. His notable works include *Matilda the Musical* co-written with Tim Minchin; Channel 4's conspiracy thriller *Utopia*; and a whole host of award-winning plays. In my opinion, though, the thing that really sets him apart is his ability to create incredibly natural dialogue... Every interruption, hesitation and bite of jet-black humour demonstrates how ordinary people speak in extraordinary circumstances. *Orphans* sees dialogue fizzing out of the truly bleak... As a result, it's the kind of play that preys on your mind long after the cast have taken their final bows.

The best dramas have a way of wrapping you up in the grit of their world: you forget you're watching a play... *Orphans* offers a heavy dose of that social realism. With a crew of NVT's finest – including a set by none other than Tim McQuillen-Wright – and three brilliant NVT newcomers



**Cerys Knighton, Jonathan Howlett,
Stuart Curlett**

in the cast, I'm confident that this production delivers a night to remember. Just don't expect to get a good night's sleep afterwards...

By Charly Sommers

Happy Now? by Lucinda Coxon | Directed by Claire Lewis | Review by Mike Aiken

It's the usual thing. A professional woman is getting pestered by a chancer at a conference. But Kitty is perfectly happy. She has a good husband, two children, and a cute house.

Michael, her audacious interlocutor, asks: 'Why don't men kiss their wives?' He knows all the patter.

She is not having any of this and folds her arms. But it seems to sow a seed of doubt in her.

From this point on, we follow her into the backwoods of the well constructed middle class life. Here is her husband, the dedicated teacher. There are the two kids who love their bedtime story. Her gay friend, with his wonderful partner from Thesaloniki, is always offering a sympathetic ear. Then we meet her strange mother who never answers the phone. And there's the couple who make up a foursome at their delightful dinner parties but get a bit too drunk.

'Why is it that rich white people love eating foreign peasant food?'



Ciaran O'Connor, Sophie Dearlove, Giles Coughlin and Robert Purchase



Simon Hudson, Sophie Dearlove



Ciaran O'Connor

'More wine anyone?'

It's important to keep up appearances. But, as the play proceeds, the surface happiness gets scrapped away until we see the desolation lurking beneath the surface in each character. And that's when our lurch turns up again.

'Happy Now?' is finely observed, deadly serious and hilariously funny. Claire Lewis has managed to direct this to keep those three tensions in constant dynamic balance.



Pat Boxall, Sophie Dearlove



Sophie Dearlove, Emmie Spencer

The play, written by Lucinda Coxon, only premiered ten years ago and remains contemporary. The contradictions and clichés are superb. And there are plenty of reversals in the plot. The script gives the seven strong cast a delicious opportunity to expound some cracking good roles which we can feel they enjoy. It's finely balanced and the actors nearly always maintain the tricky job of playing characters who are themselves actors within phoney lives.

Ian Black's sound design convinces us that there are two kids behind that partition and a cackling TV in the corner. Meanwhile, Michael Folkard's unfussy set, combined with Keith Dawson's lighting, means we can move rapidly between moods and locations without distracting scene changes.

The audience came bubbling down the stairs to the bar at the end. It left us with plenty of laughs. And a serious poke in the stomach too.

More wine anyone?

**Review by Mike Aiken |
Photos by Strat Mastoris**



Ciaron O'Connor, Sophie Dearlove

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT COURSE

If you are interested in learning all the ins and outs of putting on a production, you can shadow a PM on a show next season. We will look at all aspects that are involved, from Auditions to the Get Out, and you can get involved by taking on smaller parts of the role, and learning the ropes, whilst having the support of an experienced PM.

The process takes 3-4 months and per production and we will have regular meetings to ensure everything is covered.

If you would like to find out more or want to sign up, please contact Uli by emailing ulrike.schilling@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

About Mary Allen

'The Father' will be her second full-length production for the NVT. In April 2017 she directed 'The Real Inspector Hound', which was performed in the Studio. In addition she has directed twelve musicals in Suffolk, working with large casts of amateur and professional actors.

If you have any questions about the play or the production, please do get in touch with Mary.

maryallen99@hotmail.com 07729 033662 01273 504349

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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
'Orphans' by Dennis Kelly, 2 - 10 November <i>Studio</i>				
'Be my Baby' by Amanda Whittington, 30 November - 8 December <i>Theatre Upstairs</i>				
'Lone Star & Laundry and Bourbon' by James McLure, 18 - 26 January <i>Theatre Upstairs</i>				

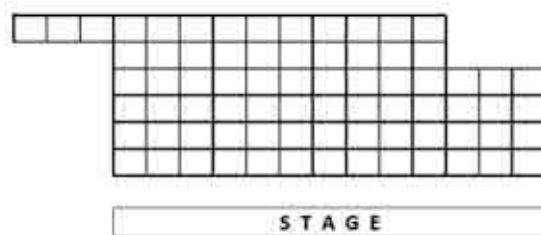
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Theatre Upstairs Allocated Seating

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.



CONTACT US

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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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