

NEW VENTURE THEATRE

newsletter
october 2019

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Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

Preview

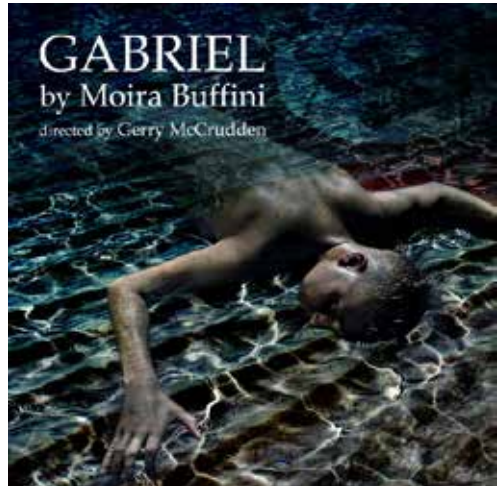
4–12 October 2019

GABRIEL

written by Moira Buffini
directed by Gerry McCrudden

Being given the opportunity to direct a play at the NVT is an honour and you have to do justice to that task. The script of *Gabriel* by Moira Buffini inspired me to get those directorial juices flowing again. For me the story a play tells is critical – it inspires the whole creative process. Then having the combination of a superb cast and a talented creative team brings it to life. Our task is to tell a story which will engage with the audience. And what a gripping tale it is. One American reviewer wrote ‘. . . the sheer polish, narrative dash and dramatic brio of *Gabriel* got my theater-loving juices flowing again pretty quickly’.

As the play unfolds all may not be as it seems. The action takes place in Guernsey in 1943 during an almost forgotten period of our history – the German occupation of the Channel



continued overleaf

NVT 2019–2020 SEASON

October 4–12	Gabriel by Moira Buffini
November 1–9	Fen by Caryl Churchill
December 6–14	Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
January 17–25	Winterling by Jez Butterworth
February 14–22	Talk by Mark Wilson
March 13–21	Quartet by Ronald Harwood
March (to be confirmed)	NVYT production
April 17–25	The Herd by Rory Kennear
May 15–23	Consent by Nina Raine
June 19–27	Miss Julie by August Strindberg
July 17–25	Hangmen by Martin McDonagh

The new newsletter

As you have no doubt noticed, the newsletter has changed. We felt that having the separate newsletter and quarterly brochure was unnecessary and instead we could produce something new and more portable.

So we are doing a trial run of halving the size but doubling the length of the newsletter and incorporating into it the calendar from the brochure. The saving by not having the separate brochure also allows us to print the newsletter in full colour.

Do you like the new format, or do you prefer the old newsletter? Do you have any other suggestions about it? Please send your feedback to:

newsletter@newventure.org.uk

We are also still looking for a permanent newsletter editor. If you are interested, please send an email to the address above.

GABRIEL

Islands. A young man, barely alive, is washed up on a beach. Believing him to perhaps being an RAF pilot, he is taken by the women of the Becquet family into their home, where he is hidden – a dangerous and illicit action. As he recovers consciousness it is apparent that he is fluent in both English and German. But he has no recollection of who he is – British pilot or German soldier? Innocent or madman? Saviour or dark angel?

The bonds between the women in the household are complicated – not always

easy and set within a community in crisis (the Occupation). The arrival of the young man stirs up all sorts of feelings. The presence of a newly arrived German officer on the island and the emerging relationship between him and one of the women complicates matters further.

Gabriel explores memory, identity and imagination and the lies people tell themselves and each other to make the darkness light again. The action builds to a tense and dramatic climax.

Gerry McCrudden, Director



ABOVE Chelsea Mountney, Lyn Snowden, Jack Lynn and Naomi Horsfall (photograph: Cata Lindegaard)

HOPE THAT PLAYS A TUNE ALONE

written by Sarah Drew
directed by Mark Wilson

Mark Wilson directs this moving piece that seems straight out of the world of Barbara Pym: an English village, 1946. Kitty (Victoria Thomson) is a young war widow whose shy desire is prised out of her by Elsa (Emmie Spencer), her sexually assured friend. And Matt Davies's Father Andrew is due round. That's the only detail that puzzles: a Catholic priest isn't usually at the heart of any village community. It's essential for the plot though and though it's plausible, it's the emotional truth that counts. Mark Wilson directs with assurance and the pacing is spot-on.

Writer Sarah Drew with her director and actors manage that in hearts rather than spades. The interaction with Thomson and the always excellent Spencer is both touching and funny, and the dialogue is natural and witty.

Thomson's reactions – skittishly sly with Spencer and genuinely embarrassed to be smoked out, shift dramatically when Father Andrew shows up. He announces a decision and Thomson holds us as her reaction changes with

barely-contained silence. The reaction between all three is tangible, believably real. Davies plays his eager, naïve, perhaps perceptively evasive role with a neat sense of boundaries (he's not the only priest in these plays). Spencer manages to suggest a naturally sympathetic quick person whose eagerness keeps betraying her good intentions. It's Thomson's reactions we remember most, and the dialogue of the women. At the outset Thomson's dancing with someone, and we return to this at the end, realizing what it means.

A quiet heartbreaker, a genuinely affecting play.



ABOVE Victoria Thomason, Emmie Spencer and Matt Davies (photograph: Strat Mastoris)

AGENCY

written by Michelle Donkin
directed by Ian Amos

There's something of the same naturalism in this more contemporary play following. Directed by Ian Amos it's a play of brinkmanship, as Thomson returns in a wholly different role of government or party SPAD who's spilled the beans, admitted to a certain amount of wrongdoing to get at her party leader. James Bennison's Sam, with whom she's had an affair is appalled. He's staying on and her quitting might make for a few uncomfortable moments as the media wait, but what of loyalty?

She could be recording him, she taunts, and invites him to let her strip and find out, wouldn't he like that? There's a

telling to and fro which never seems too long though similar ground is covered from different angles. This could be anything from opposition to the party going to war to a dramatic defection just as they're on the point of leverage and power. Thomson's playful, hard, cajoling, occasionally tender. It's clear she has more feeling for Sam than she admits to at first. Bennison plays Sam as the more hapless individual. If he recorded her, even now, they'd say the same and he'd forget her, sexism being what it is.

The space is neatly taken with later modern office chairs and a typical work-departing cardboard box on a

previous dining table containing a sad cactus, fronds, and personal bric-a-brac. Thomson's versatility, her equal assurance here starkly contrasts with her previous role. Bennison plays up against this assurance with some nice deceptive moves – not least aiming paper balls at a bin and sometimes missing. A watchable, compelling piece of office sexual politics, with more at stake.



ABOVE James Bennison and Victoria Thomason
(photograph: Strat Mastoris)

MATCH AND MATRIMONY

written by Judey Bignell

directed by Chris Gates

Judey Bignell's play is a delicious sincere homage: *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* are both cheerfully referenced. The idea was to have six daughters but here we have two, while one man – Chris Gates, who also directs – plays four parts.

Gates as white-wigged Mr Phelps and the ever-volatile Justine Smith as Mrs Phelps seem just like the Bennetts. Their daughter Evelyn (Emma Lillie Lees) has all the great lines: she's after Mr Cox, whereas her parents would prefer moneyed Mr Mitchell (same men, black and red coats respectively).

Sydney, the younger daughter, however likes Mr Andrews the vicar, a benign but idiotic Mr Collins (though his proposal is given to Mr Mitchell to plague Evelyn with). The only slight impediment is that Chris Knight's Sydney is really the son but, brought up amongst women, passes for one. The dull Mr Andrews has no idea, but they both seem equally enamoured.

Meanwhile, Evelyn's given rather a lot of herself to Mr Cox. 'You've already give 'e a lock of your hair,' Cox reminds Evelyn, 'But this hair is different,' she hints with delicious intent. Still on Mr Cox, vanishing Evelyn pines and will have nothing to do with rich

Mr Mitchell or his red coat. 'I want Cox,' she ripostes. No arguing with that.

Lees is delightful as the lustful frustrated young woman; her sister/brother Sydney, a smaller role, is played in a nicely gawky way by Chris Knight, who is appealingly funny when explaining why it's so hard to be a girl. Smith's OTT Mrs Phelps has a tricky job doing an Alison Steadman with her permanent attack of the vapours, and is vocally on full volume throughout. Parody of a parodic character is never easy, though a touch more shade in voice at least might ground it.

Smith, though, has the hardest part, required to overreact throughout. Gates manages a tour-de-force of voices, including Andrews' northern one, the more RP Cox and Mitchell, and the weary Mr Phelps. He plays up the role-changes by adopting the practice of letting the audience see he's changing roles. All this and directing too.

The end of the play is a kind of quick-change farce of three male characters. I'm not quite sure how this play wants to end. We've had the conclusion of *Some Like It Hot* but not at the end. We're cheated of poor Evelyn. We want Cox too. In the best sense this reminds one of *Morecombe and Wise's* longer sketches.

Two of these plays could easily make the transition to TV. The third tips from theatrical to burlesque without embracing it and the balance seems right. It's just that it ends with a *Noises Off* moment and doesn't truly resolve.

Austen herself got there first with *Love and Freindship*, a misspelt little masterpiece of adolescent high jinks written at 15 with illegitimate children and heroes coming in absurdly on cue; and crusty grandfathers shooting heroines dead. It's as if Austen parodied herself before she found what she was parodying. A dramatization of that, *One Fatal Swoon* by Carole Bremson and Mary Nelson, played at several venues

including the Jermyn Street Theatre throughout 1994-95.

These are all assured pieces, with stronger and more developed writing than previous short plays. That's partly because of the span, but also the truth of the dialogue holds, and it's fluent, authentic of its time, and rarely exceeds its brief. *Hope* is genuinely affecting, *Agency* alert and tricky, and *Match* linguistically brilliant and mostly pure theatre. *Match* makes more demands of itself and is a superb parody, memorable, pithy and too good to leave on a downbeat.

All reviews by Simon Jenner. First published at fringereview.co.uk July 22, 2019



LEFT Emma Lillie Lees, Justine Smith, Chris Knight and Chris Gates (photograph: Strat Mastoris)

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

October

	1	2	
Acting class 7:30pm 7	GABRIEL 7:45pm 8	GABRIEL 7:45pm 9	GABRIEL 7:45pm 10
Acting class 7:30pm 14	Winterling auditions: check the NVT website 15	Winterling auditions: check the NVT website 16	Winterling auditions: check the NVT website 17
Acting class 7:30pm 21	Winterling call backs: check the NVT website 22	Winterling call backs: check the NVT website 23	
Acting class 7:30pm 28	29	30	

November

Acting class 7:30pm 4	FEN 7:45pm 5	FEN 7:45pm 6	FEN 7:45pm 7
Acting class 7:30pm 11	12	NVT AGM 7:30pm 13	
Acting class 7:30pm 18	19	20	
Acting class 7:30pm 25	26	27	

Monday

3

10

17
Auditions:
[check the website](#)

24

31

7

14

21

28

Friday

GABRIEL 7:45pm
NVYT 4:30pm **4**

GABRIEL 7:45pm
NVYT 4:30pm **11**

18
NVYT 4:30pm

25
NVYT 4:30pm

FEN 7:45pm **1**

FEN 7:45pm
NVYT 4:30pm **8**

15
NVYT 4:30pm

22
NVYT 4:30pm

29
NVYT 4:30pm

Saturday

GABRIEL 7:45pm **5**

GABRIEL 7:45pm **12**

19

Talk auditions:
[check the NVT website](#) **26**

FEN 7:45pm **2**

FEN 7:45pm **9**

16

23

30

Sunday

GABRIEL 2:30pm
Sussex Playwrights 6pm **6**

13

20

Talk auditions:
[check the NVT website](#) **27**

FEN 2:30pm
Sussex Playwrights 6pm **3**

10

17

Quartet auditions:
[check the NVT website](#) **24**

THE NEW VENTURE YOUTH THEATRE

I can't believe its time to begin a new term of New Venture's Youth Theatre! After a summer break its always exciting to imagine what the term will bring, to witness the incredible work the students produce, and teach an undoubtably inspiring group of young performers.

I know for me and for lots of NVT members it was the first time you get a real taste of the theatre – by being able to attend affordable local youth classes. It's easy to forget how influential creative workshops can be, particularly as a teenager. That small part of the week can become a place to belong, to express yourself, to be creative and open your entire world. Through stories, through ideas, techniques, through imagination, through play – all the magic of theatre! We're all aware how confidence can grow when engaging in theatre, the dramatic arts can not only offer an escape from yourself but equally a route to finding who you are.

Previous students of NVYT have gone on to join the National Youth Theatre, and its also great to see students who have gone on and been involved in NVT productions!

So please spread the word about NVYT! If you happened to see our main March production *Charmless* you will have witnessed the passion, energy and talent just radiating off the students performing. And we still have spaces for our Autumn term!

Our Autumn term starts on Friday the 20th of September, 4.30pm-6.30pm; this term runs until Friday the 29th of November (half term break 1st November) The first session is free, and after that its £50 per term, still one of the most affordable drama classes in the area! The classes are open to anyone aged between 12 and 18.

As a community run theatre lets help spread the magic that we know theatre and drama can bring, and in this technology lead world we need the power of the live creative arts more than ever.

Please feel free to pick up a couple of flyers from the foyer if you feel you know someone who may be interested! Or check out the NVT website for more information.

[Chelsea Mounthey, NVYT Coordinator](#)

Coming soon

1–9 November

FEN

written by Caryl Churchill

directed by Ian Amos

F*en* centres on the lives of a group of women working on the land in East Anglia in the early 1980s. It is a tough play, but punctuated with humour. The women live harsh lives, haunted by the past and have hopes for their futures.

The play was derived from interviews with local people: Their words and their stories form its backbone. That community is represented by over 20 characters that span the generations from children to a woman celebrating her 90th birthday.

Caryl Churchill is one of the UK's leading living playwrights and *Fen* one of her major works.



ABOVE Laddus Fen © by Steve Dubois

Coming soon

6–14 December

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

adapted from Charles Dickens by Neil Bartlett

directed by Diane Robinson

Using only Dicken's extraordinary words and a cast of 9 actors, this powerful stage version of the much loved story is exciting, imaginative and evocative. From its opening image of Pip, alone on the windswept marshes, to the

haunted darkness of Miss Haversham's cobweb-strewn bridal chamber, this inventive and atmospheric play brings to thrilling, theatrical life this classic exploration of childhood terrors and hopes – and adult dreams and regrets.

Auditions

Winterling

by Jez Butterworth

directed by Steven O'Shea

Audition Dates: 15, 16 and 17 October

Call Backs: 22 and 23 October

Production Dates: 17 to 25 January 2020



Talk

written and directed by Mark Wilson

Audition Dates: 26 and 27 October

Production dates: 14 to 22 February 2020



Quartet

by Ronald Harwood

directed by Richard Lindfield

Audition Date: 24 November

Production Dates: 13 to 21 March 2020



Contacting the NVT

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Bedford Place
Brighton BN1 2PT



[@NewVentureTheatreBrighton](#)



[@nvt_brighton](#)



[@brightonnewventuretheatre](#)

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*Asterisks indicate trustee committee members.

NVT information

NVT acting classes

Mondays 7:30–9:30 PM

(Please arrive in good time to begin promptly at 7:30 PM)

Cost: £5 (NVT members £2.50)

In these drop in sessions you will be working with various teachers and cover acting techniques as well as theatre skills. We will be looking at audition 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 our 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 at 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 membership

At the last AGM our membership rate was formally changed to £15 a year, after a successful trial. To renew, or join if you are not yet a member, just go to our website:

www.newventure.org.uk/join-us

NVT AGM

November 13th 7:30pm

Booking tickets

TICKET PRICES AND PERFORMANCES

Members £9

Non-Members £10

Evening performances at 7:45pm

Sundays are Matinees only at 2:30pm

No performances on Mondays

HOW TO BOOK TICKETS

You can book online at:

www.ticketsource.co.uk/newventuretheatre

or by post using the form below

Please fill in both sides of the form

CONTACTING BOX OFFICE

You can contact us by phone for information, but we are unable to take telephone bookings:

01273 746118

or email:

boxoffice@newventure.org.uk

STUDIO THEATRE SEATING AND ACCESS

The Studio has unallocated seating.

There is one step at the entrance to the theatre.

THEATRE UPSTAIRS SEATING AND ACCESS

The Theatre Upstairs has allocated seating; please use the seating chart overleaf and indicate your first, second and third choice seats using 1s, 2s and 3s respectively, and fill out your contact details below. Access to the Theatre Upstairs is only possible by 4 flights of stairs and therefore may not be suitable for those with limited mobility.

CUT ALONG THE LINE, AND RETURN YOUR COMPLETED SLIP TOGETHER WITH A CHEQUE TO: NEW VENTURE THEATRE, BEDFORD PLACE, BRIGHTON BN1 2PT

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

your name:

.....

address:

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Production	Date	Members tickets (£9)	Non-member tickets (£10)	Total cost
GABRIEL (4–12 October) Theatre upstairs – mark seat preference below				
FEN (1–9 November) Studio theatre				
GREAT EXPECTATIONS (5–14 December) Theatre upstairs – mark seat preference below				

	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12			
Write '1', '2' or '3' for your first, second and third choice seats. Seat F1 is normally unavailable.		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10			
		D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	D13
		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13
		B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13

STAGE

EXIT