

NEW VENTURE THEATRE

newsletter
february 2020

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Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

Preview

14–22 February 2020

TALK

written and directed
by Mark Wilson

Set in the 1850's in the criminal wing of Bethlem asylum, this is a play about the birth of psychotherapy. It is the story of the struggle between those advocating traditional and quite Medieval treatment of the mentally ill and those struggling towards an understanding of the centrality of childhood experience and the curative value in articulating it – the curative value of talk. It is a play about stories, but more than that, it is a play about the universal and, indeed, timeless need to be heard.

Mark Wilson's decision to stage this production 'in the round' in NVT's studio space is based upon his belief in the importance of providing the audience with a particular type of theatrical experience; one that is more intimate and immediate; one in which the audience's close proximity to the actors can draw them into the lives and



experience of the characters. By virtue of the fact that there is no scenery or set, the audience are required to 'work' with the production, using their imagination to create a sense of time and place. All we see on stage are the characters, the people, and the ways in which they respond to each other. There is nothing else – no artificiality. In this way the audience is invited almost, through the use of their imagination, to contribute not only to their own theatrical experience but, because their responses can be seen by the audience members

continued overleaf

MARTIN MACFADYEN

(Former Treasurer NVT)



It is with great sadness that we learned Martin had died on 22nd November after a short illness. He is remembered with huge fondness by many here at New Venture Theatre.

Having retired from the oil industry he moved to Brighton. In 2003 he became our Trustee Treasurer, a role which he fulfilled for 4 years. During this time he steered the NVT onto a stable financial platform. His steadfast work and attention to detail enabled the theatre to pay off its debts and move into a secure financial position. As well as his support and work for the theatre, he became and remained, with his wife Meinir, a loyal supporter and great friend to many of us. He was a true gentleman, quietly efficient with a lovely dry sense of humour.

He is much missed.

NVT 2019/20 SEASON

October 4-12	Gabriel by Moira Buffini
November 1-9	Fen by Caryl Churchill
December 5-14	Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
January 17-25	The Winterling by Jez Butterworth
February 14-22	Talk by Mark Wilson
March 13-21	Quartet by Ronald Harwood
March 27	White Noise Machine by the NVYT
April 17-25	The Herd by Rory Kinnear
May 15-23	Consent by Nina Raine
June 19-27	Miss Julie by August Strindberg
July 17-25	Hangmen by Martin McDonagh

Preview continued

TALK

sitting opposite them, to the experience of others. In this way, to sit as part of the *Talk* audience is to become a key part of the story-telling process. *Talk* originally took the form of a radio play on BBC Radio 4. Mark's redesign of the play as a stage show has seen it produced in Canterbury and, more recently, at the Edinburgh Festival. As a writer, Mark's play *You* won the 'Brighton Festival Award for Theatre' and 'The Fringe Review Outstanding Theatre Award' in 2015, and has since won 'Play of the Week' at the 2018 Vaults Festival in London. The play has been published by Samuel French. Mark's directorial work at NVT includes *The Crucible*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *A View From the Bridge*.

Mark considers himself very fortunate to have been able to assemble such a talented and experienced cast. James Macauley, who plays Doctor Haydon, was last seen at NVT in *The*



ABOVE Bill Griffiths as Richard Dadd and Janice Jones as Emily Clayton (Photograph by Strat Mastoris)

Homecoming. Emily Clayton is played by Janice Jones who was so memorable in *Breaking Glass*. Hazel Starns, who plays Ward Sister Grey, is a newcomer to NVT; however, her work in other theatres is well-known, her most recent work being in the highly-praised *Brief Encounter* at The Wick. Bill Griffiths, who plays Richard Dadd, is well-known to audiences at NVT where he most recently played in *Pickwick and Weller*. The role of Fowles is played by Adam Kincaid whose

most recent acting work was in NVT's *The Real Inspector Hound*. However, Adam was also seen playing in the band in last year's NVT production of *Elephant's Graveyard*. Lastly, Mark is very pleased to welcome Matteo Bagaini in his first role at NVT, playing Doctor Hood. Mark is also pleased to have the support of such an experienced crew. Let's face it, Mark is just pretty damned pleased all round.

THE WINTERLING

by Jez Butterworth

directed by Steven O'Shea



There's a hot wire running through Jez Butterworth's work, 'something to do with violence and the poor' as Auden wrote. Add margins, both societal and geographical, and you can see how killing swine – he's kept livestock since 2004 – creates that Butterworth paradigm: a sharp-dresser creased in mud.

His 1995 gangster-manqué debut *Mojo* was followed by *The Night Heron* in 2002, and *The Winterling* from 2006, Butterworth's explicit homage to Pinter.

ABOVE (LEFT TO RIGHT) Stuart Curlett, Thomas Hobart and Jonathan Howlett.

RIGHT Charlotte Hesk, Mark Lester and Jonathan Howlett. (All photographs by Strat Mastoris)

These two plays received a muted response, with critic Michael Billington struggling with Butterworth's creative identity, but NVT's triumphant production proves how wrong this judgement is. For all its explicit homage and wide-open pauses – they do drag on a few beats too long – *The Winterling* is a

beautifully balanced, pristine play with redemption and restitution at its heart. It's the prototype of Butterworth's two later masterpieces, *Jerusalem* (2009) and *The Ferryman* (2017), where he truly comes into his force.

The mood's punctuated by jet-screams – turning on a significant trig point – and great sunk silences. Look and feel seep into this production. Directed by Steven O'Shea, with set dressing led by Delphine Du Barry, the design team's led by Simon Glazier, who create a single-set farmhouse interior with a punctured chair downstage right, and stage-right a makeshift Shabibat kitchen with 1960s mint-green dresser-drawers and hobs that need topping by a Calor-Gas one. Walls are beautifully damp-distressed; a dead-centre stove boasting a

remarkable interior blaze resides literally under an axe: a sword of Damocles; and a descending hanger for muddy trousers (is Butterworth mischievously quoting his memorable coup, Silver Johnny hanging upside down by his trouser bottoms in Act Three of *Mojo*?). Stage left there's a door, upstage a winningly observed little porchway through glass. In the Act Two of a year earlier the place briefly looks a sight worse.

That fire's one of the things lit keenly by Strat Mastoris who also designs the posters. That sometimes splintering sound's by Ian Black alongside a stereoscope of lamb-bleats that elicits sniggers for being so present, with special effects consultant DeeJ Johnson. Ian Hollands' costume design relishes the mix of rural and city.



THE WINTERLING

Jonathan Howlett's West is interrupted. Ne'er-do-well Draycott (Mark Lester) is apparently the man who leased this fugitive Londoner this Dartmoor cottage though in fact we learn he doesn't own it at all. He has less agency than when we next meet him a year earlier when West arrives haggard, almost speechless and very different. Howlett's register of both states is masterly. Lester scores a tour-de-face with one of Butterworth's great sidelong speeches which has nothing to do but establish how Draycott can menace shopkeepers into giving him food and even money to 'just fuck off' as one baker does. His mode of protection is simply acting mad in a full shop. And his cooking – no butter, spit on it – to a turn, then realizing he's burned the pig's heart – is a culinary triumph.

West has fled for a reason that becomes clear when two men turn up, one Stuart Curlett's Wally, from his past; another, Patsy (Thomas Hobart) the son of 'that Rita' whom West dimly knew. No one just apparates from the Smoke. Wally has a proposition. That doesn't come till much later, and it so happens he's duplicated it. Neither, surreally, meets Draycott. They do though meet someone we first meet a year earlier (thus later!) who refuses to talk to Draycott. But at the end of Act One, it's Patsy who asks about that girl upstairs. Who?

Curlett's Wally is a curiously banter-born enforcer, Curlett's lightness of tone and mode almost working against type,

which works beautifully. How can this office-worker demeanour presage what it seems to? Both visitors treat West with a respect due to one who was once pre-eminent, but after five days not allowed any sleep watching from a car without relief, he fell asleep. Retribution was terrible. West has retreated.

There's all sorts of hints as to what to do with talkative Patsy, first sent on a wild errand to the mud-sunk car to retrieve Wally's cigs. As if he hasn't several packets on him. Duetting between Wally and West inscribes past camaraderie; later on Wally has a private proposal. The Q&A on the Iron Age fort visited on Patsy when he returns – did he access the talking lady? – is a Joycean comic highpoint like an initiation test, but at the same time establishes a defining alliance. Hobart plays Patsy's slightly gormless but quick youth with a winning mix. With Hobart, Patsy's someone who grasps essentials and details though enjoys showing it a bit too much. Patsy's talkativeness – which irritates not a few in London – masks shrewdness. Details Patsy and West throw at each other are dizzyingly farcical, but fascinating. It's only Wally who doesn't even see the fort. It's as if to see it ushers you to an invisible community. All four other characters are drawn to it, one dreams of seeing another there, frozen. For there's someone we've not met.

It's this circling act of recognition Butterworth frames so exquisitely. West,



Draycott and Lue assert they've been glimpsing each other for long before they meet. As in Act Two Charlotte Hesk's reticent Lue appears, refusing to speak to Draycott ('most other people have a sweet side. He hasn't' she asserts). And his battery of insults at her underscore this.

Lue's assertions that she needs 'a businessman' to sign her passport photo – isn't West in business? – have a point. Lue wants out of Dartmoor. Hesk brings out vulnerable sullen underpinned by an exceedingly sharp mind with naïve corners – Lue's horizons have been crimped. Again a litany of knowledge – here, a passport form – acts like a passport, when really discussing something else. There's always some Pinteresque reason Lue can't escape.

Now, back in the present with all introduced and Wally waiting outside,

ABOVE Stuart Curlett and Jonathan Howlett.

there's a broken buckle on Lue's suitcase that means she can't leave. Patsy can repair it. And they'd spotted each other too. Partly in dream. This is where the fort itself, that trig point split by noise, becomes something other, a test of belonging.

The denouement's deeply satisfying, raising questions and a paradigm. Butterworth's heroes conjure final confrontations accompanied with unknowable forces: thundering ancient gods, banshees. Here there's just something liminal, ancient, slighted but enduring. And West, like his name, has a home. With Howlett, West's different selves narrow superbly to one intent stare. NVT's production is a nearly flawless triumph.

First published at fringereview.co.uk on January 18, 2020

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

February

Acting class 7:30pm **3**

Miss Julie auditions:
[check the NVT website](#) **4**

5

Miss Julie recalls **6**

NVYT 4:30pm **7**

Consent recalls **1**

Sussex Playwrights 6pm **2**
Miss Julie auditions:
[check the NVT website](#)

Acting class 7:30pm **10**

11

12

13

NVYT 4:30pm
TALK 7:45pm **14**

TALK 7:45pm **15**

TALK 2:30pm **16**

Acting class 7:30pm **17**

TALK 7:45pm **18**

TALK 7:45pm **19**

TALK 7:45pm **20**

TALK 7:45pm **21**

TALK 7:45pm **22**

Hangmen auditions:
[check the NVT website](#) **23**

Acting class 7:30pm **24**
Hangmen auditions:
[check the NVT website](#)

Hangmen auditions:
[check the NVT website](#) **25**

26

27

NVYT 4:30pm **28**

29

March

2

3

4

5

NVYT 4:30pm **6**

7

Sussex Playwrights 6pm **1**
Hangmen recalls

9

10

11

12

NVYT 4:30pm
QUARTET 7:45pm **13**

QUARTET 7:45pm **14**

QUARTET 2:30pm **15**

16

QUARTET 7:45pm **17**

QUARTET 7:45pm **18**

QUARTET 7:45pm **19**

NVYT 4:30pm
QUARTET 7:45pm **20**

QUARTET 7:45pm **21**

22

23

24

25

26

WHITE NOISE
MACHINE 7:45pm **27**

28

29

30

31



Coming soon

13–21 March 2020

QUARTET

by Ronald Harwood

directed by Richard Lindfield

Once the glittering stars of English opera – their iconic recording of the quartet from Verdi’s *Rigoletto* has just been re-released. Currently three of them are seeing out their final days in the peace and tranquillity of Beecham House, a genteel home for retired opera singers. That peace is about to be shattered by the arrival of Jean, the diva of the group, whose marriage to Reggie was poisonous and short-lived.



Once a year, the residents combine their faded talents in a concert to celebrate Verdi’s birthday. So will the Quartet be revived? Over Jean’s dead body!

Coming soon

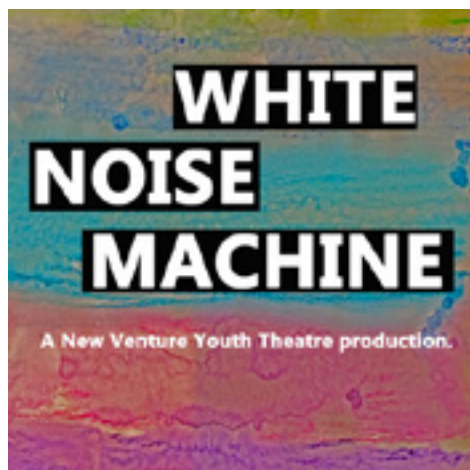
27 March 2020

WHITE NOISE MACHINE

by the New Venture Youth Theatre

directed by Chelsea Mountney

After the success of their devised comedy *Charmless*, the students of New Venture Youth Theatre return to the stage, exploring themes of mental health through the unfiltered lens of their generation. This darkly comic abstract piece investigates what it means to be human in a noisy technological world.



Coming soon

17–25 April 2020

THE HERD

by Rory Kinnear

directed by Charly Sommers

Pulling together. Falling apart.

The day isn’t going as planned. But nor is life . . .

As Carol prepares to celebrate the 21st birthday of her severely disabled son, Andy, the rest of the family gather: Andy’s older sister, their grandparents . . . and Ian, Andy’s absentee father who is loathed by everyone in the room.

While Andy and his caregiver make their way to the house, ranks close and wounds open . . . Written by Rory Kinnear, *The Herd* is a witty, heartfelt portrait of a family brought together and torn apart by circumstance and secrets. Directed by Charly Sommers.



Call for proposals to direct for our 73rd Season 2020/21

2019 saw another strong year at NVT with a wealth of diverse productions and established plays as well as new writing! As we approach the halfway point of the current season, it is already time to plan for the next.

The Artistic Director's team is looking for proposals for productions, whether from experienced or new directors and are currently inviting proposals for next season.

Our 73rd season runs from October 2020 to July 2021. The deadline for submissions is Saturday 15th February 2020.

The Proposal to Direct form can be found on the website in the formal documents section:

<https://www.newventure.org.uk/37-indexing/220-formal-documents>

Please email your proposals to:

Rod.Lewis@newventure.org.uk

and ensure you copy in:

Ulrike.schilling@newventure.org.uk

Due to recent changes in the industry which make it much more challenging to obtain a licence for a production, we suggest to submit a back-up play along with your first choice play.

If you are unsure about directing a full length production or just want to discuss options and other ideas, please do get in touch with Rod and Uli, who will act as contact for the Artistic Director's team. Although our goal is always to be as successful creatively as we can, we must never forget that everyone involved should find working as part of an NVT team a happy and personally rewarding experience - and the success of NVT relies on all of our amazing volunteers who ensure we can continue and remain a supportive, open and welcoming club.

Rod Lewis, Bryony Weaver, Katie Brownings, Mark Lester and Uli Schilling

Contacting the NVT

The New Venture Theatre
Bedford Place
Brighton BN1 2PT



[@NewVentureTheatreBrighton](#)



[@nvt_brighton](#)



[@brightonnewventuretheatre](#)

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Pat Boxall
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Angels / Archives

Gerry McCrudden
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Acting Class Coordinator

Gina Laine
actingclass@newventure.org.uk

*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.

Our sponsors

Our sponsorship deal is £250 for a year's advertising on our website and in our newsletter and programmes, plus 2 complimentary tickets for each production in that year.

NVT membership

Membership is £15. To renew, or join if you are not yet a member, just go to our website:

www.newventure.org.uk/join-us

Booking tickets

TICKET PRICES AND PERFORMANCES

Members £9

Non-Members £10

Evening performances at 7:45pm

Sundays are matinees only at 2:30pm

There are no performances on Mondays.

White Noise Machine is £5 for adults and £3 for under 16s.

HOW TO BOOK TICKETS

You can book online at:

www.newventure.org.uk

or by post using the form below

Please fill in both sides of the form

CONTACTING BOX OFFICE

Box Office (answerphone only):

01273 746118

For all ticketing enquiries, please 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

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Production	Date	# Members tickets (£9)	# Non-member tickets (£10)	Total cost
TALK (14–22 February) Studio theatre – unreserved seating				
QUARTET (13–21 March) Studio theatre – unreserved seating				
WHITE NOISE MACHINE (27 March) Studio theatre – unreserved seating	27 March	# Adults (£5):	# Under 16 (£3):	
THE HERD (17–25 April) 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