

# NEW VENTURE THEATRE

newsletter  
january 2021

Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

Preview

12 -16 January 2021

## Arthur and Esther

Online Streamed Performances

by Ross Howard

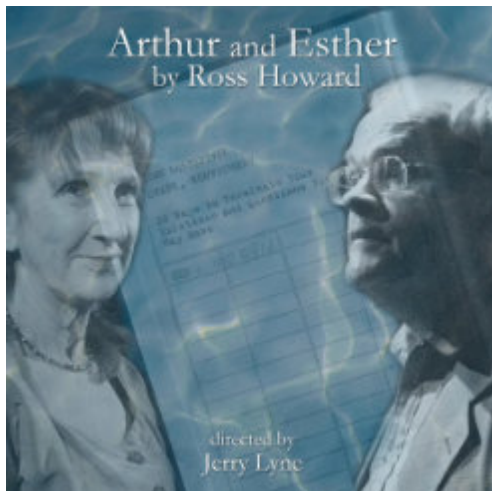
directed by Jerry Lyne - film direction Phil Palmer

In the wake of public spending cuts, resulting in closing his beloved library and turning it into an 'info lounge' Arthur wrestles with the methods set out in Montgomery Swank's *28 Ways to Terminate your Existence and Questions you Might Have*, the one book he has salvaged from the closure of his beloved library.

We follow Arthur in his humorous attempts to find a way to 'end it all' but learn of his deep sadness, passion and frustration.

With Esther, his wife, in the wake of her tragic drowning we find her looking back on her life, going over the mistakes she made and seeking understanding and forgiveness.

A play of two worlds. This amusing, elemental and affecting two-hander



explores love, its loss, and the lives we inherit and impose on others.

**Diane Robinson** playing Esther

**John Tolputt** playing Arthur

*continued overleaf*

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This play is the first of our New Virtual Season. Due to the many Covid restrictions it was important to put together a small team not only to comply with social distancing but one that has the experience and knowhow to construct a successful production in difficult circumstances. Sadly this meant we could not use our usual route of auditions.

However I am delighted we can feature two of our most prominent actors. **Diane Robinson** playing Esther and **John Tolpuitt** playing Arthur. Coupled with sound design by **Ian Black** and filmed and lit by a man of many years' experience in the industry. **Phil Palmer**.

Also a vital part of our small but very experienced team is **Carol Croft** our SM and PA to our Film Director **Phil**, and **Tamsin Mastoris** for our programme and poster design and lighting operator.

Thanks also go to **Ian Amos** our Box Office Manager for managing our online Box Office systems and **Strat Mastoris** for lighting assistance plus those people involved in making our Theatre Covid Secure.

***Some notes on the creation of this production:*** We started work in October 2020 as the Covid crisis gathered speed again. Then the lockdown in November came and it was 'will we won't we finish this' until finally we were cleared to complete rehearsal, rig, tech and film over the middle week of December 2020. We just made it as Tier 2 then Tier 4 restriction followed.

A lot of work has been undertaken to film, edit and compile the finished

production. A big thank you to all those involved.

It has been exciting and challenging to offer our first full length piece on screen to you our valued audience and we all hope you will find this a moving and rewarding experience.

Theatre is not dead!

## Rehearsal Photos



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## About Ross Howard

Author **Ross Howard's** work has been seen in London, Cork, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, San Francisco, New York City and developed at Last Frontier Conference, Great Plains Theatre Conference and at Western Carolina University.

In 2002, he was invited to join the Royal Court Theatre Young Writers Group. In 2008, he received a Fellowship from the Edward F. Albee Foundation. **Arthur and Esther** was awarded "Best of Fringe" at Las Vegas Fringe Festival 2010 while **No One Loves Us Here** was a finalist for the New York Stage and Film Founders Award 2012. **Frisky & The Panda Man** was a winning finalist in the 38th Samuel French Off Broadway Short Play Festival in 2013 and **Picture Ourselves In Latvia** was listed in New York's L Magazine's "Best of theatre 2014". **Arthur and Esther, No One Loves Us Here, Picture Ourselves in Latvia** and his evening of short plays **Our Walk Through the World** are published by Samuel French. In October 2016, his play **Two of Us** (Listed as one of the 5 Out-of-the Box

shows to see Off-Broadway from Playbill.com) showcased Off-Broadway, alongside **Arthur and Esther** and **Our Walk Through the World**.

**The Ross Howard Festival** was in recognition for the three years spent as the Resident Playwright of New Light theatre Project (As featured in American Theatre Magazine in "Know a Theatre") of New York. He regularly tutors at the Actor's Centre in London, the city in which he currently resides. He holds an M.F.A in Playwriting from UNLV (2006) and is a member of New Play Exchange and The Finborough Theatre's Writers Group. In April 2018, his new play **The Amazing Always** received a public reading at The Drama Book Shop in New York. Excerpts from **No One Loves Us Here** can be found in **The Best Men's Stage Monologues 2018** published by Smith and Kraus. **Two of Us** was published in November 2018 by Samuel French.

*Jerry Lyne (director)*

## Artistic Update

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Rod, to thank him for his hard work for the last 7 years and for asking me to join his Artistic team. I had re-joined NVT after a long break and his encouragement really helped me to re discover Theatre. He has been, and continues to be so inspiring and encouraging to me as he has to so many of us. His example of selflessness and dedication is one I hope to emulate. Fortunately, Rod has agreed to continue to work to support me and will be part of the Artistic Team along with Pat Boxall, Bryony Weaver and Mark Lester. The team will continue to operate as it did under Rod. Our aim will be to help NVT remain a diverse, vibrant welcoming theatre with high standards and a continued reputation for it's interesting, challenging and varied programme. NVT should be, above all a rewarding and enjoyable place to be a part of, where everyone has equal respect and value, a place of equal opportunity and inclusivity.

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Trying to plan with the restrictions that we have has, as you can imagine, been difficult but we do have some things in the diary, which may or may not happen on the date that we have planned! We have made decisions about how we can manage a reduced audience and re organised the seating in the studio to accommodate this to resemble a café style layout with tables where we will be able to serve you refreshments. Details of what is available will be published on our website.

Regarding the new season, which will hopefully be able to go ahead relatively normally, priority will go to the plays who were affected by the pandemic, namely Consent, The Herd and Hangmen. The team will then be looking at the plays which were submitted to Rod this time last year. If any other directors would like to submit a play for consideration please contact me or one of the Artistic Team.

Here's looking forward to a much better year and getting back to doing what we love!

*Katie Brownings*

## **Virtual Acting Class**

Acting class continues in its current virtual home via Zoom. Thanks to Sarah Davies who has stepped in to help create this virtual version of Acting Class. Over the next few months, until we are able to start again for real, an ongoing programme of monthly Acting Class leaders is being setup. Below are details of January's classes and to come are classes from Chelsea Mountney in February and Andrew Allen in March - details of these are available on the website.

### **January Acting Class**

#### **Developing and freeing your natural voice with Daniel Lovett**

**4, 11, 18 & 25 January**

Kristin Linklater was a world renowned vocal teacher who sadly passed away in June 2020. She could include the likes of Sir Patrick Stewart and Bill Murray amongst her most famous students!

In homage to Linklater these voice workshops will be chiefly associated to the her work , encouraging throughout the sessions the development of a more open, free and natural voice. A panoramic range of techniques will be explored focusing on the improvement of articulation, diction, sound vocal warm-up practice to sustain performance and the ability to find the dramatic intention in text.

In addition these workshops are aimed at helping actors understand and apply sound performance practice when working with the voice in relation to the industry as a whole, with opportunities to work with others and develop self reflection in their practice.

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## NVT Fundraising

Dear Friends, Supporters , Members and Angels,

Some may know me as Coordinator of our flock of New Venture Theatre Angels who have generously supported us financially down the years. At the recent AGM I was additionally tasked with the wider Fund Raising role .

As you will know due to COVID 19 regulations we have been closed since mid-March . But we have tried to keep our wonderful community theatre active with various on line activities such as our Acting classes and Youth Theatre. Over the past few months we have streamed a number of monologues and shorts drawing on the creative talents of our members.

Coming soon 'Arthur and Esther' by Ross Howard and directed by Jerry Lyne. Part of our New Virtual Theatre Season. A moving two hander about loss and love; a full length one act play . Please see our website for details on how book tickets.

Keeping this listed building in good order and ready for when we are able to gather again is not cheap. We have been able to benefit from various central and local government schemes. Our regular funding streams have though all but dried up. Even with the support and hard work of our volunteers it costs us £20,000 a year just to keep basic bills paid.

An example of other additional expenditure. We have not previously recorded and streamed performances before so needed to buy equipment to do this, including quality microphones. We have been able to draw on the

technical skills of our team to film to a high standard.

In these demanding and strange times we are well aware of the financial pressures on many. If you felt able to contribute even in a small way to support our 'Re- Opening Fund' that would be greatly appreciated. Some have already made welcome donations.

Monies can be paid direct to the NVT bank account:

New Venture Productions  
Lloyds Bank  
Preston Circus Branch  
Sort Code: 30-96-83  
Account Number 00171929

Please mark your donation "ReOpening Fund".

Alternatively you might prefer to give your support by joining or upgrading our merry flock of NVT Angels who come in all sizes depending on your budget; Angels, Fallen Angels, Archangels and Archangels Gabriel.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you don't mind my asking you. Your support is valued. Please contact me if you are interested in donating. We cannot wait for the days when we are all able to gather and welcome you back in person to the theatre we all love.

Keep safe and well.

Gerry McCrudden

Gerry McCrudden MBE  
NVT Fund Raiser and Angels  
gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com

## NVT Archives

One of the fascinating aspects of helping to research and build our Archives was finding snippets of information that reflected the times our members lived through.

I particularly recall a letter issued to members in the early 1940s which referred to World War Two as 'local difficulties'. A wonderful piece of English understatement. Technically it was written before our formal founding in 1947 but part of our precursor group nevertheless.

It made me think that for those who will come after us down the years it might be a good idea to record for posterity how these strange months have affected us and our relationship with the NVT.

So if you want to write a piece for the historical record do pen some words and send to me.

Good wishes and stay safe.

*Gerry McCrudden - NVT Archivist*

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