



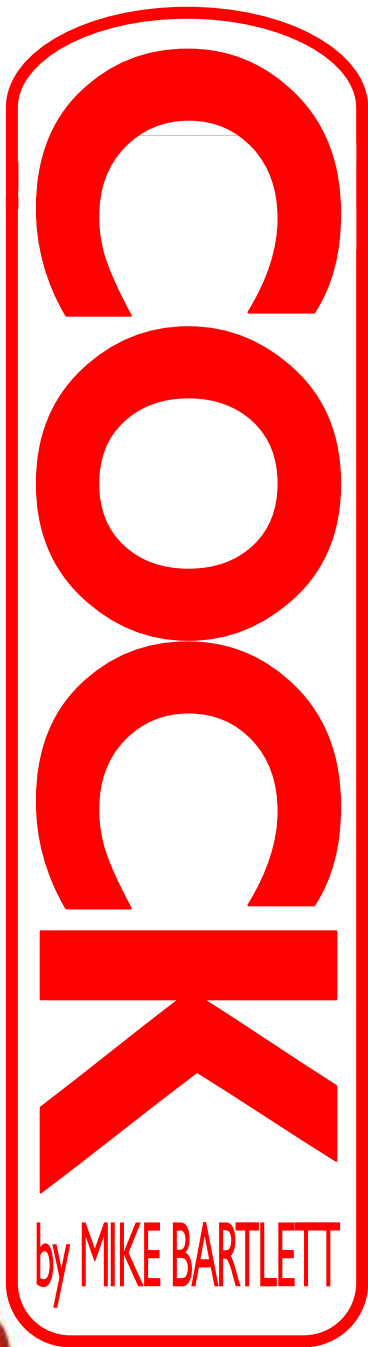
**NEW
VENTURE
THEATRE**

**Bedford Place
Brighton BN1 2PT**

Registered Charity no.
268607

Friday 13th to Saturday 21st May 2022 at 7:45pm | Matinée: Sunday 15th May at 2:30pm

www.newventure.org.uk | www.facebook.com/NewVentureTheatreBrighton



COCK

by MIKE BARTLETT

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: Mike Bartlett says *Cock* is 'for the Zona Rosa', the gay quarter of Mexico City where he was living when he wrote it. The title doesn't just refer to the male member, it also references cockfighting, which is still going strong in some parts of Mexico.

As with the fighting birds, the characters in *Cock* take chunks out of each other; the play is, metaphorically, a fight to the death. Cockfighting, like boxing, wrestling, gladiators and other forms of combat-for-entertainment, is staged in an arena – a space surrounded by spectators.

It suddenly seemed obvious that our production of *Cock* should be staged in the round, as opposed to 'end on'. I have never directed a show this way and none of the cast has ever acted in theatre-in-the-round either. This has been an exciting, (and, if truth be told, an occasionally scary) opportunity to make up our own rules.

Even Noel Coward's famous dictum on acting – 'learn the lines and don't bump into the furniture' – doesn't wholly apply because there is no furniture. Mike Bartlett is very clear in his instructions for putting on the play; no set, no furniture, no props, and no mime. So, what's left? The playwright's dazzling dialogue. Our job has been to do justice to his words.

These days it's very fashionable to dedicate your show to some deity or family member. Not really my style. If this production is for anyone, it's for Stephen Joseph, a true pioneer, who in 1955 started Britain's first ever theatre-in-the-round company in Scarborough. As he said at the time:

"Every performance is a unique work of creation, a work of art made by that audience and those actors at this moment of time. So to hell with the scenery that films can do so much better! To hell with the frame that protects the cathode ray tube! Let's have the actors in the same room as the audience, let's have four front rows, let's get really excited about this acting business."



Richard Lindfield

Cast

M	Aaron Coomer
John	Lewis Todhunter
W	Melissa Paris
F	Graeme Muncer

Creative Team

Director	Richard Lindfield
Producer	Nikki Dunsford
Stage Manager	Martyn Coates
Lighting Design	Apollo Videaux
Lighting Operator	Esme Bird
Cock image	Henry Lindfield
Poster Design	Tamsin Mastoris
Programme	Ian Amos
Social Media	James Michael Maltby

As always, the director, cast and crew would like to express their appreciation and gratitude to the front-of-house, bar and box-office teams.

**Cock runs 1hr 40 mins
approximately including a
15 minute interval.**

*An amateur production by arrangement
with Nick Hern Books*

Aaron Coomer/M: *Cock* is Aaron's first

production at NVT. As with most processes involving cock, he has found it incredibly rewarding (and challenging at times).

Although he is new to NVT, Aaron is happily at home in a theatre. He has spent much of the last decade working as a music and theatre teacher at schools in India, Mongolia and Russia. Aaron moved to Brighton

with his fiancé in 2020 to get a masters and eat chips at every meal and is enjoying every minute!



Graeme Muncer/F: Graeme has been on stage since he was nine when he starred as a dormouse in *Wind in the Willows*. His

performance as King Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* saw him named Mid-Sussex Actor of the Year. He has appeared twice recently at the Theatre Royal, first as one of the spies in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and then as Papa Bear in *Shrek*. Graeme is also a keen magician and at any opportunity will whip out another trick for any unsuspecting fool.



Melissa Paris/W: This is Melissa's first show with NVT. Previously she has performed in Shakespeare plays in London; Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* and Desdemona in *Othello*. Melissa is delighted to be involved in this sparky, modern play without any 'thou', 'doth' and 'thou arts'.



Lewis Todhunter/John: Lewis has discovered the joys of am-dram later in life. *Cock* is only his second-ever show. His first was also at NVT, playing the poetic boyfriend in *The Herd*. Lewis is currently an actor by night and plasterer by day. Excellent work at competitive prices – the plastering, not the acting (although he's not bad at that either). Rehearsals have been a joy for Lewis as he is a massive fan of Mike Bartlett's writing.



Richard Lindfield (Director): Richard hopes his second production at NVT lasts longer than his first; *Quartet* was cut short by the Covid lockdown after just three performances. In a previous life he took his clothes off twice-nightly in the West End review, *Oh! Calcutta!* but is now a respectable journalism lecturer and father of two giant teenage boys. Richard will be returning to the stage next month, with a cough and a spit in the BHOS production of *Calendar Girls – the Musical* at the Theatre Royal.

Nikki Dunsford (Producer): Nikki was trained at the Royal Ballet School and began her career as a classical ballet dancer before joining the commercial world of dance in various West End and TV shows. She has appeared in six productions at NVT, most recently as a stuck-up mother (*The Herd*) and a salt-of-the-earth pub landlady (*Hangmen*). This is the fourth time Nikki has collaborated with Richard. He has directed her in *A Murder is Announced*, *Festen* and *Calendar Girls*.

Martyn Coates (Stage Manager): Martyn's first production at NVT was the ill-fated *Quartet*. Previously he has flown through the air, (if not always 'with the greatest of ease') at the Theatre Royal as Jacob Marley in *Scrooge - The Musical* and appeared in *Journey Of A Lifetime* at the Piccadilly Theatre, London. This summer Martyn will be making a cameo appearance in a stage version of *Dad's Army*. When you see *Cock*, you will understand why this is the easiest production he has ever 'stage managed'.

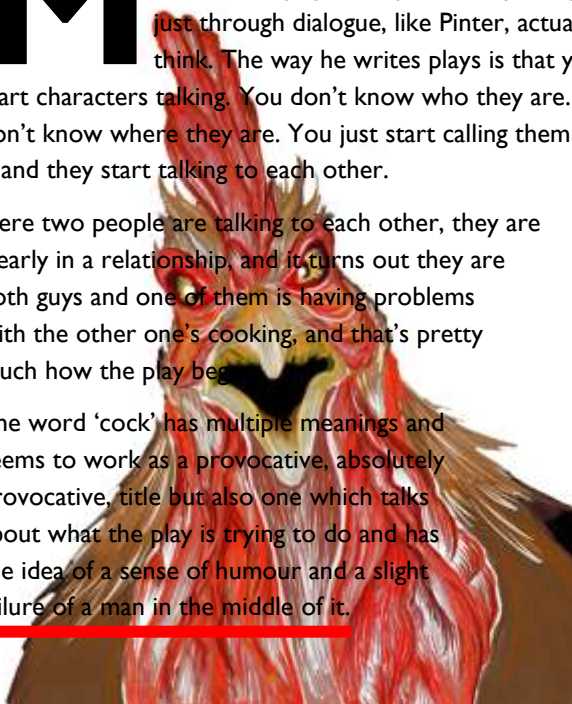
Apollo Videaux (Lighting Designer): Apollo is a regular behind the scenes at NVT, usually found wound up in some cables underneath the floor in the Operations booths. He got his start teching for NVT and has since transitioned into a freelance lighting, special effects and sound designer, with dozens of shows under his belt. Coming from a computer games background, Apollo enjoys utilising his design skills in a physical space to enhance the mood and meaning of the pieces he is working on.

Esme Bird (Lighting Operator): *Cock* marks Esme's ninth turn at lighting, having fallen into it by accident in 2019 after a last-minute plea for help. She is also no stranger to the stage, having performed in roles ranging from an arsonist to a mischievous goat! When not at the theatre, Esme spends her days running around a nursery, caring for little ones.

MIKE BARTLETT on COCK: The way I write some plays, and particularly this play, is just through dialogue, like Pinter, actually, I think. The way he writes plays is that you start characters talking. You don't know who they are. You don't know where they are. You just start calling them A and B and they start talking to each other.

Here two people are talking to each other, they are clearly in a relationship, and it turns out they are both guys and one of them is having problems with the other one's cooking, and that's pretty much how the play begins.

The word 'cock' has multiple meanings and seems to work as a provocative, absolutely provocative, title but also one which talks about what the play is trying to do and has the idea of a sense of humour and a slight failure of a man in the middle of it.



Renewal at New Venture

Year 2 of our 5 year plan (2021-2025)

Hopefully you are aware that we are trying to raise money to carry out some important renovations and improvements to our wonderful Grade II listed theatre. Although recent relaxations in the COVID rules mean we can now put on shows again, the pandemic has already reduced our anticipated

income for 2021/22.

Additionally we have recently discovered significant repairs are needed to the large windows on south side of the building. The need to raise funds is therefore

even more important as

the Committee has decided to proceed with these urgent repairs to the building; a decision which has, sadly, meant the postponement of the installation of Air Conditioning in the Upstairs Theatre which had originally been planned for this summer. More work is planned through to 2025 – see details on

www.newventure.org.uk .



Your contributions so far towards our 'Renewal at New Venture' appeal are greatly appreciated but much more is needed! Please help secure the long-term future of our cherished theatre for members, audiences and the wider community by making a donation as follows:

- Via our Just Giving page 'Renewal at New Venture' accessible via our website www.newventure.org.uk
- Using donation boxes and Gift Aid envelopes at the theatre
- Emailing fundraising@newventure.org.uk
- Becoming an NVT Angel— angels@newventure.org.uk

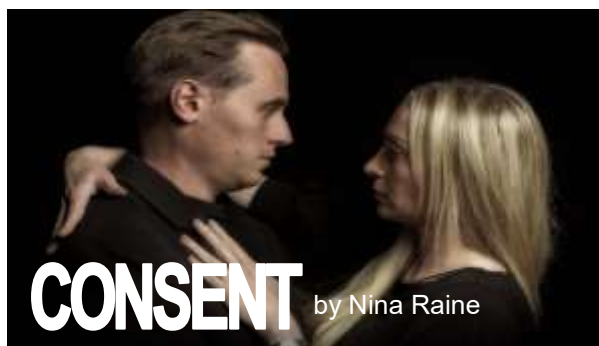
JustGiving: www.justgiving.com/campaign/renewalatnewventure





newventure.org.uk

Now booking...



Fri 27th May to 4th June

Consent is an intricately constructed, philosophical, drama with a very dark comical tone - using the template of a classic Greek tragedy within a modern context.

We are drawn into the present-day world of barristers - from courtroom to bedroom. We see the impact that their everyday relationships and sexual politics have on the people around them and the others they represent. Feelings of vengeance and justice are buried within unapologetic jokes of vaginal births and victim's impact statements. Empathy is hard to find.

A morality tale about opposing truths; the audience is invited to make their own judgement on these (mostly) privileged characters and their polarising attitudes. Its themes are hard-hitting and its language can be shocking at times. Whilst not written as a '#metoo play', the subject matter and the writer's smart and direct choice of language resonates heavily today and helps keeps some fundamentally important conversations alive.

This play contains Adult Themes, Strong language and Smoking on stage.

The legendary highwayman finds himself in an inescapable position. As the seriousness of his situation begins to hit home, he reminisces about his life on the road, the people he's met, his best friend and those who have been on the receiving end of his nefarious dealings. Nevertheless, Dick has the courage of his convictions and is prepared to take on a new adversary.



Contains adult themes, some strong language, sexual references, and sexual violence.

Not suitable for children.

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Contacting the NVT

For ticket information only, call the Box Office: 01273 746118. To book tickets or for other information check our website at www.newventure.org.uk. All other enquiries: 01273 808353

NVYT - Youth Theatre

NVT welcomes all young people(12-17) with a passion for or an interest in theatre. Fridays 4.30-6.30pm. £50 per 10 week term, first session is FREE!

NVT Acting Class

Monday evenings at 7.30pm for all levels of acting skills. It will cost you just £5 per session (£2.50 for NVT members) First visit is FREE! See website for details.

Become a Sponsor

£250: Advertise on the website, in each programme and our newsletter for one year. Plus two free tickets per show. Contact fundraising@newventure.org.uk for details. Or why not become an Angel, Archangel or even Archangel Gabriel to help us support the current and future improvements to our theatre. For further information please contact the Angels Coordinator Gerry McCrudden: angels@newventure.org.uk.

Membership

Company membership -£15 a year. Full participation, discount on tickets & newsletter. Student/Unwaged - £10 a year. (*Proof of status is required*).