

THE HERESY OF LOVE

by Helen Edmundson

directed by Gerry McCrudden

NVT
NEW
VENTURE
THEATRE

Bedford Place,
Brighton BN1 2PT

Friday 25th April - Saturday 3rd May 2025 at 7.30pm
Matinee: Sun 27th April at 2.30pm

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THE HERESY OF LOVE

by Helen Edmundson

Throughout history Sister Juana Ines de la Cruz' significance to different communities in Mexico has varied. Having been a candidate for Catholic sainthood, a symbol of Mexican nationalism and for women's rights - making her a figure of controversy and debate to this day. Little did I realise when I chose this play that Mexico would be thrust to international attention by developments in north America . Recently Mexico also inaugurated its first woman President.

It's the late 1600s. In a convent in Mexico, one of the brightest women of her generation strives to reconcile her love for God with her desire for learning. A gifted and progressive writer - she finds herself at the centre of a deadly battle of ideas when a new Archbishop is installed. She is celebrated by the Spanish Vice Regal Court, but the zealous, misogynistic Archbishop is determined to silence her.

Premiered by the RSC in 2012 and inspired by Sister Juana Ines de la Cruz's extraordinary life, this play is full of intrigue and ambition. It is as funny as it is tragic; with a rich stew of scheming servants, illicit desire and politics. Eventually Juana is betrayed by the very people she thought she could trust.

But while they are forgotten by history, her story still shines.
Viva Mexico

Gerry McCrudden
Director

Additional Programme Credits:

With thanks to: Fintan Shevlin, Carlos Villafañez -Rico, The late Mrs Hazel Meatyard, Dom Alcuin - Monastère Saint Benoit, Emese Csoma@mybelovedmakeup, The Brighton Birdcage - Wig and MakeUp Supplies. Mark Blackburne, Michael Folkard, Parkers Building Supplies, The Wood Store Brighton and as always, to all of NVT's Front of House volunteers.

CAST

Father Antonio: John Tolputt

Bishop Santa Cruz: Jeremy Crow

Archbishop Aguiar y Seijas: Bill Griffiths

Brigida: Justine Smith

Angelica: Joanna-Joy Salter

Juanita: Leah Mooney

Sister Sebastiana: Janice Jones

Mother Marguerita: Sheelagh Baker

Viceroy: Simon Messingham

Vicereine: Diane Robinson

Sister Juana: Sarah Davies

Don Hernando: Chris Phipps

Nuns: Samantha Howard and Stephanie Prieto

Priest: Ollie Wilson

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Gerry McCrudden

Production Manager: Alison McMillan-Puri

PM Assistant: Anne-Marie Harrison

Stage Manager: Bryony Weaver

ASMs: Gaby Bowring, Anne-Marie Harrison

Set Design: Simon Glazier

Set Construction: Simon Glazier, George Walter, Leah Mooney, Chris Tew, Dan Tranter

Set Painting: Justine Smith, Stephanie Prieto, Annie Sheppard

Costume Design: Mary Weaver

Assistant Costume Design: Samantha Howard, Jackie Jones

Costume Assistant (Dresser): Tandy Cufley, Natasha Kitcher, George Marshall, Joanna Miller,

Johanna O'Shea, Julia Round,

Hair and Make Up: Samantha Howard, Asmita Chandorkar

Lighting Design & Rigging: Strat Mastoris

Lighting Operation: Alex Epps, Sabrina Giles

Sound Design: Alistair Lock, Arun S Varghese

Sound Operation: Carrie Hynds, Chris Dent

Projections: Strat Mastoris, Tamsin Mastoris, Carrie Hynds, Alistair Lock

Poster & Programme: Tamsin & Strat Mastoris

Photography: Strat Mastoris,

Publicity and Social Media: Elysa Hyde

Theatre Props: Bryony Weaver, Carrie Hynds

Health and Safety: Ian Black



Sheelagh Baker : Mother Marguerita

Sheelagh is a long-standing member with the NVT and has played a wide range of roles - Shakespeare, drama, comedy and farce. Even song and dance when the occasion demanded. A particular celebration is this, her third "Mother" role. Others of a very different nature included 'The Anniversary' and 'Suddenly Last Summer'.

Jeremy Crow : Bishop Santa Cruz

Jeremy appeared last year at the NVT as Herod in 'Salomé', 'The Sweet Science of Bruising', and 'An Experiment with an Air Pump'. Other roles at the NVT include 'The Deep Blue Sea', 'The Clean House', and 'How Many Miles to Babylon?'. He has also appeared at Brighton Little Theatre, with the Southwick Players and in the Brighton Fringe.



Sarah Davies : Sister Juana

Sarah returns to the NVT to play Sister Juana. Other roles in the NVT include 'Medea', 'Queen Gertrude', 'Dancing at Lughnasa', 'The Steamie'. She has also directed and written original works for NVT: 'The Building', 'Talking Dog' and her adaptation of 'A Christmas Carol'. Sarah has been away from theatre for a while teaching Clown and developing her Bag Lady clown solo shows.

Bill Griffiths : Archbishop Aguiar y Seijas

Bill has been doing plays in and around Brighton for the last 40 years. In recent years, at the NVT, these include 'Proof', 'Talk' and 'Pickwick and Weller' and now 'The Heresy of Love' this year.



Samantha Howard : Nun

Samantha is a vocal coach, working at Masters level in vocal pedagogy. She is a retired professional singer, having worked on numerous projects for film, stage and TV in her career. Samantha is also a wig designer and makeup artist.



Janice Jones : Sister Sebastiana

Janice has been doing theatre for many years, either behind or on stage. Productions include 'Macbeth' (Point Blank Theatre); 'Comedy of Errors', 'Amadeus', 'That Face' and 'Streetcar Named Desire' (Brighton Little Theatre); 'The Rise and Fall of Little Voice' (BAHO); 'Kvetch', 'The Price', 'Old Times', 'Talk', 'A Kind of Alaska', 'Bedroom Farce' and 'Mixie' (NVT). Janice also performs her own poetry at open mic nights.



Simon Messingham : Viceroy

Simon was last spotted at the NVT in 'A Kind of Alaska'. Previous appearances here include: 'The Winslow Boy' and 'How Many Miles to Babylon?'. He is a writer and film maker. Television credits include the BBC's 'Tales of Uplift and Moral Improvement' with Rik Mayall and 'This is Dom Joly'. He is a founding member of the comedy outfit The Future Comedy Unit. His short film 'Ostrich Suit' did the festival rounds in 2024. He is currently working on ten thirty minutes audio comedies.



Leah Mooney : Juanita

Leah is back on the stage after an eight-year hiatus. Previous acting roles include Miranda in 'The Collector', Vicky in 'The Thrill of Love' and Jackie in 'My Mother Said I Never Should' all with The Green Room Productions in Eastbourne. Leah has appeared in numerous shows at Brighton Little Theatre including 'Rattle of a Simple Man', 'The Regina Monologues', 'A Wind in the Willows' and 'A Murder is Announced'. 'The Heresy of Love' marks her stage debut at the NVT.





Chris Phipps : Don Hernando

Chris returns to the NVT stage for his second production, having previously appeared in Chekhov's 'The Bear'. Other performances include 'Neighbourhood Watch' and 'A Chip in the Sugar' with Streatham Theatre, as well as various pantos and site-specific murder mystery productions. He is also a keen singer and performs with the Actually Gay Men's Chorus in Brighton.

Stephanie Prieto : Nun

Stephanie, recently arrived in Brighton, is a Chilean actress with more than 15 years' experience as a theatrical creator in Spanish and director of the Chile based NGO, Hilanderas, which defends the creative rights of women, children and LGBTQI+. 'The Heresy of Love' marks her stage debut at the NVT.



Diane Robinson : Vicereine

Diane has taught, performed and directed for schools, youth groups, community companies and professionally, for many years. Her most recent acting roles have been in 'Humble Boy' for Southwick players, 'A Merchant of Venice' and 'A Christmas Carol' for WTC and 'The Railway Children' for Brighton Little Theatre. Recent Directorial credits include: 'Picnic at Hanging Rock' (NVT) and 'Anna Karenina' (WTC).

Joanna-Joy Salter : Angelica

Joanna trained in Performing Arts at the University of Chichester and is now a Drama teacher and actress. She has previously performed in musical theatre including 'Sister Act', 'Legally Blonde' and 'The Wizard of Oz'. This is her third performance at the NVT, previous roles were in 'Mixie' and 'Picnic at Hanging Rock'.



Justine Smith : Brigida

Justine was recently in 'Mixie' at the NVT. Last year she was in 'Murder at the Manor' (Lantern Theatre) and 'Under Milk Wood' (B.O.A.T in 2023). Justine trained with Impulse Company (Meisner technique) and at the Philippe Gaulier Ecole.



John Tolputt : Father Antonio

John has acted for many years across the UK and for the last 15 years in and around Brighton. He played 'King Lear' at the NVT last year. Previously at the NVT he appeared in 'Not Talking', 'Hangman', 'The Herd', 'Pickwick and Weller', 'Smoking is Bad for You', 'The Winslow Boy', and 'Dancing at Lughnasa.'. At Brighton Little Theatre he has played Charles the Third and Winston Churchill. In Summer 2025 he will be at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall as Polonius in 'Hamlet'.

Priest: Ollie Wilson King

Ollie started acting in 2021 after a long media career. He trained at Actors Studio, based at Pinewood Studios, City Academy London and the Method Acting College, and has acted in short films and music videos, as well as creating and acting in a web gangster series, 'Attila and Bob'. He is currently filming a TV police drama. 'The Heresy of Love' marks his stage debut.



Gerry McCrudden - Director

Gerry has directed a number of plays at the NVT including 'Dancing at Lughnasa', 'The Winslow Boy', 'How Many Miles to Babylon', 'Biloxi Blues' and 'It's a Wonderful Life'. He has directed and acted in shows overseas, as well as the Brighton Little Theatre.

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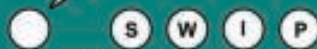


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We all need a little 'care and maintenance' from time to time and our lovely Grade II listed theatre is certainly no exception. Whether it's fixing the roof or upgrading equipment it is all increasingly expensive. So any donation you can make to help keep the New Venture alive and kicking will be hugely appreciated, and you can do it either via the donations box by the fireplace in the bar, or using the Donate Button on the homepage of our website - www.newventure.org.uk

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

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.

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Membership

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