



Short Plays 2025

Auto-Da-Fe

by Tennessee Williams directed by Ayshen Irfan

Fade to Black

by David Gillies directed by Greg Donaldson

The Fifteen Minute Hamlet

by Tom Stoppard directed by Goldie Majtas

The Pen of My Aunt

by Gordon Daviot directed by Dave Barnstorm

Red Peppers

by Noël Coward directed by Ashley Artus



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Bedford Place,
Brighton BN1 2PT

Friday 25th July - Saturday 2nd August 2025 at 7.30pm
Matinee: Sun 27th July at 2.30pm

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Registered Charity No. 268607

These amateur productions of 'Auto da Fe', 'Red Peppers' and 'The 15 Minute Hamlet' are all presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd.

Short Plays 2025

Auto-Da-Fe by Tennessee Williams
directed by Ayshen Irfan

Auto-da-Fé is an intense and haunting exploration of repression, desire, and psychological torment. Set in 1940s New Orleans, the play follows Eloi, a sexually repressed postal worker who lives under the watchful eye of his overbearing mother. Haunted by his own desires and consumed by guilt, he perceives the city as a den of corruption and sin. Desperate for purity, he spirals toward a tragic and fiery resolution.

Fade to Black by David Gillies
directed by Greg Donaldson

An actor waits in the green room to go onstage but not all is as it seems. Does this actor even know that he is an actor? Is this the afterlife? The void?
Where the hell is he?

The Fifteen Minute Hamlet by Tom Stoppard
directed by Goldie Majtas

A re-imagining of Tom Stoppard's Fifteen minute Hamlet.
It is the early hours of the morning and a group of students find themselves reciting Hamlet from memory after partying all night.

The Pen of My Aunt by Gordon Daviot
directed by Dave Barnstorm

Under a wartime sun, the light of humanity shines the brightest. When a soldier arrives at the family home, questions are asked. Under occupation, careless talk costs lives - literally. But through subterfuge and a little bit of help, perhaps friend and foe might guide him to safety.

Red Peppers by Noel Coward
directed by Ashley Artus

George and Lily Pepper are a husband-and-wife act touring in provincial music hall. They are seen first onstage, and then in their dressing room, and finally onstage again. Drama begins backstage and tensions run high as hilarious creatives clash.

Auto-Da-Fe

Director : Ayshen Irfan

Mme. Duvenet : Patti Griffiths

Eloi : Bertie Purchase

Fade to Black

Director : Greg Donaldson

Assistant Director : Persephone Pearl

The Stage Manager : Justine Smith

Bob Crump : Mike Everett

Ensemble : Clare Pearl Lyons

Ensemble : Rupert Johnson

Ensemble : Beatrice Cupido

Composers : Ric Sanchez & Graham Campbell

The Fifteen Minute Hamlet

Director & Shakespeare : Goldie Matjas

Co-director & Shakespeare : Celia Strømsholm

Laertes, Bernardo & Marcellus - Ardi Sefre

Horatio, Francisco & Osric - Vicky Glowczynska

Gertrude & Gravedigger - Tula Gartmayer

Ophelia - Paige Cowell

Hamlet - Thomas Dee

Polonius & Fortinbras - Spike Padley

Claudius & Ghost - Ripley North

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager : Ian Black

Assistant Production Manager : Natasha Kitcher

Stage Manager : Natasha Kitcher

ASMs : Claudia Ezreelian, David Turton, Katie Brownings

Sound Design : Ian Black and the directors

Lighting Design : Ewan Cassidy

Sound Operation : Carrie Hynds, Leah Mooney

Lighting rigging : Ewan Cassidy, Will Neal

Lighting Operation : Ewan Cassidy

Set Design : Simon Glazier

Set Build : Simon Glazier, Dan Tranter, Chris Tew, Annie

Sheppard, Leah Mooney, George Walter

Costume : Directors & Cast

Poster : Strat Mastoris

Programme : Tamsin Mastoris

Photography : Celia Strømsholm

Marketing & publicity : Elysa Hyde

Props : Guy Dixon, Natasha Kitcher & Katie Brownings

Health and safety : Ian Black

The Pen of My Aunt

Director : Dave Barnstorm

Assistant Director - Katya Schwarz

Simone - Fatma Hammad

Madame - Denise Evans

Stranger - Cody Thacker

Corporal - Daniel Sennett

Red Peppers

Director : Ashley Artus

Musical Director - Michael James

George - Ben Pritchard

Lily - Sarah Donnelly

Alf & Mr Edwards - Ollie Wilson King

Bert - Crispy Dunt

Mabel Grace - Ruth Tansey

Patti Griffiths - Mme. Duvenet (Auto-Da-Fe)

Over the years, Patti has morphed from daughter roles via mother roles to grandmother roles, but is overjoyed to be able to turn the clocks back in 'Auto-da-Fe' and play Eloi's (Bertie's) mother in this, her NVT debut. She has really enjoyed working with Ayshen and the rest of the NVT team and hopes you will enjoy this little gem of a play as much as she has.



Bertie Purchase - Eloi (Auto-Da-Fe)

Bertie has been performing at NVT since 2015, and has appeared in numerous shows, including 'Pickwick and Weller', 'Happy Now', 'Lovesong', 'The Messiah', 'Proof', and more. You might also have spotted him in last year's 'Les Liaisons Dangereuse' and as a musician in 'An Experiment with an Air Pump'. Bertie appeared earlier this year in the BHOS musical production of 'Company', and has performed with Patti Griffiths once before in Brighton Little Theatre's 'Dark Sublime'.

Ayshen Irfan - Director (Auto-Da-Fe)

This production marks Ayshen's directorial debut, having first found her footing in theatre through a Tennessee Williams play... an experience that sparked both admiration and ambition. It feels fitting that her first production pays quiet homage to that beginning. Prior to this, Ayshen worked behind the scenes as a stage manager, where she developed a deep respect for the craft. Ayshen is grateful to be working with such a sharp, spirited cast, whose wit and commitment give her full confidence in bringing Williams' short play to life.



Justine Smith - The Stage Manager (Fade to Black)

Justine has been acting for 10 years. Her performances include Rosie Probert, 'Under Milk Wood'; Miss Havesham, 'Great Expectations'; Mrs Saunders and Gerry, 'Cloud Nine'; Aunt Juliana, 'Hedda Gabler'; Alta, 'Language Archives'; Oberon, 'Revenge of the Amazons'; May Day, Murder at the Manor and Penny in Brighton Festival Operation 'Black Antler'. Most recently at NVT she appeared as Loud Woman and Tea Woman in 'Mixie' and as Brigida in 'Heresy of Love'. In this short play season, Justine plays the Stage Manager in 'Fade to Black', not to be confused with God!

Mike Everett - Bob Crump (Fade to Black)

This is Mike's first time performing with the NVT, and he's excited to continue developing as an aspiring stage actor. With a background in design, music and writing, he's passionate about creative storytelling and exploring character. Taking on the role of Bob Crump, a young, arrogant businessman whose untimely demise forces him to confront the truth about existence, has been an intense, challenging and rewarding experience.



Clare Pearl Lyons - Minion (Fade to Black)

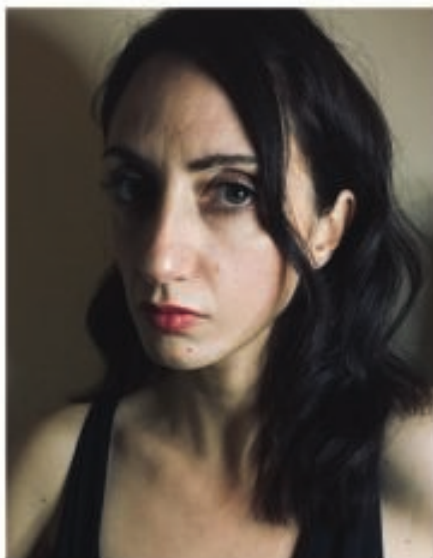


Clare completed a BA in Drama, studied acting at City Lit (London) and has deepened her practice with Meisner technique and Improv. She performed in a production of Alan Ayckbourn's 'Seasons Greetings' with City Lit Rep. She was mentored by burlesque performer Ruby Jones, and devised and performed a neo-burlesque show at Courtyard Theatre, London. Clare has performed in puppetry shows with Puppet Grinder Cabaret at Passing Clouds and Rich Mix (London). She is currently obsessed with Clown and accessing joy through grotesque silliness.

Ruper Johnson - Minion (Fade to Black)

Rupert Johnson lives in Brighton and works around the world mainly hosting movement, breathwork and bodywork training courses / retreats. He runs Sweatlodes in Stanmer Park, Brighton and enjoys making music and theatre as hobbies.

The words spoken at the start of 'Fade to Black' are adapted from a talk given by Ram Dass, an American spiritual teacher, in the 1970s.



Beatrice Cupido - Minion (Fade to Black)

Beatrice is a Brighton-based Italian contemporary dancer and actress who began dancing at the age of 7. She has extensive experience in various roles across theatre, art, music, and both commercial and artistic video productions. She practises improv with the Maydays and works as an art model. She's studied Feldenkrais, Butoh, Five Rhythms, contact improvisation, ecstatic dance and other dance styles. Bea's training includes: acting and diction for camera; Meisner technique; script work; vocal expression; theatre classes at ACT and NVT.
@beatrice_freelancemodel

Greg Donaldson - Director (Fade to Black)

Greg Donaldson spent most of his career as a professional actor, appearing in films such as 'V for Vendetta' and 'The Football Factory', and had a three-year stint as DC Tom Proctor in 'The Bill' (1997-2000). In 2002, he directed Dario Fo's 'Can't Pay Won't Pay' at the Hen & Chickens in Islington whilst continuing to work as an actor. In the last couple of years, Greg has enjoyed working at the NVT and is excited to be stepping back into the directing role.



Persephone Pearl - Assistant Director (Fade to Black)

Persephone is an artist and producer who believes in the use of creativity to approach big questions. Collaboration and accessibility are at the heart of their practice. Percy co-founded Lost Species Day, and directed arts organisation ONCA for a decade, devising and producing dozens of multidisciplinary collaborative creative projects. With a background in theatre, clown, puppetry and circus with Feral Theatre, Little Angel and the Insect Circus, Percy is happy to be supporting this ensemble process at the NVT.



Laertes, Bernardo & Marcellus - Ardi Sefre (The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

Voice actor on BBC Radio 4's 'The Adventurers'. 'Nora: A Doll's House', LN9 at Brighton Fringe. 'Like Dreaming Backwards', SUDS. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', NT Connections. Public Mascot and Sabbatical Officer for Sussex Students' Union. National Theatre Connections. National Youth Theatre 2017. LAMDA Grade 8.



Ophelia - Paige Sophie Cowell (The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

First Class BA Hons Drama and Creative Writing.

'RANK', Dir. Goldie Majtas. 'Revenge of The Amazons', Dir. Julia Mandler.



Gertrude & Gravedigger - Tula Gartmayer
(The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

TV: 'Angel of Decay,' Dir. Jamie Crawford. 'The White Princess', Dir. Jamie Payne, Alex Kalymnios. 'Day V Lately', Dir Chris Palmer.

Film: 'Mr Holmes', Dir. Bill Condon. 'Modern Life is Rubbish', Dir. Daniel Jerome Gill.

Music Video: Ella Eyre.

Theatre: 'All Yours'. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. 'Folkestone Hidden History'. 'Great Expectations'. 'The Crucible'. 'Les Miserables'. 'The Snow Queen'. 'I'm a Minger'. 'A Comedy of Errors'.



Hamlet - Thomas Dee (The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

NVT: 'Sweet Science of Bruising', 'NSFW', 'Turpin', 'Not Talking', 'Rules for Living' and 'Incident Room'. (I am delighted to be a part of this production, and to work with such a great team!)

Horatio, Francisco & Osric - Vicky Glowczynska
(The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

'Paddington in Peru', Dir. Dougal Wilson.

LAMDA bronze medal with distinction.



Polonius & Fortinbras - Spike Padley
(The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

Training: Rose Bruford College (UK), National Academy of Theatre Arts (Poland)

Theatre: 'Taking Care of Baby', 'Chekhov's Gun', 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist', 'You Don't Need My Permission', 'Naturalism', 'Home Fires', '451', 'Dr Blighty'.

Claudius & Ghost - Ripley North (The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

Bridge Theatre Training Company, 2025 intake.

'Nora: A Doll's House', LN9 at Brighton Fringe. '4.48 Psychosis', Dir. Violeta Lambies. 'The First Love Project', Dir. Jeremy Piper, 'The Bear' Pit Theatre Company.



Director & Shakespeare) - Goldie Majtas (The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

Writer and producer of 'RANK'. Gemma in 'RANK 2024' - Present. Hippolyta in 'Revenge of the Amazons', 2023. Charlotte in 'NSFW', 2023.



Co-director, and 'Shakespeare' - Celia Strømsholm (The Fifteen Minute Hamlet)

Previous direction & producing: 'Nora: A Doll's House', LN9 at Brighton Fringe. 'Medea', SUDS.

BA English Literature. Ibsen Studies, University of Oslo. Chinese Film, Theatre, & Modern Cultural History, Renmin University.

World of Tomorrow project at Donmar Warehouse & RADA.



Simone - Fatma Hammad (The Pen of My Aunt)

Fatma is thrilled to make her proper stage debut as Simone in 'The Pen of My Aunt' after playing previous roles in school as Jay Gatsby, Anne Frank, and Miss Trunchbull. A theatre lover at heart, she works at an English school and spends her free time making playlists as part of the soundtrack of her life. Simone's fiery spirit feels like a mirror to her own determination to challenge boundaries. She wants to thank the cast, crew, and Dave for this amazing experience.



Madame - Denise Evans (The Pen of My Aunt)

Denise has spent most of her working life in the theatre. She started out as an actor in 1982 touring Britain and beyond with a small touring theatre company, which she started with a friend and which was subsequently funded by the Arts Council. She spent over thirty years as an actor and actor-manager, and then later as a teacher of young actors. She has played parts as varied as Dickens' The Artful Dodger to Oedipus' Jocasta, to the dark tragedy of Euripedes' Medea, and recently Margery in Talking to Margery for the 2025 Brighton Fringe Festival.



Stranger - Cody Thacker (The Pen of My Aunt)

Cody can't wait to make his New Venture Theatre debut with 'The Pen Of My Aunt'. He has thus far enjoyed the rehearsal process and is thrilled to be playing such a complex character. When he's not acting, Cody religiously watches Merlin, loves to get lost in the mountains and sleeps, dreaming of one day sailing away, unannounced, to reside in the mountains of New Zealand.



Corporal - Daniel Sennett (The Pen of My Aunt)

Daniel recently completed the National Youth Theatre's 10-month 'Playing Up' course, enhancing acting skills. His recent roles include Oliver in 'One in Five', a mental health awareness short film, Harrison in 'Switch On', and David/Clone in 'Number 38'. Recent stage credits feature Lysander in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Johnny in 'Disco Inferno', and Roderigo in 'Othello'.



Director - Dave Barnstorm (The Pen of My Aunt)

Before the pandemic, Dave was an established and award-winning theatre and opera director. He remounted 'La Boheme' from King's Head Theatre at Trafalgar Studios in 2017 and was nominated for Best New Opera in the Olivier Awards that year. He was also co-producer and associate director of The So & So Arts Club, as well as the artistic director of Another Soup, and worked with the likes of Michael Brandon, Rula Lenska, Miriam Margolyes, and Dame Harriet Walter. He is now working as Producer and an Associate Director at ThirdSpace Theatre.



Assistant Director - Katya Schwarz (The Pen of My Aunt)

Katya has been directing plays since the age of fourteen. Whilst studying English Literature at UCL she directed four productions, including 'Measure for Measure' at the Bloomsbury Theatre. Most recently, she co-directed 'King Lear Is Dead', a Brighton and Camden Fringe production, and has been working with ThirdSpace Theatre, as assistant producer on 'Let It Be a Tale', and assistant director on Brighton Festival's 'Earth Teeth'.



George - Ben Pritchard (Red Peppers)

Ben is an NVT stalwart, performing here in a wide range of productions over the past 19 years, including 'American Buffalo', 'Hay Fever', 'The Deep Blue Sea', 'Hedwig & The Angry Inch', 'Parlour Song', 'The Sweet Science of Bruising', & 'Mixie'. Other productions include: 'The Full Monty' (WMTC), 'Brief Encounter' (The Wick), 'Blue Remembered Hills' at BOAT (Identity Theatre), & 'A Steady Rain' (FKP.media); for which he jointly won The Art Council's 'Best Actor' Drama Award. He is relishing the opportunity to flex his comedy chops again in this brilliant Coward caper!



Lily - Sarah Donnelly (Red Peppers)

Having started out in a short play at the NVT in 2022— 'A Kind of Alaska', Sarah then performed in 'Suddenly Last Summer' and 'The Sweet Science of Bruising'. This part is a joy for a Noël Coward fan and someone who loves the world of Variety Theatre that the play is set in. Sarah is very much both! She is relishing her first comedy role and the chance to bring Lily Pepper to life, drawing on her experience as singer and compere for the Sassy Cabaret Club.



Alf & Mr Edwards - Ollie Wilson King (Red Peppers)

Ollie started acting in 2021 and has worked at it full time for more than a year. He trained at Actors Studio and City Academy London, and will appear in TV mini-series 'Blue Season', to be screened on international networks late this year. He's also acted in short films and music videos, including 'Toothache', for James Marriott's recent UK chart-topping album, as well as in 'The Heresy of Love' at the NVT. Ollie's honoured to be playing a double role in 'Red Peppers'.



Bert - Crispy Dunt (Red Peppers)

Crispy's passion for writing and performance was sparked in 1991 by MMU where he studied Creative Arts, aged 24. Crispy moved down to Brighton in 1997, where he has since performed in shows by The Upstairs Theatre company and Thespionage. Crispy has been performing with the Cascade Creative Recovery Drama group since 2017. He has done courses in physical theatre, clowning, and stand-up both in Brighton and London in 2021. He has a zumba teaching qualification, is a grade 8 trombonist, and now sings with the City of Stars choir.'



Mabel Grace - Ruth Tansey (Red Peppers)

Ruth trained at Dartington College of Arts and the London School of Contemporary Dance. She has performed with various repertory companies and theatre on the canals, performing in pubs and regattas over the country. She has also performed twice at Glyndebourne 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Don Giovanni'. Ruth has performed at NVT in 'Through The Wormhole', 'Hard Times', 'The Crucible', 'Still Lives', 'Richard III' and 'Breaking The Code'. She is pleased to be back at NVT performing in another Noel Coward play.



Director - Ashley Artus (Red Peppers)

Ashley is an award winning actor with an extensive CV of 30 years of movies, TV and theatre. Working with Warner Bros, Working Title, Film 4. Extensive BBC Comedy and Drama. Recent 'Smoggie Queens' for TV. Sir Trevor Nunn. Sir Cameron Mackintosh. Max Stafford Clarke. Mike Leigh. Using their methods, practises, approaches and inspiration. He is thrilled to be directing with NVT and believes Theatre and storytelling is the most important tool human beings have. It's not politicians that move culture forward, it's artists.



THANK YOU

Special thanks from 'Auto-Da-Fe' to Laura Scobie for being the voice of Miss Borderlon and Mark Lester for being the narrator. From 'Red Peppers' to Gladrags who provided the costumes. 'The Fifteen Minute Hamlet' team would also like to thank Gabriel Hellier for the flush, and thank you to those that 'flushed it'. Thank you also to Victor Pilard for being part of the development process with us. And of course, thanks as always to our Box Office and Front of House volunteers, and everyone else who keeps our theatre running.

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