

SHORT PLAYS 2026



Sure Thing

by David Ives. directed by Oliver Canavan

Say Something Happened

by Alan Bennett. directed by Jason Lever

Catherine Medbh

by Declan Feenan. directed by Alice Healey



The Candidate

by Brent Holland. directed by Carolyn Chinn

The Fall (an excerpt from)

by James Fritz. directed by Sarah Tansey



Friday 2nd - Saturday 10th October 2026 at 7.30pm
Matinee: Sun 4th October at 2.30pm

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

Bedford Place,
Brighton BN1 2PF

Registered Charity No. 208607

How does one become a theatre director?

Three years ago, our then Artistic Director, Katie Brownings, set out to grow NVT's pool of directors. Ever the teacher, she wanted NVT to offer a pathway into directing; not just a door, but a clear set of steps through it. She introduced a simple rule: to pitch a full length play, you first have to direct a short.

The rule opened doors both ways - for established directors joining our community, and for existing members ready to take their next creative step. It also meant every season needed at least one series of shorts.

Tonight you'll see the last run of short plays in Katie's programme. Nineteen new and new-to-us directors later, her legacy speaks for itself.



Holly Moran and Jon Howlett in Catherine Medbh

THANK YOU

To Marcus Card for the loan of lighting equipment, and as always to the Front of House and Box Office teams, without whom no show would be possible.

CAST

SURE THING

Emma Howarth - Betty

Harvey Barton-Hague - Bill

SAY SOMETHING HAPPENED

Denise Evans - Mam

John Hartnett - Dad

Zarrina Danaeva - June

CATHERINE MEDBH

Jonathan Howlett - Him

Holly Morran - Her

THE CANDIDATE

Dana Nastevica - Black

Claire Coull - White

Sapphire Samiullah - Red

Jamal Riaz - Blue

Suzanne Heritage - Runnels

THE FALL

Zarrina Danaeva - Girl

Luke Carruthers - Boy

John Hartnett - Mr Butler

CREATIVE TEAM

Directors - Oliver Canavan, Carolyn Chinn, Alice Healey, Jason Lever, Sarah Tansey

Production Manager - Ian Black, Katie Brownings

Stage Manager - Gaby Bowring, Bryony Weaver

ASM - Ollie Wilson-King, Sofia Elliott, Chris De La Nougerede, Dora Slade

Set Team Leader - Chris De La Nougerede

Lighting Design - Bert Gladstone

Lighting Assistants - Enrico Di Guiseppe, Dora Slade, Marcus Card

Lighting Operators - Bert Gladstone, Chris Phipps

Sound Design - Ian Black

Sound Operator - Ian Black, Jim Prior, Chris Dent

Costume Design - Cast

Props - Guy Dixon, Furniture Store, Emmaus, Scrapspace

Poster and programme design - Strat Mastoris, Tamsin Mastoris

Publicity - Elysa Hyde

Photography - Strat Mastoris

Health & Safety - Ian Black

'Sure Thing' by David Ives

A brilliantly witty and fast-paced comedy, *Sure Thing* explores the awkward, hilarious, and all-too-relatable world of first encounters. Set in a café, the play follows two strangers navigating a conversation that keeps hilariously resetting every time something goes wrong. It's sharp, playful, and full of clever twists — a real actor's piece with great timing and comedic potential.

This amateur production of *'Sure Thing'* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Dramatists Play Service.

Director: Oliver Canavan

Oliver Canavan is a writer, actor and film director now making his debut for stage directing. He recently appeared at NVT in the critically acclaimed role of Franz in *'Appropriate'* and he's excited to be back on the other side working with two fantastic actors on *'Sure Thing'*.



Bill: Harvey Barton-Hague

One of Brighton's own, Harvey has been a part of the NVT for two years now and makes his theatre debut in *'Sure Thing'*. With a lifelong Passion for the performing arts, he is thrilled to be a part of such an intriguing play. As a fan of witty comedy, he cannot wait to play the role of Bill which has vast comedic potential. He's confident that you will enjoy the dynamic between the two characters just as much as him.

Betty: Emma Howarth

Born and bred in Brighton, Emma is an actor and comedy writer. Her most recent acting credits include Amelia in *'Slipping Through My Fingers'*, Inspector Ganimard in *'Sherlock Holmes: A Drag Crime Caper'* and Charlotte in the Tesco Clubcard commercial. Having previously performed in *'Jerusalem'*, she is excited to be back at NVT for the second time.



'Say Something Happened' by Alan Bennett

Mrs Rhodes is busy staring out the window, while Mr Rhodes is about to look up Helsinki in his atlas when this retired couple in Leeds have a caller from eager but green social worker, June, and her council questionnaire. She wants to put them on an "at risk" register – but Mam and Dad, perfectly alert, able-bodied and streetwise, have no intention of this! This is a funny and poignant dramatisation of a direct confrontation between old age and youth, and more.

This amateur production of 'Say Something Happened' is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French Ltd.

Director: Jason Lever

As one of his favourite writers, Jason Lever is excited to direct this largely forgotten piece of not too gentle social satire in Alan Bennett's 92nd year. It still feels relevant over '40 Years On' from when it was on television (1982) and radio (1989). At NVT, Jason has acted in 'Pickwick & Weller', 'Salomé', 'The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?', 'Turpin' and 'Hangmen', and in 'The Crucible' and 'Uncle Vanya' at Lewes Little Theatre. Last month, 'the Usher Pushed Too Far' monologue he wrote, previously filmed in NVT's 'Shorts & Monologues' series, opened Lewes's New Writing Festival.



Mam: Denise Evans

Denise fell in love with theatre when she played Mary in the infant's nativity play at school. She has spent most of her life working in the theatre, starting out as an actor in 1982 touring Britain and beyond with an Arts Council funded touring theatre company, which she started with a friend. She spent nearly thirty years as an actor and actor-manager, and later, as a teacher of young actors. She has played comedy, tragedy and everything in between, most recently at NVT playing Margaret in 'Murder, Margaret and Me'.

Dad: John Hartnett

This production is John's third appearance at NVT, having played Gloucester in 'King Lear' (2024) and Wilf in the ill-fated 'Quartet' that only ran for three performances in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. John has also performed with Brighton and Lewes Little Theatres, and in the former had the honour and joy to play Alan Bennett in 'Lady in The Van'. He is delighted to be working with Den, Zarrina and his old comrade Jason with whom he appeared in BLT's 'Playboy of the Western World' (2017).



June Proctor: Zarrina Danaeva

Her second show here at NVT, Zarrina is delighted to be back in 'The Fall' and 'Say Something Happened'. She's had a blast playing both characters, comparing the two in their responses to age and ageing, alongside two brilliant casts and directors! Theatre credits include: Nell Gwyn - 'Playhouse Creatures' (NVT), Tituba - 'The Crucible' (BLT) The Artful Dodger - 'Oliver Twist' (BOAT).



Zarrina Danaeva, John Hartnett and Denise Evans

Catherine Medbh by Declan Feenan

A tender, bittersweet Irish short play.

Set in a bar, the play follows a hesitant encounter between two former lovers. Intimate and deeply human, the piece relies on emotional truth, subtext, and naturalistic dialogue.

'Catherine Medbh' is an amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books.

Director: Alice Healey

Alice went to drama school, did some theatre, then disappeared for a while to raise a family. At the beginning of this year she Assistant Directed '4000 Days' and choreographed 'Arabian Nights'. This is her directing debut... Apparently she's back.



Him: Jonathan Howlett

Jonathan graduated from East 15 School of Acting in 2008 with an MA in Acting for TV, Film and Radio. He has performed in various London Fringe Theatre and at the Brighton and Edinburgh Fringe. NVT credits include Liam in 'Orphans', Len in 'The Winterling', Danny in 'Beginning', Macbeth in 'Macbeth' and most recently Troy in 'Jerusalem'. He has also worked in various Feature Film, TV and Webseries.

Her: Holly Morran

Having previously performed roles such as Alice in 'Closer', Anne in 'One Minute', and Cynthia in 'Endymion' during her time at university, Holly returned to the stage in 2026 as Mrs Farley in 'Playhouse Creatures' at the NVT. She is delighted to be appearing there again in the beautiful two-hander 'Catherine Medbh'.



'The Candidate' by Brent Holland

Four strangers wake up in a locked room. They have no memory of who they are, how they got there, or why they've been brought together. With no obvious means of escape, suspicion mounts and survival takes over. Who can be trusted? Who is in control? And who will pay the ultimate price?

'The Candidate' by Brent Holland is a gripping 30-minute psychological thriller where nothing is quite what it seems, and every choice has consequences.

This amateur production of 'The Candidate' is by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Playscripts.

Director: Carolyn Chinn

Carolyn is an NVT newbie. She has worked with theatre companies across southeast England and in her native Montreal. Recent directing credits include 'Hedda Gabler', 'The Graduate', 'Women Only', 'Proof', 'The Odd Couple', 'The Hollow' and 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead'. Looking for a modern thriller for NVT Shorts, she stumbled across 'The Candidate', a play she describes as "Twelve Angry Men meets Squid Game." Carolyn is hugely grateful to the cast and crew for their hard work and support. Now, hold onto your seat and enjoy the ride.

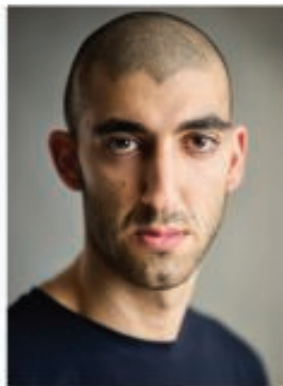


Black: Dana Nastevica

Dana began her theatre journey in Latvia, performing for three years before moving to the UK. 'The Candidate' marks her first UK theatre role and her NVT debut, where she takes on Black - a sharp, suspicious and strategic player who is always thinking a few steps ahead. Playing Black has been a brilliant challenge, although Dana is still trying to figure out whether she's acting or just naturally suspicious of everyone. She is thrilled to be part of the cast and hopes you enjoy the game. Let the paranoia begin!

Blue: Jamal Riaz

This is Jamal's first play with the New Venture Theatre. He's intrigued by the 'stuck in a random room with strangers' setting, and as a big thriller fan he couldn't wait to get stuck into this one. He's previously acted with the Southwick Players, his last role being Mr Oxenby in 'The Dresser'. Aside from acting, Jamal's very sporty and loves a cinnamon roll.



Red: Sapphire Samiullah

Sapphire is a fairly new returnee to the world of acting. She most recently performed in the NVT's 'Arabian Nights' as Sinbad the Sailor among other roles after a 15 year break from the stage. This is her second NVT production and she was immediately gripped by the thrill and intrigue of the play! She studied English and Theatre at university and was always interested in performance from a young age.



White: Claire Coull

Claire discovered her passion for acting while pregnant in Doha and unable to play rugby! A firm believer that "it's never too late" she trained at ACT Brighton. Since then she has appeared in numerous plays and independent films including Madge in 'The Dresser', Miss Pole in 'Cranford', Ruth in 'Calendar Girls', Bottom in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and Gossip in 'The Caged Birds'. This is Claire's second show at NVT after playing a fire fighter in 'The Arsonist' 10 years ago.



Runnels: Suzanne Heritage

This is Suzanne's first NVT show but definitely not her first show. She has most recently been an extra in 'The Watsons' at Brighton Open Air Theatre. Directors do sometimes give her speaking parts. Last year she had actual lines in 'Women Only' and 'Alice in Wonderland' - both at Brighton Little Theatre (BLT). She also directed 'The Tempest' at BLT in March 2026. She is thrilled to finally be on stage at NVT and hopes you all enjoy the show.



The Fall (extract) by James Fritz

Two teens plan a secret rendezvous in the empty house of a retired lawyer but they get more than they bargained for. Funny, poignant and gripping, this powerful short play is the first in a trilogy of stories in which two worlds collide and a prescient moral dilemma comes to the fore.

This excerpt from 'The Fall' is an amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books.

Director: Sarah Tansey

Trained: LAMDA.

Theatre Includes: 'To Kill A Mocking Bird', 'Much Ado', 'The Dream' (Regents Park), 'A Day in the Death of Joe Egg' (Glasgow Citz), 'Norman Conquests' (Liverpool Everyman), 'House Among the Stars', 'Sperm Wars' (Orange Tree), 'Ghosts' (Harold Pinter), 'A Streetcar Named Desire', 'Blithe Spirit', (Mercury) 'Seasons Greetings', 'The Misalliance' (Theatre Cymru), 'Romeo and Juliet' (New Vic).

Television: 'In and Out of the Kitchen', 'Casualty', 'Far From the Madding Crowd', 'The Bill', 'Turning World', 'Heartbeat'.

The Fall is Sarah's directing debut. She is indebted to her wonderful cast and the brilliant, inspirational Katie Brownings.



Boy: Luke Carruthers

Luke is a BN1 Graduate and working actor with a plethora of theatre experience as an amateur with Brighton Theatre Group since the age of 10! Theatre includes: 'Eyam', 'The Rover', 'Curtains' and Rodgers and Hammerstein's 'Cinderella' (BN1 Arts), 'Oliver!', 'Grease' and 'Chicago' (Brighton Theatre Group). Film: 'Cliques' (BN1 Arts)

'The Fall' marks Lukes's acting debut at NVT. He is thrilled to share The Fall with you.

Girl: Zarrina Danaeva

Her second show here at NVT, Zarrina is delighted to be back in 'The Fall' and 'Say Something Happened'. She's had a blast playing both characters, comparing the two in their responses to age and ageing, alongside two brilliant casts and directors! Theatre credits include: Nell Gwyn - 'Playhouse Creatures' (NVT), Tituba - 'The Crucible' (BLT) The Artful Dodger - 'Oliver Twist' (BOAT).



Booking NOW at newventure.org.uk



6th - 14th November 2026
In the Theatre Upstairs

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

Directed by Ayshen Irfan

Known as "A Trivial Comedy for Serious People", NVT warms up November with Oscar Wilde's satirical and gloriously absurd comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Step into a sumptuous Victorian world of wit, romantic entanglements, and (breaking) social conventions, wherein Jack and Algernon lead double lives, both adopting the name "Ernest" as they pursue the women they love.

With a fabulous cast, expect Wilde's celebrated repartee and farce as you experience the formidable Lady Bracknell, wicked Jack and Algy, and the delightfully eccentric Miss Prism. It's one not to miss!



4th - 12th December 2026
In the Studio Theatre

Talking Dog devised and directed by Sarah Davies

Talking Dog is a heartwarming tale of love, loyalty and family, seen through the eyes of Eddy, a devoted dog.

Blending puppetry, masks and storytelling, this funny and poignant production features enchanting animal encounters and an emotional journey that will delight audiences of all ages. Life-affirming.

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Become a Sponsor

NVT is a registered charity and owns the freehold of its theatre, a Victorian listed building. This constantly needs money spent to keep it safe and suitable for modern theatre. We need to raise money every year for this purpose and are seeking support for our sponsorship package which has been designed to appeal to local businesses who want to raise their profile in the community:

£300: This package covers advertisements on our website and in the programme for each production for 2 years. You are also entitled to 2 free tickets per production. If you are interested in sponsorship or want to help us with fundraising in any way please contact us 01273 808353 or by email finance@newventure.org.uk

Supporting the New Venture

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

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

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 - 9.30pm.
(Acting class runs most Mondays - October to July with breaks in May and Christmas)

Acting classes are open to anyone over 18. It will cost you just £8 per session (£4 for NVT members). You do not need to have any experience. Each month has a different teacher.

Please see website for details about the classes and how to book.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone over the age of 16 and the current cost is £15 per year. There is a discounted rate of £10 for Full Time students and unwaged (on means tested benefit) - (Proof of status is required)