

‘The Anniversary’

by Bill MacIlwraith
directed by Jerry Lyne
21-28 June

The Anniversary by Bill MacIlwraith first saw the light of day at the Theatre Royal Brighton in March 1966 before going onto an extended West End run and many revivals over the years. Amongst the original cast were Michael Crawford and Sheila Hancock. Sheila Hancock played young Shirley originally and at a recent revival played Mum!

This is a dark play, set in the 60’s, seething with family discontent, ruled over by that powerful matriarch Mum. What we see and sense when we join the Taggart family for the evening is something of a cauldron reaching boiling point. Mum is sitting firmly on the lid determined to ensure it stays in place. But does it?

Come and see what happens when revolution is in the air and the family try to turn the tables on Mum. You will be guests for the evening’s journey. It will be bumpy, funny and at times shockingly uncomfortable.

I am very fortunate to have an excellent talented cast and crew with faces both old and new. They have all been enthusiastic and supportive and it’s lovely to work with a great team.

It is a pleasure to have Jim Calderwood and Tessa Pointing playing husband and wife Terry and Karen, Emma Hollworth as young Shirley engaged to Matt Lawson’s young Tom and Mike Chowney as Henry, the eldest who has found

other diversions. Last and far from least, it is a delight to see Sheelagh Baker playing Mum.

It is always a privilege to direct at the NVT and



Matt Lawson as Tom and Emma Hallworth as Shirley

I am grateful for all the support from NVT, including Front of House, Box Office, Production team and the past and present Artistic Directors. So come along and support and watch Mum in action. See you there!

Jerry Lyne

**Ticket reservations
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Main Theatre - Up-date from Ian Black, Administration Director

I thank Rosie for her comments about the theatre and our performances.

It is true much work needs to be undertaken before the Main Theatre can be re-opened. This includes the installation of a Fire Detection system, for which we have been fund raising - with much success thanks to Mike and many others. Due to the generosity of local businesses, members and other individuals, we are now in a position to proceed with the Fire Detection system. Alongside this work we are look-

ing to start on other refurbishment in the Main Theatre and throughout the whole building over the summer break.

We will be looking for skilled and willing volunteers to undertake various tasks, so if you’re up for it and available over the summer,

With a fair wind behind us we may be looking at getting the Main Theatre open again during next season; but certainly as soon as we can.



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'MOJO' reviewed by Barrie Jerram

Set in a Soho Club in the late '50s, Mojo tells of a nightmare weekend following the abduction of Silver Johnny, a singing sensation and the subsequent discovery of the two halves of the club owner's body.

It is a study of the ever shifting relationships and loyalties of the five friends who barricade themselves inside the club fearful of their own safety. Fuelled with drugs and alcohol they argue, whine and insult each other. Each of them trying to ingratiate themselves, where appropriate, and being quick to denigrate others, if it is to their advantage.

Having enjoyed a production of one of Jez Butterworth's other plays -The Night Heron - at the New Venture a few years ago I was looking forward to this one. Although the Night Heron was not without its faults it was a much better play - one that excited and gripped one's interest. Seeing this play was a disappointment for me. The disappointment lay with Butterworth's writing and not with the performances.

It was his first play, written in the early '90s and reflecting the style of writing that was so popular

then - shock value and the tedious use of expletives. Here the writing was so overblown that the build up of tension, especially in the first act, was frequently interrupted. As I remarked in my review of American Buffalo, if the writer had been less generous in the use of course language and imagery, which only served to pad out the story line, we could all have gone home much earlier. The story would have been told more succinctly therefore benefiting from the tightness that this script lacked. It would have been the tight and tense thriller intended.

However the story line did contain some neat twists in the second act and was not without humour, albeit black comedy.

The production had a strong cast all giving excellent performances but they deserved better material.

Mathew Houghton and Sam Wolstenholme, following up their previous successes at NVT continue to impress. They made up a fine double act - Houghton as Potts, a man on the make, and Wolstenholme as Sweets, his dim sidekick.

Newcomer Ben Keyworth really got under the skin of his character - Skinny Luke (pun not intended). A snivelling but crafty wretch - one could almost smell the fear, sweat and halitosis. His death produced a clever coup de theatre with blood exploding everywhere.

Janna Fox played the small part of Silver Johnny, appearing briefly at the beginning and at the end of the play. This meant a lot of hanging around especially in the last scene, played suspended upside down from the ceiling- this time the pun is intended!

Darren Cockrill is another actor who has been seen to good effect in recent productions. As Baby, he skilfully managed to convey the character's schizophrenic persona - the childlike simplicity erupting into violence and with a quiet chilling control over the rest of the characters.

Tim Blissett gave a performance that mesmerised. His menacing authority, asserted by understated playing, was a quiet oasis in the midst of hysteria. His long drawn out stare down with Baby was a bold piece of direction by Frank McCabe.

Tickets

To: The Box Office Manager, NVT, Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

Please reserve for me _____ tickets for **"THE ANNIVERSARY"**

Saturday 21 June to Saturday 28 June at 7.45 pm

Matinee on Sunday 22 June at 2.30 pm (no performance on Monday)

Tickets: £7.00 (Friends £6.00) (Last Friday & Saturday £8.50 & £7.50)

DATE: _____

NAME: _____ Membership no. _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE: _____

Advice to Actors 2

John has directed everyone with so much fussy business that all my best lines are getting lost. The actors get up, sit down, carry trays, change places and move around so incessantly that I am nearly going out of my mind.

*Noel Coward in *Nude With Violin**

Concept theatre (where the director of a Shakespeare play tells the actors what the production has to say before the company have actually had a chance to find out what the play actually says) is as uncreative as the deconstructionist antics of minor Shakespearean scholarship. They both contrive to destroy the marvel of Shakespeare, denigrate his particularity, and forget that his plays were made to be performed. As a consequence, his theatre always celebrates the ambiguous and the contradictory: it is rich, not simple. It is no place for either dogmatic directors or theorists.

Peter Hall

A rehearsal period which consists of philosophical discourse or political treatise doesn't get the curtain up at eight o'clock.

Harold Pinter

The 'inside' of an actor - call it soul, consciousness, or whatever you like - with which the producer has to deal, is a very complicated instrument. That instrument is what matters most on the stage and only an extremely sensitive and careful producer can play on it without hurting the freshness of the actor's conception of the part and his own creation of it. Of course, what I am telling now about a theatrical producer only concerns the theatre of art, where plays have some inner meaning to them which is to be interpreted scenically. The commercial theatre needs no producing nor the theatre of the 'stars'.

Komisarjevsky

George (Cukor) was a brilliant director who knew how to keep things moving all the time. He didn't believe in fussy business or lots of mannerisms, but he knew each character had to keep things moving at all times, that a good play had to be like a solar system, in which all the planets are spinning in their orbits at all times.

Katherine Hepburn

News from Helen Caton, Artistic Director

OASIS OUT BACK

If you go out back at the theatre you'll notice that we have a little oasis growing. Well it's a start! Denny has agreed to manage the area but we are counting on everyone to be responsible for watering the plants. It gets hot out there and plants dry up and very quickly lose the will to live so they need us.

If we keep them alive for a year we can get ourselves a real live baby!

Additionally, if you have a garden at home and would like to donate some cuttings or plants, pots (not plastic) or anything that could make the outside area special then we would welcome your additions. Please drop them off with a little note so we know what they are and where they came from.

Smokers - Use an ashtray! Use an ashtray! Use an ashtray!

CHALK, CHEESE AND ELBOW GREASE

Congratulations to everyone who took part in the 2008 Fringe. We couldn't have housed two productions so entirely different in nature. In yer face Butterworth blasted us into May courtesy of Mr McCabe and his motley gang while the Schilling experience teased, stroked, nuzzled, bumped, poked, nibbled and nudged us out.

It was a treat to see Frank create such a characterful platform for some of the amazing talent that finds its way through the NVT doors. Watch this space for further updates as the production is being turned into a film project over the summer. Stock up on the popcorn!

I am delighted to report that Intimate Encounters had an extraordinary impact on those participating. After attending, I couldn't get it out of my mind the next day. Uli did a wonderful job training her performers to be

sensitive to other human beings within the context of the project with tenderness, charm, compassion and wit. It was really quite a treat! Big thanks to Carl who scheduled this little gem into the Diamond Season.

Looking forward, there is much to be done to prepare the theatre for the work that will take place over the summer break. I will be at the theatre from 10am till 5pm on 7th and 14th June to start preparing. We need some help to clear the space and prep some of the jobs. This is going to require a good deal of support from the community. Our building is really in need of some love and attention and it's too big a task for just a few people to take on. So - please come along and give some time. If you have been involved in a production this is a chance to pay it forward!

Often when we put out these requests for volunteers we don't get much of a response. We really do need your help so please be generous and do what you can to show up!

Many thanks - *Helen*

Dear Editor,

Members of the audience are advised that any items appearing to be foodstuffs seen on stage during a production run are in all likelihood props relevant or instrumental to the Show; they may not be made of edible materials.

As a general rule props should not be eaten as this will probably cause distress and inconvenience to the Stage Manager and to the cast, as well as possible illness to the consumer and this, in turn, could lead to a spurious and money-grubbing legal action against the theatre.

Martin Macfadyen

Dear Editor,

I was a stall holder at the Theatre Booty Sales in March. Most of the time we outnumbered the customers and in three hours I took in £11, most of it by selling to other stalls. I was disappointed that out of 400 members, only a handful were able to come in for a (free) cup of coffee and a look round.

It seems to me if we want a theatre to work in, it makes sense to help keep it standing? To those people who did turn up - a big "Thank You!"

To all the others, we missed you. Try and make it another time, eh, if only for the free coffee.

Barry Hewlett-Davies

FUND RAISING

by Mike Stubbs

The fundraising total is now **over £8,000** and rising. . . .

We're thinking of having a fundraising, social day with the theme of "Summer Stunts" where members do something silly, having raised their own group of sponsors. (I shall be walking a toy dog on wheels between the piers, for example). We'll base this on the beach if the weather's good, or the Theatre if not. But I need to know we have at least, say, 10 members who are up for this, so if you're one of those, please email me

I have some ideas we could share!



YOUR THEATRE NEEDS YOU

Did you know that if every member bought just 1 brick - we'd make over £2,000!!

So DO IT NOW!!

Just fill in the enclosed form and post it to the NVT fundraiser at the theatre along with your cheque.

Phyllis Collingbourne

We are sad to report that Jill Felix's mother, Phyllis Collingbourne, died peacefully in her sleep on 16 May.

You will remember that we announced in April last year that Phyllis, NVT's oldest member, celebrated her 100th birthday.

Many members will remember Phyllis sitting in the South Hall patiently waiting when Jill was Front of House Manager.



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for the loan of furniture for 'The Anniversary'