

2 Autumn productions *AND* the N.V.T. AGM !

'True West'

by Sam Shepard
directed by Calolm MacGregor
22 - 29 November

In *True West* the two brothers, Austin and Lee, represent two sides of the American present: one sophisticated, cultured, ambitious, and successful; the other alienated and outcast, raw, wild, violent. As the play unfolds, the two characters exchange places and reveal that each is the double of the other. Shepard's plays emphasize that, despite the American belief in starting anew, the past is never over but continues to intrude into the present.

While *True West* represents a continued movement toward realistic characterisation, the play also retains the unmistakable signature of Shepard's earlier adventurous work - such as the startling transformation of its two main characters who gradually acquire more bizarre qualities until they finally seem to fuse realism and fantasy. In many circles *True West*



Photo by Strat Mastoris

L-R Sam Parsons as Lee, Jack Bridgewater as Austin

was hailed as a breakthrough for Shepard, a work in which experimental drama was successfully melded with the more conventional elements of modern theatre. As relevant today as when it was first performed twenty eight years ago.

Reservations Forms for both productions on Page 2

'The Man Who Was Hamlet'

Presented by *Vital Theatre*, Directed by Denise Evans
Solo performance by George Dillon
2 to 6 December

Having played in most of Brighton's regular theatre venues, I'm thrilled to be launching my new show in the best studio space in the city - The New Venture - and I'm very grateful, particularly to Helen and Ian for this opportunity.

THE MAN WHO WAS HAMLET has been born of a long simmering obsession. In 1995 I directed and played Hamlet with a com-



pany of seven actors two musicians and a talking dog, starting in Brighton and touring via Queen's Park and Lewes Castle to the Edinburgh Festival. I knew Shakespeare's works fairly well but I was astonished that during my research the question of the author's identity took over and what I then discovered strongly influenced my performance.

(continued on page 3)

Mark your diary: AGM - Sunday 30 November at 19.30

NVT launching new events!

Design Forum, Members Meet and Communal Cleanup

For this season we are introducing a few new events to allow networking whilst enjoying a drink or two at the bar!

As you can see in the new brochure Tim McQuillen-Wright will be hosting a Design Forum every first Monday of the month. Feel free to come and share ideas, resources and practical advice.

Further will we welcome all members, new and estab-

lished, to get together over a drink and socialise, find out more about the theatre or even get involved with an upcoming production. The next date for Members Meet is Monday 8 December.

And last but not least, every Get out Sunday after a production will include a Community Cleanup, asking everybody to come along and clear the theatre for the next production. There is always something to be done and this could be ideally used for smaller projects, e.g. the archive project or smaller refurbish-

ment projects. And of course after all this dusty and sweat producing work we can have a drink to recover and appreciate the work done. The Communal Cleanup dates are mentioned in the brochure.

I am looking forward to welcoming you to any of the events, or even all, and have a chat over a drink.

Ulrike Schilling

NVT Production Manager

Ticket application forms

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

Please reserve for me _____ tickets for **'True West'**

Saturday 22 November & Tuesday/Saturday 25 - 29 November 7.45 pm

Matinee on Sunday 23 November at 2.30 pm

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

NAME: _____ Membership number _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE _____

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

Please reserve for me _____ tickets for **'The Man Who Was Hamlet'**

Tuesday 2 December - Saturday 6 December 7.45 pm

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

NAME: _____ Membership number _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE _____

Answers to the Showbiz Quiz : 1. Richard II, (They are Bushy, Bagot and Green.) 2. Mark Anthony. 3. The Winter's Tale. 4. Solanio 5. Shylock.

December newsletter dates

Final copy date
Monday 17 November

Printing
Friday 28 November

Stuffing & posting
Wednesday 3 December

'What All The Rabbits Are Doing'

reviewed by Barrie Jerram

The play's shock element start had all the promise of a political thriller as the establishment ruthlessly covers up the consequences of a prison rehabilitation experiment gone wrong.

However what followed was a philosophical debate about the nature of evil and the possibility of redemption.

Raymond, a violent psychopath, is assigned life-drawing classes under the scrutiny of watching scientists. His life model is Marianna, an optimistic charity worker who forms an extraordinary bond with the prisoner.

Their scenes together depicted a slowly developing friendship as Raymond questioned her motive for being there and Marianna trying to get him to express his feelings.

These scenes were interspersed

with bizarre exchanges between the snipers who are on stand by, ready to intervene if the girl is in danger.

The snipers were dressed in black and wearing lights on the head that spot lit only their faces. This gave a comic aspect to them and at times suggested masks that led me to believe that their purpose was to maybe fulfil a role similar to the Chorus in a Greek tragedy. However, surreal elements were added by one of them moving in a balletic way and carrying a black fan rather than rifle and the shifting sexual tension between the three of them. The games that that played smacked more of a school playground rather than a surveillance team. This aspect of the play was its weakest and detracted rather than added any value to the piece. It was a pretentious mish-mash.

There were strong performances from Rhys Lawton as Raymond and Zoe Hinks, Marianna. Hinks had a remarkably expressive face that she used well – at times enigmatic, mocking and even flirtatious. Considering that she spent the whole play totally naked it was incredible that one was to draw to the face rather than to the body.

In addition to starring in the play Hinks also wrote and co-directed it and with her co-director also playing one of the roles it was the usual case of a production suffering from not having a detached and dispassionate view of the play's weaknesses.

By a strange co-incidence this was the second play in a week where the staging was such that the audience were made to feel as though they were also in prison. The previous play at the Barn, Southwick, contained a powerful performance from Andy Bell, a NV stalwart.

BARRIE JERRAM

(The Man Who Was Hamlet continued from page 1)

The truth is that very little is known about the writer of Hamlet - and what is known makes it difficult to believe it was William Shaksper of Stratford. The mismatch between the Stratfordian's life and the character of the writer 'Shake-speare' has led many to look for an alternative candidate and in the twentieth century one was identified who satisfies our desire to find in a writer's life clues to his thoughts, methods and motives (beyond the mere accumulation of money).

Championed by many eminent figures from Sigmund Freud to Mark Rylance (the recent director of the Globe Theatre) Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was a colourful figure who some see as an egotistical monster and others as the star of the English renaissance, not just a patron but a master of a range of arts and sciences whose legacy rivals even Leonardo da Vinci.

So now, some thirteen years after playing Hamlet I am honouring his dying words - "Tell my story!" - and in my task I'm excited to be working with a fantastic team: Denise Evans as director, Chris Stagg as dramaturg and Charlotte Glasson as musician (who will be playing live during the performances).

As part of my new creative methodology I also want to open the door to NVT members to sit in on the later rehearsals for the production, so if you are interested email me at:

George Dillon

Writer & performer, *The Man Who Was Hamlet*

A Dame's Directions **Judi Dench's Rules for Herself and Others**

- 1 Remember it's a play, not reality.
- 2 Obey the metre.
- 3 Start scenes.
- 4 Earn a pause
- 5 Don't separate.
- 6 Drive through the speech.
- 7 Antithesis, pauses, up at the end of Lines
- 8 Economy, simplicity, and negotiate with humour
- 9 You don't have to carry the message, the play does it for you.
- 10 Trust the play, and your casting.

The season presses on, following a somewhat mixed and varied response to 'What All the Rabbits Are Doing'. We look forward to our first NVT production 'True West' followed by 'It's A Wonderful Life' to take us up to Christmas; not forgetting our other external production 'The Man Who Was Hamlet' sandwiched in between.

But that is not all, we also have our AGM. This year, like previous ones, we are looking for those rare individuals, the ones who are willing to give some time to keep the theatre functioning. We have a few, although for the size of the membership, a very few.

The list of roles to be filled is quite long and could appear daunting to the would-be volunteer. But the more roles we have and fill the less time com-

mitment each role has. We have been looking at how each role can be minimised as far as possible so that it does not invade your personal life. But we do need volunteers, we need you. Many of the roles will function more effectively with a small team supporting them. So if you want to dip your toe, but feel a 'role' could be too much at present, why not volunteer to be part of a support team e.g. Volunteer Liaison, Social events, Front of House, Box Office, Maintenance, Set Construction etc. Go on, you know you want to.

If you have mislaid the nomination forms and are desperately searching for it to put your name forward. Fear not, email me and I'll send you another copy.

Ian.black @newventure.org.uk

1. We have a new sponsor - Acappella Fusion, my wife, Chris' choir, have signed up for the next 12 months for £250 which gives them adverts in the brochure, programmes and website, plus 2 free tickets for each show....it's a good deal so maybe you can suggest sponsoring NVT to your contacts. We need more!!!

2. Social evenings are good "Fundraising" events and I have in mind a Karaoke evening for the next one. But I need someone to organise it, so if you're interested please give me a call and we can talk it through.....

Mike

New Venture Theatre
Annual General Meeting
Sunday 30 November Starting at 19:30
Bar open from 19:00
WE NEED YOU TO BE THERE !

Showbiz Quiz by Barry Hewlett-Davies

Shakespeare's Creepy Crawlies and Other Animals

1. Which play do the caterpillars of the commonwealth creep their way into:

- a) *Love's Labours Lost*; b) *Richard II*;
c) *Timon of Athens* ?

2. Who cried 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war:

- a) *Henry V*; b) *Coriolanus*;
c). *Mark Anthony* ?

3. Two people are chased off stage by a bear in:

- a) *The Tempest*; b) *The Winter's Tale*; c) *As You Like It* ?

4. Who jeers at strange people because they "laugh like parrots at a bagpiper" ?

- a) *Falstaff (Henry IV)*; b) *Katherine (Taming of the Shrew)*; c) *Solanio (Merchant of Venice)* ?

5. Who boasts he is vigilant as a cat to steal the cream:

- a) *Othello*; b) *Falstaff*; c) *Shylock* ?



No prizes. Just for fun. Answers upside down elsewhere in this issue.

Last time, because of an error in transmission, Punch and Judy were said to be marionettes. They are, of course, glove puppets. Thanks to everyone who so kindly pointed this out.