

# NVT Newsletter goes **Colour!**

Coming in  
October

Neil Simon's  
'Biloxi Blues'  
Directed by  
Gerry McCrudden

(No August or  
September productions)

Box Office (24hr)  
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Other enquiries  
01273 808353

NEW VENTURE  
T H E A T R E

NEW VENTURE

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The New Venture Theatre Newsletter is about to change. From next season – the next edition – the Newsletter will be in colour and be emailed to you. For those who are unable to access emails we will still distribute a printed black and white version by post.

We have been forced to move to email, due to the recent price hike in postal charges. However, it has enabled us to

move to colour, which printing costs had previously precluded. Anyone can change to email copies at any time, just email us below and we will do the rest.

The newsletter will be distributed as an attached PDF document, which almost all computers, tablets, smart phones, e-readers etc. can open. Renewal requests will also be emailed as well as the forthcoming events that Dan Walker has recently

started sending out regularly, audition notices etc.

Everyone will still get their NVT Brochure 3 times a year. It is not practical to email this, so you will still receive it by post.

For those who do have emails and have not received an email from the NVT recently we need you to confirm your email address. We do have a number of emails that bounce back, so if you have changed your email address and cannot recall if you told us please email us now [info@newventure.org.uk](mailto:info@newventure.org.uk).

## Ten Minute Play Competition 14-21 July 2012 End of the season

Following the success of the 10-Minute Play Competition in 2010, New Venture Theatre and Sussex Playwrights have joined forces again.

Many thanks to all who entered the 10-Minute Play competition 2012. Having received in excess of 170 plays the judging panel of representatives from both New Venture Theatre and Sussex Playwrights presented the 8 directors with a short list. From this the directors were able to choose their preferred play.

The 8 plays have now been selected for production and are listed on page 3.



Photo by Strat Mastoris



Late arrivals controversy  
Members' Forum: pages 4 & 5

# Don't miss the next Social!

On Saturday 28th July at 7:30 we are hosting the 'End of Season Social' where we will remember and celebrate some of the great achievements NVT and all volunteers involved experienced over the past season. We are presenting the NVT Awards, created by our guest designer Ben Pritchard, after having been delighted by a

short play by Andrew Allen. Andrew wrote this play appropriately to the Olympic torch passing through Brighton for this years 'People's day'.

As usual we will be having a raffle and if you came to the last socials you know what great prices our fundraising team organised for us!

Even though the season

will be officially over, but if you can't get enough of NVT and would like to come during the summer break, this is your chance to still get involved in the restoration of the Main Theatre, as many jobs will be done over the summer and there is plenty to get involved with. Alternatively get in touch with Jerry Lyne, details on the

last page of this newsletter.

And of course, if you want to chat to any director or anybody involved in next season's productions the ideal way for networking is our amazingly cheap and friendly bar.

I look forward to seeing you there.

**Ulrike**  
**Artistic Director**

## Acting Class

**Monday evenings: 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 July**

**Find your inner clown - Andy Thomas**

Come on a journey with Andy Thomas as we seek to find our 'inner fool', our natural state of being funny. Using game, improvisation, group work and paired work we shall create comic situations and see where our 'fool' lies. We shall

follow the methods used by Philippe Gaulier in Paris, who trained such famous clowns as Sacha Baron-Cohen. Fun, active and inclusive, we shall aim to have a good time and learn from each other and find our potential. Andy Thomas is a

Brighton based comedy performer and teacher, one half of 'Thomas and Maloney' and created 'Crimes Against Humanities Teachers' which won best comedy in the Brighton Festival.



## Tickets for next upcoming NVT productions

**Ticket prices: £9 (£8 members)**

**Final Friday/Saturday: £10 (£9 Members) Tuesday evenings: tickets £7**

**(Please note: On Sundays matinee only, and no productions on Mondays)**

**Evening performances at 7.45 pm  
Sunday Matinees at 2.30 pm**

**14-21 July: Ten Minute Play Competition**

Performance date?	How many?		Total Cost?
	Member?	Non-Member?	£

**6-13 Oct: 'Biloxi Blues' by Neil Simon**

Performance date?	How many?		Total Cost?
	Member?	Non-Member?	£

**Name, Address, Postal code & phone number:**

Membership Number(s)

**PLEASE SEND or DELIVER YOUR CHEQUE and this coupon to:  
New Venture Theatre, Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT**



## Ten Minute Play Competition

*continued from page 1*

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These plays will be presented in the 10-Minute Play Competition production at the New Venture Theatre, which runs for 7 performances from Saturday 14 to Saturday 21 July 2012. After each performance the audience will be invited to vote for their preferred play. The overall winning play will be announced after the last performance on Saturday 21 July.

This is a production to celebrate new writing, the power and pleasure of theatre and live performance. In addition, the opportunity for the audience to add their voice to encourage the playwright whose work they most enjoyed.

Bluebottle	by John Petherbridge	director – Sarah Garbutt
Change of Plan	by Stuart Pursell	director – Alex Epps
Charlie	by David Taylor	director - Hannah Liebeskind
In the Bar of the Half Moon	by Joel Kaye	director – Kevin Moore
Mick & Pete	by Brian Tuley	director – Moog
Nora's Special Day	by Mark Wilson	director – Mike Stubbs
Short Story	by Paul Fox	director – Lou Preecy
Still Waters	by Christopher Owen	director – Tamsin Fraser

### ***Ian Black***



### **Spotlight on Anne Gilson Membership Secretary**

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**Why did you decide to join NVT?** A friend kindly gave me an Associate Membership as a present.

**How long have you been a member?** It must be about 14 or 15 years.

**What have been the highlights for you?** As I've only been an Associate Member until this year the highlights have been some of the wonderful productions I have seen at New Venture. Very early on I was enthralled by Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* starring Jerry Lyne.

**What does your current role involve/cover?** It seems like a whole host of things. Firstly collecting all the Membership Applications and Renewal Forms from the Theatre and entering them on the database. Replying on line to all enquiries including sending out programmes and application forms. Sorting out the labels for the Stuffing and organising the event. And trying the patience of Ian in getting to grips with the database.

**What have been the most satisfying roles/positions on or off the NVT stage?** As this has been my first role in the Theatre, I suppose I have to say being Membership Secretary.

**What are your major interests outside of NVT?** Travelling, adventures around the world. At home I walk 7 miles along the seafront twice a week with Charles (the NVT newsletter editor). I also enjoy seeing friends and going to the theatre. Since I was 13 I have been fascinated by American politics – way before I married an American.

**What has been your greatest life achievement?** Probably when I was working for Sussex Alcohol Advice Service and I created a 90 hour training programme for volunteer counsellors and being lucky enough to have the course nationally accredited.

**What are you looking forward to at NVT?** The next Season which looks great.



Hi Charles

Back in my home town of Kalamazoo even amateurs take it as a matter of pride that their rather dreary shows start on time. I figure that starting late while you wait for members of the audience to arrive gives a message to those waiting for the performance that they aren't that important. That seems rather unfair to the likes of me and encourages more of the audience to be late or even later.

As you know I am an occasional lunch-time entertainer and the management of that club are very strict about starting on time. On my rather sneaky visits to other small theatres in Sussex I have also noted that their performances, too, start on time.

NVT has a special place in my heart and I feel slightly piqued that our wonderful theatre doesn't come up to the same standard.

Love to you all

**Mary Jane Birdwhistle**

Dear Editor,

What's going to happen when the theatre upstairs opens? Do we wait on the landing and stairs, or rush up in the designated five minutes? What price safety?

**Janet Hewlett-Davies**

## Front of House considerations from Natasha Borg

As the Box Office Manager at NVT, I am partly responsible for the way Front of House operates on performance nights, and I have been saddened by some of the letters which have appeared here recently in complaint of this aspect of our theatre.

Our shows do sometimes begin a few minutes late because we **are** waiting for late-comers. With our Studio holding as few as 54 seats for some productions, a couple of late parties can sometimes account for almost a quarter of the audience; if we do not wait a few minutes, the Stage Manager is then faced with the task of slipping in late-comers, which is distracting and disruptive for everyone involved. We also sometimes ask the audience to remain outside the Studio until called, as some productions have actors set on stage as the audience enter.

I despair at the suggestion that we are expected to deliver a Front of House experience synonymous with the Theatre Royal. Our ticket prices certainly reflect the fact that we do not have paid Front of House staff; we rely

on the willingness of our members to volunteer to help run Front of House on performance nights, and fit this extra role into their already busy lives. We aim to create a welcoming and helpful environment on performance nights, in which our audience, volunteers and production team can empathise with one another in a space where efforts are appreciated, difficulties are understood, and productions are enjoyed.

We can only ask our audience to please turn up in good time. Of our membership, we can only ask you again to please think of volunteering a few hours a month to assist our Front of House operation and support the New Venture Theatre.

To help on the box office during performances please contact [boxoffice@newventure.org.uk](mailto:boxoffice@newventure.org.uk)

To help on the bar please contact [frontofhouse@newventure.org.uk](mailto:frontofhouse@newventure.org.uk)

**Natasha Borg**  
**Box Office**

## Rebuttals?

There may just be some free space on this subject in the next (October) issue.

We'll probably need to close the subject and move on after that.

Final copy date: Monday 10 September



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## Kevin Moore responds - vigorously

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As the new NVT Production Manager I would like to address the letters that have been in the last few newsletters that speak of two issues, the first being shows going up late, and the second audiences having to go in all at once just minutes before a show starts.

Dealing with shows going up late first, there's a short response and a much longer response. The short response is that this theatre is completely run voluntarily. The much longer response is that we are not the Theatre Royal, which is staffed by paid employees who deal with audiences every week, with a regular team and regular management. Nor are we at all like a cinema, which is also staffed by paid employees (and forgive me for being pedantic but they almost always put on shows 20 minute later than billed because of the trailers showing beforehand). We are a member club which relies on the members to run the whole thing, the bar, the box office, the fire steward, front of house (this newsletter!), everyone involved in ensuring the audience have a good time is doing it purely out of love for the theatre, completely free.

I am sympathetic to anyone who can't stand a show going up late, and as Production Manager I am aiming to improve it for next season, but perhaps if I highlighted some of the difficulties a stage

manager (a role I am currently doing for the run of Medea at the time of writing this) faces then maybe it will help clarify why sometimes a show does go up late.

The main problem is when there are quite a few audience members who have not turned up. Now some point to the fact that in other theatres they go up anyway without having all the audience. I don't wish to get too technical but this is a much easier prospect when you have a proscenium theatre like the Theatre Royal, whereas the NVT currently only has a studio theatre. The difference is crucial because when you do get a latecomer you can slip them in with easy access to the seating in a proscenium theatre, but you have to enter the actual acting space in a studio theatre, so the stage manager will have to take into account whether there is a convenient time to get them into the theatre, are there any clear scene changes. This sometimes can make a stage manager err on the side of caution if it is a pretty intense non-stop play. These are decisions that only become easier with experience, and as I've said, this is not their day job.

One additional note on this is that usually we have to shut the front doors as we start a show, as they are so close to the studio entrance, and it has been known for latecomers to start banging loudly

on the door, despite us putting a sign up for them to use the side entrance. This can be pretty disruptive.

On to the other issue, audiences being let into the theatre all at once, often causing a big queue. This has been something that I've been thinking we can improve ever since I've become Production Manager, it seems like such a simple solution; open the doors earlier. There is again however the issue of it being a studio theatre. Ultimately it is down to the director of the show how the audience come into the theatre, and sometimes a director will want the actors on stage before the audience come in, so that the audience walk into something interesting going on as they come in, or they want to control what the audience sees in some way and so delay them coming in any earlier. This is something that happens more often with a studio theatre than other type, which is why it can seem like such a regular occurrence at NVT. I still think that even accommodating such decisions we can open earlier and give audiences more time to sit down and will endeavour to try to do so where I can in the next season.

If anyone has further suggestions for improvements then I am happy to hear them. Please contact me via email on [kevin.moore@newventure.org.uk](mailto:kevin.moore@newventure.org.uk)

**Kevin Moore**  
**Production Manager**

# ‘Medea’ by Euripides

Translated by Tom Paulin

Directed by Andrew Allen

A review by Barry Hewlett-Davies

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One of the advantages of translation is that it sets a play free. This works wonderfully in Tom Paulin’s poetic version of Medea where he brings Euripides into 21<sup>st</sup> century speech and style with considerable boldness.

Andrew Allen’s production invites us to a wedding feast where we are the guests, seated at tables, a device which drops the action right into our laps, almost literally. As the actors weave round you, you do well to keep in mind the note in the programme about where to put your feet.

Inevitably, the evening is Medea’s, a genuinely thrilling performance from Sarah Davies. Her voice picks up Paulin’s Irish cadences – a good point since Medea is not Athenian and we are in Corinth. She murders her children to spite her husband but convinces us her evil is justified. Divine intervention prevents her punishment. Euripides has her carried off at the end in a golden chariot – in this show, she steps into dazzling white light like somebody undergoing supernatural surgery.

I could have done with a bit more supernatural. After all, we have the gods to contend with and more thunder and lightning would make the point that higher and even more wicked forces are hard

at work – and they are always going to win.

It is by no means a one-woman show.

Sam Parsons is Jason, bitter and beguiled by turn, finally destroyed. A tall and commanding figure, his realisation of what Medea has done to his sons is heart-rending. Think about the “pretty chickens” speech in Macbeth. The last confrontation between the two of them is very good theatre.

Amanda Harman is the nurse, dealing well with putting us in the picture as the story begins – not an easy job. Given the unconventional presentation of the show, it takes two or three minutes for the audience to settle down and, more importantly, to start listening to what’s going on.

Lana Harper has a great time as the Messenger telling us about the ghastly death by poisoned frock of Jason’s new bride and her father –

grand guignol par excellence.

The ten actors who make up the chorus speak and move elegantly. That they comment on events as well as reporting them is a surprise to classicists perhaps, but useful. And it is a touch of brilliance to have Ella Fitzgerald’s Every Time We Say Good-bye as further comment.

New Venture has been on a roll this season with some first-rate shows. Medea, brings down the curtain with a satisfying flourish as the last major production.

## Casting

The Chorus: Lizzie Booth, Hayley Curran, Bridie Donaghy, Charlotte Grimes, Sharon Salazar, Helena Waters, Kay Wetherilt, Jezz Bowden, Steve Larkin, and Dan Walker.

The Children: Justine Lartillot and Ulrike Schilling.

Other players: Tom Robinson, Barry O’Dea, and Derek Fraser.

I don’t want to be irreverent, but trying to think of something cheerful after such devastating nuptials, I came up with a line from a North Country radio comic called Al Reid – “There was enough said at Our Edie’s Wedding !”



Photo by Tamsin Fraser

## The Cast

Lana Harper Derek Fraser Dan Walker Sam Parsons Tom Robinson Barry O’Dea Jezz Bowden  
Kay Wetherilt Hayley Curran Sharon Salazar Charlotte Grimes Sarah Davies Helena Waters Lizzie Booth Steve Larkin  
Amanda Harman Ulrike Schilling Bridie Donaghy Justine Lartillot

# 'MEDEA' – a look behind the scenes

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When I spoke to Andrew last season regarding a production for the current season, he ambitiously suggested MEDEA. As we had not staged a Greek tragedy at the NVT for a while, and also Andrew envisaging a very different staging to our common use of the Studio theatre, I happily agreed. Little did I know the impact this would have on my life!

I approached Andrew regarding audition notices and deadlines during his classes in January and he mentioned he would like to have a Production Manager before the auditions. As I was aware of the complexities having Medea as part of the season, I felt obliged to offer my help, just in case he couldn't find anybody else – and of course he couldn't! So that was me fixed for about four months to an ultra-ambitious project with a director who sees improvisation as an essential part of all aspects life has to offer.

Andrew gave me a copy of the translation he wanted to use and I was mesmerised! I did not expect anything as fast paced and clear as Tom Paulin's version of the text, after all it's an ancient Greek story.

In my usual fashion, I managed to convince people what an amazing project we are working on and had many crew positions quickly covered.

So us all excited about the coming months, we embarked on the first challenge, the auditions! Being both rather busy people and individually dancing at several weddings each week, we managed to sync our diaries and finalised three audition dates. On the first evening, a Thursday, we had about seven people turn up and were able to cast several of

the individual parts and had some potential chorus members. On Friday, the second evening of auditions, we saw three people spread out over three hours, well it was a Friday evening ... We knew many other people were interested, but unfortunately our last day, a Sunday evening, offered only two and a half hours to see over 25 (!!!) people! This didn't help us decide who to cast. Therefore we needed to organise recalls!

As we had so much interest we could then happily cast the parts and embark on the rehearsal process. As these things go, unforeseen events creped up in people's lives and it was rather difficult to organise a group of over 20 people to be in the same room at the same time.

Being blessed with the support of many helpers, new members and NVT stalwarts, we could utilise the three month rehearsal period to create an amazing show and challenge our resources to find solutions that matched our ambitions.

While being faced with a lack of sleep, lots of pub conversations and bills, many questions at rehearsals and the general things life throws at you, I found myself enjoying the work with all the amazing people involved in this project.

As Production Manager, one can manage most aspects of the organisation of the production from the comfort of a chair or sofa and a computer, but of course this depends on the production, the director and the cast, mainly their number. As I offered to help with chorus and movement work, and later on I somehow found myself offering to take a non-speaking part, I attended many rehearsals just to observe the

development and check in with everyone.

It was amazing to see how things developed and how quick, or at times slow, a scene shaped up and altered my whole perception of the play. This process became magical during the last weeks, again several challenges had to be tackled, but the feeling of support, passion and company spirit in order to solve all problems and ensure the finishing touches are added in time, just lifted me up and freed up unknown energy reserves. Many other people in the group felt the same and we were looking forward to tell the story to an audience!

Having embarked rather spontaneously on this adventure, I gained so much from this experience and met such lovely people, that I can only be grateful for all the people and opportunities NVT has to offer!

The role of Production Manager can be shared and is a fantastic way of learning about all the nuts and bolts that make a production tick and observe a director at work.

So if you are considering to direct yourself or are a very organised individual who loves managing, but can't commit too much time to being at the theatre, but still want to be part of a production or just want to get involved with a production and observe the whole process, this is an ideal role for you. You can always work together with someone if you feel more comfortable with that, and your support will be highly appreciated. Just contact the Volunteer Liaison or any of the directors for next season to get involved, as I have the feeling Andrew might just be looking for a Production Manager for next season too.

**Ulrike**



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**OCTOBER 2012 newsletter**

Copy deadline: Monday 3 September  
 Printing: Monday 17 September  
 Stuffing: Saturday 22 September

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