

NVT
Newsletter
February 2013

Coming end of
March

'Boston Marriage'

By David Mamet
Directed by Jerry Lyne

30 March - 6 April

Box Office (24hr)
01273 746118
Other enquiries
01273 808353

NEW VENTURE
T H E A T R E

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'How to disappear completely and never be found'

By Fin Kennedy
Directed by Ian Black
23 February - 2 March 2013

When Charlie, a young executive, is accused of embezzlement and decides to disappear, he pays a visit to a master of the craft in a seafront fortune teller's in Southend. "I don't think the problem lies with me," Charlie tells the company doctor, who only wants to keep Charlie functioning so that he can broker the next deal. "I think things might be genuinely shit." If Charlie's right, maybe it is time to stop the world and get off. Become somebody else. Haunted by visitations from a pathologist who swears he is already lying flat out on her slab, Charlie begins a nightmarish journey that sees him abandon everything, even his name.

This play is a mix of dark humour and surreal imagery. A cross between a surreal dark comedy and a human tragedy.

Having been inspired by a number of books on the subject including a handbook also called "How To Disappear Completely and Never Be Found" and reading through cases listed on the website of National Missing Person's Helpline, Fin Kennedy wrote this play which was turned down by a number of theatres before winning the Arts Council Jon Whiting Playwriting award in 2005. It was the first unproduced play in 40 years to win this award.



Front: Scott Roberts. Back: Ben Prichard, Arwen Matthews, Tom Robinson, and Hellen Ward

Photo by Strat Mastoris

Subsequently the play was commissioned by Sam West and produced at The Crucible Studio in Sheffield in 2007. Since then it has been produced worldwide and is now one of the most licensed plays by Nick Hern Books.

This production brings two new actors to the New Venture Theatre – Scott Roberts as Charlie and Hellen Ward, who plays a number of characters in the play. Along with them a number of NVT stalwarts and more recent newcomers make up the rest of the cast – Arwen Matthews, Ben Pritchard, Emmie Spencer, Sam Parsons and Tom Robinson. Also some other members of the NVT may appear in one form or another – will you recognise them? The cast are complimented by an experienced crew and design team. We hope you will come along and immerse yourself in this thought-provoking and entertaining play.

Ian Black, Director

Acting Class

Finding Stories and Characters from All Sorts: Dipping and Devising - Sarah Davies

28 January, 4, 11, 18 and 25 February

Exploring different stimuli as creative springboards into inventing scenarios and characters, Sarah invites you to come and invent together in the spirit of play. Lots of moving around to movement and silly games to get you into the mood of playfulness with others. Structures and scenarios will be given for you to explore and experiment with. Each session will end with a sharing of work.

An Introduction To Method Acting - Sean Lippett-Fall

4, 11, 18 and 25 March

In these classes we will examine the practical and theoretical aspects of "Method Acting".

We will be using both individual and group working techniques in an often challenging, but above all **fun** and safe series of exercises and experiments.

Attendance of all four classes will add to a greater learning experience as we work towards a final 3 - 5 minute individual Actor showing in class 4.

No previous experience or knowledge is required, just bring a smile and an open mind.

Sean graduated at "Arts Educational Acting School", and is an Equity registered Actor / Director. Professional Theatre Credits include:

Plough and The Stars / The Caucasian Chalk Circle / A Little Night Music / Blood Wedding / The Seagull / The Destiny Of Me / The House Of Bernarda Alba / Amongst Barbarians / Contemporary Canterbury / Pig In A Poke / The Glass Menagerie (Sam Mendes).

TV Credits include: The Bill (x2) / Invasion Earth (x2) / Wycliffe (x3)

Updates on recent developments

Since January I have been enjoying the pleasure of admiring the 2013 NVT Calendar Boys and can only recommend you get a copy if you have not done so yet. <http://www.newventure.org.uk/nvt-calendar-boys-2013.asp>

Proposals

I am further enjoying meeting new directors and discussing proposals with new and existing NVT members. Another exciting season is shaping up! In January I had a meeting with Rod Lewis, who directed 'The Price' and Rod kindly offered to assist me as Artistic Director, taking on an advisory role to productions, especially for directors who would like more feedback regarding direction and acting. As you might know, Rod has been professionally involved in theatre all his life, whilst my background is more movement and art based, which should offer directors as well as actors a variety of great support for productions.

The youth group project is still developing and not forgotten. In December Sarah Davies refreshed her chaperone training and updated her knowledge on legal requirements in preparation for 'Hansel and Gretel' and will be attending a workshop with other youth groups leaders this spring to network and find out how other groups are run. After that some taster workshops are planned to get a feeling how the group can develop.

So look out for workshops and projects during this season and if there is anything you would like to see happening or anything you can offer, please do email me so we can schedule it for next season.

Ulrike
Artistic Director

Thoughts from a South Hall Chair

Here we are with 2013 well underway with a 5 star review from the Argus for the production of 'Far Away' / '7 Jewish Children'. The year also started well with an excellent New Years Eve Event, combining entertainment from NVT members and the annual renewal of a new year's beginning. A great event, enjoyed by all who attended and a big thank you to Tamsin and her happy band of helpers and entertainers who made the event possible.

Next up is a play I won't say too much about. As the director I may be a little biased. Just remember to book early before all the tickets disappear.

As this season moves forwards with 'Boston Marriage' and the auditions for the Fringe Festival productions, 'No Exit' on 4 and 7 February and Andrew Allen's Improvisation on 8 and 15 February, we also need to consider next season. Yes, we are near to the closing date for Production Proposals for 2013/14 - deadline is Friday 15 February.

The external work on the south side of the theatre has taken a little longer than expected. However it is now complete and we are expecting the scaffolding to be removed very soon. The double glazing in the South Hall has been completed and will soon have blinds fitted. Some of you may have noticed some noises coming from the air conditioning system a few productions back. This will soon be resolved with a modification to the system.

Ian Black, Chairman

Bare-fronted thanks!

The New Venture Theatre would like to offer it's heartfelt thanks to the following Brighton retailers for kindly stocking 'Calendar Boys' during the recent months:

Cardome, Kemptown www.cardome.co.uk **City books**, Hove www.city-books.co.uk
Kerfuffle, Kemptown **Malarkey**, Bond Street
Naughty but Nice, Kemptown **Pen to Paper**, Sydney Street www.pentopaperonline.com
VinMag, Kensington Gardens <http://www.vinmag.com>

Their generosity alone has raised over £80.00 profit from calendar sales, contributing to the continued refurbishment of the Main Theatre. Show your appreciation in 2013 by supporting this fantastic group of local retailers!

Calendars can still be purchased online and at the New Venture Theatre. You've already missed Mr. January, but you're just in time for Mr. February! Unlike his namesake, he's neither short *nor* cold.



Spotlight on Judy Milton Fundraising Manager



What decided you to join NVT?

After moving to Brighton in June 2011, I came to see 'The Servant' with friends, and was very impressed with the standard of production, combined with the informal, friendly atmosphere of the place. When I saw in the brochure that volunteers were needed and that acting classes were on offer, I thought it would be a good opportunity to get to know people in Brighton and try something new.

How long have you been a member?

Since December 2011.

What have been the highlights for you?

It's all good! Productions have been universally excellent, acting classes have been energising and innovative, and getting a £5,000 grant the first time I approached a funder (The Pebble Trust) was very gratifying! I find NVT to be quite an inspiring place; it's incredible what continues to be achieved by people giving their time and expertise absolutely free of charge!

What does your current role

involve/cover?

I have periods of intense personal busy-ness which restrict my NVT activities, but generally as fundraiser, I look for grant awarding bodies who might give us sufficient money to restore the Main Theatre upstairs, and tailor applications accordingly to fit their criteria. We currently have bids totalling £12,000 in to The Foyle Foundation and Garfield Weston Foundation to pay for the raked seating upstairs. This involves liaising with the committee for general guidance and financial information.

I am also tasked with generating more sponsorship, and have secured raffle prize donations for social evenings along with my trusty assistant, Anderson.

My current plans are to coordinate a plan to include the Angels more, following their generous donations, and to implement a fundraising 100 club, where members pay in regular small amounts and can win prizes too.

What have been the most satisfying roles/positions on or off the NVT stage?

I really like contact with people, so staffing the bar, or 'selling' NVT to potential sponsors or audiences are things I enjoy.

What are your major interests outside of NVT?

Time with family and friends, cooking and eating with same, travelling to new places, The Arts, swimming and hiking.

What has been your greatest life achievement?

Wow, that's a hard one! One thing that comes to mind is setting up a mediation service a few years ago to help resolve conflict between parents and teenagers and hearing how well regarded and well used it still is. Plus seeing my two brilliant daughters becoming impressive, capable young women!

What are you looking forward to at NVT?

Getting more money in to pay for the Main Theatre conversion, and seeing it up and running.

Leonard Goldman: a very special NVT member



I had the great pleasure of spending some time in January with Len Goldman. At 96 he is probably NVT's oldest member. When he renewed his membership recently he wrote that he had spent some of his childhood at Christ Church School in the NVT building and I thought members would be interested to hear about Len and he kindly agreed to be interviewed. Incidentally the school's name can still be seen on the building.

There was a church to the right of the building, where the flats are now located. Len attended the school from when he was 8 in 1924. Apparently the 1904 Education Act provided the exist-

ing elementary schools for all to 14 and newly created secondary schools where children were expected to stay to 16. There was a small fee for these and, additionally scholarships for the 'bright' kids. It seems Len was not one of these and he remained at Christ Church until he was 14. The school had approximately 120 pupils and Len spent his 1st and 2nd year in an upstairs room, now part of the main theatre. What is now the studio and south hall were divided by a 'sliding wall'. The main entrance to the theatre was used by the teachers, but the boys had to go round to the side.

There was no school curriculum as such and his teacher was mainly interested in English. He was a consummate actor and organised classroom dramas and productions. Len took part in all the plays and has been in love with the theatre ever since. For productions the sliding wall was opened between the studio and south hall. His first role was Falstaff in Henry IV part 1, see his picture (above) and you can guess why! His teacher was clearly a big influence and Len felt he owed him a great deal. Later when

Len returned to Brighton he managed to contact the teacher again and knew him to the end of his life.

Len and his family moved to London around 1932 and he started studying at evening classes. He developed a lifelong interest in politics. He didn't join the International Brigade during the struggle against Franco in Spain in the late 1930s but engaged intensively in the anti-fascist campaign in Britain.

During WWII Len spent 6 years in the army. After completing his training he went off to India and Burma. In India he became close friends with a Bengali family, spending all his leaves with them. They were all members of Gandhi's Congress Party. It was during the Quit India movement but they accepted him even though he was wearing a British army uniform.

***Len's philosophy is:
keep going
till you can't.***

After WW II Len was delighted to get the opportunity to train as a teacher and worked in North London teaching English and History at an intermediate school and then at one of the first comprehensive schools, having engaged in the struggle for these for a number of years.

In 1958 he went to what was then the German Democratic Republic to help set up a Summer School for their teachers of English. Whilst there, he had the opportunity to accept a post as lecturer at Leipzig University and remained there for 7 years. He



Len Goldman - NVT member and supporter

thinks there have been many misconceptions about the then GDR and other Socialist countries. He believes they were trying to build a Socialist society and a considerable amount was achieved, but they had powerful enemies and a siege mentality was created leading to deservedly unpopular restrictive practices. During this time Len met and married Rita (one of his students!) and in March this year they will be celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Len and Rita came to Brighton in 1965 and out of curiosity he visited his old school in Bedford Place. He was delighted that the building had become home to a theatre and he became a member of NVT around 1970.

He intended to become involved in NVT but his many other interests mean this hasn't happened. He thinks that the quality and the level of acting and directing at NVT is superb and in recent years he has particularly enjoyed 'Of Mice and Men' and 'The Permanent Way'. Len said he is really looking forward to the January production of *Seven Jewish Children*, especially since he is an anti-fascist – and Jewish.

Currently Len is busy volunteering at the Brighthelm Centre and Brighton Peace and Environment Centre. He has written his autobiography in 3 paperback editions and has also produced a book of poetry.

Charles Gilson, Editor

'Far Away' and 'Seven Jewish Children' reviewed by Louise Schweitzer

You don't go to a Caryl Churchill play – you meet it half way. You are not a passive audience waiting to be entertained, you are wrestling with three questions; what is this about, what does it mean and what do I think? In '*Far Away*', directed by Tamsin Fraser, three actors debate duplicity in three acts. Wonderously skilful and realistic dialogue circles round the fact that nothing is quite what it seems. Sarah Davies plays 'Harper', disturbed by her young niece 'Joan', Christina Wood, who has seen something nasty in the woodshed and cannot sleep. Does Harper herself know what the violence and blood are about? Does innocent Joan believe her cover-up? Enter Tobias Clay as Todd, a young hatter who courts Joan, against a background of parades and persecution before a final, surreal scene in which a now adult married Joan delivers a personal nightmare of anxiety involving a range of random concerns including elephants. Whose side are *they* on?

Man's inhumanity to man is the linking theme for '*Seven Jewish Kinder*', a Greek chorus of women who take it in turns to warn a Jewish child of suc-

cessive horrors from the gas chambers to the Six Day War. Bare stage, black costumes and few props save for short film clips, the actors needed particular skill to conjure up Churchill's vision and enable us to understand the reality behind the abstract. Marvellous playing from an-all women cast of Zoe Ed- den, Amanda Harman, Jo Spratley, Deborah Keays, LChittenden and Jane Tarlo.



Tobias Clay as Todd and Sarah Davies as Harper in '*Far Away*'

Photo by Jez Bowden

Director Strat ouise Gregory, Sam Mastoris chaired a postplay discussion between members of the cast, the producers, English lecturer Mark Chutter from Sussex Downs College and we, the audience: emerging reactions coalesced Churchill's dramas as brilliantly conceived forms of minimalist dialogue upon which audience could project our own truth – whatever that was. We learned of Churchill's preoccupation with politics, gender and sexuality although none of these was demonstrably overt in Act 1 and only laterally in Act 2. It is perfectly possible that each of us in the New Venture Theatre on Saturday night saw a different play. I thought both Acts demonstrated persecution, deception and dystopia. What did you think? – you tell me.

One of Caryl Churchill's conditions for our licence to stage 'Seven Jewish Children' was that we organise a collection for Medical Aid for Palestinians - it was made clear that there was no obligation to contribute. At the final count we raised £ 230

'Seven Jewish Children' (and what to tell them?)

Commenting on this emotionally charged subject is dangerous ground. Criticise Israel - you are "anti-Semitic". Side with Israel - you "support brutal aggression".

I'll try to be rational.

Nazi anti-Jewish obscenities are well known. We should also remember, although it is of lesser magnitude, the persecution of the sincere Christians like Pastor Niemöller and the political opponents of the Nazis, risking torture and death. Tragically, anti-Semitism still exists and has to be fought.

One result of the persecution was the impetus it gave to the establishment of a "Jewish Home". Its establishment was not opposed and even promoted by the major powers.

Most Jews have remained in the homeland where their families have been citizens for generations. However, sufficient have emigrated to Israel and, with help from the Diaspora, especially from the

USA, they have prospered and made the desert bloom.

But Palestine was not "empty". Most of the indigenous population were removed by force or the threat of it and large numbers have lived in refugee camps ever since. The understandable resentment this has caused has resulted in many bitter atrocities and even a war.

The latest example is the recent Israeli aerial bombardment of the tiny strip still occupied by the former inhabitants, in retaliation for their rocket attacks. The destruction of homes, the illegal encroachment of Israeli "settlers" and many other aggressive actions of both contestants have ensured that a peace agreement is vitally necessary.

What to tell the children? As a Jew and a lifelong anti-fascist activist, I feel that the play tries to be fair to both sides.

Len Goldman

New Years Eve - A night to try to remember....

Last years New Years Eve seemed to be a rather quiet one for many people and when talking about it in January 2012 Tamsin had the idea to celebrate at the NVT for a change. It might have been February, as I am sure Tamsin could not have suggested this idea whilst being sober (we all know she is not drinking throughout January), considering that it is pretty much obvious who would end up organising it....and a great job she did indeed!

Already a few days before the party the entertainers were busy rehearsing their shows and other lovely helpers set up the space.

On the night a handful of people, the usual suspects, helped behind the bar and support the takings as well, whilst about 95 people were having a jolly good time! A massive thanks to Kirsty and Colin Elmer, Debbie Waldon, Tamsin and Strat, Ian and Uli for filling the

crowds up and cleaning all those glasses.

Entertainment was provided throughout the night: Debbie Waldon and Peter Poole enlightened with short story readings, Izzy Mackenzie sang beautifully several chansons followed by Ben Pritchard's latest stand up routine. After an interval the band SPÜNK, aka Lou Preecy, Moog and James Camp, played a set of songs followed by Colin Elmer singing "Ma Crepe Suzette" a la Kenneth Williams and Uli taking several layers off and demonstrating a 'cleaning-workout' disguised as dance. Before Andrew Allen saw the New Year in, Gerry McCrudden, Strat Mastoris, Alistair Lock, Kirsty Elmer, Claire Armstrong, Colin Elmer and Frank Leon entertained with a Victorian Melodrama ensuring all genres of

performative arts were addressed in our lovely Studio Space. I personally did find the countdown into the New Year in the Studio rather moving having spent not only many hours rehearsing and creating shows in there, but having seen many many amazing productions and experienced a variety of emotions and making loads of friends in this unique space.

The evening was presented by Gerry McCrudden who also drew the winners of the 'Unwanted Christmas Present Raffle' and lighting and sound were designed, rigged and operated by Strat Mastoris and Chris Pugh.

In the great spirit of the evening the bar was extremely well supported and I myself embraced the motto of the night and even though I can remember the evening with all its amazing performances, I do have to try in order to remember the whole night.

Ulrike, Artistic Director



Tickets for next NVT productions

Ticket prices: £9 (£8 members)

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

Evening performances at 7.45 pm

Sunday Matinees at 2.30 pm

Please note: On Sundays matinee only

23 February - 2 March:

'How To Disappear Completely and Never Be Found' by Fin Kennedy

Performance date?

How many?	
Member?	Non-Member?

Total Cost?
£

30 March - 6 April:

'Boston Marriage' by David Mamet

Performance date?

How many?	
Member?	Non-Member?

Total Cost?
£

11 -12 April:

'Underneath The Lintel' by Glen Berger

Performance date?

How many	
Member?	Non-Member?

Total Cost?
£

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Membership Number(s)

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* Please note there may be a delay in receiving confirmation of your tickets for bookings made more than a month in advance of the performance date.



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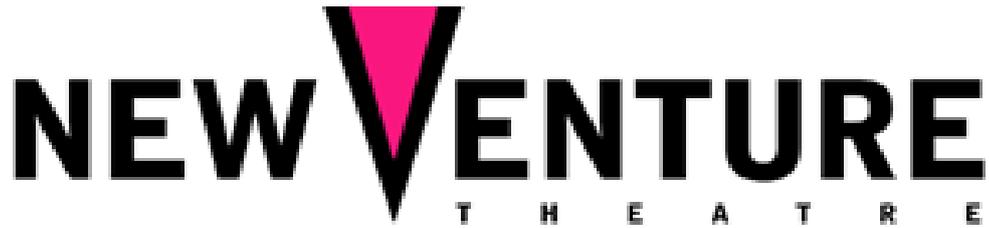
Our sponsors

Our sponsorship deal is £250 for a year's advertising on our website and in our brochure, newsletter and show programmes, plus 2 free tickets for each production in that year.

MARCH 2013 newsletter
 Copy deadline: Monday 25 FEBRUARY
 Printing: Monday 11 MARCH

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About NVT

NVT was founded in 1947. For ten years the company was nomadic, performing in a wide variety of halls and theatres. In 1956, it took a lease on the first floor of Christchurch Schoolrooms, Bedford Place -- when its 100-seater proscenium arch theatre was built.

In 1983 the trustees of the company decided to buy the freehold of the premises and added an 80-seater studio theatre on the ground floor. In the autumn of 1999, the third main space in the building -- the South Hall -- was refurbished. Apart from being a more inviting place for members and audiences to meet and enjoy drinks from the bar, the new South Hall is also used as a cabaret-type venue.

NVT is a community theatre, committed not only to achieving the highest standards on stage, but also to cultivating original work.