

'Biloxi Blues'

By Neil Simon
Directed by Gerry McCrudden
6-13 October 2012



Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues* is a semi- autobiographical play by this prolific award winning writer. In his Desert Island Discs appearance some years back Sue Lawley asked Neil Simon what he thought about the views of some who considered that his work was overly sentimental. Simon pondered that 'hopeful' was his preferred term; and that while there is always an ending to any particular piece of work - but not to the lives of the subjects. You can see this approach in *Biloxi Blues*. Which in my view is Neil Simon at his best.

Biloxi Blues was the twenty-first play by Neil Simon to reach the Broadway stage in twenty-four years. In it he turned to his own life for inspiration with a trilogy of semi-autobiographical plays. He first introduced Eugene Morris Jerome (Simon), the hero of *Biloxi Blues*, in the widely acclaimed *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. That play depicted

Eugene's close-knit Brooklyn Jewish family, as seen through Eugene's diary entries. In *Biloxi Blues* Simon follows Eugene as he gets sent to army training camp in Biloxi, Mississippi in

Sergeant. Interwoven are gritty issues such as bigotry and intolerance; handled in a moving and sensitive way and with a deftly observed comedic touch. *Biloxi Blues* was



Photo by Strat Mastoris

L-R - Tobias Clay, Steve Larkin, Jonny Parlett, Frank Leon, Warren Saunders

1943. There, the naive Eugene, who has never before left home, is forced to confront difficult issues and his own reactions to them. Eugene learns to cope with fellow soldiers from all walks of life, falls in love, and loses his virginity - under less than ideal circumstances, all while having to navigate the eccentricities of his drill

turned into a film starring Matthew Broderick and Christopher Walken.

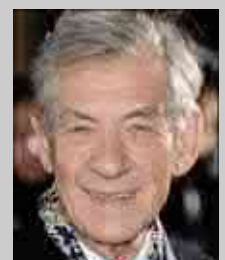
The young soldiers are changed and matured by the time they leave Biloxi for service overseas. From a disparate group they have become a band of brothers. New York

Continued on page 2, col. 1

STOP PRESS:

Sir Ian McKellen, Patron of the Little Theatre Guild, will be visiting Brighton. We are arranging for him to come to the NVT as part of our Fundraising for the Main Theatre.

Watch out for details!



Continued from page 1



critics were spot-on when they hailed it as a fine comedy, and another step in the process of making Simon neither so simple, nor so simplistic. Broadway critic Frank Rich, who was not easily pleased wrote: " Besides being extremely funny, *Biloxi Blues* is Neil Simon's first serious attempt to examine his conscience as an artist and a Jew.

Biloxi Blues was a Broadway hit. Not only was it honoured with a Tony Award for the best play of 1985, but also audiences warmed to the humour that filled each scene, indeed, almost every line. Many noted that Simon, as he had done so many times previously, was able to draw his audience together with his relatively simple words. Eugene comes to learn about the wide world around him. More importantly, for Eugene's personal journey and his development as a writer, he comes to learn what his place in the world can, and should, be.

The commitment of the talented ensemble Cast and Creative Team has been second to none. They have endured gym sessions and military drills along the sea front and much else. Their love and ownership of the piece is very evident in the rehearsals.

Please note that there are adult themes and a scene of male nudity. Not suitable for children.

Gerry McCrudden

'Three Kinds Of Me'

'Three Kinds Of Me' by Sarah Charsley, directed by Andrew Allen - 19 and 20 October 2012.

When I first walked, shaking and hyperventilating, into the New Venture Theatre to audition for a part in *Five Kinds of Silence* in front of director, Kirsty Elmer, I never imagined that four years later I would be



Photo by Jez Bowden

putting on my own one-woman show in the very same space.

That is the wonderful thing about the NVT, it gives us members the chance to explore our ideas and creativity in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. In the past few years the NVT has become like a second home to me, like it is to many others, and I have had the opportunity to meet and work alongside many talented and inspirational people, both on and off stage.

From the moment I suggested my 'crazy idea' for a one-woman show to artistic direc-

tor, Uli, I have received nothing but support and encouragement, without which I'm sure I would have given up the project by now and convinced myself that I couldn't possibly pull it off. My director Andrew Allen, sound technician Jez Bowden, stage manager Debbie Waldon, and Tamsin Fraser (who didn't bat an eyelid when I asked if she could turn my face into a banana for the poster - and just look at the results!) are just a few people who have helped turn my crazy idea into an albeit crazy reality, and to them and many others I am extremely grateful.

Three Kinds of Me started life as a series of short stories about relationships and mental health that I wrote during a Masters in Creative Writing three years ago. The fact that they are all first person monologues with a similar voice and themes gave me the idea that I could potentially combine them for performance purposes. I've never written a play before and the process of adapting the stories for stage has been both challenging and enlightening. What works on the page definitely doesn't necessarily work on the stage, and the original stories have undergone considerable transformation, with each rehearsal revealing new ways to develop them. What I'll be left with in October I have no idea, but that's what makes the process so fascinating

Three Kinds of Me is proving an exciting learning curve and once again I'd like to thank the New Venture Theatre for giving me this fantastic opportunity, both as a writer and performer. I hope some of you will be crazy enough to come and watch.

Sarah Charsley

Baring their all for the Theatre

A group of shy lads from the NVT are about to bare all to help raise money for the renovation of the upstairs theatre. 12 chaps of varying shapes and sizes will fill the pages of a special NVT 2013 calendar. What some folk will do for art! So if you are thinking of stocking fillers for Christmas, you might want to consider this unique right royal gift.

So watch this space - as it were.

NVT Awards & End of Season - 2012

When you read this we will just have had our AGM and New Season Launch social, so we need to do some mind casting to remember the end of last season social.

This was a very well attended social event and we were treated to some great entertainment. The evening started in style with Tom Robinson and Izzy Mackenzie serenading us with an acoustic set in the South Hall.

Next up were the NVT Awards 2012 – a display of solid mutual celebration, with each award being greeted with rapturous applause and cheers. A full list of the Award winners is below.

The entertainment concluded with a performance of 'Carrying A Torch' by Andrew Allen. This 10-Minute play was written by Andrew for NVT members to perform at the Brighton & Hove Arts Council element of the People's Day event on Saturday 14 July.

Many thanks to Tom and Izzy, Andrew and his cast, Anne & Charles our independent vote counters, the various people who helped to organise and cover the bar and everyone who came along.

Award	Nominated	Winner
Best Production	Medea The Permanent Way Little Voice	The Permanent Way
Best Direction	Pat Boxall (Little Voice) Andrew Allen (Medea) Kirsty Elmer (The Permanent Way)	Pat Boxall (Little Voice)
Best Actor / Male Performer	Andrew Allen (Kvetch) Frank Leon (Little Voice) Colin Elmer (The Servant)	Colin Elmer (The Servant)
Best Actress / Female Performer	Sarah Davies (Medea) Jenny Lee-Delisle (Little Voice) Lauren Varnfield (Streetcar) Janice Jones (Kvetch)	Sarah Davies (Medea)
Best Newcomer on Stage	Janice Jones (Kvetch) Steve Larkin (Streetcar) Sandie Armstrong (Iron) Jenny Lee-Delisle (Little Voice)	Janice Jones (Kvetch)
Best Back Stage Team	The Servant Medea Little Voice	Little Voice
Most Innovative Production	The Permanent Way Talking Dog Medea	Talking Dog
Best Set Design	Tim McQuillen-Wright (Little Voice) Kate Greaves (Streetcar) Izzy Aidallbery (Permanent Way) Natasha Borg (Medea)	Tim McQuillen-Wright (Little Voice)
Best Sound Design	Daniel Stevens (Little Voice) Jezz Bowden (The Permanent Way) Simon Booth (Talking Dog)	Jezz Bowden (The Permanent Way)
Best Lighting Design	Chris Pugh (Streetcar) Strat Mastoris (The Permanent Way) Dan Walker (Little Voice)	Dan Walker (Little Voice)
Best Make-Up	Kirsty Elmer (The Servant) Peta Williams (Medea)	Kirsty Elmer (The Servant)
Best Costume Design	Laura Scobie (Streetcar) Izzy Aidallbery (The Servant) Sarah Charsley (Medea)	Izzy Aidallbery (The Servant)
Greatest Contribution Non-Production	Tony Shoesmith Jezz Bowden Box Office Team	Tony Shoesmith

Ian Black, Chairman

Eileen Miller 1917-2012

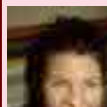


Facebook tributes



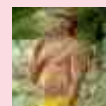
Paul Cemmick

She was great!



Peta Taylor

No idea she was 95 so young was she.



Frankie TwoBins

How sad.



Penelope A Taylor

She was a gorgeous person, one of the good ones :)



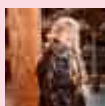
Barry Hewlett-Davies

A lovely lady to work with.



Isabel Aidallbery

That's so sad - I worked a lot with Eileen when I was younger and she was always lovely to work with.



Maggie Clune

God bless you Eileen!



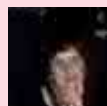
Tamsin Fraser

Oh sorry to hear that. Yes she was a lovely lady and one of the first people we got to know at the NVT.



Delorean Grooves

A really wonderful woman. And a great actress, too. Thanks for posting, Pat.



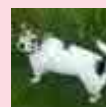
Trish Bayless

Very sorry to hear such sad news.



Laura Bennett

Oh, that is sad news. Eileen was just full of class. Elegant and funny & with a glint in her eye. Very fond memories of her. Thanks for letting people know, Pat.



Nik Hedges

Terribly sad news.



Jim Calderwood

A lovely, lovely lady.



Rachel Henderson

I have very fond memories of Eileen.



Serena Costello

Oh no. Such sad news. Great memories of a wonderful lady.

Founder Member

With the sad passing of Eileen Miller in her 95th year, a founder member of the company, the Theatre has lost one of its most staunch and loyal supporters, besides one who was a much respected actor. Eileen, who has always given unwavering support to us since being a founder member of the company, appeared in so many of our productions and until the refurbishment of the South Hall, her photographs occupied many large areas. Her last appearances on stage were in "Our Mutual Friend" and then "The

House of Bernada Alba" and it was only because of ill health that her acting appearances ceased. In spite of this, she still continued to come as an audience member to all our productions and these visits only ceased recently, when ill health finally took its toll.

Eileen's memories will have covered the beginning of New Venture, when the original founder Graham Philips, gathered together a troupe of like minded actors one of whom was Eileen, and toured local halls, schools and the like, before finding the top floor of a former church and school building to rent from the

Church Authorities. New Venture Theatre was established. The top floor was made into a theatre with dressing rooms and Green Room and then continued with the changes to the building over the years until it is the fantastic space that we can all enjoy today.

As members we all owe an enormous debt to Eileen for her work and artistic skills from the very beginnings of New Venture, which enable us, who continue to carry the torch, to use, cherish and enjoy the ever changing space.

She will be sadly missed.

***Sheelagh Baker on behalf of
NVT Management Trustees***

Thoughts from a South Hall Chair

So here we are moving headlong into a new season; our 65th Season to be accurate. Another major milestone for the NVT is this very newsletter, the first to be circulated electronically.

Last season saw some great productions, performances and events. Many thanks to all who made them possible. Now we can look forwards to what is to come and it looks to be another great season. At the time of writing Biloxi Blues is selling very well, with at least one performance sold out. Our first additional production – Three Kinds of Me, a one woman show, written by and starring Sarah Charsley and directed by Andrew Allen – is only on for 2 performances 19 and 20 October, so don't miss out on getting your tickets. Our second full production this season is The Price. This production is the NVT entry into the Brighton and Hove Arts

Council Drama Awards, so we wish them well.

The main theatre continues to be refurbished as detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. There is an opportunity after the AGM, during the New Season Launch Social on Saturday 22 September to see how this is progressing, if you miss this chance and would like to see how things are going, let us know and we will try and arrange something.

Over the coming months, further work will be undertaken in the main theatre and the south side exterior of the theatre. The outside work should cause minimal inconvenience, but will require scaffolding to undertake some waterproofing work so we can upgrade the interior decoration of the South Hall and Kitchen. This will include double glazing and blinds in the South Hall, like those in the Studio.

Ian

Words from our Artistic Director

Looking back . . . and ahead!

Last season saw many ambitious shows, all of which were successfully produced.

As in previous years, NVT celebrated many achievements; several nominations and awards at the Brighton and Hove Drama Awards, sold-out productions, the NVT Awards, the amazing progress of the Main Theatre development, financial support from trusts and individuals alike, and a vibrant theatre life!

Our 65th season includes similarly ambitious, diverse and experimental approaches in our Studio Theatre as there were in the previous season. With such a variety of themes and genres we hope you'll find many intriguing productions to come and see and of course to get involved in.

Adding to the core productions, the programme will feature workshops, one-off events, short runs and social gatherings as well as opportunities for new members to get involved. Classes and Sussex Playwrights meetings will continue and we are looking into widening our training programme to include youth members.

And of course the refurbishment of the Main Theatre will need volunteers to support the constant efforts a small hard-working team has provided over the past year to move this project along.

Even though many events are already organised, there is still time to have input to our current season and suggest or offer workshops, one-off events, readings or anything you think should be included in the season.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope you enjoy season 65!

Ulrike
Artistic Director

Acting Class

3, 10, 17, 24 September and 1, 8 October

Tear it up, rub it out, rip it to shreds, make mistakes, get it wrong and start all over — Andrew Allen

We all make mistakes. In this six-part series of Acting Classes, that's exactly the point. Freed from the pressures of having to get everything exactly 'right', we can begin to explore the simple pleasures and skills of story telling on stage. Using improv skills and script work, Andrew Allen (*Kvetch*, *Four Play*, *Medea*) will be leading the workshops in an encouraging and nurturing environment that will give you the confidence to add to your performance toolbox, whether you want to be funnier, more moving, or simply avoid bumping into the other actors. With this in mind, this is a series of classes that is genuinely for all skills, from the more seasoned performer to the absolute terrified beginner.

15, 22, 29 October and 5, 12 November

Presence and physicality — Ulrike Schilling

In these sessions we will explore body awareness and physicality as performance tools. Through a variety of tasks and exercises we will connect to our bodies and utilise physicality in relation to text and within devised work. Working individually and in small groups in a safe environment we will explore which movement skills we already bring and how to use our bodies in performance. You do not need to have previous experience or training, but please wear comfortable clothing. Ulrike has trained in Dance and Visual Art and has been performing internationally before moving to Brighton. She has created interactive and promenade based work at NVT, 'Intimate Encounters', 'Icarus', and has been involved in many productions backstage as well as on stage.

Upcoming productions

6 -13 October **Biloxi Blues** by Neil Simon,
directed by *Gerry McCrudden*

19 -20 October **Three Kinds of Me** by Sarah
Charsley, directed by *Andrew Allen*

9 -17 November (no show on 15.11). **The Price** by
Arthur Miller directed by *Rod Lewis*

6 -9 December **Hansel and Gretel** devised by
Helen Nelder - Thursday– Sunday 7:45 and Saturday
and Sunday 2:30 (6 shows in total)

See ticket order form - page 11

Ten minute plays – eight directors & eight new plays

New Venture Theatre and Sussex Playwrights Club

Reviewed by Barry Hewlett-Davies

It would take up most of the Newsletter to review each play separately so here goes with notes as brief as the plays themselves.

Mark Wilson's wedding fiasco, Nora's Special Day, kicked off with a brilliantly-timed chase – Warren Saunders and Jason Rhodes playing farce with the necessary straight faces. The play is a lovely idea and deserves another showing. As a curtain-raiser teamed with another wedding piece ? (Not Medea, though, eh ?)

In Short Story and Change of Plan, people drank a lot of pale-looking whisky while agonising about writing for a living and how to market the result. In Bluebottle, the bluebottle got killed in a prison cell with a rolled-up copy of The Times in what was probably the scariest piece of the evening. There were some pretty tense moments and it seemed at times as if more than the fly was at risk.

Laura Scobie and Frank Leon were two competitive little boys, nine and eight, in and as Mick and Pete, a charming fragment handled by two very assured actors. Grown-ups playing kids can slip into embarrassment only too readily, but this was non twee and genuinely funny.

More drink arrived (imaginary this time) in Bar of the Half Moon and this play had the evening's best performance - from Lyn Snowdon, a performance of quiet dignity.

A genuine surprise came with Tamsin Fraser directing Still Waters, with its role-switch at the end, totally not signalled in advance and with a good performance in concentration from Janice Jones.

I don't know what to say about Charlie, the last play. I must admit it passed me by. Was someone talked out of killing a cat ? I really couldn't tell you.

A suggestion about the evening as a whole: as the settings have to be changed at speed, why not leave more stage lights on ? Audiences like to see backstage staff at work and as this crew was particularly on the ball, it would have been good to see more of them.

With a programme of plays so different in concerns and content, it's almost impossible to decide which is the best. This is being written before I know who won, but my marbles go in the boxes for Nora's Special Day (for its zip); Still Waters (for its ingenuity) and Mick and Pete (for sheer charm.)

The Plays and Players

Nora's Special Day by Mark Wilson, dir. Mike Stubbs, with Helena Tobin, Warren Saunders and Jason Rhodes.

Short Story by Paul Fox, dir, Lou Preecy, with Andy Thomas and Chelsea Mountney

Change of Plan by Stuart Pursell, dir. Alex Epps, with Deborah Mead and Robert Holden

Bluebottle by John Pethebridge, dir. Sarah Garbutt with Lyn Fernee. Janice Jones and Liz Stapleton

Mick & Pete by Brian Tuley. Dir. Moog with Laura Scobie and Frank Leon

In the Bar of the Half Moon by Joel Kaye, dir. Kevin Moore with Martin Hoskins and Lyn Snowdon

Still Waters by Christopher Owen, dir. Tamsin Fraser with James Newton, Claire Armstrong and Janice Jones

Charlie by David Taylor, dir.Hannah Liebeskind, with Sarah Braithwaite and Claire Armstrong

NVT: Main restoration project: an update

Main grid for lighting and tabs

J & C Joel, a well reputed company, have completed a survey and are providing us with costs for the Provision of the Grid System above the Main Stage and Auditorium supporting the new lighting system, curtain rails and tabs.

As this is expected to be in the region of £25,000 we shall have to stage the work as we raise funds.

New seating

Hussey's, another well respected company, have surveyed the auditorium and advised we can accommodate 77 fixed seats meeting current regulations. We now have a quote for 77 seats at just under £13,000, to be installed by ourselves under supervision from Husseys.

Auditorium

New rake installed.

Lighting Box: all electrical work completed, nearing completion.

Stage

Side walls clad with ply to facilitate fixing of scenery.

Main entrance way enlarged and double doors installed.

Stage widened by removal of old side wings.

Steel Beam above front of stage boxed in and old lighting bars removed.

Window shutters built.

Main stairwell

Stairs to be boxed in to make them safe.

Fundraising: as of 03/08/2012

Current donations: £32,532.50

Current expenditure: £5,082

Expected expenditure: £47,840 (NB this is before firm quotes for the Grid and Seating)

A separate Fundraising Project is underway to find a sponsor / donor / grant for the seating.

Volunteer help. There is an enormous amount of work we can perform ourselves and many thanks to the volunteers who have already been helping.

Within the next few months this is the list of work we need to do.

Stage ceiling area

Remove all extraneous fittings from ceiling and sloped areas.

Fill and make good holes, cracks in the ceiling.

Paint ceiling with two coats black flints paint.

Stage wall areas

Remove all extraneous fittings from all walls.

Fill and make good holes and areas of damage above level of clad walls, including areas of dampness on west wall adjacent to clad beam.

Paint walls with two coats black flints paint.

Rub down and repair woodwork on west windows, prime and paint in black, the only window that opens in the central sash.

High level windows – one window is fixed shut and painted in-situ. The other one needs a hinge put on it and fixed so that it opens for maintenance.

Freshly clad beam

Sand all edges.

Fill all holes.

Paint both sides and underside with one coat black paint.

Raked seating

Sand all edges.

Fill all holes.

Paint all surfaces black paint one coat to seal wood pending decision about what coverings are to be fitted in due course.

Auditorium ceiling area

Sand down surface and remove any extraneous fixtures.

Fill and make good holes and areas of damage include areas of dampness at various points.

Colour of ceiling to be decided.

Auditorium walls

Sand down surface and remove any extraneous fixtures.

Check soundness of walls where the damp has come in and may have weakened plaster strength.

Fill and make good holes and areas of damage include areas of dampness at various points around the walls.

Colour of walls to be decided.

Jerry Lyne, Secretary

AUDITION NOTICE

Two plays by Caryl Churchill

'Far Away' directed by Tamsin Fraser
& 'Seven Jewish Children' directed by Strat Mastoris

Performance dates: 19 – 26 January 2013

Audition dates:

Sunday 30 September 11.00 – 13.00

Seven Jewish Children - South Hall – audition slots by appointment

Far Away - Main Theatre either 11.00-12.00 or 12.00-13.00

Monday 1 October - Main Theatre 19.00-20.00 (7.J.C) 20.00-21.00 (F.A)

Recalls – Sunday 7 October 11.00 – 13.00 (7.J.C. 11-12.00) (F.A. 12.00-13.00)

Far Away

Harper, Joan and Todd inhabit a dystopian nightmare country where people are at war with their neighbours and allegiances change from day to day. But as the action becomes more surreal and animals, insects and elements are pitted against each other, we must question how much is truth and how much are tales told to protect ourselves and others from the real atrocities going on. As with all wars involving rival clans or ethnic groups, alliances coalesce and fracture – last month's allies become today's sworn enemies, sometimes happening so quickly that you can't keep up with who you should be hating...

CAST – 2 female, 1 male

Joan (female) - This actress will need to play the younger Joan (early teens) as well as her older self of 20+ so therefore will need to be able to age down. Late teens /early 20's ideally. This character is onstage in every scene.

Harper (female) - Joan's aunt, needs to be convincingly of an older generation – late 40's + A good character part.

Todd (male) - Joan's colleague, boyfriend and later, her husband. Early - mid 20's and of a fairly youthful appearance.

Seven Jewish Children

Caryl Churchill wrote 'Seven Jewish Children' as a response to the Israeli assault on Gaza in January 2009. It's an intensely emotional piece, attempting to examine the psychology of the Israeli people, refugees from the Holocaust in Europe now building and defending a new state in Palestine.

In seven short speeches, each one presumably from a relative to the parent of a young girl, the modern history of the Jewish people is sketched out. The first speech takes place somewhere in Europe, in hiding from the Nazis, and subsequent scenes occur during the emigration to Palestine, the foundation of the State of Israel, the subsequent wars with their Arab neighbours, and the occupation of territory won in 1948 and 1967.

We see 'Seven Jewish Children' as a perfect counterpart to 'Far Away' as both plays address the theme of how people attempt to protect themselves from unbearable truths, and demonise others perceived as 'the enemy'.

'Seven Jewish Children' is less than ten minutes long, and most of the speeches are less than a page in length - so no intense line-learning involved. Each speech is complex, however, with contradictions and changes of heart by the speaker which will need to be brought out -

"Don't tell her what they did" "Tell her something" "Tell her more when she's older" "Tell her there were people who hated Jews"
"Don't tell her" "Tell her it's over now" "Tell her there are still people who hate Jews" "Tell her there are people who love Jews"

This extract gives some idea of the contradictions that the speaker is experiencing. Ideally I want seven individual performers, as each speech is delivered at a different point in history, and each performer needs to be old enough to be giving advice to the parent of, say, a seven-year-old.

So - anything from mid-twenties to eighty years old. Of either sex.
(probably the easiest categorisation of actors that we've ever had at NVT ...)

Anyone may audition. However, offers of roles are conditional on applicants being paid-up members of the NVT for the duration of the entire rehearsal and performance period.

Please note anyone wanting to audition for 'Far Away' will be needed to commit to the entire hour session – the dynamics of the relationship between the 3 characters is key and we need to try out the various interactions.

We are aware that some people may want to audition for both productions, so please ensure you book for one or other time slot and make us aware of this when getting in touch.

Script extracts available on request and will also be available in advance from the NVT South Hall.

We already have excellent backstage and design teams already in place but do let us know if you wish to assist with either.

In praise of the Youth Theatre

As many members will know, this season the NVT hopes to restart the long-dormant youth theatre. In its previous incarnation the youth theatre was active from 2001- 2006 and produced six very varied plays, including 'Kes', Sharman MacDonald's 'After Juliet', Alan Ayckbourn's 'Confusions' and Brecht's 'The Good Woman of Setzuan', as well as several showcases. It was an important entry point for a number of members over the years – me included – and became the pivot of our social lives.

The YT was open to ages 12-18 and became one of the few environments for young people in which class was completely irrelevant – members came from schools all over the city, and the surrounding areas, including some of the very worst schools (those that are now academies...) and Brighton's two private schools. Within the youth theatre, everyone was equal and everyone was friends- it was a little socialist paradise in the South Hall...

Some of the plays produced were of a very high standard, and some even featured an entire youth production team (stage management, lighting and sound, costumes, poster – you name it!) which was a great opportunity for many members to discover skills they had never considered.

As with any activity that is mainly populated by teenagers, the YT was far from perfect – there were breakages, there were sub-par performances and there were many broken rules- but the same is equally true of the adult theatre. There were issues over money, membership fees and licensing but none of these was insurmountable. In spite of these, for a few golden years it was a truly special part of the theatre and of all our lives.

However the biggest issue, from an internal perspective, was the lack of unity with the adult theatre and the increasingly tense

relationship with a number of the adult members, and it was this ultimately that led to its demise. In its earliest productions the youth theatre was an integrated part of the adult theatre – our plays were designed specifically for a young cast and featured adult actors as well, supporting a stronger over-all quality but meaning also that we got to know many of the adults and subsequently were involved in several adult productions ourselves. However, under a changing leadership, the YT became more and more separate to a point where even the adult in charge didn't participate in the adult theatre!

As the YT became increasingly isolated, the quality of both the classes and performances fell and as a consequence of this, behaviour worsened. By the final days of the YT, a vicious circle had formed as youth members felt that the adult members looked down on them and weren't doing enough to repair the decline in quality, and responded with varying degrees of rudeness, thus causing the adult members to behave even more coldly towards them!

What was crucially missing from this relationship was respect! In a theatre run solely by volunteers, who pull together out of love for the theatre and out of the camaraderie that comes with this, the only thing that holds the entire structure together is respect. As a group of friends, the youth members would never have dreamed of behaving in that way towards each other, neither would 99.99% of the adults I have known; yet for some reason a divide formed and an utter lack of respect became the norm and for the youth theatre to stand a chance of success in future this has to change. We had some wonderful one-off workshops run by members of the adult theatre on specific areas of expertise. These were truly inspiring, broadened our skills and knowledge, and made some progress

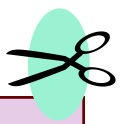
towards rebuilding that relationship. In the future version of the youth theatre, I would love to see more of this, and correspondingly the youth theatre must be clearly structured around a respect for the building, the institution and for the people who give up their time to make it all possible.

We all need to let go of those less-than-fond memories and remember that without new members the theatre becomes stagnant, but new members (especially those with the fragile egos of the young) don't want to join if they don't see opportunities to be involved and to build their skills. For young people, there are relatively few available parts in adult plays and it can be easy to get discouraged.

I first joined the NVT at the age of 9 when an accident of fate brought me to the auditions for 'Our Mutual Friend', having had no inclination towards performing prior to that. 14 years later I am still an active member, though offstage these days – I have a degree in theatre design, and I am in the early stages of a career as a designer. I can honestly say that none of this would have happened without NVT, and equally I probably wouldn't have stuck around during my teenage years had it not been for the youth theatre. Several of my co-members have also gone on to degrees and careers in theatre and film on the basis of the skills they learned in the youth theatre.

So whether or not it comes to a vote at this month's AGM, I hope the adult members will get behind the renewed youth theatre and give it the support that it needs to survive. Not everyone will want to run classes, but as theatre-lovers we can all attend performances or showcases. At its best, the youth theatre can be a wonderful asset to the theatre and can truly make a difference to its members.

Izzy Aidallbery



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**

6-13 October 'Biloxi Blues' by Neil Simon	Performance date?	How many?		Total Cost?
		Member?	Non-Member?	£
19 -20 October 'Three Kinds of Me' by Sarah Charsley	Performance date?	How many?		Total Cost?
		Member?	Non-Member?	£
10-17 Nov: 'The Price' by Arthur Miller	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:
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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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NOVEMBER 2012 newsletter
 Copy deadline: Monday 8 October
 Printing: Monday 22 October

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