

A NEW VENTURE THEATRE PRODUCTION 2020

# QUARTET

Ronald Harwood



ATKINS BAKER HARTNETT TONGUE

**NVT**

**NEW  
VENTURE  
THEATRE**

Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

**PERFORMANCES:**

Friday 13th to Saturday 21st March 7.45 pm

Sunday matinee 15th March 2.30 pm

No show Sunday or Monday evening

**BOX OFFICE INFORMATION:** 01273 746118

**ONLINE BOOKING:** [www.ticketsource.co.uk/newventuretheatre](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/newventuretheatre)

Registered Charity No. 268607

**£1**

An amateur production by arrangement with Samuel French

# QUARTET

by

Ronald  
Harwood

Ronald Harwood was inspired to write *Quartet* when he watched the documentary film, *Il Bacio di Tosca* (Tosca's Kiss).

The film documents the lives of the residents of Casa di Riposo per Musicisti di Milan, the world's first home for retired opera singers, founded by composer Giuseppe Verdi in 1896.

I was inspired to direct the play by the thought of working with a group of actors and crew of my own generation (apart from our lighting kid, Max). We would rehearse in the mornings, consume copious amounts of tea and biscuits, wallow in shared memories and generally have a jolly good time.

And so it has proved. Rehearsing *Quartet* has been the best fun, some of the best fun of my many decades in amateur theatre.

Also, *Quartet* is an intelligent and perceptive play that deals with the question some of us are facing now, and the rest of you will have to contend with in years to come – age.

Harwood says the story is about tolerating old age and not giving into it. In the case of Jean, Reggie, Cecily and Wilf, once the applause from their iconic Covent Garden performance in 1971 has died away and the fame is a distant memory, what do these fading stars have to live for?

In a recent interview with TheArtsDesk.com, the author said: "I know more of actors than old opera singers but performers are performers. The terrible thing about an opera singer is that the career is short because the voice goes."

Talking of careers, after many years acting in and directing shows across Brighton and Hove, this is my NVT directorial debut, and once I had got to grips with the 'way we do things' it has been an extremely pleasurable experience.

And I love the bricks and mortar. I feel a real buzz every time I unlock the door, disengage the alarm and walk into the building. There's a tremendous sense of theatre history. Hopefully, before I am too old, I may be invited back.

**Richard Lindfield** (director)

Quartet is set in the Sir Thomas Beecham Home for Retired Opera Performers.

Time: the present, from late summer through to autumn.

Quartet runs approximately two hours, including a twenty-minute interval.

## Cast

(in order of appearance)

<b>Singers</b>	Samantha Brennan Sally Wilson
<b>Pianist</b>	Gary Nock
<b>Reggie</b>	Raymond Tongue
<b>Cecily</b>	Ann Atkins
<b>Wilf</b>	John Hartnett
<b>Angelique</b>	Carol Croft
<b>Jean</b>	Sheelagh Baker

## Production Team

<b>Director</b>	Richard Lindfield
<b>Designer</b>	Michael Folkard
<b>Production Manager</b>	Ian Black
<b>Lighting design</b>	Apollo Videaux
<b>Lighting operator</b>	Esme Bird
<b>Stage managers</b>	Martyn Coates Carol Croft
<b>Poster design</b>	Henry Lindfield
<b>Photography</b>	Cata Lindegaard
<b>Rigoletto costumes</b>	Gladrags
<b>Publicity</b>	Nina Evans and Cata Lindegaard
<b>Box Office</b>	Christine Stubbs

*Thanks to:*

Michele Bole, Jamie Collins, Gary Cook, Helen Schluter.

We are grateful to RCA Victor for their permission to use excerpts from their 1971 recording of the Covent Garden production of *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi, featuring Wilfred Bond, Jean Horton, Reginald Paget and Cecily Robson; musical director George Solti; producer Franco Zeffirelli; resident producer John Copley.

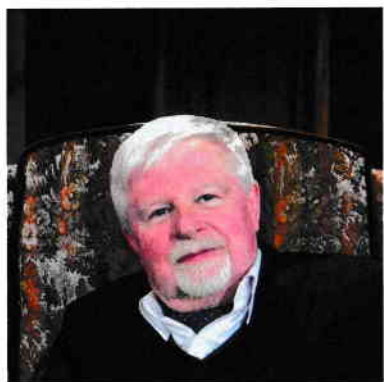
We are also grateful to DMGT Plc for their kind permission to use extracts from the Daily Mail of Wednesday, May 5th, 1971, in this production.

As always, the director, cast and crew would like to express their appreciation and gratitude to the front-of-house, bar and box office teams.



## Raymond Tongue (Reginald)

It was some twenty years back that Ray first trod the boards of NVT in Arthur Miller's *The American Clock*; he subsequently played in *The Misanthrope* and *Curtains* before work took him away from Brighton. A somewhat circuitous route – Eastbourne, Cardiff, Worthing and Exmouth – and Ray finds himself back in Brighton and on the NVT stage, a naturally tone-deaf man playing a retired opera singer. Much has changed in that time; a director's note "Act your age" now has new meaning.



## John Hartnett (Wilf)

Quartet marks John's acting debut at NVT although he has been a member for 10 years. He has worked under Richard Lindfield's direction before in *When The Wind Blows* and *No Man's Land* at Brighton Little Theatre and they were both in the cast of *Other People's Money*. John has appeared in numerous productions at BLT, notably *Duet For One*, *The Playboy of the Western World* and as Alan Bennet in *The Lady in the Van*. More recently he has appeared in *Haunting Julia* and *Loving Androids* at Lewes Little Theatre.



## Ann Atkins (Cecily)

Ann is a newcomer to NVT. In 2002 she emigrated from Cheshire to Henfield and immediately joined two theatre companies, Brighton Theatre Group and Brighton Little Theatre. Past musicals with BTG include *Oliver*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Full Monty* and most recently *Bad Girls*. BLT shows include *The Lady in the Van* (with her current co-star John), *A Little Night Music*, *Love Song* and *The Mill On The Floss*. Ann has directed *Bedroom Farce*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *The Graduate* and *The Thrill of Love* at the Little. And now, it's 'Old Lady Time'. Enjoy.



### Carol Croft (Angelique)

Having been part of the stage management team since joining NVT in 2018 (she recently worked on Mark Wilson's *Talk*), Carol is delighted to be given the opportunity to step, or rather stride, into the spotlight. Her departure from backstage sees her play care home assistant Angelique amongst what she says in 'an esteemed cast'.



### Sheelagh Baker (Jean)

Sheelagh is a long-standing actor with NVT, having appeared in over 50 productions, with a wide range of roles from farce to Shakespeare and comedy to drama. These have included some challenging, some favourite roles, some disappointments and the odd award along the way. Now? Sheelagh is continuing with her acting commitments outside of NVT, but so happy to be still involved with the company and revelling in the energy and talent of our new members.

### Samantha Brennan (Opera Singer)

Sam originally studied at Trinity College of Music and the University of Sussex. Her credits include leading roles in Berkoff's *Sink the Belgrano*, Orton's *Loot* and Lorca's *The House of Bernardo Alba* as well as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Anything Goes*, *Showboat* and *South Pacific*. More recently, she performed at the Trinity Theatre in Tunbridge Wells as the title character in *An Evening with Lady Montague*. She has also sung as alto soloist in Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. Sam also performs with the Brighton-based jazz quintet Unfenced.

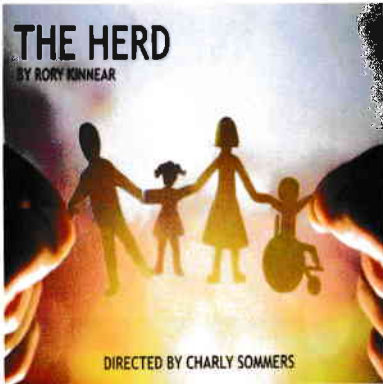
*Continued overleaf*

## Gary Nock (Accompanist)

Over the years Gary has performed locally in musical theatre, operetta and opera in addition to being musical director for so many musicals he has now stopped counting. It has been a pleasure spending time with Sam and Sally as they decided upon options to sing for this production of *Quartet*. A memory: the only time Gary has been on stage at the New Venture Theatre before was back in the late 1980s when he was an extra in a production of *Bent* in which Richard Lindfield played the role of Max.

## Sally Wilson (Opera Singer)

Originally from South Wales, Sally trained at the Royal College of Music. Living in Brighton, Sally performs regularly as both soloist and ensemble singer. She has played a variety of leading and supporting roles with Heber Opera, most recently singing Priestess Leila in *The Pearl Fishers*. Other roles include: Fenena (*Nabucco*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Micaela (*Carmen*), and Pamina (*The Magic Flute*). Sally also performs with the Brighton-based jazz quintet Unfenced – the group will be taking part in the Brighton Festival Fringe on 2nd May 2020.



April's NVT Production

# The Herd

Friday 17 to Saturday 25 April

written by Rory Kinnear

directed by Charly Sommers

*Pulling Together. Falling Apart.*

*The day isn't going as planned. But nor is life . . .*

As Carol prepares to celebrate the 21st birthday of her severely disabled son, Andy, the rest of the family gather: Andy's older sister. Their grandparents. And Ian, Andy's absentee father who is loathed by everyone in the room.

While Andy and his caregiver make their way to the house, ranks close and wounds open . . . Written by Rory Kinnear, *The Herd* is a witty, heartfelt portrait of a family brought together and torn apart by circumstance and secrets.



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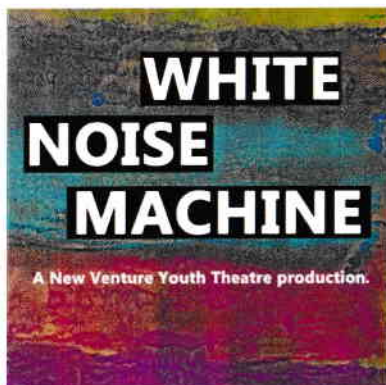


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NVYT Production  
**White Noise Machine**

Friday 27 March

written by NVYT  
directed by Mountney

After the success of their devised comedy  
*Charmless*, the students of New Venture  
Youth Theatre return to the stage.

Exploring themes of mental health through the unfiltered lens of their  
generation. This darkly comic abstract piece investigates what it means to be  
human in a noisy technological world.

## **NVT Acting Class**

Monday evenings at 7.30pm for all levels of acting skills. It will cost you just £5.00 per session (£2.50 for NVT Members). First visit is FREE!

## **Contacting the NVT**

For ticket and performance enquiries only, call the Box Office: 01273 746118, or email: [boxoffice@newventure.org.uk](mailto:boxoffice@newventure.org.uk)  
All other enquiries: 01273 808353

## **Become an NVT Sponsor**

Advertise your business to hundreds of local residents with NVT from only £250. For a range of print and web publicity options and opportunities for free show tickets, please contact: [fundraising@newventure.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@newventure.org.uk)

## **Supporting NVT**

We are a membership club, founded in 1947. We perform established plays, both classical and contemporary, and are a showcase for new writing. If you are interested in joining us, please pick up a membership form in the foyer.

In 1983, NVT bought the freehold of this listed Victorian building which needs constant investment to maintain its integrity. To keep NVT going, we rely on the generosity of the community, to provide donations that are essential to the upkeep of the building and the refurbishment of the main auditorium.

For more information on how you can support NVT. Please contact: [fundraising@newventure.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@newventure.org.uk)

Many thanks to our current donors and our special appreciation to our major anonymous donor.

## **COMING SOON IN 2020**

**27 March**

### **White Noise Machine**

by New Venture Youth Theatre  
directed by Chelsea Mounthey

**17 to 25 April**

### **The Herd**

by Rory Kinnear  
directed by Charly Sommers

**15 to 23 May**

### **Consent**

by Nina Raine  
directed by Scott Roberts

**19 to 27 June**

### **Miss Julie**

by August Strindberg  
directed by Mark Lester

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/newventuretheatre](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/newventuretheatre)

## **Youth Theatre**

(11 to 17 year olds)

Every Friday, 4.30pm to 6.30pm, during term time.

The sessions are led by experienced actors, directors, writers and teachers. The first session is free so you can come and try it out before committing. No experience is necessary and everyone is welcome.

For further information, see [www.newventure.org.uk/youththeatre](http://www.newventure.org.uk/youththeatre)

For enquiries, please contact: [youththeatre@newventure.org.uk](mailto:youththeatre@newventure.org.uk)