

A NEW VENTURE THEATRE PRODUCTION 2018

# True West

by Sam Shepard

directed by  
Steven O'Shea

**NVT**  
**NEW  
VENTURE  
THEATRE**

Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT

**PERFORMANCES:**

Friday 19th to Saturday 27th January 7.45 pm

Sunday matinee 21st January 2.30 pm

No show Sunday evening or Monday

**BOX OFFICE INFORMATION: 01273 746118**

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

Registered Charity No. 268607

**50p**

An amateur production in association with Samuel French, Ltd.

# True West

by Sam Shepard

“I wanted to write a play about double nature. I just wanted to give a taste of what it feels like to be two-sided. I think we’re split in a much more devastating way than psychology can ever reveal. ”

Sam Shepard

I had always been a huge admirer of Sam Shepard’s work and so was delighted to have the opportunity to direct one of his plays for the first time. The news of his death in July last year merely added a greater sense of poignancy to the whole undertaking.

A coruscating, funny and violent portrayal of sibling rivalry, the story centres on two brothers. Austin, a successful screenwriter, is working on a movie project for a Hollywood producer, Saul, while house-sitting for his mother who is vacationing in Alaska. When his estranged older brother Lee, a drunken petty thief, unexpectedly arrives to stay, the two engage in a lethal battle of wills.

Shepard manages from this simple plot line to further explore many of the themes and motifs that characterised his work over the years: The ideal of the old West as opposed to the West as it is today; the painful necessity of having to break away from a father’s influence; the perennial friction between the concept of art as a business and as an ideal; isolation; notions of identity and the fallibility of the American Dream. The play represents in many ways the quintessence of Shepard’s artistic output and stands as a fitting memorial to a uniquely individual talent.

As always I am deeply indebted to the hard work and commitment of the theatre staff, production team and outstanding cast, Janice Jones, Stuart Warwick, Will Cooper and Martin Ryan. I would like to express my immense appreciation to them all.

Steven O’Shea (director)

*Setting: A home in a Southern California suburb, about forty miles east of Los Angeles.*

*Time: Summer, 1980.*

## **Cast**

(in order of appearance)

<b>Austin</b>	Will Cooper
<b>Lee</b>	Stuart Warwick
<b>Saul Kimmer</b>	Martin Ryan
<b>Mom</b>	Janice Jones

## **Production Team**

<b>Director</b>	Steven O'Shea
<b>Stage Management</b>	Bryony Weaver & Gabrielle Bowring
<b>Assistant Stage Management</b>	Annedore Hopf, Gordon Foggo & Natalie Sacks
<b>Set Design</b>	Simon Glazier
<b>Lighting Design &amp; Rigging</b>	Strat Mastoris & Margarita Steinberg
<b>Sound Design</b>	Tim Metcalfe
<b>Assistant Sound Design</b>	Emmie Spencer
<b>Lighting Operation</b>	Alex Epps & Erica Fletcher
<b>Sound Operation</b>	Tim Metcalfe & Erica Fletcher
<b>Costume Design</b>	Kasha Goodenough
<b>Set Construction</b>	Simon Glazier, George Walter, Monika Schuettbacher & Hannah Clark
<b>Makeup</b>	Amanda Harman
<b>Poster Design</b>	Strat Mastoris
<b>Photography</b>	Strat Mastoris
<b>Fight Choreography</b>	Moog Gravett
<b>Voice Coach</b>	Christine Stubbs
<b>Accent Coach</b>	Marie Ellis
<b>Movement Coach</b>	Ulrike Schilling
<b>Publicity</b>	Tamsin Mastoris & Emmie Spencer
<b>Props</b>	Bryony Weaver & Gabrielle Bowring
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	Ian Black
<b>Costumes Supplied by</b>	Gladrags

The production runs for approximately 2 hours 15 minutes including a 15 minute intermission.

First act: 1 hour 20 minutes; second act: 35 minutes.



## **Austin (Will Cooper)**

Will won a scholarship and trained at the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts in London

His theatre credits include the title character in Jack Jerome's *Journey Of Life* (Edinburgh Festival), Brian in *Brian Looks Like Alan Rickman* (York Theatre Royal), *Ghost House* (Theatre 503) *Phaedra's Love* (Arcola Theatre)

Will is also a stand-up comic/comedy performer/writer hosting It's Big News (Holy Moly/Endemol) and various sketches with The Bad News Crew

Will's credits while training include *The Crucible* directed by Janet Amsden, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by John Wilde and *Cloudstreet* directed by Titania Krimpas.

## **Lee (Stuart Warwick)**

Stuart is a writer and performer. After graduating from a Theatre and Visual Art Degree at Brighton University in 2001, he's been involved in a variety of artistic pursuits including theatre, music and dance. His new play *Point of Echoes*, a collaboration with choreographer Ben Wright and funded by the Rural Touring Dance Initiative, is on tour this spring.



## **Steven O'Shea (Director)**

*True West* marks Steven's seventh directorial production at the NVT following *Speed the Plow* by David Mamet (2011), *Kvetch* by Steven Berkoff (2012), *Old Times* by Harold Pinter (2014), an adaptation of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare (2015), *Loot* by Joe Orton (2016), and *The Homecoming* by Harold Pinter (2017).

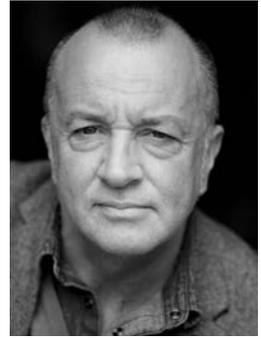
He currently runs the Working Toward Performance drop in acting classes in Brighton: [www.workingtowardperformance.co.uk](http://www.workingtowardperformance.co.uk)

## **Saul Kimmer (Martin Ryan)**

Martin joined NVT in 2017, and this is his second production for the theatre, following on from his role as Johnny the Priest in *Anna Christie*.

Previous stage credits include Vladimir in Wendy Wasserstein's *Isn't it Romantic* and Il Capitano for La Commedia dell'Arte.

Martin has undertaken class work in comedy improvisation, musical theatre, scene study and voiceover. A natural raconteur, he has recently performed in standup in Brighton.



## **Mom (Janice Jones)**

Janice's previous roles at NVT include Sylvia in *Broken Glass*, Anna in *Old Times*, Anna in *Boston Marriage*, Esther in *The Price*, Lizzie in *End of the Beginning* and Donna in *Kvetch*. Janice has been involved with various theatre companies, including Brighton Little Theatre and Cast Iron. She is loving playing Mom in the brilliant *True West*.



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We would like to thank Rod Lewis, Mike Stubbs, Uli Schilling, Tamsin Mastoris, Sussex Beacon and as always our appreciation and gratitude to the Front of House, Bar, and Box Office teams.

Plants kindly loaned to NVT by the Brighton Flower Company, 102 Western Road, Brighton, BN1 2AA. Plants can be purchased at the end of the run.

## **Sam Shepard**

Author of some 44 plays, Shepard remains one of the most celebrated, prolific and important playwrights of his generation. As a playwright, screenwriter, director, musician and Hollywood film star, he enjoyed an outstandingly varied career.

In 1979, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his play *Buried Child*. By the age of forty he had become the second most widely performed American playwright after Tennessee Williams. With appearances in over fifty films, he was nominated for an Academy Award for his performance as test pilot Chuck Yeager in *The Right Stuff* (1983). As a musician he played drums for the band Holy Modal Rounders and later toured with Bob Dylan with whom he collaborated on the song "Brownville Girl". He directed two feature films, *Far North*, (1988; starring Jessica Lange, his partner for almost thirty years), and *Silent Tongue* (1994). But it is as a playwright that he will be best remembered and *True West* stands at the forefront of his outstanding body of work.

### **The original productions**

The play was first performed at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco, in 1980, and was warmly received locally. Shepard's reputation as a playwright had been enhanced after he won the Pulitzer Prize, and the play's Off-Broadway opening later in the year at the Public Theatre was highly anticipated. However, the director, Robert Woodruff, quit after the previews and Shepard, unhappy with the casting of Tommy Lee Jones (Austin) and Peter Boyle (Lee) over the original cast, denounced the production, saying 'I would like it to be known that the "production" of my play *True West* at the Public Theatre is in no way a representation of my intentions.' The problems behind the scenes were reflected by the performances and the play closed after eight weeks.

The play was revived in 1982 by the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. It was directed by Gary Sinise, who also played Austin in New York, with the then relatively unknown John Malkovich in the role of Lee. The production was a success and it transferred to the Cherry Lane Theatre in New York, where the play finally received the critical and commercial reception it deserved and it went on to run for 762 performances.

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## **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.

## **FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS**

Friday 16th to Saturday 24th February

### **Our Lady of Sligo**

by Sebastian Barry  
directed by Mark Wilson

Friday 16th to Saturday 24th March

### **'Bad Jews'**

by Joshua Harmon  
directed by Bob Ryder

April

### **NVT's 70th Anniversary**

Friday 11th to Saturday 19th May

**1984**

by George Orwell  
directed by Nick Richards

[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, until 23rd March, with no session on 16th February. Summer term starts on Friday 13th April.

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)