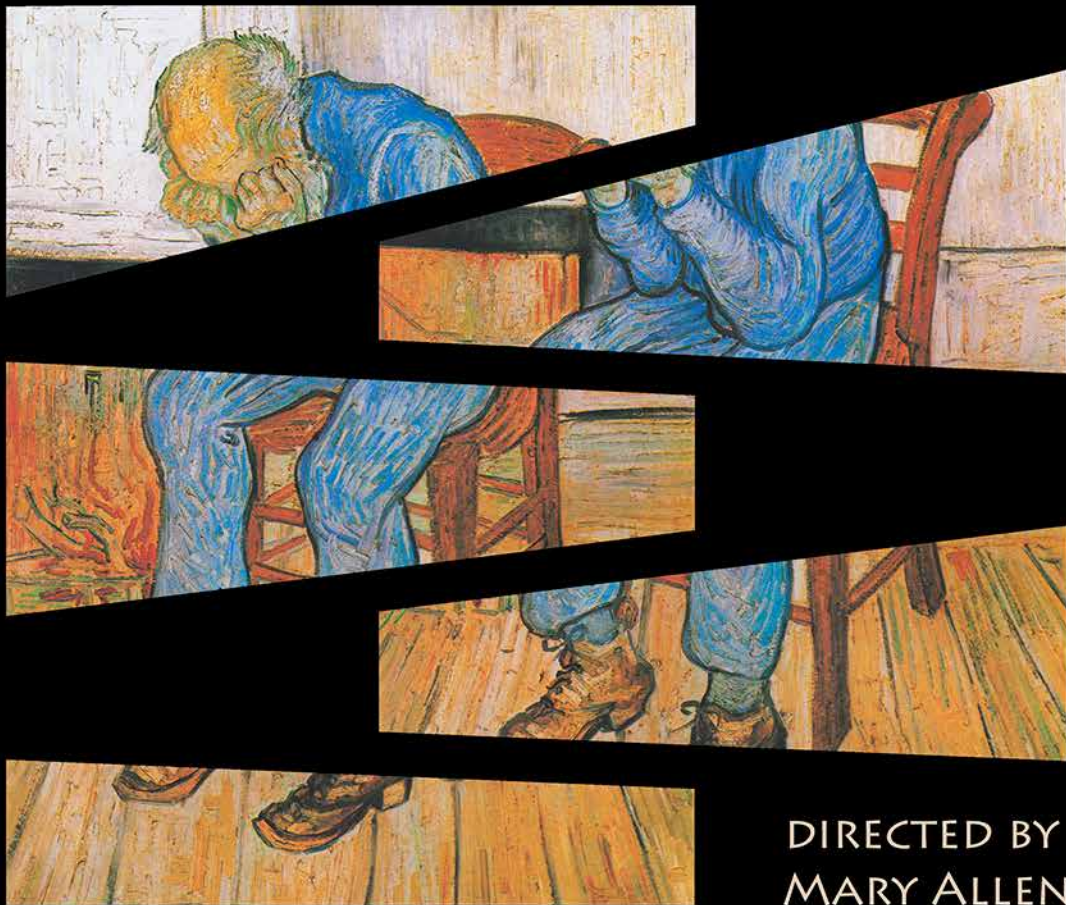


# THE FATHER

BY FLORIAN ZELLER



DIRECTED BY  
MARY ALLEN

**NVT**

**NEW  
VENTURE  
THEATRE**

Bedford Place,  
Brighton BN1 2PT

PERFORMANCES:

Fri 15th - Sat 23rd March 2019 - 7.45 pm

Matinee Sun 17th March - 2.30pm

(No Sun/Mon eves)

ONLINE BOOKING: [www.newventure.org.uk/tickets](http://www.newventure.org.uk/tickets)

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION: 01273 746118

 @nvt\_brighton

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# THE FATHER

The Father portrays in a unique way how living with dementia feels; both for the father, Andre, as well as for his daughter and her partner. The daily challenges the condition creates are illustrated in this fascinating play through a variety of devices, constantly showing us the perspective of the affected person.

While the play is an acutely distressing portrait of dementia, it is by turns both humorous and moving. It shows Andre, while inhabiting a world of contradictions, capable both of a fierce lucidity and a senile cantankerousness.

The Father was first performed in Paris in 2012, the English premiere taking place in Bath in 2014. In 2015 it transferred to the West End, and was hailed as one of the most outstanding hits of recent years. It won ecstatic five-star reviews, and top listings in the Best Plays of the Year, winning awards in Paris, London and New York. The Times described it as '*a controlled unforgettable portrait of losing your mind*', and The Guardian summed it up as '*a play that continually confounds expectations, and works almost like a thriller, with a sinister Pinteresque edge.*'

I am very lucky in that I have a superb cast, led by Michael Bulman, and a terrific production team. Strat Mastoris has created an unsettling environment, echoing the state of Andre's mind.

The rehearsal process has been both challenging and exciting, as collectively and individually we have faced and explored the feelings and issues that arise when caring for an elderly relative with dementia. The cast have come up with numerous good ideas about the portrayal of this illness, and they have been a pleasure to work with.

I hope Florian Zeller would be proud of what we've done; and that you, our audience, enjoy this great play as much as we have enjoyed working on it.

I would like to dedicate this production to the memory of my own father, a gifted and much-published poet, and the courage with which he faced the uncertainties of his last few years.

Mary Allen  
Director

## **CAST**

<b>Father :</b>	<b>Michael Bulman</b>
<b>Anne :</b>	<b>Lyn Snowdon</b>
<b>Woman :</b>	<b>Emmie Spencer</b>
<b>Pierre :</b>	<b>Mark Lester</b>
<b>Man :</b>	<b>Simon Messingham</b>
<b>Laura :</b>	<b>Marie Owens</b>

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

<b>Director :</b>	<b>Mary Allen</b>
<b>Production Manager :</b>	<b>Ulrike Schilling</b>
<b>Stage Manager :</b>	<b>Carol Croft</b>
<b>ASM :</b>	<b>Anthony Squire</b>
<b>Set Design :</b>	<b>Strat Mastoris</b>
<b>Set Construction :</b>	<b>Simon Glazier, George Walter, Strat Mastoris, Carol Croft Paintings by Delphine Du Barry Sofa throw by Jackie Jones</b>
<b>Props :</b>	<b>Carol Croft</b>
<b>Lighting Design :</b>	<b>Strat Mastoris</b>
<b>Lighting Operation :</b>	<b>Max Videaux</b>
<b>Sound Design :</b>	<b>Cata Lindegaard</b>
<b>Sound Operation :</b>	<b>Cata Lindegaard</b>
<b>Poster layout &amp; Programme :</b>	<b>Tamsin Mastoris</b>
<b>Photography :</b>	<b>Strat Mastoris</b>
<b>Publicity &amp; Marketing :</b>	<b>Emmie Spencer, Ulrike Schilling, Max Videaux</b>
<b>Health &amp; Safety :</b>	<b>Ian Black</b>

### **Many thanks :**

To Mark Wilson for all his support, to Scott Roberts and the Front of House Team, Chris Stubbs and the Box Office Team and to the NVT for being such a lovely and supportive place to work.

### **Michael Bulman - Andre**

Most of Michael's performing experience has been as a singer, in offerings as diverse as Britten's 'Death in Venice', 'HMS Pinafore', Sondheim's 'Sweeney Todd' and 'A Little Night Music'. Indeed, he still performs with the Esterhazy Chamber Choir in Lewes.

He only started to act after reaching the age of 70, appearing with the Lewes Little Theatre as Henry Drummond in 'Inherit the Wind', Leonato in 'Much Ado About Nothing', Julius Caesar, and Charles Macklin in 'Mr Foote's Other Leg'. He has also been seen as the Narrator and Mysterious Man in Sondheim's 'Into the Woods' for LOS Musical Theatre.

For NVT he has previously played Dada in 'Our Lady of Sligo' and Billy in 'Lovesong'.



### **Lyn Snowdon - Anne**

Lyn's most recent role at NVT was Mai in 'Our Lady Of Sligo'. She is delighted to once again be cast as Michael Bulman's daughter in an equally heartbreaking story. And no, Lyn is not actually eating chicken.

### **Mark Lester - Pierre**

Mark has been back at the NVT for 2 years now. He has appeared in 'The Deep Blue Sea', NVT's award-winning 'Anna Christie' and 'Jumpy' and is very much looking forward to appearing in 'The Father'. He is excited by the prospect of working with yet more of the incredible talent at The New Venture.

He has just completed his directing debut at NVT, directing James MacLure's 'Laundry and Bourbon' and 'Lone Star', which was well-received and was a hugely enjoyable experience.



### **Emmie Spencer - The Woman**

Emmie has appeared in several productions at the NVT, most recently as Bea in 'Happy Now?' (2018), Daphna in 'Bad Jews' (2018), and Hester Collyer in 'The Deep Blue Sea' (2017). Recent appearances elsewhere include 'Voices from Home' at the Old Red Lion Theatre, Islington (2018), Broken Silence Theatre's 'Bug Camp' (Winner of Best New Play at Brighton Fringe 2017) and Matron in Kasabian's 'One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest'-inspired music video 'You're In Love With A Psycho' (WIZ/Sony Music 2017).



### **Simon Messingham - The Man**

Simon Messingham returns to the NVT for the first time since 'Hughie' in 2017. He is a producer and writer by trade. Simon has acted in many shows at the NVT including 'The Winslow Boy', 'The Herbal Bed' and 'How Many Miles to Babylon'.

### **Marie Owens - Laura**

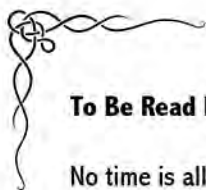
Marie Owens first got involved in theatre in 2012 when she joined Bart Players in her native city of Belfast. There she got the chance to play several parts: killer maid, hot-tempered waitress, seductive spy, eccentric cook. Laura is her first part since relocating to Brighton. She's delighted to be playing someone likeable for the first time!





### Mary Allen - Director

'The Father' is Mary's second production for the NVT, after directing 'The Real Inspector Hound' two years ago. For the last thirteen years she has also been directing musicals in Suffolk, working with large casts of amateurs and professionals. Mary spent the first three years of her working life as an actor, and thereafter spent the rest of her career working in various capacities in the arts. She says that when she first saw a production of 'The Father' it blew her away. 'The playwright describes it as a tragic farce, and it certainly has both of those qualities, as well as being a superb piece of writing.' She is thrilled to have the chance of directing it. 'I have a fabulous cast, who bring out both the humour and the despair.'



### To Be Read Before Being Born

No time is allowed for practice or rehearsal.  
There are no retakes and there isn't a prompter.  
There's only moving water, dimpled by turbulence -  
And no clambering out onto the bank  
to think things over, as there is no bank.

### Battue

The origami-master folded away his smile  
and swept his extended family into the litter bin  
to be eaten by paper tigers.

Fergus Allen  
3 September 1921 - 22 July 2017  
father of Mary Allen.



## COMING NEXT

12 - 20 APRIL 2019

(STUDIO THEATRE)

**PICKWICK AND WELLER**

**BY BARRY PURCHESE**

(With more than a nod towards  
Charles Dickens)

music by Michael James

directed by Rod Lewis

Samuel Pickwick is a warm hearted and well meaning man of advancing years but, despite his age, still something of an innocent. As he sets forth on his adventures into the wider world he is easy pickings for rogues such as Alfred Jingle and the rascally lawyers Dodson and Fogg. He is in need of a protector and no-one comes better qualified than the street wise Sam Weller. Sam, with his singular brand of philosophy, never fails to make us laugh as he comes to the rescue of Pickwick time and again.

## COMING SOON

17 - 25 MAY 2019

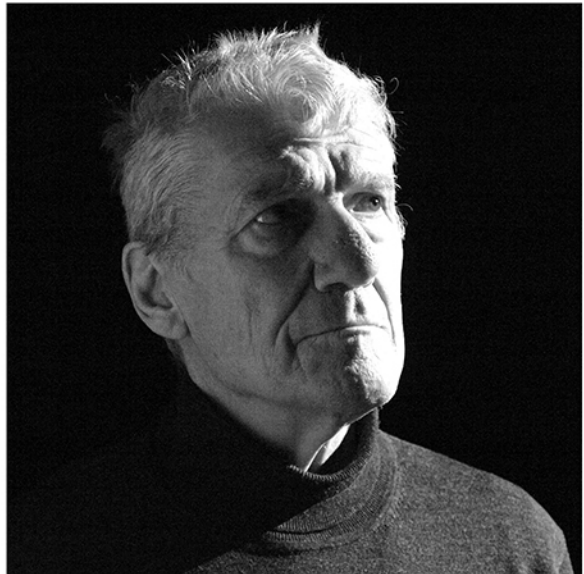
(THEATRE UPSTAIRS)

**HYSTERIA**

**BY TERRY JOHNSON**

directed by Bob Ryder

Real life, fantasy and hallucination. Freud meets Dali, meets half-naked comedy chaos. Serious stuff is swept up in the crazy world of theatrical farce. Terry Johnson's brilliant creation achieves a rare balancing act, in which alarming subjects and events are filtered through high-jinks comedy entertainment. It's a play that's always sparkling and witty, while sometimes descending into low farce, while somehow still being thought-provoking and deeply touching. It's a modern classic and a great experience, which makes you laugh, think and feel - often all at the same time.



Michael Bulman as The Father

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## Contacting the NVT

For ticket information only, call the Box Office - 01273 746118. To book tickets or for other information check our website at [www.newventure.org.uk](http://www.newventure.org.uk). All other enquiries 01273 808353

## NVYT - Youth Theatre

NVT welcomes all young people (12-17) with a passion for or an interest in theatre. Fridays 4.30-6.30pm.

## NVT Acting Class

Monday evenings at 7.30pm for all levels of acting skills. It will cost you just £5 per session (£2.50 for NVT members) First visit is FREE!

## Become a Sponsor

£250: Advertise in our brochure, on the website, in each programme and our newsletter for one year. Plus two free tickets per show. Contact [fundraising@newventure.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@newventure.org.uk) for details. Or why not become an Angel, Archangel or even Archangel Gabriel to help us support the current and future improvements to our theatre. For further information please contact the Angels Coordinator Gerry McCrudden: [gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com](mailto:gerrymccrudden@hotmail.com).

## Membership

Company membership - £15 a year. Full participation, discount on tickets & newsletter. Student/Unwaged - £10 a year. As above... *Proof of status is required.*

## 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 need your financial support, either to add to our regular sponsors (annual package £250) or you can be a Cherub for a fiver, an Angel for £100, Archangel for £500 or an Archangel Gabriel for £1,000. Please look out for the leaflets in the Theatre. As an Angel you will be listed on the Role of Honour in the Theatre.

If you are interested, please email [fundraising@newventure.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@newventure.org.uk) for more information.