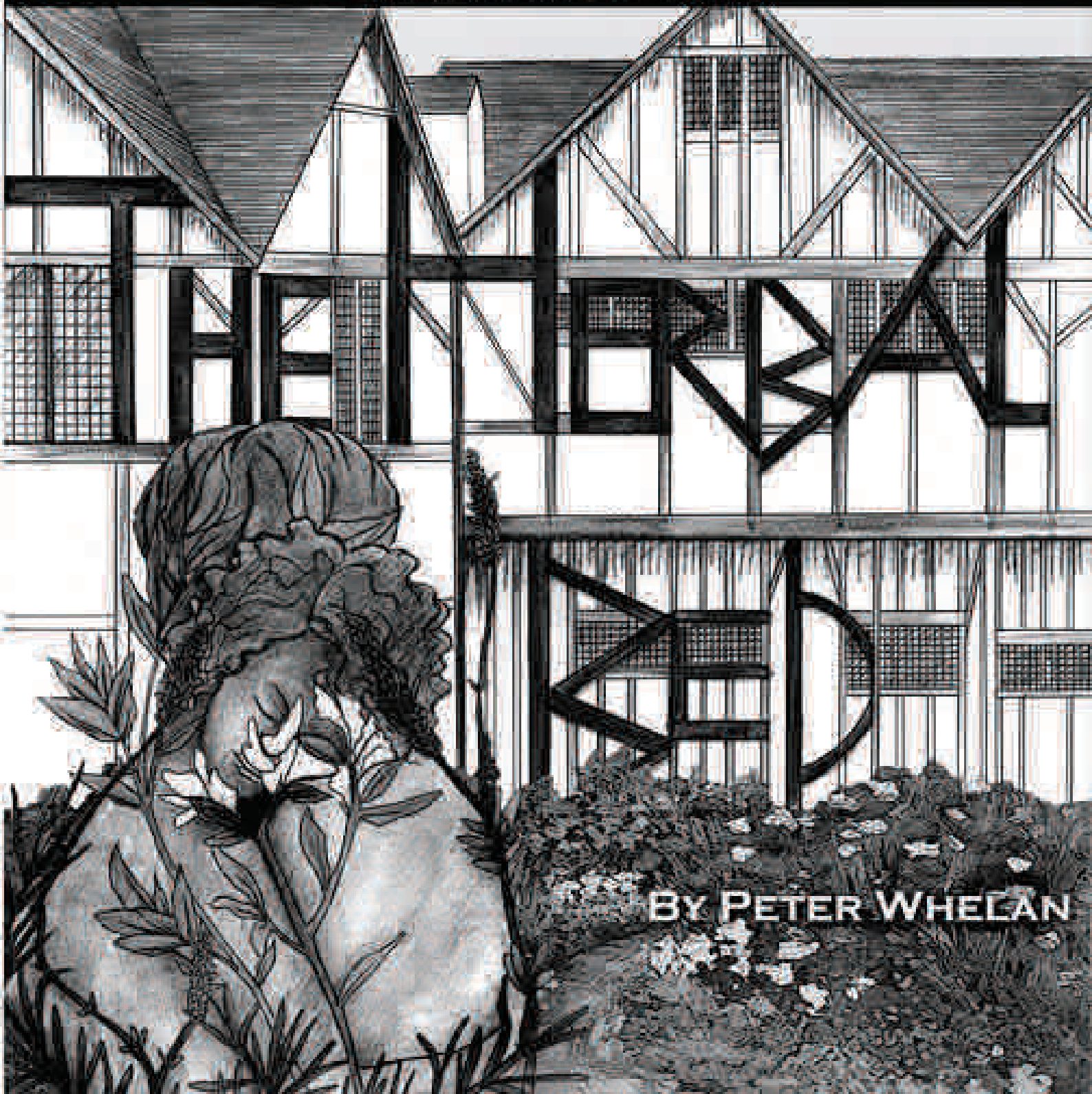


A NEW VENTURE THEATRE PRODUCTION 2014



BY PETER WHELAN

NVT

**NEW
VENTURE
THEATRE**

Bedford Place,
Brighton BN1 2PT

PERFORMANCES:

Fri 20th June - Sat 28th June 7.45 pm
Sun Matinee 2.30pm (No Sun/Mon eves)

ONLINE BOOKING: www.newventure.org.uk/tickets

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION: 01273 746118

 @nvt_brighton

THEATRE +

NEW WRITING +

CLASSES +

LICENSED BAR +

50p

THE HERBAL BED

In the depths of last winter, when I was fretting about directing 'Far Away' my first full length play, a good friend suggested that I might be interested in taking a look at 'The Herbal Bed' as my next offering because she'd seen it at Stratford and had loved it. I borrowed her copy of the play and was instantly hooked – I left behind snow-bound Hollingdean and was transported back to the summer of 1613 and rural Stratford on Avon.

This is the true story of a passionate, independent and intelligent woman stifled by a loveless marriage and the confines of being a woman; the contradiction between human desires and the social and religious conventions which suppress them. My initial proposal for the play appealed to another strong, independent woman – our previous artistic director Uli – well it would, wouldn't it... and so we were on our way.

It's hard for us to imagine the world-view of people in the early seventeenth century. The separation between different social classes was rigidly enforced, and the rule of the Church in moral matters was absolute - partly out of feudal deference, but also because of an unquestioning belief in an afterlife and the possibility of eternal damnation. Peter Whelan takes us very close, though, with 'The Herbal Bed'

Susanna, William Shakespeare's eldest daughter, is accused of adultery with family friend and neighbour Rafe Smith. Her husband, respected physician John Hall, is desperate to clear the family name and pushes her to sue for slander. But how can they avoid the fact that one summer's night while her husband was away, Rafe Smith was seen secretly leaving their herbal garden?

This is a serious charge, and three people's private lives are subjected to the glare of intense public scrutiny in this tale of passion, loyalty, independence and religion. The case ends up before an Ecclesiastical Court, where the family's souls, as well as their moral reputations, are in danger.

Based on actual events and written by Whelan (who wrote about Great War morality in 'The Accrington Pals') in 1996, this play looks at universal themes of love, marriage, loyalty, independence and social class.

The play's action takes place mainly in the 'physic' garden where many medicinal herbs were grown, and in the doctor's dispensary adjoining the family house. And this is where another challenge came in, how to create the period feel of the Jacobean manor 'Halls Croft' and the garden, in a small black space, with limited budget and without it looking 'clunky'. The solution was to treat the entire design as a sketch... an artist's impression of how it would have looked, with you the audience filling in the gaps with your imagination.

Not only do we have a talented group of actors bringing this story to life, but somewhere along the way we have accumulated a vastly talented team in bringing this show together - including designers, costume makers, researchers, production and stage managers, choreographers, techies and even a garden planner...

We hope you enjoy this unforgettable drama.

Tamsin Fraser
Director



Setting

The garden of Doctor Hall's house (Hall's Croft, as it stands today), a substantial half-timbered two-storey residence in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Act 1,

Scene 1. Early June, 1613. A fine, pleasing day with high, racing clouds.

Scene 2. The same, half an hour later.

Scene 3. The same, at night... calm and moonlit.

Interval of 20 mins

Act 2.

Scene 1. The garden, two days later. Glorious sun.

Scene 2. Worcester Cathedral. An alcove near the western end of the south aisle where the consistory court is held.

Scene 3. The garden at Dr. Hall's as before, some weeks later. Evening.

Red Gray - Susanna Hall

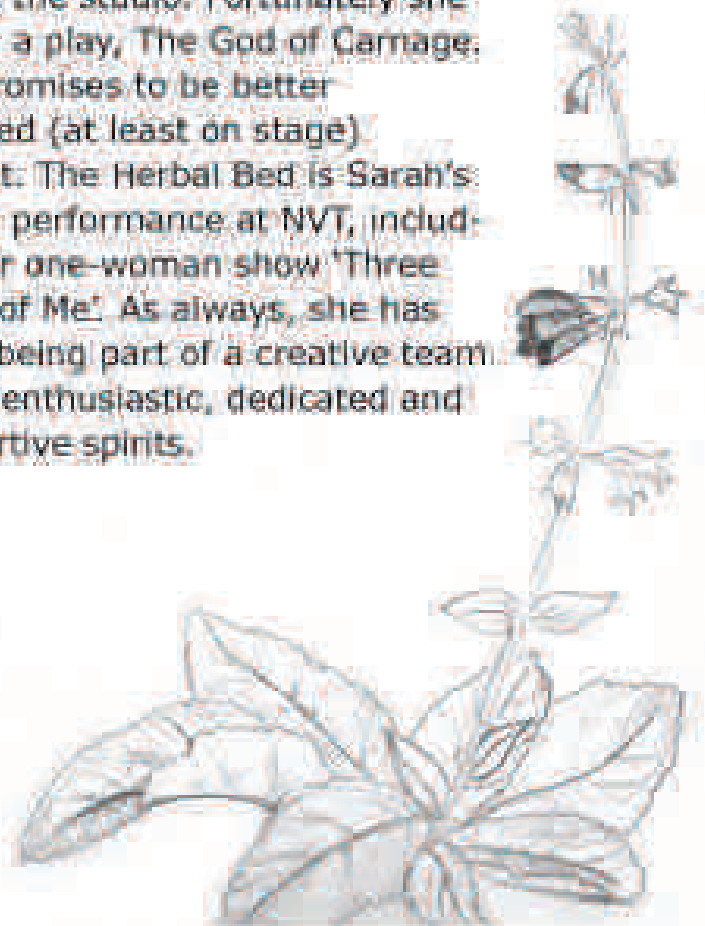
Red performs solo recital work, session singing, opera and theatre. Previous roles include Beth 'What I just shot' (W@rn Theatre Co.) Caroline 'Whale Music', Denise Savage 'Savage in Limbo' (Day for Night Theatre Co.) and Kate 'Old Times' (NVT). Her next role will be in 'The Gospel according to Lillian' - Oct 2014 at The Church of the Annunciation Festival and playing Brighton Fringe 2015. Other plans for 2014 include theatre/opera two - hander 'In and Out of Love' by Stephen Plaice (St. Michael's & All Angels, July 26th) and performances with 18 piece contemporary jazz outfit Studio9Orchestra including 'Love Supreme' Jazz festival at Glynde in July. Red runs her own part-time Theatre Arts School and Vocal Teaching Practice and lives in Brighton with her family.



Sarah Charsley - Hester Fletcher



Sarah was last seen at NVT getting very drunk and projectile vomiting across the studio. Fortunately she was in a play, The God of Carnage. She promises to be better behaved (at least on stage) tonight. The Herbal Bed is Sarah's eighth performance at NVT, including her one-woman show 'Three Kinds of Me'. As always, she has loved being part of a creative team full of enthusiastic, dedicated and supportive spirits.



Jay Chappell - Jack Lane

Jay completed his training at Brighton's Academy of Creative Training. Previous roles include Le Duc in Arthur Miller's 'Incident at Vichy' and Dr Arthur Wicksteed in Alan Bennett's 'Habeus Corpus'. This is Jay's first role at NVT. He is also keen musician and enjoys DJ'ing.

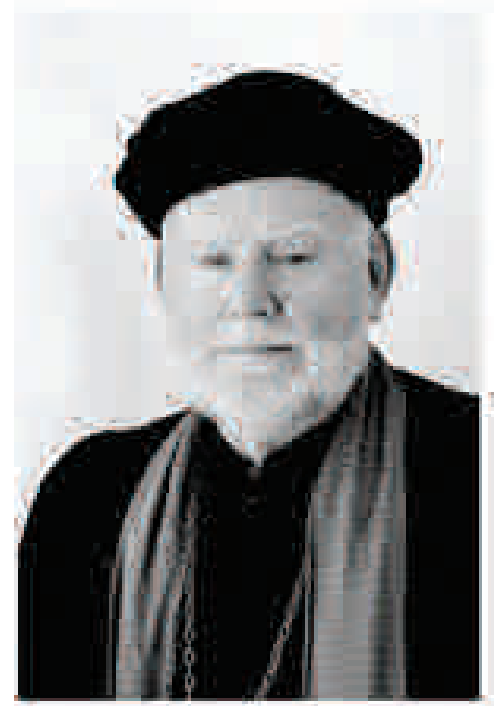


Simon Messingham - John Hall

Simon Messingham appeared in 'The Winslow Boy' at the NVT. He moved to the South Coast in 2007 after many years writing TV and film and books for Doctor Who. He currently co-runs a film company, acting, writing and a new-found skill: producing.

Gerry McCrudden - Bishop Parry

Gerry has directed 'The Winslow Boy', 'Biloxi Blues' and 'Dancing at Lughnasa' for the New Venture Theatre. He has also appeared in 'The Weir' as well as 'The Lieutenant of Inishmore' at Brighton Little Theatre. He will be directing Noel Coward's 'Hay Fever' at the NVT in November.



Cordelia Brand - Elizabeth Hall

Cordelia has loved theatre ever since she saw the West End show 'Wicked' when she was 6. She has been doing ballet since she was three and has been in several school productions playing many roles including a Dragon slaying princess and a fairy who lost her wings. She is very excited to be playing Elizabeth.



Constance Starns - Elizabeth Hall

Connie has been in love with performing since the age of three, when she first saw Doris Day in Calamity Jane. She enjoys playing her flute, singing with Brighton Festival Youth Chorus and dancing. A diverse range of roles in school productions include; an evil oil can, a lovelorn seikie and grumpy Mr Scrooge. She is very excited to be playing Elizabeth alongside such a talented group of actors.



Warren Saunders - Rafe Smith

Warren has just finished a sell-out performance of Natalie Audley's highly successful new play 'Auld Acquaintance' playing Rob Elway at The Dukebox Theatre and will be appearing in her adaptation of 'Tis Pity She's A Whore' as Jeremy for this year's Edinburgh festival. No stranger to NVT most recently playing Russell in Pinter's 'Celebration'. He filmed as Kenny in Studio from the Skys 'Drowning in Sunshine' web series and also Lt. Grainger in Tim Griffiths' indie action film as yet to be released 'Mission 2: Redemption'.



Alistair Lock - Barnbus Goche

Alistair is unusual in being an expert in post-production whilst having considerable experience as an actor and voiceover artist. He's appeared in several NVT productions over the years, most recently as Hal in "Kvetch" and Sergeant Toomey in "Blloxi Blues"; two very different roles. In real life he works as an audio editor and sound designer and can be heard as a doomed astronaut on Radio 4's Saturday afternoon play "The Martian Chronicles" with Derek Jacobi.



CAST (in order of appearance)

Elizabeth Hall :	Constance Starns
Elizabeth Hall :	Cordelia Brand
Hester Fletcher :	Sarah Charsley
Rafe Smith :	Warren Saunders
Jack Lane :	Jay Chappell
Bishop Parry :	Gerry McCrudden
John Hall :	Simon Messingham
Susanna Hall :	Red Gray
Vicar Barnabus Goche :	Alistair Lock

CREATIVE TEAM

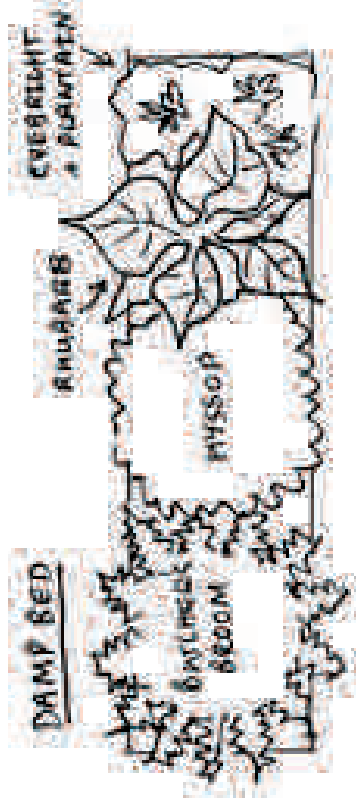
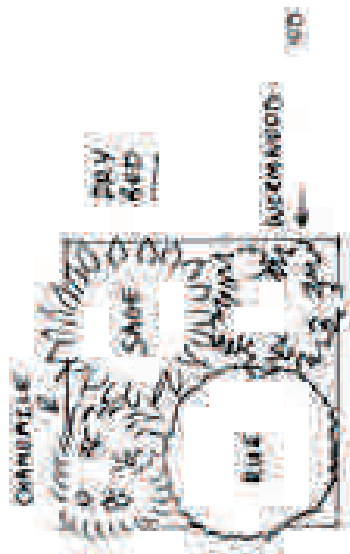
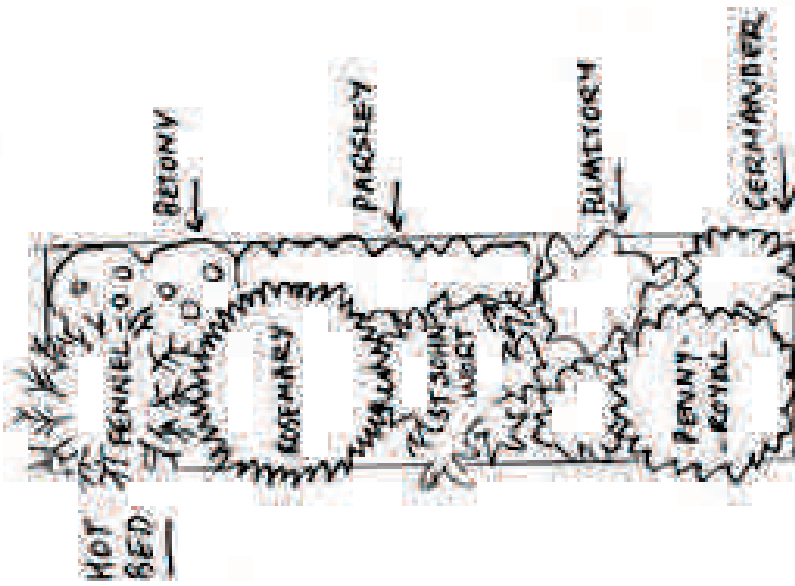
Director :	Tamsin Fraser
Production Manager :	Ian Black
Stage Manager :	Annique Tate-Doe
Assistant Stage Manager :	Barry Purchase
Set Design :	Mark Green
Set Construction :	Mark Green, George Walter, Barry Purchase & Strat Mastoris
Set Finish and Dressing :	Mark Green & Isabel Aidalbery
Properties :	Trish Bayliss & Liz Miller
Costume Design :	Jackie Jones
Costume Assistants :	Liz Miller & Annabelle Trent
Lighting Design :	Emma Shiel
Lighting Operation :	Alex Epps
Lighting Rigging :	Emma Shiel & Strat Mastoris
Sound Design & Operation :	Emilio Pascual
Recorder Music, Arrangement & Recording :	Eleanor & Richard Gamper
Poster & Programme :	Isabel Aidalbery
Makeup :	Sara Selim
Choreography :	Alex McQuillen-Wright
Fight Coordinator :	Moog Gravett
Research :	Debbie Walden
Garden Design :	Anita Sullivan Fearnside
Photography :	Strat Mastoris
Marketing :	Dan Walker

Many thanks to:

Rob Stephens for making the sundial, Chris Pugh for all his input, assistance and technical advice, Gladrags, Harvey's of Hove, Loans of various items – Rod Lewis (bellows), Mrs Valerie Harris (basket), Christine Snowden (nightie), Alexandra Löske for suggesting this play, Sarah Davies for casting an eye, Ian for having to do the boring bits... and as always, our appreciation and gratitude to the Front of House, Bar staff and Box-Office teams.

THE HERBAL BED PLANTING PLAN

www.anita-sullivangardens.co.uk



A guide to planting for a herbal garden of your own

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Coming next to NVT...

18th July - 26th July

Decade

by various writers

Directed by Kirsty Elmer

No-one can forget the moment they heard the news. September 11th 2001 sent shockwaves across the globe. It was a day that was supposed to change the world forever. Ten years on, a team of major writers and thinkers have explored responses to the defining event of our times. This is a thrillingly imaginative investigation into the legacy of 9/11.

'Decade' is a collaborative collage of playlets from twenty contemporary writers, in response to the attacks on the Twin Towers: the events on the day and their legacy ten years later. We will be staging 14 of the plays in promenade, utilising all of the NVT theatre spaces to tell a range of intertwined stories.

'Decade' is a promenade production, which will involve the audience moving from one space to another; there are stairs which some may find difficult. There will also be some strong language and, therefore, due to the nature of the piece, it will not be suitable for children.



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!

NVT Youth Theatre

Fridays 4.30pm - 6.30pm

Open to 12-17 year olds interested in Drama, theatre, creative play and working with new people in a real theatre setting.

Become an NVT Sponsor

£250: Advertise in our brochure, on the website, in each programme and our newsletter for 1 year, plus two free tickets per show.

Contact fundraising@newventure.org.uk for details

NVT

**NEW
VENTURE
THEATRE**

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS 2014

18th - 26th July
'Decade'

by various writers
directed by Kirsty Elmer

3rd - 11th Oct

'Amongst Barbarians'
by Michael Wall
directed by Sean Lippett

31st Oct - 8th Nov
'Hay Fever'

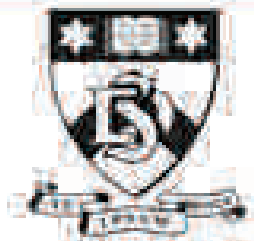
by Noel Coward
directed by Gerry McCrudden

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 for more information.



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