

MEDIA RELEASE

THE
COURT
THEATRE

25 June 2018

For immediate release

[Vernon God Little](#)

Written by Tanya Ronder

Based on the novel by DBC Pierre

Directed by Tom Eason & William Burns

28 – 30 June 2018

The Pub Charity Studio at The Court Theatre

Short Show Description:

Vernon God Little is a dark and comic take on the commercialisation of horrific events. This gripping and twisted tale of love, betrayal and unlikely friendships proves that desperate times can throw up the most unlikely of heroes.

YOUNG ACTORS TAKE THE STAGE IN SOLD-OUT SHOW AT THE COURT THEATRE

IN-BRIEF

The Court Theatre's Youth Company will be tackling a terrifyingly relevant, comic and playful story this June when they take to the stage to perform *Vernon God Little*.

The Court Youth Company is a training and performance company for young performers aged 17 – 21. Members audition in November to spend the following year at The Court with the company, producing two plays over the course of the year. *Vernon God Little* is their first performance as a company.

The play follows teenager Vernon after his best friend instigates a school shooting, murdering sixteen of his classmates before turning the gun on himself. This leaves Vernon as the scapegoat for a tragedy that quickly gathers the attention of television reporter Eulalio "Lally" Ledesma.

"It's a crazy, whirlwind story," said Rachel Sears, The Court's Programmes Manager (Education, Training and Jesters), who oversees The Court Youth Company.

William Burns, a Court Youth Company alumni, has re-joined the company in a new capacity for *Vernon God Little*. He is co-directing the play alongside director and performer Tom Eason.

Burns promises a thrilling and topical performance that he thinks will resonate strongly with its connection to the spate of school shootings in America.

"Audiences can expect a fast-paced and exciting comedy with young people really pushing themselves to their limits."

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The Court Theatre

PO Box 268

Christchurch 8140

New Zealand

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With performances already sold out, keen viewers will have to wait until The Court Youth Company's next performance, *Children of the Night*, in December.

Vernon God Little opens at The Court Theatre on 28th June and runs through until 30th June.

IN-DEPTH

The Court Theatre's Youth Company will be tackling a terrifyingly relevant, comic and playful story this June when they take to the stage to perform *Vernon God Little*.

The Court Youth Company is a training and performance company for young performers aged 17 – 21. Members audition in November to spend the following year at The Court with the company, meeting twice a week for three hours to learn and practise skills that help them produce two plays over the course of the year. *Vernon God Little* is their first performance as a company.

The play follows teenager Vernon after his best friend instigates a school shooting, murdering sixteen of his classmates before turning the gun on himself. This leaves Vernon as the scapegoat for a tragedy that quickly gathers the attention of television reporter Eulalio "Lally" Ledesma.

"It's a crazy, whirlwind story," said Rachel Sears, The Court's Programmes Manager (Education, Training and Jesters), who has been overseeing the project.

"The Court Youth Company is made up of some of Canterbury's most talented young actors. They're all creative performers who want to stretch themselves – and the way they've approached this story and have gotten into the characters makes me feel like it's the right play for them to be doing," she said.

William Burns, a Court Youth Company alumni, has re-joined the company in a new capacity for *Vernon God Little*. He is co-directing the play alongside director and performer Tom Eason, who is one half of Canterbury theatre company Two Productions.

For Burns, his previous experience with The Court Youth Company has been invaluable.

"I was in The Court Youth Company over the last two years and did four shows with the company. I met Tom Eason through the Company who is co-directing this show with me now and I also teach younger kids drama at The Court, which all started through being selected for The Court Youth Company and getting those connections."

Coming back to the company as a director, rather than an actor, has been an exciting challenge for Burns.

"It's been a really good creative challenge for me being back in the room in a different position. What's exciting about this show is how fast-paced it is – it's the fastest script I've ever read. Every actor in the company gets a place to shine and their moment in the spot-light."

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With over twenty characters, The Court Youth Company have their work cut out for them bringing *Vernon God Little* to life. Based on the Booker Prize winning novel by DBC Pierre, Sears thinks it has been a fantastic opportunity for the company's young actors – as well as the professional practitioners at The Court.

“These young performers remind us why we got into theatre because they’ve got a huge amount of passion for the project. It’s a learning opportunity for them, but also for the professionals that they’re working with. It connects us with the emerging performers of the future, which is invaluable for a theatre.”

One such performer, Miriam Qualls, who will be playing a range of characters in *Vernon God Little*, has already made the jump from The Court Youth Company to The Court Theatre’s mainstage, having played Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* earlier this year.

As for what audiences can expect from this fast-paced, black comedy, Burns promises a thrilling and topical performance that he thinks will resonate strongly with its connection to the spate of school shootings in America.

“Audiences can expect a fast-paced and exciting comedy with young people really pushing themselves to their limits.”

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Cast

Vernon	Sam Bowler
Jesus	Tane Patterson
Mom	Paris Thornley
Lally	Anaru Shadbolt
Taylor Figueroa	Rongopai Tickell
Ella Keeter	Grace Newton
Vaine	Freddy Thornton
Leona	Alex Wright
Sheriff Porkorney, Heavy and Jonesy	Todd Anderson
Brad and Brian	Conor Hill
Dr Goosens	Harrison Searancke
Pam and Judge	Alice Cheersmith
Vernon’s Attorney and Mr Deutschman	Felix Elliott
Kid in Braces, Bartender and Lally’s Mum	Joanna Fan
Mr Keeter	Holly Fraser Devenny
Court Officer, Pelayo’s Wife, Bus Driver & Chrissie	Ruby Pledge
Eileena, Con #1 and Spanish Voiceover	Meg Wikitoria Fulton
Judge Helen Gurie, Old Lady and Media Court Officer	Miriam Qualls
Silas, Border Guard and Con #2	Ocean Pearl Jones
Team Leader, Pelayo and Lasalle	Anita Mapukata
Pastor Gibbons and Prosecutor	Lillian Fata

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Creatives

Director/Sound Designer	Tom Eason
Director	William Burns
Lighting Designer	Giles Tanner
Stage Manager	Rachel Pugh

Ticket Prices

- Students & Seniors \$15
- General Admission \$20

Show Times

- Thursday 28 June & Friday 30 June 6:00pm
- Saturday 30 June 3pm & 7pm

Images can be found at The Court Theatre's [Media Centre](#)

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:
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