

ECCO

**The newsletter of the English Comedy Club, Brussels
February 2008**

Chairman's letter

Christmas seems like a very distant memory now. With so much organizing and planning to do, the E.C.C. returns with a vengeance and diaries and meetings seem to abound. After two planning meetings, the committee is close to making several decisions regarding the club's 100th season. I hope there will be more details in next month's E.C.C.O.

Yet no sooner have they been dealt with than FEATS looms over the horizon. Whilst the club is only a reserve for this year's competition already two pieces by the E.C.C. look set to take the Fringe by storm. On top of being fully involved in Stockholm 'shadowing' the festival, movements are already in place for the arrival of F.E.A.T.S next year here in Brussels. The scale of the project never diminishes in size and the help needed to create a successful F.E.A.T.S is huge. I hope as many of you in the club can help in any way that you can. Spring 2009 may seem an eternity away - however as anyone involved in theatre will know that's only four productions or around 11 play readings. Not so far away when put in that context.

One of those productions, 'Animal Farm', is less than a month away. The rehearsals are going well, the theatre is booked and soon the E.C.C. will take to the stage once more with a cast of around twenty at De Kam in March. Many new faces join familiar ones in what I hope will be another successful show for the club.

Time I guess pushes on for all of us but I hope you agree that with the E.C.C. doing what it is doing, time becomes great experiences and fond memories.

- Steve Challens

We have a new website!

Come and check out the new website at <http://theatreinbrussels.com/ecc/>

Many thanks to Conrad Toft for his work on the new site and special thanks to Paul Gray for all his work on the previous site over the years. Send any comments or contributions to the webmaster webmaster@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com or EccoEditor@scarlet.be.

**"I love acting. It is so
much more real than
life."**

~ Oscar Wilde

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Upcoming productions

Animal Farm, 11-15 March at De Kam

Once upon a time there was a farm where the animals took over and all lived happily ever after... or did they?

Orwell's political allegory shows us how easily utopia can slip into dystopia. Through comedy and tragedy, the tale mirrors the Russian revolution and growth of the Soviet Union, but could just as easily represent today's totalitarian and even democratic societies where idealism often gives way to despotism and cronyism.

The ECC is proud to present this timeless classic. We hope you will join us and see why its powerful message is just as relevant today as ever and that "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

Tickets are €13 for members, €15 for others. (€13 for groups of 10+ except Friday/Saturday) To book, send an e-mail to ecctickets@yahoo.com or call 0477- 408704.

De Kam is at Beekstraat 172, 1970 Wezembeek-Oppem. You can get there with tram 39, getting off at the stop called Beek/Ruisseau.

Club News

Membership

If you haven't renewed for the 2007/2008 season, please contact Membership Secretary Rachel on 0486 10 26 32 or rachel.cuff@blplaw.com and she'll send you a form. Otherwise you can transfer your money to the club account 310-0627727-29 (not forgetting to put your name in the communications section) and let her know you've done so. It will get you a discount on your Animal Farm ticket!

Looking for sponsors for the 100th anniversary

As you know, we're closing in on our 100th anniversary season. This is a key event for the whole English-speaking community in Brussels, as it marks 100 years of English-language theatre here. Many people say to me "I didn't realise there had been British people here that long!" So let's make it as much fun as we can. If your company would like to get involved in some way, through offering in-kind support, hosting an event, or just advertising in the programme for one of the shows, contact Antonia at EccoEditor@scarlet.be or Sara at sara_murray@hotmail.com. The gala dinner in September will be a great opportunity for entertaining clients and we can arrange block bookings for companies wishing to do so. Again, contact Antonia or Sara.

Have you got something to say?

We welcome any ideas for contributions to ECCO - it's your newsletter! Have you seen a fabulous show in London that you want to tell everyone about - or even a stinker that you think we should avoid? Is there some element of Club news you think we should be featuring? Have you got some furniture to sell? If so, send your contributions to the editor at EccoEditor@scarlet.be

Film preview

Clément Gharini, known to quite a few ECC members, will be previewing his short film "Terres Noires" at the Arenberg cinema on 24 February. If you would like to attend, send an e-mail to info@helicotronc.com

FEATS

Stockholm 2008

A whole lot of information about hotels, the fringe and the invited groups has just gone up on the Stockholm website. We're not one of the selected groups, but as Steve says in his letter at the front of this publication we're hoping to have a strong representation on the Fringe.

The website is <http://2008.feats.eu> and the dates for the festival are 9-12 May.

Brussels 2009

It seems a long way away, but we're already gearing up for FEATS 2009. This will be a real group effort and we are already looking for people for a number of key roles, including: group liaison, catering and bar, box office, transport coordination, stage crew, webmaster, and volunteers for the many jobs that will need to be done during the festival. If you would like to get involved, get in contact via feats2009@yahoo.co.uk, or call Antonia on 0495 516281.

The bit at the back

Here are the latest rumours about what's coming to the West End in 2008, courtesy of the London Theatre Guide.

The Daily Mail reports that David Pugh, Dafydd Rogers and the Disney company are working on a stage adaptation of the film **Calendar Girls**, expected to open at the Chichester Festival in September, go on tour and then have a West End run. Rumoured cast members include Twiggy, Sue Johnston, Lynda Bellingham, Wendy Craig, Amanda Redman, Jenny Agutter, Stella Gonet, Anna Chancellor and Miranda Richardson.

In the "have a laugh" category we have **The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert**, a musical version of the cult 1994 film. No casting as yet, but can't we have fun thinking of names! Also **Dancing the Night Away**, a musical based on the movies of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers - Matt and Alesha to play the leads, Strictly fans?!

Looking at more serious shows, I'd love to see either of these: **Single Spies** by Alan Bennett, starring Nigel Havers, Diana Quick, Coral Browne and **Creditors** by August Strindberg, in a new version by David Grieg at the Donmar Warehouse.

And then finally in the "Not even if you gave me the tickets for free AND paid for me to stay at the Ritz" category we have... **Simply Cuban** - Simply Red take their songs to the West End in a new musical given a "Latin makeover" for the show with choreography by Arlene Phillips (!!!)

Dates for your diaries

Play-readings

Don't forget the play-readings are the first Wednesday of the month, unless there is an ECC show. Mary would very much appreciate spontaneous calls from people letting her know that they will come along - you don't always have to wait for her to call you! She can also give you information about what plays will be read. You can contact her on 02/345 8583.

Brussels gets its own "Oliviers"

Brussels United Theatre Technicians (the usual suspects) will be organising the first annual gala theatre awards for all Anglophone productions in Brussels for the 2007 / 2008 season. Further details will be announced shortly - including details of who can vote and how - but in the meantime reserve Saturday 14 June in your diaries. Venue is still to be decided, however we hope it will be an occasion to dress up, have fun with your friends and maybe even win an award or two. We plan to lay on entertainment and catering so will be selling tickets to cover the costs and make it a special event - gold envelopes and drum rolls included: If you would like to help please contact Martin Kirk on 0486 300912 (martinjohnkirk@yahoo.co.uk). Let us know if you're just interested in attending, as it will help us gauge numbers.

Coming up elsewhere on the theatre scene

The Irish Theatre Group

Rewarding Experiences / Before, before and then, and then

by Vincent Eaton

Warehouse Studio Theatre, Schaerbeek, 8-19 April 2008

After writing/directing BOOM (amongst others), Vincent Eaton will be staging new material for this production. This may consist of two one-act plays or one full-length play - it is all a work-in-progress. What is sure is that there will be multimedia involved and that the themes will be love, death, relationships and general incredulity.

Tickets:

www.irishtheatregroup.com

0475 585 462

The American Theatre Company

Café Theatre

Scarabaeus, Schaerbeek, 22-26 April 2008

Presenting its annual Café Theatre show - an evening of music and short plays, including the winning entry of the 2007 playwriting competition.

Food and drinks will be available.

Tickets: www.atc-brussels.com (no phone booking number given)

Brussels Light Opera Company

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum

De Bosuil, Jesus Eik 29 May - 1 June

Stephen Sondheim's music and lyrics recount the hilarious tale of a Roman slave named Pseudolus and his attempts to win his freedom by helping his young master woo the girl next door. Zany vaudevillian nonsense, plot twists, turns and roundabouts make Forum one of the most loved Broadway hits of all time.

Tickets: www.bloc-brussels.be or 0484 768 117

Other theatrical productions

Wolubilis presents Declan Donnelly's production of Andromaque by Racine

The director who came to Brussels last year with Cheek by Jowl's production of Cymbeline is this year working with Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord of Paris, for this production of Racine's masterpiece of French theatre. Oreste loves Hermione who is crazy for Pyrrhus who burns for Andromaque who is mourning her dead husband Hector. 11-13 March, Wolubilis. Go to <http://www.wolubilis.be> for details.