

English Comedy Club, Brussels

ECCO

100

January 2010

If you have any suggestions or comments for ECCO, then please send them to Conrad at ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com. The next ECCO will come out in March 2010.

"Many people look forward to the new year for a new start on old habits."

Anonymous

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First of all, my very best wishes for a happy and healthy 2010.

While the weather outside is frightful, there is plenty going on in the am dram theatre world to keep you entertained, to educate budding actors and set builders... read on for details!

The end of 2009 passed by in a blur for me as I was acting in *The Cherry Orchard* - and we all know how absorbing play commitments can be!

For those of you to whom I was not able to apologise in person, I just wanted to say again how sorry we were to have to cancel the Saturday matinée performance. It was beyond our control, but the Club can of course always learn from such events for the future - and I trust that we have.

To end on a positive note, I am really looking forward to seeing some of the upcoming shows now that I am "resting" - and I hope to catch up with you there.

Abi Greef,
ECC Chair



Planning for 2010

Next week we begin planning for the 2010-2011 season. It begins with our annual meeting to gather ideas and proposals for next season's shows.

It will take place at Avenue Georges Henri 154, 1200 Woluwe-Saint-Lambert (close to Gribaumont metro station) at 7.30pm on 19 January.

Interested directors should have a play in mind, and ideally bring

a copy of it along with them.

You will also need to line up a producer and a stage manager as soon as possible in the process (potential new directors: don't be put off by that, we'll give you some names if you don't know anyone!).

For more details contact ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com.



Set-building Workshop: rescheduled for February

ECC Committee

Chair (& ACTS rep): **Abi Greef**
 Hon. Treasurer: **Martin Blackwell**
 Hon. Secretary: **Mark Prescott**
 Vice-Chair: **Stephen Challens**
 Membership: **Rachel Cuff**
 FEATS rep: **Andy Ing**
 CAST rep: **Martin Kirk**
 ECCO & Web: **Conrad Toft**
 Without portfolio: **Iona Hamilton**

The English Comedy Club unfortunately had to reschedule the set-building workshop that was planned for December to 13-14 February 2010.

Bad news for us but good news for those of you who wanted to attend but had commitments that weekend.

Just to recap: professional set designer and set builder,



Olan Wrynn's set for Asylum Production's *Bedbound*

Olan Wrynn, will lead participants in both theoretical and practical sessions.

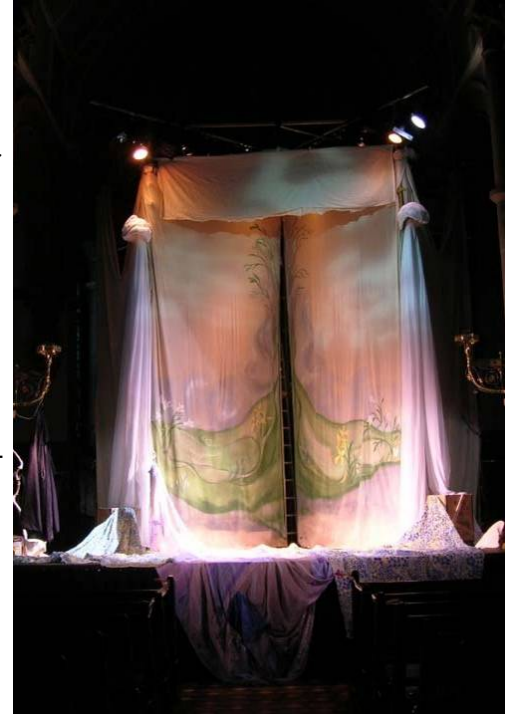
Olan has been working in

theatre, film and design for the last ten years. Six of those years have been as production manager for Graffiti Theatre Co in Cork. He is also a founding member of Janus Theatre Co and graduated from UCC with a masters degree in Drama and Theatre Studies.

The course will concentrate on the needs of our theatre groups in Brussels in terms of designing for a limited space, such as the Studio, and creating sets that can easily be transported to other theatres and theatre festivals.

If you've always fancied a go at designing for the stage, or even if you have some experience but would like to take your skills to the next level this is the opportunity for you.

The two-day course will cost



Olan Wrynn's set for Graffiti Theatre Co's *The Snow Queen*

60 euros (50 euros for ECC members). If you would like more details or to sign up for the workshop, contact Conrad Toft at conradtoft@gmail.com. Please hurry though as spaces are strictly limited.

Auditions for The Red Death

The English Comedy club is pleased to announce auditions for its entry to the 2010 Festival of European Anglophone Theatrical Societies competition.

The production will be an original adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Masque of the Red Death*, directed by Steve Challens.

It will be performed both in

Brussels and at the festival in Bad Homburg near Frankfurt this coming May.

The auditions will be held this coming Sunday, 17 January, between 1pm and 3 pm at The Warehouse Studio complex, Rue Waelhem 73, 1030 Schaerbeek.

The auditions will be held in the Bar room, simply ring the doorbell by the right of the

main gates, then go through the door in the left-hand corner of the courtyard and up the stairs.

For more information please come along or contact the director, Steve Challens, at stephenchallens@gmail.com.

Three Tall Actresses

In 2005 Edward Albee was inducted into America's Academy of Achievement ("Living Museum") as "America's Greatest Living Playwright". His early plays, in the late 1950s/early 60s, won him a reputation as an observer of life. His most famous play is perhaps *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, which was controversially denied the Pulitzer Prize in 1962, a prize he received for three subsequent plays, including *Three Tall Women* (1994). That his plays are being restaged and remain relevant today, is a testimony to his portrayal of human issues.

Three Tall Women looks at so many life-themes that it is almost Shakespearean, and indeed Lenny Henry's almost static Othello recently gave me confidence an almost immobile central character can work when the text and acting is good. Writing the flyer and publicity material for *Three Tall Women* has been a time-consuming and fascinating exercise. I always thought I was pretty deft at summarising: it just shows that you don't know yourself as well as you think you do, and this in fact is one of the many themes of this fascinating play. All I found I could say in summary was, this play is about life. And death. And just about everything else in between.

Lyn Wainwright

When I moved to Brussels thirty-eight years ago and began my long connection with the English Comedy Club, I had no idea that I would one day play the part of a woman in her nineties. I would not have believed that I could identify with such an old character who struggles with encroaching senility. I would not have believed that I could become that person but then that is what this play is all about; the human ageing process. There have, of course, been many roles and many productions in between which have brought me to this point and I will have to draw on all that experience to do justice to this woman who is strong but tragic, sad but witty but always determined to tell us her story.

Over the years I have played Principal Boy in pantomime, I've sung in Gilbert and Sullivan, I've played a dotty tour guide, a stage manager,

a drunk aristocrat and a betrayed wife and mother but I have the feeling that this will be my most demanding role yet. I am both excited and nervous at the prospect!

Rachel Cuff

Finally, a play where being 5'10" is an advantage! This may have been the first audition of my life where I didn't slouch...

I have worked with Janet onstage in previous productions, and it is a pleasure to be directed by her. And not only for the vast array of biscuits and tea that accompany each rehearsal. Delightful as it is, I should probably calm down, or you'll be coming to see *Two Tall Women* and *One Spherical Woman*.

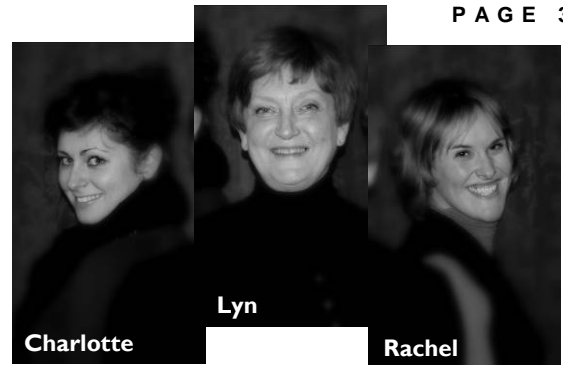
The first play I did in Brussels was *The Memory of Water*, of which I have incredibly fond memories. Like *Three Tall Women*, it was staged in the Studio and was a play about life. And death. I think the Studio is a venue ideally suited to such intimate plays, and I am very much looking forward to acting in it again.

I liked this play the first time I read it, and am swiftly growing to love it. Although written by a man, it has a great deal to say about the relationships between women and how such relationships shift across generations and with age. Perhaps more importantly, it explores the perceptions that women have of themselves at different stages of their lives. Is there a "best" time of life and, if so, which one is it?

Charlotte Owen

I'm so thrilled that my first play in Brussels has coincided with working alongside such a talented and delightful team of people, on a truly incredible script. I have to admit, I wasn't familiar with *Three Tall Women* before I auditioned for the play, but I have absolutely fallen under its spell. It is a remarkable feat in writing – I'm still discovering something new about the play at each rehearsal – surely a testament to the way in which Albee has packed so much depth into each character.

I regret that I haven't done more acting since



arriving in Brussels in April 2008 to work as a journalist – but this play has certainly put the fire back in my belly to do more!

At Bristol University, as with drama groups before including The Questors, I was heavily active in the theatre world - acting in plays such as Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* as Mephistopheles, Noel Coward's *Hayfever* as Sorel Bliss at the Bristol Old Vic, an open air production of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, and musicals including *Grease* where I played Rizzo.

The director, Janet Middleton

I first saw *Three Tall Women* sitting up in the Gods in London. The play mesmerised me, and I hope that it will have the same effect on our audiences here in Brussels. It is not a zappy zingy sort of play with lots of glitz and clever set. It is a quiet thought-provoking piece with the words and the acting as the focal points. I am truly grateful to the ECC for trusting me with this wonderful play, and to the ATC for their understanding. I am also extremely thankful that I have been fortunate in assembling an absolutely amazing cast, who make me laugh, smile, sniff and think at every rehearsal, and that I have the support of some very talented people behind the scenes. Thank you Malinda, Teresa, Peter, Sue and Roisin for letting *Three Tall Women* be part of your lives too!

Three Tall Women will be performed at The Warehouse Studio theatre from 9-13 March.

Tickets are €14 (€12 for members; groups of 10 or more on Tuesday to Thursday) and can be booked using the [online form](http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com) at ecc.theatreinbrussels.com.

MEMBERSHIP

If you want to renew your membership, or have any questions about the current status of your membership, please contact Rachel Cuff on 0486 10 26 32 or rachel.cuff@blplaw.com.

Next play readings

Please ring ahead on 02 345 8583 (9-10 am or 8-10 pm) so that we can confirm numbers!

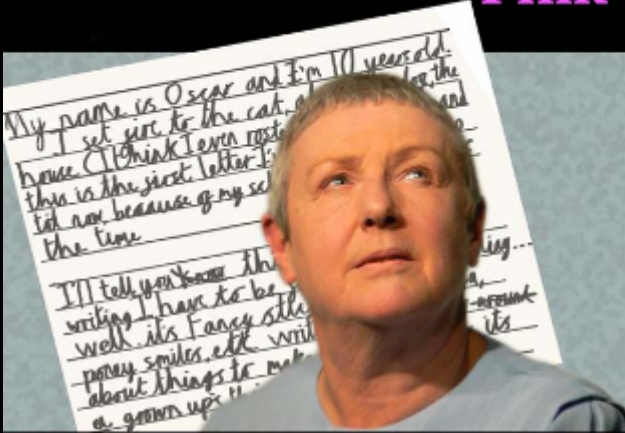
February's play reading will be *The Play's the Thing*, P.G. Wodehouse's adaptation of Ferenc Molnár's comedy *The Play at the Castle* on Wednesday, 3 February at 7.45 pm at Mary Pritchard's house (32 Avenue Bel Air).

March's play reading will be *The Breadwinner* by Somerset Maugham on Wednesday, 3 March at 7.45 pm at Barbara Blackwell's house (20 Rue Louis Hymans).

Forthcoming productions and events

The American Theatre Company presents

Oscar and the Lady in Pink



by **Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt**
directed by **Malinda Coleman**
starring **Ruth England**

Warehouse Studio Theatre 19-23 & 26-30 January 2010

Tickets available from atc.theatreinbrussels.com

Barn Dance

6 February 2010 at 7 pm
at De Kam Cultural Centre,
Beekstraat 172, 1970 Wezembeek
Live music with caller!
Entry: €15 including food
Tel. Jenny 02 653 6590
Email: Christine.royce@telenet.be

The Brussels Shakespeare Society presents

9 - 13 FEBRUARY 2010



Jonathon Sawdon, best known for his BSS performances as *Hamlet* and *Henry V*, directs this play, which he describes as being about "Corruption, money, sex! Deception, greed, gluttony, money, sex! Cruelty, infidelity, betrayal, money, sex! Repentance, marriage, money and er...sex!"

This Jacobean satire audaciously intertwines ribaldry and profanity to leave you laughing and squirming in equal measure.

Tickets: bss.theatreinbrussels.com 0475 592 703

WORKSHOP

with **Andrew Visnevski**
RADA MA Associate Director

30 & 31 January 2010

The Brussels Shakespeare Society is pleased to announce that Andrew Visnevski, the Associate Director of the RADA MA as well as Associate Teacher at RADA (Royal Academy of Music and dramatic Art) will return to Brussels to run a workshop on Middleton and Shakespeare. Andrew's experience and enthusiasm ensure a valuable and enjoyable experience in stage craft, indeed his aim is to promote the work of new people in theatre which he does through his Theatre Alive! Organisation.

Places will be limited.

Venue: SCARABAEUS - ESPACE THEATRAL, 19-27 rue Creuse, B-1030.

The total cost for the weekend will be €65 for BSS members and €75 for non-members - the BSS will also offer a reduced rate of €45 for students wishing to attend.

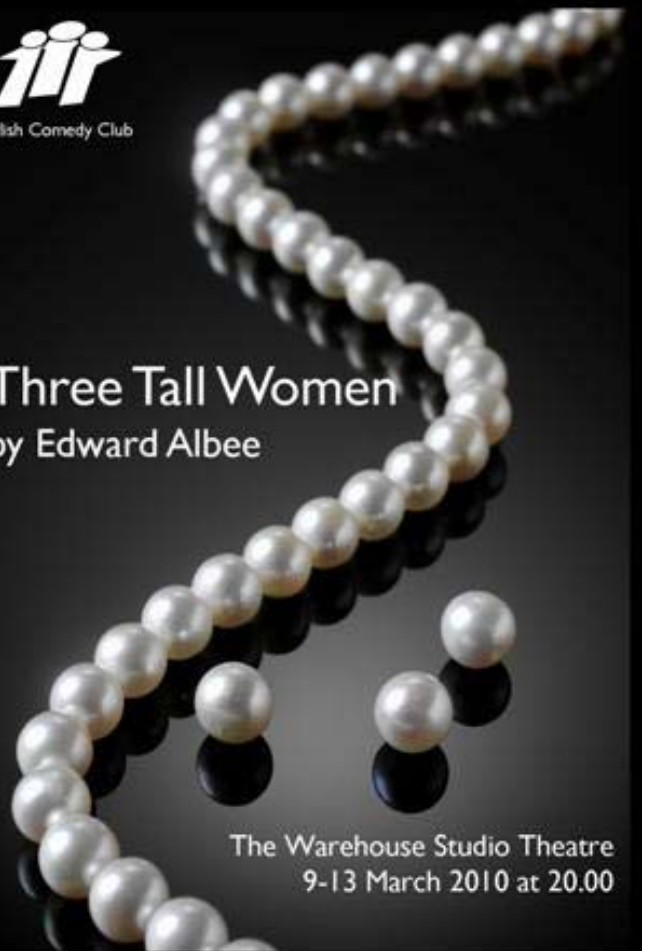
For details and reservations please contact Tracie Ryan at tracie.ryan@gmail.com or on 0474/034435.



English Comedy Club

Three Tall Women

by Edward Albee



The Warehouse Studio Theatre
9-13 March 2010 at 20.00