

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 September 2010.

ECCO

May 2010



FEATS 2010: Bad Homburg

Steve Challens reports from FEATS 2010.

On the first night we were treated to a David Tristram, Bertold Brecht and Peter Shaffer plays.

The first was a David Tristram play about an actress chasing the best actress award at a one-act play festival. The part of the adjudicator was played well, many recognised old and new adjudicators in his performance. Sharper cuts would have made the script sharper funnier and blacker.

They were followed by Entity Munich with a Bertolt Brecht play about three characters stuck without water in a desert, ending in an unnecessary, capitalist murder. Many of the Brecht rules were obeyed with projection used, chorus music breaking up the action along with a narrative showing the characters progress through the story. The play could have been lifted from the page better, to be made more relevant to today's audience. This said, it was good to see old Bertolt done at a festival - especially one in Germany.

Finally we had *White Liars* by Peter Shaffer, a tale of a fortune teller and two guys all bluffing, fibbing and lying to get what they want. The play touched on homosexuality which for the time was shocking but lacked power today. It was performed as a comedy where the adjudicator quite rightly noted the interaction between the two men should have been more realistic, harder and grittier.



Three very different plays, three very different styles, three different experiences which is after all what FEATS is all about.

Day Two! After brain-stretching tech rehearsal with a basic lighting rig pushed to its very limits, I was not perhaps well disposed to being a very good audience member...

BATS broke my negative mind set with *Oh my God*, a play about God visiting a Nunnery. I loved the setting, I thought as an original script having a stab at *Sister Act*, the performances were strong, writing humorous and the idea well rounded as a package. It was fun to watch and I believe a worthy winner of the best original script award. With gay vicars, naughty nuns and silly deaths, BATS also deservedly won the discretionary award.

The second play of the evening was *Home Life* by Edward Albee, the prequel to *Zoo Story*. This is a strong play with strong dialogue, but from the very first line the delivery was wrong. There was virtually no blocking and the tale dragged on. Perhaps this was my nerves waiting for the ECC to go on next.

So, *The Red Death* penned and directed by myself (making me a poor judge). What can I say? Excellent cast, excellent crew dealing with a difficult plot. Even interruptions from drunken jobs from the wine festival outside couldn't stop the ECC trying to achieve Steve Challens 'Theatre of the Impossible' and very nearly pulling it off!

Let's move away from us and onto the third night - with *Jolly* by NWTC Luxembourg. Great Music, Great opening Tableau, good performances, slick bar two unnecessary blackouts, a fast pace and heavy Mamet writing. However, as the middle play from a Trilogy, its power was completely lost on me.

The ITG brought a play by Conor McPherson. For my money the best play of the weekend. Strong performances from Brian and Alma, directed by Colum Hatchell, in a two-hander where both have bags over their heads throughout the play. The language was stunning, all movement was considered, the story powerful and strong. The staging was excellent. The ideas well conceived and a product that delivered excellence. The ITG truly made my FEATS weekend.

The final play before the party was *Inplayers Amsterdam* with an original script in the style of commedia dell'arte. It is fair to say it split the ECC group down the middle, some loved it, some felt it didn't meet up to the style.

PARTY!!! Erm...yes...as they say if you remember it you weren't there! I remember great food, silly singing, good

Continued bottom of page 2...

THIS ISSUE:

And so another season ends	2
Casting around for help	3
Forthcoming auditions	3
Forthcoming productions	4

And so another season ends

Hard to believe it, but we have reached the end of the season. And what a season it has been – three great shows in Brussels (*Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Three Tall Women*) and wrapping up with 2nd prize at FEATS in Bad Homburg over the Ascension weekend.

Having been in our show, *The Red Death*, it is impossible for me to be objective about it, but I can say how delighted and proud the cast and crew all were to bring home the ECC Centennial Cup.

ECC Committee

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

On the subject of FEATS, I think there were two topics on which the Red Death team were united: first, that we had a great time; and second, that the other entry from Brussels, the Irish Theatre Group's production of Conor McPherson's *Come On Over*, was superb.

Warmest congratulations to the ITG cast and crew for bringing such a thought-provoking and gripping piece of theatre to a (heartily appreciative) FEATS audience.

And with barely a pause to pat ourselves and our fellow Brussels groups on the

back (!) we are into plans for the 2010-11 season.

Auditions will be coming up very soon for our September Studio production of two one-act plays – including one directed by Anna Sparre, in her debut as a director for the ECC.

The December slot sees the welcome return of Diana Morton-Hooper Deeks directing Alan Ayckbourn's *Private Fears in Public Places*, also in the Studio. Discussions are under way for our spring 2011 show, which we hope will be a mainstage production.

And this is just for the ECC - as always, the Brussels am dram calendar is packed. We are lucky enough to have an excellent pool of technicians and backstage crew with a fount of knowledge, but they could definitely use more people with whom to share that expertise... and aside from the technical aspects, tickets, programmes, interval drinks etc. do not sell themselves!

Thank you to everyone who has helped out on a show in the past year, in whatever capacity – we simply cannot do this without you. More than ever, helping hands are very welcome, so even if you have never done anything "behind the scenes" before, do not be shy in volunteering!

Abi Greef, ECC Chair

Continued from page 1:

disco then a blur until finding myself standing in FEATS forum the next day.

The final night started with a De WAANzin play: a stunning stage picture, beautiful side lighting and a strong visual effect that won it the best stage presentation prize. It was a single monologue that just never stopped, but a simple opening and closing of the curtains would have been just as entertaining.

Next was *Our Wedding Day* by CATS. A gentle story with some good performances and a tale neatly told.

The last show was *Shakers* performed by GEDS. Whilst the set was seemingly made for me, I felt there was mime in the wrong places, lack of strong physical pictures. Sadly, the group ran over which cost it points in the final evaluation.

In the end, we go to FEATS, not just for the theatre but for the people we spend time with at the festival. This is why I will continue to return year after year.

To finish with, here are the thoughts I had during the award ceremony.

Discretionary award: a free choice. An adjudicator should pick what she likes and if that's two young gay vicars all power to her and them!

Best stage Presentation: I feel GEDS deserved it more than De WANNzin, but...

Best actress and actor: I still fail to see how these are marked, surely just two more discretionary awards. I did not agree with either choice, which reflects personal taste along with individual performances being rated over group performances.

Best original script: awarded to BATS for all the right reasons.

Seeing all these prizes gone, I thought that was it. It was not to be an ECC night, I had tried and failed.

When GEDS were placed third this confirmed my thinking... but then I was left wondering if I had just stolen the wrong prize in front of a full audience as we came in second.

As excuses rattled through my head I watched Luxembourg win for a second year. It is not the play I thought would win but then these results are the view of one person just as this article is just a review of one person's memories.

See you in Geneva next year!

Casting around for help

CAST needs your help to fill vacancies essential to the running and management of The Warehouse and Studio. CAST (Cooperative Association to Support Theatre) is a not-for-profit association which owns and manages the Warehouse and Studio complex on behalf of the ATC, ECC and ITG.

Caretaking role(s): Sue Botterell is standing down as Warehouse Manager after many years of thankless tasks--thank you Sue for your tireless commitment to English language theatre in Brussels! The CAST Committee has decided that Sue's boots are too big to fill by just one person, so we are breaking her tasks up into more manageable pieces.

A rota is being put together to make sure someone is present at The Warehouse on Friday mornings. Now **we are looking for a volunteer or volunteers** to carry out other tasks, such as coordinating and managing repairs, liaising with the co-propriété of the whole complex, managing annual fire and safety inspections, paying the cleaner, liaising with external groups who hire the space/borrow props, set, costumes, buying supplies (tea, coffee, cleaning products, toilet roll) and replacing things that get broken or lost, and generally taking care of the place.



Please contact the Chair of your group if you can help with either of these roles or if you would like to be involved in CAST in any way.

While The Warehouse and Studio complex are always buzzing with people rehearsing and producing great theatre, the resources necessary to make this possible are stretched. The CAST Committee thanks you in advance for your support to keep the Warehouse and Studio complex running smoothly and safely

Next play reading

June's play reading on Wednesday **2 June, 7.45pm** at Mary Pritchard's (Avenue Bel Air 32, Uccle), held in conjunction with the Irish Theatre Group.

The play will be *The Shaughraun*, written by Irish playwright Dion Boucicault. You can find out more about the play at [Wikipedia](#).

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

Auditions...

We'll be producing two one-act plays, *Savage/Love* by Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaikin (directed by Anna Sparre) and *The Dumb Waiter* by Harold Pinter (directed by Steve Challens).

These two one-act plays will be performed in September here both at the Warehouse Studio Theatre, Brussels and at The Place, Bedford as part of our collaboration with The Swan Theatre Company.

If you're quick you can go along to the auditions for our September productions on Tuesday, 1 June and Wednesday, 2 June at 7.30pm at The Warehouse Studio Theatre rehearsal rooms, Rue Waelhem 73, 1030 Brussels.

For more information or for alternative audition dates contact the directors, Steve Challens (stephenchallens@gmail.com) or Anna Sparre (annamariasparre@gmail.com).



Cymdeithas Gymreig
The Brussels Welsh Society
in association with the
Irish Theatre Group
 Present
Under Milk Wood
by
Dylan Thomas
Directed by Paul Gray
 June 2, 3, 4 and 5
 8:00 p.m. at the
 Studio Theatre 73 rue Waelhem,
 Schaerbeek B-1030

Tickets €12 (€10 for Welsh Society or ITG Members and for groups of 10 or more on 2 & 3 June).
Book online at milkwood.brussels@gmail.com
By phone 02 375 1432 or (9am-6pm) 02 771 6706

Prepaid tickets will be held at the box office.
 The Studio Theatre has limited accommodation and we reserve the right to sell any non-prepaid seats 15 minutes before the performance.

Brussels Shakespeare Society

William Shakespeare's
A Midsummer Night's Dream
 directed by Deborah Griffith

TICKETS
 EUR 12 - REGULAR
 EUR 10 - BSS MEMBERS
 GROUPS 10+ UNDER 18
 FREE UNDER 10

INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS
WWW.SHAKSOC.COM
 OR CALL 0475 59 27 03

CORROY-LE-CHATEAU (NEAR SEMBLONN)
 JUNE 2010 - 18TH AT 20:00
 19TH AT 15:00 AND 20:00
 20TH AT 18:00

THERE IS WET WEATHER PROVISION - THE SHOW WILL GO ON / BRING A RUG OR BLANKET TO SIT ON, AND APPROPRIATE CLOTHING DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER / PARKING, FOOD AND BAR AVAILABLE / NO DOGS ALLOWED IN THE CASTLE GROUNDS

The ITG, together with the Irish Club of Brussels presents *Bloomsnight*, an evening of drama and poetry in celebration of James Joyce, on 12 June. Tickets are €20 (including supper) and it starts at 19.30.

FULLY BOOKED

The **Brussels Bookswappers Club** will be hosting its monthly meetings at a new venue, a new time and under new 'management'!! From now on the BBC will be meeting on the 4th Wednesday of every month at a friendly café/restaurant «Les Enfants Terribles» in Boitsfort (near the ISB) from 19.30h-21.30h.

The M - Museum Leuven is holding an exhibition of works by the British artist *Angus Fairhurst* from 21 May to 12 September. The exhibition comes from the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol. Address: L Vanderkelenstraat 28, 3000 Leuven. More info from www.mleuven.be or tel. 016 27 29 29 and <http://www.arnolfini.org.uk/whatson/exhibitions/details/189>

OTCaters salt presenta (premiere)
Llama un inspector
 Autor: J.B. Priestley
 Director: José Bonnete

do Inspector calls by J.B. Priestley
 (played in Spanish with English subtitles)

del 15 al 19 de junio de 2010
 hora: 20:00 horas

Lugar: The Warehouse Studio Theatre,
 Rue Waelhem 67 & 1030 Schaerbeek - Bruselas

Reservas (reservations)
 Tel: 0475 64 16 66
ticketstheater@gmail.com
 Más información: www.warehousetheatreleuven.eu