

English Comedy Club, Brussels

ECCO

November 2009

100

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 January 2010.

"A hungry dog believes in nothing but meat."

ANTON CHEKHOV,
The Cherry Orchard

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Annual General Meeting 2

ECC Board 2009-10 2

Set-building Workshop 2

In memoriam: Angela Dodds 2

Fear, Fun & Frolics 3

Friday night fever 3

Planning Meeting 3

December Play Reading 3

Membership Renewal 4

Forthcoming productions 4

Malinda Coleman is directing a host of ECC regulars, plus a handful of talented newcomers, in this Chekhov classic at Petit Théâtre Mercelis.

The story follows Lyuba Ranevskaya, who returns after five years in Paris to her family estate in the Russian countryside, where financial straits are leading inexorably to the sale of its famous cherry orchard.

Chekhov's last play, comic, ironic and melancholic by turns, presents a group of characters struggling in different ways to rise to the challenges of changing times. Despite its Russian setting, this play may have something to say to us all.

Despite Chekhov's reputation as the author of gloomy plays, he regarded *The Cherry Orchard* as a comedy, and indeed, in rehearsal we have found it to be full of laughs.

Before each performance of *The Cherry Orchard*, there will be a chance to have a Russian platter, a selection of Russian-style light-bites to get you fully in the mood for your Russian-themed evening.

The platters will be served from 45 minutes before each performance and are available in both meat and vegetarian versions.

Come and enjoy with us this marvelous 20th century theatrical classic, which we are delighted to be presenting at the Petit Theatre Mercelis in Ixelles, a new venue for the amateur theatre world.

If you want to see Chekhov's classic *The Cherry Orchard*, then you need you book soon. Three performances are almost completely sold out and we expect that the remaining tickets will not last long.

The theatre is located at rue Mercelis 13, 1040 Brussels. Full details of public transport links and nearby parking will be sent by email when tickets are booked.



Tickets are €16 (€13 members; groups of 10 or more Tuesday – Thursday). You can also order Russian platters for €10 (before 1 December — see below).

Bookings can be made online at <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com>.

Rush in for your Russian!

However, the platters must be ordered in advance and the closing date for the orders is 1 December, so if you want a Russian platter with your tickets then you'll have to book them now!

If you have already booked your tickets, you can still book the Russian platters online using the [ticket booking form](#), just put a note in the comments



box to save that you have already booked.

ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Annual General Meeting

ECC Board 2009-10

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 ECC AGM took place on 19 October at the Warehouse and I would like to express my personal thanks to those brave people who made it through the unpleasant weather that evening to join us!

The Committee for this year was elected unanimously at the AGM.

I am particularly pleased to welcome our newcomers to the Committee — Martin and Mark; they are both extremely valuable additions to the team.

I would also like to express

my deep thanks to Jo Jack, our outgoing Treasurer, for her three great years in that important role, and to Harriet Mancey-Barrett, our ever-cheerful ECCO & Publicity person and all-round "doer of things", who has left Brussels for the bright lights of London. And my thanks to everyone else for staying on for another year!

Speaking of the finances, we were unable to bring you the Treasurer's report at the AGM itself - unfortunately there is not much an am dram club can do when your

Treasurer suddenly gets called into a big work meeting until late evening on the day of the AGM... I promised to share a summary of the highlights, and this will be published in the next ECCO.

Any member who would like to receive the information that you would have received at the AGM is welcome to contact me via the [ECCO Editor address](#) and I will send it through (although you might have to wait until after *The Cherry Orchard* for a reply...!).

Abi Greef, Chair

Set-building Workshop

The English Comedy Club is organising a set-building workshop for the weekend of 12-13 December.

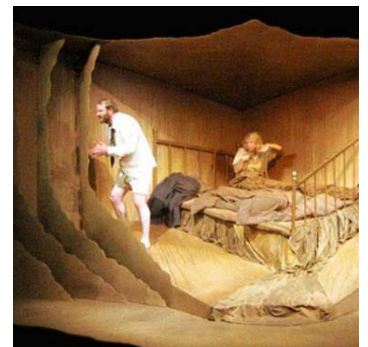
Professional set designer and set builder, Olan Wrynn, will lead participants in both theoretical and practical sessions.

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 60 euros (50 euros for ECC members). If you would like more details or to sign up for the workshop, contact



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

Conrad Toft at conrad-toft@gmail.com. Please hurry though as spaces are strictly limited.

In memoriam: Angela Dodds



By now most of you will have heard the sad news that Angela Dodds, known to many of us as one of the stalwarts of the FEATS community, died on Sunday 15 November.

Following initial treatment for cancer, in June and July Angela's health had seemed to be improving. However,

towards the end of the summer, the cancer had spread to her shoulders and spine and she was in and out of hospital several times.

It was Angela's wish that friends were not informed of her deteriorating health.

Her funeral service took place at St Boniface Church, Antwerp on Tuesday 24

November.

Donations in Angela's memory are welcome to either the Missions to Seafarers (IBAN BE09 3200 0821 4657, BIC BRUBEBB) or Medecins sans Frontieres (details for donations can be found on www.msf.org.uk or www.msf-azg.be).

Spring production: Three Tall Women

The ECC's first production of 2010 will be Edward Albee's *Three Tall Women*, performed from 9 to 13 March 2010 at The Warehouse Studio Theatre.

Director, Janet Middleton says "it has to be said that to start working on my first full production in the role of director whilst producing *The Cherry Orchard* and a family Christmas is probably veering towards insanity. But I LOVE this play, and the opportunity to direct it was too good to let it pass by".

Janet particularly likes Albee's sense of humour, which she describes as dark and dry.

It is generally accepted that Albee wrote *Three Tall Women* as a therapeutic way of dealing with his

unhappy relationship with his step-mother who could not accept his homosexuality, and there are clear references to his life in this play: but there is far more than autobiography to this play.

In 1994 *Three Tall Women* won Edward Albee his third Pulitzer Prize for Drama, some years after he had been written off as creatively 'dried up': it was quite a come-back!

The play is a black comedy about any(wo)man: who we are, why we are, how we are. It looks at life with a 360-degree view. It is about living life and the inevitability of death.

Three women, one of them slightly demented, squabble with each other over unpaid bills, grammar, diction, the day of the week

and incontinence. An old lady reminisces about horses and the unhappiness of her sex life. Where on earth is this play going?

It is going towards the inevitable, and on the way it will address how we live, how we perceive ourselves, how we perceive others, how we change, what we hope for and how we cope with what we get. How do we become what we are? Were we really what we thought we were? Did others see us as we thought they did? Who do we love? How do we love? Why do we love? And can we forgive?

Oh! The number of questions Albee asks during the course of this play!

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

FEATS Fear, Fun & Frolics on Fridays

The English Comedy Club is looking ahead to FEATS 2010. Director Steve Challens has already organized several workshops on his play loosely based on *The Masque of the Red Death* by Edgar Allan Poe.

The workshops take place at Nekkersdaal Cultural Centre in Laeken on Friday evenings (but

not for the next couple of weeks as Steve is in *The Cherry Orchard*).

Auditions for Steve's show will be held in January, but if you want to get a sneak preview of this multimedia extravaganza then contact Steve at

stephenchallens@gmail.com.



2010-11 Planning Meeting

It will soon be time for our traditional annual meeting to gather ideas and proposals for next season's shows. 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!).

The date has not yet been fixed, but is likely to be the evening of either Monday 18, Tuesday 19, Sunday 24 or Monday 25 January.

More details in the next ECCO.

Play readings

December's play festive reading will be excerpts from *Blackadder* accompanied by mulled wine and mince pies on Wednesday, 16 December at 7.45 pm at Mary Pritchard's house (32 Avenue Bel Air) – please ring ahead on 02 345 8583 (9-10 am or 8-10 pm) to confirm numbers.

January's play reading will be on Wednesday, 6 January at 7.45 pm at Barbara Blackwell's house (20 Rue Louis Hymans) – please ring ahead on 02 345 8583 (9-10 am or 8-10 pm) to confirm numbers. The play has still not been decided.

Time for membership renewal

"I don't care to belong to a club that accepts people like me as members."

GROUCHO MARX

For those of you who have not yet renewed your subscription (which ran out at the end of September), there is still time to dip your hand in your wallet. And if you've already renewed your membership, then what better present for your Great Aunt Agatha in Australia than a sparkling new ECC Membership—a unique gift!

We would like to remind you that membership not only contributes to supporting the ECC, but also give you benefits such as reductions on ticket prices, monthly play readings and other events.

Membership remains at the rate of €10 per year, and only €5 for

students, stagiaires and under-18s, with the membership year running from 1 October to 30 September.

We would be very grateful if all new and continuing members could fill in a copy of the membership form, in order to ensure that our contact details remain current.

If you have any queries regarding membership, please do not hesitate to contact our membership secretary, Rachel Cuff, on Rachel.cuff@bplaw.com or 0486 102 632. You can post your membership forms [by email](#) or by post to Rachel Cuff, Rue Lesbroussart 110, 1050 Brussels.

Membership dues can be paid by bank transfer to our account: 310-0627727-29. Please don't forget to put your name in the communication.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: (street & no.) _____

(commune) _____

Mobile phone (GSM): _____

Tel (daytime/office): _____

Tel (evenings): _____

E-mail: _____

I am a new member

I am renewing my membership

I am interested in (PLEASE TICK):

ACTING DIRECTING

PRODUCING RUNNING PLAYREADINGS

BOX OFFICE TAKING BOOKINGS

ATTENDING PLAYREADINGS

COSTUMES PROPERTIES

STAGE MANAGEMENT SET BUILDING

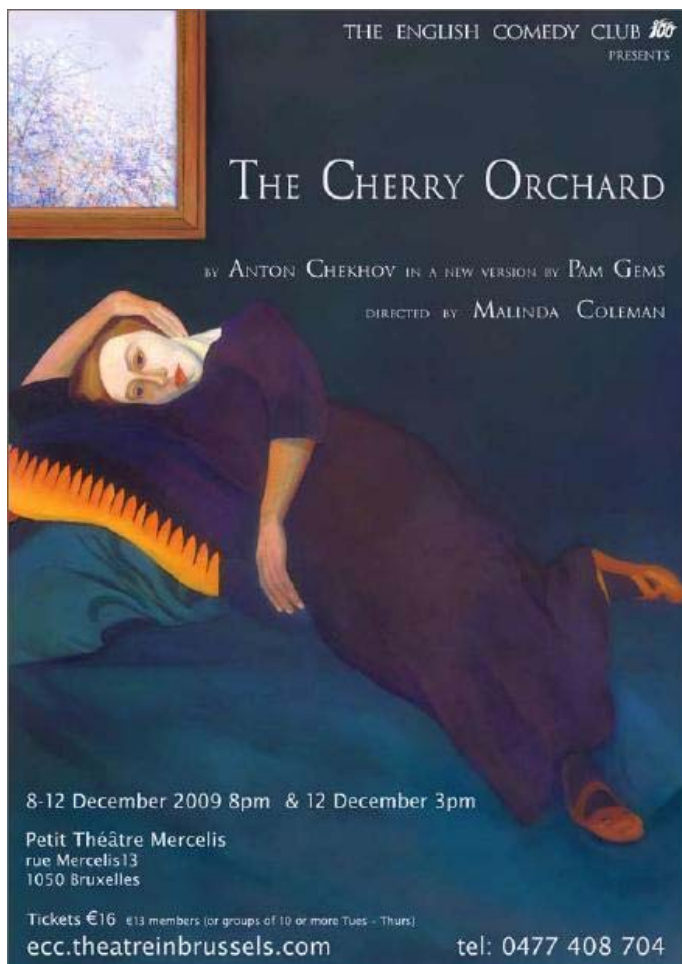
PAINTING LIGHTING

SOUND PUBLICITY

MAKEUP HAIR

FRONT OF HOUSE OTHER _____

Forthcoming productions



THE ENGLISH COMEDY CLUB 100 PRESENTS

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

BY ANTON CHEKHOV IN A NEW VERSION BY PAM GEMS
DIRECTED BY MALINDA COLEMAN

8-12 December 2009 8pm & 12 December 3pm

Petit Théâtre Mercelis
rue Mercelis 13
1050 Bruxelles

Tickets €16 €13 members (or groups of 10 or more Tues - Thurs)

ecc.theatreinbrussels.com tel: 0477 408 704

The American Theatre Company presents

Oscar and the Lady in Pink

by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt

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

Oscar is 10 years old, has leukemia, and lives in a hospital. "Pink Lady" Granny Rose, former lady wrestler and hospital volunteer, becomes Oscar's friend. *Oscar and the Lady in Pink* follows their friendship, including Granny Rose's wrestling reminiscences and her advice to Oscar about his relations with hospital friends and his parents. Poignant and funny, this long monologue is a tour de force challenge for Ruth England.

Tickets available soon from atc.theatreinbrussels.com

The Brussels Shakespeare Society presents

A Chaste Maid from Cheapside

by Thomas Middleton

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! Penitance, 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