



If you have any suggestions or comments for ECCO, then please send them to Janet at ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com.

The next ECCO will come out in November 2011

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Letter from the Chair:

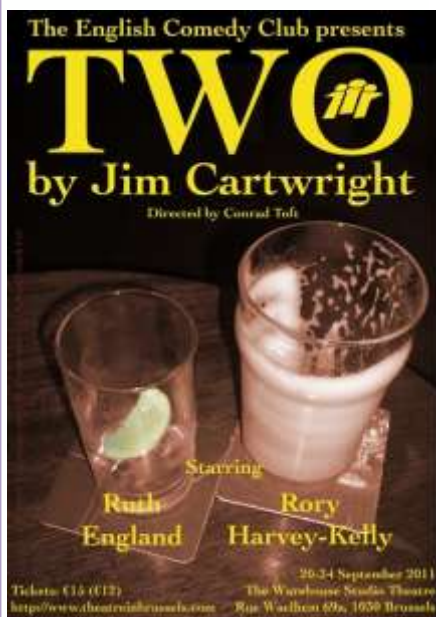
Welcome back to Brussels and the start of the 2011-12 anglophone am dram season. The ECC opens the season with "Two" - involving a talented and experienced cast and crew, the show promises to be an absolute cracker, and I am looking forward to it immensely! We are also finalising plans for a December production featuring the work of some of our many talented local playwrights - read more below.

This is my last report as Chair - I have served the maximum 3-year term and will step down from the Committee at our AGM on 26 October. It has been a privilege to be involved in the English Comedy Club over the past several years. Whatever time and energy I have spent on the role of Chair is scant payment for what the ECC has provided to me - a creative outlet that was always a welcome change from "the day job"; the chance to learn from some highly talented directors, actors and the (mostly unsung) heroes that are the crew; and - above all - some precious friendships that I know will be life-long. I would also like to pay a public and effusive tribute to my fellow Committee members - they are a great group of people and I have been very fortunate to work with them.

I hope to see members old and new at the AGM to celebrate the ECC, and to welcome the new Chair on board. And for anyone interested in standing for Committee next year and helping with the running of the ECC, I can only say - DO IT!

Abigail Greef

chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com



TWO 20-24 September 2011

The Warehouse Studio Theatre

Rehearsals are coming to a close for *Two* and all is well. Ruth (England) and Rory (Harvey-Kelly) have both managed to master their seven roles each in Jim Cartwright's masterpiece slice of Northern life and are ready to present it to the audiences in Brussels (20-24 September) and in Bedford (30 September - 1 October). The play is being directed by Conrad Toft, with Sue Botterell as stage manager, lighting from Carsten Koester and costumes by Iona Hamilton.

The process has been a hard slog at times, as Rory says, "the rehearsals have felt like an extended workshop. I appreciate the intense focus that is possible for two actors plus director to achieve". They have been working through the summer on the production. Rory notes that "it has been great to have almost all rehearsals in the Studio. Developing an intimate knowledge of the theatre has been beneficial to exploit the required choreography to the maximum." And choreography is the word - the two actors have to keep the action going on- and off-stage, while changing their costumes and personalities in the wings.

For those of you who have seen Ruth in any of her many previous roles, you will know that she is an actress with boundless energy and a huge amount of talent and experience. Even she has found the rehearsal process daunting: "This is one of the most challenging roles I have ever undertaken, as the choreography of movement is paramount. We are fortunate to have a director who knows what he wants and has the ability to demonstrate his vision to us. *Two* is a terrific play and rehearsals are really enjoyable although, frankly, exhausting."

Do come along and see the play - it promises to be an energetic, entertaining and thought-provoking evening. Tickets are available from <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com>, €15 (€12 for members and groups of 10 or more, Tuesday to Thursday). See Page 4

THE BUTT AWARDS 2011

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners!

The ECC is delighted for the *Private Fears in Public Places* team which won an armful of well deserved awards:

Diana Morton-Hooper-Deeks for her Direction

Carsten Koester for sound

Carsten Koester & Roisin Dore for lighting

Andrea Theinert for props

Liam O'Luanaigh, Peter Mountain, Philip Deeks, Philip Deeks and team for set

And "The Sexy Moment" won the Audience prize

We were also extremely pleased to see the Golden Butt go to Di and Paul Grey – a wonderful end to, and recognition of, many years dedicated to amateur theatre in Brussels.

And THANK YOU to everyone who worked so hard to make it another lovely occasion!



The 2011-12 BUTT Awards ceremony will be on 7 July 2012 - save the date in your diaries now!

The results from this year's awards are listed on the [TheatreInBrussels](#) website.

Auditions at the Warehouse for

SEPARATE TABLES

By Terrence Rattigan

Directed for the ECC by Diana Morton-Hooper

Stage Managed by Sue Botterell

on Sunday 25 September at 15h

on Monday 26 September at 19h and

on Wednesday 28 September 19h – 21h

A detailed study in lies, class judgments and repressed passions, *Separate Tables* by Terrence Rattigan consists of two connecting plays. Set in a private hotel in mid-1950s Bournemouth, it explores the seedy gentility of the long-term guests who live by the strict social rules of a bygone era, obliged to take meals at individual tables, symbolizing the isolation of each. In the first play, a down-at-heel journalist is confronted by his ex-wife, who once provoked him to a violent act that sent him to prison and ruined him. In the second play a bogus army Major and dowdy neurotic girl with a ruthless domineering mother are drawn to each other, even when scandal breaks. In both plays the hotel manager acts as the catalyst to resolve the issues.

The production will take place in the Warehouse Studio Theatre 28 Feb – 10 March 2012 and will run for 10 performances. Scripts will be distributed before Christmas and rehearsals will be an intensive 4 times a week starting mid January. There are roles for 8 women, 4 men. The production is also looking for backstage help.

| In both plays | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Mrs. Railton-Bell | Manipulative, well dressed dominating snob. |
| Lady Gladys Matheson | Sweet, inoffensive, level headed but manipulated by Mrs.Railton-Bell.. |
| Miss Meacham | Loner with a passion for horse racing. Of an age with Mrs. R-B and Lady M. |
| Miss Pat Cooper | Strong, no nonsense character who runs the hotel, and loves John Malcolm. |
| Miss Jean Tanner/Mrs. Stratton | Trendy unconventional, young woman. |
| Charles Stratton | Young, trendy. Training to be a surgeon. |
| Mr. Fowler | Ex public school teacher |
| Mabel and Doreen | Waitresses |
| In first play | |
| Mrs Anne Shankland | Vain, spoilt, elegant ex Mayfair fashion model once married to John Malcolm. |
| Mr John Malcolm | Northern hard drinking journalist , ex docker, ex politician |
| In second play | |
| Major Pollock | Troubled soul hiding behind fake army title. |
| Sybil Railton-Bell | Timid, mousy, plain, scared of everyone, ruled by dominant mother |

For further information please call

Diana on 0476 689425 or Sue on 0499 250708 as of 1st Sept.

Or e mail Diana on dianamhdeeks@yahoo.com any time

TWO



A little preview ...

The ECC and Rattigan - A small correction

Barbara Blackwell writes:
"Thank you for the ECCO ... May I put the record straight? Blackie was the lead in the first ECC post-war play in May 1948, two weeks before our wedding, so I was into the Club's activities very early on!! The play was Rattigan's "While the Sun Shines" which was quite appropriate at the time ... it would be fun to read [Rattigan] in this 100th year."

On Friday 3 June, *Le Soir* published an article about 'Am Dram' in Brussels ...

Here is a (non-professional) translation:

In Brussels close to a dozen amateur theatre groups perform pieces in English, but also in Spanish, Hungarian or in Swedish, and sometimes in several languages at the same time. Let's meet them in the wings.

The English Comedy Club may be the oldest British (amateur theatre) company on the continent. "It was founded more than 100 years ago, and has never stopped performing, except during the Second World War" explained Rachel Cuff, member of the ECC Committee – a voluntary group as is the norm in the amateur theatre world. Lawyer by day, specialising in competition law, actress by night, Rachel has lived in Brussels for 9 years. "I did not expect to find a theatrical life here of such intensity, so international and energetic. When you rehearse 3 or 4 times a week with the same people for 2 months, you end up making new friends. Like a lot of expatriates, I have found a family in the theatre.

Following the example of other companies such as The Brussels Shakespeare Society, The Irish Theatre Group or The American Theatre Company, The ECC produces 3 or 4 productions each year. Its members – actors, set builders, technicians – are aged between 20 and 70 years old. They work for the European organisations, are language teachers, accountants and IT workers. "The public is two-thirds anglophone, but many nationalities work on our productions. And we would like to attract more Belgians", said Rachel.

The English company (sic) has its own premises at 69A rue Waelhem, in Schaerbeek, which is close to place Verboekhoven at chaussée de Helmet. In 1994 the ECC, together with the ATC and ITG purchased an old industrial building. With a clubroom, two rehearsal rooms, storage space and, above all, a theatre seating 65, today the Warehouse Studio Theatre swarms with activities.

"The small size of the Studio often allows more intensive theatrical experiences" notes Noel Griffin, who works with the ITG. Originally from Belfast, Noel came to Brussels to work for the Northern Ireland authorities. "I had a taste of the theatre as an adolescent, but it is here that I refound it following an advertisement for an audition. I won a small role, then another and I now perform in 3 pieces a year. The diary of Anglophone theatrical events is so full that it is difficult to follow everything".

A mixture of experienced and new actors

Founded in 1982, the ITG offers classical and modern Irish theatre. Here, like elsewhere, directors and actors mix together during projects and auditions. "But we always try to have a mixture of experienced and new actors" emphasises Noel.

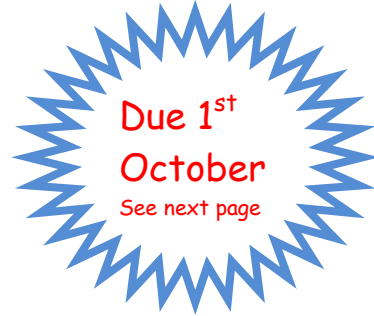
If the Anglophones seem to dominate the expatriate theatrical world, more recent initiatives have come from the Hungarian and Greek communities. The company Teatro.be, which took over from Atanino in 2005, alternates classical and contemporary works from the Hispanic repertoire, with a conspicuous taste for Federico García Lorca. It performs in L'Espace Scarabeus, rue Creuse in Schaerbeek. "The majority of actors and technicians come from Spain or Latin America, but it suffices to speak the language to join us. The public is like elsewhere extremely mixed" say Ester Poso Vera and Carmen Falkenberg Ambrosio.

Still very young, the company ETCetera plays on its part the multilinguistic card. Its recent *Hamlet Unplugged* alternated monologues in English, French, German, Spanish and Swedish ... all with surtitles. "The objective is to bring people to performances in a language other than their own" explained Peter Willis. The company notably organises evenings during which three one-act plays are performed, each in a different language and always with surtitles. "Our public is actually mostly Hispanic and Francophone, but little by little we are attracting the new communities, notably from Central Europe" he continued.

All the companies agree: all willing volunteers are very welcome, whether on the stage or to offer help back stage. It's not a bad way to practice a different language is it?



English Comedy Club membership address and telephone number update



You can pay membership dues* by bank transfer to our account: **310-0627727-29**. Don't forget to put your name in the communication. Then please take a moment to update the form below and send it by:

- Post to: **Rachel Cuff, 110 Rue Lesbroussart, 1050 Brussels**; or
- E-mail to: membership@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com or rachel.cuff@blplaw.com

For the sum of 10 euros a year (5 euros for students, stagiaires and under 18s) you will be entitled to:
 Our regular newsletter, ECCO, with information on forthcoming auditions, shows and other club events
 Reductions on tickets for ECC productions
 Membership of CAST**, giving access to the rehearsal rooms and workshop in the Warehouse complex for ECC, ATC and ITG events
 Participation in monthly play readings and other club events.

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| I am a new member | | I am renewing my membership | |
| Date: | | | |
| Name | | | |
| Address | | (street & no.) | |
| | | (commune) | |
| mobile phone | | | |
| Tel (daytime/office) | | Tel (evenings) | |
| e-mail | | | |

ECCO is distributed by e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail address, tick this box for postal distribution:

| |
|--------------------|
| Hard copy via post |
|--------------------|

I am interested in (PLEASE TICK):

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| ACTING | | DIRECTING | | PRODUCING | |
| RUNNING PLAYREADINGS | | RUNNING BOX OFFICE | | TAKING BOOKINGS | |
| ATTENDING PLAYREADINGS | | COSTUMES | | PROPERTIES | |
| STAGE MANAGEMENT | | SET BUILDING | | PAINTING | |
| LIGHTING | | SOUND | | PUBLICITY | |
| MAKEUP | | HAIR | | FRONT OF HOUSE | |
| OTHER | | | | | |

*Membership runs from October 1 to September 30 each year.

**Cooperative Association to Support Theatre – the ECC, ATC and ITG are members and own the Warehouse complex

VERY IMPORTANT DATE: 26 October – 7.30pm
Warehouse Studio Theatre

ECC AGM

The committee invites all ECC members to join them for a drink and celebration of the past year's achievements – and a look towards the coming seasons.

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: | Janet Middleton |
| Web: | Conrad Toft |
| Without Portfolio: | Iona Hamilton |

Now is also the time to ask yourself – what can you do to help? After 3 years as a wonderful Chair, Abi has to stand down from this role and a replacement is urgently needed. Can you find some extra time to take on this fulfilling role at the hub of the committee?

We also invite members to join us on the committee and to become more active in the decisions and running of the ECC.

If you don't feel committee work is for you at the moment, come along anyway and spend a pleasant evening with friends old and new!

Congratulations to Graham Andrews & Sarah Strange who have been selected as actors to take part in a series of audio plays which will be part of a permanent exhibition at a new Visitors' Centre in Oudenaarde.

Membership Fees Due 1st October!

We would like to remind you that membership not only contributes to supporting the ECC, but also gives 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 the 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 on ecc.theatreinbrussels.com under Membership (OR in this ECCO), 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 membership@ecc.theatreinbrussels.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. **Thank You!**

Costumes

The costumes store at the Warehouse is bursting at the seams and in need of a good clear out, planned for early Autumn (details to follow).

Volunteers to help sort and catalogue the costumes are asked to contact Iona Hamilton

(ionamshamilton@yahoo.co.uk)





Find us on Facebook

You can now visit
the ECC's
Facebook group by
following this link:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/199504640067452/>

The English Comedy Club has taken its first quiet steps in the world of social networking. Join the group to get updates on our activities on a regular basis and well as seeing the other side of the people you might know from on- and off-stage.

Our December Production

Plans have been quietly coming together behind the scenes for a production featuring short plays by local playwrights. *Families Aren't Just For Christmas* will showcase some of the considerable writing talent we have in Brussels. At the time of writing, three contributors are confirmed (and we are gently twisting a couple more!) Look out for more information in the next ECCO.

Congratulations to Sara Murray and her partner Harry on the birth of their son **Sebastian**. Sebastian was born on 10 June in Amsterdam, where Sara now lives.



FORTHCOMING PLAY READINGS

Wednesday 7 September

Round and Round The Garden
By Alan Ayckbourn

Chez Mary Pritchard
32 ave. Bel Air, 1180 Brussels

Wednesday 5 October

Play To Be Confirmed !

Chez Barbara Blackwell
rue Louis Hymans 20, Ixelles 1050

We meet at 7.45 for an 8pm start – contributions to the nibbles and drinks (an important part of the evening) are encouraged!

**Please let Mary know if you are going to come along: 02 345 85 83
(Anytime, but you are most likely to catch Mary between 8-10 or 20-22h)**

We wanted to pass on our thanks to the BUTT voters for awarding us the Golden Butt. We fell over on our backs with surprise - it was much appreciated.
All best wishes,
Paul and Diane



Forthcoming Events... for more see www.theatreinbrussels.com

Swan Theatre Company: *Bonnie & Clyde* - More details to follow soon!

29 & 30 October, The Warehouse Studio Theatre

National Theatre Live: *One Man, Two Guvnors* - 15 September. *The Kitchen* - 6 October. Aat a Kinopolis near you! ([Click here to go to the website](#))

The American Theatre Company: *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams, 18-22 October in the Bozar's Studio Theatre

BLOC: *Hello Dolly*, 24-27 November, Auderghem Cultural Centre

Irish Theatre Group: *The Seafarer*, 15-19 November, The Warehouse Studio Theatre. Conor McPherson's darkly comic Faustian fable finds Sharky Harkin trying to stay sober while tending to his overbearing, recently blind, older brother Richard on Christmas Eve. Two friends and the mysterious Mr. Lockhart join them for a game of poker. Alcohol reopens old wounds and the mysterious stranger reveals himself to be something more. Tickets: www.irishtheatregroup.com

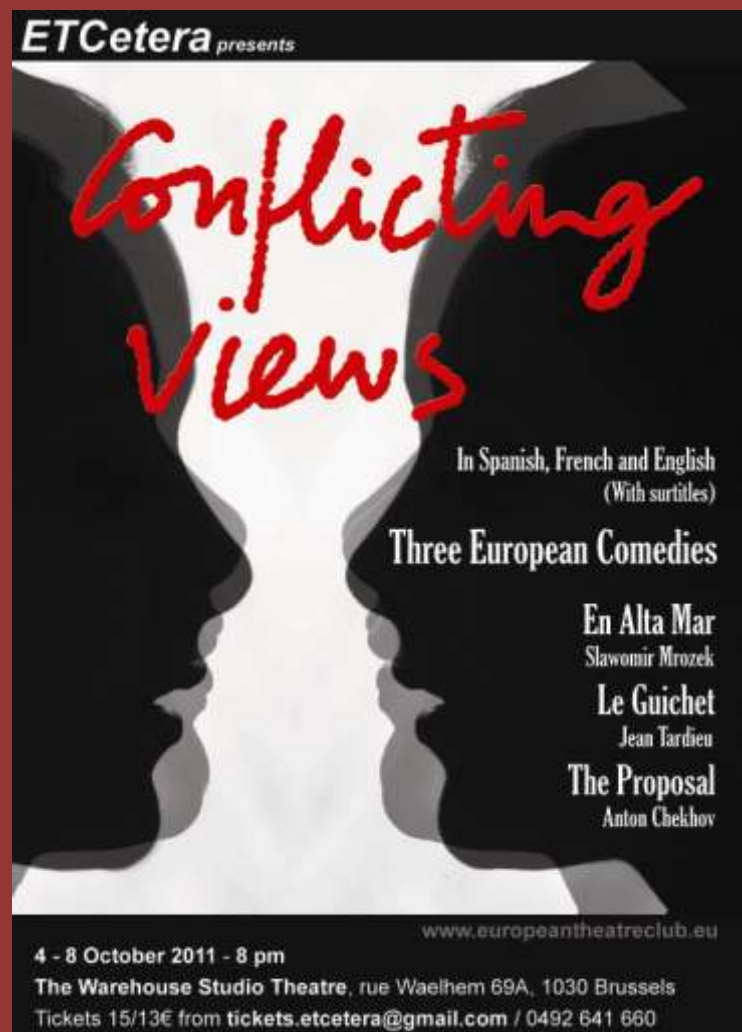
Brussels Shakespeare Society: *The Tempest*, 29 November - 3 December



Don't Forget ...

TWO
20 - 24 September

AGM
26 October



If you hear of any productions coming up in English in Brussels or Belgium, why not share with your ECC friends? Send details to Janet for inclusion in the next ECCO:

ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com