



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 July 2013



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Letter from the Chair

Hello!

Spring seems to have finally arrived, bringing with it optimism, ideas and renewed enthusiasm. In this issue of ECCO, there will be great news concerning our fund raising efforts at *Calendar Girls*, plus Lyn will introduce you to her forthcoming directorial debut, *Copenhagen*.



I would like to bring another subject up: The Warehouse Complex. Over the years these buildings have served our theatre community fantastically well. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to those who had the foresight and courage to buy the place.

Some people now question if we should stay at The Warehouse, or if we should try and find different premises that perhaps better suit our needs now.

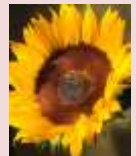
It is with this question in mind, that folk are now starting to visit other buildings, look into the cost of a different place. This may not happen, but, just to let you know, yes the Warehouse is a wonderful gift to us all, but maybe, just maybe, there is something better out there

Sue Botterell
Optimistic ECC Chairman

chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com



THANK YOU To Everyone Who Gave So Generously



As you will be aware, one of the aims of the *Calendar Girls* production was to raise awareness of, and funds for, **Fondation contre le Cancer**.

As the play's director, it is my very happy duty to report the final figures are as follows:

€2 per Ticket from Ticket Sales:	€2,118.00
Bucket Collection:	2,756.76
Additional Contribution by ECC:	<u>2,126.24</u>
Grand Total to FCC:	€7,000.00

I am very grateful to our sponsors, whose funding covered the cost of the posters, flyers and programmes, and thus enabled us to give them away for free; to our lovely audiences for giving so generously into the collection buckets (after having already donated €2 each just by buying a ticket) and to the generosity of cast and crew members who gave their time, enthusiasm and support to this production.

Finally, my sincere thanks to the ECC Committee for deciding to double the amount given from the ticket sales and thus enable us to make such a generous donation to this worthy charity.

Janet Middleton



CALENDAR GIRLS - REVIEW

Sara Hammerton has very kindly reviewed our most recent production:

"The play is MUCH better than the film" claimed Janet Middleton when proposing to direct Calendar Girls. In March we found out why. To begin with, it is definitely funnier. There are lots of brilliant one-liners in the script, such as Celia's "It's not the golf I mind, it's the bags I have to play it with" or Jessie's defiant "I'm off to score some crack", when fed up with being treated as a weak-minded geriatric by a youthful beautician. There were too many more to mention, and the audience lapped them up, laughing every time.

The characterisation is much stronger in the stage version too, and here credit goes to Janet and co. for the casting. The "Calendar Girls" were a very mixed bunch, and the choice of actresses reflected this. Admittedly there were plenty to choose from, because women turned up in their droves for the auditions. Perhaps they would have been less keen had they realised they would be taking their kit off during what was possibly the coldest week of the year.

Iona Hamilton's choice of costumes served to further illustrate their personalities, with the mousey Ruth (Boff Muir) wearing boring beige and grey shapeless clothes, while Celia's (Deborah Griffith) clothes emphasised her assets by dint of being about two sizes too small each time. Chris (Claire Harris, who fitted the part to a T) had a mini halter-neck Christmas outfit that no Santa has ever been seen in, and Marie was always very chic and just a tad too smart for every occasion. Her Barbie-pink sports bag with matching sweatband was a treat. While Clémence Robin's little white number summed up her personality in a glance.

It wasn't all laughs – there were inevitably sad moments too. Roísín Dore as Annie evinced raw emotion during her argument with Chris, crying out that she'd give back all the money raised for just one more hour with John.

All the Calendar Girls played their roles well, as did the comically snobbish Marie (Ailsa Higgins), while Joanna Patrick gave excellent performances in her two cameo roles as boring WI speaker Brenda Hulse and the extremely posh Lady Cavendish. And let's not forget the men. One very memorable moment was provided by Graham Vincent as John Clarke, ill and out of breath in his wheelchair in a very touching and convincing scene. Equally convincing was young Jordan Craig, giving a very mature performance as the photographer Lawrence who battled with nerves before his professional skills took over to photograph women old enough to be his mother (or grandmother...). Philip Rowe hit the right note as Chris's adoring husband Rod, while Craig Simpson was a suitably crass and sleazy TV advertising director.

The key photography scene was a masterpiece of choreography. It was slickly done, with each woman genuinely stripping off while revealing nothing too shocking, thanks to clever timing and of course the props they hid behind. If the actresses were nervous they didn't show it (except when scripted). All of them performed with aplomb, and each "take" was warmly applauded by the audience.

The production was a clear illustration of how much team effort is required to put on a show. Colma O'Lunaigh's aforementioned props were almost a star in their own right. They included, notably, a "MUM" funeral wreath, a giant cake stand for the enormous buns to hide Celia's assets, and the hilarious craft projects by over-eager Ruth, including her model of "West Life" (having misheard the title: "Still Life on the Theme of Autumn").

Most of the play takes place in the town hall – and the entire set had to be prepared in the warehouse then transported to and built onto the stage of the Beaux Arts Studio theatre. Again a reminder of the amount of teamwork involved. Visits to John's hill were achieved quickly and simply by folding the two outside flats – on rollers – inwards to show the hillside painted on the reverse.

And then there was the music. The film doesn't make you want to sing along, but the play certainly does. Anna Holmén, playing Cora, provided the strong lead voice for Jerusalem, often having to sing it solo, but joined in the finale by a very tuneful rendition from all the Calendar Girls. "And did those feet in ancient times...."

Finally, let's not forget that this story is about cancer, and raising money for charity. True to the spirit of the original Calendar Girls, Janet Middleton wanted to raise as much as possible for Fondation contre le Cancer. If anyone wishes to make further donations to this good cause, please go to their website (<http://www.cancer.be/>).

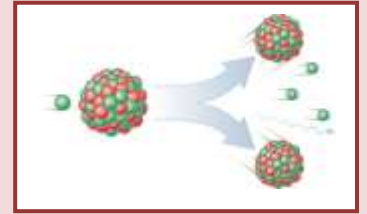


Coming Soon!

COPENHAGEN: 8-12 October, The Warehouse Studio Theatre

Director Lyn Wainwright says: We have a cast!

The auditions were well attended and the only problem was in making a choice as the play could have been well cast several times over.



Thank you all for coming and congratulations to David Steen, Chris Jones and Anna Holmén.

This month we have begun working on the text and will start rehearsing in earnest in June.

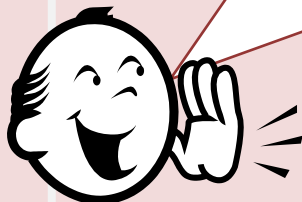
We are very lucky to be supported by the 'old team' namely Sue Botterell as Stage Manager and Eileen Sutton as Producer. The crew is in the process of being formed but if you would like to offer your services and get involved then you can contact me, Lyn Wainwright, on 0475 656 851 or by email copenhagen@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

PANTO TIME! 5-7 DECEMBER 2013

We are already looking forward to our December production: a pantomime of **Jack and The Beanstalk** at Auderghem Cultural Centre. There will be great fun for all the family, with music, audience interaction (oh, no there won't!), and a cast of thousands (ish).



It will take a big team to put the show together and so we'd like to invite you to get involved either on-stage or off-stage (it's behind you!), so if you would like to come and join us please get in touch with the director, Conrad Toft, at conradtoft@gmail.com or by phone on 0484 799 534.



An Ideal Husband: 18-22 March 2014

The Studio Theatre, Palais des Beaux-Arts



"Even you are not rich enough [...] to buy back your past. No man is"

An Ideal Husband is a comedy by **Oscar Wilde** which revolves around the blackmail of a popular public official and which is thick with political intrigue. As one of the characters points out *"sooner or later we have all to pay for what we do"*

Auditions will take place on Monday, 23 September and Wednesday, 25 September at 8pm and on Sunday, 29 September at 4.30pm at the Warehouse in the Bar Room.

For further details contact the Director at deborahgriffith@mac.com

FEATS 2013 RUNNING ORDER ANNOUNCED!

This year, FEATS is hosted by AATG (Anglo American Theatre Group) in The Hague, from 17 to 20 May, and takes place once again at the impressive Koninklijke Schouwburg.

The running order has now been announced: so if you're going along ... book, book, BOOK!

Friday 17 May	<i>27 Wagons Full of Cotton</i> by Tennessee Williams	American Theatre Company (Belgium)
	<i>Ten Days in November (1647)</i> by Stuart Marlow	ACTS (Germany)
	<i>The Stronger</i> by August Strindberg	Village Players (Switzerland)
Saturday 18 May	<i>Watson in Winter</i> by Richard Thayer	Tagora (France)
	<i>Black Horse</i> by Bruno Sousa	ESOC Theatre Group (Germany)
	<i>For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls</i> by Christopher Durang	Hamburg Players (Germany)
Sunday 19 May	<i>The Event</i> by John Clancy	New English American Theatre (Germany)
	<i>Alarms</i> by Michael Frayn	Copenhagen Theatre Circle (Denmark)
	<i>Bassett</i> by James Graham	Theatre in English/Theatre in Education (Belgium)
Monday 20 May	<i>Hinterlands – Heart of Lightness</i> by Ko van den Bosch	Het Homerostheater (Netherlands)
	<i>Death in the Living</i> by Mike Williams	InPlayers (Netherlands)
	<i>Boy Meets Girl</i> by Sam Wolfson	Stockholm Players (Sweden)

For more information on FEATS 2013:

<http://www.feats.eu/>

<http://www.feats.nl/>



Behind The Scenes

The Costumier

Experienced and talented costumier, Iona Hamilton, writes:

When you go to the theatre, what do you notice most? Is it the set, the lighting, the costumes, or are you so engrossed in the play, carried away by the actors that it melts into a seamless whole?

The job of costumier is a challenging one, in that the costumes should be so right for the characters that they look perfectly natural and believable... at least for contemporary plays. For period pieces the costumes also play a role in creating the period, in helping the audience step back in time. For the actors, a good costume can help them get in character - the corsets in *Diana of Dobson's* (directed by Conrad Toft) for example, apparently did this, by demanding a correct posture in order to avoid being spiked by the boning. Costumes can also be a quick way of establishing character, or, in the case of *Animal Farm* (directed by Steve Challens), communicating the animal essence of the character while not dressing the actors in pantomime style "animal costumes".

Being costumier for a play combines a number of skills, not least powers of persuasion and diplomacy to get an actor to wear something they consider unflattering, for the good of the character and the play. A lot of research and creative thought is required in many cases - what exactly would someone have worn in small town America in the 1950s?

If you think about your own wardrobe, there are plenty of clothes in it that you've had for several years; real people don't change their entire wardrobes with the fashion year - but a very contemporary outfit can give a hint about a character's style, wealth, status. The costume designer works closely with the director from the beginning, to try to understand their vision for the piece, and the constraints in terms of scene and costume changes (see the *Blue Room*, directed by Antonia Mochan, and *Calendar Girls*, directed by Janet Middleton for examples), as well as physical movement (*A Dog's Life*, directed by Christine Marchand). Many costume items can be found in the treasure trove that is the costume store in the Warehouse, others in second hand clothes shops, such as *Les Petits Riens*. The actor's own wardrobe can also be a rich source of material - as can that of the costumier! Other garments can be bought or made from scratch or altered. Designing costumes is a lot of fun, but can be very challenging and time-consuming, as it usually requires a number of fittings.

The job of costume designer is not complete when the curtain goes up - costumes can need ironing, mending, tweaking, and even washing between performances. And at the end of the show, everything needs to be cleaned and put away again. It's a vital part of a show, but often invisible: the audience might notice costumes when they're not quite right, but when they are good, they should serve to enhance the other elements of the play, being part of the whole.



OTHER NEWS



Julian Oliver writes about the launch of European Friends of Wexford Festival Opera - a rare experience:

Leonie Bates and family recently launched 'The European Friends of Wexford Festival Opera' at an event in the European Parliament. This was an opportunity to catch up on the recent growth and successes of the Wexford opera festival which runs annually in late October/early November. The Irish Ambassador to the EU, Rory Montgomery, has agreed to be the honorary patron and spoke with passion and enthusiasm about his regular visits to the festival and the warm welcome that awaits all festival goers. Wexford specialises in performances of both full length as well as shorter operas, many of which are rare or have not been produced for some time. Wexford Festival Opera was recently rated in the top three opera festivals around the world. Details of benefits of becoming a friend are available from europeanfriends@wexfordopera.com. GO now!

Attention Opera Lovers!

Don't forget you can also watch live opera screenings at UGC

(<http://www.ugc.be/vivalopera.html>) and Kinapolis (<http://kinapolis.be/fr/opera-au-cinema>)

Many Congratulations to Roísín Dore and Kevin Brennan on their recent marriage!



SAVE THE DATE!

29th June 2013

Annual BUTT Awards!

ECC Committee 2012-13

Sue Botterell
Conrad Toft
Iona Hamilton

Andy Ing
Janet Middleton
Laura Smith
Lyn Wainwright
Martin Blackwell
Sara Hammerton

Chair
Treasurer & ACTS Liaison
Secretary, CAST Liaison & Costumes
FEATS Liaison
ECCO
Website
CAST Liaison & Membership
Publicity

Contact us via: ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Please Note:
Date Change
due to Bank Holiday!

Monthly Play Readings

Wednesday 8 May - Chez Barbara – 7.45 for an 8pm start!

Janet Middleton will lead us in reading

PEOPLE by Alan Bennett

Still showing at the National Theatre, and recently transmitted as an NT Live production, *People* is typical Bennett – casting a wry look at the property problems faced by the landed gentry. A must for National Trust members!

Please ring Mary for further information and to let her know if you are going to come along or email ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com. (If ringing you are most likely to catch Mary between 8-10, am or pm).

Contributions to interval drinks and nibbles always welcome!

We will meet Chez Mary on 5 June ... but please keep an eye out for changes to date or venue that happen from time to time.

Other Forthcoming Events...

For more information and auditions see www.theatreinbrussels.com

American Theatre Company
(Pre-Feats Performance)

27 Wagons Full of Cotton
By Tennessee Williams: 3-4 May

Irish Theatre Group

The Importance of Being Earnest
By Oscar Wilde: 21-25 May

BLOC







Basingstoke or Bust!
23-26 May

Brussels Shakespeare Society

The Way of The World
By William Congreve: 13-16 November

Click on the name of the theatre group above to go directly to their website

You might also be interested in ...

-  **Biloxi 48** will be presenting *All that I will ever be* by Alan Ball. In French, with English subtitles. On now until 26 May at [Théâtre de la place des Martyrs](#).
-  **NT Live** will present *This House* on 16 May. <http://kinopolis.be/fr/theatre-au-cinema>. Other forthcoming screenings are *The Audience* on 13 June and *Othello* on 26 September. **However** Belgium is not at present listed on the NT Live website as being one of the venues for either of these screenings.
-  Auditions for *Evita* to be performed by **BLOC** 28 November – 1 December 2013. The audition schedule runs from 4 – 18 June, and full details will be given shortly on the BLOC web site www.bloc-brussels.com or are available from producer.evita@yahoo.com
-  Auditions for *The Way of the World* to be performed by the **BSS** in November 2013. The auditions 11 & 12 June schedule. Full details are available from wayoftheworldnov2013@gmail.com and keep an eye on www.shaksoc.com
-  **Brussels Madrigal Singers** will be giving a concert at the end of June. Date uncertain at time of going to print, so keep an eye on their website: <http://www.brusselsmadrigals.be>
-  In association with **ETCetera** there will be a production of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Directed by Sophie Thompson, 25-29 June. www.bouge.org/antigone.html

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