



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 March 2013



Auditions

Calendar Girls

Committee

Congratulations (Lots!)

Copenhagen

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NT Live

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Panto

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Letter from the Chair



Hello,

I hope you have all had a better start to the New Year than me, flu followed by bronchitis is not something I would recommend. Before I decided to lie in bed for a few days, I attended some Calendar Girls rehearsals. During the serious rehearsal process the cast and backstage crew are also having fun, enjoying putting together a good show. It is great to be part of a group of people pulling together to make an excellent production.

Speaking of cracking good shows, I really have to thank Malinda Coleman and her team for *Presumption*. It was nice to see The Studio being used in a form we rarely dare to, and it worked. The two-hander took us on a journey into a relationship, full of twists, turns, dark humour and broad comedy. It was a play where I genuinely didn't know what was coming next, it played with our assumptions about narrative structure, and yet we could follow it. Tania, Yorgos and Malinda put weeks of work into this play, and we were entertained and made to think by their efforts. The gang who moved the rostra, under gang boss Conrad, deserve that special badge of honour for courage. The Studio is a space which can be used in different ways, but to move it around ... That takes guts.

Sue Botterell

chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com



Calendar Girls by Tim Firth

based on the Miramax motion picture by Juliette Towhidi and Tim Firth

March 2013

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|---------|-----------------------|----------|--------|-----------|
| | | €2 per ticket goes to | | 1 | 2 |
| | | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| | | 8pm | 8pm | 8pm | 8pm + 8pm |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| | | | | | 23 |

Palais des Beaux-Arts, Rue Ravenstein 23, Brussels

Tickets €16

Don't forget to book!

Tickets available from <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com>

Sponsored by **F T I CONSULTING**

English Comedy Club - Performance by amateurs under licence from Samuel French

CALENDAR GIRLS

By Tim Firth

Based on the Miramax motion picture by Juliette Towhidi and Tim Firth

Directed by Janet Middleton

The Studio Theatre
Palais des Beaux-Arts

12-16 March 2013 - 8pm & 3pm Matinee 16 March

Click on calendar & book now!

For each ticket sold €2 will be donated to **Fondation contre le Cancer**



CALENDAR GIRLS

BOX OFFICE OPENING SOON!

The Box Office should be open in the next couple of days!

Keep your eye on <https://www.facebook.com/groups/eccbrussels/>, <https://twitter.com/> or <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com/> to be among the first to book!

Janet Middleton writes:

I am delighted to report that things are going well with our preparations to bring you *Calendar Girls* in March. We are just one of hundreds of productions taking place all over the world; taking advantage of the amateur rights being available for only one year.

What has taken me a little by surprise (and I apologise to Tim Firth if he ever reads this) is just how GOOD the script is. When I first read it I found it moving, but wasn't really overwhelmed by it. My motivation to direct *Calendar Girls* was the storyline – I love what these women have achieved and feel that we, the public, owe so much to them: we might not even be aware that a development their fundraising has paid for has affected our life, or that of someone we hold dear. But the script has really grown on me. I'm enjoying seeing my actors get to grips with their characters, and noticing the sometimes subtle hints that the script is giving them for their motivation or characterisation, enjoying Mr. Firth's sense of humour and the way he manipulates our emotions!

And it's not just about 'The Girls'. There's John - the source of love and fun that started this all off – and his somewhat long-suffering mate Rod; Marie, the formidable Chair of the WI; Lawrence a very nervous young man torn between his love of photography and the fear of these not-so-young poster girls (sorry girls!); Lady Cravenshire – visiting the village from her stately pile, and several other lovely cameo roles.

I know every director says this but ... my cast and crew are fabulous! A real delight to work with and working very hard to reach the level of perfection we all want. Sadly we have lost Abigail Greef from the cast for personal reasons, but my brief despair evaporated when Anna Holmén not only stepped into the role of Cora without any ado, but was also immediately greeted as an old friend by the cast. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication.

At time of writing no photos of the cast rehearsing are available – but they will be going up on our website and on our facebook page soon, so keep an eye out for them!

Finally - this play certainly arouses a lot of interest! I have received many comments about my "strippers", some "nudge, nudge, wink-wink"s, and lots of men have made offers to help backstage! I do hope the public isn't going to be disappointed at how brief the one famous scene is – you'll just have to come along and find out how much more there is to this play than the promotion of the sale of iced buns!

In keeping with the ethos of these wonderful ladies, the ECC has agreed to give €2 from each ticket sale to a local cancer charity in Belgium: *Fondation Contre le Cancer* (www.cancer.be)

Help Wanted: If you would like to help with Front of House on the night you are attending the play please contact Eileen at: calendar-girls@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Coming Soon!

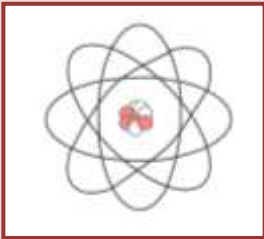
The ECC is delighted that Lyn Wainwright has agreed to direct Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* for us in October.

Lyn writes:

Michael Frayn is perhaps best known as the author of the farce *Noises Off* which is all the funnier because it views the production of a play both from in front and from behind the scene. Frayn has achieved equal success with both drama and fiction: His novels like *Spies* and *Headlong* are full of well researched detail but the humour is always there as well.

If, like me, you have grown up admiring the work of Michael Frayn it will have been a shock to you to realise that he was born in 1933. BBC Radio has recently celebrated his work with a mini-season including performances of *Skios*, *Copenhagen* and *Headlong* at the beginning of his 80th year. You may still just catch the tail end of them on the BBC I-player. *Copenhagen* is available on Radio 3 until Sunday <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01ppwn6> and on Radio 4 Frayn is featured on the Saturday Drama series <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006ggxs>.

From 8-12 October the English Comedy Club will celebrate closer to his actual birthday with a production of ***COPENHAGEN***.



His work often raises philosophical questions and this play is no exception. It is based on a meeting between two physicists, Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg. The meeting really did take place in 1941 but what occurred between them is a matter of speculation. Frayn draws parallels between the uncertainty of the behaviour of physical objects as established by Heisenberg's scientific work and the difficulty of knowing what motivates people and why they do what they do.

Auditions will be held at the Warehouse as follows:

Sunday 24th Feb at 2pm
Monday 25th February at 8pm
Monday 4th March at 8pm

Roles for 2 men and 1 woman. Further details can be obtained from the Director, Lyn Wainwright:
Copenhagen@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

And while we're looking forward ... It will soon be Panto Time!

(Oh no it won't ... Oh yes it will ... and so on!)

It may only be January, but already the ECC is thinking about December when we will be bringing you, for the first time in many years, an example of that great British tradition ... **The Panto!**

Dates to be confirmed! Now which one will it be???

But in the meantime, if you have small – or not so small - children that you wish to introduce to the wonderful world of panto, then you might still be able to get tickets for ***Dick Whittington and his Cat*** at The British School or ***Dick Whittington - Lord Mayor of London*** in Antwerp.

<http://www.batsantwerp.be/>

<http://www.bsbpantoloons.com/default.aspx>



Presumption: A Review

Sara Hammerton writes:

Malinda Coleman made a very brave choice when she decided to direct "Presumption", an innovative piece devised by the Sheffield theatre group Third Angel. The audience were treated to an experimental play, with just two characters to hold their attention for the whole evening - without an interval. It is not a formula that would necessarily attract a large audience, but after just the first night word spread and soon the show was a sell-out.

The play opens with an empty stage, although it is quickly furnished, by the characters, with a table, chairs, cutlery and glasses, indeed everything you would need for the dinner party that we realise has just happened. It is in examining the aftermath of their dinner party that the young woman hostess and her partner start to reflect not only on the evening itself, but on their whole relationship.

The narrative is not linear. Suddenly the discussion stops, winds back, starts again from a particular point, not once but several times, each time just slightly different, each time uncovering a different layer. It gradually becomes clear that the characters we see are fictional characters, it is a play within a play. Suddenly our two protagonists are correcting or discussing their performances, before switching back seamlessly into their roles, drawing the audience in with them.

The complexity of the piece means that holding the audience's interest is quite a challenge, one which both actors, Tania Rabesandratana and Yorgos Filippakis, rose to with aplomb. Neither is English, both are new to the ECC, and both gave very natural, engaging performances, hugely appreciated by the audience, judging both by the warm applause at the end of the evening and the compliments quickly posted on Facebook and Twitter.

As the story moves along the actors gradually, seemingly effortlessly, bring on more furniture and more props, all the paraphernalia a couple would accumulate as they build up their life together, including a sofa, armchair, lamp, bookcase... the material "baggage" representing the emotional baggage. The result was impressive. All the furniture and props had been carefully chosen to make it as simple but convincing as possible, and the whole process was slickly choreographed and performed. The costumes were also kept simple, with subtle changes – a pair of shoes, a scarf – to indicate a change of scene.

Malinda Coleman deserves warm congratulations for her directorial vision in pulling off this complicated task so smoothly, as do the actors for their excellent performances. But the backstage team also deserve a huge tribute. The set was almost the "third" actor in this piece and certainly couldn't have appeared – then disappeared – so efficiently without a lot of behind-the-scenes preparation. A whole false wall had to be erected temporarily in the warehouse to screen all the furniture being carried off and on, a creative use of the space for a very creative and very successfully performed play.

Behind The Scenes

A new regular feature to Inform and Encourage

THE WAREHOUSE MANAGER

If you are reading this you are likely to be involved in amateur theatre in some way, be it on the stage, behind the scenes or sitting in the audience. We all have an important role to play but how many of us spare a thought for the person or persons responsible for the smooth running of the theatre, workshop and rehearsal rooms on which we all depend.

In every well-run establishment there is someone who knows where to find things, ...who is good at persuading us to tidy up as we leave,who pays the cleaner and buys the loo rolls,who takes the empty paint tins to the tip,who knows the neighbours well and knows where to get help,who orders the wood and books the safety inspections.

We all do it in our own homes and offices so we have some idea of what is involved but in the Warehouse everything is magnified. It is like living in your home with your own family and all your friends and relations as well. It is like an office where the staff changes every week.

So spare a thought.

We have been very fortunate to have Sue Botterell who has performed these roles so well over a number of years with endless good humour and diplomacy.

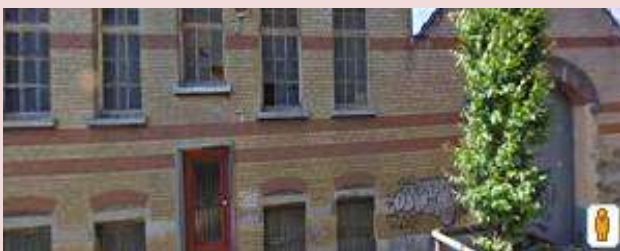
Thank you Sue

We have taken so much of it for granted and now that Sue is standing down we find that we need a whole army of people to replace her.

We are making progress.

We have two new Workshop Managers and the Friday Rota, which ensures that there is always someone in the Warehouse every Friday morning, is working well. But there is always room for more volunteers so if you think that you can and would like to help in some way then get in touch withI would have said the Warehouse Managerbut in her absence ..with me, Lyn Wainwright via ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Sue Botterell also writes:



As you know the Warehouse complex is owned by the ATC, ECC and ITG. It is looked after by the three groups under an umbrella group, CAST. The Warehouse is very fortunate that Roisin and Kevin have taken on the responsibility of Workshop Managers. They will look after that part of the building for us. Thank you.

We have an established system of Friday mornings being when people who need access to the building know that it will be open. Catriona, Marie and Philip have served on that rota, as they step down: **Thank you.**

I welcome, with gratitude, those who have come on to the Friday morning rota: Barbara, Sheila and Colma.

As always, it is team work and generosity that has kept, keeps and will keep our theatre scene thriving. Plus, of course, wonderful plays for us all to enjoy.

ECC MEMBERSHIP NEWS



CONGRATULATIONS

To Committee Member **Laura Smith** and **Jonathan Nwagbaraocha** who became engaged in December. We wish you both much happiness – and look forward to hearing about the wedding plans!

FEATS 2013

17-20 May 2013
The Hague

More information to follow next month!

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

Baby Congratulations

To **Rachel** and **Simon** whose son was born (some-what unexpectedly) in New York on 14 January.

We are looking forward to meeting the young man when he arrives in Brussels.



ECC Committee 2012-13

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sue Botterell | Chair |
| Conrad Toft | Treasurer & ACTS Liaison |
| Iona Hamilton | Secretary, CAST Liaison & Costumes |
| Andy Ing | FEATS Liaison |
| Janet Middleton | ECCO |
| Laura Smith | Website |
| Lyn Wainwright | CAST Liaison & Membership |
| Martin Blackwell | |
| Sara Hammerton | Publicity |

Contact us via: ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Finally – Congratulations to member Philip Landon whose play 'English for Foreigners' is being given a rehearsed reading at The Space in London this Sunday (20 January).



Philip writes:

It is my humble hope that the themes (= languages + the relative prestige thereof; the guilty agonies of post-colonialism; the world domination of Anglo-American culture) will one day resonate perfectly with a Brussels audience. People in the EU institutions and at NATO live these things on a daily basis. It's a challenging text to read because of the textbook conceit, but the idea itself is, I think, accessibly theatrical. Actors have the most fun when they must use gestures and tone etc. to show that they mean something other than what their lines say. And that's also when the audience is the most engaged -- when they have to keep on their toes and constantly interpret what's going on.

<http://space.org.uk/>

Anyone who would like to read the script can contact Philip via ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Monthly Play Readings

The next Play Reading Group will be on

Wednesday 7 February

Chez Mary – 7.45 for an 8pm start!

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!

As we enter 2013 it's time to say once again ...



THANK YOU MARY AND BARBARA!

Regular attendees at the Play Readings will know how much generosity Mary and Barbara show towards us as their guests – we are extremely grateful that despite sometimes inclement weather bringing in guests who are soaked through or bring their snow and salt-caked shoes into their homes, they continue to warmly welcome us.

We disorganise their furniture, we leave them dirty glasses and dishes – and still they smile!

We get carried away and Mary frets that the neighbours will wonder what is going on ... why does she have so many angry people shouting in her flat? What is the frenzy going on down there? But still she says 'See you next month'.

In addition, Mary does an amazing job at ringing round to remind us and check if we will be coming – a task way beyond the call of duty and time-consuming. The pair also ferry left-over bottles and nibbles between their homes, so that nothing goes to waste!

Our thanks too to **Rina** for her services to the cause! Without her generosity the evenings would sometimes be more complicated to arrange!

Please keep an eye out for changes to dates or venue which happen from time to time

Other Forthcoming Events...

For more information and auditions see www.theatreinbrussels.com

American Theatre Company

A Delicate Balance
By Edward Albee

15-19, 22-26 January

BATS Antwerp

Dick Whittington – Lord Mayor of London

26-28 January

Brussels Shakespeare Society

The Merchant of Venice

12-16 February

American Theatre Company

Café Theatre

16-20 April

Irish Theatre Group

The Importance of Being Earnest
By Oscar Wilde

21-25 May

BLOC

Basingstoke or Bust!

23-26 May

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



The next screenings will be:

21 March: *People* – a new play by Alan Bennett

16 May: *This House* – a new play by James Graham

<http://kinopolis.be/fr/theatre-au-cinema>

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