

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 September 2014

ECCO

July 2014



Auditions

Bennett Talking Heads

Butties

Committee & ECC News

Future Productions

Miss Julie Review

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Warehouse Access

Warehouse Re-fit

Chair's Welcome

June has been an exhilarating end to the season, with both an excellent show in the form of *Miss Julie* and a FEATS to remember in Luxembourg. I'd like to thank Anna Holmén, not only for her directing but also for bringing in some new faces to the club – I hope that they will continue to enjoy working with us in the future. I'd also like to bid a fond farewell to four of our members, who are leaving the country: Michael Hales, Martin Kirk, Martina Meyer and Alma Forsyth. You will all be missed, but we wish you all the best for your new lives back in the UK – we hope to see you back often!

Finally, if you've been involved in a show for any group this season, don't forget to vote in the annual Butties, our local Oscars. Voting begins on 28 June at <http://www.theatreinbrussels.com>.

Have a great summer

Conrad Toft


ECC Chairman chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com



TALKING HEADS
By Alan Bennett

STARRING:
SARA HAMMERTON
ALISA HIGGINS
RACHEL CUFF

DIRECTED BY:
JOANNA PATRICK
MARK PRESCOTT
JONATHAN STOCKWELL

 Warehouse Studio Theatre,
Rue Waelhem 69a, Brussels.
Tickets €15
<http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com/talkingheads>

23-27
Sept
2014

Tickets on sale now: <http://www.thelittleboxoffice.com/ecc>

TALKING HEADS

Three Monologues by Alan Bennett

Lady of Letters

Sara Hammerton, Directed by Joanna Patrick

Irene Ruddock is a self-appointed guardian of the high moral ground and her living room is the centre of her operations! She frequently writes to her MP, the police, the chemist - everyone she can, to remedy the social ills she sees around her. In this monologue, Alan Bennett showcases his central theme that the human condition is tragicomic and I am sure that this character will resonate with the audience – I bet you know, or have met, a Miss Ruddock at some stage in your lives!

Soldiering On

Rachel Cuff, Directed by Jonathan Stockwell

Muriel has about as much time for self-pity as a proverbial Eastender in the Blitz. Brimming with cheery, tweedy determination, this dutiful gal shrugs off adversity, keeps calm and carries on serving the community. It may be the 1980s, but her old-fashioned British pluck is alive and kicking. Today, when our more individualistic, expressive culture is coming under fire, Muriel's stoicism and reserve can seem attractive, even admirable. But how much self-restraint is too much? And is it just Muriel who's paid the price?

Her Big Chance

Ailsa Higgins, Directed by Mark Prescott

Lesley is an aspiring actress who throws herself into every part she's offered - just ask the production team on *Crossroads* or *Tess*! So far the roles she's had have been small, but now she's been offered a part in a new film targeted primarily at the West German market. Could this be Lesley's big chance? And as she is a self-confessed people person, will this role open up new social and career doors for



ECC NEWS

Committee	Role	Contact us at:
Conrad Toft	Chair	chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Janet Middleton	Secretary & Ecco	ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Martin Blackwell	Treasurer	treasurer@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Andy Ing	FEATS	feats@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Chris Jones		chris@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Joanna Patrick	Webmaster	web-admin@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Lyn Wainwright	CAST	lyn@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Sara Hammerton	Publicity	sara@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

FRIDAY

IMPORTANT CHANGE TO ACCESS TO THE WAREHOUSE ON A FRIDAY!

Mina, the cleaner at the Warehouse, will no longer be letting people into the building.

Therefore, if you wish to visit the premises on a Friday morning and do not have a key, you will need to contact the person on duty and arrange a time with them.

You can see the rota on the Theatre in Brussels portal:

<http://www.theatreinbrussels.com/listings/the-warehouse-studio-theatre/fridayrota/>

2014 Buttie Awards - 12 July



Voting is open until 22:00 on 10 July at
<http://www.theatreinbrussels.com>

Further details will be available when you vote!

And don't worry ... you won't miss the football!

FEATS 2016

We're very excited about hosting FEATS in 2016 at the Woluwe-Saint-Lambert Cultural Centre and hope you will be too!

MORE INFO IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE!

Miss Julie

Directed by Anna Holmén

Sara Hammerton reviews our most recent production:

I have never seen Miss Julie before. I knew of it by reputation, it is after all a landmark play that is said to have transformed European theatre, but Tuesday 10th June at the Warehouse was the first time I've actually seen a performance. And it was absolutely outstanding; it surely has to rank with some of the best professional productions.

The project was very close to director Anna Holmén's heart, and loving attention to detail clearly pays off. By the time I arrived the audience were already commenting on how beautiful the set was. The Studio had been turned into a Swedish manor house kitchen, a style that has inspired Ikea imitations for years. It was brilliant. Congratulations to set designer Anette Vanier. It's amazing what you can do with the clever use of white and grey paint, applied to a few choice pieces. Apparently they only had to buy one piece of furniture, the cool box, and the rest was from stock - including the iron kitchen range actually made, it turns out, for an ECC production of Miss Julie back in the early nineties. One clever device that worked particularly well was the part of the kitchen wall that turned into a translucent screen when a strong light was shone onto it from behind, showing just enough of the sharply outlined shadows of Miss Julie and Jean to suggest they were getting intimate.

Which brings me onto the acting. There are only three parts in this play, and it was very well cast. If I had to imagine what Miss Julie looked like, then she'd look like Sophie Thompson. She fitted the role perfectly. It is a very demanding part, swinging from haughtiness, playfulness, to vulnerability, anxiety, hysteria. She didn't falter, adding very convincingly to the layers of emotion, but never falling into the trap of going too far, making her breakdown entirely believable.

Jean, the servant she wants to seduce, was played by the excellent Yorgos Filippakis. He strode onto the stage with energy and authority and never missed a beat. It is also a complex role, a seemingly self-assured man who aspires to better things but is acutely aware of his social inferiority. He starts by trying to do the right thing, then realises he can take advantage of the situation, using whatever tricks he can to achieve that. He is alternately reasonable, persuasive, masterful, bullying and angry.

The two leads had to get up close and personal, and they did it very convincingly. On stage passion can be quite a challenge for actors, especially in a small space like the Studio, and this is honestly the best example I've seen so far.

Georgiana Gilmeanu was equally convincing as Kristin, the cook, who is far more grounded and down to earth than Miss Julie, or even Jean. Ironically (or perhaps this was also a casting choice?) she looks a little like Sophie/Miss Julie, yet the two could not have been more different. She is the one who provides objectivity and clarity on the situation, commenting to Jean for example that if their masters are no better than they are, "there's no point us trying to be like them".

No actor, however, even these three very talented people, can make a play seem good without a decent script. Strindberg's play is a very realistic portrayal of human emotions, inner conflict, and the devastating consequences that giving rein to those emotions can have. I can see why it has sparked so much debate and controversy, with its portrayal of loveless passion, and its very unflattering portrait of a vulnerable young woman.

There were actually two other performers in the play who also deserve a special mention – Lovisa Nilson, the singer, and Kirk Chilton, the violin player. A beautiful touch, and excellently done.

Congratulations also to whoever picked out the period costumes, which added to the very professional look of the whole piece. I felt sorry for Yorgos in his heavy black clothes in that sweltering heat, but hey, you've got to suffer for your art! Sophie too had to wear a high necked, long-sleeved close-fitting dress that must have been hot, but fitted her to perfection. Fortunately for her she spent much of the play in her underwear – crisp, cool white cotton with lovely detail on the bottom of the long petticoat. I particularly liked Kristin's pale grey dress and white apron, that matched the set. (Did I mention I really liked the set?).

The lengthy and rapturous applause at the end was well deserved. This was the ECC at its best.

Pictured Right:

Sophie Thompson, Yorgos Filippakis and Georgiana Gilmeanu





THEATRE OPEN DAY

SAVE THE DATE - 14 SEPTEMBER 2014

- Free performances
- Presentations on theatre skills
- Visits to the workshop and costume and props store
- Sign up to take part in future productions
- Café and bar

On Sunday 14 September we will launch the new season with another Theatre Open Day at the Warehouse. There will be free performances from all the participating groups, including a sneak preview of the ECC's pantomime, Aladdin.

Come and enjoy the show, and the presentations on all the skills that go into making the magic work – sound and lighting, props, etc. It will also be an opportunity to nose around behind the scenes, in the rehearsal rooms, the props and costumes store and workshop.

Bring along as many friends and colleagues as you can. We hope to attract new audiences and new talent, both on stage and off. There will be a sign-up sheet for anyone who wants to take part, whether as a sound engineer, set builder and painter, stage manager, or just in the bar or box office. The presentations on theatre skills may help you decide where your talents lie.

We will also be asking for volunteers to help make this day as successful as last year's. **Watch this space!**

Watch this

Audition Dates: *Tom & Viv*

There will be auditions at The Warehouse at 8pm on 16 & 18 September for our March 2015 production of *Tom & Viv*, a fabulous, fast-moving, play about T S Eliot's complicated marriage to his first wife.

Janet Middleton will be looking for a number of actors and actresses. Parts available are:

T S Eliot	An actor who can perform convincingly both in American (Missouri) and upper-class British English. Age 20-30ish
Vivienne Eliot	Age 20-30ish
Maurice Haigh-Wood	Vivienne's 'English Idiot' brother, 30ish
Rose Haigh-Wood	Vivienne's mother
Charles Haigh-Wood	Vivienne's father
Louise Purdon	20-30ish, London accent
W.I. Janes	Male, 50ish
Charles Todd	Male, 30s, American accent

In addition Janet will be looking for an actor and actress (or stage crew who are comfortable on stage), to perform various small roles/changing the scenes – there are 20 scene changes in the first act alone! Janet would be delighted to discuss the play, and the roles available, with anyone who is interested. Please ring

The Warehouse Studio needs a Facelift



This photograph was taken in 1994 when the Studio was being converted from an old Ceramic warehouse

Lyn Wainwright writes:

You can just see the stairs coming up from the street entrance and two new holes in the wall ready to become the doors into the loos.

It was an enormous project with the work carried out by a dedicated band of volunteers. We don't need to create quite so much rubble this time but at the very least we want to renew the floor in the theatre, reorganise the bar area, spruce up the entrance and give everything a new coat of paint.

Are you ready to volunteer?

We need everyone from strong guys to dismantle and lift things to clever carpenters, essential electricians, artistic types who can wield a paintbrush and supportive sandwich makers who can keep the rest going.

The plan is to get started in the second week of July. Conrad Toft has agreed to oversee the initial dismantling and storing work necessary to clear the space.

So Sunday 13th July is a date for your diary!

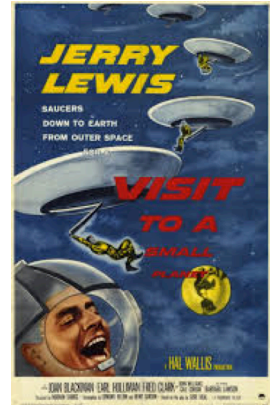
Work will continue during the rest of July and the whole of August. We know that you are all planning to go away on holiday but we are counting on the fact that you will be here some of the time so why not get involved.?

Please send us an email studio-repairs@theatreinbrussels.com letting us know when you will be available and the sort of tasks that you are willing to perform. Any offer, however small, will be gratefully accepted.

Monthly Play Readings

Wednesday 3 July – NEW VENUE!

Our thanks to Jean and Luca Fenelli who have offered to host our play reading at their lovely home on Chaussee de Waterloo in Uccle.
Transport: Bus 38/Tram 7 (Longchamp) and buses W365, 136, 137 (Ave Winston Churchillaan). Please ring Mary for exact details.



Graham Andrews will lead us in reading
Visit to a Small Planet

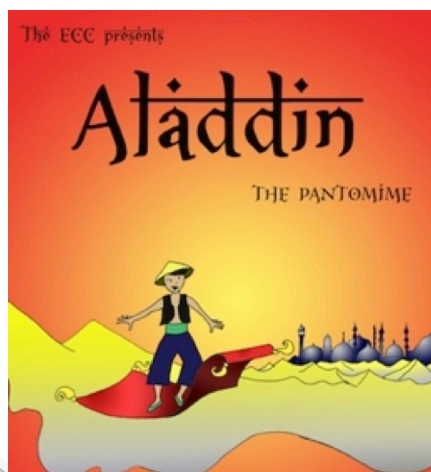
Graham writes: Gore Vidal's *Visit to a Small Planet* began life as a TV play on the NBC *Goodyear Television Playhouse*, broadcast live on 8 August 1953. The theatrical version opened at the Booth Theatre, Broadway, on 7 February 1957, where it ran for 388 performances. It also enjoyed a long run in London - and in Brussels! Jerry Lewis mugged about in the 1960 film version, about which I can only bring myself to say that Signet paperbacks produced a very nice tie-in edition, from which I've conveniently pinched this blurb: "The fun comes fast and furious in this riotous frolic about a visiting spaceman who lands his flying saucer on Earth . . . and almost wrecks the lives of two young lovers, a TV news analyst, and a pompous Pentagon general."

Wednesday 6 August: Play and Venue to be announced

Please ring Mary to let her know if you are going to come along, and to check the venue, on 02 345 8583 (you are most likely to catch Mary between 8-10, am or pm), or email ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com for further information.

We meet at 7.45 for an 8pm start!

Contributions of interval drinks or nibbles always welcome!



Aladdin – 9-11 January 2015

Tickets: €16/€12

**Special offer until
30 September 2014:
€2 off per ticket!**

<http://www.thelittleboxoffice.com/ecc>



A Round-up by Conrad Toft

The 38th FEATS took place at the Kinneksbond Cultural Centre in Mamer, a small theatre in a small town about 8km from Luxembourg from 6 to 9 June. It was certainly a FEATS to remember, with record temperatures and beautiful sunshine (unlike the hailstorms in Brussels) and a warm welcome from the New World Theatre Club (NWTC).

The standard of the shows was variable although on the whole it was high, and some of the prizes were too close to call (there was a single point between first and second place).

We had some wonderfully wacky pieces in the shape of *The Virtue of Pretty Penny, or, A Vile Murder Foil'd* from Tagora (Strasbourg), where evil bankers tried to destroy Count Euro and his love Penny entirely in rhyming couplets, and *The Last Supper*, in which the Garden of Gethsemane was turned into a kebab joint complete with cabaret acts. There were also visual feasts, such as a huge Broadway-style dance number opening *Death* from NEAT (Stuttgart), AATG's shadow figures, Latin and video images in *The Ribbon* from Entity (Munich) and colourful costumes in *La Franco* from AATG (The Hague)

Over half of the shows were original scripts, which was a scary prospect, but some were surprisingly good. Of course, one original script, which will not be winning any awards any time soon was the FEATS skit, which was, as usual, irreverent, bizarre and ever-so-slightly bonkers. This year we had 11 actors from 7 groups involved, which was great for building community spirit.

There was also some sublime serious drama with wonderful acting from Caraigh McGregor in the Irish Theatre Group's *A Night in November* and Ellen Bergman and Jonathan Greenman in the Hamburg Players' *Amateurs*. Congratulations in particular to Caraigh, Csaba Bartos and the team for their Best Actor and Third Place prizes. I hope that we will see the full version of the play in Brussels soon!

Seeing the stretched resources at NWTC reminded me how important it is to share the load during our own FEATS festival here in Brussels in 2016. The Hamburg Players showed great enthusiasm, bringing a group of 28 to the festival this year to gain some experience before they host in 2015. I hope that we will also be able to go to Hamburg in numbers next year to prepare ourselves fully for 2016.

Awards:

First Prize	Hamburg Players for <i>Amateurs</i> by David Auburn
Second Prize	Semi-Circle for <i>The extraordinary revelations of Orca the goldfish</i> by David Tristram
Third Prize	ITG for <i>A Night in November</i>
Best actor	Caraigh McGregor (ITG)
Best actress	Ellen Bergman (Hamburg Players)
Best stage presentation	Lucerne World Theatre Company for <i>It's on you, John</i> by Charlie Lucarotti
Best original script	Guy Las (Entity) for <i>The Ribbon</i>
Discretionary Award	NEAT for opening sequence in <i>Death</i> by Woody Allen
Stage management award	AATG

Other Forthcoming Productions

For more information and auditions see www.theatreinbrussels.com

English Comedy Club	<i>Talking Heads</i> by Alan Bennett 23-27 September 2014
Brussels Shakespeare Society	<i>Hamlet Unplugged</i> 13-18 October 2014
American Theatre Company	<i>Doubt: A Parable</i> By John Patrick Shanley 21-25 October 2014
ETCetera	<i>Don Juan and the Stone Guest</i> 3 Short Plays 4-9 November 2014
Irish Theatre Group	A Night in November by Marie Jones 12-15 November 2014
BLOC	<i>My Fair Lady</i> 27-30 November 2014
Irish Theatre Group	<i>Dolly West's Kitchen</i> by Frank McGuinness 9-13 December 2014

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

YOU MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED IN

KVS has regular productions subtitled in English. Visit their website to find out more:
<http://www.kvs.be/en>

Fun, Food & Acting: Once a month a unique presentation at Theatre de la Toison D'Or in association with Brusselslife: <http://www.ffact.be/#>

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