



ECCO: May 2015



In this edition:

Call for Directors

Committee & ECC News

Congratulations!

Feats 2015 & 2016

Future Productions

Mrs Klein

Play Readings

Tom & Viv Review

War Brides

Letter from the Chair

The end of March brought *Tom and Viv* to a close. Janet and her team are to be congratulated on an excellent and successful production which played to full houses all week. A lot of hard work and careful planning went into it as I witnessed at first hand being a late addition to the lighting team.

I would like to add a very special thank you to Poppy Bullock. It is often said that the contribution of the backstage crew goes unrewarded but this production also had an understudy. Poppy worked selflessly to prepare so that she would be able to step into the role of Vivi at a moment's notice. In the event her services were not needed and her contribution went unnoticed by members of the audience but it gave the cast and the director the security they needed.

With Easter behind us and the welcome arrival of sunshine, Conrad and his team are now working hard to prepare *War Brides*, the ECC entry to FEATS which will take place in Hamburg later in May. For those of you not able to travel to Hamburg you will be able to see it here in the Warehouse Studio Theatre where it will be performed between the 14 and 16 May

We wish them every success in the competition.

Lyn Wainwright

chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

War Brides
by Marion Craig Wentworth
14-16 May 2015, Warehouse Studio Theatre




Tickets: €8, <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com>



War Brides
by Marion Craig
Wentworth

14-16 May
8pm

**Warehouse
Studio Theatre**

TICKETS
€8
**NOW ON
SALE!**

**Click
Poster**
to go directly to
the Box Office

If you have any
contributions to ECCO,
please send them to
Janet at
ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

The next ECCO will
come out in
July 2015

Deadline: 15 July

War Brides: 14-16 May and Feats 2015

Our entry for FEATS 2015 is *War Brides* by Marion Craig Wentworth.

Director Conrad Toft writes: Europe is at war. The young women of a small country village are being strongly encouraged to become "war brides", to marry the soldiers going into battle and produce the next generation of soldiers for the Empire, but what happens when some of them refuse?

This is the premise behind Marion Craig Wentworth's play, which was a runaway success in America in 1915 and made into a 1916 film before being banned when the USA joined World War One.

The ECC will be taking this one-act play to FEATS in Hamburg this year, and you'll have an opportunity to see it here in Brussels from 14-16 May at the Warehouse Studio Theatre. [Click here to go directly to the box office!](#)

There is a great cast including well known faces such as Peyton Cimino, Andy Blumenthal, Gareth Lewis, Joanna Patrick and relative newcomers to the Brussels stage: Richard Daly (Don Juan), Izzy Poston (Aladdin), and Amanda Ekdahl. The show will be supported by an experienced and talented crew.



Mrs Klein: a psychoanalyst on the playwright's couch

Mrs Klein, by Nicholas Wright, is the ECC's first production of the 2015-2016 season – filled with tensions, swirling undercurrents and bubbling with dark humour that bursts out in the most inappropriate places. **Director Jonathan Stockwell reveals all.**



What's the play about?

In the simplest terms, it's about Melanie Klein, who was a brilliant, self-educated psychoanalyst, a strong but complicated woman whose ideas are still influential today. In 1934, she was becoming famous for her pioneering and controversial work analysing young children... including her own.

The play centres around her conflictual relationship with her grown-up daughter, Melitta. A psychoanalyst herself, Melitta harbours a deep personal and professional resentment towards her mother. When Klein's son, Melitta's brother, dies in uncertain circumstances, it brings long-standing tensions to a head. The third character, Paula, is a refugee from Nazi Germany – and another psychoanalyst! Melitta's friend and Mrs Klein's protégée, she's quietly using the mother-daughter conflict to pursue her own desperate agenda.

It's not hard to see where Klein got her ideas – about children's need to reconcile intense love and anger towards their parents, about the guilt that often accompanies family battles, and the difficult business of repairing the damage. **Deadly serious?** Not entirely. Fortunately the dialogue's peppered with absurd, unexpected humour. Sometimes we're laughing with the smart characters, sometimes at them.

Why did you choose this play?

It deals with universal themes in a highly original way. Not everyone is the daughter or son of a psychoanalyst, but everyone has a mother. And the relationship is always complex and deep. When I first saw the play, I thought "yeah, I can relate to that". Maybe others can too.

And it illustrates the way family relationships are rarely just about two people. There's always a third person – other people – to complicate things. As Mrs Klein says: "Before you know it, there's a crowd in the room." For example, Paula is caught in the middle between Mrs Klein and Melitta, but she's also manipulating their relationship. As a psychology student, this stuff fascinates me. I want to go on to study counselling and psychotherapy, and this is a fantastic way for me to learn while doing what I love: theatre!

What do you focus on as a director?

Above all, I'd like to be a source of ideas, support and guidance for the actors – to provide a framework for them to create in. It should be an enjoyable experience. I firmly believe the results are best when the actors are happy and secure enough to play and experiment. I'm also determined to pay attention to the less obviously dramatic bits of the text – the parts where the audience might switch off if there's not enough going on between and inside the characters. The aim is to make sure that every moment has some texture and interest to it.

What do you like about acting, directing, the world of theatre?

I used to love the adrenaline of being on stage; that was enough. Now I need to feel like I've really done something good and, in short, I think directing comes easier to me than acting. It's also very nice to be part of a community. As a director, you see just how much work is being done behind the scenes by the production team. As an actor, I didn't always value that enough. Now it's just lovely to see how much time and effort people are prepared to put in. It feels good to be part of that.

What do you think about Melanie Klein's approach to psychoanalysis?

Her theories were highly innovative, a big step on from Freud's in my view. I think she got to some basic truths. But it shocks me how confident Klein and her contemporaries were about such an intangible thing as the unconscious, on the basis of no scientific evidence. For sure, in all of us there's lots happening beneath the surface that we're not aware of. To me, there's an obvious value in exploring that. What I am less certain about is whether it's for an analyst to tell me what's going on: "I'm the expert, I can analyse you." Thankfully, most therapists today wouldn't think that way.

What message would you like people to walk away with when they leave the theatre?

I'd be happy if our audiences walked away and said "psychoanalysis is interesting, worth engaging with, but you have to be critical about it, it needs to be questioned as well." And I'd like people to go away curious about Melanie Klein's ideas because – though at times they sound a bit mad – they contain germs of profound truth, I think. I only hope they realise a lot of things have changed since the 1930s.

[Melanie Klein's life and ideas - YouTube](#)

Tom & Viv: Review by Sara Hammerton

Michael Hastings' rich, multi-layered script tells the story of a marriage that was doomed to failure and the tragic effect of mental illness in an age when it was still poorly understood and poorly treated. It spans many years, with seemingly countless scene changes. It could easily have become disjointed, but this was a very slick, smooth production.

Swift scene changes were made possible thanks to a plain black set that was kept deceptively simple, swapping the cushions and throws on the sofa – when it wasn't moved out of the way altogether – and changing the vases and flowers on the sideboard that doubled up as a shop and bank counter. Clever use of lighting also helped, especially the giant cross projected onto the floor to denote the church, and the scales of justice that lit up the wall for the courtroom scene.

T.S. Eliot, excellently played by Gareth Lewis as the socially awkward young American (well done on the accent Gareth) rather baffled by English customs, is immediately drawn to the distinctly well-bred Vivienne Haigh-Wood. The attraction seems mutual and passionate, and they marry in haste. Part of her charm is that Vivienne is not quite like other people, but Tom soon finds out just how unusual she is, and how difficult to deal with.

Sophie Thompson has already proved her skill in portraying neurotic young women, as Strindberg's Miss Julie. As Vivie she powerfully conveyed the nervous energy, impatience, haughtiness and sometimes desperation emanating from the ever-more misunderstood heroine. Her "madness" soon becomes apparent as she burns the curtains on honeymoon, locks the hotel staff out of their room, and purloins the sheets.

Some of her back story is told to us by her mother, Rose Haigh-Wood, who spends all her time trying to keep everything smooth and calm and terribly proper. Sandra Lizioli got the role of posh matriarch just right, and got to wear some brilliant period costumes, notably her Edwardian mutton-sleeved suit, and even a Marie-Antoinette outfit.

Despite the depressing story line, there were plenty of moments of humour, including Rose's beautifully-timed putdowns and Tom's dry humour. The clown of the piece however was Maurice, Vivie's brother, played by Craig Simpson who gave a brilliantly entertaining performance. (Craig you really are a very convincing idiot.) Maurice however is also the most self-aware character, deeply conscious of his breeding as well as his of lack brains. You can understand why the more complex and less likeable Tom admits he had come to admire him.

There is also dry humour from Vivie's father, Charles Haigh-Wood, played by Martin Webber, who has the confidence of his social standing but in old age becomes rather baffled and increasingly resigned.

Orla Colcough gave an assured performance as the nurse, Louise Purdon, who becomes Vivie's confidante and possibly only friend. She is the one who early on expressed concern about the high alcohol content of Vivie's "medicine" and how it might affect her. Like Rose she got to wear a lovely period Edwardian Costume.

Strong performances were also delivered by the actors in the "smaller" roles, namely Chris Wehbe as William L. Janes, Katherine Cox as the bank clerk and Jeremy Zeegers who showed his versatility as a photographer, a very English barrister and, memorably, as the doctor who delivers the news that Vivie's condition was actually a hormonal disorder that could easily have been treated. Although personally what will stick on my mind is his cameo as Bertie Russell at the fancy dress party given by the Bloomsbury set. Jeremy just rocks that whole black leotard/lemonade tutu look. (Another piece of irony here – Tom seems to be a bit of a social climber trying to fit in with the English establishment, yet is drawn to the anti-establishment Bloomsbury set.) Both Jeremy and Katherine also put in sterling service as efficient scene shifters, dressed as butler and maid and staying firmly in character the whole time.

The very warm applause at the end – directed I believe at both cast AND crew – was richly deserved. As Rose Haigh-Wood would say, I was riveted.

Congratulations Janet Middleton, be very proud.

Tom & Viv: Production Photos



Tom & Viv Quiz: which is the Eliot Line? by Jeffer London¹

1. A. "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."
B. "We shall not cease from changing costumes, and may see an end, or a boob or a ball for the first time."
C. "We shall not cease from changing sets, and in the end we'll paint it all black."
2. A. "If you aren't in over your head, how do you know how tall you are?"
B. "If you aren't spending Sundays in bed, why talk of where the clean sheets are?"
C. "If you aren't being over fed, how do you know what your lines are?"
3. A. "It's not wise to improvise until you know the script."
B. "It's not wise to violate the rules until you know what they are."
C. "Always do what the director says."
4. A. "Sorry lot, actors who struggle for words."
B. "So the lover must struggle for words."
C. "Squelch, those are not my words."
5. A. "This is where I get cross, not with a boom, but a 'so sorry."
B. "This is the way the world ends, not with a poem, but a wheelchair."
C. "This is the way the world ends, not with a bang, but a whimper."
6. A. "Men tighten the knot of confusion into perfect misunderstanding."
B. "Meant I, then not, oh confusion, wish the director was clear on this thing."
C. "Men might not offer confession to a miss who's understanding."
7. A. "Make-up is the hand maiden of personality."
B. "Monologues are the hand maiden of Mess-ups."
C. "Anxiety is the hand maiden of creativity."
8. A. "You are the music while the music lasts."
B. "You missed the date, of anniversary last."
C. "You needed a moustache, most in the cast."
9. A. "Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled, and each man fixed his eyes before his feet."
B. "Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled, and each took an egg salad in their hand."
C. "Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled, a cross of light, in his eye, before his feet."
10. A. "For serving tea, Eileen takes the cake."
B. "I am American, what do I know about class."
C. "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons."
11. A. "I had seen birth and death, but thought they were different."
B. "I had seen Sophie and Poppy, but as Viv they were different."
C. "I had been a socialist and a fascist, but in the end was indifferent."
12. A. "April is the cruellest month."
B. "April is one of the Bloomsbury riffraff."
C. "April is the month I get my life back."
13. A. "Only moon and moods are this bazaar, or possibly, hormones make me dizzy so."
B. "Only those who play five roles are living the possibility of how far one can go."
C. "Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go."

¹ Many thanks Jeffer! Answers are: 1A, 2A, 3B, 4B, 5C, 6A, 7C, 8A, 9A, 10C, 11A, 12A, 13C

ECC NEWS

Committee News

Committee	Role	Contact us at:
Lyn Wainwright	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	CAST Rep	chris@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Boff Muir		Boff@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Joanna Patrick	Webmaster	web-admin@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Sara Hammerton	Publicity	sara@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Date of Next Committee Meeting: 11 May

CALLING DIRECTORS: Old and New! Experienced or Not!

In September 2014 the ECC's production of *Talking Heads* gave Joanna Patrick, Mark Prescott and Jonathan Stockwell a chance to direct in Brussels for the first time in a small production, which resulted in three beautifully directed pieces which were very much appreciated by our audiences, and we are delighted that Jonathan is at present holding auditions for *Mrs Klein*, which he will be directing in September.

Because this format worked so well, we would like to open up **March 2016** to new directors as well as those who have experience of directing here in Brussels. We have a number of ideas based on an evening of one-act plays, and would love to discuss our thoughts with potential directors.

If you are interested in exploring directing a play, contact Lyn now, so that she can register your interest at our next committee meeting when we hope to finalise our plans. chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

FEATS (Festival of European Anglophone Theatrical Societies)

In 2016 the ECC will be hosting FEATS from 5-8 May. Planning is still in its early stages, but already we are collecting together the names of people interested in helping, be it heading up a team or turning up next year to sell programmes. To make sure you don't miss out on being kept up to date with what's going on email Janet at ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com and she'll add your name (and telephone number) to our circulation list.

MONTHLY PLAY READINGS

Wednesday 6 May
7.45pm for 8pm - Chez Mary

Janet Middleton will lead us in reading

BLITHE SPIRIT

By Noël Coward

Blithe Spirit is a comedy about a socialite and novelist called Charles Condomine, who invites the eccentric medium and clairvoyant, Madame Arcati, to his house to conduct a séance, hoping to gather material for his next book. The scheme backfires when he is haunted by the ghost of his annoying and temperamental first wife, Elvira. After the séance Elvira makes continual attempts to disrupt Charles's marriage to his second wife, Ruth, who can neither see nor hear the ghost.

IMPORTANT

Although Mary and Barbara are still very much our guiding lights, Mary is no longer going to ring around to remind people about the meetings, and so you will now only hear about them by reading Ecco, Ecco Flash or via Facebook. However, in addition, every month Janet will be emailing a reminder to people who have attended in the past and who want to be on the Play Reading email list. If you would like to be added to the ECC Play Reading List, please email her at ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com.

We are now asking people to register as coming along via a Doodle link: all you will have to do is click on the link, add your name to the list under 'Table View', click in the box and then 'Save' your entry. If you have any problem with this, please do not hesitate to contact Janet - or simply to ring Mary on **02 345 8583** as usual! She has a message service if she's not there.

If you would like to come along in May please click here:

<http://doodle.com/7bzpybmyh5p9626d>

Contributions of interval drinks or nibbles always welcome!

Future Play Reading Date: 3 June

Congatulations to Hugo de Chassiron & Lara Gill

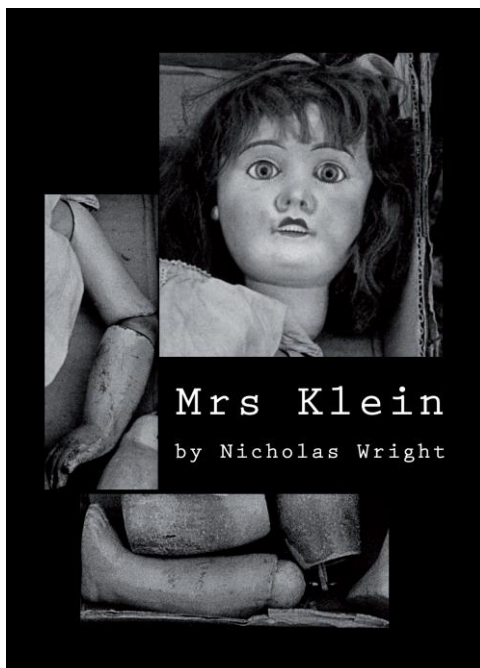
On the arrival of their absolutely beautiful baby daughter **Sarah**. Sarah is no stranger to the stage, having already starred as the Genie of the Ring's Bump in *Aladdin*!



FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

ECC	<i>War Brides</i> by Marion Craig Wentworth 14-16 May 2015
BLOC	<i>The Pajama Game</i> by Richard Alder & Jerry Ross 4-7 June 2015
Brussels Shakespeare Society	<i>As You Like It</i> by William Shakespeare 9-13 June 2015
Irish Theatre Group	Bloomsnight 13 June 2015
ECC	<i>Mrs Klein</i> by Nicholas Wright 22-26 September 2015
American Theatre Company	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> by Arthur Miller 6-10 October 2015

Click on the name of the theatre group above to go directly to their website.
For more information and auditions see also www.theatreinbrussels.com



22-26 September 2015
Box Office Opens 1 May
<https://thelittleboxoffice.com/ecc>

YOU MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED IN

NT Live now screening at Utopolis, Mechelen.
[Click here for further details](#)

14 May *Man and Superman*
15 October *Hamlet*

Utopolis will also be screening Mike Leigh's adaptation of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* on **19 May**:
http://www.utopolis.be/nl_BE/events/336

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:
<http://www.ffact.be/#>