



ECCO: July 2016



In this edition:

AGM: Date for your diary

Cinderella

Committee & ECC News

FEATS: Lots!

Future Productions & Forthcoming Events

Play Readings

Social Events

The Government Inspector

Youth Project: Update

If you have any contributions for ECCO, please send them to Janet at

ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

The next Ecco will come out September 2016

Deadline: 15 August

Letter from the Chair

It's been a great year for the ECC!

FEATS 2016 was a triumph in spite of some anxiety that security issues would discourage our wider European audience from attending.

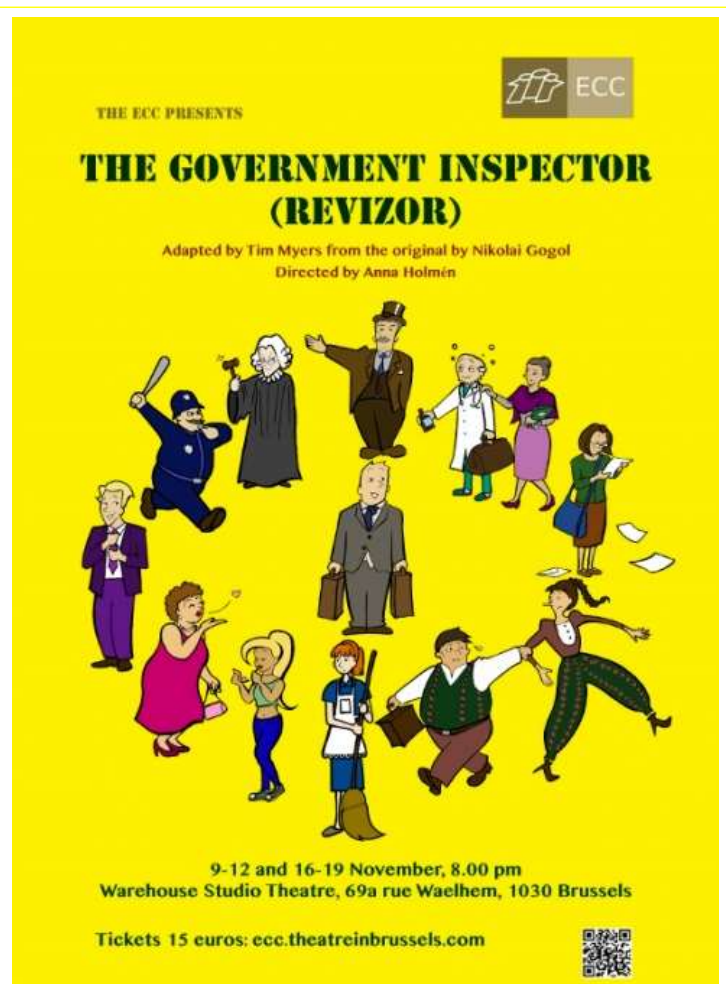
In the event we had good houses and everyone went home happy. The theatrical experience was stimulating, both on stage and in the Fringe, and our hardworking hospitality and technical teams made sure that all their other needs were well catered for.

It has not been such an easy time for the English language community in Brussels. Terrorism and the uncertainty created by Brexit make it difficult to plan ahead. All the more reason, however, for the ECC to continue to provide a haven of activity and common purpose. We all need to take time out from our stressful lives and the theatre provides that escape route for so many of us.

Enjoy the summer break. We are in the process of providing an exciting programme for you all in the autumn. As always we welcome new recruits so why not bring a friend.

Lyn Wainwright

chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com



Click on image left to go directly to the Box Office

The Government Inspector

9-12 & 16-19 November 2016

8pm

The Warehouse Studio Theatre

Tickets: <https://thelittleboxoffice.com/ecc>

Director Anna Holmén writes: "Everybody gets it, and I most of all." This is what Czar Nicholas I is said to have commented, when he saw the first production of *The Government Inspector*, "Revizor" in April 1836. The play is a satire of the ingrained corruption in Russia by the Ukrainian-born playwright Nikolai Gogol, based on an idea from none other than Pushkin. It is a play with deep roots in Russian culture, clearly proving that the British are not the only ones who can laugh at themselves.

So why do I want to direct this comedy of errors? Well, the keywords are "officials", "administration", "power play" and "corruption". I felt that if there was a translation old enough to be without copyright, then a modern adaptation and some geographical adjustments would make the play perfectly suited for the capital of Europe. This modern version gives the Brussels ex-pat community, and not least its faceless eurocrats, something from our own backyard to laugh about as we deal with the too often voiced, false accusations of creating too much administration, playing power games and corrupt dealings.

Luckily, I found someone who had just the same ideas as me, but a much better ability to put them on paper. Tim Myers has virtually rewritten the whole play, in modern language and a whole new setting, while keeping Gogol's, frankly very unpleasant, characters and classic comedy intrigue. Funnily enough, none of the translations I have come across has had the names of the characters translated, even though they in the original have meanings referring to the characters themselves. Inspired by Dickensian tradition, Tim has renamed them all to give the audience a hint of what to expect.

A quick resume of the plot gives us a small town, somewhere in Europe, spectacularly mismanaged by Mayor Baglout, Judge Rushcase, hospital director Olga Chisel and school director Luke Lamb. As in so many other classic plays, a letter is intercepted, and the officials learn that a government inspector is coming to town. In the turmoil that ensues, a misunderstanding leads Mayor Baglout and his cronies to believe that an official staying at the local inn with his servant is the inspector in question.



With a very strong cast of seasoned and new actors I am confident that the ECC November production will give the audience value for money and aching abdominal muscles.

First items for The Government Inspector costumes wardrobe. How do they fit in? Only one way to find out, book your tickets!

FEATS 2016

Many Congratulations to all the FEATS Winners!



First place

Irish Theatre Group with *The London Vertigo* by Brian Friel, after Charles Macklin

Second place (The ECC Centennial Cup)

University Players, Hamburg with *Invasion* by Jonas Hassen Khemeri (translated by Frank Perry)

Third place

AATG with *Alas, Poor Fred* by James Saunders

Best original script

Béibhinn Regli (GEDS) for *Working Girl*

Best stage presentation

Irish Theatre Group with *The London Vertigo* by Brian Friel, after Charles Macklin

Stage management award

BATS, Antwerp with *Three More Sleepless Nights* by Caryl Churchill

Discretionary award

Hamburg Players with *Soap Opera* by David Ives, for the washing machine and the stand-in role played by the director

Blackie Award for Best Actor: Brian Foley (ITG) in *The London Vertigo*

Other Nominations : Ben Evans (*Alas Poor Fred*, AATG); The Entire Male Cast of *Invasion* (Up Players) and Adrian Veale (*Three More Sleepless Nights*, BATS)

Special Mentions: Ewan Craig (*Remote*, EYT); Ravi Rege (*Paper God*, Actors Workout); Harald Djurken (*Soap Opera*, Hamburg Players) and Daire O'Doherty (*Working Girl*, GEDS)

Blackie Award for Best Actress: Marion Carter (AATG) in *Alas, Poor Fred* by James Saunders

Other Nominations: Jennifer Gehring (*Invasion*, Up Players); Zuzana Cox (*Syrinx*, Semi-Circle) and Amy Lee (*Soap Opera*, Hamburg Players)

Special Mentions: Kristina Kardum and Diana Campillo (*Wulf*, BSS); Alicia Desmedt (*Remote*, EYT) and Shirley Blake (*Creativity in the Time of Dictatorship*, In Players); Rita Felder (*Syrinx*, Semi-Circle); Danielle Kallender (*Paper God*, Actors Workout); Valerie Doyle (*Soap Opera*, Hamburg Players) and Beibhinn Regli (*Working Girl*, GEDS)

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEER HELPERS!

We could not have done it without you!

FEATS 2016: Parteeeee!



FEATS 2016



Our Adjudicator, Bev Clark, with her 'Minder' Malinda Coleman



Our Chair, Eileen, with the winners!



Eileen, Barbara Blackwell and our wonderful Stage Managers Andy Ing & Conrad Toft.

Barbara also presented the Blackie Awards for Best Actor and Best Actress.

FEATS 2016: An Overview

FEATS Helper and Performer Sara Hammerton writes:

The Woluwe St. Pierre Cultural Centre looked resplendent in the sunshine as luvvies from Amsterdam, The Hague, Hamburg, Munich, Bonn, Basel and Geneva, not to mention Brussels and Antwerp, arrived for the 40th Festival of European Anglophone Theatrical Societies, or FEATS.

The cherry blossom came out too, providing more of a pink carpet than a red one for our budding stars.



There was a very busy, happy atmosphere as participants settled into the venue, and got ready to strut their stuff before the Brussels' audience, fellow thespians, and of course the official adjudicator, Bev Clark. Quite a few also spilled out onto the surrounding lawns to enjoy the sunshine as they went over their scripts or ate their lunch. Inside, the bar was set up, the sandwiches and crisps were all ready for sale, programme sellers, cloakroom attendants and ticket checkers were all in place, while behind the scenes the crew got ready for show time.

The twelve short one-act plays, including five original scripts and six comedies, ranged from the tale of a tribe of 11th-century female warriors in Denmark to a 21st century student running a sex shop in a small town in Ireland via an elderly couple in arm chairs, kids in a park, relatives in a waiting room and travellers in the desert.

The opening piece, *Wulf!*, by the BSS, gave an energetic start to the festival, with lots of music and movement, and some performances that elicited praise from the judge. All the cast and crew had a fabulous time doing it and Stephen Challens' text was a very close runner-up for best original script.

I can't mention every performance here – they all had their good points and of course some weaker ones – but the plays have all been described in the "Feats Teasers" published in the run-up to the festival. My personal favourite was *Soap Opera*, the story of a washing machine repair man and his love affair with – a washing machine. Which just goes to show you do not know what to expect, because I thought the story was just toooo far-fetched, but the script was very funny, the two-level staging worked really well, and there were some great performances, particularly from the maitre d', but also from the woman director who did an excellent job of stepping in at the last minute to replace the man in the main role.

For innovation, I was particularly impressed with *Invasion*, performed by the University Players, Hamburg, largely for its very original set – hollow boxes trimmed with LED lights shifted around to represent whatever the play required next (box, bar, seat..). The actors were deft both in their own movements (clearly young and supple!) and in shifting the

boxes, as well as demonstrating an impressive range as they switched accent and persona. They were rewarded with second prize.

I would like to give a special mention to the English Youth Theatre (previously known as TIE), who gave the adults a good run for their money with *Remote*. These are school kids who get to rehearse for just over an hour a week, have homework to do and exams to revise for, making some of the mature and articulate performances we saw all the more impressive. Some of their actors got a special mention – well deserved.

And of course I have to mention the ITG's *The London Vertigo*, the worthy winner of the best production prize. We were given five, well-paced and evenly matched performances, although it was Brian Foley who walked off with the best actor award for his outstanding turn (in a red dress). The set was beautiful too, especially the red velvet curtain draped over a suspended bar. Loved it. Well done to Roisin Dore and co. who also bagged the best stage presentation for the ITG. So, three awards in all for the ITG. Time to invest in a trophy cabinet.

Being part of one of the performing groups gave me an insight into the strict rules that are applied to FEATS. With three groups a day competing for the same space, respecting the set time limits is crucial, both for the technical and performance rehearsal, and for placing and striking the set, not to mention getting all the technical specifications right in advance.

Aside from the competition entries, there were also fringe events during the afternoon, including many short plays, several workshops plus a guided walk. I only got to see one fringe play, *Zoo Story*, by BATS, which featured two very strong performances and a fast-paced script with an interesting twist. All Fringe events were well attended and clearly enjoyed.

To make the whole festival work we had a trusty crew behind the scenes, who were there from 8.00 am till after midnight – even later on party night. (Thank you to Steve Challens, Mark Prescott and co for a FANTASTIC party). And of course there was the whole front of house crew, organised with military precision by Pauline Van Greuningen. Not to mention the very slick operation at the bar and the food counter.

A lot of preparation goes into all this of course, mainly by Eileen Sutton and her FEATS committee, who began preparations well in advance and were still meeting daily during the festival. As well as sorting out the venue, getting a team together, and all the technical arrangements, there are also some last minute details that must not be forgotten. Here's just one example. Steve O'Byrne took care of the FEATS T-shirts this year, and after some research found a company in the Netherlands that could produce them in five days rather than the five weeks it would have taken in Belgium. Last minute changes, technical hitches and a public holiday meant that in the end delivery risked being delayed beyond our deadline. Steve decided to collect them himself from Deventer in the Netherlands, setting off at 12 noon the day before FEATS began. Heavy traffic meant he would arrive after the factory closed, but he called ahead and it was arranged for him to pick the T-shirts up from the home of a kindly staff member living nearby. Steve got back to Brussels just after 10.30 pm on 4 May, with the T-shirts, after having spent about 10 hours behind the wheel on a 600km round trip. He was at the W:Hall bright and early the next morning.

He has asked to be relieved of T-shirt duty next time.

ECC NEWS

Committee

Lyn Wainwright
Kerry Lydon
Martin Blackwell
Andy Ing
Chris Jones
Janet Middleton
Boff Muir
Joanna Patrick
Sara Hammerton
Fiona McGinnis
Conrad Toft

Role

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
FEATS
CAST Rep
ECCO

Publicity
Costumes
Webmaster

Contact us at:

chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
secretary@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
treasurer@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
feats@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
chris@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
boff@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
joanna@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
sara@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
fiona@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
webadmin@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

Cinderella

13-15 January 2017

ECC all set for *Cinderella!*

Excitement, delight and magical surprises are coming your way this Christmas!

The ECC panto will be returning for its fourth year with *Cinderella*. This timeless tale of rags-to-riches - featuring ugly sisters, songs, silliness and unfeasibly cute mice - will be performed at the Auderghem Cultural Centre from 13-15 January 2017. Stand by for tickets to go on sale - rumour has it that they'll go faster than invitations to the Royal Ball!

Social Event

Many Thanks to Kerry & Adam for giving us a wonderful time at our recent Quiz Night!

Our June quiz proved such a success that we will be hosting another on **30 September**.

Once again it will be in The Bar Room of The Warehouse, Rue Waelhem 69a, 1030 Schaerbeek. There will be more details in the September ECCO – but put the date in your diary and it's not too early to sign up on our Doodle to let us know you are coming (NB if you are coming as a team then you can just put one name +3 (eg Joe Bloggs +3): <http://doodle.com/poll/k9bvd7fmquyritw2>

AGM: Please put the date in your diary!

Thursday 20 October

Butties

For those of you who have not come across the Butties before, they are the Olivier Awards of Brussels!

Anyone who has been involved in a production is entitled to vote in various categories (although not actually for themselves, obviously) and then we all come together for a presentation of tastefully designed trophies and a wee drink or two.

This year the Butt Awards will be held on **Sunday 9 July at 3pm – Presentations at 4pm**. We are grateful to **Martin Blackwell** for offering to host the festivities in his lovely garden in Tervuren.

Voting is open until 7 July

[If you are entitled to vote then you can do so by clicking here](#)

Once you have voted full details will be sent to you. If you are not eligible to vote but have been closely involved with the ECC this year, then you can simply fill in the bottom of the form.

We look forward to seeing you on 9 July!

NB: For seasoned Butt Attenders. Conrad is looking for someone to take over the tallying of the votes. Would you be interested in doing this? If so, please contact him – he will be delighted to hear from you.

Survey

Please don't be surprised if you receive a survey from us: we are keen to find out how our audience finds out about our shows.

Many thanks for your co-operation.

Youth Project

It is with great regret that we have to announce that the planned Youth Workshop for this summer cannot go ahead.

Although we had plenty of interest, and an experienced leader with a programme ready to go ahead, the dates we were able to offer were not compatible with the availability of the families interested in participating.

We hope that we will be able to start this project in 2017!

MONTHLY PLAY READINGS

Our Next Play Reading will be held on Wednesday 6 July

Amy's View

By David Hare

We will meet Chez Barbara, Rue Louis Hymans 20, 1050 Ixelles

In Pangbourne and London between 1979 and 1995 there is a running argument about the respective virtues of traditional theatre and the media arts weaving its way through opinions on marriage, love, fame, fidelity, betrayal, personal and artistic integrity – and the corporate world. So pretty much something for everyone!

If you intend to come please register via Doodle by clicking **Here** - or ring Mary on 02 345 8583.

For those of you who are new to the play reading group, we meet at 7.45pm aiming to start reading at 8. We have drinks and nibbles, and a small contribution in the form of a bottle or something to eat is always welcome!

Although Mary and Barbara are still very much our guiding lights, Mary is no longer ringing around to remind people. However, every month Janet emails a reminder to people who have attended in the past and wish to be on the mailing list for these reminders. If you would like to be added to the ECC Play Reading Email List, please email Janet at ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

How to Doodle: All you have to do is click on the link above, add your name to the list under 'Table View', click in the box to show you are coming (or do nothing if you're not!) and then 'Save' your entry. If you have any problem with this, please do not hesitate to contact Janet - or simply ring Mary.

The next play reading will be on 3 August

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS/EVENTS

ATC	<i>Tartuffe</i> 20 September – 1 October
ITG	<i>Afterplay</i> 11-15 October
BSS	<i>Coriolanus</i> 24-30 October
ECC	<i>The Government Inspector</i> 9-12 & 16-19 November
BLOC	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> 24-29 November
ECC	<i>Cinderella</i> 13-15 January

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

YOU MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED IN:

Utopolis, Mechelen, has for some time been screening **NTLive**, but they are now also screening other English productions. [Click here for further details](#)

19 July	<i>The Queen</i>
15 September	<i>A View from The Bridge</i>
27 October	<i>The Entertainer</i> The Kenneth Branagh Theatre Co.
27 October	<i>Frankenstein</i>
17 November	<i>Hamlet</i> Benedict Cumberbatch Version
8 December	<i>War Horse</i>

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/#>