



ECCO: March 2019



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

ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

The next Ecco will come out in May 2018

Message from the Chair



Thank you to all of you that came to see our most successful panto yet in January – Robin Hood & Babes in the Wood. It is always lovely to see so many youngsters get their first taste of theatre. The panto was a great financial success and we were able to donate some of the funds to two charities - Serve the City and FACE – in addition to being able to finance the rest of the season and help with the running costs of the Warehouse.

Rehearsals are well under way for our next production of Pygmalion directed by Emily Bowles. This will be in the studio in May and the box office is already open. The ECC will also be participating in FEATS in Munich in May. We have entered The Impotence of Being Frank directed by Hugh Dow for competition (which we staged as part of a double-bill a couple of years ago) and a small team will be travelling to Munich to represent the ECC.

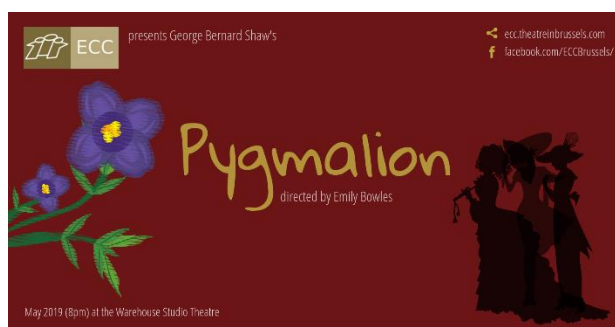
Hope to see you at one of our forthcoming shows and we really appreciate your continued support.

Kerry Lydon, ECC Chair

chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

In Rehearsal Pygmalion

Our next ECC production is George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion", directed by Emily Bowles, at the Warehouse Studio Theatre from 2-4 and from 8-11 May, 2019.



Emily writes:

Pygmalion is the reworking of the story of the sculptor who falls in love with a female statue – fruit of his own labour. This masterpiece presents the renowned theatre duo of Eliza Doolittle, a “common” cockney flower girl, and Henry Higgins, a professor of phonetics who decides to try and pass her off as a duchess by correcting her English. He succeeds and wins his bet, and indeed Eliza’s old habits soon disappear, but her soul remains unchanged. She has feelings ‘same as anyone else’, which are disregarded by the bullying yet witty professor whose own manners are not the best example.

Who would not want to see a play which openly mocks and attacks the British class system? A play in which the lower class make use of unpleasant sounding jargon, common expressions (‘the new small talk’) and make so many grammatical mistakes that the harsh yet likeable Higgins, very much like Shaw himself in many ways, cannot hold his tongue and condemns such behaviour throughout the play. He adds insult to injury by showing an utter lack of respect towards women (Shaw had feminist views after all).



The nuances in the character of Henry Higgins both as a reader and as an audience member have never ceased to astonish me, and at times confuse me. He has a way of being direct, but as it is often hard to tell whether he is angry or highly enthusiastic, I still find it difficult to really describe him, or analyse the nature of his character. How can someone so rude and mean at times, be so witty and likeable? The reason is simply that he is direct and does not hide the truth from anyone. He treats everybody the same way, regardless of social class. But is he truthful to himself?

In Pygmalion I really see the complexity of the human nature and a sense of social struggle in all of the characters, from Eliza, her father Doolittle all the way over to the Eynsford Hills and Higgins himself. Understanding difficult characters is already a challenge, and I personally enjoy directing a challenge. The actors are all in character already, and I could not be happier.

Come and see the results of all our hard work (and fun!). Performances are on 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11 May at the Warehouse Studio Theatre, starting at 8pm (doors open 7.30 pm). Full running time, including interval, approximately 2h30. Tickets €16.00

Box office now open.

<https://thelittleboxoffice.com/ecc>

In Review: The Panto.

Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood

FULL HOUSE!

Success can be measured in many ways. When it comes to this year's panto, we surely scored high whichever way you look at it. Full house – yes. VIP audience – yes. Audience standing in the aisles – yes. Audience dancing – yes. Audience laughing – yes. Rapturous applause – yes.



Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood, performed at the Auderghem Cultural Centre from 18-20 January, was the sixth panto in a row for the ECC. Building on the success of the five previous shows, ticket sales were high (close to 3,000), and by the Sunday we had a full house. The first time EVER, apparently, in the history of the Auderghem Cultural Centre, so they were delighted (as were we). Prince Laurent also brought his kids, which means we can almost claim the panto is now “by royal appointment”. Of course everyone in our audience is a VIP – school groups, scout groups, family groups, mates, bemused strangers.

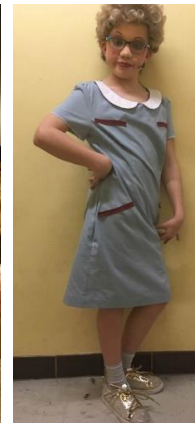
Director Andy Fisk and principal writer and choreographer Josephine Draycott put even more emphasis on the singing and dancing this year. Katherine Cox, our feisty Maid Marian, set the tone with a rousing rendition of Good Morning Nottingham, supported by the chorus in a carefully choreographed dance. Josephine Draycott in the title role of Robin Hood, gave another strong vocal (and physical) performance. Last year's principal boy Hannah Riley (the Prince in Snow White) didn't get to sing this year, but put on such a fabulous performance as the front half of the lovely panto horse Brown Booty that the horse became the kids' favourite character. She was only half the story of course – of equal importance was the horse's rear end played very gamely – and with an impressively flexible back – by Cat Harris, who ate her way through a large apple under her costume for every show. Cat also got to stand up in another costume, as the huntsman who couldn't bear to kill the babes.



This year's baddie was Caraigh McGregor who brought his considerable talents to bear to play a mean but camp Sheriff of Nottingham, keeping his audience enthralled. His partner in crime, Guy of Gisborne, was Cath Howdle, whose love of panto shines through every role she plays.



One innovation this year was that we had a mini-dame. Steve Challens was a revelation as adult dame Nurse Nanny Nellie, embracing his inner camp for all he was worth. In his walkdown costume he looked like a cross between Danny la Rue and Toots. Shadowing his every move was his mini-me dame, 11-year-old Oscar Graf, off stage a quiet bookish lad, on stage an absolute drama queen! Amazing. Oscar was not the only 11-year-old-principal. We also had Cara Davies and Isabelle Kelly as Wallonia and Flandria, this year's comic duo, who never let their French/Flemish accents slip and took infectious delight in all their daft antics.



More daft antics too from our Merry Men, led by Jen Cleal as Alan-a-Dale. They were an all singing all dancing troupe, whose Mel Brooks tribute "Men in Tights" can-can was one of the highlights of the show.



Compering the show was our lovely, very girly Fairy Bluebell in shape of Charlotte Morely, who also got to show us she can hold a tune better than most.



Then we had our all singing, all dancing chorus, beginning with the Sheriff's and Guy's four guards (with their Nottingham coat of arms), the ever cute mice – nine of them this year – who also became minions, and about 18 more kids who as well as being villagers took it in turns to become – to mention but a few numbers - school kids for Hit Me Nanny One More Time, dancers in ABBA outfits for Money Money Money, dancing onesie-wearers for Wake Me Up Before You Go Go, and in the case of Eilidh Bordes a bouncy rock-'n-roll Baby Groot in Mr. Blue Sky.

With a cast of 55 not everyone can be mentioned by name here, but they all deserve recognition and were all listed in the programme.

Nor can I mention the whole crew but we wouldn't have a panto without them. There is a huge amount of work that goes on back stage. Forgive me for selecting just a few of those who make the magic happen. The choreographers who worked hard with that enormous cast from way back in sunny September were Josephine Draycott, Hannah Riley, Cath Howdle and Marta Braun. Richard Hampton once again produced a staggering amount of amazing props, with some very professional contributions from Cat Harris and Cath Howdle. Steve O'Byrne and Andy Fisk were responsible for the music and special effects, and our costume team (names in programme) worked very hard to bring to life the ideas originally supplied by Josephine Draycott, while adding a few of their own. Jen Cleal again led her make up team and the person bringing all the different parts of the machinery together was show producer Kerry Lydon. We had Ant McCarthy all the way from Luxembourg to do the lighting, Andy Ing all the way from his unpacked removals boxes to stage manage and Lilian and Freddy all the way from Kampenhout to do publicity. Finally a big shout out to our parent helpers who got all the right kids onto the stage at the right time in the right costumes. Take a bow.

Sara Hammerton

CALL FOR DIRECTORS

The ECC is looking for directors for the next season and beyond. If you are interested in directing a small studio production, a big mainstage production or even the panto we would love to hear from you. Experienced and first time directors are all welcome. We are happy to help out and support new directors. We can provide a mentor and help find a team to support you, so don't be shy. If there is a production you would like to put on and you think it might be of interest to the ECC please contact chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com.

SOCIAL EVENTS

We have had a slight lull in our social events recently due to busy timetables and clashing commitments. We intend to have more soon, including by popular demand another wine tasting evening. It would seem that the social events involving alcohol work best. Hmmmm..... We'll let you know the dates of forthcoming social events as soon as plans are firmed up. Meanwhile here's a reminder of the last one.



Play Readings

6 FEBRUARY 2019

Graham Andrews will lead us in reading

"The Return of A J Raffles"

By

Graham Greene

We will meet Chez the Middletons

Rue des Atrebatas 27, 1040 Brussels

The Return of A. J. Raffles, first published in 1975, is an Edwardian comedy play in three acts, written by Graham Greene and based somewhat loosely on E. W. Hornung's characters in *The Amateur Cracksman*.

Set in the late summer of the year 1900, the story revolves around the infamous burglar and cricketer, A. J. Raffles—presumed dead in the Boer War—who returns to Albany where, with his friends Bunny and Lord Alfred Douglas, he plots to rob the Marquess of Queensberry, partly for the money and partly for revenge against the Marquess for his treatment of their friend Oscar Wilde. The robbery takes place at The Marquess' house in Hertfordshire, where Raffles and Bunny are interrupted by the Prince of Wales and a Scotland Yard detective, who discover the Prince's personal letters have also been stolen. Fans of Raffles will already be aware that Radio 4 has recently aired some old Raffles episodes, and at time of writing they are available to 'listen again' here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00ymy34/episodes/player>

To register that you are coming please go to: <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com/>

6 March 2019

Sheila Hewitt will lead us in reading

"Nell Gwyn"

By Jessica Swaile

We will meet Chez Fiona

Ave Roger Vandendriessche 35, 1150 Brussels

Nell Gwyn (1650-87) was a celebrity figure of the Restoration period. Praised by Samuel Pepys for her comic performances as one of the first actresses on the English stage, she became best known for being a long-time mistress of King Charles II of England and Scotland. Called "pretty, witty Nell" by Pepys, she has been regarded as a living embodiment of the spirit of Restoration England and has come to be considered a folk heroine, with a story echoing the rags-to-royalty tale of Cinderella she had two sons by Charles II.

This play about her life debuted at The Globe, and caused controversy because a mixed-race actor, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, was cast in the lead role.

3 April 2019

Kristina Kardum will lead us in reading

"Messrs. Glembay"

By Miroslav Krleža

We will meet Chez Rina

CEIA, Sint-Michielslaan 119, 1040 Brussel

In April we are delighted to welcome Kristina Kardum who will lead us in the reading of a classic from her native country of Croatia: ***Messrs. Glembay***.

Messrs. Glembay is a 1929 play by Miroslav Krleža, which was adapted into a film in 1988.

The play is divided into three acts, dealing with the events and the rift within the family Glembay, and is the first of three plays in a trilogy. It is considered a classic of Croatian literature.

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

<u>ATC</u>	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams, 5-9 March 2019, Centre Culturel Jacques Franck
<u>BSS</u>	<i>Our Country's Good</i> by Timberlake Wertenbaker, 19-23 March, Espace Theatral Scarabeus
<u>Green Parrot</u>	<i>Shrek, the Musical</i> – 22-26 March 2019, WHall, Woluwe Cultural Centre
<u>ITG</u>	<i>Philadelphia, Here I Come</i> by Brian Friel, 26-30 March 2019 – Warehouse Studio Theatre
<u>ECC</u>	<i>Pygmalion</i> by George Bernard Shaw, April 2019, Warehouse Studio Theatre
<u>BLOC</u>	<i>The Sorcerer</i> , 23-26 May 2019, De Bosuil Cultural Centre, Overijse

**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**

ECC PRIVACY POLICY

In line with the General Data Protection Regulation the ECC has adopted a **Privacy Policy** to give you a clear understanding of what information we collect about you, how we collect it (from you directly and from third parties), how we use it, and how we keep it secure. [Full details of the ECC Privacy Policy are on our web site: http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com/?page_id=1954](http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com/?page_id=1954)

You can contact us at any time to access the information we hold about you on privacy@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com