



## New World Theatre Club Newsletter

January 2008

Inside .....

<i>What's on</i>	1
<i>Editor's essay</i>	2
<i>Committee comment</i>	3
<i>Rave reviews</i>	4
<i>Dream 2007</i>	8
<i>The Natural Daughter</i>	9
<i>Insider insight</i>	10
<i>Club concerns</i>	12
<i>External events</i>	13
<i>Back-page bump</i>	14

### What's on ...

When	Who	What	Where
4–6 January		<a href="#">Théâtre des Capucins</a>	Season's Greetings
<b>19 January</b>	<b>NWTC</b>	<b>Improvisation workshop</b>	<b>T'Scheier, Aspelt</b>
7, 8, 13, 14, 18–20 March, 10, 11 April		Design for Living	Grand Théâtre
17–18 April		Torquato Tasso	Grand Théâtre
23–26 April	Pirates	Old Time Music Hall	Gasperich Parish Hall
7–9 May		Never Shop and F**k When you are Angry	Théâtre National du Luxem- bourg

**Merry Christmas ...**

## Editor's essay

Alison Kelly

I'm writing this before Christmas, as I'm off on an extended New Year's break on December 28<sup>th</sup>, so I can't resist putting festive symbols all over this newsletter! I just hope they don't seem inappropriate by the time you get round to reading it!

The club has several things to celebrate, as well as the festivities all around us. As you will see further on in the newsletter, *Tissue* was well received, and not just by the usual suspects. It is good to see English-language theatre being reviewed in *Luxembourger Wort* – and even better to see it being reviewed so favourably. Congratulations to all concerned! There is also a very favourable, if belated, review of *Something Unspoken*, reprinted from *DAWN*, the newsletter of the Drama Association of Wales, so obviously our fame is spreading!

Closer to home, we are also celebrating a very enjoyable and well-attended Backstage Workshop, the successful conclusion of the Dream 2007 project, and the continuing progress of the Youth Workshop. All of these are fully reported in this newsletter, so even if you weren't there you can get some sense of what your club is up to.

The committee has also been busy, although things have quietened down a bit in recent weeks since Rodney has returned to his native land for a long overdue visit to family and friends. In typically efficient fashion he wanted to get everything organised before he left, and so we were all working hard and meeting frequently.

The next event to look forward to is the Workshop-Audition for *The Natural Daughter* on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January. We decided to shift this from Edward's house to T'Scheier in Aspelt, as that venue can accommodate larger numbers. The unusual billing of a Workshop-Audition is meant to indicate that you don't have to decide in advance if you want to be in the play. If you just like the idea of a theatre workshop in the New Year, and fancy exploring the use of masks in the theatre, you can come along and enjoy yourself without any pressure. But if you would like to take part in the production you can also consider the particular roles that are available, and whether any of them have your name attached.

The club has also been approached by the head of the Abbey Neuminster about putting on a contribution to their annual *Festival international Humour pour la Paix* (International Festival of Humour for Peace) in 2009. While we are obviously flattered to be invited, there is a slight problem: they have already chosen the play for us! *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* by Martin McDonagh is a comedy about the IRA (yes, really), which is obviously a delicate topic and one that would have to be tackled sensitively. The other problem is that they want a reply by early January, so committee members are frantically trying to get hold of a copy of the play and read it over the Christmas holidays. If you have any thoughts on this – or anything else that you read in this newsletter – please do let a committee member know. All our contact details are on the back page.

Now I've got to get back to the all I that remains for me to say is, wonderful holiday!



shopping and the mince pies. So I hope you all have/had a

Deadline for March issue: **February 15**. Please email your contributions to [alison@keled.com](mailto:alison@keled.com), fax them to (00352) 25 44 38 or snail mail to Alison Kelly, 41 rue J.B.Esch, L-1473 Luxembourg.



### Committee comment

The committee met on November 13<sup>th</sup> at Rodney's flat on Kirchberg. All members except Anna were present.

The first item on the agenda was future productions. With *Tissue* imminent we discussed a few issues around this production. In particular, we decided to make it clear to all future directors that all publicity is the responsibility of the production team. This includes invitations to ambassadors and critics, as well as publicity in the media. The committee will of course be willing to help if requested, but the initiative should come from the team.

We also discussed the workshop for *The Natural Daughter*, and considered whether attendance might be improved if it were advertised as an audition rather than a workshop. Possible venues for a production later in 2008 were also discussed. This should be intimate, without being okay or too expensive. Any suggestions would be gratefully received.

Next we considered the third stage of the Dream 2007 project. There had been a bit of a mix-up over this, in that the committee had been exploring contact with old people's homes, while the sub-committee had arranged to perform in five secondary schools. It was agreed that this is indeed the job of the sub-committee., but that they should keep the rest of us well informed about what they are doing. We decided to ask them to write a report on the third stage of the project for the newsletter (see page 8).

Steady progress is being made on recovering the policy book. We have almost finished going through the existing records to try to recover policies adopted by the club in the past, and we decided to try to put together a new policy book, based on the existing policies, by March. This will then be circulated to all members, who will be asked to submit any comments well before the AGM (so as to try to keep the meeting to a manageable length). Items in the policy book should be long-lasting statements of the club's principles; more ephemeral decisions should be incorporated into the production book. This is already in existence, but needs to be updated.

Christine reported on the Youth Workshop. There are now 12 participants, although attendance is irregular, and not all of them have paid their fees. Most of the group seemed to be more interested in acting than in writing, and so they have decided to attempt parts of Alan Ayckbourn's *Confessions* for their spring show. We are still looking for a director for an adult one-act play to be put on at the same time, so as to make a café theatre evening out of it.

Alison has put the membership database into Access, which makes it much easier to sort and query. She reduced lists of lapsed members, many of whom are long-standing members of the club. It was agreed that many of these people were probably unaware that their membership had lapsed as no reminders had been sent out this year. Alison agreed to email them a tactfully-worded request to renew.

The question of 'splinter-groups' was discussed. Occasionally NWTC members put on productions independently, outside the club's umbrella. This can be either because their idea has been turned down by the committee, or because they don't want to stick to some of the club's policies (such as open auditions). Of course, individuals have a perfect right to do this, but we felt that it was not a practice that should be encouraged: we have good reasons for our decisions and our policies! It was decided to charge any such groups the full rate for any equipment (lighting, costumes etc.) that they might want to borrow from us.

Several items were raised under A.O.B. The club's website is doing a good job of advertising current events, but other information (such as details of the committee and the newsletter) are badly out of date. Christine robustly agreed to ask Christine Mitchell (our webmistress) if she wanted any help in updating the website. The club is a long-standing recipient of DAWN (Drama in Wales Newsletter), but the question was raised as to whether this represents value-for-money. Alison agreed to put something in the newsletter about the work of this group and in particular the national drama library that it hosts (see page 7). Finally the role of the NWTC at the (Munsbach) summer school was mentioned, in the light of a suggestion that there should be an element of profit-sharing between the club and the tutors. As the hour was already late, we decided to explore this more fully at a later meeting.

The next committee meeting will be held on January 21st, by which time all the committee members will have returned from their travels to far-flung places.

## Rave Reviews

### Tissue

*An open letter* from Luce Botte-Castaldi

Dearest Friend,

When you contacted me to see if I would like to accompany you to the opening night performance of a NWTC production of a play about breast cancer, I thought: "Are we crazy?!" You and I live this theme day in and day out for months and months and months, indeed for the rest of our lives. And you think it's a good idea to devote an evening's worth of energy (because it's not the time, really; it's the level of available energy) to participate in yet another exploration of this disease??



Well, dear friend, I am happy to report that you were right once again. The performance of *Tissue* was a true pleasure. Written by Louise Page, directed by Wendy Dunning-Baker, and produced by the New World Theatre Club, *Tissue* was performed at the Théâtre du Centaure on the Grand rue in Luxembourg-Ville on the 14 – 19 of November, 2007.

But it started many years ago, in 1978 in fact, when the writer, Louise Page, was commissioned to write a play about women. And to quote the Director's notes in the program: "She particularly wanted to write a play about a hidden problem for women as opposed to something more outwardly obvious." And that, to me, is a vital piece of information to view the play in its correct historical perspective.

Who was writing about this topic at that time? It was a totally "hidden problem" that brought a deathly shudder of disaster and fear to those involved. The available medications and treatment methods were as difficult as the disease itself. Today we are blessed with advanced research and technology, based in great part on the clinical trails of those earlier women. A phrase that I encountered in my research and that has stayed with me in a humble and comforting way is that "we are standing on the shoulders of the women who have come before."

And this production is indeed a joyful and fitting homage to celebrate the courage, humour, and humanity of those women, all rolled up into the character of Sally, bravely played by Fran Potasnik. Covered all in white, looking so tiny in a large chair up-stage center when the lights came up, she was the picture of vulnerability. And on-stage Fran remained, scene after scene, in a whirl of brief moments of Sally's life, forward, backward, jumping in time, interacting with various relationships of her past and present, each scene lasting only a few moments before being catapulted into the next, with no chronological sequence to hold on to. A difficult job well done. The audience was able to ride that roller coaster of events, with Fran clearly providing the emotional focus so we didn't get lost. The final image of her, eyes gleaming and full of hope, facing up into the light with darkness all around her, was deeply moving. It says it all: we must keep moving forward.

Also indispensable to the audience's smooth journey through the play, was the intricate positioning provided by the lighting design. Les Wilson's lights provided the map with sufficient clues to guide our attention to each episode with not a second lost; essential to the over-all timing and continuity of the piece.

How to describe the athletic versatility of the other two actors in this production is surely a challenge. Adrian Diffy and Niamh Huggard outdid their many, many selves on stage, providing moments of unique enjoyment, humour and pathos. They were able to create an ensemble feeling, as they tumbled from character to character.

Niamh, portraying childhood friends Zoe and Fleur, provided that thread to Sally's past that made her present all the more poignant. "I must, I must, I must increase my bust!" in an aerobic rhythm broke through the tension with great laughter and relief. With Niamh's arresting eyes and a variety of lilting voices, she effectively carried us through her many characters, each contributing another jigsaw bit of information to bring the overall picture into focus. I particularly liked the jaded doctor's secretary.

Artfully balanced between the two women on stage, the male presence of Adrian Diffy, in all his incarnations, was a satisfying completion of the trio. His great rubbery face, his ever-changing posture, expression and gesture provided great variety and understanding to the rapid flow of scenes. Father, brother Simon, various

boyfriends appeared and disappeared in a flash, each distinct from the other; appealing, generous, concerned characters. Adrian's use of a prop, his hat, clutched in his hands with hunched shoulders and an uncertain step, was particularly effective in portraying the nervous tension and alarm this illness brings to families – the hesitation, not knowing what to do, what to say, wanting to help but feeling helpless. And then, the grateful release through humour: Adrian was funny!

The humour, pace and movement of the evening was a fine success due to the intelligent and able direction of Wendy Dunning-Baker. Wendy kept the piece on its feet, moving and *entertaining*, despite its serious content. That is quite a challenge with a brave choice of material. I loved the flowing use of the chairs: upstage, downstage, faced in every different direction, open, and even cleverly held closed in one scene. A young Sally, Simon and a friend frolicking on the very edge of the stage, so close and immediate, gave the audience the charm and invention of children at play with a spontaneous joy that was like opening a window of fresh air, relieving the hot-house tension of viewing a life with cancer. The use of a recorded scene that was only heard and not seen was also useful in giving distance to the intimacy of the play's content. In all: good direction in threading together a breathless number of quick scenes at a pace that never broke stride.

From the opening music that gave us the heartbeat, all production elements worked in harmony to create a special and moving theatre experience. In addition, it was an opportunity to learn more about a disease that is being faced by an ever-increasing number of women.

Written as it was, almost 30 years ago, I would suggest an up-dated version; a nip and tuck to modernize pertinent content more in line with the situation of today. *Tissue* could then also be used as an education tool in many different venues (schools, hospitals, clinics) as a springboard of discussion for the general public, and more intimately for the now millions of families grappling with these issues. The structure of the play itself, the fact that it is divided into innumerable short scenes, lends itself easily into tailored and edited productions aimed at specific audiences. I could see that as having enormous instructive and therapeutic value, as well as continuing as a fine artistic accomplishment.

Thanks for a wonderful evening,

Luce

### **Why me? Why me!**

*"Tissue": Scenes from the life of a woman suffering from breast cancer*

Reviewed by Ronny Steinmetz, in *The Luxembourger Wort* 19/11/07 (translated from German by Chris Albrecht)

The New World Theatre Club's current production of the English language play *Tissue* by Louise Page at the Théâtre du Centaure theatre tackles the subject of breast cancer.

With such a difficult subject, the play could easily have been melodramatic and become disconnected from its audience. However this production avoided these dangers.

Presented in the form of an objective narrative, *Tissue* highlights various moments in the life of Sally (Fran Potasnik), and her fight against breast cancer. The play covers her childhood and youth, when worries were distant, to the first doubts, not taken seriously, the operation and the ensuing physical and emotional hardship, up to the final acceptance of the condition.



### **A brilliant performance**

The play's non-linear structure, and the fact that the many different characters – parents, brother, friends, doctors, nurses etc. – were all played by Niamh Huggard and Adrian Diffey, made the play a challenge to act and to follow.

However, these difficulties were mastered with the help of impressive changes of character by the three actors, few but meaningful props (for example a stethoscope and a nurse's cap), perfect diction in many different dialects and voice ranges, and a discreet but very effective set. The genuine and realistic nature of the characters enabled men as well as women to feel their way into Sally's pain.

It is shocking to be confronted with the extent of the impact which a small piece of tissue can have on a woman's life. Nevertheless, everyone affected by this problem should see *Tissue* because the author Louise Page shows so aptly not only how difficult the illness is to manage, but also the power of hope.

This fine performance received well-deserved and sustained applause from a packed venue, and many theatre-goers will hope to see another New World Theatre Club performance in the not-too-distant future.



### **Something Unspoken**

*Reviewed by Teresa Hennessy in the Autumn 2007 issue of DAWN, the newsletter of the Drama Association of Wales*

How wonderful it is to meet up with old friends in a beautiful European city at a drama festival. Renewing old acquaintances whilst enjoying the sights and sounds of an unfamiliar city and being entertained every afternoon and evening with good quality, varied, exciting theatre. I am, of course, talking about my favourite, the FEATS festival...and who should I meet there this year but our old friends, the New World Theatre Club (NWTC) from Luxembourg. This talented group excelled in many aspects of theatre this weekend giving the audience great pleasure with a well-chosen piece.

I'd like to thank NWTC members Rodney and Steve who very kindly took time out from their busy schedule to talk to me about the history of the group and the projects they are preparing for later in the year.

NWTC are an active group with many projects in the offing, yet one without a home venue in which to base themselves or store scenery/costumes or even rehearse! Luxembourg is very expensive, and it comes as no surprise to hear that the National Theatre of Luxembourg can charge €1000 a night to perform at their venue, so NWTC use free space at local schools for rehearsals, and who can blame them? They're trying to establish an ongoing relationship with a suitable venue; a practice that many groups will empathise with. Their production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* last July was an extravaganza acted in Luxembourgish, German and English with choral selections in French. The group has also organised youth theatre improvisation workshops in English which have been running since February 2007. These workshops are an opportunity for the young people of Luxembourg to explore the themes of the 2007 Year of Culture through theatre and improvisation.

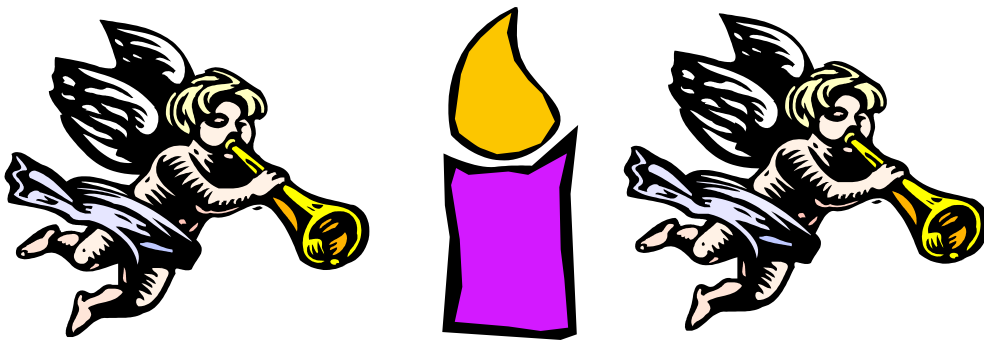
NWTC was founded in 1968 in Luxembourg and is one of the founding members of FEATS. The club produces on average of two or three plays a year, ranging from contemporary work and comedy favourites to more serious drama. But it all started four years earlier in 1964 when translator Peter Davis wanted to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's birth with his class of English language students at the European Parliament. Irene Lowy and Martin Vasey recorded the balcony scene from *Romeo and*

*Juliet*; good job it was on audio-tape, as Irene was six months pregnant at the time! The experience certainly did not put her off even though she was going through quite an ordeal herself at the time. Four years later, Peter further encouraged her to take part in the full-length play *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder. There weren't that many British people in Luxembourg then, but as long as they were English-speaking they were roped in to take part!

NWTC have been members of DAW since 1999 and we have enjoyed a great relationship with this group, not least thanks to Pauline Lloyd the former Chair of NWTC; the friendship began when Pauline attended a DAW summer school at St Donat's in the Vale of Glamorgan back in the nineties.

I not only enjoyed Pauline's company along with the rest of the company, but also thoroughly enjoyed their production of *Something Unspoken* by Tennessee Williams. Two compelling performances from: Ann Overstall in the role of Cornelia Scott, a Southern lady who has assumed the role of oracle and matriarch of the town; and Fran Potasnik who played her constant companion and faithful personal assistant Grace Lancaster. Cornelia's feelings run wild when, on the anniversary of their first meeting, she gives Grace fifteen red roses, one for each of the years that they have 'lived together'. I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed this production, and isn't it great when you can go up to your friend with hand on heart and say how much her company's work has affected you ... and in a good way! The two actresses, in close collaboration with the director (Chris Wilson), explored the deepening of Cornelia's feelings for Grace over the years since the two Southern spinsters began 'living together', and as the imagined relationship, from Cornelia's point of view, was taken towards reality.

NWTC has for many years organised a residential summer school in Clairefontaine (formerly in Munsbach) revolving entirely around project work for directing, acting and musical theatre students. For more information, please go to [www.munsbach.org](http://www.munsbach.org) and to find out more about this fine drama group go to [www.nwtc.lu](http://www.nwtc.lu)



**Songs from Call me Madam**  
*Chris Albrecht*

On 27 November 2007, I represented the New World Theatre Club at a performance of *Songs from Call me Madam* at the US Embassy in Luxembourg. The United States Ambassador Ann L. Wagner and Luxembourg's Consul-General in San Francisco, Georges Faber had joined forces to bring a selection of songs from Irving Berlin's famous Broadway musical to Ambassador Wagner's residence.

Call Me Madam is based on America's capable and colourful envoy to post-WWII Luxembourg, Perle Mesta. The musical opened at Broadway's Imperial Theater in 1950 and played for two seasons, earning four Tony Awards, including best musical score for Irving Berlin. In 1953, Twentieth-Century Fox adapted the hit musical for film. The evening was especially poignant because the songs were performed in the same house that Mesta lived in when she served in Luxembourg from 1949. It was a rare opportunity to bring such a memorable chapter in Luxembourg's post-war history back to life. Perle Mesta's amazing charisma, was, I am sure, instrumental in its own way in putting the Grand Duchy onto the international map. The event was also great in that it brought together a very interesting mix of local and expatriate fans of English-language culture. I formally expressed thanks, on behalf of the New World Theatre Club, to her Excellency for organising such a special event.

## Dream 2007: the third and final lap

Chris Albrecht

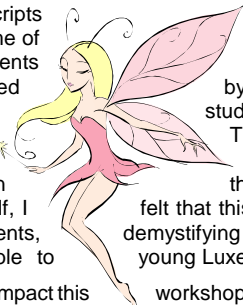
In the September newsletter I wrote about the plans for the Dream school workshops. These constitute the third lap of the Dream 2007 project, your club's contribution to *Luxembourg and Greater Region – Year of Culture 2007*. Dream 2007 was a multi-disciplinary and multi-lingual theatre project held in three stages: workshops, leading into a performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and finally some pedagogic workshops in Luxembourg schools. We are happy to say that five workshops have now taken place, involving a total of 127 secondary school students. All the workshops were in local secondary schools: two in the Lycée Privé Fieldgen, and one each in the Lycée Technique du Centre, Lycée des Garçons (Esch) and Lycée Michel Rodange. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* is part of the standard English language teaching programme in Luxembourgish schools.



I attended the last workshop in the series, which was held in the Lycée Michel Rodange in Luxembourg City. This was also the very last and final event under the Dream 2007 project. I was quite excited about going back into the school which I had myself graduated from back in 1979 .... Save for a few coats of paint added here or there, and a few new wings added on (but in the same style) to cater for ever increasing student numbers, I felt as if I had only just left my school desk. What appeared, however, to have dramatically changed, was the teaching in general: the English language teacher had a perfect command of the language, which was far from what I encountered in my time, the teachers seemed to have a collegial relationship with the students, and the students appeared to be well used to the concept of outsiders coming into the building and sharing their expertise with them.

The bashfulness or apparent passivity of teenage student groups has, however, not changed a tad, although it was great to find out that a lot of it went out of the window as soon as the workshop kicked off. A small number of actors and back-stage people from Dream joined Tony Kingston, the Dream Director, that day. In fact, the composition of the team was different for each workshop, according to who had the time or could take a few hours off work that day, and the programme varied depending on who was present. This time we had a Titania (Jessica Whiteley), a Henner / Bottom (Jean Schmit), a Peaseblossom (Lisa Jedras) and a Schnauz / Snout (Beverley Atkinson), in addition to myself in the capacity of general coordinator (and off-duty lion!).

On this occasion, we worked through two scenes with an English language class mainly composed of native Luxembourg speakers. The first scene was the one where Titania is awakened by Bottom and becomes charmed by his beautiful singing ... After an initial discussion with the students on the context and the ideas underlying this scene, text transcripts were distributed and the scene was re-enacted in English with the help of some of the students. The teacher's desk became Titania's bower and a few students stood in as fairies-in-waiting. The second scene was the one where the Wall, played by Beverley, quite literally stands between Bottom and Thisbe. One of the male students was prepared to give up some dignity to play the part of Thisbe, provoking considerable hilarity from his colleagues. The scene had been acted in Luxembourgish in the Dream production and was re-enacted in the same way during this school workshop. Being a Luxembourgish speaker myself, I felt that this was a very interesting way of bringing Shakespeare closer to the students, demystifying the author and generally making English language and culture more accessible to young Luxembourgers.



All in all, I was most impressed with the impact this workshop had on the students, and I hope that our club can keep this concept going in some shape or form in the future. In fact we pursued this concept with considerable success during several periods in the more distant past but until recently we have not been able to revitalise it – mainly for reasons of the availability of workshop speakers during secondary school hours. The secondary school workshop concept in general is, in my view, a very effective method of reaching out to teenage members of the community, and promoting English language theatre in Luxembourg in a sustainable way. I am glad that the Dream project has helped to put new life into this concept and very much hope that it will be pursued in connection with future productions.

Deleted:

# The Natural Daughter

**Workshop Audition: Saturday 19 January, 10.00-17.00**

at T'Scheier, 32 rue Pierre d'Aspelt, Aspelt

(from Luxembourg, head south through Hesperange and Altzingen to Frisange. At the lights in Frisange turn left to Aspelt. In Aspelt turn left onto rue Pierre d'Aspelt. The restaurant T'Scheier is on the right just before the church).

With Christine Probst, John Brigg & Edward Seymour

The aim of this event is to have fun exploring some acting techniques, with the ulterior motive of casting *The Natural Daughter*, a play by J W Goethe, for performance in Luxembourg later in 2008.

The morning will be given over to general voice, movement and impro sessions; after lunch (which participants will be encouraged to buy from the Scheier, to cover its costs – €15 for choice of menu) sessions will be more specifically related to the themes and requirements of the play – see below.

Maximum number of participants: 20. Closing date: Monday 14 January at noon.  
To reserve a place, phone 35 90 97 or email Edward – [eseymour@pt.lu](mailto:eseymour@pt.lu)

**The Natural Daughter** (1803, English version 2003)

In this political fairytale young Eugenia, born into wealth and privilege, seems destined for great things. Her ambitions come up against the real world of rivalry, revolution and intrigue. (A bit like getting a job in Luxembourg?)

<i>Main speaking parts</i>	Age*	
<b>King</b>	40	Sociable; incompetent
<b>Duke</b> , his uncle	55	Ambitious; capable
<b>Eugenia</b> , his daughter	20	Ambitious; talented
<b>Secretary</b> , the Duke's assistant	40	Revolutionary; ruthless
<b>Governess</b> , Eugenia's tutor	35	Loyal; impressionable
<b>Cleric</b> , a conspirator	35	Embittered; single-minded
<b>Advocate</b> , the Governess's friend	35	Honest; conventional
<i>Smaller speaking parts</i>		
<b>Commandant</b> , a local governor	25	Jovial; conformist
<b>Count</b> , a courtier	60	Loyal; friendly
<b>Abness</b>	35	Pious; conformist
<b>Monk</b>	60	Other-worldly; conformist

*Non-speaking parts*: Doctor, two servants, two adjutants, two nuns, boy with casket

\*A rough guide only: many characters could be either sex and any age.

## Insider insight

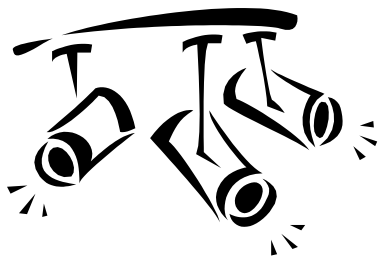
### The Backstage Workshops, Saturday November 24th 2007

Alison Kelly

#### Lighting

Perched on a circle of stools, in a great barn of a room in Aspelt, some 20 people nervously introduced themselves and explained why they wanted to attend a workshop about theatre lighting. Most were teenagers who were either studying drama at school or involved in lighting school productions, but there was a smattering of both older and younger people.

John Brigg started the workshop by illustrating the importance of lighting. If you close your eyes and then open them again, what do you immediately notice? The brightest object in the room. But if a lesser light moves, your eye naturally follows that. By shining torches in each other's faces we explored the interesting effects of shadows, and the way a bright, direct light can wash out the features. The contrast gives form and the shadows show us the shape of the object. And of course shining light of one colour on fabrics of another colour can produce some unexpected and dramatic effects. In the theatre, light is used to focus attention and to create mood. Changes in the light not only keep the audience's interest, but direct that interest to particular points on stage. This is the art of the lighting director.

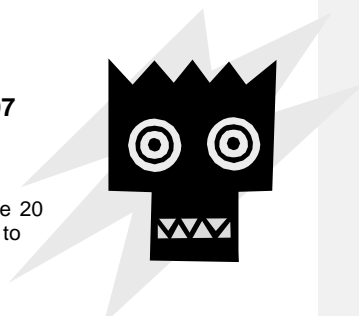


After a break for a late breakfast (kindly provided by Angela Milne, via the local patisserie), Anthony McCarthy introduced us to the craft of the lighting director. He showed us the two main sorts of theatre light, and invited us to try our hand at adjusting them. Whereas the plano-convex light has soft edges so that several beams can easily be merged, the profile lights are often used for highlighting and creating special effects. They have a special effect themselves, in that the gates are reversed, so that to move the light up (or left) you have to move the gate down (or right) – all very confusing for the uninitiated. At present there are no low-energy theatre lights, so the apparatus gets very hot and difficult to handle.

John and Anthony also pointed out the importance of knowing exactly what sort of electricity supply the venue has, and being careful not to overload it! The lighting director has to be both an artist and a scientist, able to calculate the requirements of particular combinations of lights correctly. It's also important to bring all the correct plugs, adaptors and cables with you, a point that was graphically brought home later in the day, when a search party had to be sent out for a 16/32 amp adaptor!

After lunch, the lighting workshop moved on to more practical matters. We worked on lighting the scene where the ghost of the murdered Banquo appears to Macbeth at a banquet. In addition to background lighting, the ghost and Macbeth need to stand out, and so does Lady Macbeth's face. The light has to follow Macbeth as he moves around, and all this provided us with quite a challenge. We had to learn how to load the lighting bars and keep them balanced, as well as how to extend the light stands and make sure the cables were hanging correctly and the barn doors on the lights weren't obscuring other lights. All of this takes considerable time and skill. In a real production up to 20 lights may need to be set up and focused in an hour.

In the end all the lights are connected to a lighting box, so that central control during the play is 'simply' a matter of pushing the knobs up and down at the right time. Even this is largely hidden from the audience (and indeed the actors), most of whom never realise how skilled the essential job of lighting a production is, how much advance planning it takes, and how important calm and fast reactions on the night are. But at least 20 people can now appreciate this crucial aspect of theatre better.



## Make-up

The make-up workshop was shorter and less well attended than the lighting one, but equally informative. Colette McCormack started by explaining the difference between traditional greasepaint (which needs powder to make it stick, and is harder to remove, but can give dramatic effects) and newer water-based paints. She emphasised that it is important to apparently overdue stage make-up and not to blend it too much – it will look grotesque from close up, but it needs to be overdone to achieve an effect which is visible from a distance and under the bright lights of the stage.

Colette demonstrated how make-up can be used to age an actor, by adding at least 30 years to Christine Probst's face. She showed us how to add lines to a young face, by getting the actor to smile or frown and drawing in the creases on their forehead and around their nose with dark red lines to represent the wrinkles that will inevitably appear as these expressions are repeated over many years. The best way to draw a line is to dot and blend it, but the temptation is always to over-blend. This needs to be resisted, or the effect will disappear. For extra emphasis the dark lines can be balanced with a white line on either side to make them stand out even more. Dark shading under the eyes can be used to give the effect of bags, and white on the end of the nose and chin lengthens them (again, an aging effect). By the end of all this, the familiar Christine had been completely transformed!



Colette then gave us some general tips and discussed more extreme make-up techniques. Features such as cheek bones can be highlighted to make them more prominent with shading underneath. She suggested that male actors should shave earlier in the day (not immediately before the show, which would make their skin too sensitive for make-up), and that a stipple brush (or a pot scrubber if a stipple brush is not available) can be used to create the effect of a day-old growth of beard. Blues and whites can give someone a sickly pallor, and reds and blacks are effective for bruising. Eyebrows can be made to disappear with soap and make-up to stick them to the skin, and new ones added where needed. All the exposed skin (neck, hands, even feet and ankles in some cases) needs to be made up in the same way if the effect is to be convincing.

The participants then chose a couple of willing volunteers and made them up as a pixie (green skin, striking slanted eyes) and a geisha (white skin, false raised eyebrows and exaggerated, bright-red mouth). Finally the three transformations were paraded under the lights of the lighting workshop to demonstrate how effective the make-up is in those conditions.

*Many thanks to everyone who helped at the backstage workshops: the workshop leaders, John Brigg, Anthony McCarthy, Colette McCormack and Christine Probst; the general organiser and provider of breakfast, Angela Milne; and a special thanks to Jan Horsburgh for persuading so many of her students to give up a Saturday to attend. [Thanks also to Sally Cardew for her willingness to help.](#)*



## Club concerns

### ***Kleeschen in the Kannerklinik***

*Chris Albrecht writes:*

At the initiative of Kiwanis Luxembourg, NWTC joined forces with Pirates Productions and Voices International in a move to provide some relief to the unfortunate children attending the city's children's hospital, the Kannerklinik, on December 6<sup>th</sup>, St Nicholas's Day.

NWTC arranged for The Man himself to be present, while Kiwanis supplied the bishop's attire, presents and chocolates, Pirates provided clowns and voices, and Voices International supplied a string of festive Christmas season songs.



Many of the out-patients, aged between 1 and 14, had congregated with their parents in the activity room and were eagerly awaiting the arrival of St Nicholas. When the white haired man finally arrived in the room, he was greeted by the children's sparkling eyes and a festive rendition of *An der grousser hellger Nuecht*. Visibly moved by the joy displayed by these unfortunate children, not to mention by the sheer beauty of the song, St Nicholas was ushered by assisting Kiwanis angels and clowns (clad in costumes strangely reminiscent of those seen in a musical called *Showtime*) to the comfort of a white chair and beckoned the children to him. He exchanged warm words with each child, and rewarded each one personally for his or her good conduct and remarkable courage.

Before returning to his busy schedule, St Nicholas insisted on visiting the children in the emergency room as well as looking in on each of the sick new-born babies and their parents in the hospital rooms, leaving each baby with a squashy teddy-bear and pledging that each teddy would make the baby strong and healthy.

A wonderfully worthy cause – and a prime example of camaraderie and cooperation between several clubs. To be repeated!

### ***Youth Workshop***

*Angela Milne writes:*

At the Youth Workshop on Saturday, 1st December, Pauline Lloyd very kindly came to speak to the children about stage management. There was quite a small group of children that day, but they seemed to respond very well indeed and weren't bashful about asking questions or coming up with ideas. The impression gained was that most of them still want to be on the stage rather than behind the scenes. Pauline did an excellent job of revealing some of the secrets of stage management. This was the first of a series of events which we hope to present to the children in the coming year. Chris and Les Wilson have already accepted our invitation to come and speak sometime in January. Sincere thanks to Pauline; I think the children got quite a lot out of it.

### ***Looking for a play?***

The Drama Association of Wales (DAW) operates the UK National Drama Library which posts scripts and theatre books on hire to members worldwide. Both full-length and one-act plays are available, all indexed by number of male and female characters, plus a few monologues, musicals and 'other' scripts. NWTC is a member of DAW, so if you would like to put something on, and are looking around for ideas, don't forget this resource. Contact Aled Rhys-Jones on [aled.daw@virgin.net](mailto:aled.daw@virgin.net) or Teresa Hennessy on 0044 29 2045 2200.

### ***Policies please!***

We are still trying to locate the club's Policy Book, which contains all the official policies that have been adopted at AGMs over the years. Could it be in **your** attic/cellar? Please have a look, and let any member of the committee know if you come across it.

If we can't locate the existing Policy Book we will have to try and recreate it. Again we need your help. Do you have any piles of old AGM documents stashed away somewhere? If so, please have a look through them to see if they contain any minutes of policies that have been agreed by the club. Even if you can only half-remember a policy that you think we might have agreed, send it in and we can discuss it at the next AGM.

## External events

Here is some information on other theatre-related events in Luxembourg which might be of interest to an English-speaking audience. See <http://theatre.lu/> for details of professional theatrical events (in all languages).



### **Season's Greetings**

**Alan Ayckbourn's** deliciously dour comedy in which the characters soon prove so boozy, over-sexed and generally fractious that the holidays degenerate into a series of increasingly outlandish calamities. [In Luxembourgish](#)

4 & 5 January, 8 p.m. and 6 January, 3 p.m., [Théâtre des Capucins, 9, place du Théâtre L-2613 Luxembourg](#)  
Reservations: [47 08 95-1](#).

### **Design for Living**

Noël Coward's comedy about sex, love and lust takes three free-spirited young artists cavorting through London, Paris and New York in 1932.

7, 8, 13, 14, 18–20 March, 10 & 11 April 2008, 8 p.m., Grand Théâtre, 1 Rond-point Schuman, Luxembourg.  
Reservations: [www.luxembourgticket.lu](http://www.luxembourgticket.lu) or 47 08 951.

### **Torquato Tasso**

This is the second of Goethe's sequence of plays (of which *The Natural Daughter* is the third). This production is directed by local man Frank Hoffmann, with Germany's Actor of the Year for 2005, Wolfram Koch, in the lead. In German.

17–18 April 2008, 8 p.m. Grand Théâtre, 1 Rond-point Schuman, Luxembourg. Reservations: [www.luxembourgticket.lu](http://www.luxembourgticket.lu) or 47 08 951.

### **Never Shop and F\*\*k When you are Angry**

This play is a combination of John Osborne's 1956 classic *Look Back in Anger* and Mark Ravenhill's 1996 *Shopping and F\*\*king*. It switches from one to the other in the same way as people today switch channels on their TVs or surf the internet in a search for immediate gratification.

7–9 May 2008, 8 p.m., Théâtre National du Luxembourg, 194 Route de Longwy. Reservations: [www.luxembourgticket.lu](http://www.luxembourgticket.lu) or 47 08 951



## Back-page bump

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** (01 May 2007 – 30 April 2008):

Single: 12.50 €  
Couple: 20.00 €  
Family: 25.00 €  
Student: 5.00 €

*Payments to BGL, ISBN LU80 0030 0960 1115 0000*

*If you change your email address or personal details, please don't forget to send Alison Kelly the new details, so that we can keep you in touch with the club! Thanks.*

### Committee contacts

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And don't forget the club website: [www.nwtc.lu](http://www.nwtc.lu)

... and a Happy New Year