



New World Theatre Club Newsletter

March 2008

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What's on ...

When	Who	What	Where
13 March	Ivor Dembina	This is not a Subject for Comedy	Robert Krieps Auditorium, Abbaye de Neumünster
7, 8, 13, 14, 18–20 March, 10, 11 April		Design for Living	Théâtre des Capucins
17–18 April		Torquato Tasso	Grand Théâtre
24–26 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

Editor's essay

Alison Kelly

Spring is here – which is to say that the daffodils are out, and it was snowing this morning. Coming from the UK, I thought I was used to unpredictable weather, but Luxembourg seems to be in a league of its own in this respect. Still, I suppose it makes life interesting.

As usual there is lots happening in the English-speaking community here, including in the world of theatre. The Théâtre des Capucins is putting on its first ever production in English, Noel Coward's *Design for Living*, on a variety of dates in March and April. Try not to miss it! Several NWTC members are involved in this production (see page 6), and if it is we can expect the amount of professional English-language theatre available in Luxembourg to continue to increase.

Elsewhere our sister club, Pirate Productions, is offering a Musical Hall evening at Gasperich Parish Hall at the end of April (see page 7). Should be good fun, and I'm sure you'll recognise some familiar faces and some familiar songs. There are prizes for those who enter into the spirit of the event by dressing appropriately.

This year is the 40th anniversary of the founding of New World Theatre Club, apparently by three Luxembourgers. The committee is already thinking about how best to celebrate this anniversary, and there will be more about this in future newsletters. If anyone has any memories of any memorabilia of the early days of the club, please get in touch with Angela Milne who is collecting everything she can lay her hands on to provide a retrospective view of the club's history. And if anyone can tell us why the name 'New World' was chosen, we'd be fascinated to know. We hope to incorporate the results of all this research into a revamped club website before too long.

On a more serious note, the club has decided to participate in the 'Relay for Life' at the Coque again this year (see page 4). Relay for Life is partly a fund-raising activity, but it is also about showing support for everyone affected by the disease. I have a couple of good friends undergoing treatment at the moment, and a couple of others with family members who are affected, so it's a subject close to my heart. If you feel the same, I hope you'll be able to spend at least part of the weekend of 13/14 April showing that you care.

Well, that's enough of that. I'm off on Saturday for a week skiing in the Alps, and then it's over to the UK to celebrate my mother's 90th birthday at the end of April, so I've a busy spring ahead of me. To complete the spring theme I thought I'd share with you this picture of daffodils in snow!

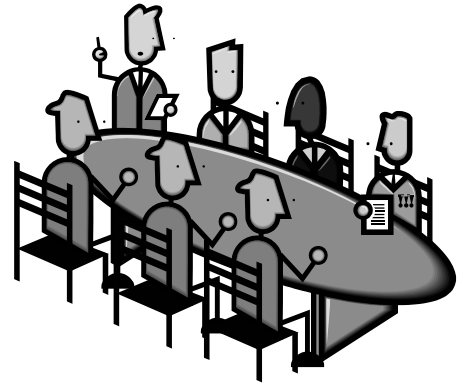


The dead-line for the May issue is **April 15**. Please email any contributions to alison@keled.com, fax them to (00352) 25 44 38 or snail mail to Alison Kelly, 41 rue J.B.Esch, L-1473 Luxembourg

Committee comment

The committee has met twice since Christmas. Many of the same issues were discussed at the two meetings.

The improvisation workshop held in the middle of January was a great success (see report on page 3). This format seemed to work better than a traditional audition, as everyone got something out of it, even if they didn't want or didn't get a part in the final production. As a result of the workshop an ensemble cast has now been put together and *The Natural Daughter* is going ahead in the autumn, although the exact dates, cast and team are still to be decided.



Before that, the Youth Workshop team are planning a show for friends and family in the early summer. Christine Probst has some scenes for the young people to perform, and she is investigating a central venue for the show. We are still looking for a one-act play to complete the evening. All members of the Youth Workshop have now paid, and we welcome them as Student Members of the club.

The committee has also been discussing how best to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the club in 1968. Plans are crystallising around a Gala Dinner in November, possibly also involving a play, and certainly with displays of memorabilia from the intervening years. A sub-committee has been set up to push these ideas forward. Any suggestions or contributions for this event would be much appreciated: please contact Mea, who is co-ordinating the subcommittee (see back page for contact details).

As reported in the January newsletter, the committee was flattered to be approached by the Director of the Festival of Humour and Peace with an invitation to put on a play at the 2009 event. However when we read the play he wanted us to produce (*The Lieutenant of Innishmore* by Martin McDonagh), our enthusiasm waned. We felt that this play would be difficult to cast (requiring several young male actors with good Irish accents) and produce (involving gallons of blood and both live and dead cats). Perhaps more seriously we were worried that it might be offensive to some members of the audience, either because the Irish are portrayed as stupid or violent or both, or because it could be interpreted as supporting the IRA. We decided to offer a different play on the theme of Humour and Peace and submitted a couple of alternatives. Unfortunately this offer was turned down, so we have regretfully decided to withdraw from this project.

Work on reconstituting the missing Policy Book continues. A subcommittee has been set up to work on producing a coherent set of policies, based on those we have been able to locate in minutes of past meetings. This will be circulated to members well before the AGM, with the invitation to comment on and/or correct its contents in advance of the meeting. By so doing we hope to get a new set of policies approved at the AGM without spending all night discussing them!

The membership database is now up to date (as far as we can tell). Some 30 lapsed members renewed in November/December after a gentle reminder. We now have a procedure for sending hard copies of the newsletter to members who do not have access to email, although we will continue to discourage this as it means more work for the committee. However we still do not have a membership pack to welcome new members to the club, or any way of immediately involving them in the club's activities. It would be good to have a proper Membership Secretary who was prepared to take this on: if anyone would like to volunteer, either now or at the next AGM, please do not hesitate to get in touch with any member of the committee.

The committee expressed their thanks to Christine Mitchell for her work in publicising our productions on the club's website over the last few years. After a bit of arm-twisting we now have a couple of 'volunteers' – Thierry Staffen and Dan Kelly – to update the website. In the near future we hope it will include more details of the club's activities, including instructions on how to join and links to back newsletters.

We continue to keep an eye on the club's financial situation, and we have recently examined the final accounts from both *Tissue* (a profit) and *Dream 2007* (a loss). The treasurer wants to clarify the relationship between the club and the Munsbach Summer School, and will arrange a meeting with John Brigg to do this.

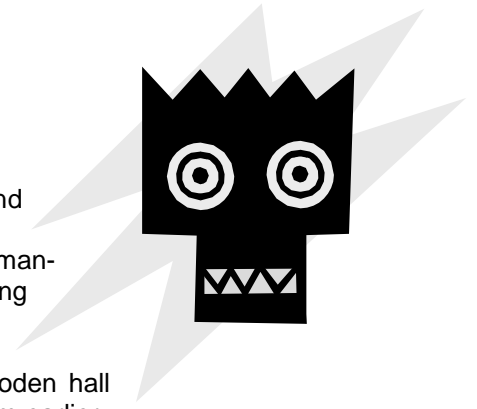
The next meeting of the committee will be on April 7th at Angela's house.

Insider insight

Improvisation workshop, Saturday 19 January 2008

Birgit Meixner-Oakes

As an outsider and not (at the time) a member of NWTC, I was curious to find out what was going on in NWTC's "Actor's workshop" in Aspelt last month. Having many years of theatre work behind me, including directing a German-speaking theatre group ("Patchwork") here in Luxembourg, I was looking forward very much to receiving some training myself again.



On entering the training room at T'Scheier in Aspelt – an impressive wooden hall normally full of nightlife and bars – I immediately recognised some faces from earlier NWTC productions. I and a couple of other women were the only newcomers. Although everybody else seemed to know each other very well, they were all very friendly and welcomed me at once.

The day was divided into two parts: the first part was body training and special work with masks and the second part included some language training and work with an extract from the text of J.W. Goethe's *The Natural Daughter*. John Brigg did a great and sensitive job of exploring with the group the effects and expressions of masks, which we all wore. We each had the opportunity to appreciate how unusual and delicate it is to act wearing a mask, both by taking part and by watching the others.

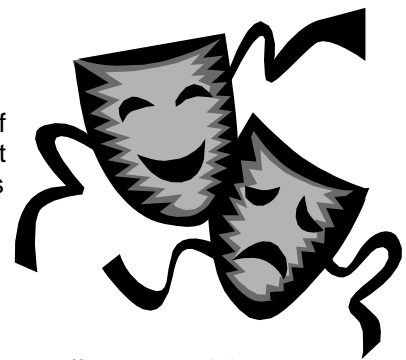
The second part of the day started with voice training by Christine Probst whose lively and charming spirit was quite infectious. Then we continued working with the text of *The Natural Daughter*. Edward Seymour, who had translated the piece into English, guided us through part of the text and made us familiar with its rhythm, and we tried to start acting a bit. Thank you Edward for your calm and friendly attitude towards teaching us.

The whole day was enjoyable and informative and I'm already looking forward to the next NWTC workshop!

Club concerns

Personal

As many of you will already have heard, Tony Kingston (the Director of *Dream 2007*) was taken seriously ill shortly after Christmas, and spent several weeks in hospital fighting for his life. Although his health continues to give serious cause for concern, the most recent news is that he is at home and improving steadily. June and the children would like to thank everyone who sent messages of support during this difficult time. We wish him well for his continued recovery.



We were saddened to hear of the death of Frank Philpott, and would all like to offer our condolences to Jane and Jo.

Relay for life

"Relay for Life" is an international event that celebrates those who survive cancer and pays tribute to those who are touched by it. It is an overnight relay walk or run, in teams – not a race, just an opportunity to show solidarity and raise money for research and support. A team from NWTC took part last year, and we would like to participate again this year. The idea is to wear T-shirts announcing that "We've been running for 40 years", so as to get some publicity for our anniversary year as well. The Luxembourg event is organised by La Fondation Luxembourgeoise Contre le Cancer, and takes place at the Coque on Kirchberg from the evening of Saturday 13 April to that of Sunday 14. Anyone who would like to participate, for however long or short a time, is invited to contact Rodney (see back page).

FEATS Fringe



This year's FEATS (the Festival of European Anglophone Theatrical Societies, see <http://www.feats.org/>) will be held in Stockholm, from the Friday 9 to Monday 12 May, 2008. As you all know, Stockholm is a beautiful city, especially in Spring, and everyone is cordially invited to attend (at their own expense of course!). Details of the programme, recommended hotels etc. are available from Rodney (see contact details on the back page) or on the Festival website (<http://www.feats.eu/2008>).

In addition to the main programme, there will be a Fringe on Saturday, Sunday and Monday afternoons, from 2 to 5 pm. The venue is a small studio theatre in Dieselverkstaden the premises for the main Festival. If you would like to put something on at the Fringe, please contact the organiser (Nigel Harvey, nigel.harvey@stockholmplayers.se) as soon as possible – the deadline is Friday March 14th. Again Rodney has more details, and the official application form.

Entry for the Fringe is free, but no costs will be reimbursed, and you are responsible for obtaining any necessary performing rights. There are basically few rules and entry is not restricted to the FEATS community. You can even put in multiple entries. Any shortish piece (up to 40 minutes) is welcome. It can be a one act play, a play extract, a monologue, an experimental piece, performance art etc., and there may even be some workshops and lectures if anyone is interested in providing them. The final line-up will be decided only on the basis of forming an exciting, varied and balanced programme, within the time available. The intention is to let people know whether their submission has been accepted by the end of March.

Rodney will be taking over from Pauline Lloyd as our official representative on the FEATS steering committee after the 2008 gathering, and we wish him the best of luck in this new role.

Tissue

The club's most recent production, *Tissue*, is being revived for four performances in the UK! The cast have been invited to perform the play in the studio at the Hampton Hill Playhouse in Teddington near London in April. Break a leg!

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).



This is not a Subject for Comedy

A one-man show by comedian Ivor Dembina about his upbringing in London's Jewish community and the moral awakening that led him to challenge his community's views about the conflict in the Middle East. Through a mixture of jokes and comic stories the show illustrates his experience of childhood anti-Semitism, his love of Jewish culture and his feelings about Israel and Palestine.

Thursday 13 March, 8 p.m. Salle Robert Krieps, Abbaye de Neumünster. Reservations: www.luxembourgticket.lu or 47 08 951.

Design for Living



Young British director Douglas Rintoul directs Luxembourgish actors Tom Leick, Myriam Muller and Jules Werner and an international cast including NWTC members Ann Comfort (Overstall), Adrian Diffey and Christine Probst in Noel Coward's *Design for Living*.

Gilda the interior designer loves Otto the painter and Leo the playwright, both of whom love her but are also devoted to each other. Any attempt by Gilda to exclude either of them is doomed to failure, and the complex and revolving relationship between them ends in an ambiguous 'design for living'...

As Coward himself said, "These glib, over-articulate and amoral creatures force their lives into fantastic shapes and problems because they cannot help themselves. Impelled chiefly by the impact of their personalities each upon the other, they are like moths in a pool of light, unable to tolerate the lonely outer darkness but equally unable to share the light without colliding constantly and bruising each other's wings."

7, 8, 13, 14, 18–20 March, 10 & 11 April 2008, 8 p.m., Théâtre des Capucins, 9 Place du Théâtre. Reservations: www.luxembourgticket.lu, 47 08 951 or ticketlu@pt.lu. Tickets: adults 20 €, students 8 €.

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 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 or 47 08 951



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*Gasperich Hall 24th to 26th April 2008 at 8p.m.
Doors open at 7-30pm*

Tickets: 15 euro (students 10 euro)

Telephone 356339 or e-mail musichall@sarumlux.net

Big D

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 the new details to Alison Kelly, so that we can keep you in touch with the club! Thanks.

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And don't forget the club website: www.nwtc.lu