

Another Successful Summer School for LEATSS

The Luxembourg European Annual Theatre Summer School completed another successful year in its current home at the Chateau of Clarefontaine, on the Belgian border. Student numbers were the highest ever and an enthusiastic bunch of all ages, arrived on Saturday 27th and stayed until Sunday 4th of August.

The school is open to all-comers, whether you have ever done theatre before or not, and includes music and directing as well as acting. Each student takes a course of 'skills' and one of 'theme', with four different tutors: expert professionals that come over from the U.K., each bringing their own experience and individual take.

The grand theme this year was 'stock characters' – meaning archetypes, such as 'bumbling fool' or 'dumb blonde'. This fed into many and varied projects – with the tutors teaching in various ways, sometimes focusing on specific texts, or guiding work that the students devised. One project, for instance, was based around 'site-specific' theatre, and the lovely and intriguing venue – which straddles the border – was used as inspiration by students.

The courses were many and varied. Keith Myers taught the directors' course, a lot of 'get up and do it', and a course about farce – much hilarity ensued. Janice Dunn taught the 'site-specific' course as mentioned, and an acting course directly related to the theme of different characters. Sarah Case was new to the Summer School but fell straight in to the idea of it, and brought something new. She is an expert in voice, and had ideas for anyone who needs to speak on stage, or guide others.

Graeme Du Fresne is the course director, and also runs the music courses. He used a wide variety of songs – including being bang up-to-date, with work on the new musical 'Matilda' by Tim Minchin. There was also a 'special session', involving everyone, which this year turned out to be a choice of singing Country & Western, or going off to learn a line dance. And then everyone got together to sing and dance - Great Fun!

A third project is 'student-led', allowing budding or experienced directors to work with fellow students on a text of their choosing. And there is also what is known informally as 'project four', meaning that break and meal times, and especially the bar after the work day is finished, become a chance to share and discuss the work, as well as make or renew friendships, and just generally have a good time.

But for all the fun, some serious learning goes on, and the LEATSS continues to improve the standard of local Am-Dram across Europe.