



WHT France E-newsletter

4

Novembre 2012

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Editorial

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Think Different(ly)

Cette année, la saison française du White Horse Theatre est placée sous le signe de la différence, ce qui ne saurait nous déplaire puisque faire jouer du théâtre dans les écoles est une façon de sortir des sentiers battus, de « voir les choses autrement ».

En effet, la tournée en France prenant un peu d'ampleur, deux groupes y participeront, avec naturellement des programmes distincts. Les régions du Nord et de l'ouest verront ainsi de braves gens s'alarmer de la différence de leurs voisins, des vampires, dans la pièce intermédiaire*.

Comme toujours, il y a là matière à réflexion ; toute différence, sociale, physique, culturelle... peut être envisagée à travers ces vampires métaphoriques. Quant à la pièce de niveau supérieur, elle met en évidence des distingos bien subtils : il s'agit de *Pygmalion**, à découvrir dans une mise en scène et un décor chatoyants. La pièce pour débutants*, elle offrira une parodie des œuvres d'Agatha Christie.

En Lorraine, les différences seront perceptibles dans une version hilarante de Robin des bois : discrimination homme-femme, inégalité de lois

qui favorisent les puissants... La pièce intermédiaire, *Dreaming in English* nous amènera à réfléchir sur les différences culturelles et sociales tout en nous faisant visiter Londres.

Enfin, après trois ans de représentations de pièces de Shakespeare, interviendra un important changement avec du théâtre moderne : *Look Back in Anger*, de John Osborne, est une superbe pièce, à ne manquer sous aucun prétexte, le 10 avril à la Médiathèque intercommunale de Longwy.

Xavier Parisot

*Voir page 2



Emma Longthorne et Hamish Stansfeld à nouveau en tournée dans *Twelfth Night* (ci-contre, avec Joanna Cordle et Richard Nicholson)

Lauren Baino, Katherine Fielder, Myles Horgan et Adam Baylis dans *Pygmalion* de G. Bernard Shaw en tournée en France en février 2013



Une nouvelle saison commence !

Un an après sa création, nous entamons la seconde saison de l'association et nous avons préparé un programme qui, nous l'espérons, plaira autant que celui de l'année dernière.

Vous retrouverez notre e-newsletter, bien sûr, et vous pourrez vous tenir informés sur notre [page Facebook](#). Nous mettrons en place une **exposition** sur le thème « Look

Back in Anger ».

Les rendez-vous importants :

Lundi 21 janvier 2013,
19h : **Assemblée Générale** de l'association

Mercredi 20 février, 2013,
18h30 : **Lecture-discussion** sur *Look Back in Anger* de John Osborne (ouverte à tous)

Mars-Avril

« **Meet, chat and eat** », rencontre(s) avec les acteurs lors d'une soirée conviviale. (Soirée réservée aux membres de l'association)

Mercredi 10 avril, 20h00 : **Représentation de *Look Back in Anger***, de John Osborne à la Médiathèque intercommunale de Longwy ■



Tournée en France

Pour la 1ère partie de la tournée White Horse Theatre en France, Lauren Baino, Katherine Fielder, Myles Horgan et Adam Baylis jouent trois pièces très différentes.

La tournée aura lieu du 04 au 19 février 2013 et passera par Lille, Dunkerque, Le Mans, Cholet, Wassy, etc.



Adam Baylis est Smellsock Fomes, le grand détective

The Great Detective

Lord et Lady Swigwell organisent une réception dans leur château. Soudain, le collier de pierres précieuses de Lady Swigwell est volé. Lady Swigwell et le majordome Speaking commencent à chercher le coupable et font appel au célèbre détective Smellsock Fomes, quand soudain, Lord Swigwell est assassiné.

Une parodie hilarante des histoires d'Agatha Christie.



Katherine Fielder, Lauren Baino et Myles Horgan

Neighbours with Long Teeth

Cette pièce sur les vampires écrite en 1986 par Peter Griffith, est toujours d'actualité. Mr et Mrs Smith sont des anglais moyens. Ils veulent ce qu'il y a de meilleur pour leur fils Richard.

De nouveaux voisins viennent s'installer dans le quartier. Quand les Smith voient qu'on transporte deux cercueils à l'intérieur de la maison, ils pensent à un double

décès. Ils vont bien vite apprendre la réalité sur leurs voisins.

A leur grand dam, Rick va sympathiser avec Phylthia, la fille du compte Spatula. Si elle a un mode de vie compatible avec les humains, ce n'est pas le cas de son père qui n'aime pas le sang en bouteille.

Sous ses airs de comédie, cette pièce fait réfléchir. On y parle de la tolérance, et d'intégration.



Mr and Mrs Smith (Myles Horgan et Katherine Fielder, ne souhaitent pas que leur fils Rick (Adam Baylis) revioie Phylthia, la jeune vampire (Lauren Baino).



Pygmalion

On ne présente plus la pièce de G. Bernard Shaw.

Eliza Doolittle est marchande de fleurs dans les rues de Londres au début du XXe siècle. Higgins est linguiste renommé. Pickering est son ami. Quand Eliza vient demander des cours à Higgins pour pouvoir devenir vendeuse dans un magasin, les deux hommes se mettent en tête de la faire passer pour une duchesse en moins de six mois.

Un classique incontournable du théâtre britannique. Le texte est un régal.



Pour voir Peter Griffith, auteur de *The Great Detective* et *Neighbours with Long Teeth* qui présente les pièces de la tournée de février 2013, [cliquez ici](#)

Il nous parle aussi de l'organisation des tournées, de l'écriture des pièces et de la différence entre les tournées en Europe et au Japon. Pour voir la vidéo, [cliquez ici](#)

Vous trouverez la transcription de cette partie de l'interview page ci-contre.

Interview

Peter Griffith répond aux questions de White Horse Theatre France. Découvrez tout sur les tournées, l'écriture des pièces, leur mise en scène et les tournées au

WHTF: How are the tours organised?

Peter Griffith: Each year we choose plays for all the different areas that we perform in. We have companies in all areas of Germany, and in France, in Holland, in Denmark and in Sweden. This year we are hoping to send a company for a few weeks to Poland and we also have one company which performs every year for two or three months in Japan. For each of these areas we try and choose the right plays to fit in the right areas. Teachers report back to us on whether they would prefer to have a Shakespeare or a modern play for the senior pupils and we try and always make a contrast with whatever we did last year. So if we did Shakespeare one year, we're likely to do something modern the next year and for each area we try and choose something that is a little bit different. If we did a serious play one year, we'll probably do a comedy the next year and so on. We plan tours in November that's almost a year in advance of when the tour starts because by January we have to be negotiating with the directors and the designers and by February we have to have the publicity complete, which is sent out in March, so we're always working about a year in advance.



WHTF: How do you write new plays?

Peter Griffith: I don't know, it just sort of happens. I suppose I begin by thinking of an idea. Where do the ideas come from? Sometimes they come from me thinking about my childhood and things that I experienced in my childhood. Sometimes they come from my children, not so much nowadays because both my children are long since adults but in the time when they were children, I often got ideas for plays from them. We also get ideas from teachers. When we perform in schools, we always ask teachers to fill out a form saying how they liked the play and what they liked about it and what they didn't and one of the questions we always ask is "What theme do you think we should use for the next play?" We often get good ideas from teachers for that. Sometimes we can't use the ideas, of course, we have to pick

and choose. Teachers in Northern Germany often say: "Can we have a play about unwanted pregnancy?" because they think that's a social topic that should be discussed in schools but in southern Germany we couldn't possibly discuss this topic. It would be completely impossible to even mention a topic like this in school because they're all Catholics there and a lot of the schools are run by the Catholic Church and so that would be a topic that we can't do. Generally we manage to find new topics each year for plays and I probably begin by writing a bit of the play and then I have to work out what age group this play is going to be designed for. Sometimes it doesn't work out. Sometimes I've got a really good story that would really appeal to the 11- and 12-year-olds but I can't find a way of telling it in simple enough language for them to be able to understand it. Fortunately, so far I've always managed to find something about each year in the last thirty-five years – which is the time the company has been going – I've written nearly forty plays and I've still got ideas for plays that I haven't written yet and I'm looking forward to writing them, maybe next year.

You ask if it's a regular process writing plays each year. Well, with thinking of ideas, you can't make it that regular. Sometimes loads of ideas come to me and I could sit down and write five plays, other times I can't think of anything to write about. So it can't be as regular as I might like. Fortunately, we've got these forty plays in the repertoire, that I've already written, and so we can always bring back a good play that we've used before. Some of the plays we do have been in the repertoire for years. *Neighbours with Long Teeth* is one of the plays we're doing in France this year, that was one that I wrote in 1987 and it still regularly comes back in our repertoire, partly because every school in Germany knows this play because Cornelsen, which is one of the biggest school publishers, since 1990 has always excerpts from *Neighbours with Long Teeth* in their textbooks. And so every school in Germany knows this play



and people seem to like it and so it keeps on being done again and again.

WHTF: When you stage a play for the first time, is it different from staging it if it has already been performed before?

Peter Griffith: It's always tremendously exciting doing a play for the first time. You never know what's going to happen, you don't know until you try it out with an audience whether it's really going to work. I suppose I'm experienced enough at it to think that the plays I write will probably work but until we actually do it, we don't know. I generally don't do the directing of a new play myself. I used to do that and sometimes it got me into difficulties because as a director it would be my job to take the text that the author has written and to make it work. Then if a scene is not working, then the director says: "Ok, this scene needs to be done in a different way" and you get the actors to do something different. But if I'm the author as well and a scene isn't working, then I tend to say "O gosh, maybe it's been badly written, maybe I'd better rewrite that scene!" And once that starts happening, then we get into chaos. So normally, I get someone else, one of our guest directors to direct the very first production of any play that I've written. That system has worked very well. My colleague, Michael Dray, I think he is well-known in France by now, he's done the first performances of most of the plays that I've written, but other guest directors have done the same and it's a system that works well. Then once the guest director has shown that it can work with an audience then I feel confident enough to do it myself.

WHTF: Are some levels more difficult to write for?

Peter Griffith: Well, there are different difficulties for different levels. For younger pupils, the difficulty is

Interview de Peter Griffith, suite

getting the grammar and the vocabulary so simple that the pupils can understand it. It's easy to write stories for 10- 11-year olds but it's difficult to write stories in a foreign language, which they will understand. So the difficulty there is finding the right language, the story is easy. When it comes to the 14-to-16-year olds, they already have quite a bit of experience of learning English and so it's not so difficult to write things with vocabulary and grammar that they will understand. But the difficulty is dealing with teenagers. Teenagers can be awkward, difficult people, particularly when you get 300* of them in one room at the same time. As I always say to the actors, if you can enthuse and inspire an audience of 300 14-to-16-year olds, who don't want to be in that building in the first place and who don't want their teachers to think they're enjoying something the teachers are providing, and who don't speak English, then you can work any audience in the world. So the difficulty with writing plays for them is to find a theme that really interests them. The way to do it is to make sure that the actors are "cool". If you can show the audience in the first couple of minutes of the play that the actors are "cool", then they will start to listen and to understand the story and then you've got them on our side. And it's a wonderful feeling to get a group of difficult

teenagers actually on our side, laughing, cheering, clapping together. But it is difficult to write plays for that age-group because if it's too young for them, they'll think it's silly and childish and they don't want to watch it. If it's too serious and too complicated for them, they can't understand it and they don't want to watch it. It's a very fine line. That I always think is the most difficult age-group to write plays for.

WHTF: *What can you say about adapting plays for Japan?*

Peter Griffith: Well, we don't really adapt them very much. We do in Japan the same plays that we would do in Europe. The only difficulty is that they show them to different age groups. For instance I'm actually flying to Japan later today to accompany one of our companies that will be performing in Japan for the next 8 or 10 weeks and they're doing *The Tiger of the Seas*, a play about pirates. In Germany, we show this play to 10-11 and 12-year olds and if we showed it to 14-or 15-year olds, they would be completely insulted because they would say: "No, this is childish". The Japanese love childish things even when they're 14-15, 16-year old. We've performed *The Tiger of the Seas* in Japanese universities. The thing with Japan is that they don't understand spoken English nearly as well as European people do. In Japan, English is taught as a written lan-

guage, not a spoken language, pretty much the way Latin is taught in Europe. You don't expect pupils to be able to speak fluent Latin, but you expect them to be able to understand and analyse Latin sentences. And that's how the Japanese react to English plays. They don't understand anything they hear but they're world experts on grammar and literature. So they like seeing entertaining visual plays with very, very simple language. They also like Shakespeare. For them Shakespeare is like fairy tales. As they don't understand the words anyway, it doesn't make any difference for them the fact that in Shakespeare we speak in 500 year old poetry they only see the visual side of it and so they love our Shakespeare productions. Serious plays for 14-to-16-year olds on social topics like racism and child crime and anorexia, topics that we use in Germany, they don't want to know about. They don't want to know about problems in Japan, they like to smile and sweep all their problems under the carpet. So we choose plays for Japan that are light-hearted and fun and very, very visual.

WHTF: *Thank you very much*

Peter Griffith: Thank you. Good to talk to you and I hope that people who watch this video in France enjoy our plays and I look forward to seeing you again.

*En Allemagne, le système de réservation étant différent, il arrive que le public atteigne 300 spectateurs

En tournée en France l'année dernière, ils étaient au Japon de septembre à novembre



A Niigata, Beth Dalloway, Katherine Rodden, Alessandro Visentin et Matthew Neal ont joué pour un public de tout petits. Ci-dessous, les réflexions d'Alessandro dans son blog correspondent à ce que dit Peter Griffith dans son interview.



Extrait du blog d'Alessandro Visentin :

(...) Once the set is built up, props put in their places and the costume bits are dangling loosely off my body I wait for the audience to be seated. My nerves - just before receiving a quick signal from the stage manager or some giggly Japanese girl -

still give me a slight twinge even after having performed

these shows for over a year. I take this as a good sign! The cast exchanges a quick, reassuring glance backstage before the show begins.

This is the point where I am generally greeted by the sound of silence. Of course this is not the wished for effect

particularly when performing '*The Tiger Of The Seas*' which is

Continued on p. 5

a pirate adventure containing audience participation.

(...)

After the greeting ritual - including the business card exchange - we are faced with different audiences. 'The Silence Of The Lambs' or 'The Sound Of Silence' section describes the general type of audience here in Japan. However, we have experienced all kinds. Here are two examples:

- I crossed the stage to get into starting position for 'The Tiger Of The Seas' when a collective scream stopped me in my tracks. I looked in the direction where the screams came from - ready to offer first aid to the person who has hurt them self - when I realised that the screams were directed at me. The screaming continued throughout the show every time I appeared on stage and I wondered what I had done wrong. A teacher later reassured me it was normal behaviour. Strange!

- I was greeted with complete silence and had myself prepared for a really quiet performance. However, what slightly weirded me out about this performance was that not a single audience member was looking at anyone on stage. Again, I wondered what was going on when after about

one and a half minutes the whole auditorium erupted in a noise I had never heard so magnified before. The entire audience was reading the script and we had obviously reached a point where the page needed turning. I never knew how much noise it makes when two hundred people turn a page at exactly the same time. (...)



Une enseignante pose avec le groupe après la représentation.

Emma et Mark rempilent !

De passage en France l'année dernière, Mark Burghagen et Emma Longthorne nous avaient fait rêver dans les pièces pour les enfants du primaire. Ils sont repartis en tournée pour le White Horse Theatre, mais chacun dans des groupes différents et pour les élèves du secondaire ou les adultes, cette fois-ci. Avant leur départ, ils ont répondu à notre interview. A lire ci-dessous.



Mark Burghagen (Captain Porridge) et Emma Longthorne (Lizzie) dans Lizzie and the Pirate, lors de la tournée 2012 pour les enfants de primaire.

WHTF: Can you tell us about your previous experience working for White Horse Theatre?

Mark & Emma: We both started working for the company's primary school tour in January 2012. We performed two shows called 'Taradiddle' and 'Lizzie and the Pirate' which toured for six months. Both shows were written for two actors, in simple English for children between the ages of 6-11.

WHTF: What was it like to perform in front of an audience of children for the first time? Did they react the way you expected?

Mark & Emma: Since neither of us had previous experience in theatre in education we had no preconception of the response of the children. We found that the reactions of an adult audience during our public dress rehearsals were very different to the reactions we got from the children during our first week on the road. The children, however, really loved all the visual elements of the shows which greatly aided their comprehension of the stories. On the whole, the children reacted in the ways we expected them to.

WHTF: Have the plays or the way you played evolved between the beginning and end of the tour?

Mark & Emma: Throughout the tour our confidence as performers grew steadily. As actors, we felt we became vocally and physically more versatile. Although the action and blocking itself did not change during the tour, the characters evolved and became more vibrant.

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Au sommaire de la prochaine e-
newsletter

Interview de Mark et Emma, suite

WHTF: *What is your best memory?*

Mark & Emma: After one of our performances of 'Lizzie and the Pirate,' a little girl came back to us after the show to ask for our autographs. She was on her own and very shy. But after we gave her our signatures and had a chat with her she all of a sudden ran out of the gym, and as she did so jumped with glee! Experiences like this showed us how much the children appreciated the performances.

WHTF: *What is the most difficult aspect of being on a tour?*

Mark & Emma: The travelling can be very tough, especially towards the end of the tour. Moving accommodations regularly and spending many hours on the road, often in traffic jams can be very tiring!

WHTF: *What made you decide to apply to be a part of this year's tour?*

Mark & Emma: The experience we gained during the six months was invaluable and the memories we gained will stay with us for a long time. White Horse Theatre is very professional and supportive and it continues to be a pleasure to work for the com-

pany. As actors, we also wanted to gain experience performing for a different age group.

WHTF: *In what way is it different to perform in a group of 4 instead of a group of 2 like your previous experience?*

Mark & Emma: As we are still in the rehearsals process of the new season, it is difficult to tell at this stage what the differences are going to be. But it has already become apparent to us that the work load is slightly lifted with a company of 4 actors rather than 2. This is not just in terms of acting, but in logistic job distribution and concerning technical elements of the shows.



Jo, Richard, Emma et Hamish en tournée, viennent de terminer de jouer la comédie de Peter Griffith *My Cousin Charles* et s'apprêtent à jouer *Twelfth Night* (La Nuit des rois) de William Shakespeare, mises en scène de Michael Dray, à Türkismühle, près de Trèves.

Tournée d'avril en Lorraine pour le White Horse Theatre

Peter Griffith présente *Maid Marian, Dreaming in English* et *Look Back in Anger*.

Werner et Dieter présentent **l'envers du décor**: comment fabrique-t-on le décor ?

Kenneth Michaels, metteur en scène nous parle de son métier.

Nos prochains rendez-vous

Décembre-Janvier :

- ◆ N'oubliez pas de renouveler votre adhésion: vous trouverez le formulaire à la fin de l'e-newsletter
- ◆ Publication de l'e-newsletter #5

21 janvier :

- ◆ Assemblée Générale de l'association, marquez-le dans vos agendas !

20 février :

- ◆ Lecture-Discussion sur *Look Back in Anger* (séance ouverte à tous)



Apprendre l'anglais
Par le théâtre

Fiche d'adhésion

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Je désire prendre part à l'organisation de certaines actions : oui – non (rayez la mention inutile)
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