

Theatre Café Europe - London



UNICORN



9 - 21 OCTOBER 2007



The Project

Company of Angels transformed the Clore Studio and foyer of the Unicorn Theatre into a unique, intimate, candle-lit performance space to present eleven new plays for young people from Europe.

During two weeks of performance readings, workshops and events (including an International Symposium and an International Youth Encounter), writers, artists, translators, directors, other industry professionals as well as general audiences and groups of young people watched, discussed and performed plays from some of the most exciting new writers in Europe today.

Theatre Café Europe – London was designed as the main event of a new platform aiming to ensure that the best new European plays for young people are translated and shared across Europe in an accessible and exciting way.

Theatre Café Europe has three starting points:

- it is very difficult for new plays to break language barriers and be enjoyed across borders
- play readings are generally perceived as static and make little impact, especially on young audiences
- young audiences rarely have the opportunity to meet playwrights from different countries, drawing reflection and inspiration from the encounter.

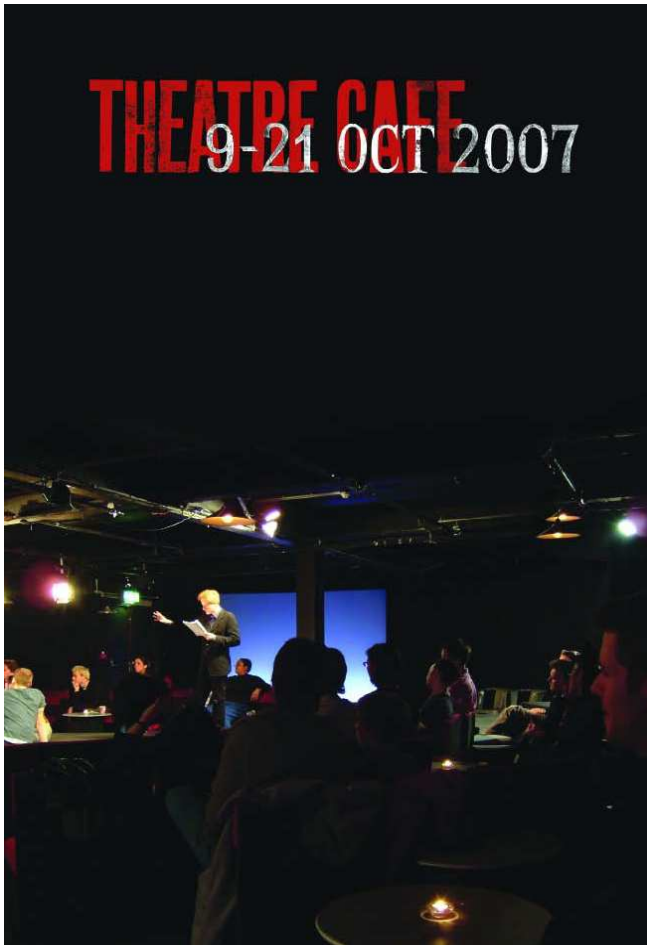
Theatre Café Europe aims to address these by:

- translating 20 outstanding European plays for young people and circulating them around Europe
- creating an innovative way to present new writing, in a special environment in which a staged reading becomes a unique, exciting event
- starting a European platform dedicated to the exchange and translation of plays for young people

A 'Theatre Café' is a theatrical space designed to create an informal, intimate atmosphere where audiences can relax and feel involved. The closeness of the public to the actors makes post-show discussions natural.



The Programme



Bats (Portugal)
by Jaime Rocha
Translated by Alice de Sousa

Blowing (Holland)
by Jeroen van den Berg
translated by Rina Vergano

Colörs (Romania)
by Peca Stefan
(original in English by the author)

Do you like Porn? (Sweden)
by Klas Abrahamsson
translated by Gabriella Berggren

The Real Elvis (Estonia)
by Urmas Vadi
translated by Liina Unt

Helver's Night (Poland)
by Ingmar Villqvist
translated by Jacek Laskowski

In Memoriam (Belgium)
by Hanneke Paauwe
translated by Rina Vergano

Invasion! (Sweden)
by Jonas Hassen Khemiri
translated by Frank Perry

Respect (Germany)
by Lutz Hübner
translated by Zoe Svendsen

So young, so blonde, so totally confused (Belgium)
by Gerda Dendooven
translated by Rina Vergano

This Child (France)
by Joel Pommerat
translated by Nigel Gearing

Theatre Café Europe International Symposium
In co-production with Unicorn Theatre

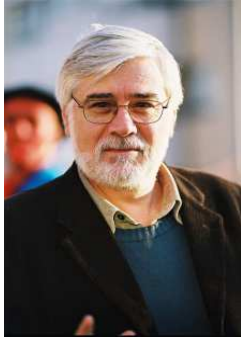
12 – 13 October 2007

Theatre Café Europe Youth Encounter
In association with the National Theatre Young Company

17 – 21 October 2007



The Plays



Bats (Morcegos)
by Jaime Rocha / Portugal
translated by Alice de Sousa
adapted for the stage by John Retallack

Two couples inhabit a surreal and fantastical world. The first are recent university graduates, passionate, volatile and embracing of new technology and modernity; the second are old and live a rural and primitive existence devoid of all modern comforts. These two polar existences are forced into contact after the river that divides them apparently dries up and the young couple find themselves cut off completely from the world.

Jaime Rocha received the Portuguese Authors Society's Theatre Award in 2004.

Directed by Max Key

Cast: Steven Beard, Rachel Edwards, Wendy Nottingham, Toyin Omari-Kinch, James Daniel Wilson



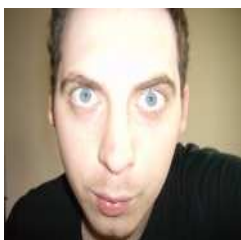
Blowing (Blowing)
by Jeroen van den Berg / Holland
translated by Rina Vergano

Blowing uses Mother's birthday present, a broadcast quality video camera as the central prop in this cruel and very funny play about unhappy families. The writer winds scenes back and starts them again, so that Mother can keep up the façade that her birthday is progressing immaculately. The entire scenario is seen through the eyes of the two teenage children.

'Blowing' won the Taalunie award for the Best Play in 2003.

Directed by Ben Harrison

Cast: Wendy Nottingham, Christopher Staines, Gehane Strehler, James Daniel Wilson



Colörs (Colörs)
by Peca Stefan / Romania

Colörs is a rude, wild satire set in New York and Bucharest. A Romanian playwright accused of terrorism, a drug addict coming back from the dead, an old cop trying to regain his ex-wife's heart and a group of friends going to Eastern Europe to get rich. This extremely funny play mocks those who would mock New Europe.

'Colörs' received the Best New Comedy Play Award from the Comedy Theatre Bucharest in 2006.

Directed by John Retallack

Cast: Steven Beard, William El-Gardi, Wendy Nottingham, Toyin Omari-Kinch, Christopher Staines, James Daniel Wilson





Do you like Porn? (Gillar du Porr?)
by Klas Abrahamsson / Sweden
translated by Gabriella Berggren

A young woman and a young man meet in the waiting room outside an audition for a play about sexuality. They start to talk... about porn. What do boys think, what do girls think? What are the differences? Or are we not so different after all? Abrahamsson's play has been seen by teenagers throughout Sweden.

Directed by Max Key

Cast: Gehane Strehler, James Daniel Wilson



The Real Elvis (Elvis oli Kapis!)
by Urmas Vadi / Estonia
translated by Liina Unt

Surrealist comedy set in a museum dedicated to the great Elvis Presley, involving several Elvis impersonators, a murder plot, a man who has lost his memory, jealous love rivals and 'The King' himself coming back from the Dead.

Urmas Vadi won the 2003 Estonian Radio Award.

Directed by John Retallack

Cast: Steven Beard, Toyin Omari-Kinch, William El-Gardi, James Daniel Wilson, Christopher Staines, Wendy Nottingham, Gehane Strehler, Rachel Edwards



Helver's Night (Noc Helvera)
by Ingmar Villqist / Poland
translated by Jacek Laskowski

On the eve of a political uprising, which recalls the midnight round up of the Jews by the SS, a childless mother, and a motherless child, seek their happiness first in the oppression and then the salvation of each other. This play deals with how the increasing militarism of a society seeps into even the most domestic of settings. The show explores how easily people can be manipulated in times of mass hysteria and how human beings cope when they have nowhere else to run.

Ingmar Villqist has been nominated twice for the Polityka Award in 2000/01.

Directed by Max Key

Cast: Wendy Nottingham, Christopher Staines, Rachel Edwards





In Memoriam (In Memoriam)
by Hanneke Paauwe / Belgium
translated by Rina Vergano

In Memoriam was written as a special site specific piece, to be performed in graveyards. Father, mother and young daughter Dora recount how they are trying to deal with the death of their son and twin brother, Arno. The dead boy also has his say. Paauwe explores not only the dark side of loss, but also the hope of solace.

Hanneke Paauwe received the Lichtpunkt Award in 2004/05.

Directed by Anthony Banks

Cast: Rachel Edwards, Christopher Staines; Myer Wakefield and Maggie Walker (both from the National Theatre Young Company)



Invasion! (Invasion!)
by Jonas Hassen Khemiri / Sweden
translated by Frank Perry

Invasion! is a tornado of words, images and ideas: this comic masterpiece deals with the lives of young immigrants in Stockholm. Extremely funny and irreverent, often deeply moving, *Invasion!* succeeds in tearing down the walls between “us” and “them” while calling into question the very nature of the illusion that is theatre. *Invasion!* has been a sell-out with young audiences in Stockholm for two years.

Jonas Hassen Khemiri received the Per Olov Enquist Prize in 2006 and Invasion!, was selected for the Swedish Teaterbiennalen 2007.

Directed by Ben Harrison

Cast: William El-Gardi, Toyin Omari-Kinch, Christopher Staines, Gehane Strehler



Respect (Ehrensache)
by Lutz Huebner / Germany
translated by Zoe Svendsen

Four friends make a trip to Cologne. By the end of the night, their world has been turned upside down. One is dead, two are in police custody, and the fourth is recovering from stab wounds. It is the job of Kobert, police psychologist, to find out what happened. Lutz Hübner's hard-hitting play about sexual attitudes, provocation and intercultural confusion, is based on the true story of an honour killing.

Lutz Hübner was awarded the German Youth Theatre Prize in 1998.

Directed by John Retallack

Cast: Rachel Edwards, William El-Gardi, Gehane Strehler, James Daniel Wilson





So Young, So Blonde, So Totally Confused
(Zo mooi, zo blond, en zo behaard)
by Gerda Dendooven / Belgium
translated by Rina Vergano

14-year-old Anneke is a modern, headstrong, outspoken girl who wants to determine her own life. On Wednesday afternoons she helps her mother to chop vegetables in the steamy kitchen of a Chinese take-away, and just before opening time, mother and daughter pull on their kimonos and wigs in expectation of regular customer, Mister Jacques...

Directed by Anthony Banks

Cast: Rachel Edwards, Christopher Staines; Sophie Bleasdale (from the National Theatre Young Company)



This Child (Cet Enfant)
by Joel Pommerat / France
translated by Nigel Gearing

This Child is an exploration of feelings, from the noblest to the most shameful, that bind parents and children together. The play, remarkable in its intensity, stages various family confrontations revealing all the complexity of family ties, in a language that combines simplicity and truth. Scenes of blame and reproach, of passion and awkwardness, alternate with others portraying an intense longing for happiness. *This Child* was the most talked-about play in France in

2006.

This Child won the French Critics' Association's Award for Best New Play in 2006.

Directed by John Retallack and Anthony Banks

Cast: Steven Beard, Rachel Edwards, William El-Gardi, Wendy Nottingham, Toyin Omari-Kinch, Gehane Strehler, James Daniel Wilson and the National Theatre Young Company



Writers

“The Theatre Café Europe festival was a very positive and interesting experience for me. The directors of the readings succeeded (with the help of a great ensemble of actors) in striking a good balance between reading and full production, i.e. to present the pieces without forcing a particular interpretation of the plays.

It is also worth mentioning how fair and to the point the post-show discussions were. A nice, professionally organized festival which I hope will be repeated for many years to come!”

Lutz Hübner, *Respect*

“It is always good to see Elvises and teddy bears. Maybe it is the reason why I write. Now I saw my characters in London. It was just great that one of Elvises was a black man. In Estonian theatre this takes a century. Many thanks!” **Urmas Vadi, *The Real Elvis***

“For me as a writer it was nice to meet other writers, directors, actors and it was interesting to see/hear what is being written now in European countries; and how / where we have things in common, where we differ... The atmosphere was open and friendly, and thanks to this initiative my play is translated in English, French; there is interest in Germany, and just now it is being translated in German and brought to a German speaking audience, so the initiative brings new theatre pieces effectively to wider audiences, across borders.”

Hanneke Paauwe, *In Memoriam*



“For me, the reading in London was the first time I heard Colörs in English and see how the play works in this language. I think the location – the Unicorn Theatre – was very well chosen. I just wish we had a space like that in Bucharest. The director did a very good job with the play, and some of the actors were brilliant (although others were more miss than hit).

The comments on the day I was there were very mixed – this has reinforced my feeling that this play is either love or hate – which I think is very good. I have also decided to mark the different genres in the script and improve stage directions, lines and jokes in the English version.

However, I got some very positive feedback from directors. One of them wants to stage it in Berlin, at the English Theatre. There are also requests from London. And just the other day the French translator for the Lille reading wrote that it went very well in France and asked if he can send it out to directors and publishing houses over there. This means Theatre Cafe Europe works and plays circulate, which is always a great thing. I hope the project continues in the following years because there aren't so many like it.” **Stefan Peca, *Colörs***



International Symposium

12 – 13 October 2007



The Theatre Café Europe International Symposium brought together more than fifty delegates (writers, translators, directors, producers and other industry professionals) who, over the course of two days, watched seven play readings and participated in the panel discussions following each reading.

The specially designed Theatre Café setting in the Unicorn's Clore Studio and Foyer successfully created a feeling of intimacy allowing for human, intimate performances and lively, engaged public debate afterwards.

Feedback from delegates was very positive overall, as is illustrated by the answers and statistics below.

The Panellists

Chair: Purni Morell – Head of Studio, National Theatre

Oladipo Agboluaje – Playwright

Lugman Ali – Artistic Director, Khayaal Theatre Company

Serdar Bilis – Associate Director, Arcola Theatre

Penny Black – Translator / Theatre Co-ordinator, Goethe-Institut

Chris Campbell – Deputy Head of the Literary Department, National Theatre

Tony Clark – Artistic Director, Hampstead Theatre

Lin Coghlan – Playwright

Giles Croft – Artistic Director, Nottingham Playhouse

Svetlana Dimcovic – former International Associate Director, Gate Theatre

Lisa Goldman – Artistic Director, Soho Theatre

Tony Graham – Artistic Director, Unicorn Theatre

Tanika Gupta – Playwright

Marilyn Imrie – Radio 4 Drama Producer

Kristine Landon-Smith – Artistic Director, Tamasha Theatre

Jonathan Meth – Director, Writernet

Carl Miller – Associate Director, Unicorn Theatre

Marcus Romer – Artistic Director, Pilot Theatre

Atiha Sen-Gupta - Playwright

Paul Sirett – Playwright / Associate, Soho Theatre

Joe Sumsion – Artistic Director, Action Transport

Heleen Verburg – Playwright

Jatinder Verma – Artistic Director, Tara Arts



Delegates

Feedback excerpts from panellists and participants¹

What is your overall opinion of the International Symposium?

Excellent	30%
V. good	45%
Good	20%
Fair	0%
Poor	0%
N/A	5%

“A real event. It felt solid, well organized, prompted a genuine discussion, pushed the boundaries amongst UK participants, was a rare opportunity to get a breath of European air, broke down some barriers between YPT and the rest of the theatre world. Felt like it could be a regular event that would become a must-attend.”

“An important contribution to the promotion of young peoples’ theatre in Europe.”

“A great concept – I was delighted to be involved.”

How would you rate the choice of plays in the programme?

Excellent	15%
V. good	25%
Good	35%
Fair	15%
Poor	0%
N/A	10%

“High quality work, pushing boundaries leading to critical debate. European stance stopped the parochialism; fairly wide delegates list.”

“The plays that were chosen were challenging and complex, and didn’t patronize a young audience. The event itself provided a friendly atmosphere in which to discuss new work for young audiences, and meet interesting theatre makers from all over Europe.”

“A great event – very worthwhile, and can only grow in strength and impact on YPT. Thank you.”

How would you rate the Unicorn Theatre as a location for the event?

Excellent	40%
V. good	30%
Good	20%
Fair	0%
Poor	0%
N/A	10%

“Unicorn was a great location for the conference (especially for foreign delegates) and it afforded a good atmosphere, and the wonderful facilities offered by this great new theatre space.”

¹ Based on 20 returned questionnaires from 70 delegates / participants; full evaluation document available on request.



How would you rate the design / appropriateness of the space for the event?

Excellent	30%
V. good	40%
Good	25%
Fair	0%
Poor	0%
N/A	5%

“The café style seating and lighting and the catwalk space made for a very intimate setting and an immediacy; you could almost reach out and touch the actors.”

“A simple but interesting layout that worked for all the plays. A café atmosphere felt just right for this kind of event.”

What did you like best about the event?

“The readings and the talks and meeting practitioners from all over Europe.”

“It brought together a really interesting mix of people.”

“Seeing work from Europe by writers I had not previously encountered.”

“The booklet was outstanding; the opportunity to have so many great new writers introduced to me – and all I had to do was sit, watch and enjoy.”

“Meeting other authors, to experience, hear, see what is being written now in several European countries, and how; I also appreciated the quality of the actors and of some directors.”

“The actors and their intelligence and energy. The fact that translators were really appreciated, and the job they do was valued and highlighted.”

“The opportunity to get an opinion sampling of industry peers from different backgrounds and disciplines.”

“The variety of plays offered, the opportunity to discuss them with the playwrights and translators. The opportunity to meet other people with an interest in European theatre and cultural exchange.”



Youth Encounter

17 – 21 October 2007

Four youth groups from Holland, France, Estonia and England came together for a series of workshops and performances during the second week of **Theatre Café Europe – London**. The participants worked together in specially designed sessions on directing, acting, staging a performance and improvisation as well as rehearsing a short joint presentation for the final day of the encounter. The sessions were led by Rick Nanne (Educator, MUZTheater Zandaam, Holland), Max Key (co-director, Theatre Café Europe London), and Anthony Banks (Associate Director, National Theatre Connections) with the assistance of Sophie Lifschutz (freelance director and Youth Encounter co-ordinator) and Zenia Bond (on placement from the BA Applied Theatre course at Central School of Speech and Drama).

A particular emphasis was put on movement and cross-language work in all workshops, and the final presentation involved all participants speaking in their own native languages.

Each group also performed one of the plays in the Theatre Café Europe overall programme² (20 plays from 11 countries, performed in rehearsed readings in four events across Europe) in their respective language with projected subtitles.



French youth group performing *Colôrs*



Estonian youth performance of *Do you like Porn?*



Dutch youth group performing *A Bloody Lovestory*



Workshop for joint final presentation

² The Theatre Café Europe brochure is enclosed with this evaluation report.



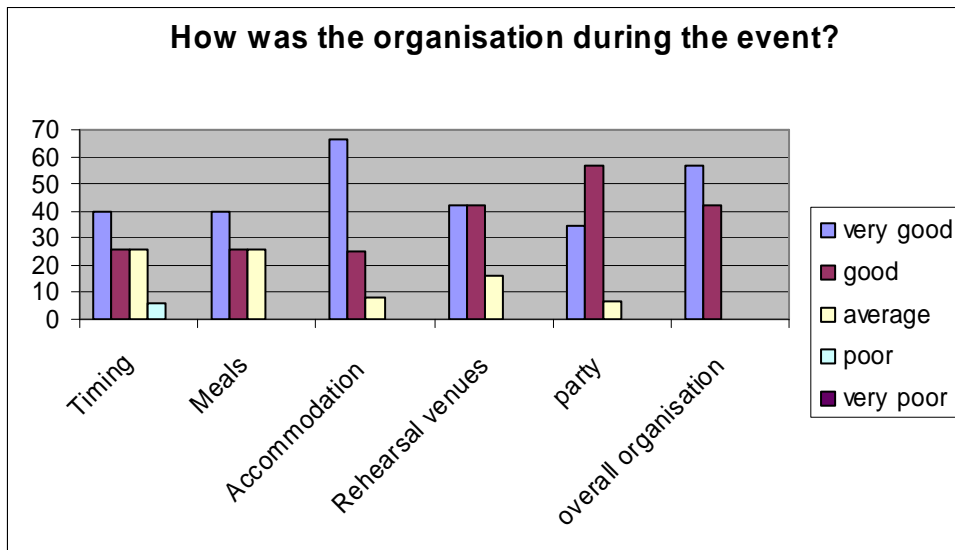
Participants³

How much do you agree with the following statement: *My participation in the Youth Event has influenced my impression of foreigners and foreign cultures?*

Strongly agree	46%
Agree	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	6%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%

How would you rate how well the groups mixed?

Very Good	46%
Good	46%
Average	6%
Poor	0%
Very Poor	0%



How would you rate the information provided about Theatre Cafe prior to your arrival in the UK?

Very Good	47%
Good	26%
Average	20%
Poor	7%
Very Poor	0%

³ From a total of 15 returned questionnaires



How would you rate the sessions on...?

Thursday morning

Very Interesting	12%
Interesting	62%
Average	25%
Not Interesting	0%

Friday morning

Very Interesting	25%
Interesting	62%
Average	12%
Not Interesting	0%

Thursday afternoon

Very Interesting	75%
Interesting	25%
Average	0%
Not Interesting	0%

Friday afternoon

Very Interesting	37%
Interesting	50%
Average	12%
Not Interesting	0%

Would you like to take part in a Youth Encounter again?

Yes	100%
No	0%

If you were describing the Youth Event in one sentence to someone who doesn't know anything about it, how would you explain it?

A really good opportunity to spend four days with people you wouldn't normally act with/ talk to! Finding out that actually it was fun to do so.

Lots of fun activities, nice warm people and good plays

Exchanging and enjoying theatre experiences from different cultures and learning from this.

What did you like/ dislike about the workshops?

I liked it when we improvised scenes in different languages

Different, learnt a lot about communication in particular (speaking in our native languages, etc).

I liked making scenes in different languages; I disliked the 'photo-making' thing.



Audience⁴

What was your overall opinion of the performance?

Excellent	39.3%
V. good	35.7%
Good	14.3%
Fair	10.7%
Poor	0%

What did you think about the reading?

"It raised a lot of difficult issues for discussion."

"it was interesting to just focus on the text."

"more than a reading – a quality performance!"

"Forgot they had scripts – excellent and wonderfully clear."

"Really interesting and a great way to see new writing very cheaply!"

"An honest relationship between audience and actors."

What was your opinion about the fact that the play was 'script in hand'?

Excellent	32.1%
V. good	28.6%
Good	25.0%
Fair	3.6%
Poor	0%
Not ticked	10.7%

Did the lack of set affect your understanding of the play?

No 27 (96.4%)

Yes 1 (3.6%)

Can you say why?

"Clear writing and strong storytelling meant no set was needed."

"It was stripped away – no set – audience concentrated well on voices and emotions."

"No, because it was so well acted."

"It's not about the set – just about what happens."

"It allowed me to create it or myself, and it was down to the writing and the actors to carry the play."

"Theatre is about people, not surroundings."

"Kind of liberating – lets the story take its own course. Nobody dictates anything about the setting or how things are."

⁴ From a total of 28 questionnaires returned after different readings



Could you tell that this was not originally written in English?

No 24 (85.7%)
Yes 3 (10.7%)
Not ticked 1 (3.6%)

Can you say why?

"Great translation."

"Translation wasn't stilted, use of slang made it real."

"It was translated in a way that was the English youth culture, it was very real and relevant to now."

"It was very well delivered."

"It was so natural."

"I imagine the subject is so universal."

"All was perfectly audible, it's a universal subject."

"No. The language sounded completely English and the content, presumably, is universal themes."

"I was listening out for clues – but didn't find any!"

"The themes are not connected to one particular country."



The Cast

The Theatre Café Europe London ensemble included:

Steven Beard, Rachel Edwards, William El-Gardi, Wendy Nottingham, Toyin Omari-Kinch, Christopher Staines, Gehane Strehler and James Daniel Wilson

The ensemble was supported by members of the **National Theatre Young Company** in three of the eleven plays (Hollie Beasley Garrigan, Sophie Bleasdale, Heather Dennis, Jamie Di Sprito and Hannah Duffy, Myer Wakefield, Maggie Walker).

They were directed by **John Retallack, Ben Harrison, Max Key and Anthony Banks.**



George (Christopher Staines) and Frank (James Daniel Wilson) in *Colörs*



The ensemble and members of the national Theatre Young Company in *This Child*



Elena (Gehane Strehler), Ulli (Rachel Edwards), Sinan (Toyin Omari-Kinch) and Cem (William El-Gardi) in *Respect*



Elvis 1 (Toyin Omari-Kinch), Elvis 2 (William El-Gardi) and Elvis 3 (James Daniel Wilson) confront Slipson (Christopher Staines)





STEVEN BEARD

Lou Coulson Associates Ltd
020-7734 9633

Previous credits include:
A Midsummer Nights Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, King John (RSC); **Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Racing Demon** (National Theatre), **Hypochondriac** (Almeida)



TOYIN OMARI-KINCH

Evolution Talent Management
020-7770 6128

Previous credits include:
The Tempest (Shakespeare in Education), **It's Just a Name** and **Fool's Paradise** (Nu Century Arts)



RACHEL EDWARDS

Andrews Hamilton Ltd
020-8491 7904

Previous credits include:
All Quiet on The Western Front and **The White Album** (Nottingham Playhouse), **Faster** (Filter Theatre, BAC) **The Diary of Anne Frank** (Birmingham Rep)



CHRISTOPHER STAINES

Curtis Brown
0207 393 4400

Previous credits include:
Blue / Orange (Abbey Theatre Dublin), **The Importance of Being Earnest** (Bristol Old Vic), **She Stoops to Conquer** (Out of Joint / NT), **Theatre Café** (Arcola Theatre 2004)



WILLIAM EL-GARDI

Shane Collins Associates
020-7470 8864

Previous credits include:
The Container (Edinburgh Festival 2007), **Failed States** (Pleasance), **Time of the Tortoise** (Theatre 503), **Tangier Tattoo** (Glyndebourne Opera House)



GEHANE STREHLER

DQ Management
01273 721221

Previous credits include:
The Last Virgin (English Theatre Frankfurt), **Fahrenheit 451** (TNT Theatre), **4.48 Psychosis** (Tangram Theatre), **The House of Bernada Alba** (Federal Theatre USA)



WENDY NOTTINGHAM

Rebecca Blond Associates
020-7351 4100

Previous credits include:
Total Eclipse (Menier Chocolate Factory), **Abigail's Party** (Ambassadors Theatre), **The York Realist** (Royal Court & West End), **The Way of the World** (Lyric), **The Voyage Inheritance** (National Theatre)



JAMES DANIEL WILSON

AXM
020-7261 0400

Previous credits include:
Home (Frantic Assembly), **The thought that counts** (Theatre-Rites), **Cyrano de Bergerac** (Oxford Shakespeare Co.), **Jumpers** (Birmingham Rep) and **Miss Saigon** (West End)



Contacts

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Respect
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Theatre Café Europe is a co-production with **hetMUZTheater**, Zaandam (Holland), **VATteater**, Tallinn (Estonia) and **Le Grand Bleu**, Lille (France).



www.theatrecafe.eu

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