

## **Munsbach European Summer School 5 - 13th August 2000 report by Robbyna Svärd**

What could one expect when one collects 54 (48 students + 4 tutors) talented people (29 f , 23 m )with a passion for the theatre to spend 9 days at the historical Munsbach Chateau situated on the outskirts of the city of Luxembourg. ANYTHING!

Absolutely amazing, mind-boggling, fantastic, stimulating, comforting, developmental, enriching... words cannot describe or do justice to this experience. One needs to experience this school to fully understand what I am going to write.

It doesn't matter if you are a less experienced player or a talented long-time player Munsbach has something to offer you. Munsbach is special, Munsbach is different, things happen at Munsbach which do not happen anyway else.

The venue couldn't be better, the activities are flexible and developmental and the teaching method professional and successful. Everyone contributes to the experience, students and tutors alike. The course director Mike McCormack, actor, director and University lecturer along with 2 dedicated students, Chris Bearne and John Brigg from the New World Theatre Club organised this Summer School week at Munsbach which celebrated its 10 year anniversary this year. Mike worked in close collaboration with the other 3 tutors, Graeme du Fresne specialist in Music and acting, Peta Lily specialist in Movement and Comedy and Noel Greig specialist in acting and play writing.

As I understand it the course has been adapted and perfected every year taking experience and feed-back from the students and tutors into consideration. The tutors gave 150% at the sessions and for the students it felt very safe and supportive and we could try absolutely anything. The emphasis was definitely on "the process" and perfecting the process rather than stressing a finished product or result. I cannot remember when I have attended such a stimulating and learning course where theoretical knowledge was skilfully combined with practical training and experimentation. The activities revolved around project work accommodating both directing and acting skills. Using a process of "shares and swaps" everyone had an opportunity to both observe what students in other groups were doing as well as a chance to test all the group activities. The timetable or course schedule which is mind-boggling at first glance becomes very familiar after a few days. So familiar in fact that the schools schedule feels normal and one starts to question what one is doing in real life.

In addition to all the sessions there is time for relaxing which mostly happens in the Pub/bar at Munsbach. The poetry and music evenings in the Pub reminded me of our Cabaret evenings in Stockholm and provided excellent entertainment. With beer at 10 SEK and a glass of wine at 12 SEK it was not easy to leave the bar before the very small hours of the morning. However, no excuses accepted the following morning when classes and sessions kicked off with the 30min warm up on the lawn. The discipline and respect for everybody and the schedule resulted in a very positive atmosphere. As many as two thirds of the students at this years school had already attended the school once or even several times in the past. This did not in anyway affect us the newcomers but it just shows how attractive many students find the atmosphere and experience of the Munsbach summer school. This year there were even participants from the US. The other positive is getting to know the members of the other amateur English speaking theatre groups in Europe who participate at FEATS.

This is definitely a summer school which I would recommend to all of you who are interested in the theatre.