

Shakespeare, brushed up and let's not forget about the Bear

„Come“ they said „it'll be fun“ they said and I believed them. Boy, was I wrong!

It was a long journey to get me to the LEATSS (www.leadss.lu) doors. First time I heard about it was about 5 years ago and ever since I was thinking of going, but my life offered or pushed me into other priorities... Then I got a ½ scholarship from my club (www.pirates.lu) last year. I was delighted, just until I realised I couldn't go because of medical reasons. There have been hard times afterwards and the fear of not getting into the summer school was growing. I applied for the scholarship offered by the school as well. In the email I explained many reasons that ate up all my money and savings and just a couple of weeks before the classes started, I got a YES.

I was warned that the kitchen there is only adapted to “vegetarian” and “non vegetarian” choice. Wrong! It may have appeared on the outside, but once the kitchen staff found out about my lactose and gluten free diet, they made sure that I got special dishes without them. I never considered myself as a modest eater, but during the 8 days of school I probably ate two to three times the usual. And didn't gain a single kilo!

The schedule started with the 9 am warm-up and ended at 9:15 pm. We had 4 breaks in the meantime and an optional hour to spend in between. It was intense. And time flew like it is always flying when you're having fun. and every evening ended downstairs by the bar, having a couple of drinks and even more fun!



The fountain, where we found a few minutes of rest and sunshine



Same fountain, view from the garden

There were a Theme and Skills classes, a Student project and Swaps, that is to get a taste of other themes and skills. My Skills was “Speaking from Head to Toe” with amazing Sarah Case and my Theme was “There’s Plenty of Song in Stock” with wonderful Graeme Du Fresne. And often Sarah was wonderful and Graeme was amazing! It wasn't just the connection my groups had with the tutors, it was the enthusiasm from both sides that made hard work so delightful and the success so easy! In both groups I belonged to the minority of the non-native English speakers and there were moments when I felt I almost don't understand the language. My vocabulary, good enough to work in the institution and help creating serious reports about this and that for years, suddenly seemed so poor. There is so many new words I learned and forgot that week! I will not let myself forget those many ways of relaxing all the muscles needed for speech, the melody of Shakespeare's lines, the darkness we discovered in a modern prose example, the fun with the relaxation techniques, the fffffff, vvvvvvvvv, sssssss, ššššššššššš (shhhh), zzzzzzz and žžžžžžžžžžž (zhhhh) we filled our room with! Vibrating your lungs, muscles and bones.... and most important: breathing. Skills that I have conquered. Rhetoric. The art of persuading. Quoting lines from Shakespeare was never easier! And the modern text. And the accents.

Singing in a Stock character was the other fun, we were Cinderella's evil sisters, the Wolf and the Red Riding Hood, Gangsters, Lovers and Ms Trunchbull. No matter the gender of singers, or the fact that some of the songs were, as Graeme mentioned, f*cking difficult, we conquered them all! A week later, “The Hammer” is still banging in my mind, when “Barcelona” or “I'm So Over Men” are taking a break.



My Theme group



My Skills group

The Student Project. What a fun! There was no competition, but if there was, I'm sure that the group I was the part of, would get a reward as the one that had the most fun. The runners-up would have been very close. The directors volunteered and selected the pieces they wanted to work with, the tutors assigned the remaining students to them. The process was to be the most important and when we were reading the Bear (A. Chekhov) for the first time, I had no idea that just days later we would be chasing each other in the park at around 30 degrees heat and improvising on a completely different situations and the fun and the laughs we had!



The view from my window



The invisible bonds we've been weaving through the week. The friendships we made, and were taken all over Europe and beyond. The addiction that turns into the post-school depression and the only cure is coming back again. One more week next year...

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Me at the end of the week: tired & happy

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