

# SCARLET NEWS

Following our highly successful tour of *Love and Other Fairy Tales*, we have finally produced a new newsletter, which tracks what we have been up to recently and what lies ahead. Inspired by last year's show, which was a re-working of one of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* by Nick Revell, we have taken the theme of journeys for this year's newsletter.

We are currently in rehearsals for our new show *The Wedding*. This is the first-ever British production of Virgilio Piñera's brilliant Cuban Absurdist play. The show heralds exciting collaborations with practitioners old and new to Scarlet. Associate Director Emma Bernard directs, following her co-direction with Gráinne on *The Fruit has Turned to Jam* in the Fields and Kate Eaton, previously an actress with the company has translated the text. Kate's article below shares how her travels to Cuba

led her to discover this fascinating writer. The *Wedding* is touring nationally with a run at the Southwark Playhouse from 17 March - 5 April 2003.

2002 was a fantastic year for Scarlet. *Love and Other Fairy Tales* travelled to the Brighton Festival and the first Prague Fringe Festival. Cindy Oswin who played the *Wife of Bath* gives an insight into the company's experiences in the Czech Republic. Scarlet's work with schools and community groups expanded hugely and included *Urban Acts*, a festival celebrating youth arts, during which actors created performances with Barnet Youth Centres across the borough (see Andrew Bridgmont and Oli Halpern's articles).

We also have articles from two photographers: Mark Hamilton who has been working with Scarlet since 2001 on our publicity images and Steve Hollingshead

who documented Scarlet's involvement in the Southwark Festival when actors from *Love and Other Fairy Tales* led a historical tour around Southwark.

This coming year brings exciting new projects including *The President's Wives*; an ambitious multi media production (see Gráinne's article), commissions from Arts Depot and Jackson's Lane and of course *The Wedding* which opens on 14 February. See the back page for a full list of tour dates and workshop opportunities.

Please look out for Scarlet on tour, keep your eye on the website and we hope to see you over the next year. Enjoy the newsletter!

Sophie Pridell

## TRANSLATING THE WEDDING

KATE EATON GIVES A FEW EXPLANATIONS

Flora: Explanations?

Alberto: Explanations that don't explain anything, formal explanations the sort of explanations normally given by persons of good breeding.

Act 1; *The Wedding* by Virgilio Piñera

My first journey to Cuba was in 1992. I spoke no Spanish, but many were the inhabitants willing to practise their English on me. I returned to England and started rehearsals for Scarlet's production of *On Air*. As we toured the highways and byways of Britain, I decided to put the journey time to good use by learning Spanish. I began 'Si', 'No', 'El hombre cuya hija es actriz'. In June, the tour over, I visited Cuba again: 'Yes' and 'no' came in very useful but my remarks about the man whose daughter has thespian leanings were less widely understood.

Fast forward to September 1997. I am there again, this time with GCSE and A Level in Spanish under my belt. I am also about to embark on a part-time BA in Spanish and Latin American Studies at Birkbeck College. The Havana Theatre Festival is in full swing, dedicated this year to Virgilio Piñera, a writer about whom I know absolutely nothing but who turns out to have been one of the most important Cuban writers of the last century. The production that most impresses me is Piñera's absurdist comedy *The Wedding* by Cuban company Teatro de la Luna (Theatre of the Moon). Something about the style of the piece reminds me of Scarlet's *Princess Sharon* (adapted from *Princess Ivona* by Witold Gombrowicz). I decide then and there that one day I will translate *The Wedding* into English, a rather grandiose ambition

since to date I have not translated anything longer than a paragraph. However, over ensuing years I keep the idea at the back of my mind and during subsequent visits to Cuba, I manage to buy up nearly the entire back-catalogue of Piñera's work from the second-hand booksellers in the back streets of Havana and transport them back to London.

Fast-forward again, October 2000 and I have convinced Gráinne that despite the fact I am about to have a baby in two minutes and hormones are obviously rotting my brain, that Scarlet would like to produce a rehearsed reading of *The Wedding*. I have decided to submit it as my final year degree project. In January 2001, I discover that one of those serendipitous six degrees of theatrical separation means that Virgilio Piñera and Witold Gombrowicz were friends when they both lived in Buenos Aires in the 1950s and that Piñera had helped to translate Gombrowicz' *Ferdyduke*. I finally manage to come up with the finished product within days of the scheduled reading, which was deemed to be a success. Skipping forward again to 2003, I have my degree, MA in Literary Translation and I am in rehearsals for a full-scale production. That's where reading Latin American Spanish for Beginners in the back of Scarlet's van can lead you!

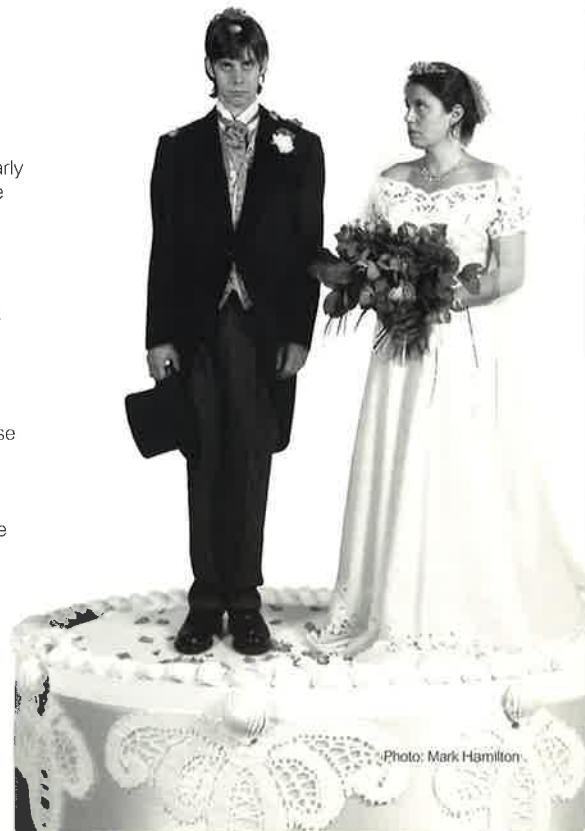


Photo: Mark Hamilton