

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear friends,

Welcome back to our 'Autumn Season' in BLOC. Memories of our last show, 'The Sorcerer', have been superbly documented, and both the photo book and video are now in their final stages of production. Make sure to place your orders as soon as possible.

As you know, rehearsals for 'Kiss me, Kate' are in full swing and the box office is now open. Let's sell this show - it's going to be another BLOC hit!

The deadline for proposals for our next two shows is 15th October (more information in this newsletter).

Finally, even if you're not involved in 'Kiss me, Kate', you're welcome to come along to a rehearsal at De Kam and have a drink in Koen's bar with fellow BLOC members. We're one big musical family!

Here's to  
'another  
opening,  
another  
show'!

Tony Lowe  
- BLOC  
Chairman



## BLOC'S UPCOMING PRODUCTION

Rehearsals are in full swing for BLOC's November 2019 show:

Cole Porter's **Kiss Me, Kate**.

Here are some fun facts you may not know about Kiss Me, Kate:

- Kiss Me, Kate won the first ever Tony Award for Best Musical, in 1949. The 1999 Broadway revival also won "Best Revival of a Musical" in 2000.
- This was the only one of Cole Porter's shows to stay on Broadway for more than 1000 performances.
- The 1949 original cast recording has been inducted into the American Library of Congress's National Recording Registry for the album's "cultural, artistic and/or historical significance to American society and the nation's audio legacy".



## GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

***Tickets available now!***

**Thursday 21 November - 20:00**

**Friday 22 November - 20:00**

**Saturday 23 November - 14:30**

**Saturday 23 November - 20:00**

**Sunday 24 November - 14:30**

*Centre Culturel d'Auderghem.*

See [bloc-brussels.com](http://bloc-brussels.com) for more information.

Wednesday, January 5, 1949

Forty-third VARIETY Anniversary

# Plays on Broadway

## Kiss Me, Kate

Robert Seltzer & Leonard Ayers production of musical comedy by Cole Porter (10 scenes), with music and lyrics by Cole Porter, book by Bella and Samuel Spewack. Stars Alfred Drake, Patricia Morison, Fred Graham, Eddie Gray, Charles Wood, Lucien Littlefield, Harold Lang, Harry Clark, Jack Diamond, Bill Litting, Marjorie Reynolds, Della Green. Specialty Dances—Fred Davis, Eddie Sledge. "Taming of the Shrew" Players—Lila Kirk, Harry Trevor, Thomas Meter, Edwin Gray, Charles Wood, Harold Lang, Patricia Morison, Fred Graham, John Quellan, Mary Martin, Peggy Ferris, Marjorie Trath, Gay Laurence, Ethel Maders, Helen Rice, Madeline Strazza, Tom Holt, George Caudy, Neva Patten, Nan Garden, Allan Lowell, Charles Wood. Dancers—Ann Hunter, Shirley Kohl, Jean Madeline, Gerald Sherman, Gladys Bryant, Jean Jackson, Mark Brennan, John Castelle, Victor Daniels, Paul Olson, Glen Taylor, Ruth Tross.

The smash success of "Kiss Me, Kate" (and it is unquestionably a smash) is a thrilling story of show business—the triumphant return of Cole Porter, the prodigal composer, to the ranks of the theatrical great. He has been "away" too long. Not just as Irving Berlin and Oscar Hammerstein, 2d, survived slump years to write their greatest hits, Porter has made his comeback with the finest score of his career.

Even after his tremendous advance buildup, with rave reviews from out-of-town and a growing volume of expectant talk around Broadway, "Kate" isn't a letdown. It's solidly enjoyable, with one innumerable tune after another, many of them with slyly amusing lyrics. There's fine singing, plus captivating personalities and performances, entertaining dancing, and stunning settings and costumes. Even the book, usually the catch in a musical, is interesting and serviceable.

In every department, "Kate" is a superlative show. From the original idea, it is imaginative, ingenious, tasteful and skillfully done. The scenes are brilliantly rouined to provide contrast and tempo. John C. Wilson's direction is firm, yet pliable and expressive. There is an uncannily effective mixture of sentiment, comedy and rhythm in the music and lyrics, and excellent variation in the choreography, from ballet to hot hooding.

Although there isn't a weak tune in the show, some of the Porter songs are certain to be memorable. Sure bets for most-played ratings, possibly with revised lyrics in some instances, are "Why Can't You Behave," "So in Love Am I," "I Hate Men," "Too Darn Hot," "Where Is the Life That I Led?" "Blanca" and "Brush Up Your Shakespeare." It's the sort of score that sends an audience out of the theatre singing.

The Bella and Samuel Spewack story is the hectic romance of a stage couple, divorced but still in love, who are playing Petruchio and Kate in a tryout of "Taming of the Shrew" at Ford's theatre, Baltimore. Both acts get opening lifts by routing ensemble numbers, and there are only a few brief slow spots thereafter. There's an unusual amount of plot, but it never seriously impedes the show.

Alfred Drake and Patricia Morison are superb as co-stars. Their singing is impressive, with the film actress, in particular, having a lovely, warm voice. Both combine fire and humor in performance, and their styles and personalities are admirably paired. Lila Kirk and Harold Lang, co-featured, register as second leads, the former in particular with the "Why Can't You Behave" ballad and the latter especially in a show-stopping dance routine with Fred Davis and Eddie Sledge, Harry Clark and Jack Diamond, as self-consciously genteel hoodlums, also halt proceedings with their "Shakespeare" duet, and the whole company is infectiously enthusiastic.

Any musical as fine as "Kate" inevitably suggests comparison with the wonder show, "Oklahoma!" Actually, they aren't comparable, being utterly unlike in style, flavor and effect. But as long as there are shows like "Oklahoma!" and "Kate" nothing can quite take the place of the theatre. Hobe.

Review of the original Kiss Me, Kate: Variety, p.259, 5 January 1949.

The magazine was 465 pages long!!!!

Cole Porter and Kiss Me, Kate playwright Bella Spewack (co-writer with her husband Sam Spewack, not pictured).



**GETTING TO KNOW YOU - VIVIENNE MCKAY**

*After rehearsal on 8 October, I had the chance to sit down for a few minutes with our Musical Director for Kiss Me, Kate, Vivienne McKay. Here are some of the things we chatted about.*

- Helen Krabb

**Helen:** How long have you been involved with BLOC?

**Viv:** I first played my clarinet in the orchestra. It was when I came to Belgium, in 1986, so I'm probably one of the veterans of BLOC. I sometimes used to play for auditions when BLOC was the Gilbert and Sullivan Society. I played in a number of shows.

When I got married and had my daughter I had a break for about 15 years, and then I came back and I played for Beauty and the Beast as rehearsal pianist.

I never really anticipated music directing a show until we came to, in true BLOC fashion, the auditions for Sweeney Todd. [The person] who was music directing [was unable to continue. There was no-one else available], so that was it. I was a reluctant music

director at first but was pleased to be working alongside Stage Director Bridget Peirson-Davis who is a good friend. But now I am quite happy to be doing it.

**Helen:** What's your favourite show that you have done with BLOC?

**Viv:** Sweeney Todd, definitely. Because it was the most difficult, musically, by far. It was challenging. And it was good to do that first, because anything after that seems like a bit of a walk in the park. It was a once in a lifetime experience. We all got on well, and it was just totally memorable.

**Helen:** What's your favourite musical that you have seen on stage?

**Viv:** Well, I remember when I first saw the Phantom of the Opera, that had a huge impact. I saw it when it first came out and it was very different. I liked Wicked as well, I thought that was really clever.

**Helen:** If you could pick one musical for BLOC to do in the future, what would you pick?

**Viv:** I think Hairspray would be really good. Chess would be good. Mamma Mia, of course. And of course West Side Story. Another one I like is Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. No, I can't pick just one!

**Helen:** Do you have a favourite piece of music from this show?

**Viv:** No. Whenever I start shows, I'm never very sure about how much I'm going to



like the music. Then I always start liking it, a lot. [Then] I like all the numbers.

**Helen:** Have you always liked musicals?

**Viv:** Oh yes. When I lived in London, in the early 80s, I used to play the piano for people who were in the original case of Evita, the London cast. We had a little touring group and did shows when they weren't in the theatre. They moved on to be in the original cast of Chess. So I have been playing musicals for a long time.

[Before that,] my grandfather sang in Gilbert and Sullivan in the 1920s. I remember he was one of the Gondoliers, in an am. dram. production of the Gondoliers. I've been brought up with it.

**Helen:** What do you do in your day job?

**Viv:** I teach, piano and music, and play, accompany, that kind of thing, music in general, at the British School.

**Helen:** Music in general - that's your life?

**Viv:** Yeah, it's music.



**WHAT ELSE IS ON?**

8-12 October	Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf	American Theatre Company	Petit Théâtre Mercelandis
19 October	Sing-along Ruddigore	Sing G&S in Brussels	De Bosuil
26 October	Staging Post	The Staging Post	De Kam
5-9 November	Our Few and Evil Days	The Irish Theater Company	Petit Théâtre Mercelandis
21-24 November	Kiss Me, Kate	Brussels Light Opera Company	Auderghem Cultural Centre
26-30 November	Lessons in Love (English/French - each section subtitled in the other language)	ETCetera	Warehouse Studio Theatre
1 December	The Snowman & Percus- sion Extravaganza	The Children's Charity Christmas Concert	Auderghem Cultural Centre
15 December	Brussels Carol Concert	Brussels Carol Concert	Koninklijk Conservatorium
17-19 January 2020	Beauty and the Beast (Pantomime)	English Comedy Company	Auderghem Cultural Centre



**RUDDIGORE**

**CREEP INTO HALLOWE'EN MOOD -  
BUT BEWARE THE WITCH'S CURSE!  
WHOO-HA-HA-HA-HA...!!**

Join in the "Sing G&S in Brussels" sing-along  
with Gilbert and Sullivan's ghastly, ghostly "Ruddigore"  
on Saturday, 19th October (14:30 to 18:00)  
at De Bosuil Cultural Centre, Jezus Eik (1st floor), 3090 Overijse.  
**A SPOOKY SING-ALONG AFTERNOON WITH A HALLOWE'EN TEA**

Participation: €5 singgasbru@gmail.com

The next "Staging Post" will be held at De Kam on Saturday 26 October.

The show will feature as the main act "The Bluesy Cats", a local, international band, playing Blues, Soul and Light Rock from the '60s & '70s.

The brilliant Portuguese and Spanish guitarists, Luis Reis and Juan Mellado, who gave us a standing-ovation performance of Iberian and Latin-American music last March, will be playing Blues and Ballads as a supporting act.

We are pleased to welcome Marieke Slovin Lewis, a singer/song-writer from the US who will be performing some of her own songs, and playing her baritone-ukulele.

[www.TheStagingPost.net](http://www.TheStagingPost.net)

**Staging Post De Kam**  
For Good Music in a Café-Theatre Setting,  
GC De Kam, 172 Beekstraat, WezembEEK-OPPem.  
Tram No. 39, Stop "Beek,"

In association with PTPI-Europe, presents  
**a musical evening on**  
**Saturday, the 26<sup>th</sup> Oct @ 19:30.**

Featuring  
**"The Bluesy Cats"**  
Blues, Soul and light rock from the  
60s and 70s

With supporting acts from  
**"Luis & Juan"**  
Blues, Ballads & scintillating guitars  
and  
Songs from singer/song-writer  
**Marieke Slovin**

Followed by a  
**Free podium in the bar 'til late.**

Takings over costs go to charity.  
Café-Theatre seating with space for dancing.  
Recommended entry donation 15eu, kids for free.  
Doors open at 19:00; come early to be sure of a table.

**BEAUTY & the BEAST**

17-19 January 2020 - Ruderghem Cultural Centre

Tickets: Adults: €16 - Children €12  
<https://thelittleboxoffice.com/ECC/>

ECC's next production will be their January pantomime: "Beauty and the Beast"

*"[A] fun-filled show based on the classic fairy tale. Expect songs and laughter, bad jokes and fabulous costumes, wolves, horses, magical servants, and even a couple of Belgians... and did we mention the bad jokes?"*

*Enjoy plenty of songs, dances, stunning scenery, special effects and superb costumes...topped off by all-round slapstick and silliness. Festive entertainment does not come any better!"*

*Tickets are on sale now.*

**EXHIBITION : PAINTINGS AND PHOTOS****CATHERINE JACQUEMET BRAWN & ROGER BRAWN**

Many of you may know Catherine Jacquemet Brawn, who often manages Front of House for BLOC. This November, Catherine and her husband Roger Brawn are holding an exhibition of their work.



Art gallery Au Fond Du Bois,  
Brusselseteenweg 49  
Tervuren

20 November to 1 December 2019

More details :

[facebook.com/events/368485087366716/](https://facebook.com/events/368485087366716/)

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

The Committee will be considering proposals for BLOC's 2020 shows at our October meeting.

If you are interested in making a proposal, please read all the detailed information in the previous edition of BLOC Notes (available online at [bloc-brussels.com](http://bloc-brussels.com)).

To make a proposal, email [blocchairman@gmail.com](mailto:blocchairman@gmail.com) by 15 October 2019 at the latest to let us know the basic outline of your proposal, and be prepared to present your proposal to the Committee in person on 23 October.

**BLOC MEMBERSHIP FEE 2019**

Have you paid your membership fee for 2019? It's not too late!

The fee is for every member of 16 years and older. It is important that everyone involved with a show has paid their fees, to ensure that you are insured while doing BLOC activities.

As a performing member the fee for each person is 40 Euros. If you are a non-performing member the fee is 20 Euros. Both membership type fees are for 2019 calendar year.

Fees should be paid to the "BLOC" bank account, number: BE54 3101 7807 3797. In your payment please mention your name and 2019.

**SUBMISSIONS FOR BLOC** Notes

Deadline next BLOCNotes:  
1 November 2019

*The BLOCNotes Archive is available on-line.*  
See [bloc-brussels.com/blocnotes](http://bloc-brussels.com/blocnotes)