

Sitges English Theater Company will this year commemorate its 20 years of promoting performing arts in our town with a full program centring again on comedy nights.

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Amateur theatre, as an artistic expression and a medium for integration and socializing of a large foreign community, has been growing in Sitges thanks to Sitges English Theatre Company (SETC), which will celebrate its twentieth anniversary this year. The company's main objective was to facilitate an activity that would both support artistic interests and generate a community with common cultural affinities. The language of the group has always been English, although it has also been able to stage up to three works in Catalan, Spanish and English as well as the universal language of performing arts.

SETC both supported artistic interests and generated a community with common cultural affinities.

Brandon Jones and Jimmy Gardiner, were two of the first initiators. "Here at the Casablanca bar there were various patrons who were interested in creating a medium that would allow them to socialize and have an activity at the same time". It was through the interest and dedication to theatre of these founding members that SETC was launched in December 1999, which, as Brandon Jones points out, coincided with a high number of

English-speakers in Sitges and the setting up of ESCAAN.

One of first activities was singing Christmas Carols in English and Latin at Cap de la Vila. Then under the direction of Stephen Michael our first theatrical performance was held In 2000 at the Espai Cultural Pere Stàmpfli. In the first years the association grew by incorporating new people who had been living in Sitges or who had just arrived. Jean-Luc Hérin, current SETC secretary, points out that people come and go, and that some people, in these 20 years "are no longer with us". But there is also a generational change as children and young people have joined and now play a major part in many of the activities thus giving the company a guarantee of continuity.

The pantomime is a British tradition which is usually staged at Christmas time.

"Integrating in the community or doing theatre" was a debate that was synonym with a period of crisis, reminds Brandon Jones. "And without crisis we would not be an amdram group!", Jean-Luc Hérin added. The company had a new impulse in 2005 with a work that was performed in the Cava (Retiro).

Then from 2008, two events started taking a major place in the yearly program of events, the Christmas Pantomime and Sitges Has Talents. Both still active and consolidated with participation of both English-speaking and Catalan-speaking people.

The Pantomime is a British tradition. It is a Christmas show where the character of the dame is played by a male actor and where the ingredients are humour, dance and music. They are usually very expensive productions," Bridget Wilson (i.e. Nelson) explained, who acts currently as interface with the families and does choreography in the various shows.

The current SETC president, Stephen England, who is in charge of putting together and producing the works points out that involving young people has added new activities to the company's regular program where music and comedy feature prominently.

Based at the Escorxador, the same venue as where the activities began, SETC has always expressed the need for a performing arts space, "not as massive as the Prado and Retiro but bigger and less impersonal than the Escorxador. "

LIGHTS GONE AWOL

SETC uses the Antic Escorxador as its main venue. This is where they have been keeping equipment and where their lights were installed. Two weeks ago half of the these lights disappeared. SETC calls on the other entities and groups that have access to the space to find out what may have happened. They believe that this equipment have been mistaken for town hall property. If you have any information you can write to: sitgesetc@gmail.com.

2019 DATES

- **2X1- Happy families - April 6th and 7th**
- **Sant Jordi - April 23rd**
- **Sitges has Talent 2019 - May19th**
- **Here we go again - early July**
- **Teen Pop Fest - September**
- **Comedy Evening - October**
- **Beauty and the Beast (Pantomime) - Early December**