

This amateur production of Calendar Girls is presented
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PRESENTED BY



Calendar Girls

BY TIM FIRTH

DIRECTED BY
PETER HILTON

PRODUCED BY
ADRIAN CHESSE

13. 14. 15. 21. 22. 27. 28. JUNE 2014

DESIGN BY ELEANOR LOW



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DIRECTORS NOTE

Peter Hilton

Last September when I first suggested directing Calendar Girls to the Semi-Circle Committee I did not fully realise what a journey I was undertaking. Probably like a lot of you I had seen the film and thought it was a wonderful gentle English film with a lot of comedy and emotion. I did not realise quite how much until we actually started rehearsals. There have been times when rehearsals have stopped because we could not stop laughing and others where the emotion was too much to continue. I hope we will now take you on the same journey. Most of you know by now that the film and the play are based on a true story that comes out of the County of Yorkshire in England. Eleven ladies from the Rylstone WI in Yorkshire decided to pose nude for a calendar to raise money for Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research. This was the result of the husband of one of them dying of this cruel disease. In the play he is John Clarke but in real life he was John Baker. Since John's death in 1998 a number of 'official' calendars have been produced by the original girls and to date they have raised over £3 million towards research. The Semi-Circle has also produced a calendar with the co-operation of the 'girls' from the play and the proceeds will go to Cancer Research in Switzerland. Please make sure you buy a copy in the foyer. Our thanks go again to Andreas Rasp and his team for welcoming us back to the Rampe Theatre and agreeing so readily people who have worked so hard to bring us to this point. Last but not least to the cast – especially the 'girls' who undertook the challenge of acting in a play that is based on a true story. It is not an easy thing to represent a group of people whose story began only 16 years ago but, I think you will agree, they have achieved this magnificently.

Semi-Circle Productions



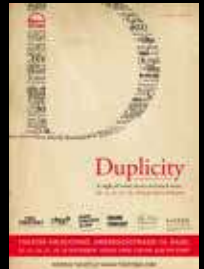
2014: Calendar Girls



2013: Greener Grass



2013: A Murder is Announced



2012: Duplicity



2012: The Shadow Box



2011: Looking Back
Falling Forward



2011: RENT the Musical



2010: Unoriginal Sin



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Autumn Production 2014

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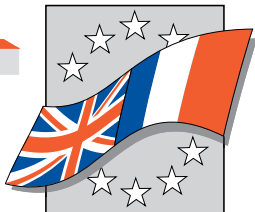
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PRODUCERS NOTE

Adrian Chess

When Peter Hilton offered me the Production Manager brief after the auditions in January, I thought the job would be a mountain to climb, given the fact that my experience is based on the French theatre scene with all its ungovernable artistic sensitivities and not the Swiss one. As a language consultant, I was also concerned that I do not speak Swiss German and that I would get as lost as I physically do in Basel, looking for rehearsal venues among the labyrinth of one way streets with (for me) unreadable names. My apprehensions, however, were soon allayed, as I quickly discovered the international and largely autonomous dimension of the cast and crew involved in a typical Semi-Circle production. How at home and motivated one immediately feels in this theatre group, helped as well, might I mention, by Peter's deliberate seating arrangements for all the CG cast and crew who dined together and bonded at the annual Semi-Circle dinner, prior to production. In addition, I discovered that English is the general working medium in Basel, unlike France where the French and English languages are constantly vying with each other for linguistic ascendancy, even within a theatrical context! Semi-Circle stalwarts, Scott Holland, Diana Zuger and Eleanor Low all offered to help me with the PM task at the outset and I thank them for this. I then met with Peter and Diana chez Pete in early February and was impressed by how efficiently my brief was presented to me in a concisely detailed job description. In recent months, I have come to compare the job of Production Manager of Calendar Girls with that of a conductor of an orchestra, i.e., co-coordinating the individual talents of the crew. This crew met several times in the backroom of the Café Fortuna who kindly provided us with a large table and seemed to tolerate quite boisterous albeit productive meetings lasting several hours but following a strict agenda. One of the things that strikes me most about producing a Semi-Circle play is how excellently structured and harmonious the show already is, even before the preparation of the show properly gets underway (although Peter had also knowledgeably hand-picked the talent around him). In fact, so many people involved in the production side already have a sterling experience in their fields that I can only gloss over some of the talent I have encountered in the lead up to performance: Eleanor Low, Publicity Person, a real cornerstone of our production - hard working, efficient and with in-depth knowledge and experience in her field, meeting every marketing deadline, whether it is the publication of posters or finding sponsorship, Rory Macfie, Treasurer, who so competently keeps the production within budget and who has such valuable experience and insight into the financial aspects of a theatrical production, Dragana Blaser a specialist in scenography, Tanja Spichty so reliable in her organizational skills, etc. In fact there are so many competent people behind this production of Calendar Girls I cannot mention them all on one page, but Production Manager has been an easy job for me, mainly due to the excellence of other crew members' teamwork.

All the above brings me to say that Calendar Girls must be a box office success here in Basel as it would be such a well deserved psychological reward for all the Production Team and Cast's efforts. I equally thank the tirelessly working and always available Peter Hilton for bringing me on board the production of this show and tolerating all my questions and emails... so now all that remains to be said is... let everyone break a leg!



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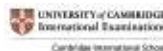


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CALENDAR GIRLS CAST



Vinka Arellano - Cora

Vinka Arellano is a Chilean – Norwegian multilingual (5 languages) actress who moved to Basel for love. Having been on stage since the age of 5 in different independent ensembles in Norway, she quickly adapted herself to a new life in Switzerland by performing for the English Drama Group of the Uni in Zürich, Basel's Semi-Circle and in other independent theatre projects. Vinka has also featured in commercials and provided voice-overs for Swiss Television and Migros. Latest acting credits include: RENT, The Sound of Music, Duplicity, Unoriginal Sin, Bouncers & Shakers, A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur, Celebration, Bedroom farce, Don't Drink the Water and A Doll's House. She is grateful for the education and the inspiration these plays have provided.



Cathy Barker - Chris

Cathy, like her character Chris, comes from the north of England, but from the other side of the Pennines (you know, the side where all the best pop music and comedy comes from!). She has been a member of several choral societies over the years, and has dabbled in musical theatre (most recently in last year's G&S production of "Trial By Jury"). Her first acting role that didn't involve suddenly bursting into song came last year, when she played "The Woman" in "Losing It", one of the plays in Semi-Circle's production of "Greener Grass". She has now most definitely caught the acting bug.



Conny Heim - Celia

Conny Heim was born in Oberreute, a small village in the Bavarian Alps. She has always loved the theatre and throughout her life has held many positions both behind, and occasionally on, the stage, in both amateur and professional productions in Freiburg, Düsseldorf, Erfurt, Vienna and on cruise ships. She is married to a professional actor, has travelled three times around the world and is now working for the cruise ship industry, based in Basel. In 2006 she joined the Semi-Circle, and after much backstage work and directing, she is now happy and excited to step into the limelight again - even without clothes!



Sue Newstead - Annie

Work brought me to Switzerland 11 years ago. A passing phase, or so I thought, but I'm still here. This is a beautiful country, but I do have to escape the mountainous landscape from time to time for the big skies of Norfolk, England, where I was born and raised. From the age of six the thrill and drama of my school's productions had me totally hooked on theatre, and I am very excited to be making my Semi-Circle acting debut with Calendar Girls. I just knew all that gardening, jam making and needlework that I do in my spare time would come in useful one day.



Carol Rees - Ruth

'What woman of '21 again' could refuse the opportunity of being a Calendar Girl?' Usually more comfortable backstage as a set designer/painter and makeup artist, the call of the grease paint was too strong and it is with great excitement that I take to the stage again after a performance several years ago in Semi-Circle's Memory of Water. The camaraderie backstage and during rehearsals is a definite highlight of the production and it is with pride that together we will show that the women of Yorkshire have, at each stage of their life, a beauty – with the last phase being the most glorious...



Suzan Wilson-Sladek - Jessie

Suzan has lived in Switzerland for over 30 years and has been a member of the Semi-Circle since 1996. She has been involved in many roles within the club; including administrative, acting and working behind the scenes. Last year she ventured out into the field of directing and found it a thoroughly enjoyable experience. This time she plays the role of Jessie and has, as a teacher herself, been able to relate very well to many of the feelings Jessie expresses.

SYNOPSIS

Calendar Girls is about a group of extraordinary women, members of a very ordinary Yorkshire WI (Women's Institute), who spark a global phenomenon by persuading one another to pose for a charity calendar with a difference! As interest snowballs, the Calendar Girls find themselves revealing more than they'd ever planned. Based on an inspiring true story, Calendar Girls is quirky, poignant and hilarious. The film was released in 2003 and was an instant hit at the box office, becoming the number one film in the UK on its release. Tim Firth has adapted the screenplay of his film for the stage. Calendar Girls opened at the Chichester Festival Theatre and has since become the fastest selling play in British theatre history.

ACT 1

.....
INTERVAL 15 MINS
.....

ACT 2





CALENDAR GIRLS CAST



Edward Atkinson - Liam

Edward has lived in the Basel area since 1989, and worked as a bank's archivist. He was in several Semi-Circle plays in the 1990s including playing George in "The Actor's Nightmare". He returned to the Semi-Circle stage last year appearing as Sergeant Mellors in "A Murder is Announced" and Bordeleau in "Mixed Doubles". He is pleased to have been a shareholder of Jennings Brothers which sponsored the original Calendar Girls.



Samantha Children - Marie

Calendar Girls is Samantha's first Semi-Circle production and her first acting experience for eleven years. Sam has had an illustrious acting career which has included roles such as King Balthazar in her junior school Christmas play and Maria in her secondary school's production of West Side Story. Sam is from the south of England but has been living and working in Basel for the last two years.



John Hyland - Rod

Born in Buckinghamshire but raised in Berkshire was less to do with moving and more to do with the government changing the county boundary and postal codes. However one move I did make was arriving here in Basel where I am delighted to be part of the team producing Calendar Girls.



David Laurie - John

Since joining Semi-Circle in 2011 David has played a range of roles, including a singing/dancing businessman (RENT), a patient (Shadowbox), a king (Ruby), a party-crasher (Creep) and an aging gigolo (Mixed Doubles), but this is the first time he was asked to play 'a human sunflower'. Rather a tall order to portray a stalk character... However, with feet firmly planted he resolved to grow into the role, keeping his face turned to the light, and trying not to get too seedy, before leafing quietly.



Luca Manganeli - Lawrence

Despite the scientific background of his "official" education Luca has always been fond of art and literature. He started as an actor ten years ago, following a 3-year course in Italy. He then became a permanent member and vice-president of an Italian theater association. He played in many comedies and dramas, often in main roles, being Lord Goring in "An ideal husband" by Wilde, Ligurio in "La Mandragola" by Machiavelli, Laudisi in "Cosi' e' se vi pare" by Pirandello, Monsieur Aubin in "Tailleur pour dames" by Feydeau, etc... He also took part in several plays for children and for two years he has been part of a clown therapy group working in the hospitals. Without doubt, he acknowledges the truth in the Oscar Wilde's words: "Life imitates art far more than art imitates Life".



Mélanie Schuetz - Elaine

Lots of funny and interesting characters have accompanied me over the last four years of my theatre experience. Once being armed with a camera and always on the hunt for the next top story as eager journalist Martina. Then bringing the world of my fiancé upside down by pretending to have a silly twin sister. Telling stories as the squeaky Dormouse in "Alice in Wonderland". Or as money-mad banker's wife planning a round-the-world trip but ending up in the cellar with the police in their house. But now I'm very much looking forward to bringing Elaine to life and wish you all a wonderful evening enjoying the "Calendar Girls".



Val Walder - Lady Cravenshire

After being a seventy-year-old ghost, then a 'young' woman having an affair with a married man, a charlady, a gallerist and a grandmother I have now reached the heady heights of the aristocracy and a chance to wear my red hat!



Kelly Walsh - Brenda Hulse

Kelly was born and raised in Nashville, TN and has lived in Basel for the last 6 years. After being in many school plays in her younger days the call to acting rang again. "Calendar Girls" was the perfect opportunity to return to the stage with her first production with Semi-Circle.

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CALENDAR GIRLS CREW



Peter Hilton - Director

I have now been in Basel for just over 21 years making my living as a Business English teacher. I have produced, directed, worked back stage and acted in a number of Semi-Circle productions. I have also been involved in and directed a number of Pantos for The Basel English Panto group. This has been the most challenging project I have undertaken for Semi-Circle but thanks to a wonderful cast we have managed to come through the experience having had a lot of fun and a few tears. I must also compliment the back stage team who have had the unenviable task of collecting an amazing amount of props as well as supporting the cast and myself. I hope you have enjoyed the play and been well entertained. Thank you for coming and supporting Semi-Circle thus allowing us to continue to bring quality performances to put before you.



Diana Zuger - Assistant Director

After all the great roles I have had the privilege of playing over the years, I was going to have a rest but as soon as I learned that we were planning to perform "Calendar Girls" I couldn't resist getting involved. It has been a wonderful experience working with such a great cast and hope that our audiences enjoy it as much as I have.



Adrian Chess - Producer

After studying classical Spanish art and theatre at Salamanca University, Adrian moved to France and taught English at Nantes University before launching out into his own language consulting agency. Over the years, he co-wrote, produced and performed several pantomimes and musicals for non native audiences as well as writing for and playing in several Anglo-phone French rock bands. In 2013, he moved to Alsace. Since his arrival in the area, Adrian has performed in "Trial by Jury" (Basel G&S) and played the part of Scuffle in Basel Panto's "Beauty and the Beast".

CALENDAR GIRLS CREW



Chris Jones - Stage Manager

Chris Jones is a relative newcomer to the world of theatre. After working as Assistant Stage Manager (aka stage hand) on last year's Semi-Circle production of Greener Grass, this is his first attempt at stage managing. Now retired, Chris is an avid hobby cook and is happiest when out on a golf course or spoiling his grandson.



Tanja Spichty - Assistant Stage Manager

For the last few years Tanja has helped regularly with Semi-Circle productions. This year she tries her luck as Assistant Stage Manager. But even though she thought this would be a complete new field of action, in the end it always comes down to making lots of phone calls in Swiss German. This year's main topic of the phone conversations: fake flowers...



Dragana Blaser - Scenographer

Architect, Interior Designer, Scenographer. She moved from London to Basel where she discovered her love for scenography and for creating the physical surroundings in which theatrical action unfolds. Her work spans Semi-Circle, Happyville and Basel Panto Group productions including Musical Rent, A Streetcar Named Desire, A Murder is Announced, Duplicity, Bouncers and Shakers, Mother Goose, Treasure Island and Grinch. Another year and another production for which Dragana is delighted to work on set design. She hopes that many local Swiss come to experience Calendar Girls, a group of extraordinary women who have touched the hearts and minds of many of us.



Eleanor Low - Design & Publicity

Actress, producer, singer, designer, Eleanor is no stranger to Basel audiences and theatres. Her first stage performance in Basel was in "Sleeping Beauty" with the Basel Panto Group. Since then she has worked with numerous theatre companies, including Upstart Entertainment, Semi-Circle and Happyville. Her most recent role was as Alexi Darling in the rock musical "RENT" 2013. Eleanor also manages the publicity for Semi-Circle, is a committee member and when Eleanor isn't on the theatre stage, or backstage for that matter, you might hear her singing rock/pop vocals for the band "The Mike Story". She can play a variety of musical instruments: Saxophone, drums, piano...The only thing Eleanor has yet to explore is directing!



Kirsten Gräser - Light & Sound

Kirsten joined Semi-Circle for the Spring production 'The Shadow Box' back in 2011, where she worked as Assistant Stage Manager. Last year Kirsten did the lights and sound for 'A Murder is Announced' and is again responsible for the lighting and sound of 'Calendar Girls'. Being part of the tech team, she has enjoyed the professionalism of backstage with the stage team. The buzz of the theatre world is a good balance for her work as a scientist.

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Michael Bojang, Sally Jaegglin

Janet Ramp

Acknowledgements

Sally Jaegglin for helping us produce an amazing calendar we can all be really proud of

Jays Delight, for a great collaboration with their delicious sweet treats

Zaraz for providing the delicious savoury treats

Natashia Collier for providing the wonderful costume for Chris

Kernzone for sponsoring their room to take beautiful photographs for the calendar

Rachel Wolf from Ricola for being a generous sponsor and providing us with Ricola drops

Andreas Rasp and Anita Antonietti from the Theater Rampe, Borromäum



"One of the many drawbacks of living in a house full of women is that a bad haircut cannot easily be downplayed. Thanks to the stand-in barber's failure to speak an intuitive

mélange of Italian, Spanish and English as I do and as my normal barber does, I was left one afternoon with a teenage No.2 on top, shaven ears and straggly 70s greasy locks curling erotically below my collar like a rustle of under-arm hair caught in the sink."

"One of the most bizarre pieces of advice I received while growing up (from a friend's mother) was that polite people always left something on their plates, and did not, as my own parents never failed to enjoin, "finish it up". It is now evident, in the new morality of sustainability, that this advice to leave food uneaten was plain bonkers. "Waste not want not" proves, like many Victorian epithets, to have multiple meanings, most of them true."

"Truth and reality are different perceptions. What companies say is not what is heard. Reputation is not brand, and being clear is not the same as being transparent. Just be honest, helpful and persuasive."

"Some companies get stubborn and self-righteous. They want not only to be right but they want proof and a certificate of it. Deep down, they want their critics to make public grovelling apologies, little realizing that in this they will lose credibility with their real customers and other stakeholders by beating the same drum over and over in a corporate trance like an addled hippy."

"I have never seen so many teenage girls in one place as outside that stadium before One Direction hit the stage at the Hallenstadion. There was 60s-style screaming in the air. Boys of any description were nowhere to be seen. Somehow it felt thrillingly pre-revolutionary."

It felt like the Flood had come to New York: pavements scattered with broken black umbrellas, gathered stark and broken in stricken clusters at swirling crossings. It made me wonder - what actually is the point of an umbrella?

"Celebrity obsession is no longer just a microculture for tired people, it is now the default multi-culture of the world, the filter through which modern morality and behaviour is forged and even politics is conducted."

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