



## ECCO: November 2014



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If you have any contributions to ECCO, please send them to Janet at [ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com](mailto:ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com)

The next ECCO will come out in January 2015

Deadline: 15 Dec.

### Welcome – From your ECCO Editor

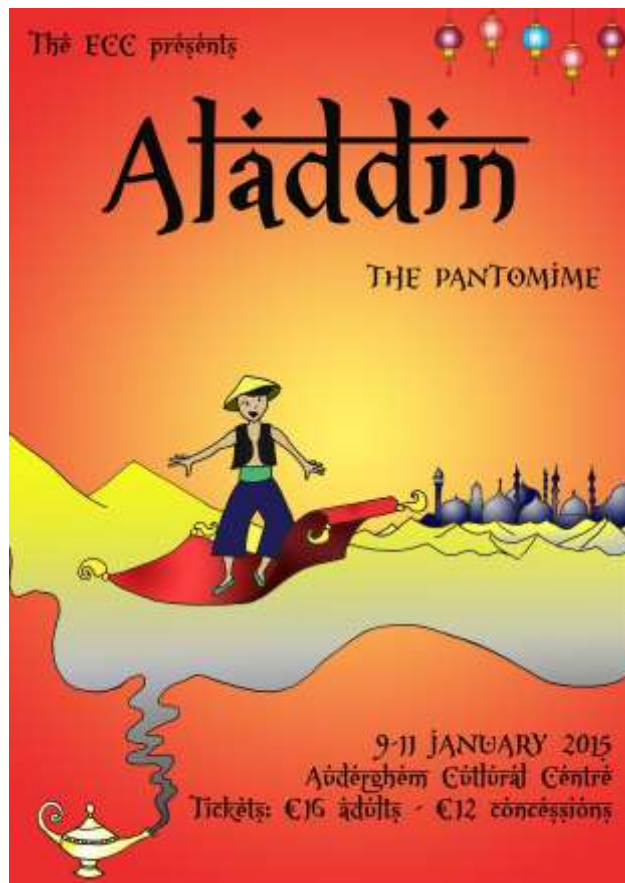
Well, a lot has happened since the last edition of ECCO. We have had our highly successful *Talking Heads* production, which has not only been a credit to the club, but also given us three fabulous new directors in Joanna Patrick, Mark Prescott and Jonathan Stockwell: all familiar names from the stage proving that they can also direct. We look forward to them directing for us again in the near future, and congratulate their actors on their powerfully moving performances.

On a sadder note, at our AGM we had to say 'Thank You' but also 'Goodbye' to our Chair for the past year, Conrad. Conrad has been a huge support to the club for many years – and we hope that we can look forward to his continued enthusiastic input from outside the committee for many years to come. During his time as Chair Conrad has notably introduced the excellent new booking system, which has made life easier for both the productions and the audience members.

As we come to the end of 2014 we are looking forward to starting 2015 with a bang (OH NO we're not! Etc ...) with *Aladdin*: I would urge you to book soon as following the success of *Jack and the Beanstalk* we expect tickets to sell fast!

On behalf of the club I wish you all a very (early) Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

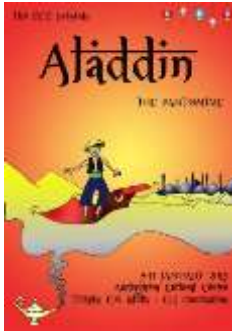
Janet Middleton [ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com](mailto:ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com)



TICKETS  
NOW ON  
SALE!

Click  
Poster

to go  
directly to  
the Box  
Office



Auderghem Cultural Centre  
Blvd du Souverain 183, 1160 Brussels  
9 January (8pm), 10 January (1.30pm & 5pm),  
11 January, (1.30pm & 5pm)  
Tickets are €16 for adults and €12 for children

**Following last year's successful production of Jack & the Beanstalk, the ECC is proud to present a brand new panto - Aladdin!**

Our hero, poor but pure of heart, lives with his mum, Widow Twankey, who runs a laundry in Old Peking in the shadow of the Imperial Palace. Aladdin dreams of a better life when one day he meets the Emperor's daughter, the beautiful Princess Jasmine. The boy has to grow up fast when a mysterious uncle turns up asking for his help in obtaining a lamp from a magical cave. This sets off an exciting chain of events that brings Aladdin love and riches beyond his wildest dreams!

Directed by Henri Colens, and starring Chris Jones, Cath Howdle, Andy Blumenthal and Conrad Toft, the English Comedy Club production of Aladdin is bursting with humour, songs, and magic. This show will delight young and old. *Oh yes it will!*

**Director Henri Colens writes:** The story of Aladdin is well-loved because it tells us of the all-conquering power of love, and gin! Our production of Aladdin will be brash and bold and hilariously funny: we've already been in stitches during our early rehearsals and I'm convinced we have a hit!

Book Here: <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com/aladdin> If you have any problems booking, please contact [tickets@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com](mailto:tickets@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com)

#### **HOW CAN YOU HELP OUT WITH THE PANTO?**

***Follow Aladdin on Twitter @AladdinECC!***

Publicity is one of the vital ingredients in the success of our productions: it is so frustrating when you hear people say 'Oh, I'd have LOVED to have seen that' when it's too late! Femke, the *Aladdin* publicity person, is seeking help in spreading the word – and maybe you can help out too! Femke is encouraging people to tweet about our panto! **Femke writes:** Here's what you can do (/ keep on doing):

1) a general tweet mentioning @AladdinECC and the link to the tickets. For example:

***Come and see #AladdinBrussels the Panto! Check @AladdinECC and book tickets here <http://goo.gl/wyBPq3>***

2) a Follow Friday (#FF) a tweet on Friday whereby you recommend @AladdinECC to your followers. For example: ***Friday's here: Today's #FF goes to @AladdinECC - I can't wait for their #panto in January***

3) "**spotted!**" Tweets. For instance if you see the Aladdin posters in the European Commission or the Parliament (or Stonemanor) take a picture and tweet it mentioning @AladdinECC. For example (with your photo): ***Spotted: @AladdinECC at the #EuropeanCommission - just heard people in the lift saying tickets are selling out. Get yours soon!*** (include link if space)

Other things you can do:

- Re-tweet tweets by @AladdinECC - check out the tweets and favourites (or even better RETWEET): this way all your followers see that you're talking about @AladdinECC
- tell / ask your followers with a large network/number of followers to start promoting @AladdinECC
- I will start mentioning you individually in tweets too, asking questions or silly things about your characters. And, stay tuned for the weekly wicked question to the director :-)

**You can also find Aladdin on Facebook:**



**Running Time:**

2 and a half hours with 20 minute interval

## A taster of what's to come!



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**Do these photos give you a hankering to tread the boards?**

**Our March 2015 production, *Tom & Viv*, is fully cast  
– except for one more member of our on-stage/off-stage team!**

*Tom & Viv* is still looking for a man, aged 20-40, to play a photographer, a barrister and to be an on-stage/back-stage member of the team!

Interested? Free to rehearse from January on (or ideally from November, but this is negotiable)? Able to do an English accent?

**Then contact Janet on 0495 94 2991 / email: [ECC.tomandviv@gmail.com](mailto:ECC.tomandviv@gmail.com)**

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# TALKING HEADS

## Reviewed by Graham Andrews

*Talking Heads* was originally written by Alan Bennett, in 1987 and 1988, to be performed as a series of monologues on BBC television, with actors talking directly into camera. They have all since been adapted for both the professional and amateur stage. The recent production by the ECC was a resounding success – and I'm here to tell you why.

Alan Bennett has been described as England's "National Teddy Bear"<sup>1</sup>, probably because of his cuddly and diffident public persona, but he doth practise to deceive. The 'talking head' characters run the gamut from Rupert to Pudsey, with a Grizzly bear thrown in from time to time. It reminds me of the Irish style of monologue, in which the **shanachie** (storyteller: pronounced shan-a-kee) holds an audience spellbound with a mixture of folksy humour, pathos, and wee thinky bits.

The three stories chosen for this production have surprises in store, mostly in terms of slow and subtle emotional development. From entrance to exit lines, the cast made their characters seem like real human beings, with their own unique stories to tell, not actors reciting lines written by a know-it-all author. I sensed a one-on-one connection between actors and audience.

In *Lady of Letters* (directed by Joanna Patrick), Sara Hammerton portrayed Irene Ruddock, a writer of poison pen letters to anyone whom she hopes to enlist in her self-righteous moral crusade against her neighbours in particular and the world in general. Irene does get her legal comeuppance, but – after leaving prison – she just takes up where she had left off. Some people never learn!

Rachel Cuff played Muriel in *Soldiering On*, directed by Jonathan Stockwell. She made pitch-perfect transitions from relentless good humour to moments of horrible truth. The death of Muriel's husband and subsequent bad investments – or worse – by her son, Giles, have resulted in painfully reduced circumstances. But there is no wallowing in self-pity: "I'm not that sort of woman."

Ailsa Higgins obviously relished the role of Lesley, an aspiring young actress, in *Her Big Chance* (directed by Mark Prescott). Lesley lands a featured extra role, as a blonde bombshell called 'Travis', in what she takes to be a European art movie. But she gradually turns into the kind of 'starlet' who will only take her kit off if the scenes are essential to the plot – and done in the best possible taste.

Fiona 'Boff' Muir excelled as producer and stage manager. There was an effectively simple set, designed by Conrad Toft, with minimal furniture and a selection of props (thanks to Fiona McGinnis, who doubled as Costume Lady) that were appropriate to whichever character was on stage at the time. Cecelia Flett kept the sound at a calm conversational level. The lighting, by Lyn Wainwright and Barbara Daw was – ahem – spot on.

Dear ECC Committee. Any chance of a *Talking Heads 2* . . . ?

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<sup>1</sup> John Sutherland: Emeritus Professor of English Literature, newspaper columnist and author



# If you didn't make it to Talking Heads, here's what you missed!



# ECC NEWS

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## ECC Annual General Meeting: Brief Report

Our AGM was held on Monday 20 October, and the committee elected as follows:

Committee	Role	Contact us at:
Vacant	Chair	<a href="mailto:chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com">chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com</a>
Janet Middleton	Secretary & Ecco	<a href="mailto:ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com">ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com</a>
Martin Blackwell	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com">treasurer@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com</a>
Andy Ing	FEATS	<a href="mailto:feats@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com">feats@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com</a>
Chris Jones		<a href="mailto:chris@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com">chris@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com</a>
Joanna Patrick	Webmaster	<a href="mailto:web-admin@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com">web-admin@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com</a>
Lyn Wainwright		<a href="mailto:lyn@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com">lyn@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com</a>
Sara Hammerton		<a href="mailto:sara@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com">sara@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com</a>

**CHAIR:** The committee is currently actively seeking a person to take up the role of Chair, therefore if you – or someone you know – is interested in helping the club in this capacity, please contact one of the above as soon as possible!

It was also decided that a charitable donation should be made of €1,000, to be equally split between the Orbit village/Rinya school charity in Kenya and a charity for women suffering from domestic violence in Belgium. The former payment has already been made, and we are delighted to have received the following message of thanks:

*Dear Committee*

*Your treasurer, Martin Blackwell, has informed me that you have generously donated €500 towards our charity initiative . On behalf of our team, of which Martin is a member, I would like to thank you for this very kind gesture. This money will be used to further stimulate the sports programme (especially Rugby) at the Orbit village orphanage , Kayole Nairobi and ensure that we will be able to donate a further €6000 towards an additional classroom at the new Rinya school on Mfangano island , Lake Victoria. I was personally very happy that you have so significantly helped us, as, in my early days in Belgium , I derived great satisfaction from participating in a few ECC productions .*

*Many thanks again*

*Vivian Auer -- on behalf of the Orbit Village/Rinya school sponsorship team*

## ECCO

My thanks to all who give me information and articles for ECCO on a regular basis. Normally this is the producers and directors of our productions, and Sara Hammerton who regularly writes our reviews. As Sara was an interested party in *Talking Heads* I am grateful to Graham Andrews for his review – Graham made the mistake of being too enthusiastic in his praise to me – so be warned! It could be you next time!

I am always looking for contributors and contributions to ECCO – so please do not hesitate to contact me with details of anything you think will be of interest to lovers of English language theatre in Belgium.

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# FEATS 2016

**We're very excited about hosting FEATS in 2016  
and hope you will be too!**

Hosting FEATS is a huge event for the club, and whilst as one of the FEATS founders we are regular hosts, each time is a unique experience involving very many people with all sorts of different talents to offer. We need help with administering the event, help with welcoming the participating groups, help with feeding and watering the performers and audiences and help with running the event at the theatre.

**We are delighted that Eileen Sutton has agreed to Chair the FEATS 2016 Committee**, bringing with her to the ECC her huge experience of FEATS and of theatre in Brussels.

**FEATS 2016 will run 6-9 May 2016**

**To learn more about our plans for 2016, and how you can be a part of this exciting event, please come and join us for festive drinks and nibbles**

**Monday 15 December at 8pm**

**Rue des Atrebatas 27, 1040 Etterbeek**

**RSVP: [ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com](mailto:ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com)**

If you cannot join us on the 15<sup>th</sup>, please email Janet at the above address to register your interest in being involved.

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## CALLING DIRECTORS!

### FEATS 2015: 22-25 May

The ECC has accepted an invitation to participate in FEATS 2015 in Hamburg, and so the committee is now looking for a director to take a play there.

If you think you have a great piece that you would love to direct, which runs between 20 and 55 minutes, then contact us now! It can be a complete play; an extract from a play which can stand alone or an alternative which would have to be approved by the FEATS organising committee. Contact Janet at [ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com](mailto:ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com)

**We also welcome approaches from directors  
wishing to direct an ECC production in Brussels**

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# MONTHLY PLAY READINGS

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## Remember, Remember the 5th of November!

Graham Andrews will lead us in reading the Agatha Christie thriller

### Witness for the Prosecution

#### *We will be meeting Chez Mary*

**Graham writes:** Nowhere is Agatha Christie's remarkable ingenuity more evident than in her adaptation of *Witness for the Prosecution*. The short story of the same title is seemingly perfect and complex, with a stunning final revelation that lifts the reader off the chair. Yet for the stage version Dame Agatha devised still another revelation beyond that one, an entirely plausible surprise that not only makes for an electrifying curtain but at the same time legitimizes what would otherwise have been a necessary deception in the list of characters.

#### **IMPORTANT**

Although Mary and Barbara are still very much our guiding lights, Mary is no longer going to ring around to remind people about the meetings, and so you will now only hear about them by reading Ecco, Ecco Flash or via Facebook. However, in addition, every month Janet will be emailing a reminder to people who have attended in the past and who want to be on the Play Reading email list. **If you would like to be added to the ECC Play Reading List, please email her at [ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com](mailto:ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com).**

We are now asking people to register as coming along via a Doodle link: all you will have to do is click on the link, add your name to the list under 'Table View', click in the box and then 'Save' your entry. If you have any problem with this, please do not hesitate to contact Janet - or simply to ring Mary on **02 345 8583** as usual! She has a message service if she's not there.

**If you would like to come along in November please click here:**

<http://doodle.com/brf4mddsgbaaxytw>

We meet at 7.45 for an 8pm start –

Contributions of interval drinks or nibbles always welcome!

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**Future Dates:** Wednesday 3 December and Wednesday 14 January (delayed to avoid clashing with *Aladdin*)



# FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

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**ETCetera**

***Don Juan and the Stone Guest***  
**3 Short Plays**  
**4-9 November 2014**

**Irish Theatre Group**

***A Night in November* by Marie Jones**  
**12-15 November 2014**

**BLOC**

***My Fair Lady***  
**27-30 November 2014**

**Irish Theatre Group**

***Dolly West's Kitchen* by Frank McGuinness**  
**9-13 December 2014**

**ECC**

***Aladdin***  
**9-11 January 2015**

**American Theatre Company**

***44 Plays for 44 Presidents* by Andy Bayiates, Sean Benjamin, Genevra Gallo-Bayiates, Chloe Johnston and Karen Weinberg**  
**20-31 January 2015**

**Brussels Shakespeare Society**

***Henry VI & Richard III***  
**1-8 March 2015**

**Irish Theatre Group**

***Quietly* by Owen McCafferty**  
**10-14 March 2014**

**ECC**

***Tom & Viv* by Michael Hastings**  
**24-28 March 2015**

**Click on the name of the theatre group above to go directly to their website.  
For more information and auditions see also [www.theatreinbrussels.com](http://www.theatreinbrussels.com)**

## YOU MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED IN

**NT Live** now screening at Utopolis, Mechelen. [Click here for further details](#)

<b>6 November</b>	Of Mice and Men
<b>13 November</b>	Frankenstein – Benedict Cumberbatch as Monster
<b>27 November</b>	Frankenstein – Johnny Lee Miller as Monster
<b>9 December</b>	John
<b>22 January</b>	Treasure Island

**KVS has regular productions subtitled in English.** Visit their website to find out more: <http://www.kvs.be/en>

**Fun, Food & Acting:** Once a month a unique presentation at Theatre de la Toison D'Or in association with Brusselslife: <http://www.ffact.be/#>