



ECCO: November 2015



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If you have any contributions to ECCO, please send them to Janet at ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

The next ECCO will come out in January 2016

Deadline: 15 December

Letter from the Editor

Later in this newsletter you can read the report that our Chair, Lyn, gave at our recent AGM. In her report Lyn expressed her, and the club's, gratitude to many people. I would therefore like to redress the balance and give Lyn thanks on behalf of the club for the time and talents she brings so generously to the club – and other groups as well. I am writing this edition's introduction as Lyn is currently directing *Quietly* for the ITG which is being performed next week: we wish her and her team a very successful run.

Our next production will be our panto in January, and after that a slightly unusual production in which, at Lyn's suggestion, Hugh Dow and I hope to be including a number of not-so-regular and new people both on and off stage.

As this is, in effect, our Christmas edition, may I wish you all a very happy festive season and wish you all the best for 2016!

Janet Middleton – Ecco Editor
ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com



8 January
8pm

9-10
January
1.30 & 5pm

Audergem
Cultural Centre

TICKETS
€16/€12
NOW ON
SALE!

Click
Poster
to go directly to
the Box Office

Dick Whittington & His Magical Cat

Auderghem Cultural Centre, Bvd du Souverain 183, 1160 Brussels

Friday 8 Jan, 20:00

Saturday 9 Jan, 13:30 and 17:00

Sunday 10 Jan, 13:30 and 17:00

Tickets available at <http://ecc.theatreinbrussels.com/dw>

ECC panto rehearsals kick off with a swing!

Let's hear a big cheer from all the boys and girls to the news that the ECC is bringing a panto to Brussels again this year! Rehearsals are now well under way for the 2015-16 pantomime and this time round we'll be taking you to Olde London Town for a marvellous time with *Dick Whittington and his Magical Cat*.



The tale of Dick Whittington is a classic British folk story of a simple peasant boy who comes to a big city to make his fortune. At the story's start he has nothing but a cat, his wits and a half-eaten sandwich, but in London he finds friends, adventure and the most beautiful girl in the world. Yet London is plagued by an awful infestation of rats, led by the dastardly King Rat (booo!) - and King Rat's ambitions don't stop at London. Given half a chance, he will try to take over the world and subject it to his love of all things dank and dismal (not to mention his appalling puns). Faced with King Rat's hordes of ravaging rodents, London's townsfolk are in desperate need of a hero... and it turns out that Dick and his cat might be just what they have been waiting for!



To stage this story (with the requisite amount of energy, glitter, sweeties and terrible jokes) ECC has assembled a crack team of lovely people and we are now deep into rehearsals. Highlights so far have included mass dance sessions, rewritten Taylor Swift lyrics, and an epic stage-fighting workshop. The cast features some faces which those of you who came to see last year's *Aladdin* will recognise, as well as some fabulous new talent.

So stand by for a stunning spectacle of silliness and song, coming to you this January!



*Boys and girls, mums and dads, it's panto time again
From the 8th to 10th of January, once more in Auderghem.
After Jack and then Aladdin, Dick's the hero for this year
(Though he's helped a lot by Tommy, a magic cat that knows no
fear).
Together with their friends they win the day against King Rat
An evil megalomaniac who's helped by total prats
Called Proximus and Belgacom, two rodents come from
Brussels
Whose brains are small and shrivelled, like a cauldron full of
mussels.
To say Dick bests the baddies is not a spoiler, to be fair
Cos everybody knows that he was three times London's Mayor!
There are many well-known faces among the cast and crew
Most return from pantos past, alongside one or two who're new
There's a brand new script from writers with a superb sense of
humour
(And the jokes aren't ALL recycled, let me squash that nasty
rumour)
So to dispel those New Year blues there's nothing better
recommended
Than Dick Whittington the panto - a show that's simply
splendid!*

By Sarah the Cook

Age something-and-3/4, never you mind how old I am you nosy so-and-so's!

Auditions: ECC Production March 2016: Two Comic One Act Plays

Cast & Back Stage Crew Required!

The Real Inspector Hound

Director Janet Middleton writes: *The Real Inspector Hound* is a wonderfully funny play which I am looking forward to hamming up quite a bit. I am looking for actors who have either retired from the stage or who have not yet plucked up the courage to perform by allowing the security of lines on stage. How this will happen is secret at the moment! I will of course also be looking for some more experienced actors.

Subject to availability of the cast, rehearsals will be twice a week, and I would like to have at least one of those as an afternoon rehearsal. This is of course subject to progress!

Characters

Moon - M or F - any age

Birdwood - M

Mrs Drudge - F - older

Simon - M

Felicity - F - any age up to 50s

Cynthia - F - any age up to 60s

Magnus - M - older

Inspector Hound - M or F any age

Radio Voice - M or F

Body - M or F - No lines, just needs to lie still! But this is a comedy ...

Other - 6 or 7 people to act as audience.

Dinner For One

Director Hugh Dow writes: *Dinner for One* is a two handed sketch lasting 18 minutes involving an elderly lady being served dinner by an increasingly squiffy butler. The joke's dependent upon the old lady confusing the butler with her many lovers: the ending is mildly risqué. Its claim to fame is that German TV executives, catching sight of it live in the UK in 1963, thought it would do at a pinch for New Year's Eve television. Since then it has unaccountably become a part of German, Swiss, Swedish, Danish, Faroese and heaven-knows where else's required Hogmanay viewing. Most northern Germans know it off by heart. So funny little sketch or cultural phenomenon, take your pick.

If either of If these plays interests you, please come along to audition! Janet and Hugh would be happy to hear from anyone who would like to register their interest or have further information.

AUDITIONS for cast will be held:

Thursday 5 November 7pm

Sunday 8 November 12-1pm

Wednesday 11 November 3pm

Rue des Atrebatas 27, 1040 Brussels

Very close to Montgomery Metro - Contact

Janet for more details

Janet: 0495 94 2991 or middletonjanetk@gmail.com

Hugh: 0494 33 7025 or hughjamesdow@gmail.com

CREW

We are also hoping to encourage new back stage crew - so if you've had a secret hankering to become involved without having to perform on stage, now is your chance to let us know! We will find you someone to help you along the way, so please don't think you'll just get thrown in and left to flounder. To register your interest, please contact Janet.

Mrs Klein

Here are just a few of the audience reactions to the show:

"All three actors were so strong it was easy to forget they were acting, I wanted to walk on stage and join the conversation!"...

"The performances were superb, as were the design and the whole production."

"It is the best-directed, best-acted play I've seen here in years... Terrific."

"All three actresses were frankly awesome."

"It was absolutely fantastic - sincere congratulations to all three wonderful women involved, each an incredible gifted and compelling actress in her own right, and my compliments to the director for an incredible production overall!"



Mrs Klein: Review by Sara Hammerton

I have been put off psychoanalysis for life! "Mrs. Klein" by Nicholas Wright is a brilliant, very clever play, but it is not a good advert for her profession. Melanie Klein was and is a highly influential therapist who pioneered play-centred child psychoanalysis, but she ruined her relationship with her daughter, Melitta, in the process.

The play examines the final breakdown of this relationship following the death of Mrs. Klein's son, in what appeared to have been a climbing accident. She is struggling to come to terms with it, and chooses to focus instead on her ongoing dispute with two professional rivals, Dr. Glover and Dr. Schmideberg. (Melanie Klein does not have a doctorate – she is plain Mrs. – hence the title). We realise with shock later that the Dr. Schmideberg she is so critical of is actually her own daughter, Melitta.

Pat Butler brought confidence and energy to the role of Mrs. Klein, portraying her as a domineering ego-maniac, who nonetheless has her fair share of vulnerability. Comfort is brought in the form of a young psycho-analyst and ardent admirer, Paula Heimann, who brings her poppy seed cake at a time when a grieving Mrs. Klein is missing the comforts of home. The cake was her mother's favourite – although it turns out she harboured great anger towards her mother.

Paula is there at Mrs. Klein's invitation, to look after her flat and correct the proofs of her book, selected because she defended Mrs. Klein against her great enemy, Glover, and because she is a German-speaking Jew, like herself. But Paula is also to quickly become a daughter-substitute, a role she believes she has had to play all her life, having been born after the death of her elder sister. Saskia Van Nuffelen was excellently cast as Paula, loyally subservient, supportive, and acutely aware of exactly what the issues are.

Enter the real daughter, Melitta, played by Esther Pozo Vera, absolutely seething with emotion - anger, frustration, desperately wanting her mother's love and deeply resentful because she believes she has never had it. She has convinced herself that her brother's death was a suicide and that her mother is responsible - an accusation she has made in a letter that she came back to retrieve (but later decides her mother should read).

All three women are psychoanalysts and not surprisingly they keep analysing what is going on in their discussions. They all have emotional issues carried over from childhood insecurities, and all have troubled relationships in adulthood. Many issues are explored in the text, including guilt, transference and counter-transference. Fortunately, the programme very kindly explains these for us! What I found particularly fascinating was that Mrs. Klein could make such a clear separation between Dr. Schmideberg, an enemy to be fought on the professional front, and Melitta, her daughter (the same person), with whom she wants to have a proper adult relationship. She seems to utterly fail to understand why she cannot build a loving relationship with her daughter now, or the real depth of Melitta's anger. Melitta believes her mother treated her as an interesting subject to test her theories on, rather than a child who needed (and still needs) her mother's love.

There is some redemption in the end – Paula finds out more about Hans' death, and it does seem to have been an accident after all, enabling Mrs. Klein to finally give way to real tears and find some catharsis. There are also lighter moments to lift the text. I enjoyed the account of Mrs. Klein's chat with her newly-wed taxi driver: "They have some minor sexual problems, but I think I helped him". Of course in psycho-analysis, so much seems to be related to bodily functions and sexual issues. I will never look at the string section of an orchestra in quite the same way again...

This is a very intense play to stage, exploring psychoanalytical theory, against the background of a single set (very neatly built by the way, and that green looked familiar) and with only three actors. All have to express powerful emotions, including some very convincing crying. Thanks to three superb, and well-matched, performances the energy and interest was kept up throughout. They also looked the part – good period costumes, especially the lovely shoes. And the hair above all was beautifully done. It really added to the period feel - as did some carefully chosen props, down to a lovely old radio. Sound and lighting were on cue as always – it matters! The audience seemed to thoroughly enjoy it, and the encore was well deserved.

Well done to cast and crew, and above all to Jonathan Stockwell for this brave choice. He has only directed once before – and last time it proved to be a prize-winning performance. He may need a rest after this, but I think the ECC will be hoping he offers to direct again soon.

ECC News

Committee	Role	Contact us at:
Lyn Wainwright	Chair	chair@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Kerry Lydon	Secretary	secretary@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Martin Blackwell	Treasurer	treasurer@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Andy Ing	FEATS	feats@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Chris Jones	CAST Rep	chris@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Janet Middleton	ECCO	ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Boff Muir		boff@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Joanna Patrick		joanna@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Sara Hammerton	Publicity	sara@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Fiona McGinnis	Costumes	fiona@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Conrad Toft*	Webmaster	web-admin@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com

* To be co-opted at the new committee's first meeting

Can you Help CAST?



CAST is a committee made up of volunteers from each of the groups that own The Warehouse and Studio Theatre: ECC, ITG and ATC.

CAST is in need of two volunteers:

- **Treasurer: w.e.f. 1 January 2016**
- **Warehouse Manager: Immediate Start**

Both positions are voluntary, but the people who take on these roles will earn the warm gratitude of those who benefit from our wonderful facility.

For further information please contact Aoife at: aofemurphy85@gmail.com

FEATS 2016



In October the ECC's FEATS Committee was delighted to welcome the FEATS Steering Committee to Brussels. A useful meeting was held, and the groups selected to be invited to participate in next year's festival. Invitations have now been sent out, and we are looking forward to having all their replies by the beginning of December. Our thanks to Eileen for her generous hospitality.

The weekend was only marred for some by an evening spent in a well-known Avenue Louise bar watching the rugby: the result was not exactly that wished for - except by the Australian Chair of the Steering Committee!



AGM: Report

Many thanks to everyone who came to our Annual General Meeting. At the meeting it was agreed that €1,000 of our excess income should be given to charity, and the charity **Sers ta Ville** has now received this donation (<http://www.servethecity.be/brussels/fr/>).

Chair's Report to the ECC AGM 2015

Lyn Wainwright Reported: Those of you who were at the last AGM will remember that the post of Chair was left vacant after Conrad Toft stood down from the position.

I was abroad, travelling at the time but on my return agreed to take over from January 2015. Janet Middleton, as secretary, must be thanked for 'keeping the ship afloat' during the intervening months.

Since the last AGM we have had a very successful year both financially and artistically. Building on the success of the Pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk in 2014 our first production of the year in January 2015 was 'Aladdin'. Many of the previous team came together to write, direct and perform a highly successful show. There is clearly a demand among a significant section of our membership for this kind of theatre which has introduced new and younger members to the club. We hope that the pantomime tradition will continue into the future. Indeed we already have a new pantomime 'Dick Whittington' in production for January 2016 but we are also conscious that we must not neglect the needs of our wider audience. The new format of the ACTS calendar means that the first production slot in September each year will rotate between the amateur theatre groups. This will have the effect that the ECC will not always have a suitable pantomime slot every year but this will ensure that our overall programme will be sufficiently varied to cover all tastes.

Our March production was 'Tom and Viv' directed by Janet Middleton. This was a challenging project, not least because of the multiple scene and costume changes involved, so Janet and her team are to be congratulated on the success of the show. The ECC also owes a huge debt to Poppy Bullock who agreed to understudy the role of Viv when the need arose due to health problems. A selfless task which ensured the smooth running of the show.

'War Brides' was the ECC entry to FEATS in Hamburg. We did not come away with any prizes this time but Conrad Toft together with his cast and crew are to be congratulated for representing us all. Participation in FEATS is always worthwhile and as you all know the ECC will be participating to an even greater extent when we host FEATS in Brussels in 2016.

Our most recent production 'Mrs Klein' was very well received. Jonathan Stockwell was one of our 'new' directors in September 2014 when he directed 'Soldiering On' as part of our 'Talking Heads' evening of plays. Being first on after the holiday period has its own challenges and the experience gained the previous year was invaluable when it came to directing our first show of the season. This was a very strong production where the teamwork and commitment were clearly visible.

Play readings have continued throughout the year and remain popular with a dedicated group of followers. Our thanks go to Barbara Blackwell, Mary Pritchard and Jean and Luca Fanelli for opening their homes for the readings. This year we have also held a couple of social events in the Warehouse which have provided a meeting point for those members who are not directly involved in our theatrical productions. Our thanks go to Chris Jones who has been our creative master of ceremonies organising suitable fun and games. Even the AGM has an original twist this year as after the formal proceedings are completed we will read 'The Real Inspector Hound' so we invite you to stay and enjoy the fun. I am particularly fond of this play as I was part of the cast of the 1982 Comedy Club production when I was still young enough to play Felicity!

'The Real Inspector Hound' will be performed next March directed by Janet Middleton together with 'Dinner for One' directed by Hugh Dow. Again, in an attempt to offer more opportunities to all our membership we are encouraging our less experienced actors to come forward for auditions together our more experienced actors who may have reached an age where they feel that they need support for remembering lines. A safety net will be available. As already mentioned we also have the pantomime in January and FEATS in May. Finally, in November, Anna Holmen will be directing 'The Government Inspector'. All in all a very busy and varied season to look forward to.

Then there is the question of our name the 'English Comedy Club'. The word 'Comedy' is frequently misunderstood particularly when used on-line or on facebook where it is assumed that we are a group of stand-up comedians. In order to avoid this we now refer to the ECC theatre group or ECC (English Comedy Club) for internal documents as you see on the Agenda. This avoids the need to register a new name and keeps the traditionalists among you happy.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work on your behalf. During the year we have co-opted two new members; Boff Muir and Fiona McGinnis. As Producer, Costume Maker and even Treasurer in Waiting they together bring a wealth of experience to the committee. They are both standing for election to the committee today.

**English Comedy Club AGM 2015
Financial Report – Martin Blackwell**

ACCOUNTS at 31 JULY 2014 & 2015

BALANCE SHEETS AT JULY 31

	2014	2015
	€	€
General Fund		
Balance at beginning of the year	48,303.28	55,405.89
Surplus for the year	7,102.61	1,083.33
Balance at end of the year	55,405.89	56,489.22
Warehouse Fund	49,500.00	49,500.00
TOTAL FUNDS at July 31	104,905.89	105,989.22

FIXED ASSETS

Share of CAST assets	49,500.00	49,500.00
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CURRENT ASSETS

ING current account	1,327.67	1,531.98
ING deposit account	54,127.61	48,739.83
PayPal account	0.00	619.63
Warehouse operating expenses prepaid	1,333.33	1,333.33
Social event bar stock prepaid	0.00	50.00
Mrs Klein rights prepaid	0.00	560.00
FEATS 2016 theatre prepayment	0.00	5,700.00
FEATS 2016 expenses prepaid	0.00	73.00
Talking Heads rights prepaid	967.77	0.00
Tom & Viv rights prepaid	462.51	0.00

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Mrs Klein net advance sales	0.00	(189.47)
Dick Whittington net advance sales	0.00	(209.08)
2013 & 2014 Tax & filing costs	(705.00)	(720.00)
Talking Heads advance sales	(60.00)	
Aladdin advance sales	(48.00)	
Donations	(2,000.00)	(1,000.00)

NET CURRENT ASSETS	55,405.89	56,489.22
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TOTAL ASSETS AT JULY 31	104,905.89	105,989.22
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ACCOUNTS at 31 JULY 2014 & 2015

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

For the years ended July 31

Income

Net proceeds from public performances	17,400.78	10,541.87
Interest	291.30	312.22

TOTAL INCOME 17,692.08 10,854.09

Expenditure

Warehouse and operating expenses	8,156.52	8,255.15
Tax & filing costs	275.00	343.80
Sundry costs	0.00	39.32
Bank Charges	157.95	132.49
Donations	2,000.00	1,000.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE 10,589.47 9,770.76

Surplus for the year

7,102.61	1,083.33
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NET PROCEEDS FROM PUBLIC PERFORMANCES

For the 2013/14 & 2014/15 seasons

TALKING HEADS		2,818.99
ALADDIN		5,481.17
TOM & VIV		2,408.64
WAR BRIDES		(166.93)
COPENHAGEN	3,246.84	
SKYLIGHT	71.59	
JACK & THE BEANSTALK	5,158.01	
MISS JULIE	3,792.31	
IDEAL HUSBAND	5,132.03	

17,400.78	10,541.87
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Donations of 500€ each agreed at 2013 & 2014 AGMs were paid in the year ended July 31, 2015 to the British Charitable Fund, the Belgian Center for Guide Dogs, the Centre de Prévention des Violences Conjugales et Familiales & to the Orbit Charity Project

MONTHLY PLAY READINGS

Wednesday 4 November

7.45pm for 8pm - Chez Barbara

Graham Andrews will lead us in reading

Dracula

This month Graham will lead us in reading ***Dracula***. Normally I give a little summary of the play, but I feel this one needs no introduction!!

We will be meeting Chez Barbara:
[rue Louis Hymans 20, Ixelles 1050](#)



For those of you who are new to the play reading group, we meet at 7.45pm aiming to start reading at 8. We have drinks and nibbles, and a small contribution is always welcome!

As always, please can you sign up via the Doodle to let us know if you are coming: <http://doodle.com/poll/4s5fpeegnc2z2uibvysy3tk8/admin#table>

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.

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.

Future Play Reading Dates: 2 December

ECC Play Reading Scripts

The ECC Scripts are now being held Chez Janet, which is near Montgomery Station. This is to enable anyone who wishes to obtain a script for any reason, from thinking of directing a piece through to wanting to lead a play reading, or to simply read for fun, to have easy access. Please contact Janet at ecco@ecc.theatreinbrussels.com for further information/to get hold of a script!

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Irish Theatre Group	Quietly by Owen McCafferty 3-7 November 2015
ETCetera	<i>Amour et Musique</i> 11-14 November 2015
BLOC	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i> 26-29 November 2015
Brussels Shakespeare Society	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i> 16-23 January 2016
American Theatre Company	<i>Melancholy Play</i> by Sarah Ruhl 18-27 February 2016

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

YOU MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED IN:

Utopolis, Mechelen, has for some time been screening **NTLive**, but they are now also screening other English productions. [Click here for further details](#)

12 November	<i>Coriolanus</i> by William Shakespeare – NTLive – Starring Tom Hiddleston
26 November	<i>A Winter's Tale</i> by William Shakespeare – Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company – Starring Dame Judi Dench & Kenneth Branagh
1 December	<i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare – NTLive – Starring Benedict Cumberbatch: <i>Repeat Showing</i>
8 December	<i>Jane Eyre</i> – NTLive
25 February	<i>As You Like It</i> by William Shakespeare - NTLive

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: <http://www.ffact.be/#>