

SPOTLIGHT

Newsletter of the Geneva English Drama Society
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IN THIS EDITION

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2015–16 season

Our full productions for the next season are: *Proof* by David Auburn directed by Frances Favre (29 September–3 October), *Caught in the Net* by Ray Cooney directed by Pam Walsh (November), and *Rabbit Hole* by David-Lindsey Abaire directed by Tim Hancox (March).

Auditions for *Caught in the Net* will be held on August 24th 2015. Audition notes will be available from our website closer to the time.

GEDS BBQ at the barn

Our annual BBQ will take place on Saturday, August 15th from around 6:30 p.m. Entry is 20 CHF. We will provide the meat (traditional roast legs of lamb) but we

would like to hear from people who can bring salads and desserts. To sign up, please email Jane Easton at jane.easton@wanadoo.fr. Keep an eye on GEDS at a Glance for updates!

GEDS events

How would you like to socialise with GEDS? Do you have a burning desire to attend a certain kind of event? We'd like to try something new and we'd love to have our members' suggestions.

If you have any ideas, our new Social Events Manager Liz Kernen will be pleased to hear from you. Email her at liz@kernen.net.

GEDS workshops

GEDS' new workshops manager, Christopher Bailey, would like

Summer fun

We're gearing up for summer with our blockbuster comedy *Popcorn* from June 16–20, a double-bill of playreadings on June 9th and a hilarious romp in the garden for our closing event, a playreading of *A Laughing Matter* by April de Angelis on June 27th. Read on for all this and more news and events from GEDS and beyond!



to hear from members who can offer or suggest theatre-related workshops. Email him at christophertomlinbailey@hotmail.com

Award for Bill Lloyd

Congratulations to GEDS member Bill Lloyd who has won second prize in the Writers' Forum story-writing competition.

His story, *Drowning in Your Eyes*, will appear in Issue #166 this July.

This is the first time Bill's work will appear in a UK publication, having previously been published both in Ireland and Switzerland.

New committee

The membership has voted and a new(ish) committee has arrived! A warm welcome to

fresh-faced committee members Daire O'Doherty and Christopher Bailey, a fond farewell to Helene Barr and Loulou Stirrup, who have resigned, and a welcome back to all the rest.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Helene and Loulou for all their hard work on Events and *Spotlight*, respectively. They will be missed!

Check out the committee box on the back page to see who's who these days.

PLAYREADING CORNER

Doors open 7.00pm: playreadings commence at 7.30pm.

Playreadings take place downstairs at the English Church Hall, Rue de Mont Blanc, Geneva

Whether it be for productions...

The English Church Hall has served us well for many years as a playreading venue and although we have no intentions to leave our trusty abode, we are obliged to review the options for all venues from time to time, whether this is for productions, playreadings, rehearsals or other events.

If you know of a suitable venue available for under CHF 130 a night, send your suggestions to andrewbrookes21@gmail.com.

Call for playreadings

We are now accepting proposals for the 2015–16 playreading season. If there is a playreading that you would like to arrange in the forthcoming season, or if there is a favourite play that you would like to see performed, please contact Neil-Jon Morphy at morphyn@bluewin.ch before June 15. We would also like to hear

from those who are willing to arrange a playreading but do not have a specific play in mind. We are particularly interested in hearing from anyone willing to arrange a newcomers' playreading for those who have not yet performed in a GEDS show or playreading.

JUNE 27TH
SUE & ALAN LEATHER'S
RESIDENCE IN CHEVRY, FRANCE

A Laughing Matter

by April de Angelis

Join us for an evening of wine and roses – the final GEDS event of the season, taking place in a glorious garden in the French countryside and featuring April de Angelis's *A Laughing Matter* as its centrepiece.

This modern Restoration comedy about the lives of actor David Garrick and playwright Oliver Goldsmith is bodice-busting bawdiness at its best. Garrick, in the twilight of his career, must decide whether to stage a play

We realise that getting to Chevry may present something of a problem to some of our more environmentally-friendly members, but we wouldn't want transport issues to prevent you from coming, so why not (car)pool our resources? If you need a lift or are driving and can offer lifts, contact Liz Kernen at liz@kernen.net and we'll try to help as many of you as possible to get to the show. Those offering lifts: please state your place of departure and the main areas by which

by Goldsmith which may make or break his reputation, and which will certainly incur the displeasure of some of his more powerful patrons.

The sudden appearance of theatrical evangelist, Hannah, the persuasive presence of one Dr Samuel Johnson and the unmistakable rattling of moral skeletons in Garrick's cupboard serve to further complicate matters. Ultimately Garrick must choose between

you will pass (i.e. train station, etc.) and phone number. For those seeking a lift: place of departure and phone number. Liz can also provide you with directions if needed.

Practical information:

Food will not be provided but patrons are welcome to bring snacks or a picnic if desired. There will be a cash bar.

Patrons are reminded to bring folding chairs, blankets, cushions, as well as warm clothes and anything else they may require to enjoy the show comfortably!

honouring artistic integrity and feathering his social nest.

A robust and unruly tale told in ripe and occasionally colourful English, with some mild adult content, *A Laughing Matter* will be served hot at 6.30pm, on Saturday 27th June in the garden of Sue and Alan Leather, 9 Jardins de Chevry, FR-01170 Chevry.

Arranged by Nic Sommer & Loulou Stirrup

Meanwhile, elsewhere...

Basel Semi-Circle – *Entertaining Angels* by Richard Everett

*Fridays, Saturdays, and
Sundays from June 5 to 27 at
8pm*

If you happen to be Basel-bound this month, don't miss this production from the local English theatre group.

A play about four women and a ghost, *Entertaining Angels* is filled with sharp-edged comedy, healthy irreverence, probing wit and tremendous emotion.

Bardy – the recently deceased Vicar whose dilemmas and beliefs live on after him. Grace – his widow, who battles to come to terms with life, love, death and betrayal.

Ruth – her missionary sister who has held on to a guilty secret for 30 years.

Jo – Grace's psychotherapist

daughter who despite her failed marriage becomes a calming intermediary between her mother and aunt.

Sarah – the new Vicar who discloses her own past and uncertainty.

Set in the deceptive quiet of a quintessential English garden, this play is not just about love, grief, denial, acceptance, forgiveness and moving on. It also involves a hamster, a lawn mower, a French polisher and other witty diversions!

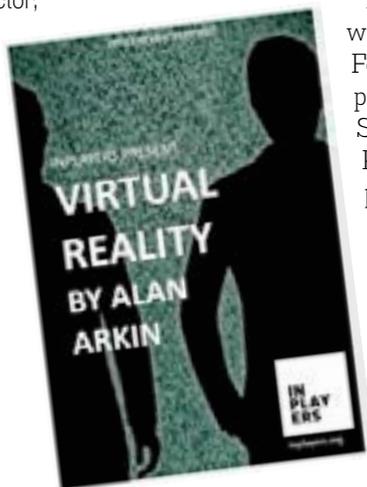
Tickets available from Starticket.ch.

AMAZING FEATS OF THEATRE

The offering at this year's FEATS competition in Hamburg was nothing if not varied, but some shows stood out above all the rest.

First prize was awarded to In Players International Amsterdam's production of *Virtual Reality* (some of you may remember that this show also took first prize when the competition was held in Geneva four years ago).

This hilarious two-hander written by actor, director, and comedian Alan Arkin has two characters and, at least in this production, no props save for a pencil. Nonetheless these two shady characters, who have just met to carry out an intense, high-stakes job that is never specified, start



unloading item after unlikely item from three large crates and checking them off a list, keeping the audience guessing before taking them on a tense, almost unbelievable flight of fancy that ends with a light-hearted twist.

The show was perfectly paced and wonderfully acted by Brian André and Eli Thorne, whose joint award for Best Actor was well-deserved.

In second place was *The Dice* by Forbes Bramble, performed by Stockholm Players. The play is set in a cell in a men's prison that holds three very different but equally strong characters who decide that the fairest way to settle disputes among them is with an impartial, objective system of rolling dice. This works

well until the dice begin to take on supernatural qualities in the eyes of the prisoners and finally turn on them.

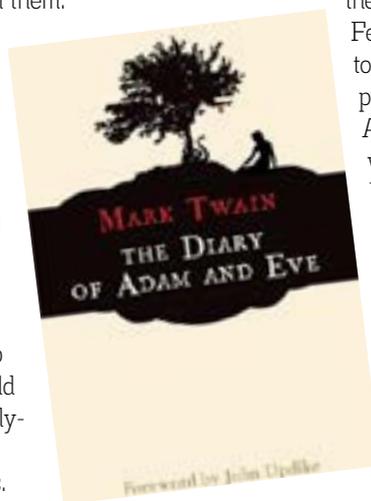
The four actors (three prisoners and a sadistic guard) played extremely well together and drew the audience deep into their world with beautifully-pitched performances.

The Diary of Adam and Eve, by Mark Twain, adapted by Elton Townend Jones, New English American Theater, Stuttgart was a surprisingly fresh and entertaining production about Adam and Eve's first days in the Garden of Eden. The audience laughed heartily as the surly, solitary, monosyllabic Adam grumped at "new creature" Eve's uncontainable effervescence and enthusiasm for the brave

new world and everything in it. Despite being among the youngest performers in the competition, Felice Becker took home the prize for Best Actress for her wide-eyed and lovable Eve. In fact, the two young actors had such wonderful attack and chemistry, and were so endearing in their innocence, that

the audience found themselves hoping they might stay that way. Happily, the "fall" was handled with warmth and humour and the play ended on a high note.

Finally, third place went to *The Strange Horseman*, an eerie and stylistic play by Michel de Ghelderode from the early 1920s and set in a hospice for the old and infirm. One night, one of the patients – known only as The



Watcher – hears a strange sound in the night and sends the other patients into a tailspin by telling them that death is coming to claim one or more of them. The play relies heavily on atmospheric music and sound effects, from ringing bells to clomping boots to a muffled scream into a pillow, most of which were delivered by a multi-instrumentalist on a raised dais behind the actors, who then closed the show with a haunting chorus. New World Theatre Club Luxembourg member John Brigg not only directed and starred in the production, he also produced the poetic and evocative English translation that was used. Overall, it was a highly accomplished production.

From the main event to the fringe, the FEATS festival is an opportunity for societies like GEDS to see what similar societies across Europe are doing and draw inspiration for future productions, and to forge lasting connections with members of other theatrical societies.

GEDS at FEATS 2016

We're looking for proposals for plays that GEDS might consider taking to the FEATS competition in Brussels next year. Send submissions to Tim Hancox at thancox@bluewin.ch.

GEDS communications

As some of you will have already noticed, we have made some changes to the ways in which we communicate information to our members. We have added some channels (Facebook and Twitter) and adapted others (GEDS at a Glance and *Spotlight*).

So to help you get used to the changes, here's a handy guide to GEDS' communications strategy:



geds.ch: Information about all GEDS events, from playreadings to productions to parties. Also hosts photos of previous productions and a page of useful links. Our website will be getting a makeover soon, so watch this space!

GEDS at a Glance (or GaaG): A regular, brief email message that aims to help members stay up-to-date with the latest GEDS happenings.

In the words of GaaG co-ordinator Mark Clayton, "GEDS at a GLANCE is sent to members by email prior to the society's next events. It provides the latest details, and supplements the information on the GEDS website and in *Spotlight*."

Spotlight: A bi-monthly magazine including reviews, articles, interviews and news and events from GEDS and other theatrical and musical societies.

Facebook page (GEDS – Geneva English Drama Society) and Twitter account (@GEDSGeneva): Several updates a week about GEDS events as well as ticket giveaways, news and anecdotes from the wider theatre world, and the occasional attempt at humour.

As always, we welcome all your questions, comments, and suggestions so don't hesitate to give us feedback on any of our communications channels.

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WHAT'S ON ... JUNE AND NEXT SEASON

Who	What	When	Where
GEDS	<i>A Laughing Matter</i> – playreading	June 27	Chevry, France
GEDS	<i>Proof</i>	Sep 29 – Oct 3	Théâtre de l'Espérance
GEDS	<i>Caught in the Net</i>	November	Théâtre Pitöeff
GEDS	<i>Rabbit Hole</i>	March	TBC