\*\*UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL SUNDAY 20 MARCH 2016 \*\*

EXCEPTIONAL INTERNATIONAL SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED FOR

2016 SUNDAY TIMES EFG SHORT STORY AWARD

Shortlist comprises Alix Christie, Petina Gappah, Colum McCann,

Edith Pearlman, Jonathan Ruddock and Jonathan Tel

EXCLUSIVE: FOYLES SHORT STORY EVENTS TO INCLUDE READINGS BY JULIET STEVENSON, TOM HOLLANDER AND DAVID SOUL

[www.booktrust.org.uk/sundaytimesEFG](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/sundaytimesEFG)

[www.shortstoryaward.co.uk](http://www.shortstoryaward.co.uk)

Three men and three women from five countries and across three continents make up a truly international six-strong shortlist for the 2016 Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award. The shortlist comprises American Edith Pearlman, author of over 250 works of fiction; the Irish writer Colum McCann, Man Booker longlisted author of *Transatlantic;* Zimbabwe’s Petina Gappah, winner of the Guardian First Book Award and now longlisted for the Baileys Prize 2016; Jonathan Tel, the British winner of last year's Commonwealth Short Story Prize; and American writer Alix Christie and Canadian novelist Nicholas Ruddock, both of whom set their stories in European cities.

The Foyles Charing Cross Road events on 21 and 22 April will include readings by the well-known actors Tom Hollander, Juliet Stevenson, David Soul, Gina Bellman, Selina Lo and Chippa Chung.

Judge and best-selling author, Mark Haddon commented, ‘Judging literary prizes can be a bruising experience but this was a shockingly uncontentious and wholly enjoyable experience. I think we could all have happily extended the process to a few more meetings in order to sit around and talk about stories. It was also interesting and salutary for a writer of short stories, to note the breadth of often contradictory qualities that different members of the panel expected a really good short story to demonstrate. The lesson being: don’t expect to please every reader but whichever kind of reader you’re trying to please, make your story as near perfect as you can. Rewrite and edit, rinse and repeat.

Irrespective of whether a particular story touched us, I think we all came to appreciate writers who had ironed out all those snarls and glitches which litter every writer’s early drafts and produced a final draft which felt truly finished.’

Andrew Holgate, judge and literary editor of the Sunday Times said, ‘What impressed me most about this year's shortlist is the sheer variety of form and subject matter, from Colum McCann's gripping piece of meta-fiction to the dreamlike qualities of Nicholas Ruddock's *The Phosphorescence* and the nostalgia of Edith Pearlman's *Unbeschert*. Interwar New York, a hair stylist in Africa, a dacha near East Berlin and a research station in China's nuclear weapons programme - quite some breadth, in a collection of exceptionally accomplished stories. Picking a winner will be immensely difficult.’

The 2016 Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award winner will receive £30,000, the world’s richest prize for a single short story. Regularly attracting talent from around the world, this year’s shortlist again reflects the prize’s global reach.

The six shortlisted writers and the titles of their short stories are:

‘The Dacha’ by Alix Christie

‘The News of Her Death’ by Petina Gappah

‘What Time is it Now, Where You Are?’ by Colum McCann

‘Unbeschert’ by Edith Pearlman

‘The Phosphoresence’ by Nicholas Ruddock

‘The Human Phonograph’ by Jonathan Tel

Now in its seventh year, the award has again cemented its reputation for showcasing both established and emerging writers. Alix Christie’s first novel, *Gutenberg’s Apprentice,* was published in 2014, whilst celebrated author Edith Pearlman has published more than 250 works of short fiction. Jonathan Tel is the only author to have been previously shortlisted.

The winner will receive £30,000, and the five other shortlisted writers will each receive £1,000. The winner will be announced at a gala dinner hosted by EFG at Stationers’ Hall in London on Friday 22 April. Readers can read the shortlisted stories on the new website for the prize: [www.shortstoryaward.co.uk](http://www.shortstoryaward.co.uk)

This year’s judging panel comprises broadcaster and novelist Melvyn Bragg; critic and commentator Alex Clark; novelist and short story-writer Mark Haddon, and award-winning author Rose Tremain. Andrew Holgate, Literary Editor of *The Sunday Times,* completes the line-up, alongside the non-voting chair of judges Lord Matthew Evans, who co-founded the award in 2010.

The Award accepts entries of 6,000 words or under published in English from fiction authors from anywhere in the world who have been published in the UK or Ireland. The Award reflects The Sunday Times’ support for outstanding writing and the rich literary heritage of the newspaper, and the ongoing commitment of EFG, a leading international private bank, to the literary world. The Award is managed each year by the reading charity, BookTrust.

Previous winners are Chinese writer Yiyun Li for her story ‘A Sheltered Woman’ (2015), three Pulitzer prizewinners - US author Adam Johnson (2014), US-Dominican author Junot Diaz (2013) and US author Anthony Doerr (2011) - Kevin Barry from Ireland (2012), and CK Stead from New Zealand (2010). Shortlisted authors have included Hilary Mantel, Emma Donoghue, David Vann, Elizabeth Strout, Ali Smith and Gerard Woodward.

For full details of the Award visit:

[www.shortstoryaward.co.uk](http://www.shortstoryaward.co.uk) or [www.booktrust.org.uk/sundaytimesEFG](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/sundaytimesEFG)

Keep up-to-date with the Award via Twitter (@shortstoryaward , @EFGint and #STEFG) and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sunday-Times-EFG-Short-Story-Award/103783816320081>

KEY DATE

Friday 22 April 2016 9pm Winner announced

Shortlist events at FOYLES, Charing Cross Road with WordTheatre:

Wednesday 20 April & Thursday 21 April 2016 at 6pm:

WordTheatre and Foyles will present readings of the shortlisted stories by the well-known actors Tom Hollander, Juliet Stevenson, David Soul, Gina Bellman, Chipo Chung and Selina Lo at Foyles, Charing Cross Road, London. WordTheatre, the spoken word specialists, brings the world's best contemporary literature to life through live performances. Tickets for the readings will be available from Foyles ([www.foyles.co.uk/events](http://www.foyles.co.uk/events)) and Times+.

For more information on the prize and interview requests please contact PR Collective:

Katherine Stroud – [kstroudpr@gmail.com](mailto:kstroudpr@gmail.com) / 07780 112964

Sue Amaradivakara – [sue@prcollective.co.uk](mailto:sue@prcollective.co.uk) / 07786 626492

Becke Parker – [becke@bparker.co.uk](mailto:becke@bparker.co.uk) / 07810 480924

Author biographies

ALIX CHRISTIE

Alix Christie is an author, journalist and letterpress printer. She apprenticed to two master printers and owns and operates a 1910 Chandler & Price letterpress. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from St Mary’s College of California and lives in London with her husband and two children. Her first novel, *Gutenberg’s Apprentice*, was published in 2014.

PETINA GAPPAH

Petina Gappah is a lawyer and Zimbabwean writer with law degrees from Cambridge, Graz University and the University of Zimbabwe. Her debut story collection, *An Elegy for Easterly*, won the Guardian First Book Prize in 2009 and was shortlisted for the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award. Her debut novel *The Book of Memory* was published by Faber last year.

COLUM McCANN

Colum McCann is the author of [six novels and three collections of stories](http://colummccann.com/books-by-colum-mccann/). Born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, he has been the recipient of many international honours, including the National Book Award, the International Dublin Impac Prize, a Chevalier des Arts et Lettres from the French government, election to the Irish arts academy, several European awards, the 2010 Best Foreign Novel Award in China, and an Oscar nomination. His novel *Transatlantic* was longlisted for the 2013 Man Booker Prize. McCann lives in New York.

EDITH PEARLMAN

American writer Edith Pearlman has published more than 250 works of short fiction and short non-fiction in national magazines, literary journals, anthologies, and on-line publications. Her first collection of stories, *Vaquita*, won the Drue Heinz Prize for Literature; her second, *Love Among The Greats* won the Spokane Annual Fiction Prize. Her third collection, *How to Fall*, won the Mary McCarthy Prize in Short Fiction. Pearlman lives in Massachusetts.

NICHOLAS RUDDOCK

Nicholas Ruddock was born in Ottawa. His debut novel, *The Parabolist*, was shortlisted for the Toronto Book Award and the Arthur Ellis Award in Canada. *How Loveta Got Her Baby*, a book of short stories, was published in 2014. Ruddock lives in Ontario.

JONATHAN TEL

Jonathan Tel’s published books include a story collection about Israelis and Palestinians, *Arafat's Elephant*, which was shortlisted for the PEN/Hemingway Award; a novel, *Freud's Alphabet*, and *The Beijing of Possibilities,* a story sequence that unfolds in contemporary China, which was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Award. Tel was a finalist for the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Prize in 2014, and the winner of the 2015 Commonwealth Short Story Prize.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Award

Co-launched by Lord Evans of EFG Private Bank and Cathy Galvin ofThe Sunday Times in 2010, The Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award is the richest prize for a single short story in the English language. Worth £30,000 to the winner, the international annual award aims to promote and celebrate the excellence of the modern short story, and has attracted entries from some of the world’s finest writers.

About The Sunday Times

The Sunday Times is the UK's largest circulation quality Sunday newspaper with a circulation of 763,000 (Source: ABC, December 2015). Over 181,000 people subscribe to the digital and/or print editions of The Sunday Times and The Times (Source: ABC). Renowned for its technological innovation, The Sunday Times is available for download on all platforms and devices including Android, Amazon Kindle and iOS. The Sunday Times has a reputation for award-winning, courageous and campaigning investigative journalism, breaking many major world exclusives. With 12 sections every week, The Sunday Times offers great value to readers and it is recognised not only for breaking news but for its unrivalled coverage of sports, business, the arts and entertainment. [www.thesundaytimes.co.uk](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/)

About EFG

EFG International is a global private banking group offering private banking and asset management services, headquartered in Zurich. It operates in 30 locations worldwide, with circa 2,200 employees. In the UK, it operates as EFG Private Bank. Based in London, the bank and its UK businesses (including EFG Harris Allday and EFG Independent Financial Advisers) also have offices in Jersey, Guernsey, Birmingham, Bridgnorth, Ombersley and Wolverhampton. [www.efginternational.com](http://www.efginternational.com/)  [www.efgl.com](http://www.efgl.com/)

About BookTrust

BookTrust is Britain’s largest reading charity. It has a vision of a society where nobody misses out on the life-changing benefits that reading can bring. BookTrust is responsible for a number of successful national readingprogrammes, sponsored book prizes and creative reading projects aimed at encouraging readers to discover and enjoy books. [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

About Word Theatre    
**WordTheatre® is where authors, actors, and audiences meet to experience the world’s best contemporary literature brought to life. Dedicated to inspiring empathy, curiosity and conversation, these powerful and entertaining performances create community and engender compassion while sparking a love for reading, writing and self expression.** [www.wordtheatre.com](http://wordtheatre.com/)



