



The Questors Theatre
Company

The
Cocktail
Party

by T. S. Eliot



The Questors Theatre

First Performance

SATURDAY, 30th NOVEMBER, 1974

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT was born a citizen of the United States of America in 1888. He took British nationality in 1927 and made his home in this country until his death in 1965. He visited The Questors once, in 1949, to see a play by a young poet in whose work he was interested.

Already known as a classical scholar and a poet, Eliot did not turn his attention to the theatre until comparatively late in his life. But when, in 1935, he wrote *Murder in the Cathedral*, a play intended initially only for performance in Canterbury Cathedral as part of its Festival of that year, his reputation as a major playwright was immediately established. The *Family Reunion* followed in 1939 and then there was a gap of ten years before *The Cocktail Party* captivated critics and audiences alike, first in Edinburgh, then New York and finally, London.

Amid the spontaneous outburst of delight and approbation which greeted the first performance, only the occasional dissident voice was to be heard. Alan Dent, writing in the 'News Chronical' dismissed it as "... this finely acted piece of flappedoodle", while Ivor Brown in a generally disapproving review in 'The Observer', even questioned whether there was any poetry in the play at all! The critic writing in the New York 'Daily Post' after the opening there had no doubts however... "The greatest of living poets has been trying to storm the drama for a long time, but at last he has mastered it, and his new work, which is technically in verse but hardly seems to be, is an authentic modern masterpiece, one of the two or three finest plays of the post-war English-speaking stage... a subtle play, but not really a difficult one, and although it demands a considerably closer attention on the part of its audiences than do most contemporary works in the theatre, it is absorbing on whatever level it is contemplated."

The topic of the various levels on which the play can be taken is indeed an absorbing one and will, no doubt, tantalise Questor audiences as much as it has done the many thousands of others who have seen, read and discussed the play over the past twenty-five years — much to the delight of the author who consistently refused to be drawn on the subject. "I would not" he said, "want to say to anyone that this or that is the meaning, because the whole interest of the process is in getting your own meaning out of it."

After the final performance on Saturday, 7th December, there will be a public discussion of the production at which we hope to see those of our audience who feel stimulated to come and contribute their own views as to what the play is all about, or who are interested to hear what other people think. The discussion will be led by E. Martin Browne, who directed the first-ever production, and who was closely associated with the author during the period when the play was being written. Dr. Browne spent an evening with the company at the beginning of the rehearsal period and we are much indebted to him for his advice, help and continued interest.

The Cocktail Party

by T. S. Eliot

<i>Alexander MacColgie Gibbs</i>	TONY RUSHWORTH
<i>Julia Shuttlethwaite</i>	MARY HODLIN
<i>Peter Quilpe</i>	PAUL PHILPOTT
<i>Celia Coplestone</i>	PATSY MORGAN
<i>An Unidentified Guest</i> ...	NORMAN WILKINSON
<i>Edward Chamberlayne</i> ...	KENNETH RATCLIFFE
<i>Lavinia Chamberlayne</i> ...	JILLYANN HEALY
<i>Nurse/Secretary</i>	JUDY EMMET
<i>A Caterer's Man</i>	JOHN MARTIN

ACT I

Scene 1

The Chamberlaynes' London flat
An early evening in Spring

Scene 2

The same, twenty minutes later

Scene 3

The same, the following evening

INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

ACT II

A consulting room, a few weeks later

TWO YEARS PASS

ACT III

The Chamberlaynes' flat. A summer evening

Directed by BARBARA HUTCHINS

Designed by BRIAN RICH

Assisted by ANDRE DUBREIL

EXHIBITION

During the run of *The Cocktail Party* there will be an exhibition of ceramic paintings by Harold Elvin.

DISCUSSION

A discussion is held after each production by The Questors, to which all members are invited. The discussion on *The Cocktail Party* will be held after the performance on Saturday, 7th December in the Foyer.

REFRESHMENTS

Sandwiches and coffee are available in the Foyer before performances, and refreshments will be served during the interval.

FOYER BAR

The Foyer Bar is open on performance evenings from 7.00 p.m. to 7.45 p.m. and during the interval.

It operates on a theatre licence and anyone attending a performance may use it, including guests. No bar membership is involved.

Interval drinks may be ordered at the bar before the performance commences.

The Grapevine Club continues as a private bar.

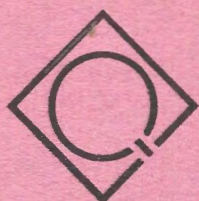
**PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE IN
THE AUDITORIUM.**

**PLEASE DO NOT TAKE DRINKS
INTO THE AUDITORIUM.**

The Questors is a Club Theatre:

Only members may book tickets and membership cards *must* be produced at the box-office.

Full details of membership are available from the Administrator on request.



The Questors Theatre
MATTOCK LANE EALING W5 5BQ

567 0011 Administrator

567 5184 Box Office

Forthcoming Productions:

December 31,
January 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11 at 7.45 p.m.
Matinee, Saturday January 4 at 4.30 p.m.

DRACULA

by Hamilton Deane and John Balderton
from the novel by Bram Stoker

Members and guests: 80p and 50p

January 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31
February 1 at 7.45 p.m.

ELECTRA

by Sophocles
translated by H.D.F. Kitto

Members FREE, guests: 80p and 50p

For The Questors Theatre:

ARTISTIC DIRECTORATE

Director of Productions...	...	...	NEVILE CRUTTENDEN
Head of Design	...	...	MARY ANDERSON
Plays Adviser	...	...	DAVID GOWER
Studio Theatre Director...	...	...	SPENCER BUTLER
Productions Manager	...	...	ROBERT PORTEOUS
Stage Director	...	...	ADRIENNE TALBOT

ADMINISTRATION

Administration	GORDON CALEB
House Manager	STAN EAMER
Box Office Manager	WIN WRIGHT

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