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THE QUESTORS THEATRE



the seagull

by ANTON CHEKHOV in a new version by THOMAS KILROY

Production Sponsored By
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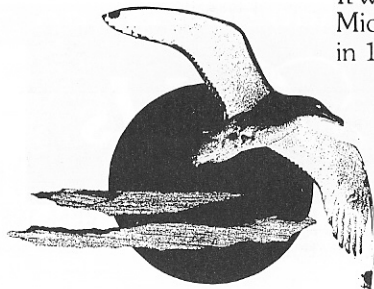
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The Authors

THOMAS KILROY

Was born in Callan, County Kilkenny in 1934. In the 1960s he was a visiting professor to four American universities and since 1978 he has been Professor of Modern English at University College, Galway. In 1967 he was awarded first prize in a BBC Radio competition for his play, *The Door*. His first stage play, *The Death and Resurrection of Mr Roche* was presented at the Dublin Theatre Festival in 1968 and later at the Hampstead Theatre Club. *The O'Neill* (1969), *Tea and Sex and Shakespeare* (1976, revised 1988) and *Talbot's Box* (1977) were all presented at the Abbey Theatre in 1978. *Double Cross*, his play about William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) and Brendan Bracken, appeared in the West End in 1986. He was awarded the Guardian Fiction Prize and the Heinemann Award for Literature for his novel *The Big Chapel* (1971). He has also written two plays for Irish television, *Farmers* (1971) and *The Black Joker* (1981). He is currently working on a new version of Ibsen's *Ghosts* in which AIDS, not syphilis, is the Alving family's legacy, and on a new play for the Royal Court which deals with an English theatrical company who run out of petrol in a small town while touring Ireland during the wartime 1940s. His version of *The Seagull* first appeared at the Royal Court in 1981.



ANTON CHEKHOV

Was born at Taganrog in 1860. He came from humble parentage but graduated as a doctor from Moscow University in 1884. He was a prolific and successful short-story writer even during his student days, but also developed an interests in the theatre. His earliest plays were one-act comedies ('vaudevilles'), among them *The Bear* (1888). *The Proposal* (1889) and *The Wedding* (1890). His first full-length plays, *Ivanov* (1887) and *The Wood Demon* (1889) were not very successful, and *The Seagull* (1896) was a spectacular failure when first performed at the old-fashioned Alexandrinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. When, however, it was revived by the newly-founded Moscow Arts Theatre two years later under the direction of Constantin Stanislavsky it became a spectacular success. The Moscow Arts Theatre took a seagull as its symbol, which it bears to the present day. It was followed by *Uncle Vanya* (1899), *Three Sisters* (1901) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), the year in which Chekhov died, at the height of his powers. His other full-length play *Platonov* (written in 1880/1, but not discovered until after his death) was first produced in Germany in 1928. Like Constantin in *The Seagull* Chekhov had burnt his copy of the play after it had been rejected by the leading actress to whom it had been submitted. It was seen as *Wild Honey* (a version by Michael Frayn) at the National Theatre in 1984.



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

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President: Dame Judi Dench
Vice Presidents: Sir Brian Batsford, Alfred Emmet, OBE, Roger Rees, Michael Williams
Theatre Manager: Elaine Orchard

First Performance 13 May 1989

the seagull

by **Anton Chekhov**

(In a version by **Thomas Kilroy**)

Directed by **John Davey**

Set designed by **Ray Dunning**

Costumes by **Ray Childe**

Lighting by **Frank Wood**

Sound by **Martin Udall**

Production Sponsored By
Coca-Cola & Schweppes Beverages Limited

John Good
Programme

Director's Notes

THE SEAGULL

Russia and Ireland

At first sight it may seem an act of perversity to transfer a classic Russian play from its home setting to the wilds of Galway. But when the reasons for doing this are not only intellectual, but theatrical, the decision is not only justified but laudable.

The parallels between Russia and Ireland at the end of the 19th century are genuine and have not gone unnoticed before. It is perhaps surprising, but instructive, to find that great Russian writer Turgenev writing about Irish literature and remarking: 'I could never have written about the Russian peasants as I did, had I not read Maria Edgeworth'. (Maria Edgeworth, of Anglo-Irish stock, actually managed her father's Irish estates as well as writing novels about life in Ireland in the 19th century.)

The Anglo-Irish, essentially a Protestant land-owning class, had enjoyed a period of power and expansion during the 18th century (the Ascendancy). By the period of this play, many events had occurred to shake their secure power-base, to render them more economically vulnerable and to isolate them increasingly from the government of England, the country which many still regarded as their home. The terrible potato famines of the 1840s had left their legacy. of the population of eight and a half million, approximately one million had died and a further one and a half million had emigrated to avoid starvation. In Galway in 1846 there were food riots; in June 1848 an Inspector of

Roads for Clifden, Galway, buried 140 bodies he found strewn along his route. In one week in June 1849, 490 people died in Ballinasloe Workhouse, Galway.

Such events had their political backlash with the formation of the Fenian Brotherhood and the Fenian Risings of 1866/7. After all, in a country where 70% of the land was farmland, but where only 3% of the population were landowners - and they were the Anglo-Irish, Protestant and often absentee - there was bound to be trouble. So when another potato famine loomed in 1879, the Irish National Land League was formed, by Michael Davitt, with Charles Stewart Parnell as its president. The 'Land Leaguers' resisted evictions and with held rents. Captain Boycott gave a new word to the language in 1880; as an agent for an absentee landlord, he found that the 'Land Leaguers' had 'blackened' his harvest. Elsewhere landlords and their agents were less fortunate, meeting with assault and assassination.

An English Government under Gladstone, sought to solve the problem by distancing themselves from the Anglo-Irish landlords and gradually introducing legislation to allow the mainly Catholic tenant-farmers to buy the land they worked and lived on from their landlords. As a result, the Anglo-Irish lived out a period when, like their Russian counterparts, their lands were broken up, their incomes decimated and their style of life destroyed for ever.

So much for the intellectual and historical reasons for setting the play in Ireland; there must also be good theatrical reasons. For these, it is only necessary to point to the reviews of the original Royal Court production of 1981:

'...the best production of *The Seagull* that I have seen... The effect - as with doing Shakespeare in modern dress - is not to supply any blanket new interpretation, but to sharpen individual characters and incidents...'

Robert Cushman *The Observer*

'...the play becomes more directly concerned with a world we can all recognise...'

John Walker *Now*

'The play's humour, compassion and poignancy emerge just as powerfully from a Celtic mist as they do from a Slavic rain storm'

Milton Shulman *Evening Standard*

'I suspect that what we see... may come closer to Chekhov's intentions that all those past productions shimmering with poetic tears.'

Francis King *Sunday Telegraph*

I feel that Chekhov, were he here to see us, would approve.

John Davey



Chekhov reads his *Seagull* to directors and actors of the Moscow Art Theatre, 1898.

the seagull

CAST in order of appearance

Mary	Gwenan Evans
James	Simon Roberts
Peter	Michael Hiller
Constantine	Alex Nash
Jack	Michael Green
Workman	Ray Dunning
Lily	Heather Naylor
Pauline	Dorothy Boyd-Taylor
Dr Hickey	Tony Rushforth
Isobel Desmond	Anne Renn
Gregory	Alan Chambers
Aston	Ben Crocker
Maid	Kate Armstrong
Cook	Maria Brusa

The action is set on the Desmond Estate in East Galway, in the West of Ireland, in the latter part of the 19th century.

Act 1: In the grounds of the estate. Summer.

Act 2: The garden of the Desmond house. A few days later.

INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

Act 3: The dining-room. A week later

Act 4: The drawing room. Two years later. November.

This production visits the open-air Minack Cliffside Theatre in Porthcurno, Cornwall
19th - 23rd June 1989.

PRODUCTION

Directed by **John Davey**
Set Designed by **Ray Dunning**
Costumes Designed by **Ray Childe**
Lighting Designed by **Frank Wood**
Sound Designed by **Martin Udall**
Songs Sung by **Caroline Bleakley**
Piano Played by **Robert Guinea**

Stage Manager **Lucille Terry**
Deputy
Stage Managers **Ian Gwyn Thomas, Susanna Fyson**

Assistant Stage Managers **Harriet Simon**
Alessandra Zegna, Susan Jagger
Claire Broughton, Anya Beale
Kate Armstrong, Peter Terry

Construction **Peter Terry**
Properties **Glyn Backshall**
Debbie Ward

Prompt **Lesley Harris**
Wardrobe Master **Brad Askew**
Assisted by **Tess Walsh**
Vandra Howard, Lindsay Udell
Jane Dewey

Ladies' Costume **Mary Anderson**
Christine Brand, Tim Haywood
Lyn Williams, Val Moran, Betty Howard

Mens' Costume **Sylvia Juren**
Michael Marsh

Lighting Operators **Frank Wood**
Martin Udall, Andrew Rungen

Sound Operators **Martin Udall**
Richard Hetherington

Dialect Coach **Sally Grace**
Wigs and Make Up **GREASEPAINT**
Catherine Bassett, Kate Jay

Traditional Irish music arranged and performed by 'Moving Statues' (**Jane Halliday, Nicky Hirst, Colin Mulberg and Rob Murphy**). They can be contacted on 7885308.

Thanks to **Val Boyes**
Alfred Emmet, Peter Tompkins

SEASON OF NEW PLAYS AT THE QUESTORS THEATRE

In The Playhouse

THE ALMAS

A new play by DAVID MOWAT

The Almas is a reputedly sub-human species still existing in the remote regions of Cental Asia. A female of the species is brought into a small-town twentieth century home. The results are comic, thought-provoking and disturbing.

Directed by David Mowat and David Emmet

Cast includes Howard Benbrook, Sheree Clapperton, John Downs, Leela Selvon, Anne Sawbridge, Jane Westrop and Mark Webb.

The designer is Tony Godel

Performances: June 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th at 7.45pm

Tickets: Members FREE Guests June 6-8 £3.00, June 9-10 £3.50

Sponsored by DUFFY'S WINE BAR Pitshanger Lane, W.5.

In The Studio

Student Playwriting Competition-Joint Winner

THE MIND FOREST

by Richard Steadman-Jones

A new play based on the life of Victorian spinster Mary Kingsley and her journeys into the jungle of West Africa.

Directed by Anthea Dobry

Cast includes: Nevile Cruttenden, Lisa Day, Rachel Power, Daniel Smith and Ffrangcon Whelan.

Designed by Marina and Walter Seward

Performances: 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th June at 7.45pm

Tickets: Members and Guests £2.50

Sponsored by Waterstone & Company

In The Playhouse

Student Playwriting Competition-Joint Winner

WAR STREET SERENADE

by Katy Louise Dean

A raw look at life among rootless youngsters in a small English town.

Directed by Paddy O'Connor and designed by Brad Askew.

Performances: 17th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th June at 7.45pm

18th June at 3pm

Tickets: Members FREE Guests 17-22 June £3.00

23-24th June £3.50

Sponsored by Waterstone & Company



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Coming Events

LATE NIGHT in the Studio

'D MINUS'

by Kevin Madley

Questors author directs his own world premiere - a gentle comedy of pregnancy, playgrounds and parenthood.

Cast includes: Cery Jones

Two performances only: Thursday 15th and Friday 16th June at 10.30pm.

Tickets: Members and Guests £1.00

Proceeds in aid of the REDEVELOPMENT FUND

Rehearsed Play Readings

In The Foyer

Sunday May 14th at 7.45pm

PASS IT ON

by Renee

The play celebrates the role of working-class women during social unrest. 'I am interested in writing good roles for women and about women we don't see on the stage, but who are all around us.'

Directed by Howard Shepherdson

In The Foyer

Sunday May 28th at 7.45pm

LOVER'S VOWS

by Mrs Inchbald (1798)

True love, social class, illegitimacy: no wonder this popular play caused havoc for the genteel social circles of Jane Austen's 'Mansfield Park'. Find out what all the fuss was about on May 28th.

Directed by Sue Solomon



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

In The Shaw Room

Monday June 5th at 7.45pm.

R.U.R

by **The Brothers CAPEK**

A classic which introduced the word ROBOT to the world.
Directed by Tim Leandro

In The Foyer

Sunday June 11th at 7.45pm

THE BELLE'S STRATEGEM

by **Mrs Hannah Crowley (1780)**

A hero ultimately forced into an acceptance of his real emotions by the contrivances of the heroine who refuses to marry a man who does not truly love her.
A Sparkling Comedy!

In The Foyer

Sunday 18th June at 7.45pm

THE CHANGING

by **David Lewis**

A new light-hearted comedy on changing sexual roles.
Directed by Brian Ingram

Admission is FREE to all members and guests at PLAYREADINGS



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Art Exhibition in Upper Foyer

HELEN TYLER

Trained at Hammersmith and Leicester Colleges of Art.

Exhibitions: Athawes Gallery, Acton June 1987
Ealing Public Library, November 1988

Having returned to painting after a long quiescent period, the work exhibited was all completed in the past year and a half.

An example of analogous thinking:

'He went on to explain how each totemic ancestor, while travelling through the country, was thought to have scattered a trail of words and musical notes along the line of his footprints, and how these Dreaming-tracks lay over the land as 'ways' of communication between the most far-flung tribes.

'A song', he said, 'was both map and direction-finder. Providing you knew the song you could always find your way across country'.

'And would a man on 'Walkabout' always be travelling down one of the Songlines?'

'In the old days, yes,' he agreed. 'Nowadays, they go by train or car'.

'Suppose the man strayed from his Songline?'

'He was trespassing. He might get speared for it'.

'But as long as he stuck to the track, he'd always find people who shared his Dreaming? Who were, in fact, his brothers?'

'Yes'.

Excerpt from 'The Songlines'
a story about Aboriginal
thinking by Bruce Chatwin.



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

INFORMATION

For The Questors Theatre

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 Vice Chairman
 Secretary
 Treasurer
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 Stage Director
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Roger Kelly
Gwenan Evans
Michael Vadon
Lucille Terry
Doug King
Elaine Orchard
Jill Gee
Lindsay Udell
Elaine Orchard
Robert Gordon Clark
Ken Ratcliffe
Simon Higginson
Geoffrey Sellman
Ken Parker
Douglas Thomas
Dorothy Dent
Barralets of Ealing
Gutermann
Wilkinson Sword
Persil, Comfort, Stergene

ADMINISTRATION

The Questors office is open from 9.30 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. every weekday. If you wish to make contact for details of membership, or hiring the Theatre and rehearsal rooms, telephone the office on **01 567-0011**.

MEMBERSHIP

If you wish to become a member you can use the form on the page opposite; just send it to the Theatre with the appropriate subscription.

BOX OFFICE

For personal callers the box office is open evenings only from 6.45 p.m. to 8.45 p.m. on days of performance and five days prior to each Playhouse production.

THE STUDENT GROUP

The Questors runs a two year part time student course; details can be obtained from the office.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP

There are a number of groups for younger members. These cater for all age groups, from 5-17. The classes are intended to create awareness of the theatre and provide a stimulating channel for imagination.

NEW MEMBERS EVENINGS

Why not attend one of our new, or prospective members evenings, and have a conducted tour of the Theatre complex. Tours start and finish at the Grapevine Bar, 8.00 p.m. every Wednesday.

THE GRAPEVINE CLUB

The Questors has a fully licensed Bar which is now open to all members. The Bar is open every evening plus lunchtimes on Sundays. Questors members are requested to sign in their guests when entering the bar.

THE HOTPLATE

Delicious hot and cold food is available in the upper Foyer between 6.30 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. during the run of Playhouse productions, and coffee, tea, and cakes are served during the interval. No hot food will be provided at the Sunday matinees.

NOTE

The Hotplate is not open for Studio productions, but when Studio performances coincide with those in the Playhouse, it will endeavour to serve those audiences whenever this is possible.



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

MATTOCK LANE, EALING, LONDON W5 5BQ

Telephones: Membership Secretary 01-567 8736 General Office 01-567 0011

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TELEPHONE NO..... DATE OF BIRTH (if under 18).....

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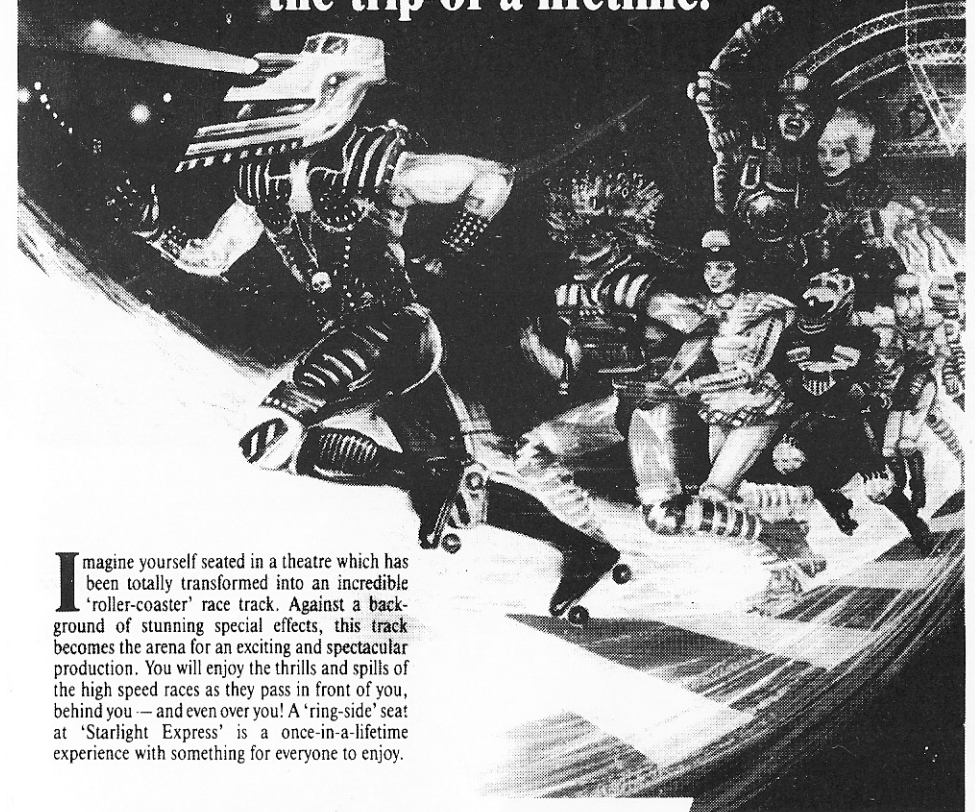
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Evenings at 7.45pm

Matinees Tuesday & Saturday at 3.00pm

(Performance lasts 2½ hours)



PRICES OF ADMISSION

Stalls £8.00-£22.00

Dress Circle £8.00-£20.00