

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### *In the Playhouse*

#### **Carol Concert**

Book early for seats at this popular annual Questors treat. A chance for you to join in carols old and new and to enjoy an entertaining selection of Christmas music by The Questors Choir, under Tim Godfrey. There will be appropriate interpolations by the pick of Questors actors. Mulled wine and mince-pies add to the seasonal fun.

17 December at 7.45pm. Admission Members and Guests £5.00

### *In the Playhouse*

#### **Alice: Through the Looking Glass**

*by Phillip Sheahan*

A brand new dramatised version by The Questors' own Phillip Sheahan. Basically it's entirely faithful to Lewis Carroll — but we've taken a few theatrical liberties.

All your favourite characters are there: the Red Queen, the White Queen, Humpty Dumpty, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Walrus and the Carpenter and so on. But our Alice is not such a little girl — she's a wisened-up modern teenager, and it's not exactly a "looking-glass" she goes through!

This play is entirely suitable for young children — but we reckon it'll appeal to older children and adults too (with or without their families).

31 December, 2 - 7 January at 7.45pm

31 December & 7 January at 2.30pm

1 January at 5.00pm

Sponsored by



**BARCLAYS**

### *In the Playhouse*

#### **The Homecoming**

*by Harold Pinter*

An East End family of dubious respectability has a re-union. A taxi-driver, a pimp and a no-hope boxer are joined by the respectable oldest son and his wife. She, however, has an immoral past and sparks fly.

This is arguably the best play of the greatest living British playwright and certainly an outstanding modern classic.

This one is not to be missed.

21, 24 - 28 January at 7.45pm; 22 January at 2.30pm

## THE HOUSE AMONG THE STARS

BY MICHEL TREMBLAY



An adaptation by Sam Burns from the translations by Bill Findlay & Martin Bowman and John van Burek





Michel Tremblay was born in 1942 in Montreal's French speaking industrial east end. Whilst at the Graphic Arts Institute of Quebec, where he trained as a linotypist, he began writing short stories, which were later published under the title *Stories for Late Night Drinkers*. In 1964 he won the first prize for young writers sponsored by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for his play, *Le Train*, written in 1959.

He first achieved national recognition in 1968 with the première of *Les Belles Soeurs*, written in *joual*, the popular patois of Quebec. Subsequently dubbed 'the single most important event in the history of Quebec theatre', the play was given its first production in Great Britain in 1982 in a production directed by Spencer Butler at The Questors Theatre. It was also seen in Paris in 1973, where it was declared best foreign production of the year, and in a Scots version, *The Guid Sisters*, at the Tron Theatre, Glasgow, in 1989 and again in 1990. There followed a cycle of plays all set in Montreal mostly amongst homosexuals, transvestites and social misfits, often with characters reappearing from play to play. These include *Broken Pieces* (1969); *Forever Yours Marie-Lou* (1971); *Hosanna* (1973); *Bonjour Là, Bonjour* (1974), seen at The Questors in 1982; *Sainte-Carmen of the Main* (1976); and *Manon/Sandra* (1977), which was seen at the Traverse, Edinburgh, in 1984, and in London in 1989. His move to Outremont, a more affluent district of Montreal, and the election of an independent Quebec government in 1976 seem to have influenced a shift in his writing, as demonstrated in plays such as *The Impromptu of Outremont* (1980), *Albertine in Five Times* (1984), seen in London in 1986 and at The Questors in 1987; *The Real World?* (1987; seen in London in 1990); and *La Maison Suspendue* — retitled the *The House Among The Stars* (1991; seen in Edinburgh 1992 and given its first performance in London at The Questors Theatre 1994).

As well as plays — eighteen to date, most of which have also been translated and performed in English — Tremblay has written two musical comedies, eight novels and seven film scripts. His *Chroniques du Plateau Mont-Royal* is a sequence of novels about a working-class street in Montreal. *Making Room* was the first of his novels to be published in Britain (1990). Tremblay has also translated and adapted plays by Aristophanes, Tennessee Williams, Dario Fo, Chekhov and Gogol.

## THE EDITOR TALKS TO DIRECTOR, SPENCER BUTLER

Ed: Why is the play called *The House Among The Stars*. Is it a space factory?

S.B.: Very much the reverse. The play is very much based in reality — in a real house by the real Lake Simon. But while the other houses are all built at lake-shore level, this one has been built on stilts. So it looks much higher than the others — among the stars.

Ed: Does your set suggest this?

S.B.: Yes. But we want it to look a very real house so Jenny (Richardson) and I first of all designed a real house — one you could live in, with all its rooms. Then we translated this into theatrical terms, concentrating on the verandah where the action takes place.

Ed: This action covers three generations, I believe.

S.B.: And they are frequently all on the stage together. So our acting area must be big enough to accommodate the three groups separately. But at times they overlap, reflect each others thoughts and movements, emphasise a subtle relationship between the generations. This has led to an interesting choreographic exercise which the cast has enjoyed working on.

Ed: The generations are clearly identified then?

S.B.: Oh yes, and not merely visually. In our adaptation Sam Burns and I have tried to differentiate between the language, and even the dialect, of 1910, 1950 and 1990, which Tremblay managed very subtly in his French Canadian original.

Ed: Is it realistic language?

S.B.: Yes. As I said before these are very real people in a very real setting. Being on a verandah one is very much aware of the smells and sounds of the country around. The smells of the lake and the trees. And Alan Smith has created a super soundtrack of the noises that abound in the country — including the cry of the loon, a bird which is only heard in Canada. Rather a screechy warbling, but my Canadian friends tell me the sound immediately carries them back home.

Ed: There is the sound of a violin as well? I see Ian Harris is credited in the cast-list.

S.B.: It's a fiddle more than a violin, if you get my meaning. He plays for parties and dances — jigs, and so on. Ian has composed a lovely jig though at first it sounded a bit hearty — so we played it at three different speeds and found the slowest speed had exactly the right feel of reflective melancholy. And this sound, too, comes from the wood offstage. It's so much a play of the senses — sight, smell, sound — and this plaintive half-heard melody is so exactly right and is used occasionally in the play to reflect echoes of the differing periods.

Ed: It sounds as if the technical side of this production is very important.

S.B.: It always is. Thank God for the Questors wonderful technicians! The action is this play goes from morning to night on the same day. The sun gradually moves around the house 'till sunset and 'till eventually, we find the house among the stars!

Ed: I can't wait to see it all.

S.B.: Good! And with the cast I've got I can tell you you're in for a wonderful evening.



# THE HOUSE AMONG THE STARS

by Michel Tremblay

An adaptation by Sam Burns from the translations by Bill Findlay & Martin Bowman and John van Burek

*First performance of this production Saturday, 3rd December 1994*

## CAST

(in order of appearance)

### 1990

John ..... **PIERS WHIBLEY**  
Matthew ..... **MARK NEALE**  
Sebastian ..... **TOMOS LEWIS**

### 1910

Victoire ..... **LUCY RATHBONE**  
Joseph ..... **NICHOLAS CHAPMAN**

### 1950

Edward ..... **T J ZALE**  
Albertine ..... **CATHERINE WALLACE**  
The Fat Woman ..... **RUTH LISTER**

**TOMOS LEWIS** also plays Marc and Gabriel

Violin music composed and played by Ian Harris

The play is set on the verandah of a house by Lake Simon, Quebec Province, Canada.

*Approximate running time is 1¾ hours without an interval*

## PRODUCTION

Directed by ..... **SPENCER BUTLER**  
Designed by ..... **SPENCER BUTLER, JENNY RICHARDSON**  
Lighting Designer ..... **ALAN N. SMITH**  
Sound Designer ..... **ALAN N. SMITH**  
Costume Designer ..... **JENNY RICHARDSON**  
Stage Manager ..... **ERIC LISTER**  
Deputy Stage Manager ..... **BRIDGETT STREVS**  
Assistant Stage Managers ..... **KATIE KEELER,**  
**FELICIA MASSIAH, LLOYD CHARLTON**  
Prompter ..... **SUSAN OLIVER**  
Properties ..... **HARRIET SIMON**  
Dialect/Voice Coach ..... **TRISH BAILLIE**  
Wardrobe ..... **JEAN DERBY,**  
**JAN LEWIS, JOAN GRIFFIN,**  
**WENDY HOLBROOK, EILEEN COX**  
Lighting Operator ..... **PHILIPPA FORSTER**  
Lighting Assistants ..... **NATALIE FALLMAN,**  
**MARGARET LEVIS**  
Sound Operator ..... **LEILA BAYANDOR**  
Construction ..... **GRAHAM CARPENTER,**  
**STEVEN BEHROOZI, NEVILLE GILLETTE, ROGER BRACE**  
Hair/Make-up ..... **JOANNA HOOPER,**  
**EMMA MUNROE**

*Thanks to* **LABATTS OF CANADA, CHRIS SYDENHAM, TINA HARRIS,**  
**JIM CAITHNESS, IAN JARVIS, JO PERSE, BRAD ASKEW,**  
**RICHARD LEWIS, JOHN WEBSTER**



THE PLAYHOUSE IS EQUIPPED WITH AN INFRA-RED SOUND TRANSMISSION SYSTEM FOR USE BY PEOPLE WITH HEARING DIFFICULTIES. IT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO USE THIS SYSTEM WITH PERSONAL HEARING AIDS SWITCHED TO THE T POSITION. To obtain the appropriate receiver please contact the Duty House Manager.



THE PLAYHOUSE IS EQUIPPED WITH A LIFT, WITH ACCESS TO THE BAR AND UPPER FOYER LEVELS FOR THOSE WITH MOBILITY PROBLEMS.

1. The taking of food and drink into the auditorium is NOT permitted.
2. The use of cameras, video-cameras or tape equipment during the performance is also prohibited.
3. Patrons are requested to turn off portable telephones and beepers in the auditorium, since the activation of these during a performance is offensive to audience and actors alike.



## ART EXHIBITION IN THE UPPER FOYER

3 - 12 December 1994

### REBWAR

Born in Kurdistan (Iraq), Rebwar moved to Europe in 1990. He spent the first two years in France before coming to the UK in 1992. Exquisite, colourful, bright and cheerful images — painted on almost anything, from a notepad cover to canvas; from pieces of furniture to driftwood. Rebwar is already well-known in Europe but this is the first time he has exhibited his work in London.

## ART EXHIBITION IN THE GRAPEVINE GALLERY

3 - 12 December 1994

### CAMELLIA BLANCA

Camellia Blanca comes from San Francisco and has held exhibitions there and in Washington, New York and Cork.

At the moment she is working on a series of prints, including studies in oil, water-colour and ink, using as a theme Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

## THE COMPLETE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FOR...

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## INFORMATION

### 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 6.30pm and 8.00pm 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 matinées.

### 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.

### 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, 8.00pm every Wednesday.

### THE STUDENT GROUP

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

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS

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.

### For The Questors Theatre

Artistic Director  
Studio Director  
Director of Studies  
Chair  
Vice-Chairman  
Company Secretary  
Club Secretary  
Finance Director  
Stage Director  
Marketing Director  
Theatre Manager  
Productions Secretary  
Membership Secretary  
Programme Editor  
Questopics Editor  
Marketing Manager  
Sponsorship  
Box Office Management  
Programme Sales Organiser  
Front of House Manager  
Press Relations  
Haberdashery  
Wardrobe Equipment  
Wardrobe Care

David Emmet  
Simon Thomas  
David Emmet  
John Davey  
Doug King  
Sue Blake  
Christine Garland  
Ken Kettle  
Kris Collier  
Simon Green  
Elaine Orchard  
Christine Greening  
Alice Pennicott  
Vincent McQueen

Sam Jennings  
Geoffrey Sellman  
Ken Parker  
Val Blaxland  
Eric Lister  
Trish Fox, Sarah Wood  
Tootal Craft  
Wilkinson Sword Scissors..Fiskars Ltd  
Persil, Comfort and Stergene  
courtesy of Lever Bros.  
Dry-cleaning by C.D.S.

### Administration

The Questors office is open from 9.30am until 5.00pm every weekday. If you wish to make contact for details of membership, or hiring the Theatre and rehearsal rooms, telephone the office on 0181-567 0011.

### Membership

If you wish to become a member please fill in the application form (copies in the Foyers); just send it to the Theatre with the appropriate subscription. 0181-567 8736.

### Box Office

For personal callers the box office is open every Wednesday evening 6.45pm to 8.30pm; Monday to Friday 11.00am to 12 noon; during productions 6.45pm to 8.30pm; Sunday matinées 2.00pm to 2.30pm; Studio productions 6.45pm to 8.00pm.