

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

In the Studio

Abigail's Party by Mike Leigh

This work takes apart the suburban set and doesn't put them back together again. Devised using improvisation techniques, it still has a final script which is dipped in acid and as finely polished as a new CD. The hopes of the 80s suburban élite may have been dashed by the recession – but Leigh's play trashes their pretensions with venomous delight.

14 - 21 October at 7.45pm

In the Playhouse

Nasty Neighbours by Debbie Isitt

BT BIENNIAL
Sponsored by
BT

This new play for the 1995 BT Biennial is a fast-moving dark comedy. Isitt's work is renowned for touching a raw nerve while exploring the murkier side of "ordinary" British life.

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

*The Questors production sponsored by
Spindlewood Manufacturing Consultants Ltd.*

In the Studio

Grace by Doug Lucie

A first rate comedy, not just about Big Business and Evangelism but about one woman's resistance to the Americanisation of Britain. It is also about historical fact and fiction, religion and truth. Described by one critic as a "Cherry Orchard" of our times.

4 - 11 November at 7.45pm

In the Playhouse

Amadeus by Peter Shaffer

First performed in 1979, a massive hit in London and on Broadway. The play deals with the rivalry between Salieri, Kapelmeister at the court of Emperor Joseph in Vienna and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the 25 year old genius. On his death bed, Salieri reflects on the events of the past – and in so doing takes us back through a drama in which Shaffer mixes superb theatrical techniques and sublime music to examine jealousy, genius and revenge – and the effect which such emotions can unleash.

11, 14 - 18 November at 7.45pm; 12 November at 2.30pm

Sponsored by



BARCLAYS

THE FOURTH WORLD COARSE ACTING CHAMPIONSHIPS



OUR ADJUDICATOR

We are very honoured to have as our adjudicator Timothy West, whose theatrical fame is such he needs no introduction. Neither does his wife, Prunella Scales. Together, they form one of the great pairs of the theatre world. Their connection with Coarse Acting began in 1977 when both of them came to see the Coarse Acting Show at Edinburgh, and stayed behind to talk to the cast and tell them their own experiences, some of which were incorporated in the published version.

Timothy adjudicated our 1980 Festival and became involved in a macabre coincidence. He awarded the trophy to The Glebeland Players of Amersham, for their play *Public Death*, a Noel Coward spoof in which the leading character accidentally cut his hand on a broken glass and bled into unconsciousness on stage, while struggling to continue. A few days later exactly the same thing happened to Timothy. Playing in his one-man show *Beecham* (based on the conductor) he cut his hand on a broken glass, struggled on, and finally gave up at the interval, being taken to hospital to have 26 stitches in his hand. Which just shows that the disasters portrayed in Coarse Acting are not so far-fetched as one might think. We wish him better luck tonight!

AWARDS

The following awards will be presented:

The World Coarse Acting Trophy, a magnificent objet d'art of surrealistic design, constructed by Richard Lewis in our own workshops. Any resemblance to a decorated chamber-pot is accidental. Destroyed by accident in 1990 and lovingly reconstructed by Liz Feather.

The Martin Bowley Prize for the longest death scene (in the absence of any fatality, the trophy will be awarded for the longest pause or the worst performance). This trophy is awarded in honour of Martin's death in *The Silver King*, which lasted so long most of the audience had left by the time he had finished. The Samuel French Award, generously presented by the publishers of *The Art of Coarse Acting* and the three Coarse Acting shows.

FOR THE COARSE ACTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Organiser: MICHAEL GREEN
Designer JOHN STACEY
Stage Manager JENNY RICHARDSON
Lighting PETE WALTERS
Sound COLIN HORNE
Front of House ERIC LISTER

Helpers in all departments

**ROGER BRACE, CHRIS SYDENHAM, TINA HARRIS,
DAVE WHEATLEY, JO PERSE, NIGEL LAWRENCE,
GEOFF MOORE, SYLVIA WALL, BRIDGETT STREVS,
SUE WEST, ANNE SAWBRIDGE, PAUL VINCENT,
ELIZABETH MARSHALL, JENNY BECKLEY, NIGEL WORSLEY.**

(With apologies to any inhabitants of Ealing who have been left out.)

For The Questors Theatre – President: Dame Judi Dench

Artistic Steering Committee Chair	Alan Chambers
Studio Director	Simon Thomas
Director of Studies	David Emmet
Chair	John Davey
Vice-Chairman	Steve Hames
Company Secretary	Sue Blake
Club Secretary	Christine Garland
Finance Director	Ken Kettle
Stage Director	Kris Collier
Marketing Director	Simon Green
Theatre Manager	Elaine Orchard
Productions Secretary	Christine Greening
Membership Secretary	Alice Pennicott
Marketing Officer	Fleur Lloyd
Programme Editor	Ken Ratcliffe
Questopics Editor	Nigel Lawrence
Sponsorship	Geoffrey Sellman
Box Office Management	Ken Parker
Programme Sales Organiser	Val Blaxland
Front of House Manager	Eric Lister
Press Relations	Trish Fox
Haberdashery	Tootal Craft
Wardrobe Equipment	Wilkinson Sword Scissors..Fiskars Ltd
Wardrobe Care	Persil, Comfort and Stergene
	courtesy of Lever Bros.
	Dry-cleaning by C.D.S.

THE FOURTH WORLD COARSE ACTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

One night only – Sunday, October 8th, 1995

THE TEAMS

(not necessarily in order of play; indeed, some may never appear)

The Royal Shakespeare Company

The RSC appeared in the very first world Championships in 1972. We are honoured to have them again, this time led by Desmond Barrit, whose Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* was acclaimed this year by audience and critics alike. Perhaps it is appropriate they should enter, as an extract from *The Art of Coarse Acting* is being performed in *The Shakespeare Revue*, running this autumn at The Pit in the Barbican.

The Bunny Langridge Players

This Questors side were winners of the original competition with their detective spoof *Streuth* which later triumphed at The Edinburgh Fringe as part of *The Coarse Acting Show*. Some of that original company are included this year and production is by Michael Langridge, who produced *Streuth* way back in 1972.

The Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

Earlier this year The Talisman put on *The Coarse Acting Show* and author Michael Green was invited up to see it. Out of this (and lots of drinks afterwards) arose an invitation to take part in the World Championships. The Talisman even held a script competition to sort out the best material, so they are obviously taking things very seriously and we extend a warm welcome to them.

Richmond Shakespeare Society

The company from The Mary Wallace Theatre in Twickenham are neighbours of ours, so they need little introduction. Indeed, quite a number of Questors are also members there and work with both companies, and some had a hand in tonight's show. Their entry is a specially-written Greek Tragedy called *Oedocles – King of Thebes*, and with their classical experience they should do full justice to it.

The Miscasts, of Amersham

Annie Hamilton-Pike, Director of The Miscasts, is an old friend of The Questors and was associated with the winning company (The Glebeland Players) at our last contest. She recently directed a successful Coarse Acting Show on her home territory.

The Felderly Arts Society

This side is produced by no less a person than our own chairman, John Davey, and for good measure he wrote their play, too. He also appeared in the winning team at the last competition, so we look forward eagerly to seeing what they will pull out of the hat tonight.

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes

(At the end of the final piece please remain in your seats. You will be entertained by a group of artistes from the world of Grand Opera and this will be followed by the adjudication and presentation of the World Trophy and other awards.)



THE PLAYHOUSE IS EQUIPPED WITH AN INFRA-RED SOUND TRANSMISSION SYSTEM FOR USE BY PEOPLE WITH HEARING DIFFICULTIES. IT IS ALSO 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.

THE FOURTH WORLD COARSE ACTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

This is the fourth of the World Coarse Acting Championships held at The Questors. The first official contest was in 1972 but it all really began in 1971 during an open day at The Questors when Alfred Emmet suggested a Coarse Acting competition as a way of entertaining visitors to the Playhouse. It was hastily organised by myself and much to everyone's surprise was so successful we decided to hold a proper event on a more sophisticated basis. This duly took place and the winners were The Bunny Langridge Players (from The Questors) with a delightful murder mystery called *Streuth*. The adjudicator was Richard Gordon (of *Doctor in the House* fame) and teams included a two-man entry from the Royal Shakespeare Company of Roger Rees and Tony Pedley who brought the house down with their version of the death of Caesar as performed by The Hanwell Amateur Dramatic Society.

Incidentally, if anyone is not familiar with Coarse Acting the term derives from my book *The Art of Coarse Acting* in which a Coarse Actor is described as one who can remember the lines but not the order in which they come; or one who knows when to come on stage but not where. Basically, entries in the contest are spoofs on bad amateur dramatics or indeed any sort of dramatics.

After that first contest, a former Questors House Manager, Denys Nelson, organised another competition at Salisbury to raise funds for the new Playhouse there, and The Questors sent down the Bunny Langridge team with *Streuth* but the winning company were The Maskers of Southampton, overcoming opposition which included The National Theatre, who did a murder mystery in which the butler aged ten years every time he entered, so he started off looking thirty and was about eighty by the end of the play.

The second Questors contest was in 1975, with The Maskers and Salisbury Playhouse as guest sides. The Playhouse won with a masterly version of Chekov marked by long silences and a man with creaking boots and they took the trophy, a decorated chamber-pot made by Richard Lewis which now rests behind The Grapevine Bar. It's a tribute to Coarse Acting that Salisbury marked the opening of their new Playhouse with a Coarse Acting competition, won this time by the Bunny Langridge Players with *A Collier's Tuesday Tea*. The third global competition was in 1980, adjudicated by Timothy West, who awarded the trophy to The Glebeland Players, Amersham (a team containing several Questors) for a Noel Coward spoof written by our own Jane Dewey. Prize for the best script went to David

Pearson of the Bunny Langridge players for their French farce, *A Fish in Her Kettle*.

Meanwhile Coarse Acting had penetrated the Edinburgh Festival. In 1977 I organised a company based on the Bunny Langridge Players, and we put on their two winning plays plus two more by myself as *The Coarse Acting Show*. We played to packed houses and rave notices and repeated the process two years later with *Coarse Acting Two*. This transferred to the Shaftesbury Theatre, London, for a three-month run under the auspices of Brian Rix who collected four of the most successful Fringe shows to run in repertory under the title *Lunatic Fringe*. Prince Charles came to see it and told the cast afterwards that it was the funniest thing since Edna Everidge. There's a photo in The Grapevine of him being presented with a Coarse Acting badge by Kath Harrington.

A few years later, in 1985, came the Third Coarse Acting Show, the only one of the three to have its opening as a full-scale Questors' production and this incorporated the two winning plays from the 1980 competition. Prince Charles came to Ealing to see the show. And so we come to the Fourth World contest (only competitions at The Questors count for the world title). Who will be the world champions and receive the magnificent trophy? We have lots of talent on display and a famous adjudicator. Should be fun. It usually is.

MIKE GREEN