

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

In the Studio

Dracula by Liz Lochhead

A powerful, modern adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel using movement, song and imagination to create Transylvania, Whitby and Bedlam.

4 - 11 February at 7.45pm

In the Playhouse

Mirandolina by Carlo Goldoni translated by Ranjit Bolt

Goldoni's sparkling comedy in which a spirited and independent woman teaches an arrogant, misogynistic man a lesson he'll never forget!

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

In the Studio

A Student Production **Marriage and Gamblers** by Nikolai Gogol translated by John Horwood

Two hilarious classic comedies from Russia's greatest comic writer. Fast and furious, both plays depict Nikolai Gogol's personal view of hell — the accumulation and loss of wealth and a headlong rush into matrimony.

1 - 4, 7 - 11 March at 7.45pm; 5 March at 2.30pm

In the Playhouse

Les Liaisons Dangereuses by Christopher Hampton

Christopher Hampton's brilliant adaptation is mercilessly witty. The dialogue is spare, sparkling and exquisitely funny, as Valmont the charming seducer, urged on by his ex-mistress the Marquise, wreaks havoc on vulnerable female hearts.

11, 13 - 18 March at 7.45pm; 12 March at 2.30pm

Sponsored by  **Merchant & Co.**
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THE HOMECOMING

Harold Pinter's play was first performed by The Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre on 3rd June 1965. It was directed by Peter Hall and the company included Paul Rogers (Max), Ian Holm (Lenny), John Normington (Sam), Terence Rigby (Joey), Michael Bryant (Teddy) and Vivien Merchant (Ruth).

It then opened on Broadway at the Music Box Theatre on 45th Street on 5 January 1967. The production won Tony Awards for Best Play, Best Actor in a Dramatic Play (Paul Rogers), Best Supporting Actor (Ian Holm) and Best Director of a Dramatic Play, and nominations for Best Actress and Best Designer. Peter Hall filmed the production for the American Film Theatre in 1973.

It was again directed by Sir Peter Hall for his own company in 1990. The cast this time included Warren Mitchell (Max), Nicholas Woodesan (Lenny), John Normington (Sam), Douglas McFerran (Joey), Greg Hicks (Teddy) and Cherie Lunghi (Ruth). John Kearns, who plays Max in our Questors production, was understudy for Warren Mitchell.

On its first production in London the play received a mixed reaction from the critics but by the time of its 1990 production theatrical taste was more attuned to Pinter's writing and the play received universal acclaim and is now widely recognised as Pinter's masterpiece.

Sir Peter Hall had never any doubts, "It seemed to me such a complete play on first reading", he said in an interview with Irving Wardle, for the book *A Casebook on Harold Pinter's The Homecoming* published in 1971. "I thought from the first that this play looks unblinkingly at life in the human jungle. It's not a pleasant play. It's not a play which is comfortable. It's abrasive and uncomfortable. There is something deeply animalistic about the people's reactions to each other and the way they treat each other. A jungle."

Pinter wrote the play for the Aldwych — his stage directions indicate "a large room". Hall recognised from the start the importance of the staging. The designer for both his productions was John Bury. "So I worked out before we started a set which was simple, antiseptic, grey, and dead. Pinter said to me, 'I think, properly speaking, that this is a large play which needs a large room and it will go on a large stage'. His stage directions are minimal — I think any good playwright's are. If you can't pick up what it's like and where it is and what the tone of the thing is from actually reading the text, then no amount of anxious descriptive passages are going to help you."

Sir Peter Hall goes on: "the design in Pinter's theatre is absolutely crucial. His ambiguity in technical terms is that he makes silence 'speak' by defining that silence by the noise around it. He equally makes movements and actions unbearably meaningful by the stillness on either side of them. A Pinter set therefore has to be stripped to its absolute essentials so that a movement means the thing it ought to mean. You can't elaborate Pinter's staging or indeed the way the actors perform Pinter. I think all of his work relates to a confined space where people confront each other in what are often very ugly terms. They establish their territorial rights. In *The Homecoming*, there's a patriarchal boss figure who is now aging — and everyone is trying to castrate the boss in one way or another."

"What did impress me about the play", said Sir Peter, "was its ugly brutality. The writing is as meticulous and formed as ever. But underneath the writing, there is a pressure of emotion and an ugliness of motive which I think is a new note in Pinter's work. In this play, there seemed to be something unleashed which gave the work — and I choose my words carefully — brutal and epic proportions. I think this is

the biggest play he has written. It has the largest size; it is the most painful, and deals with the rawest emotions. Although, of course, he continues to express these emotions for a lot of the time in terms of ambiguity and irony."

Hall found *The Homecoming* a complex play whose complexity grew greater as rehearsals progressed. But it is not the director's job to solve the play's ambiguities. "It is his job to present the contradictions clearly. Also, I think worthwhile theatre always deals in ambiguity. The only kind of theatre that's really interesting is something which is, in the proper sense of the term, poetic. It is produced by the clash of opposites and reverberates beyond its literal meaning."

Director of our current production, Tony Worth, adds: whilst striving to retain the spirit and style of Pinter's requirements, this 1995 Questors' production has been compelled to divert its route a little due to the category of staging we have chosen. Peter Hall's comments about the original productions were, of course, related to traditional proscenium arch presentations. This Questors' production is on our familiar thrust stage which permits the audience to sit surrounding the acting area on three sides. I consider this to be preferable to the conventional frontal (only) viewing as I feel it allows more immediate and intimate participation in events. It is as though we are able to look through the walls of the house with X-Ray eyes and 'eavesdrop' on the internal happenings and become more deeply involved with the developments therein.

Like most things in life however, this type of staging is 'two-edged' in that it enhances the benefits of witnessing three-dimensional characters going about their lives but, by necessity, also dictates that we must on occasions have to look at their backs and not see their faces. I do not consider this to be necessarily a disadvantage, as I feel it encourages near-total identification of the characters by the actors: they *have* to 'be' — two dimensional portrayals are eliminated via necessity — and the audience can often relate to the body-actions of a back just as accurately as by looking at the back's face

The end-result however is what really matters, and we sincerely hope that you will have found reward and theatrical enjoyment from our production, and considered our staging of the play to be a justifiable and enlightening experience.

Your comments on the forgoing would be most welcome. Did you like the staging? Did you think that ambitions were realised? Or would you have preferred a conventional presentation? Do let us know.



THE HOMECOMING

by Harold Pinter

First performance of this production Saturday, 21st January 1995

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Max **JOHN KEARNS**
Lenny **ROBERT STAINES**
Sam **ALLAN MORTON**
Joey **RUPERT ESCH**
Teddy **GUY ROSE**
Ruth **SUE REOCH**

The action of the play takes place within the living-room of a large old house in North London.

ACT I

Scene 1 — A late summer's evening in 1965

Scene 2 — Later that night

Scene 3 — The following morning

INTERVAL

ACT II

Scene 1 — The following afternoon

Scene 2 — A short while later that afternoon

Scene 3 — The following evening

PRODUCTION

Director **TONY WORTH**
Assistant Director **FRANCESCA LAWRENCE**
Designer **JOHN ROLFE**
Lighting Designer **NICK PITT**
Sound **NIGEL WORSLEY**
Stage Manager **NARGES AGHABOZORG**
Deputy Stage Manager **SIMON MARKS**
Assistant Stage Managers **VEZNA BARIC**
TONY WILLIAMS
Wardrobe **CHLOE FAINE**
CLAIRE GOTT
Construction **TONY WILLIAMS**
JIM CRADDOCK
Make-up **JOANNA HOOPER**

Thanks to **JIM CAITHNESS, KRIS COLLIER,**
JULIE CRUTTENDEN, JENNY RICHARDSON,
SYLVIA WALL, 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

31 December 1994 - 29 January 1995

SARAH GODSILL

The work has always taken the form of visual diaries and paintings with a narrative. Sarah now lives and works in Dumfries and Galloway, away from the more familiar urban environment, and the figure which up until recently had predominated has all but disappeared, giving way to the series of motorcycle and landscape drawings.

ART EXHIBITION IN THE GRAPEVINE GALLERY

21 January - 5 February 1995

Maedhbhina McCombe completed her BA in Fine Art in Belfast, 1993. She has practised as a photographer in Glasgow until starting the MA in Photography at the University of Westminster in October 1994.

Her work involves various techniques of photography.

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HARLEY WHITE



Harley White Group, Sinclair House, The Avenue, Ealing W13 8NT

0181-998 4942

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
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
Nigel Lawrence
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.