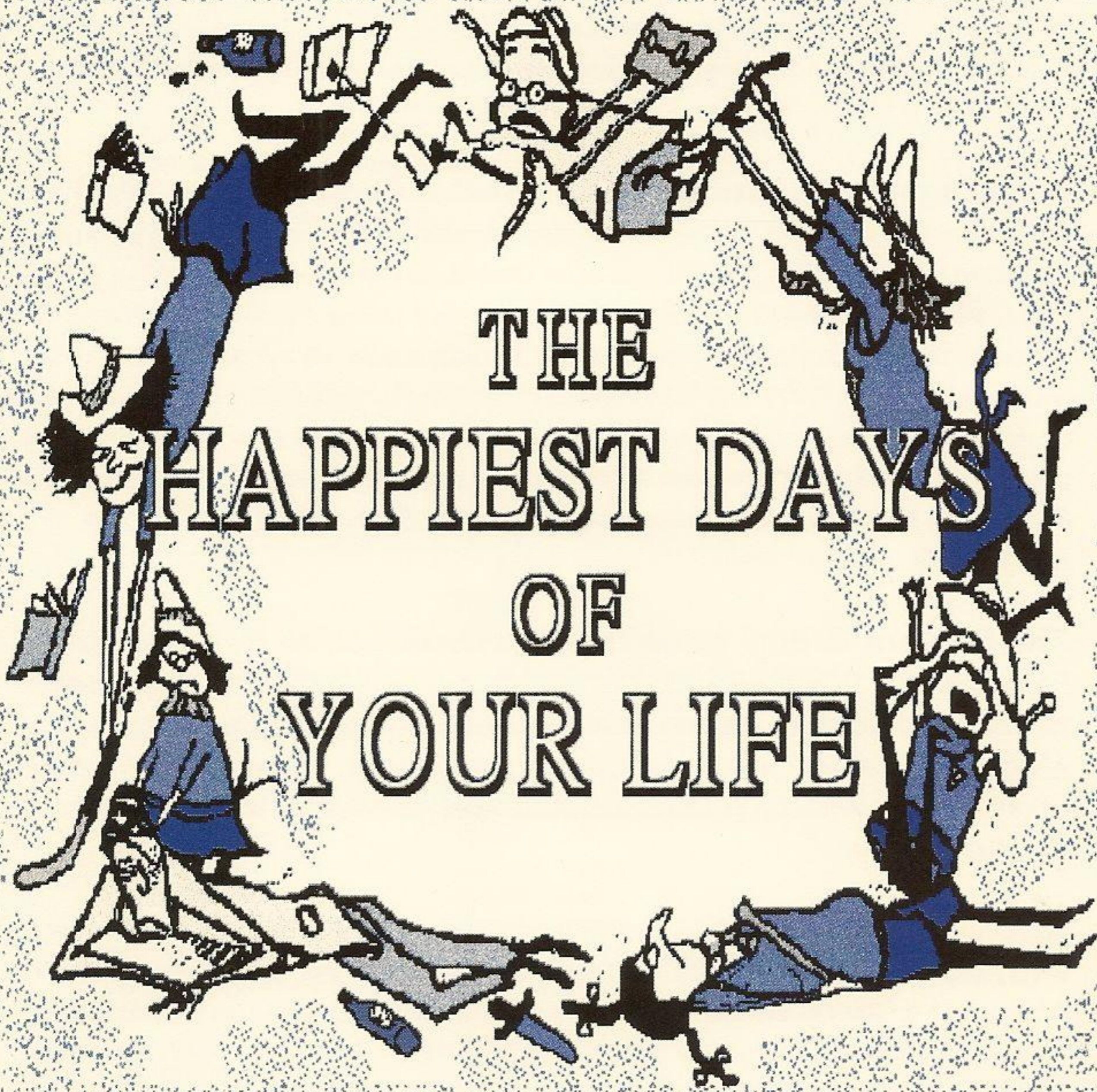


The Questors 53rd Student Group Presents



THE  
HAPPIEST DAYS  
OF  
YOUR LIFE

by  
**John Dighton**



**The Happiest Days of Your Life**

# PROGRAMME NOTES

**The Happiest Days of your Life** was first performed at the Apollo Theatre, London, on the 29th March 1948. It starred Margaret Rutherford in a role specifically written for her and produced splendid notices - "The palm goes to Margaret Rutherford as a headmistress before whom an atomic bomb might quail". The film adaptation in 1950 starred Alistair Sim as Pond, Margaret Rutherford as Miss Whitchurch and in one of her best remembered roles Joyce Grenfell as Miss Gossage. It was directed and co-written by Frank Lauder who later produced the St. Trinian's films.

**John Dighton** was born in 1909 and worked as a screenwriter from 1932. Early projects included writing for the British comedy stars Will Hay and George Formby. He joined Ealing Studios in 1939 and collaborated on the screenplays of *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) and *The Man in the White Suit* (1951) for which he shared an academy award nomination. His other film credits include *Went the Day Well* (1942), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1947) and the American financed *Roman Holiday* (1953) for which he earned a second Academy Award nomination. He successfully adapted two of his popular stage plays to the screen *The Happiest Days of Your Life* and *The Passionate Sentry*. His final screen credit was his adaptation of Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*. He died in 1989.

**The Student Group** are the Questors members who are finishing the Acting: Foundation and Performance Course which is run by The Questors in association with Kingston College. We hope that those who are appearing in this production will go on to become acting members of The Questors. About one-third of the actors you see regularly in Questors productions first started at The Questors in the Student Group.

The course is part time, but is very intensive and runs for two years. For that period a very high level of commitment and work is required. There are weekly classes in Acting (two a week in the second year), Speech and Movement, as well as a large number of additional rehearsals and preparation work. Those who finish the course find that they have thought of very little else for the last two years! Nevertheless most students find it one of the most exhilarating things they have ever done. The course has a very high reputation in the outside world of theatre training and is recommended by many of the top drama schools, who increasingly find that The Questors supplies them with a significant percentage of their intake. Anyone wishing to apply for next year's course should pick up a leaflet in the Foyer or ring 8567 0011 for a prospectus and application form. If you would like to see the work of the First Year Students, why not come to the Students Look-In on July 12th or 13th?

## The Questors 53rd Student Group presents **The Happiest Days of Your Life**

by John Dighton

*First performance of this production 1st July 2000  
Running time - Approximately 2 hours Including the interval.*

### Cast (in the order of their appearance)

DICK TASSELL <i>Assistant Master at Hilary Hall</i>	Mathew Lyon
RAINBOW <i>School Porter and Groundsman</i>	Ravi Patel
RUPERT BILLINGS <i>Senior Assistant Master at Hilary Hall</i>	Andrew MacGuinness
GODFREY POND <i>Headmaster of Hilary Hall</i>	Neil Holmes
MISS EVELYN WHITCHURCH <i>Principal of St. Swithins School for Girls</i>	Gillian Jacyna
MISS GOSSAGE <i>Senior Assistant Mistress at St. Swithins</i>	Eileen Cahill
HOPCROFT MI. <i>Pupil at Hilary Hall</i>	Michael Smith*
BARBARA CAHOUN <i>Pupil at St. Swithins</i>	Natasha Yogaratnam
JOYCE HARPER <i>Assistant Mistress at St. Swithins</i>	Carys Stout
THE REVEREND EDWARD PECK	Craig Norman
MRS PECK <i>his wife</i>	Alice Renaud
EDNA SOWTER	Karen Munro
HENRY SOWTER <i>her husband</i>	Stephen Rae*

### SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

*The action of the play passes in the Masters' Common Room at Hilary Hall School for Boys, in Hampshire. The year is 1945*

#### ACT I

*The first day of the summer term. Afternoon*

#### ACT II

*Saturday Afternoon. Three weeks later*

#### Act III

*Two hours later*

*There will be a fifteen minute interval between Acts II and III*

\* Michael Smith and Stephen Rae are graduates of the Student Group and acting members of The Questors Theatre.

### Production

Director	John Horwood
Assistant Director	Freddy Henry
Set Designer	John Wibberley
Lighting Designer	Charlie Lucas
Sound Designer	Richard Bridgen, Nigel Worsley
Stage Managers	Richard Murphy, Claire Whiteley
Deputy Stage Manager	Katy Cousins
Assistant Stage Managers	Elke Blankenstein, Peter Herrity, Davina Quinlivan
Costumes	Ruth Jackson, Paula Lear, Amanda Rijlaarsdam
Lighting Operator	Joel Shrire
Sound Operator	Paul Wilson
Construction	John Horwood, John Wibberley
Hair and Make-up	Tara Candia, Julia Krainakova, Danielle Winfield of Greasepaint
Movement Tutor	John Wilson
Speech Tutor	Leith McPherson
Poster courtesy of	Ronald Searle

The Questors Student Group is run in association with Kingston College

*With thanks to:*

Elizabeth Bisinotto, Anthony Bridges, Damien Lazell, Brin Parsonage and Harriet Simon



# The Happiest Days of Your Life

# FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

## **2000/2001 SEASON**

16th September - 23rd September

### **THE HERBAL BED** *by Peter Whelan*

#### **IN THE PLAYHOUSE**

Our new season opens with a play by Questors member, Peter Whelan. *The Herbal Bed* is a very absorbing play based on the true story of a 1613 scandal in Stratford-upon-Avon involving Shakespeare's eldest daughter Susanna Hall. Premiered to great acclaim by the RSC in 1996 it is a play about relative truth and absolute truth, morality and compromise in which three people's lives are exposed to the intense glare of public scrutiny. A moving exploration of "love's alchemy", wise and funny, generous of spirit, it is very much a play for our time

23rd September - 7th October

### **MY NIGHT WITH REG** *by Kevin Elyot*

#### **IN THE STUDIO - Free to Members**

This outrageous comedy about five 30-something men opened to rave reviews at the Royal Court Theatre in 1994 and then went on to win both the Evening Standard & Laurence Olivier Awards for Best Comedy, as well as awards from the Writer's Guild & Critic's Circle.

"a play of genius...sublimely moving, genuinely funny and exquisitely observed" ...*Jack Tinker-Daily Mail*  
"Laughter with a killer punchline" ...*The Times*

"Kevin Elyot's sharply witty and humanely wise drama about gay manners and morals in the age of AIDS...The best new play I've seen since I started reviewing" ...*Paul Taylor - Independent*

## **NEXT SEASON'S LINE UP WILL ALSO INCLUDE:**

**WOMAN IN MIND (December Bee)** *by Alan Ayckbourn*, **TRAINSPOTTING** *by Irvine Welsh*, **TONGUES OF FIRE** *by David Fletcher*, **A LITTLE HOTEL ON THE SIDE** *by Feydeau and adapted by John Mortimer*, **CLOSE-UP** *by our very own Tony Rushforth*, and of course our special Christmas show **THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS** *for which we are already taking bookings.*

9th December 2000 - 6th January 2001

### *Kenneth Grahame's* **THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS**

*Adapted for the stage by Alan Bennett with additional lyrics & music by Jeremy Sams*

#### **IN THE PLAYHOUSE**

Hang spring cleaning! Go boating with Mole and Ratty. Thrill to Toad's passion for fast travel. Follow Mr Badger down secret passages. Join the River Bankers in beating the living daylights out of the Wild Wooders in the battle for Toad Hall! Book early for the best seats in town this Christmas as the Questors is magically transformed into the setting for Alan Bennett's sparkling adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's enduring classic.

**The Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, London W5 5BQ**

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