

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

is based in West London where it has its own premises including a modern, flexible Playhouse, a Studio theatre, three rehearsal rooms, a workshop, an extensive wardrobe department and, of course, the Grapevine Bar, which is the hub of the theatre.

It has nearly 3,000 members, all of whom get involved in one way or another, either in the 20 plus productions that are staged each year, in the day to day running of the theatre, or as members of the audience.

As well as presenting a wide variety of plays, the Questors runs a two-year course for actors, plays host to visiting companies from home and abroad, mounts regular art exhibitions, runs workshops and clubs for young people and tours productions in this country and abroad.

In short, there is something for everyone at The Questors.

The Questors Theatre

Mattock Lane
Ealing, W5 5BQ

Box Office: 020 8567 5184

Admin: 020 8567 0011

Fax: 020 8567 8736

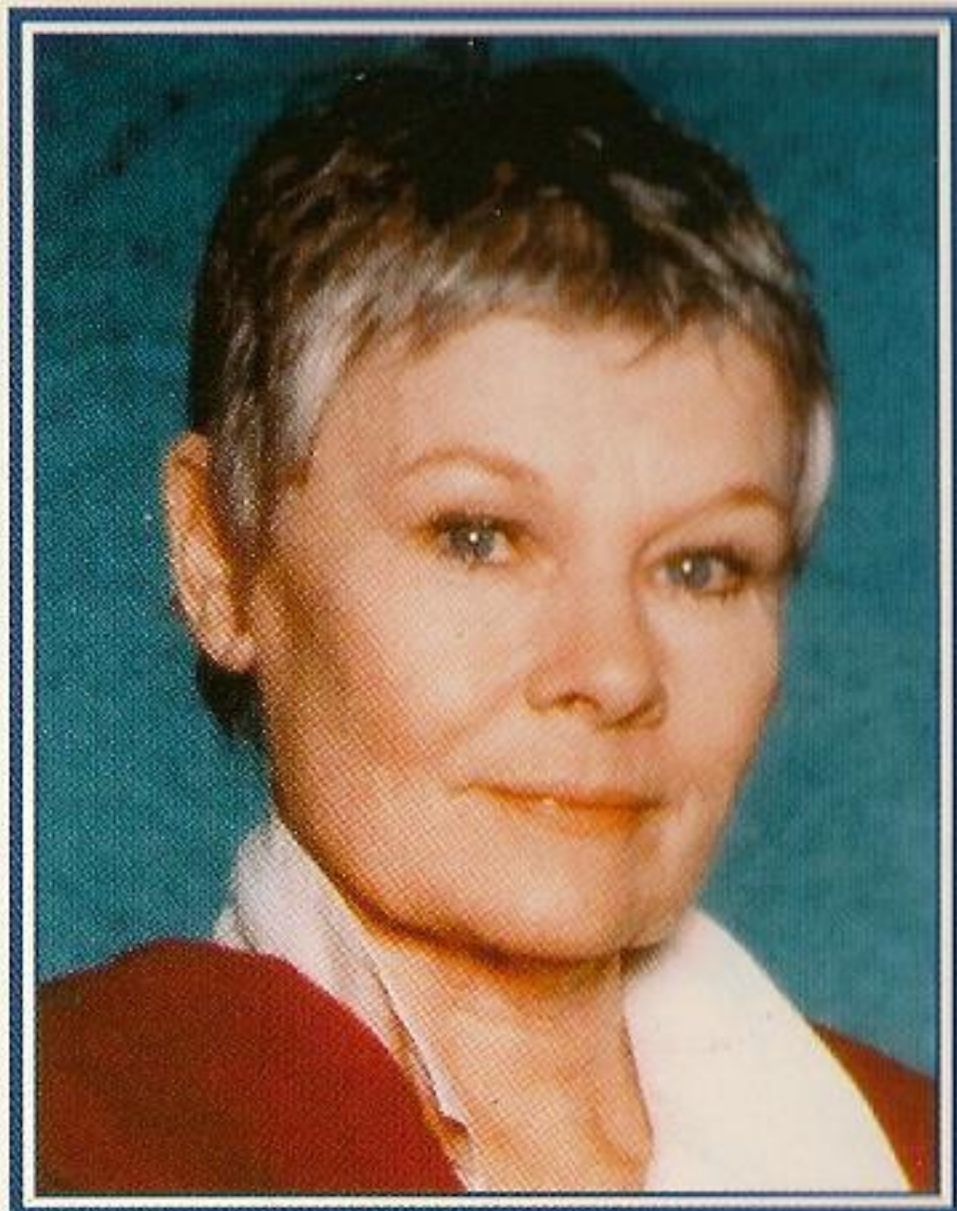
Email: enquiries@questors.org.uk

Website: www.questors.org.uk



The Beauty Queen of Leenane

THE QUESTORS THEATRE



Enquiries: 020 8567 0011
 Box Office: 020 8567 5184
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Welcome to The Questors Theatre, one of London's best kept secrets - except to its 3,000 members. How do I know about the Questors? I am proud to have been their President for over 16 years. Founded in 1929, it has since grown into the largest community theatre in Europe with a reputation for the highest standards, not only in acting but in direction and design as well. Luckily, with so many members, we have a wealth of talent to call on for all aspects of production and members are encouraged to be as actively involved as they would like. Alternatively, they simply enjoy the social side of the club, including the friendly Grapevine Bar (one of the many perks of membership) and the many and varied shows in our newly refurbished 350 seater Playhouse Theatre and more intimate Studio Theatre.

The Questors runs a professionally recognised two-year acting course in conjunction with Kingston College. There are also acting courses for beginners, free backstage training courses, visiting companies from home and abroad, regular art exhibitions, and workshops and clubs for young people. In short, there is something for everyone and with annual membership costing as little as £23.50 (including up to 10 free shows) it's great value for money as well.

But don't just take my word for it, the next time you're in West London call into The Grapevine Bar on any Wednesday evening at 8pm for a free tour of the theatre and a drink on us!

Worth looking into?

Definitely!

Dame Judi Dench
 President of The Questors Theatre



This production is supported by the family and friends of Kath Harrington to celebrate her 90th birthday.



The Beauty Queen of Leenane

by Martin McDonagh

Martin McDonagh

Martin McDonagh isn't even sure he likes theatre. Most days he'd rather go to the cinema or watch TV. Not surprisingly, you might say. The funny thing is McDonagh is the UK's most successful playwright. By the age of 27, he had four plays running simultaneously in the West End. In 1999 he was the most frequently performed playwright (after Shakespeare) in North America. His plays have been sold to 39 countries in 29 languages. Now 31, he is the stuff of theatre legend. Born to a working-class Irish family in south London, he left school at 16 and spent 5 years signing on, writing radio scripts and working, briefly, for the civil service. Then, in 1996, McDonagh's first play, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (written in eight days) was staged as a Druid Theatre/Royal Court co-production. It went on to win the 1996 George Devine Award, The Critics Circle Award and The Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Newcomer. When it transferred to Broadway, it bagged four Tony Awards.

These days we're facing an explosion of Irish theatre - from McDonagh's contemporary, Conor McPherson, to newer names like Marina Carr and Gary Mitchell. But McDonagh is something of a lone voice. For a start he is a big fan of traditional storytelling and his subject-matter is rural Ireland (his parents come from Galway and he spent every holiday there as a child). Little wonder that critics have hailed him as the modern successor to JM Synge and Sean O'Casey. In fact, six years before Marie Jones's play *Stones in His Pockets*, became a smash hit, McDonagh was examining the impact of a Hollywood film on a rural Irish community in *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Not that McDonagh's treatment of rural life is especially reverential, you understand. His plays combine manic energy and physical violence in a way that is both hilarious and viscerally shocking - from a scene in *A Skull in Connemara* where gravediggers smash up skeletons to the sound of Dana's "All Kinds of Everything", to the bloody denouement of his latest play *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, where the interior of an Irish peat cottage resembles an outtake from Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*.

If his plays were simply noteworthy for their violence, it would be pretty tedious. But McDonagh's scripts are hugely literate and very funny. In between belly laughs, McDonagh weaves in topics such as male loneliness, disability and failed romance. He understands that everyday life is full of acts of casual cruelty - from bullying to sibling rivalry. And he writes brilliantly complex parts for women. McDonagh is that original thing - a modern punk playwright. He'd only seen nine plays when he wrote *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (although tellingly he was in the front row of *American Buffalo* at the age of 15 when Al Pacino made his West End debut). "Not knowing the limitations of the form helps you break them," he insists. Instead of dramatists, McDonagh says his greatest influences are film-makers (Scorsese, Lynch, Malick, Tarantino) and musicians (Nirvana, The Sex Pistols, The Pogues). In fact, he rounded up four of the Pogues to record the incidental music for his latest play. "They were the first people who helped define what you could be as a second-generation Irish person in this country," he enthuses.

McDonagh is the perfect playwright for People Who Dread Theatre. Much of the popular culture reflected through his plays comes from film and TV. Characters are always watching reruns of Australian soaps, moaning about the crapness of Irish biscuits or trying to drown out Republican protest songs with blasts of Motorhead.

McDonagh may be young, but he's never been an ageist writer. His characters range from teens and twentysomethings to that stock figure of Irish literature, the 90-year-old pipe-smoking, potcheen-swiggling Mammy. In *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, a mother and her middle-aged daughter are trapped in a loveless - and subsequently violent - relationship. Watching the 1996 production at the Royal Court felt like a breakthrough. For once, two disappointed older women took centre stage. In the play we discover that the daughter Maureen experienced racist bullying while working in London as a cleaner. (Backward Paddy...Go back to that fecking pigsty.") According to McDonagh, "Some of those aspects came from stories my mum told me - she worked in similar jobs when she first came over from Ireland. And, like the play, she had to have a black woman explain what those abusive words meant."

These days, we're led to believe that Ireland is an affluent, modern country, buoyant on EU money. When so many recent Irish books and films are being set among the trendy bars and hotels of Dublin, why does McDonagh remain fixated on rural matters? "The Ireland I know is more the West," he explains. "I've never been madly keen on Dublin, and whatever you think about the whole Celtic Tiger thing, my natural instinct would be to see the underside of all that - the people who fall through the cracks. None of my plays are especially accurate pictures of the other side either - they're all just stories - but I think it's more interesting to start from a darker place and see where that goes."

Liz Hoggard - *The Independent*
15.6.02

Connemara

We don't see much of the outside world in McDonagh's trilogy (*The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *A Skull in Connemara* and *The Lonesome West*) - a cemetery by night and a favourite lakeside spot are the only excursions allowed from his comfortless kitchens. In the first play we hear: 'All you have to do is look out of your window to see Ireland. And it's soon bored you'd be. "there goes a calf"'. Is the Connemara out there a fit setting for these desperate comedies? If so, it is not the Connemara of cloud-shadow connoisseurs.

When, towards the end of the last century, agrarian terrorism forced the British government to undertake the development of the West, one result was that the

landlords were bought out, the companionable clusters of old hovels broken up, and the former tenants installed in isolation, each family in its own cottage on its own stripe of land. Was this one of the traumas, along with the dying back of the Irish language and the sealing up of the oral tradition, that has made rural life an insult to its setting in nature and the past? A walk in today's pastoral landscape is a succession of affronts to one's sense of belonging in the world. Stroll up the boreen: you may remember it as charming from ten years ago, but you will find that the flowery hedgerows have been ripped out in favour of barbed wire, and that the old cottage is roofless, replaced by a gaunt bungalow facing a huge shed of breezeblock and galvanised sheeting. In the slovenly yard is a silent dog condemned to life on the end of a chain. Cross a hillside black from the burning-off of furze, all its lark's nests, lizards and butterflies incinerated; skirt round the dead sheep caught in briars by its mangy tangles of wool; stride out in relief across the open mountainside. But the heathery slope has been turned into an irreparable morass by overgrazing, the ruthless grant-driven multiplication of undernourished ewes too weak to feed their lambs. If you meet the shepherd of this desert of suffering, he will tell you he must be compensated before he considers reducing his flock so as not to leave his own children a barren inheritance. There is more, much more. The news from Connemara's waters is equally squalid: brown-trout lakes contaminated by sewage, slurry and fertilizers, the salmons' spawning beds overwhelmed by peat washed down from the eroding mountain, seatrout with their fins eaten away by lice from the concentration of fishfarms in the bays...

No need, I hope, for me to say that this is not the only Connemara - I have written at length about beautiful and hopeful Connemaras but there is no doubt that this Connemara exists, this calamitous backdrop to the society McDonagh shows us, fled by its young, with its brutalised law and its old church gone in the teeth. The machine of his theatre forces us to laugh even as we pity and shudder at all this, and the rare beauty of Connemara is one of his grim implicit jokes. One of McDonagh's characters holds that 'the crux of the matter' is 'English stealing our language and our land and our god-knows-what?'

Tim Robinson - Connemara, a one inch map

Martin McDonagh

The Beauty Queen of Leenane (1996)
 The Cripple of Inishmaan (1996)
 A Skull in Connemara (1997)
 The Lonesome West (1997)
 The Lieutenant of Inishmore (2001)

Druid Theatre/Royal Court
 National Theatre
 Royal Court
 Royal Court
 Royal Shakespeare Company

The Beauty Queen of Leenane

by Martin McDonagh

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre
 9th November 2002

CAST

MAG FOLAN	Ffrangcon Whelan
MAUREEN FOLAN	Wendy Megeney
RAY DOOLEY	Tom Begley
PATO DOOLEY	Kevin Boland

The play is set in Mag Folan's cottage in Leenane, Connemara, County Galway.

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours including one interval of 15 minutes.

PRODUCTION

Director	Tony Rushforth
Set Designer	Alex Marker
Lighting and Sound Designer	Alan N. Smith
Costume	Sarah Galton
Stage Manager	Adrienne Talbot
Deputy Stage Manager	Jennifer Reid
Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Construction Team	Richard Williams, Wanda Duszynska, Sally Milton
Assistant Stage Managers	Mark Ayres, Deborah Carey, Ali Carroll, Leanne Coates, Deborah Jones, Sandra Singer
Lighting Operators	Philippa Forster, Sally Milton
Sound Operator	Sue Crowson
Dialect Coach	Tony Hill
Rain Effect	Christopher Tomlins, Karen Tollady
Prompters	Dorothy Wood, Bridgett Strevens
Set Dressing	Jenny Richardson
Make-up	Demelza Duell, Daniela Lai

With thanks to:

Don Kincaid, Eric Lister, Anne Neville, Kate Morton, Pat Menzies, Roger Brace,
 Mary Rushforth, Colin Horne, Lakin Mors, Mike Hagan, David Fairhurst,
 Rebecca Vincent, Chris Ifould, Alex Houston, Ann Beckenham,
 SuperVision TV, 42 Northfield Avenue, W13,
 and to Anthony Curran as the Radio Announcer

COMING SOON

MOLLY SWEENEY by Brian Friel

In **The Studio**, 16th - 30th November

A fascinating and lyrical play by the writer of the hugely successful 'Translations'. Blind since infancy, Molly Sweeney lives a richly satisfying life in darkness until her impulsive husband Frank convinces her to seek medical treatment to get her sight restored. But is the world of light reward enough for giving up the world she has created for herself? Suffused with the rich tradition of Irish story-telling, this drama weaves three voices into a tapestry of the real and the imagined.

In the new year...

STEEL MAGNOLIAS by Robert Harling

In **The Studio**, 18th January - 1st February

First produced in New York in 1987, Steel Magnolias ran successfully at London's Lyric Theatre in 1989. Hilarious and touching, this play for six women is set in a beauty parlour somewhere in Louisiana. Through four scenes spanning three years, Clairee, Ouiser, M'Lynn and Shelby - Truvy's regular customers - and Annelle, her eager but inexperienced assistant, engage in small-town gossip, running the gamut of the birth/marriage/death cycle. The play moves towards tragedy when Shelby - a diabetic - dies following a kidney-transplant operation, and the deep strength and purposefulness underlying the antic banter of the characters is ultimately revealed.

DESIGN FOR LIVING by Noel Coward

In **The Playhouse**, 8th - 15th February

Design for Living follows the fortunes of Gilda, Otto and Leo, a trio of decadent 30-something artists who travel from Paris to London to New York as their fame increases.

The complex and revolving relationships between the three conclude themselves in a highly provocative manner, flying in the face of convention and their public profile. The notion of a menage a trois, shocking in 1932 when the play was written, is still provocative today and Coward's play has much to tell us about celebrity status, sexual mores and the nature of fidelity.

In **The Studio**, 19th - 28th February

The Questors Youth Theatre presents a Double Bill of

Ernie's Incredible Illucinations by Alan Ayckbourn

Ernie is a boy with an incredible imagination - everything he imagines becomes real, much to the consternation of his parents. They take Ernie to the doctor's in search of a cure but things don't go exactly as planned. Secret agents, a boxing granny and mountaineering in the local library make this a hilarious story and fun for all ages.

and

The Chrysalids adapted by David Harrower from the novel by John Wyndham

Set in a post apocalyptic future, this play deals with issues of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. It tells the story of David, who lives in a world where those who consider themselves normal, the 'Norms' rule, and try to destroy anyone they see as different, the 'Mutants'. David is different, he is telepathic, but how can he hide this difference and avoid a terrible fate?

Tom's Midnight Garden

by David Wood, from the book by Philippa Pearce

This is the magical story of a boy who journeys across the boundaries of time to a fantastic garden in a bygone age. Tom Long discovers the garden when the old grandfather clock in the hallway of his aunt and uncle's dreary flat suddenly strikes thirteen one night. The discovery leads him to many adventures and also to some mysteries. What does the strange inscription on the clock mean? And who is the reclusive Mrs Bartholomew?

Find out the answers with Tom in this award winning, beautiful and intriguing play which will appeal to adults and children alike.

Particularly suitable for age 7 upwards.

PERFORMANCE DATES AND TIMES

DATE	TIME	DATE	TIME
Sat 7 th Dec	2.00pm & 6.00pm	Sat 21 st Dec	2.00pm & 6.00pm
Sun 8 th Dec	2.00pm & 6.00pm	Sun 22 nd Dec	2.00pm & 6.00pm
* Thur 12 th Dec - Questors Choir Carol Concert at 7.45pm - see below for special ticket offers! *		Fri 27 th Dec	2.00pm & 6.00pm
Fri 13 th Dec	7.45pm	Sat 28 th Dec	2.00pm & 6.00pm
Sat 14 th Dec	2.00pm & 6.00pm	Sun 29 th Dec	2.00pm
Sun 15 th Dec	2.00pm & 6.00pm	Tue 31 st Dec	7.45pm
Fri 20 th Dec	7.45pm	Thur 2 nd Jan	7.45pm
		Fri 3 rd Jan	7.45pm
		Sat 4 th Jan	2.30pm & 7.45pm

TICKET PRICES

Adults	£9.00
Children	£7.00

Save money
- family ticket only £29.00!
(2 adults and 2 children)

The Questors Choir - Carol Concert

This is an old Christmas favourite, so this year we are offering you the chance to save money by booking both shows at once. For every Tom's Midnight Garden ticket you book, you can buy a Carol Concert ticket for 50p less! Make your Christmas complete, and make it a Questors Christmas. Tickets £5.00 (Conc. £3.50).

The friendly Grapevine Bar will be open for all performances and mulled wine, mince pies and ice cream will be available in the foyer, and don't forget New Year's Eve - come along to the bar for a great atmosphere with music, dancing and much more.

DON'T MISS OUT - BOOK EARLY

Join us in the spring for a magnificent production of

The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby

Adapted from the book by Charles Dickens

In the Playhouse, 24th May - 7th June 2003

Also at the Questors...

Julian Light Operatic Society presents...

Iolanthe by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan

In the Playhouse - 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd November at 7.30pm - Tickets £10.00

Box Office: 020 8998 0639 (evenings only) or e.mail tickets@julianoperatic.org
Booking forms available in the foyers.

Ealing Shakespeare Players present...

Richard III by William Shakespeare

In the Studio - 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th December at 7.45pm (Saturday matinee 2.30pm)

Tickets £9.00 (concs. £7.00) £1.00 off if paid for in advance of the run.
Booking forms available in the foyers.

Literature Course

Spring 2003

Mansfield Park by Jane Austen

The subject for this term's Literature course is Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. This thought-provoking and highly entertaining work is sometimes seen as the most problematic of Jane's six completed novels on account of the character of its heroine. Fanny Price is certainly no Elizabeth Bennet but is she as insipid as some people find her? Come along, share in the lively discussion and see what you think!

As ever, classes take place on Tuesday mornings from 10.00 - noon. This term's course will begin on January 14th 2003 and end on March 25th with a week's break in February. Participants will need a copy on *Mansfield Park*. It helps if we all have the same edition - ideally, the **Penguin Popular Classics** copy, £1.25, but this isn't vital. Copies can be ordered from the Pitshanger Bookshop 0208 991 8131. Course fee is £40.00 for members, £50.00 for non-members. Everyone is welcome. Further information from Susan Hamlyn, 0208 567 3233.

ART EXHIBITIONS

20th October - 16th November

In the Upper Foyer - 'The Great Escape' by Janette Martin

A stunning collection of mosaics inspired by travels of both a geographical and metaphysical nature. The images on these journeys are fertile, open to the observer's interpretation. Each piece is about 65cm x 85cm and weighs approximately 10kg. There are around 4,000 hand cut pieces of glass tesserae. The base used is of superior grade ply. When the mosaic is completed, it is grouted then framed, and the back is varnished to high sheen.

9th November - 30th November

In the Grapevine Bar - a collection of portraits by Ellen Reiman Filby

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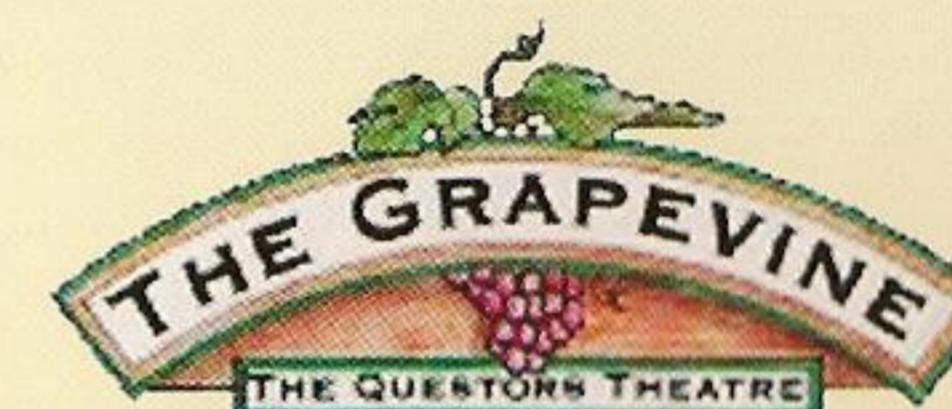
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Worldwide Flights

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UK Breaks

£25 off every booking
over £500 for
Questors Members



WORTH CROSSING EALING FOR!

For your interval or after show drinks visit the friendly and comfortable Grapevine Bar. It's open seven nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes. We pride ourselves on the quality of our cask ales, which usually include Fuller's London Pride, Fuller's Chiswick Bitter and a guest ale. We also provide a range of draft lagers and ciders as well as wines and spirits - all at very reasonable prices.

www.myfavouritepub.com/questors