

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

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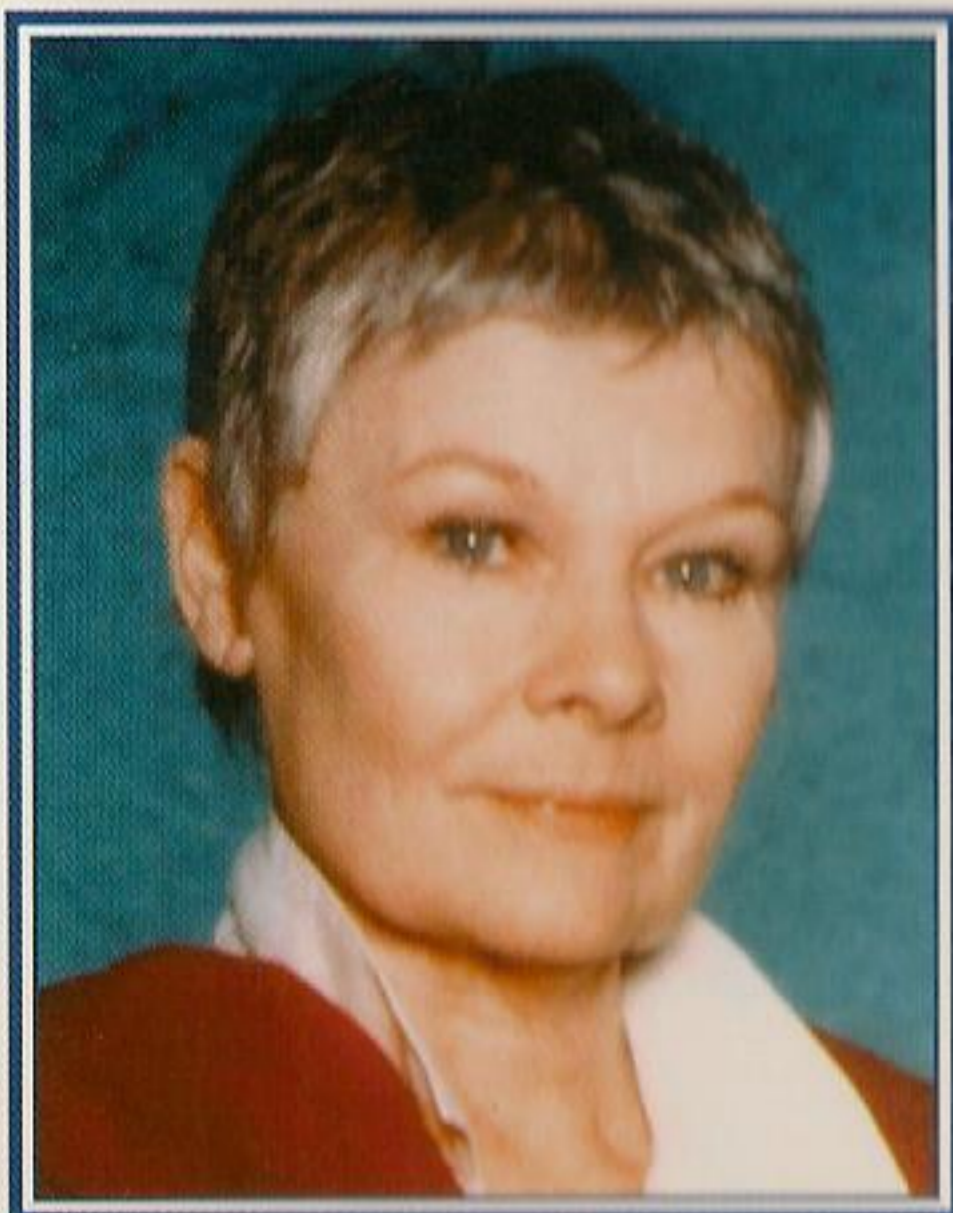
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The Madness of George III

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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



The Madness of George III

by Alan Bennett

Alan Bennett's versatility cannot be doubted. His last work to be seen at The Questors was *The Wind in the Willows*. *Beyond the Fringe*, his various film and television scripts and the ever popular *Talking Heads* put us in danger of categorising him as a populist writer. In *The Madness of George III* popular appeal is still evident, but here we see a darker side to his thinking. Bennett is a trained historian and practically every episode and reference in the play is rooted in historical fact. Yet he is still able to endow the text with the sharpness of his acute ear for comedy and satire.

The medical profession is attacked for its scientific naivety and, not least, greed. Then there are the politicians. Unlike today the position of Prime Minister was entirely in the King's gift, as was the political agenda. But the King was restrained by being forced to choose the man who was able to take the will of Parliament with him. The jockeying for position and power by such eminent names as Pitt, Fox and Sheridan is set within the desperate efforts of The Prince of Wales to gain the Regency.

Throughout the King's deterioration hints are offered as explanation of his condition; the loss of the Americas, sexual guilt, the death of his children. Perhaps another peculiarity of the age was the fact that George III was the first Hanoverian monarch who spoke English without a German accent. He was a family man and devoted father. He became fascinated by new scientific and technological developments, going so far as to sponsor, by way of patronage, many scientific instruments. Even more surprising was his habit of going to meet his subjects, discussing their problems and concerning himself with new techniques of animal husbandry. It was not for nothing that he became known as Farmer George.

Recent scholarship has proffered the theory that his condition was occasioned by an enzyme deficiency that leads to the inherited disease porphyria. King George's symptoms do seem to support this theory: skin ulcers, blue urine and a great deal of babbling. But, of course, George lived in an age when knowledge of this explanation was not available. Strange and erratic behaviour had no rational explanation, although the contemporary physicians certainly made enormous efforts to find a rationale.

BUT WAS HE REALLY MAD?

Insanity in great ones is an intriguing subject. To some extent there are parallels with King Lear in Alan Bennett's revealing and touchingly comic play. As the King's 'madness' deepens, he becomes increasingly susceptible to the machinations of those around him. The treatment he receives from his eminent physicians ranges from the ridiculous

and the bizarre to the downright tortuous. Absolute regal authority is subjected to supreme indignity. Bennett weaves these themes into a wonderful piece of dramatic writing, with a cast of curious and eccentric characters.

We know that he suffered four mysterious bouts of 'madness' during his reign. Two of them were brief, lasting only a month or so, but the first attack in 1788 lasted over 18 months and was so severe that Parliament considered appointing a regent to take over kingly duties. The final attack in 1810 merged into senile dementia.

The king was treated by seven royal doctors and a clergyman who ran a madhouse. They used traditional treatments such as bloodletting and blistering, and it is a miracle that the king survived at all. About this time he was also having trouble with his high-spirited eldest son, George, Prince of Wales. On 5 November, 1788, the King attacked the Prince of Wales and tried to smash his head against the wall. One observer claimed that foam was coming from the king's mouth and his eyes were so bloodshot that they looked like currant jelly. George was placed in a straight-jacket and eventually his doctors had a special iron chair made to restrain him. Other treatments included putting poultices of Spanish Fly and mustard all over the King's body; the idea was that the painful blisters which resulted would draw out the 'evil humours'. By April 1789, George's doctors came to the conclusion that he had recovered from his madness and he was allowed to carry on with his royal duties.

But by now he was a deeply unpopular king and there were several attempts to assassinate him. The nearest anyone came to killing him was on 15 May 1800, when a man fired two pistol shots at him while in the royal box of the Drury Lane Theatre. Although the bullets only just missed it was said that the king continued to watch the play and was so unconcerned by these events that he fell asleep during the interval.

Nowadays we recognise the King's symptoms - intense abdominal pains, rheumatism, intense agitation, insomnia, failing sight, and most rare and ominous, dark urine variously described as blue, red or wine-coloured - as those of porphyria, a disease that he may have inherited from his ancestor, Mary Queen of Scots.

George continued to suffer ill health and had further mental breakdowns in 1801 and 1804. In 1810 his insanity became permanent. George, Prince of Wales, was appointed regent, and carried out his father's official royal duties. George III died on 29 January 1820.

The Madness of George III

by Alan Bennett

First performance of this production 7 June 2002

CAST

GEORGE III	Robin Ingram
QUEEN CHARLOTTE	Joanna Procter
PRINCE OF WALES	Simon Roberts
DUKE OF YORK	Alex Janson
PITT	Richard Gallagher
DUNDAS	Vincent McQueen
THURLOW	Derek Chandler
FOX	Mike Dineen
SHERIDAN	Mark Redrup
FITZROY	Derek Stoddart
GREVILLE	Adam English
LADY PEMBROKE	Sarah Morrison
MARGARET NICHOLSON	Caroline Nagle
PAPANDIEK	Evan Rule
FORTNUM	Iain Stirling
BRAUN	David Palmer
Sir GEORGE BAKER	Derek Bullock
Dr. RICHARD WARREN	Steve Fitzpatrick
Sir LUCAS PEPYS	David Emmet
Dr. WILLIS	Jim O'Connor
Sir BOOTHBY SKRYMSHIR	Howard Benbrook
RAMSDEN SKRYMSHIR	David Bell
HEAVY 1	Ian Gilbert
HEAVY 2	Robbi Manners
HEAVY 3	Luke Ireland
FOOTMAN	Nigel Worsley
MAID	Antonia Schnauber

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Brian Ingram
Assistant Directors	Eldi Dundee, Bernice Wolfenden
Set Design	John Rolfe
Costume Design	Kirsty Packham
Sound Design	Colin Horne
Lighting Design	Chris Newall
Stage Manager	Katy Gallantry
Construction and Get In	John Rolfe, Tina Harris, Jenny Bunn, Jenny Rawlings, Jim Craddock, Chris Sydenham, Sylvia Wall, Jo Perse, Mike Hagan, Peter Collins, Barbara Marker, John Horwood, Colin Horne, Richard Williams, Jenny Richardson
Wardrobe Team	Ruth Jackson, Anne Gilmour, Maria Brusa, Claire Duberley, Marianne Micallef, Julia Cooke, Elizabeth Bisinotto, Zlata Camdzic
Deputy Stage Managers	Brin Parsonage, Tom Butler
Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Crew	Martin Choulds, Mark Burgess, Rachel Moorhead
Wigs and Make-up	Elizabeth Murphy, Kate Andrews, Lauren Fox, Kathy Bolter, Joanna Grover, Duanne Alexander
Lighting Operator	Sally Milton
Follow Spot Operator	Simon Wright
Sound Operator	Colin Horne
Rehearsal Prompts	Pam Smith, Bridgett Stevens
Thanks to:	Joy McQuad, Dave Sharpe, Ian Briggs, Jonathan Rose, Damien Lazell, Terry Mummery, Christopher Tomlins

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

PLAYHOUSE CREATURES by April De Angelis

In **The Studio**, 15th - 29th June

April De Angelis has taken the lives of five famous actresses, some of the first on the English stage, and created a funny, gutsy, bawdy comedy. It moves between their backstage and onstage lives as they deal with unpredictable lovers, fickle audiences, the pressures of performance and the painful gap between their private hopes and public disappointments. What are the roles that women play and who has the power to assign them?

THE 55th STUDENT GROUP presents

TIME AND THE CONWAYS by J.B. Priestley

In **The Playhouse**, 13th - 21st July

British journalist, novelist, playwright, and essayist. Priestley's output was vast and varied - he wrote over one hundred novels, plays, and essays, and is best known as the author of the novel *The Good Companions*. *Time and the Conways* is one of several of his works on the subject of time, others being *An Inspector Calls*, *I Have Been Here Before* and *Dangerous Corner*. It is a hugely entertaining and fascinating look at the way time affects a single family, the Conways, told through the device of moving back and forward in time.

And for next season:

SEPTEMBER

ABSENT FRIENDS by Alan Ayckbourn

A well-loved and polished comedy about the usual human messes discussed over tea and sympathy.

OCTOBER

HAMLET by William Shakespeare

NOVEMBER

THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE by Martin McDonagh

Set in a Galway town, this gutsy play portrays ancient, manipulative Mag and her virginal daughter, Maureen, whose mutual loathing may be more durable than any love.

MOLLY SWEENEY by Brian Friel

Suffused with the rich tradition of Irish story telling, this drama weaves three voices into a tapestry of the real and the imagined.

ART EXHIBITION

In the Foyer

8th June - 21st July

ERIC STANDING

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I/We wish to apply for membership of The Questors Theatre.

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Name(s)

Address

Tel. no.

e-mail

Date of Birth

Membership Type (*please tick one*)

- | | |
|---|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | £39.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint | £71.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concessionary
Senior Citizens, UB40s, Leisure Pass holders | £23.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Concessionary | £39.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Family
One adult and all children under 17 | £47.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Family
Two adults and all children under 17
<i>(please include names and dates of birth of all children for both types of family membership)</i> | £81.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student
All tickets at half price on production of NUS card - no free shows | £13.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate
For those outside a 25-mile radius of The Questors - no free shows | £15.00 |

Where did you hear about The Questors?.....

- I enclose a cheque/postal order payable to The Questors Ltd. for £.....
- I would like to pay by Credit Card - Mastercard / Visa.

Card No Expiry date /.....

Cardholder's Name

Address (*if different from above*)

Signed Date

NEW MEMBERS TICK SHEET

Many members join just to see the shows.

However, if you want to get more involved, please tick the areas you are interested in below. Remember that experience isn't always necessary.

- Acting**
You will need to take an audition to join the acting company.
Please fill in a form (available from the office).
- Directing**
You will need either a proven track record or hands-on theatre experience for this.
- Backstage**
Including stage management, construction, lighting, sound, props, and wardrobe.
- Design**
Set and/or costume design
- Front of House**
Including stewarding, box office, programme selling, Questors café.
- Publicity**
Leaflet distribution, open day etc.
- Photography**
Experience and own camera required.
- Grapevine Bar**
Bar staff.
- Envelope Stuffing**
Daytime - including general office help.
- Maintenance**
Any + every odd job.

Details of any relevant experience:

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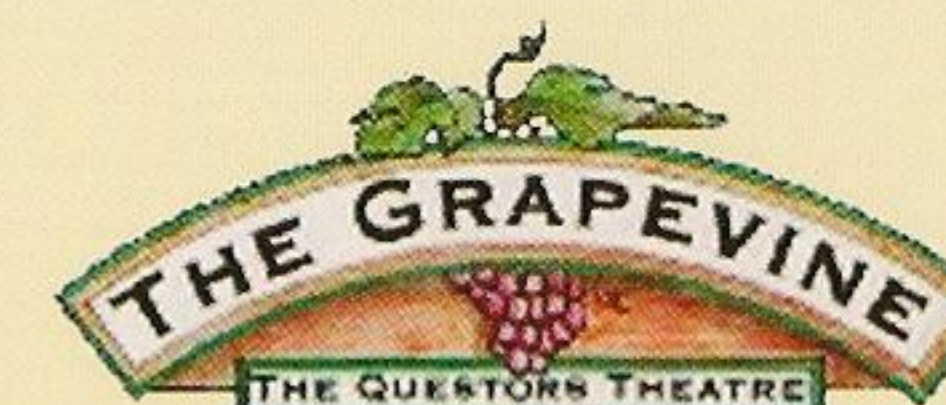
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£25 off every booking
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Questors Members



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