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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 17 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.

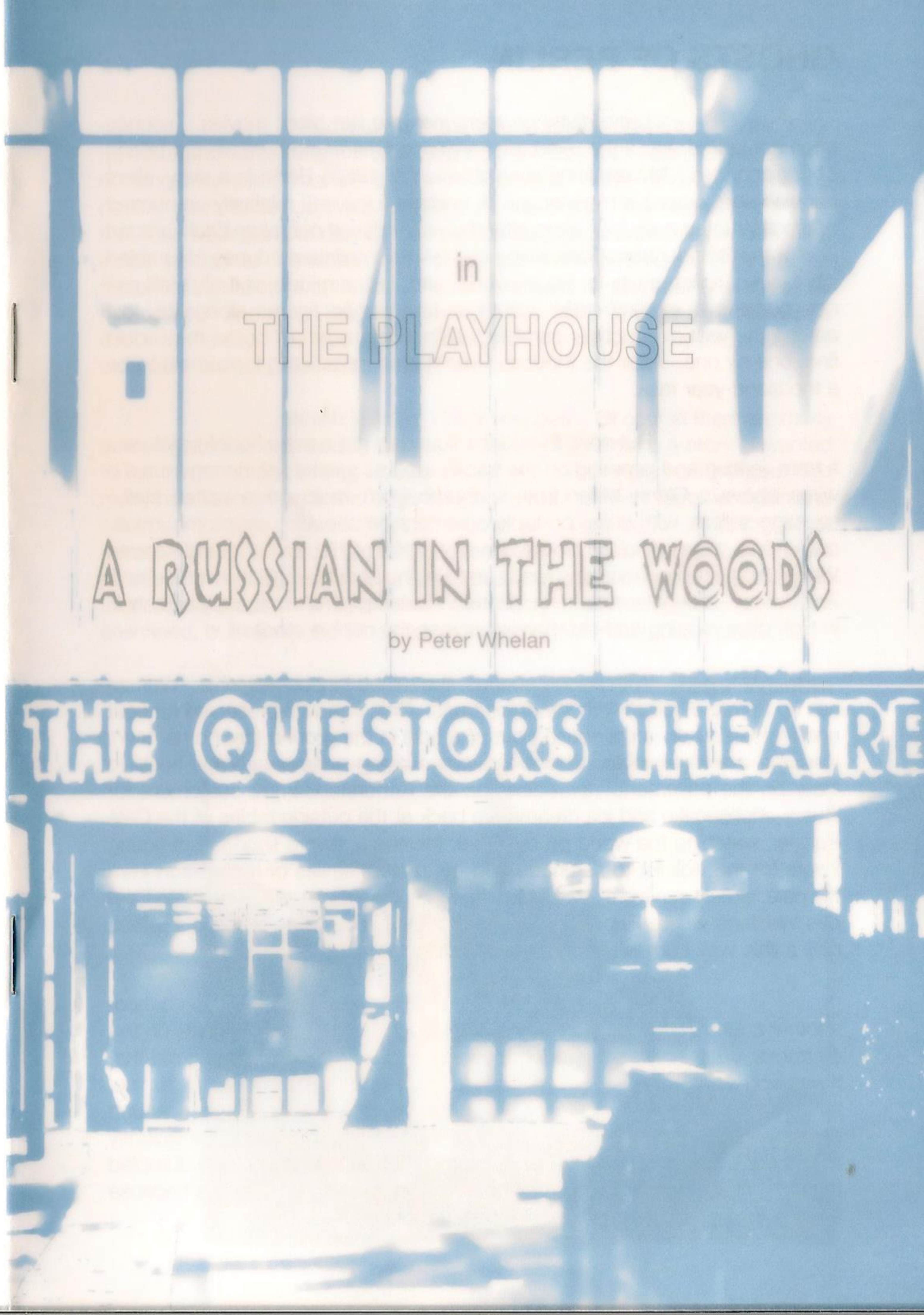
The Questors runs a professionally recognised two-year acting course in conjunction with Kingston College. There are also acting courses for beginners, free backstage training courses, visiting companies from home and abroad, regular art exhibitions, and workshops and clubs for young people. In short, there is something for everyone and with annual membership costing as little as £23.50 (including up to 8 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!

*Judi Dench*

Dame Judi Dench  
 President of The Questors Theatre



in  
 THE PLAYHOUSE

A RUSSIAN IN THE WOODS

by Peter Whelan

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

## GHOSTS OF BERLIN

Long distance memories are like silent movies... sounds often get edited out of the mind after a gap in time... and here we are talking of five decades. My recurring mental vision of 1950s Berlin is a slow, silent panning shot across a moonscape of endless ruins, still relatively untouched or reconstructed even four years after the war, a desert of broken brick, around Zoo or the Brandenburg Gate, rising and falling in splintered dunes of tumbled city blocks, rolling away to the horizon... and, in the middle of it all, I still see one geriatric truck and trailer with two tiny human figures alongside, lost among the vast destruction, carefully loading up any whole bricks they could find, one by one. After the thousand-year Reich, re-building looked set to be a thousand-year task.

But now, if I add the sounds, I get a more hopeful picture... a tram, jerking and jamming on the tracks, electric sparks spluttering from the wires above... Glenn Miller from a thumb-worn radio on a coffee stall... sausage-sellers, with shiny portable steamers on shoulder straps mournfully crying their wares ('Heisse bockwurst, zehn pfennig!'). Bronzed and scarred Wehrmacht veterans mending roads and singing about the girl they left behind. And Jeeps!... Jeeps everywhere... British, American, French, throaty and shrill, in high gear, rasping and racehosing across the cobble stones.

With added sounds, the ruined city comes alive. Women rise up from the cellars with shopping bags. One, in a well-preserved fur coat and feathered hat, is clambering out of a hole in the ground (her home now), stepping over the rubble in her boots but carrying once-smart high heels to wear on the pavement. Incredibly, on the Kurfürstendamm, customers for cherry cheesecake and ice creams are back at the outside tables of the Café Kanzler, watching the world go by. True, there is a severe shortage of young lovers for the violinist to serenade and the mutual smiles of recognition from the pale, elderly survivors soon fade... but they are there, they exist! Even Café des Westens where Rupert Brooke wrote 'Granchester' is just about intact, only a little way from where the broken bricks begin.

Yet at night sometimes, in wakeful moments, I'd hear another sound in desolate isolation ...the harsh scream of train wheels on far-off tracks, grinding distantly round uneven bends, a nightmare-ish sound that I was told was the result of the welded track the Germans used. To me, though, now that the city really was silent in sleep, it could be a sound screeching out of the collective mouth of the millions who had gone violently to death in these dark, forested lands; sometimes as they desperately fumbled to load a rifle... sometimes as they bent to feed a child... sometimes because they hadn't enough strength inside them to hold on.

When I arrived the city was still governed by the Four Power agreement, though it was wearing perilously thin. Germany itself was no longer split into four zones... the Americans, British and French having pooled theirs to set up West Germany as one state. The Russians believed that if we were going to do that then we should give up Berlin, which was deep inside their zone. We refused and issued our newly-created currency into the three western sectors of the city. Russia retaliated by blockading all road and rail routes in and out. The airlift followed, flying everything from potatoes to coal into the city. The Russians gave way (they were losing by it too) and the blockade had just been lifted when I arrived.

Which is where I begin my play... Of course there are many autobiographical elements in the story I tell... but it remains a story. I wanted to tell it with an unblinking, unsentimental eye. Too many had suffered, too many had been driven to the edge in trying to put their lives together again and I needed to take account of that. Above all, I was drawn to telling it not because I had some conclusion to offer, but out of my fascination with the power and mystery of human relationships, where characters are tested in their consciences at a time when dishonesty and ruthlessness had been enshrined, both East and West, as an instrument of international policy.

Peter Whelan



# A RUSSIAN IN THE WOODS

by Peter Whelan

First performance of this production Thursday 16 October 2003

## CAST *in order of appearance*

Pat Harford	Tim Samuels
Clive Burns	Roger Beaumont
Sergeant Dilke	Stuart Brown
Captain Geoff Wirral	Tristan Marshall
Ilse Bucher	Emily de Cosimo
Fraser Cullen	Stephen Brown
Dieter Stahl	Robin Ingram
Corporal Lloyd Jackson	Tony Steele

*The action of the play takes place in Germany and Berlin in 1950.*

*Approximate running time: 2 hours 30 mins including 15 min interval.*

## PRODUCTION

Director	Peter Field
Assistant Director	Catherine Hopkins
Designer	John Horwood
Lighting Designer	Tim Edwards
Projections	Hugh Davies Webb
Sound Design	Joel Schrire
Music by	Mark Rose
Construction	Mike Hagan, Richard Williams
Wardrobe	Nicola Thomas
Stage Manager	Sylvia Wall
Deputy Stage Manager	Tina Harris
Stage Crew	Bron Beckford, Lois Flatt, Jenny Richardson
Prompt	Bridgett Strevens
Lighting Operator	Sally Milton
Sound Operator	Anthony Enrione
Painter	Dennis Dracup
Dance Instructor	Larry Irvin
Drill instruction	Michael Lazell, Michael Green, Don Kincaid, Joseph Lazell
Fight instruction	Nicholas Jonne Wilson
Visual researchers	Barbara Linton, Geoff Webb, Ron Bloomfield
Dialect Advisers	Claus Stuber, Susan Gerlach
Make-up & Hair	Helen Scott
Thanks to:	Adrian Asher, Nigel Bamford, Peter Collins, Doug King, Louis Tonna, Ealing Library, Damien Lazell, Eric Lister, Nigel Worsley

# COMING SOON

**Blithe Spirit** by Noël Coward  
In **The Playhouse**, 8 - 15 November

Blithe Spirit is an inspired and inventive comedy, and Coward's longest-running play. It is set in the country home of the sophisticated author Charles Condomine who is researching for his latest book, *The Unseen*, and calls in the wonderfully eccentric Madame Arcati to hold a séance. Unfortunately, the proceeding has an unforeseen result and the ensuing situation makes for much hilarity. This is classic Coward, and one of his best loved plays.

**Goodnight Children Everywhere** by Richard Nelson  
In **The Studio**, Thursday 20 - 29 November

It's 1945, and seventeen-year-old Peter returns from his evacuation in Alberta to the family flat in Clapham where his slightly older sisters still live. They haven't seen him since he was eleven and find it difficult to come to terms with his hybrid accent, the new version of his name, 'Petey', and the fact that he is now a man. But under the surface, things are even more complicated. Betty, who works as a nurse, continues to harbour a not-so-secret Freudian crush on him and Anne finds her sisterly feelings complicated by her own unsatisfactory marriage. Nelson's title is a grimly sardonic comment on the tangled mix of childhood and adulthood in which the central quartet are ensnared.

**The Witches** by Roald Dahl, adapted by David Wood  
In **The Playhouse**, 13 December - 3 January

'This is not a fairy tale, this is a story about real witches.'  
But real witches don't look like witches, they look like ordinary women, so how can you tell when you meet one? Luckily, grandmother is wise to their ways and warns her grandson all about them. Despite the warnings, however, the witches turn the boy into a mouse and he discovers their evil plans to destroy all the children in the world. This wonderful adaptation is full of dazzling illusions, slapstick humour and magic that carry you along on a glorious journey of fiendish fantasy. Perfect family entertainment - chilling but thrilling! (Ages 7 upwards)

**The Princess and the Pea** by Bernice Wolfenden  
In **The Studio**, 20 December - 11 January

Magic is needed to find a real princess for Prince Nigel. There are princesses aplenty, but before he finds the real one he has to dance with a lot of unsuitable girls. Join him in his search in this enchanting retelling of a traditional fairy tale with songs, dancing, comedy and, of course, a pea! (age 2 - 7, 45mins.)

**Bouncers** by John Godber  
In **The Studio**, 20 December - 10 January

This is one of Godber's most popular plays, a fast moving comedy set in the world of a nightclub. Four actors portray a cast of over forty characters, young and old, comic and tragic and, of course, both male and female. Meet the smooth talking DJ, the lager swilling lads looking for a lay and the lipsticked, lacquered girls gyrating to the pulse of the dance floor. Whilst outside in the freezing cold, skulk the ever watchful, ever ready, ever observant Lucky Eric, Judd, Les and Ralph. And so begins the journey into the secrets of a Friday night.

## ART EXHIBITIONS

### In the Upper Foyer

The exhibition in the foyer during the run of 'A Russian in the Woods' is the work of **The Gunnersbury Group**. They meet on a Thursday at the Small Mansion Arts Centre in Gunnersbury Park. For further information please contact Gillian Hinds on 020 8992 7989.

### In the Grapevine

**Sue Shepherd**, 18th October - 1st November  
We are glad to welcome back local artist Sue Shepherd after her previous, successful, exhibition. This time she will be exhibiting with another watercolour artist, Celia Busby, who is also from the Ealing area.

Book now for our wonderful Christmas production of



# The Witches

by **Roald Dahl**, adapted by **David Wood**

13th December - 3rd January

**BOX OFFICE 020 8567 5184**

**Adults £9.00**  
**Children £7.00**  
**Family ticket (2 adults and 2 children) £29.00**



come to

# Quickies

in the Upper Foyer

**Serving tea, coffee, cakes and ice-cream.**

**Look out for an extended service, coming soon. Also, during the Christmas show Quickies will be serving mulled wine and mince pies.**