



Enquiries: 020 8567 0011
Box Office: 020 8567 5184
Fax: 020 8567 8736
e-mail: enquiries@questors.org.uk
Web site: www.questors.org.uk

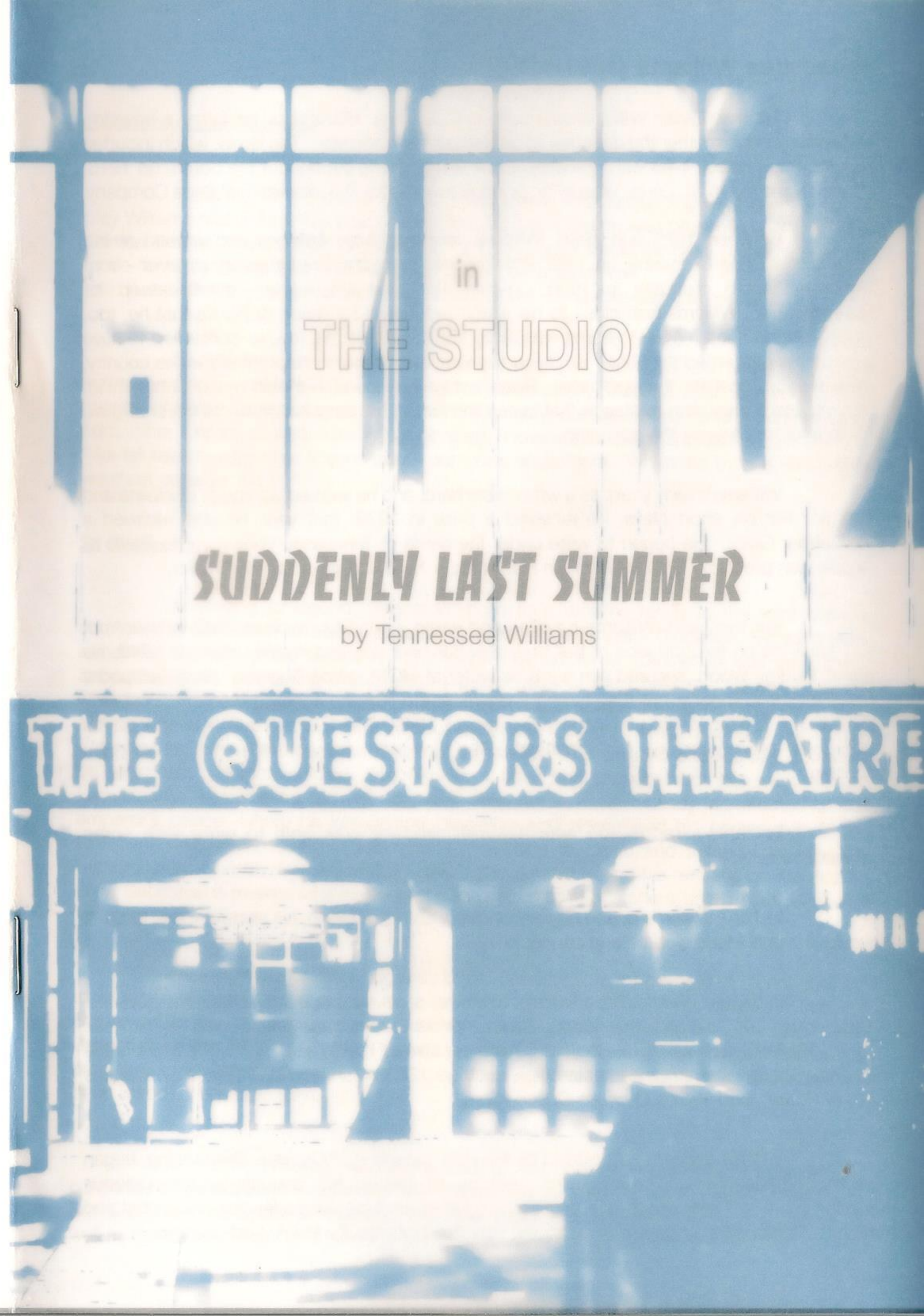
Welcome to The Questors Theatre, one of London's best kept secrets - except to its 3,000 members. How do I know about the Questors? I am proud to have been their President for over 17 years. Founded in 1929, it has since grown into the largest community theatre in Europe with a reputation for the highest 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!

Dame Judi Dench
President of The Questors Theatre



in
THE STUDIO

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

by Tennessee Williams

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Tennessee Williams (1911-1983)

Thomas Lanier Williams was born in Columbus, Mississippi, his father a travelling salesman and his mother the daughter of an Episcopalian Minister. The family, which included a sister, Rose Isabel, lived with grandparents in small towns throughout the South. In 1918, the family moved to St. Louis, where Tom's father worked for the International Shoe Company.

Between 1929 and 1938, Williams attended three colleges and worked at the International Shoe Company. In 1937 Williams was attending the University of Iowa - from which he would graduate in 1938 - when his sister Rose was institutionalised for schizophrenia. Williams was close to his sister and feared for much of his life that he, too, would lose his mind. While Williams was away from St. Louis, his mother consented to have a lobotomy performed on Rose. Because this was one of the first lobotomies in the country, there was no cost for the operation. Rose lost her anxieties, but also much of her mind, slipping into a dreamlike existence that lasted the rest of her long life. Williams never forgave his mother for allowing the operation.

Williams's early years as a writer were hard, and he worked with great discipline and energy. For his short plays, he received a prize in 1939; that year, he also received a Rockefeller Grant. He began to write under the name of Tennessee Williams. His *Battle of Angels* was produced in Boston and in New York in 1940, closing after two weeks.

For two years Williams travelled and wrote, spending much of 1942 in New York City surviving on the odd jobs of bell hop, elevator operator, and movie usher. In 1943, his agent, Audrey Wood, secured him a job as writer at MGM in Los Angeles. He developed a script for the company, but they turned it down, giving him the rights to the work. Williams revised the film script into a stage play, and in 1945, *The Glass Menagerie* opened on Broadway, playing for 563 performances. The play won many awards, as well as great acclaim.

Williams's reputation was assured, and he was able to write with some financial security.

In 1947 Williams began his relationship with Frank Merlo, his secretary and lover. It would last until Merlo died of lung cancer in 1963.

In general, Williams's early plays were well-received, popular and critical successes. They include 1947's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1948's *Summer and Smoke*, 1951's *The Rose Tattoo*, 1955's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 1959's *Sweet Bird of Youth*, and 1961's *The Night of the Iguana*. There were some failures as well, such as 1953's *Camino Real*, 1955's *27 Wagons Full of Cotton*, and 1957's *Orpheus Descending*.

In 1957 Williams, depressed by the poor reception of *Orpheus Descending*, began psychoanalysis, working through his feelings of failure, his sometimes tempestuous relationship with Frank Merlo, the death of his father, and his dependencies on alcohol and drugs. As he began analysis, he wrote the play that became *Suddenly Last Summer*.

Suddenly Last Summer

Suddenly Last Summer was originally paired with *Something Unspoken*, a shorter play Williams had written five years earlier, and the combination was presented under the title *Garden District*. It opened off-Broadway in 1958, without a star in the cast. Williams expected to be "critically tarred and feathered and ridden on a fence-rail". To his great surprise the critical reception was positive and it had a successful run before being filmed later that year.

Suddenly Last Summer is considered by many to be Williams's most autobiographical work. As with so many of his earlier plays, *Suddenly Last Summer* contains themes of homosexuality, dominant parents, savagery, self-destruction and madness, but it adds other themes as well, notably cannibalism. However its dominant idea is truth and lies. "We tell lies to sustain our fictions about ourselves and others. When the truth is so horrible, we must consider it a lie."

St Sebastian

According to legend, Sebastian, born to a wealthy family in the third century, converted to Christianity as a young adult. A favorite of the Emperor Diocletian, Sebastian was appointed Captain of the Guard in the Imperial Roman Army. Diocletian was unaware of Sebastian's faith, but during the emperor's persecution of the Christians, Sebastian visited Christian prisoners in order to provide them supplies and solace; furthermore, he converted, among others, the jailers and the Prefect of Rome. An infuriated Diocletian demanded Sebastian renounce Christianity, and Sebastian refused. The emperor ordered that Sebastian be executed. Roman soldiers tied him to a tree, and archers shot him with arrows. Miraculously, however, he did not die, and after his wounds healed, he returned to the emperor's palace, where he intercepted Diocletian and denounced his persecution of the Christians. Diocletian ordered Sebastian be clubbed to death and tossed into a sewer. Subsequently, Christians retrieved Sebastian's corpse and buried his remains on the Appian Way. Sebastian is revered as a martyr and is the patron saint of archers, soldiers, athletes, and sufferers of the plague.

Alongside the Christian legends of St. Sebastian, there developed stories that led to the martyr's being appropriated as a homoerotic icon. Some tales speculate that the Emperor Diocletian made romantic advances upon Sebastian and was enraged when Sebastian rejected him on Christian grounds. Other stories actually refer to Sebastian as the emperor's lover. Whether or not such accounts are legitimate, the image of St. Sebastian has been linked to homoeroticism.

Tennessee Williams, who came from a "high church" Episcopalian tradition and converted to Catholicism, was familiar with the images and tales of St. Sebastian. His poem *San Sebastiano de Sodoma* celebrates both the religious aspects of St. Sebastian's story, as well as the tradition that has made the saint an icon of homosexuality.

The Encantadas

Herman Melville wrote *The Encantadas, Or the Enchanted Islands* as a series of short travel sketches in 1854.

Melville's *Sketch Second* discusses turtles, but not the turtles' birth and their being killed by predators, the sex and violence, that Sebastian observes in Williams's play. Melville simply describes the turtles of the Encantadas:

"In view of the description given, may one be gay upon the Encantadas? Yes: that is, find one the gayety, and he will be gay. And indeed, sackcloth and ashes as they are, the isles are not perhaps unmitigated gloom. For while no spectator can deny their claims to a most solemn and superstitious consideration, no more than my firmest resolutions can decline to behold the spectre-tortoise when emerging from its shadowy recess; yet even the tortoise, dark and melancholy as it is upon the back, still possesses a bright side; its calapee or breastplate being sometimes of a faint yellowish or golden tinge. Moreover, every one knows that tortoises as well as turtle are of such a make, that if you but put them on their backs you thereby expose their bright sides without the possibility of their recovering themselves, and turning into view the other. But after you have done this, and because you have done this, you should not swear that the tortoise has no dark side. Enjoy the bright, keep it turned up perpetually if you can, but be honest and don't deny the black. Neither should he who cannot turn the tortoise from its natural position so as to hide the darker and expose his livelier aspect, like a great October pumpkin in the sun, for that cause declare the creature to be one total inky blot. The tortoise is both black and bright."

The Freeman Watts Standard Lobotomy (Developed 1937)

In this procedure, which they named the "precision operation," the brain was approached from the lateral surface of the skull rather than from the top. "Burr" holes were drilled on both sides of the cranium at points designated by distances in millimeters from "landmarks" on the skull. A 6-inch cannula, the tubing from a heavy-gauge hypodermic needle, was inserted through one hole and aimed toward the hole on the opposite side of the head. The cannula was inserted about 2.5 inches into the brain and, if no fluid oozed out it was lowered to the bony ridge at the base of the skull. The cannula was then withdrawn, and a blunt spatula - much like a calibrated butter knife - was inserted about 2 inches into the track left by the cannula. Care had to be taken to avoid damaging major arteries located near the midline of the brain. After the spatula was inserted, its handle was swung upward so that the blade could be drawn along the base of the skull, and a cut was made as far to the side as possible. The spatula was then withdrawn, and the site was rinsed. That was only the first of four quadrants to be cut.

Places

Cabeza de Lobo is a fictional city. The name means "Wolf's Head".

The Garden District is a very wealthy part of New Orleans, where the homes are large mansions.

The French Quarter, also known as *Vieux Carré*, is the old part of New Orleans, home of artists and bohemians, and the birthplace of Jazz.

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

by Tennessee Williams

First performance of this production 26th April 2003

CAST - in order of appearance:

MRS VENABLE	MORAGH GEE
DOCTOR	ANTHONY GREEN
MISS FOXHILL	BARBARA MARKER
CATHARINE HOLLY	CLAIRE GARRIGAN
SISTER FELICITY	SUSAN GERLACH
MRS HOLLY	MARGARET TURNER
GEORGE HOLLY	TRISTAN MARSHALL

Setting: a patio garden at Mrs Venable's mansion in the Garden District of New Orleans, late November 1935.

Running time - 1 hour 40 minutes. There is no interval.

Directed by	David Emmet
Designed by	Wanda Duszynska
Get-In Designer	Alex Marker
Costumes designed by	Nichola Thomas, Sarah Andrews
Lighting designed by	Chris Newall
Sound designed by	Joel Schrire
Soundscape created by	Mark Rose
Dialect Coach	Susan Gerlach
Stage Manager	Les Fraser
Deputy Stage Manager	Jo Matthews
Assistant Stage Managers	Elena Marks, Dominique Gozdawa, Arabo Shahenian, Matthew Simpson
Sound Operator	Martin Choules
Props	Les Fraser
Construction	John Rolfe, Alex Marker, Simon Clarke, John Rantell, Jennie Rawlings
Make-up & Hair	Julie Cruttenden
Get-In Crew	Martin Stoner, Geoff Moore, Patrick Smart
Thanks To	Mike Hagan, Damien Lazell, Terry Mummery, Tim Hayward, Ernest Suffern, Ian & Jacqui Stephen, Annabel Leventon

COMING SOON

The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby

by Charles Dickens, adapted for the stage by David Edgar
in **The Playhouse**, 24 May - 7 June

This is a rare chance to see both parts of one of the greatest theatrical adaptations of a Dickens novel ever staged. This epic narrative play relates the adventures of the virtuous young Nicholas Nickleby as he fights to overcome the injustices that assail his family. A huge cast portrays a range of typically larger-than-life characters, including the wretched Smike, the deliciously vile Wackford Squeers, the Brothers Cheeryble, the coldly calculating Ralph Nickleby, and the wonderfully eccentric Crummies Theatre Company. The lavish staging and costumes vividly recapture the sights and sounds of Victorian England, and with David Edgar's skilful and sensitive adaptation of the complete Dickens novel and Stephen Oliver's lyrical musical score you will experience all the comedy, horror, melodrama, satire and warmth of this fulfilling and ultimately life affirming tale.

Closer by Patrick Marber
in **The Studio**, 7 - 21 June

This is a brutal comedy of modern love where four strangers meet and couple. In a series of beautifully crafted duologues they connect, disconnect and reconnect in bewildering combinations. Sexual jealousy and sexual betrayal confuse their efforts to get closer as they try to avoid loneliness and isolation. Brisk, witty and obscene, *Closer* is a thrilling, intimate and caustically funny love story for today, revealing how little we sometimes know about each other and ourselves.

This play contains sexually explicit language which some may find offensive.

**Mary Queen of Scots
Got Her Head Chopped Off** by Liz Lochhead
in **The Playhouse**, 21 - 28 June

This is a ferociously iconoclastic re-examination of Mary's life from one of Scotland's best contemporary playwrights. We are led at break-neck speed through Mary's last years and forced to examine the parallels with modern Scottish life. The language is rich and varied, incorporating Elizabethan English and contemporary Scots, and the characters are full-bodied, subtle, humorous and virile.

When first performed in 1987, *Mary Queen of Scots* won a prestigious "Scotsman Fringe First" award at the Edinburgh Festival. Not to be missed.

ART EXHIBITIONS

We are very pleased to welcome two artists
who will be exhibiting their work here:

in **THE GRAPEVINE BAR**

Until 2nd May

Judith Gordon

with

'Children of the Twenty First Century'

Judith, who is originally from Detroit in the USA, has lived in Ealing for more than 20 years. Her exhibition is a series of small oil portraits of today's children.

in **THE UPPER FOYER**

From 24th May

John Flemons

LIVE THE ADVENTURE...

The Life & Adventures of **NICHOLAS NICKLEBY** PARTS 1 & 2

by Charles Dickens,
adapted by David Edgar

24th May - 7th June 2003

BOOKING NOW!



Suddenly Last

Summer

by Tennessee Williams

26, 28, 29, 30 April, 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8,
9, 10 May at 7.45pm, 27 April at 2.30pm

BOX OFFICE 020 8567 5184

Members £6.00, guests £7.50



THE
QUESTORS
THEATRE
STUDIO

12 MATTOCK LANE

LONDON W5 5BQ

Reg Charity No. 207516