



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 opening of the Questors Theatre's 75th Anniversary Season.

It was in 1929 that 17 individuals started the Questors, now it is the largest Community Theatre in Europe, with a reputation for the highest standards, and I am proud to have been its President for more than 15 years.

Over the course of the next twelve months, we will celebrate all that is best about The Questors with Classic Drama, New Writing, Comedy, a Musical and many special celebratory events. 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 350-seater Playhouse Theatre and our more intimate Studio Theatre.

In short, there's something for everyone, and with membership costing as little as £27.00 (including at least 8 free shows), it's great value for money as well.

If you're not a member already, now's the time to join. Don't just take my word for it, next time you're in West London call into our friendly Grapevine Bar on any Wednesday evening at 8pm for a free tour of the Theatre and a drink on us!

Here's to the next 75 years!

Dame Judi Dench
President of The Questors Theatre

75
years
1929 - 2004

Michael Green presents:

Coarse Acting Rides Again

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

COARSE ACTING AT THE QUESTORS

1964 Michael Green's spoof *The Art of Coarse Acting* published. Michael, a professional writer and active Questors member, sub-titles the book *How to Destroy an Amateur Dramatic Society* and defines a Coarse Actor as "one who can remember all the lines but not the order in which they come". Also: "One who limps on both legs simultaneously". Much material gathered at The Questors, where the photographs were taken. An instant best-seller, it is still in print 40 years later, both in Britain and the U.S.

1970 At Alfred Emmet's suggestion, a *Coarse Acting* competition is held at The Questors as part of an open day.

1972 A full-scale *Coarse Acting* contest, billed as *The World Coarse Acting Championship*, is organized by Michael Green at The Questors for a superb trophy (a decorated chamber-pot). Adjudicator is Richard Gordon, author of the "Doctor" books. Teams include The R.S.C. (Roger Rees and Tony Pedley), Rose Bruford College, The Maskers (Southampton), Latimer School staff and two sides from The Questors, one of which, the Bunny Langridge Players, win with *The Vicar Did It*, a spoof Agatha Christie written by David Pearson and Michael Langridge, from ideas by the cast. The RSC came second, despite their version of *Julius Caesar* in which Caesar becomes enraged when Brutus stabs him too savagely, and chases him through the auditorium.

1973 *Festival of Coarse Acting* held at Salisbury Playhouse to raise funds for a new theatre. Organized by Denys Nelson, a Questor living locally. Teams include The National Theatre, Salisbury Playhouse and local companies. The Questors take *The Vicar Did It*, but Salisbury Playhouse are winners. The National (whose entry included a butler who aged ten years every time he entered the room) are not amused.

1975 The second *World Coarse Acting Championships* held at The Questors. Won by The New Bunny Langridge players with *A Collier's Tuesday Tea* by Michael Langridge and Richard Gaunt.

1977 A second festival of *Coarse Acting* held at the new Salisbury Playhouse and The Questors win with The Bunny Langridge company in *A Collier's Tuesday Tea*.

1977 *The Coarse Acting Show* is taken to the Edinburgh Festival under the direction of Michael Green. Programme consists of *Streuth* (formerly *The Vicar Did It*), *A Collier's Tuesday Tea* and two plays specially written by Michael, *Il Fornicazione* (a Grand Opera take-off) and *All's Well That Ends As You Like It* (a Shakespeare pastiche). A sell-out. "The hit of this year's Festival", Miles Kington in Punch. Timothy West and Prunella Scales see the show and talk to the cast.

1978 The Edinburgh show is published by Samuel French with the title *Four Plays for Coarse Actors* by Michael Green.

1979 The Coarse Acting company return to Edinburgh with *Coarse Acting Two: Mobey Dick* by Michael Green and Mick Langridge; *Last Call for Breakfast*

(Mick Langridge and Richard Gaunt); *The Cherry Sisters* (Michael Green, David Pearson, Mick Langridge and John Turner); and *Henry the Tenth (Part Seven)* by Michael Green. Brian Rix invites the show to the Shaftesbury Theatre London, as part of the pick of the Fringe under the title *Lunatic Fringe*. Prince Charles pays a visit and collapses with mirth when the king's throne (occupied by David Pearson) falls apart in *Henry the Tenth*.

1980 *Coarse Acting Two* published by Samuel French. *World Coarse Acting Championships* held at The Questors, adjudicated by Timothy West. Won by *Public Deaths* by Jane Dewey and Don Starkey. David Pearson's *A Fish in Her Kettle* wins prize for best script.

1984 *Third Great Coarse Acting Show* at The Questors. The first full-scale Coarse show at the theatre, as all the others have been at competitions at Edinburgh. Programme: *Public Deaths* and *A Fish in Her Kettle* (from 1980), *The Vagabond Prince* (a musical by Simon Brett) and two more Michael Green plays: *Stalag 69* and *Julius and Cleopatra*. All published the following year by Samuel French.

1985 The Questors production of *The Cherry Orchard* is followed by *The Cherry Sisters* as a late night show. The cast of the original manage to be polite.

1987 The first *Coarse Acting Show* of 1977 (seen only at Edinburgh) is revived as a full-scale production in the Playhouse with most of the original cast.

1988 *A Collier's Tuesday Tea* and *The Cherry Sisters* are taken to Edinburgh again as *Coarse Acting Strikes Back*, part of a six-play tour by The Questors, again with most of the original cast.

1995 *Fourth World Coarse Acting Championships* adjudicated by Timothy West won by *The Glass Ménage à Trois*, a Tennessee Williams pastiche by John Davey. Other entries include *Oedocles* by Michael Green, performed by Richmond Shakespeare Society, and *The Silent Homecoming Party* by Mick Langridge.

1996 *Coarse Acting - The Revenge* at The Questors, consisting of *The Silent Homecoming Party* and *The Glass Ménage à Trois*, plus *Oedocles* with a Questors cast and a new piece by Michael Green, *Trapped*.

1999 *Coarse Acting Strikes Back* published by Samuel French. The title is taken from 1988 for a book of different plays: *Oedocles*, *Trapped* and *Cinderella* (by Michael Green); plus a piece from a Coarse Acting contest at Farnham Redgrave Theatre.

2002 Michael Green's three Coarse Shakespeare plays chosen as set books for the GCSE exam by the Oxford and Cambridge Board and the RSA. Dumbing down in education?

2004 The Questors open their 75th anniversary celebrations with *Coarse Acting Rides Again*. *Streuth* and *A Colliers Tuesday Tea* contain five of the original cast of 1972, miraculously preserved (some would say mummified).

(Thanks to David and Sonia Pearson on whose research the above is based.)

Michael Green presents:

Coarse Acting Rides Again

First performance of this production 22nd January 2004

CAST *in order of appearance:*

The Vicar of St. Sepulchre's Ken Ratcliffe

STREUTH

by David Pearson and Michael Langridge and the original cast

Inspector	David Pearson*
Mrs D'Arcy	Margaret Turner*
Mr D'Arcy	John Dobson
Hubert D'Arcy	Tim Samuels
The Major	John Hines
Maid	Lorna Duval*
James	John Turner*
Rupert	Keith Parry
Prompt	Mari King
Sergeant	Geoff Webb

*Member of the original cast of 1972

A COLLIER'S TUESDAY TEA

by Michael Langridge and Richard Gaunt

(The Director is grateful to the literary executors of D.H. Lawrence for not trying to interfere with this production)

Ida Hepplethwaite	Lorna Duval*
Margery Hackforth	Margaret Turner*
Joe Cleghorn	David Pearson*
Daniel Obadiah Hepplethwaite	Keith Parry
Albert Hepplethwaite	Tim Samuels
Victoria Hepplethwaite	Sonia Pearson*
Lionel Headbracket	John Dobson
Clement Boothroyd	John Turner*
Jed Throttle	John Hines

*Member of the original cast of 1975

A FISH IN HER KETTLE

by David Pearson

Prompt	Mari King
Vicar	Ken Ratcliffe
Antoinette	Sonia Pearson
Felix	John Dobson
Victor Loux	Paul Collins
Dr Henri Douche	John Turner
Eugene Loux	Ann Johnson
Captain Emile Bidet	Keith Parry
Mme Lucille von Obersheister	Lorna Duval
Count Otto	John Hines
Cook	Margaret Turner
Merry Minstrels	Michael Green, Eric Lister, John Stacey, Geoff Webb

THE GLASS MÉNAGE À TROIS

by John Davey

by kind permission of Tallahassee Williams

Dick Wingnut	Francis Lloyd
Aphasia Wingnut	Lorna Duval
Laetitia Wingnut	Mary-Alice Stack
Harry Stopolski	Tim Samuels
The props girl from hell	Mari King
Mr Hornbeam	Geoff Webb

PRODUCTION

Overall Director	Michael Green
Director of A Collier's Tuesday Tea and Streuth	Michael Green
Director of A Fish in Her Kettle	David Pearson
Director of The Glass Ménage à Trois	John Davey
Overall Designer and Designer of Streuth and A Collier's Tuesday Tea	John Stacey*
Designer of A Fish in Her Kettle and The Glass Ménage à Trois	Peter Collins
Lighting Designer	Peter Walters*
Sound Designer	Colin Horne**
Costumes	Sylvia Wall
Assisted by	Jean Derby, Katy Gallantry, Fran Parry

*Joined the Coarse Acting Company for the Edinburgh tour of 1979

**Joined the Coarse Acting Company for The Edinburgh Tour of 1977

Stage Management

Alec Atchison*, Bron Beckford,
Sue Collins, Tina Harris,
Nigel Lawrence, Eric Lister,
Jean Masters, Jo Matthews,
Marguerite Minster, Geoffrey Morgan,
Jo Perse, Jenny Richardson,
Peter Salvietto, Anne Sawbridge,
Joel Schrire, Bridgett Stevens

Construction

Roger Brace, Jim, Craddock,
Geoffrey Morgan, John Rolfe

Lighting Operator

Nigel Bamford

Dummy made by

Christine Waite

The Glass Ménage à Trois animals provided by

Dorrit Pollard-Davey

Hair and Make up

Lizzie Allsop, Louise Cooper-Hall

With thanks to:

His Honour Judge William Rose
(for loan of musical instruments);
Doug King, Maisie Morgan, Liz Prior,
Christine Sydenham, Paul Vincent,
& Nigel Worsley

*Joined the Coarse Acting Company for the 1979 Edinburgh Festival

COMING SOON

The Questors Youth Theatre presents:

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare

in **The Playhouse**, 10 - 14 February

In its 50th year, the Questors Youth Theatre presents one of Shakespeare's best-loved plays. Behind your safe, ordinary world, there's another, darker place, just out of sight, where fairies live. Not nice, floaty, twinkly fairies, but hoards of shadowy, greedy scavengers ready to get their sticky fingers on your possessions. But on this night, there's real trouble in the air after two young men and two young women, confused in love, stumble into the fairy realm. They find themselves at the mercy of the Fairy King and Queen, and the anarchic Puck, and when a band of actors blunder in looking for somewhere to rehearse, everything is plunged into chaos.

Duet for One by Tom Kempinski

in **The Studio**, 19 - 28 February

Stephanie was an eminent violinist until struck down by multiple sclerosis and confined to a wheelchair. On the advice of her husband she comes to see Dr. Feldmann, to help her adjust to her changing circumstances. She seems to be coping well, but under Dr. Feldmann's quiet, probing questions, however, a different picture emerges. Alone and desperate, she finally has no choice but to confront and conquer her self despair or die trying.

The Recruiting Officer by Georges Farquhar

in **The Playhouse**, 12 - 20 March

A story of bravado, deception, love, lust and army recruitment. In one of his finest plays, Farquhar deftly combines the conventions of Restoration comedy with a sympathetic and relatively realistic treatment of a country-town society. Captain Plume, back from the triumphant Battle of Blenheim, returns to Shrewsbury to recruit men for his regiment and women for his bed, and a series of comic situations follows. The play gently debunks national heroes, showing them as vulnerable and not entirely honourable. There is also humour aplenty, romantic adventures and an intricate plot in which trickery and subterfuge abound.

The Questors Student Group presents:

Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker

in **The Studio**, 24 March - 3 April

At the Sydney Cove penal colony 1789, a young lieutenant directs rehearsals of the Restoration comedy *The Recruiting Officer*. With only two copies of the text, a cast of convicts, opposition from sadistic officers, and a leading lady about to be hanged, the production is in trouble from the start.

Based on an historical incident and on Thomas Kenneally's novel "The Playmaker", Timberlake Wertenbaker's inspirational play shows us the redemptive, transcendental power of theatre with great elegance and passion.

ART EXHIBITIONS

10 - 24 January
in the **Upper Foyer**, two local artists:

Nancy Fiorello

Light and Life into Darkness
Semi-abstract paintings in acrylic

Arnold Aarons

With an International Flavour
Traditional portraits in oils

in the **Grapevine Bar**:

Jackie Tye

Horse artist Jackie Tye will be having an exhibition of her paintings to celebrate the rescue and rehabilitation of her former racehorse.
Proceeds go to the British Horse Society Welfare

In its 50th Year
The Questors Youth Theatre presents:

**A Midsummer
Night's Dream**
by William Shakespeare

In the Playhouse
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