



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 18 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.

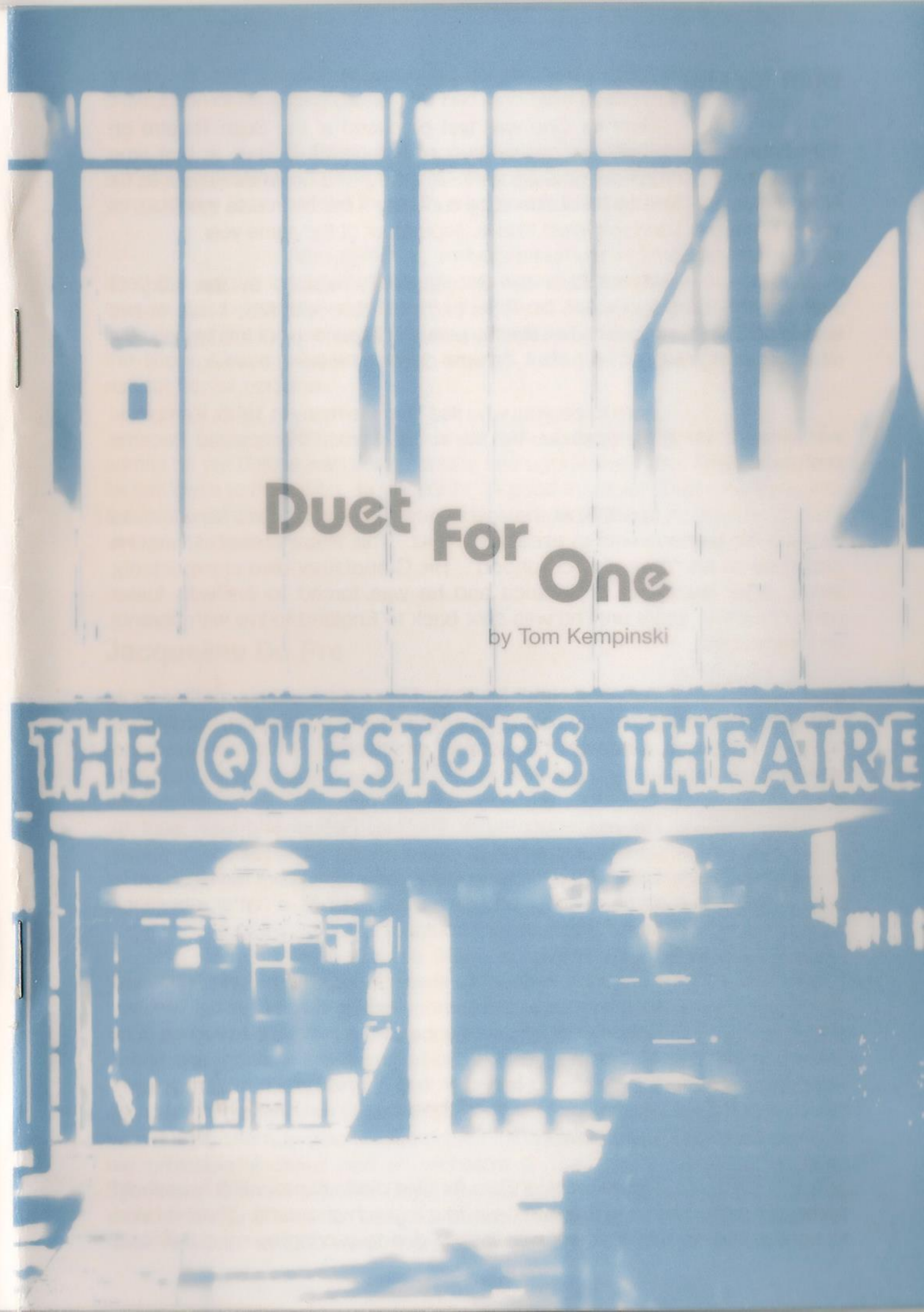
In short, there's something for everyone, and with membership costing as little as £27.00 (including at least 8 free shows), it's great value for money as well.

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!

Judi Dench

Dame Judi Dench
 President of The Questors Theatre



Duet for One

by Tom Kempinski

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Duet for One

Duet for One was first produced at the Bush Theatre on 13th February 1980 with an original cast of Francis de la Tour, at that time married to Tom Kempinski, as Stephanie Abrahams and David de Keyser as Dr Alfred Feldman. Due to its outstanding success, it transferred to the Duke of York's Theatre in London's West End in September of the same year.

Whilst *Duet for One* is clearly inspired by the story of international cellist Jacqueline Du Pré's tragic affliction with MS, it also draws heavily on Tom Kempinski's own life; his personal experience of therapy and his many years of being, as he puts it, "on the couch" five times a week.

Born to parents who fled Nazi Germany in 1936, Kempinski was brought up in Hampstead, before, in his words, "Hampstead became snotty and rich".

In 1939, at the age of three, he was sent to New York to live with his grandparents to escape the blitz. This was the start of what he describes as his "miserable childhood". His Grandfather died unexpectedly, shortly after his arrival in America and he was forced to live with foster parents for four years until he was sent back to England to live with parents he barely knew.

Two years later his actor father died and his mother sank into depression. Kempinski recalls that he began compulsively turning off taps and closing windows: "A symbol of closing down dangers and terrifying emotions".

He was educated at The Hall School and later went to Cambridge. After a term and a half at University he "cracked up" and was admitted to the Maudsley Hospital "for nutters", where he spent ten weeks. He says, "I went in mad as a hatter and came out mad as a hatter, not that I thought I was Napoleon, I was just very troubled."

Kempinski went on to study at RADA with John Thaw and Tom Courtney. He became a successful actor, working at the National Theatre, The Royal Court, in a number of films and appearing regularly on television. But frustration with the roles he played, a desire to "see more emotion" and find a part "you can really speak in" led him to writing his own plays, which typically reflected his far left convictions. He once described David Hare's generation of left-wing playwrights as "liberal".

The success of *Duet for One* made Kempinski a household name and earned him and Frances de la Tour a clutch of awards. That he failed to consolidate on this success was largely due to a crippling mental illness,

which left him virtually housebound for 14 years and contributed to the destruction of his acting career and two long-term relationships.

Suffering from agoraphobia, claustrophobia, panic attacks, suicidal depression, and weighing 24 stone, his only trips out of his flat were 50 yards to buy food, and the four-mile drive to see his therapist.

After switching analysts a number of times he managed to shed the weight, remarry and resume his writing career. He wrote 16 plays in four years, unfortunately none of which enjoyed the success of *Duet for One*. He reflected "it's irrelevant whether we can still do it as they think we don't know the score. Young directors want to work with their contemporaries, that's natural, its not personal."

Tom Kempinski has battled many personal demons; he admits he still battles with being "bolshy and aggressive". But it is a battle that he can claim to have won. In his words, "A good therapist doesn't turn you into a sane person, what changes is your ability to handle things so you can choose whether to be destructive".

Jacqueline Du Pré

Jacqueline Du Pré was born in Oxford in 1945, and was encouraged musically from a very young age by her pianist and composer mother. She and her sister Hilary, who played the piano, then later the flute, were very close, and spend much of their time together making music. When Jacqueline heard the sound of a cello on the radio at the age of four she declared that that was the sound she wanted to make. Her mother bought her her first cello for her 5th birthday and soon her closeness to her sister began to develop into rivalry. She began to practise harder, and soon overtook her older sister.

From the mid 50s she studied with the renowned cellist William Pleeth, who called her "the most outstanding cellist and musical talent I have met so far." She more or less left school at the age of 11 and was cut off from the normal life of her peers, giving her first concert at 13 which she performed with great confidence and passion. She is, for many people, most closely associated with Elgar's Cello Concerto, which she first performed at the age of 13. It had an immediate attraction for her and Pleeth was amazed to find how quickly she was able to memorize it. It was with this piece that she made her professional debut with an orchestra at the age of 16, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall. Hilary, said of her "In that environment and with her beautiful Strad, she seemed more impressive than ever. She and her cello were revealing her true nature." Jacqueline went on to

record the Elgar 7 years later with Sir John Barbirolli and the London Symphony Orchestra. This recording brought her to a popular audience and contributed towards her stardom.

However, she had begun to have doubts about her career as she realized how cut off from normal life she had been, and how little education, other than musical, she had had. For a while she refused engagements and it was at this time, when she did play, that she first noticed a numbness in her fingers. She resolved her doubts during a period of study in Moscow. Her teacher, Mstislav Rostropovich, focussed more on the emotion of the music than on the technique, which very much appealed to Jacqueline. This physicality and an intense, romantic, sometimes almost self-indulgent approach to playing became her trademark. Reviewers often commented on her appearance, her energy, and the way the cello became an extension of herself. She was not a beautiful woman, but she seemed to be beautiful when she played. The critic Raymond Ericson, writing of her US debut said she "looked like a cross between Lewis Carroll's Alice and one of those angelic instrumentalists in Renaissance paintings."

Jacqueline married Daniel Barenboim in 1966 and they began a demanding touring schedule throughout Europe and America. After years of travelling and performing, she became exhausted and went to Hampshire to stay on Hilary's farm. In her distress, she turned to Hilary's husband, Christopher Finzi, for support and comfort.

She resumed her concert schedule the following year, but the numbness in her hands returned and began to worsen. At first this was believed to be caused by stress and exhaustion, brought on by the pressures of her schedule. In 1973 she performed in New York with Leonard Bernstein and found that she even needed help to open her cello case. She complained that she couldn't feel the strings. She managed to play, but this was to be her final performance.

She was finally diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis after tests in London, but she didn't give up hope that she might play again. Her condition worsened rapidly, however, and by 1975 she was confined to a wheelchair. She decided to teach rather than give up music entirely and gave masterclasses, some of which were televised. In 1978 she said "Nobody knows if I'll ever regain mobility. It could be that next week I'll find myself walking down the road. I believe in realistic optimism but not wishful thinking." She also began working for the cause of multiple sclerosis research.

Unfortunately, her health continued to decline and she died in 1987 at the age of forty-two.

Duet for One

by Tom Kempinski

First performance of this production 19 February 2004

CAST

Stephanie Abrahams	Rosie Ifould
Dr Alfred Feldmann	Richard Gallagher

The action takes place in Dr Feldmann's consulting room. Time - 1981

*There will be one interval of 20 minutes
Latecomers will only be admitted between scenes*

PRODUCTION

Director	Roger Beaumont
Designer	John Rolfe
Lighting Designer assisted by	Alan Smith Perri Blakelock
Sound Designer assisted by	Heather Stamford Alan Smith
Stage Management	Katy Gallantry, Brin Parsonage Harriet Parsonage, Michael Smith, Chris Ifould
Lighting Operators	Andrew Fletcher, Perri Blakelock
Sound Operator	Dana Ryan
Dialect Coach	Claus Stübner
Rehearsal Prompt	Pam Smith
Sound track supplied by	Monyene Kane
Wheelchair supplied by	Wheelchair Warehouse
Upholstery by	Jenny Richardson
Chair supplied by	Brian Ingram
Thanks to:	Annalie Ranger, Sylvia Wall, Sarah Andrews

COMING SOON

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 in 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.

Road by Jim Cartwright

In the **Playhouse**, 17 - 24 April

In the course of one wild night, your drunken guide, Scullery, conducts a tour of his derelict Lancashire street. Moving from street corner to living room, from bedroom to kitchen, we flash through the lives of its inhabitants as they piece together the fragments of their lives that glint like freshly cut glass on a beer soaked bar table. Lives that encompass unemployment, depression and hopelessness, staved off with drink, sex and violence. A surreal vision of the contemporary urban landscape...uncomfortable and magical, funny and bitter, it is an *Under Milk Wood* for Thatcher's children.

Once a Catholic by Mary O'Malley

In the **Studio**, 28 April - 8 May

Once a Catholic is set in the Convent of Our Lady of Fatima, a grammar school for girls, and in and around the streets of Willesden and Harlesden, London, in the late fifties.

The play centres on the adventures and misadventures of Mary Mooney, Mary McGinty and Mary Gallagher as they experience life in the fifth form under the tutelage of Mother Peter, Mother Basil and Mother Thomas Aquinas.

"A marvellous, irreverent, affectionate and warmly comic play about the confusions and contradictions and general awfulness of being a Catholic schoolgirl".

(Sheridan Morley, *Punch*)



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After Duet for One In **the Studio** 20th and 21st Feb. 27th, 28th Feb. at 11.00pm

Hooke by John Sansick

A comic and charming portrayal of the life of scientist, Robert Hooke, who was one of the most extraordinary men of the 17th Century. He was an inventor, a mechanic, an astronomer and anatomist. He was also a braggart, a seducer of servants and a miser.

Tickets only £2, on the door

ART EXHIBITIONS

In the **Grapevine** January 31 - February 28

Double Vision

Malcolm Banthorpe - photography

Yu-lan Liu - mixed media

More information at www.graphics.demon.co.uk/double_vision

In the **Upper Foyer** until 9 March.

To co-incide with the production of her Husband's play, *Hooke*,

Audrey Sansick

will be exhibiting a selection of oil paintings based mainly on flower studies.