

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Its easy to join...

- Come to the main office during office hours.
- Join us in the Grapevine Bar at The Questors Theatre on a Wednesday at 8pm for a free guided tour and a drink on us.
- Pick up a membership form from the foyer
- Call **020 8567 0011** during office hours
- Find out more at www.questors.org.uk

Questors membership (there are 3 categories) gives you...

Company member:

- 50% discount on your ticket (excluding Christmas Shows)
- Ticket reservation facility (conditions apply)
- Special offers & invitations
- Club Magazine and monthly mailing
- The chance to act, direct and get involved backstage or with front of house
- Membership of The Grapevine Club

Playgoer Member:

- 20% discount on your ticket (excluding Christmas Shows)
- Regular monthly mailing
- Membership of The Grapevine Club

Friend:

- Regular monthly mailing
- Membership of The Grapevine Club

Discounts at:

Holmes Place, Butlers restaurant, Ealing Dance Centre, Monty's Tandoori

Three ways to book tickets:

- Ring our Box Office on 020 8567 5184 or call in and collect tickets
Open Mon – Fri 11.00am to 1.00pm, Show Nights & Wednesdays
6.45pm to 8.30pm, Sunday Matinees 2.00pm - 2.30pm
- Fill in a booking form (included with diary notes) and return to Box Office
- Book online at www.questors.org.uk

Box Office: 020 8567 5184
Admin: 020 8567 0011
Fax: 020 8567 8736
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Website: www.questors.org.uk

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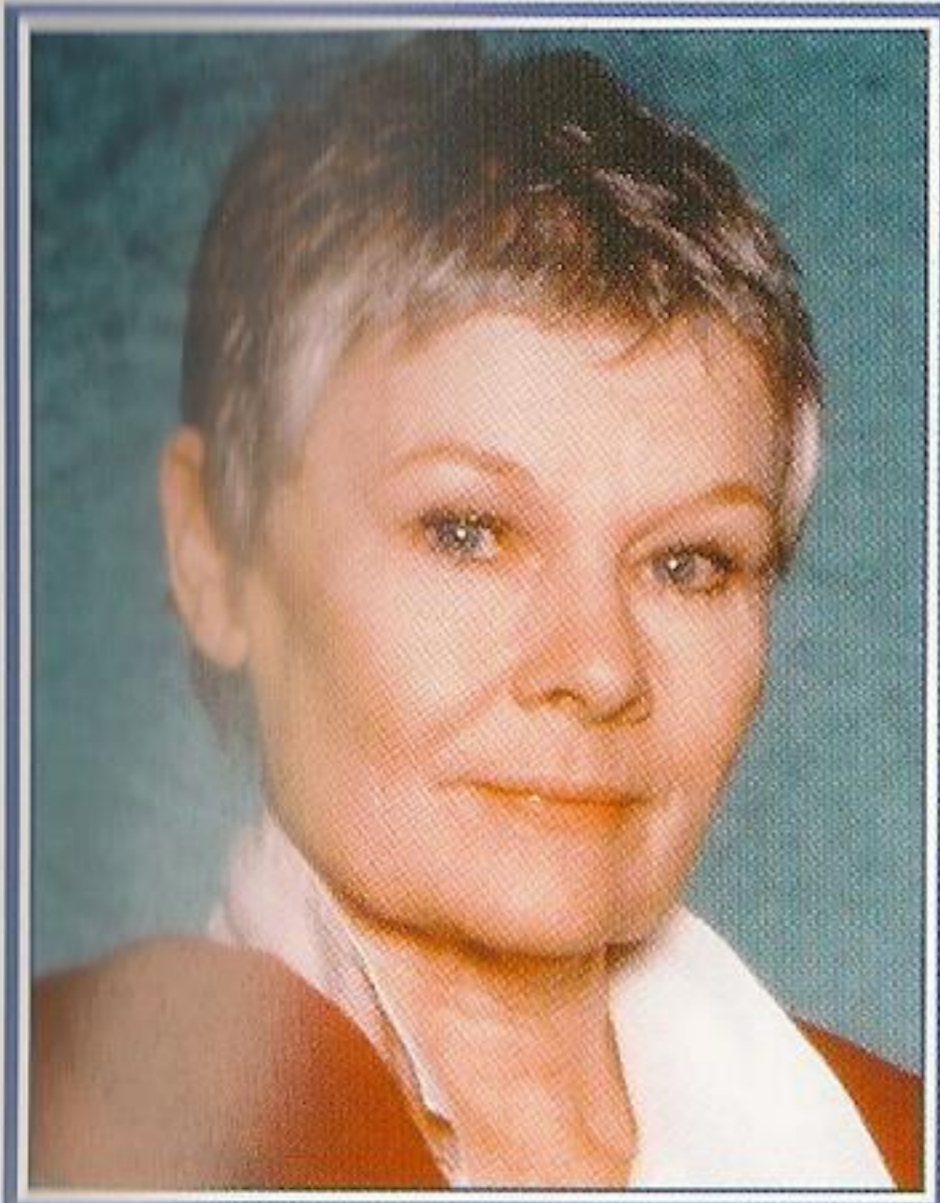


Dance of Death

THE QUESTORS THEATRE



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Welcome to The Questors Theatre, one of London's best kept secrets - except to its 2,500 members. How do I know about the Questors? I am proud to have been their President for over 20 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 350 seater Playhouse Theatre and our 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 from £12.00 - £47.50 depending upon level of commitment 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



Dance of Death

by August Strindberg
translated by Michael Meyer

Dance of Death

by August Strindberg

Strindberg wrote *Dance of Death* in 1900. He followed it immediately with a sequel, *Dance of Death Part 2*. The two plays are occasionally presented together, but Part 1 was intended to stand alone, and Part 2 is vastly inferior, probably only written to provide a happier ending when Strindberg's German translator remarked that the play as it stood was too grim to be performed.

Like most of Strindberg's work, there is a kernel of autobiography at the heart of the play. Strindberg had recently stayed with his sister Anna, who had given up her musical career in order to marry, and her husband Hugo von Philp, an irreligious man with whom Strindberg sat up all night discussing death, after Philp suffered a heart attack. The fact that Strindberg felt an attraction towards his sister certainly gives an extra dimension to Kurt's guilt about his lust for his cousin Alice. However Philp always denied that his marriage was the model for the one depicted in the play (well, you would, wouldn't you?) and there were certainly other possible originals. Strindberg's own tempestuous marital experiences no doubt furnished him with plenty of material as well.

Naturalism or Expressionism?

As a naturalistic portrait of marital strife, *Dance of Death* is often seen as a forerunner of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. This is true as far as it goes, and Strindberg is rightly seen alongside Zola and Ibsen as one of the founders of Naturalism. The Preface to *Miss Julie* is universally regarded as the most important manifesto of Naturalism in the theatre; and *The Father* (1887) and *Miss Julie* (1888) are important milestones in the development of the style. But Strindberg's later plays, such as *A Dream Play* (1901) and *The Ghost Sonata* (1907), are experiments with a more 'musical', surrealist and expressionist form of drama. *Dance of Death* is on the cusp, and has elements of all these styles. In its depiction of life as an existential hell whose protagonists are trapped in an absurd and meaningless cycle of verbal and mental aggression and gamesmanship, the play also looks forward to such non-naturalistic works as Jean-Paul Sartre's *Huis Clos* and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (which we are presenting at The Questors next season).

Strindberg once said that he drew his characters as 'split and vacillating', and for all their surface naturalism they often behave in ways that seem contradictory, arbitrary and inconsistent. The philosophy of late 19th Century Naturalism was that character should be seen as consistent and explicable in terms of heredity, environment and so on; so even in his early work Strindberg anticipates the more 'modern' view of human nature as elusive, ambiguous and contradictory.

This balance of the naturalistic and the expressionistic is a difficult tightrope to walk, and different productions have taken radically different approaches. Our production tonight is, I suppose, essentially naturalistic – at least on the surface – but there are certainly moments when symbolic, expressionist and irrational elements rise to the surface. We will have to leave it to your judgement to decide if we have fallen off the tightrope or not.

Tragedy or Black Comedy?

One critic has described *Dance of Death* as 'an unmatched black comedy about the routines and pyrotechnics of marriage'. On the other hand, many were critical of a recent production of the play and accused it of 'playing it for laughs'. Clearly a play about death, misery, mental torture and extreme selfishness – in which emotion is usually extreme and always naked and raw; and in which the only consolation to be found is that, although life is hell, there is a remote possibility that death will bring a small spark of hope – is unlikely to be a huge barrel of laughs. And yet we have often laughed in rehearsal, and will not be altogether surprised if you do tonight.

That is not to say – I hope – that we are playing it for laughs. Our concern in rehearsal has certainly been to do justice to the complexities of misery, suffering and cruelty that the characters inflict upon one another, and to present the play in all its stark bleakness. But, as Kurt remarks of Edgar, 'He'd be comic if he weren't tragic,' and as Edgar says himself near the end, 'When life is a farce it can be a nightmare.' Sometimes extremes meet, and laughter seems the only sane response to the misery and meaninglessness of life – or, at least, of some lives.

Steve Fitzpatrick

Dance of Death

by August Strindberg

translated by Michael Meyer

This translation was first performed in London on 15 June 1978
by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre
This is an amateur production.

First performance 22 July 2006

*My tragedy was criticised for being sad, as though people wanted merry tragedies.
People clamour for the joy of life, so theatrical managers put on farces, as if the joy of
life consisted in being foolish. I find my joy in the powerful, cruel struggle of life, and my
enjoyment in learning something new. (August Strindberg)*

Cast

Edgar/Captain	Robin Ingram
Alice	Louise Kavanagh
Kurt	Paul Francis
Jenny/Maya	Jennifer Quille

Production Team

Director	Steve Fitzpatrick
Set Design	Jovanka Litvinenko
Construction	Mike Hagan, John Horwood
Stage Manager	Diane Grimes
Deputy Stage Managers	Lindsay Pearson, Michael Smith
Properties	Harriet Parsonage, Claire Auvache
Lighting Design	Charlie Lucas
Lighting Operators	Sally Milton, Rachel Moorhead
Sound Design	Mark Pummell
Sound Operator	Danny Bailey
Wardrobe	Nichola Thomas, Jenny Yates
Make-up & Hair	Savanna Harrington, Emily Duffield
Movement Advisor	Nicholas Jonne Wilson

Piano played by Sarah Morrison

With many thanks to:

Alex Marker, Adrienne Talbot, Martin Choules, Nigel Worsley,
Sarah Andrews, Sarah Galton, Alan Smith, Tina Harris,
Susie Hickson, John Dobson, Joel Schrire, Richard Lewis,
Francois Langton, and the team at Greasepaint.

Robin Ingram (*Edgar/Captain*)

Robin is a long-standing acting member of The Questors. Previous roles have included Prospero in *The Tempest*, Richard III in *Richard III*, Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lennie in *Of Mice and Men*, an IRA agent in *Juno and the Paycock*, George III in *The Madness of George III* and the Marquis in *The Legacy*.

Louise Kavanagh (*Alice*)

Louise's debut performance at The Questors was as Sylvia in *This Happy Breed* last year. She has also been a member of Beaconsfield Theatre Group for several years, recent roles including Coral Browne in *An Englishman Abroad*, Clara in *When we are Married*, and Lady Alice in *A Man for all Seasons*. She has also performed with Chiltern Shakespeare Company, as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, the Princess in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Paul Francis (*Kurt*)

Previous roles at The Questors for Paul have included Kent in *King Lear*, Rafe in Peter Whelan's *The Herbal Bed*, Badger in Alan Bennett's *The Wind in the Willows*, Judge Brack in *Hedda Gabler*, Judge Turpin in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* and Singing Audrey 2, the plant, in *Little Shop of Horrors*.

Jennifer Quille (*Jenny/Maya*)

Jennifer has a wide experience in performance, including open-air theatre, film and television. For the past ten years her work has mainly been with Tight Fit Theatre, the resident professional company at the Wycombe Swan. Her latest performance was Alan Bennett's *Talking Heads* in June at the Wycombe Swan.

Steve Fitzpatrick (*Director*)

This is the fifteenth play Steve has directed at The Questors. Previous productions include *Tartuffe*, Aristophanes's *Wealth*, *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *Julius Caesar*. Most recently he directed *The Dispute* last summer, and three one-act plays by Chekhov and Feydeau at Christmas. Next season Steve is directing *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Jovanka Litvinenko (*Designer*)

Jovanka is a professional artist and designer, and graduated at Chelsea College of Art & Design. She joined the The Questors in 2002 and has worked on 12 productions including *Into The Woods*, *Shirley Valentine*, *The Clandestine Marriage*, *Early Morning*, *Oliver!* and *Guards! Guards!*. She worked as an assistant designer at the Ice and Fire Theatre and designed *Rainforest* at the Lyric Hammersmith.

Diane Grimes (*Stage Manager*)

Diane joined The Questors in 2004 and six months later started on the Kingston College technical course! She has worked in stage management on productions at The Questors which include Assistant Stage Manager and Properties Assistant on *Road, Into The Woods*, *The Lion The Witch and The Wardrobe*, *Isle of the Departed*, and *R.U.R.* Deputy Stage Manager credits include *Shirley Valentine*, *The Dispute* and most recently *The Night Shift*. *Dance of Death* marks her first production as Stage Manager.

Lindsay Pearson (*Deputy Stage Manager*)

Lindsay has worked in several stage management roles since she joined The Questors for shows including *Educating Rita*, *Shirley Valentine* and most recently the Questors Youth Theatre production *Guards! Guards!*

Michael Smith (*Deputy Stage Manager*)

One of the many actors who also doubles as stage crew when needed, Michael has worked in stage management roles on numerous Questors productions including *Amadeus*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Closer*, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore* and *As You Like It*. He also wrote the music for the *Sex and the Classics* student show last summer. Outside The Questors Michael has also crewed for *Guys and Dolls* at Richmond Theatre.

Harriet Parsonage (*Properties*)

Harriet joined The Questors in 1984 since when she has worked backstage on about 70 productions. For the last 15 years or so she has become virtually synonymous with Props as she is responsible for our substantial collection of properties.

Clare Auvache (*Properties*)

Dance of Death is Clare's second show at The Questors since she joined in September 2005. Her first show was *After the Dance* as Props Manager. She's officially hooked now, and at first wanted to be a set designer/artist, but since being a props manager she just can't get enough.

Charlie Lucas (*Lighting Design*)

Charlie has worked in various roles over his nine years as a member, including ASM, DSM, SM, lighting operator, rigger and follow-spot operator. Lighting design credits at The Questors include in the Studio *Tartuffe* and *The Government Inspector*, and in the Playhouse *Oliver!*, *Into the Woods*, *Time and the Conways*, *Trelawney of the 'Wells'*, *The Happiest Days of Your Life* and *The Wind in the Willows*.

Mark Pummell (*Sound Design*)

Mark joined The Questors in December 2005. Since then he has completed two productions as a Sound Designer/Operator: *The Night Shift* and *After the Dance*. He also more recently operated sound for *The London Cuckolds*.

More great theatre in the autumn at The Questors

September, **Tejas Verdes** by Fermín Cabal, translated by Robert Shaw. A humane and heart-rending sequence of monologues tracing the life of a young woman who vanished one night in Santiago during the early years of Pinochet's regime. 'Almost suffocatingly powerful' (*The Independent*) 'Close to a perfect piece of theatre' (*British Theatre Guide*)

September, **An Enemy of the People** by Henrik Ibsen, translated by Christopher Hampton. Dr Thomas Stockmann, a medical officer inspecting the town's public baths, finds the water is contaminated. When he defies his brother the Mayor and refuses to be silenced, he is ostracised and declared an enemy of the people. 'Little short of superb' (*The Times*) 'An unequivocal triumph' (*Times Literary Supplement*)

October, **Vincent in Brixton** by Nicholas Wright. A brash young Dutchman rents a room in the home of an English widow in Brixton 1873. He discovers a house filled with secrets and is drawn into its web of duplicity. Three years later he returns to Europe on a journey which will end in breakdown and death. 'Brilliant' (*Michael Billington, The Guardian*) 'One of the best new plays ever presented by the National Theatre' (*Sunday Times*)

October, **There'll Always Be a Brentford** by Tony Chapman and Duncan Alldrige. A brand new drama following the passion and anguish of football fans bound together by the spirit of the terraces. The play draws on verbatim reminiscences by Brentford fans from the last 70 years, weaving a fascinating tale of past and present.

November, **The Dog in the Manger** by Lope de Vega, translated by David Johnston. Beautiful and headstrong Diana, Countess of Belflor, discovers her handsome secretary one night seducing her favourite lady-in-waiting. She is consumed with jealousy and embarks on an intrigue of forbidden love, envy and passion in this sensual comedy from the Spanish Golden Age, 'the last great unopened treasure chest of world drama'.

And later in the season

December, **Peter Pan (or, The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up)** by JM Barrie, adapted by Trevor Nunn and John Caird. Our Christmas show for the family, with wonderful flying effects.

December, **Comedians** by Trevor Griffiths. Fierce and funny drama about budding stand-up comics.

January, **Bloody Poetry** by Howard Brenton. The turbulent lives and loves of Byron and Shelley in Italy.

February, **The Lady in the Van** by Alan Bennett. A quirky tale by this much loved writer.

March, **Much Ado about Nothing** by William Shakespeare. Delightful romantic comedy.

April, **The Seven Year Itch** by George Axelrod. A Broadway hit and then an even bigger movie.

May, **Waiting for Godot** by Samuel Beckett. Landmark drama of twentieth century theatre.

June, **Company** by Stephen Sondheim. Beautiful, bittersweet musical about five marriages.

June, **The Trojan Women** by Euripides. Stirring Greek drama set in the aftermath of war.

If you enjoy theatre, you'll love The Questors

Get the most from your membership

Many members join just to see shows, but there is so much else you can do, why not get involved?

Front of house is a great place to start. For programme selling, stewarding or serving in the Café you don't need any experience, and training can be given for anyone who fancies working in Box Office. If you want to meet people and have a good time, then the best place to be is behind the Grapevine Bar - you can volunteer for just one night or many.

Backstage staff, including stage managers, prop makers painters and wardrobe staff, are always welcomed and whatever your skills we'll find a place for you. If you have some experience then The Questors is a wonderful place to be a designer, but even if you don't you can help out on shows and you're sure to get some hands-on experience. The same goes for lighting and sound - the theatre is well equipped and a good place to learn.

You can direct if you have some experience or training, but if not then you can always look out for our training opportunities. The Questors has a high standard of acting and to maintain this anyone wanting to act will need to take an audition. These are held every month - please call the main office for details.

There are numerous other things you can do to help out. If you're free in the daytimes you can help out with envelope stuffing or delivering leaflets, and if you're a bit of a handy man or woman then there are always little jobs to be done.

If you'd like more information about active membership, you can ring the office on 020 8567 0011, Mon to Fri, 9.30 - 5.30, email us on enquiries@questors.org.uk

