

[www.questors.org.uk](http://www.questors.org.uk)

Find out all about our forthcoming productions – along with a lot of other information about The Questors – on our web site.

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## Stay in touch

Just send us your details, and we'll keep you informed about our forthcoming productions at The Questors.

You can either write, phone or email us with your details.

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## Join us

If you enjoy theatre, why not join us and become a member of The Questors?

If you enjoy a regular night out at the theatre with friends, why not become a member of The Questors? As a Playgoer Member, you'll receive a 20 per cent discount on your ticket to most Questors productions, free tickets for your children to most Questors productions, regular information about our productions, and membership of the Grapevine Bar, so you can come and enjoy a quiet evening in the Grapevine throughout the year.

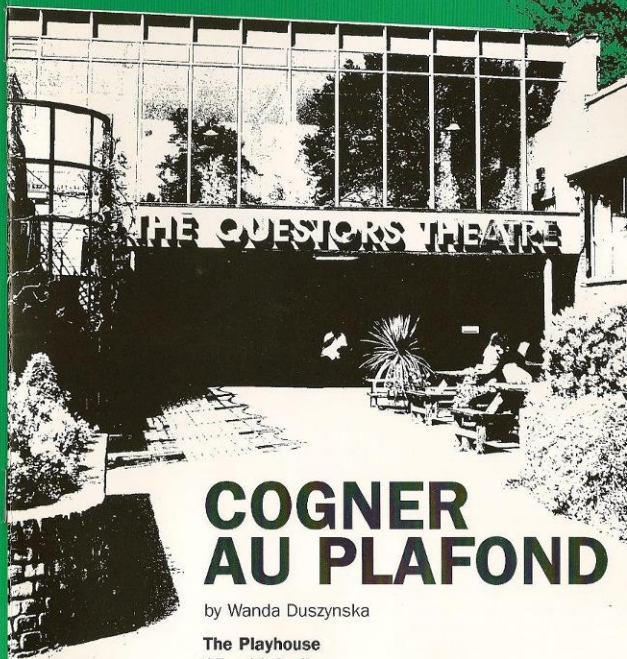
Or you could join as a Company Member and receive a 50 per cent discount on your ticket and opportunities to get involved in our productions, in addition to all the benefits for Playgoer Members.

You can get all of this for just £26.00 for Playgoer membership and £52.50 (£34.00 concessions) for Company membership, with discounts for payment by Direct Debit.

You can find Membership Application forms in the Box Office Foyer, or just phone the Theatre Office.



THE  
**QUESTORS  
THEATRE**



**THE QUESTORS THEATRE**  
12 Mattock Lane  
Ealing W5 5BQ

**Box Office:**  
020 8567 5184

**Theatre Office:**  
020 8567 0011

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[enquiries@questors.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@questors.org.uk)

Registered Charity no 207516

# COGNER AU PLAFOND

by Wanda Duszynska

**The Playhouse**  
25 – 28 April



## THE QUESTORS THEATRE



**Welcome** to The Questors Theatre, one of London's best kept secrets – except to its 2,000 members.

How do I know about The Questors? I am proud to have been its 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 perks of membership) and the many and varied shows in our 370-seat 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 The Questors Youth Theatre. In short, theatre is something for everyone, and with annual membership from £12.00 to £52.50 depending on your chosen 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 Ealing, 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



# COGNER AU PLAFOND

by Wanda Duszyńska

# COGNER AU PLAFOND

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The idea of creating a bilingual French-English play arose last summer, and the 2005 riots in France suggested themselves as an interesting topic both to myself and Questors Youth Theatre members. The theme has proved a thorny one to understand from an outsider's perspective, requiring several months of research and juggling of ideas before any words hit the page. However, it has proved to be an extremely valuable and topical subject, particularly given the impending presidential elections in France. Recent weeks have seen a welter of articles on France's struggle with disenchanting youth, fractured society and the challenges of interculturalism. In arts spheres, we're seeing projects which centre around unresolved issues relating to French colonialism in North Africa, such as the recent film, *Days of Glory*.

*Cogner au Plafond*, therefore, is a small contribution to the French debate. It does not presume, of course, to answer any questions, merely seeking to explore some of the social issues from the perspective of teenagers living on a housing estate, and the possible reasons for youth riots. The play suggests that the biggest frustration experienced by French teenagers is a lack of opportunity, due to a combination of factors: racism, poor housing and the stagnant nature of French society. According to a recent survey conducted by the Centre for Research on Education, Training and Employment (CEREQ), unemployment among young people in France is running at around 19%.

In addition to these chronic factors, *Cogner* also considers some of the more acute problems that young people from the French suburban hinterland claim to experience. One of these is police harassment and police-youth relations have been cited frequently as providing the catalyst for social unrest. However, this is clearly a polemical area and we do not seek to cast aspersions on the French police force. However, Mathieu Kassovitz's film, *La Haine*, makes just such a suggestion. The October 2005 riots which began in the built-up Paris suburb of Clichy sous Bois, were said to have been similarly triggered by the

deaths by electrocution, of the two teenagers, Zyed Benna et Bouna Traore, who ran into an electricity plant, while trying to escape from the police. When enquiries later asked why the police were chasing them, the only answer appeared to be because the boys were running. As to why the boys were running, we can only speculate that it was because the police were chasing them.

*Cogner au Plafond* has a fictitious plot which, nonetheless, obviously and unselfconsciously draws on some of these recent events. A further recent tragedy which provided the starting point for our story was the death of Taoufik El-Amri in December of last year. Of Tunisian origin, Taoufik was supposed to be in police custody, charged with being drunk and disorderly, but was released onto the street in the early hours of the morning while still in a fragile state. After a tussle with a homeless person, he seems to have fallen into the canal, where he drowned.

We dedicate our story, therefore, to these victims of social unrest.

#### A note on language

The French used in the play is mostly straightforward, GCSE/A Level standard French. However, an attempt has been made to touch on a more current youth-style language with the inclusion of a few words of slang, the odd swearword and a short exploration of the very specific French backslang known as *verlan* (which is backwards for l'envers, which means backwards); and, of course, because language is always developing and *verlan* has been around for a few years, the words in our play are already out-of-date. Some original *verlan* words have become so incorporated into the French language, that they themselves are now subjected to the backwardsing process; so the term, 'beur', a word used to refer to French people of North African origin, and created from the word, Arab, has now become, 'rebeur'.

Wanda Duszyńska

Productions are enormously important to the Questors Youth Theatre, giving its members an opportunity to audition for, and be involved in, a fully staged show as well as continuing to develop and nurture their performance skills. As a youth group leader, it is evident to me how much young actors learn from being in a play and having the chance to apply the work they do in their weekly classes, building their confidence and their stagecraft. The opportunity Wanda and I had to develop the play together with the cast allows the process to be organic and provides a space for learning, for us as directors as well as for the cast. Bi-lingual projects such as *Cogner au Plafond* – and *Goat Boy*, our first project of this type in Spanish and English – have the added

dimension of a language barrier, as well as the standard theatrical challenges of development of character and story. This project serves as a great learning tool for the actors involved and, potentially, for audience members who are learning French; but we also prioritise the pure theatrical value of the show. It is vital that the characters are clear and the story is communicated. If we achieve both then such a play can be accessible to all and can be a successful balance of education and entertainment, as the themes of the play – love, betrayal, discrimination and hope – are universal and timeless.

Dominique Gerrard

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## Questors E-News direct to your Inbox

Get all the latest news and offers for our shows by joining our e-mail lists.

- You can choose to receive short snippets of information every week or so, or longer round-ups every month – or both if you wish!
- We'll keep the e-mails as short and simple as possible - because we know you'd prefer it that way.
- And we'll have an unsubscribe facility (which actually works) at the bottom of every message!

It's easy to sign up – just a few clicks is all it takes.

Visit [www.questors.org.uk/e-news.html](http://www.questors.org.uk/e-news.html) and you'll start getting our E-News in your Inbox.

# COGNER AU PLAFOND

(Bashing on the Ceiling)

by Wanda Duszyńska

## CAST

Rachid	Gabriel Pankhurst
Djamel	Lewis Brown
Ivan	Nick Melhuish
Habiba	Sophia Lolzia
Samia	Sita Sharma
Désirée	Raquel Amoanyame
Louise	Florence Cooke
Emma	Ellen Gould
Jade	Emma Byrne
Simon	David Knowles
Philip	Alex Philippotts
Laure	Auréli Bordonnat
Florence	Lauren Murphy
Valérie	Jenny Brusa
Ségolène	Sophie Shawdon
Auréli	Hannah Byrne
Margaux	Annalie Brusa
Jean-Luc	Sebastian Umrigar
Christian	Will Langley
Newsreader	Guyanné Saul
Claude	Chris Edwards
Teacher	Wanda Duszyńska or Dominique Gerrard
Police	Henry Lewis Michael Nersisyan

Run time: 2 hours

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes

## Crew

Directors	Dominique Gerrard Wanda Duszyńska
Designer	Alex Marker
Lighting designer	Chris Edwards
Lighting operator	Celia Williams
Composer	Tayeb Fghoul
Sound designer	Danny Bailey
Sound operator	Claire Walker
Stage manager	Martin Choules
Deputy stage manager	Jack Richardson
Assistant stage managers	Annie Campbell Allie Hunter Cecily Johnson
Linguistic consultant	Valérie Amato
Wardrobe	Jennie Yates
Make-up consultant	Peter Salvietto
Photography	Michael Smith
Filming	Peter Knowles
Video editor	David Whitbourn
Chaperone	Carol Hunter
Programme editor	Rachel Knightley
Programme design and print	<a href="http://www.considerthisuk.com">www.considerthisuk.com</a>

**THANKS TO:** Yasmina Fghoul, Khadou Fghoul, Malika Fghoul, Francesca Cantini, Lisa Johnson, Rachel Knightley, Chris Ree, Abby Taylor, Jean Turpin and to the Reuters Foundation for lending us the laptops.

Original music for *Cogner au Plafond* by Tayeb Fghoul can be purchased on CD in the foyer after the performance

[www.myspace.com/tayebfghoul](http://www.myspace.com/tayebfghoul)

## Cast Biographies

### **Valérie Amato** – Linguistic consultant

Valérie has been working for the Questors Youth Theatre since September. When she was a teenager she played Anne Frank in the suburbs of Paris for two years.

### **Raquel Amoanyame** – Desirée

Raquel loves coming to The Questors and has been coming the Youth Theatre for three years. This will be her first time performing.

### **Aurélie Bordonnat** – Laure

This is Aurélie's first year at The Questors. She has previously appeared in *Le Mariage du Kassovitch* in Paris and *Sherlock Holmes* in Hong Kong. This will be her first Questors show.

### **Lewis Brown** – Djamel

Lewis has been a Questors member for two years and is now a member of the Questors Student Group. He made his first appearance on the Questors stage as Starkey in *Peter Pan*. Elsewhere Lewis has been in *The Merchant Of Venice* as Shylock and played Judge Azdak in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

### **Annie Brusa** – Margaux

This will be Annie's seventh production at The Questors, including *Tongues of Fire*, *King Lear*, *Oliver!* and *The Merchant of Venice*. At school she has appeared in *Romeo and Juliet* and has worked backstage on *Calamity Jane*.

### **Jenny Brusa** – Valérie

Jenny has been going to The Questors for nine years. She is in the Youth Theatre and was in last year's *Summer Showcase*. She is hoping to take Technical Theatre next year at Kingstons College.

### **Emma Byrne** – Jade

Emma joined The Questors when she was five. Since then she has taken part in a few Youth Theatre showcases and hopes to stay with The Questors for as long as she can.

### **Hannah Byrne** – Aurélie

Hannah started Questors when she was eleven. She has taken part in three summer showcases but this is her first full-length play. She has appeared in *Romeo and Juliet* at her school and *Oliver!* and *The Wizard of Oz* for Onstage Theatre School.

### **Martin Choules** – Stage manager

Martin has stage-managed numerous shows at Questors, most recently *An Enemy of the People* and *The Lady in the Van*. He has previously worked on the Youth Theatre shows *The Chrysalids*, *Guards! Guards!* and *Goat Boy*, as well as *Oliver!* and *Peter Pan* which had large youth casts.

### **Florence Cooke** – Louise

Florence has been at The Questors for four years. This is her first full-scale production but she has taken part in the summer showcases. She has also taken part in plays and musicals outside the Questors Youth Theatre.

### **Wanda Duszyńska** – Author; co-director

Wanda has been a member of The Questors for ten years. After completing the two-year acting course in 1999 she focussed on set design (*Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Merchant Of Venice*, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*), with the occasional foray into acting (*A Wedding Story*). This is her second bilingual drama written for the Questors Youth Theatre, the first being last year's *The Goat Boy*, in English and Spanish.

### **Dominique Gerrard** – Co-director

Dominique is a professional actress and a drama teacher and director. She trained with The Actors' Company in 2001 and has been teaching at the Questors Youth Theatre for almost five years. Dominique directed *Scenes from the Fair* in 2004 (written especially for the youth theatre) and co-directed *The Goat Boy* with Wanda in 2006. She will be performing in *Sondheim's Company* at Questors in June.

### **Ellen Gould** – Emma

Ellen has been a member of the Questors Youth Theatre for seven years. She's always loved acting and has appeared in school productions since primary school. Recently she took part in the 2007 Shakespeare Schools Festival, playing Audrey in *As You Like It*. This is her first Questors Youth Theatre production.

### **David Knowles** – Simon

David is 15 and has attended Questors since he was 12. He has played Charlie Bates in *Oliver!*, John Darling in *Peter Pan* and Corporal Nobbs in *Guards! Guards!* He is a member of the National Youth Theatre and the Ealing Youth Orchestra. He plays viola, clarinet, mandolin and piano.

### **Will Langley** – Christian

Will's first Questors productions were *The Twits* and *Oliver!* He was also in a production of *Oliver!* at his school, playing Oliver, and was Gremio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. He also and also appeared in *Macbeth*.

### **Sophia Loizia** – Habiba

Sophia has been a member of the Questors Youth Theatre for over a year and this is her first major play. She has also been in various plays in primary school and participated in the Questors Youth Theatre summer showcase in 2006. Sophia has been on radio and television shows such as *SMTV Live*.

### **Nick Melhuish** – Ivan

Nick is in his fourth year at The Questors and has been in *Scenes From The Fair*, *The Goat Boy*, *Peter Pan* and *More Adventures in Time and Space*. Outside of that he has played various parts in *Hamlet*, *A Writers Tale*, *Twelfth Night*, *Our Day Out* and was in the orchestra for *Little Shop of Horrors*.

### **Lauren Murphy** – Florence

Lauren started Questors four years ago and her first teacher was Alex Marker. The first play she was in was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She has been coming almost every week since then and has taken part in many term productions.

### **Gabriel Pankhurst** – Rachid

Gabriel started taking drama and drama classes at the YMCA aged three, performing at Ealing Town Hall in *The Snowman* aged four. He joined the Questors Youth Theatre aged eight. Last year he appeared in his first play, *Goat Boy*, in which he played both Espeedy and Welly Jelly.

The Questors present

## **Arsenic and Old Lace**

by Joseph Kesselring

Macabre and hilarious tale of two innocent old ladies with a cellar-ful of corpses.

### **Alex Philpotts** – Phillip

Alex joined the Questors Youth Theatre in 2006. This is his first play at The Questors, though he has been in three previous plays: *Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Macbeth*.

### **Jack Richardson** – Deputy stage manager

Jack is currently a student on the Kingston Technical Theatre course and has previously worked on *There'll Always Be Brentford*.

### **Sita Sharma** – Samia

Sita has been a member of the Questors Youth Theatre since 2004 but this is her first play here. At school she has performed in A School for Scandal and a number of school plays before this, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Joseph* and his *Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

### **Sophie Shawdon** – Ségolène

Sophie has been a member of the Questors Youth Theatre for four years. This is her fourth youth theatre production after roles in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Scenes from the Fair*, and the father of a six-foot dwarf in *Guards! Guards!*

### **Sebastian Umrigar** – Jean-Luc

Sebastian joined The Questors in 2005 and this is his first production. At school he has taken played *David Copperfield*, *Claudius in Hamlet*. He is presently rehearsing for a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* playing the part of Oberon, and for *Peter Pan* at Richmond Theatre over the Easter holidays.

4-5, 8-12 May at 7.45pm,  
6 May at 2.30pm

In the Studio

Tickets: £10.50  
(£9.50 concessions, £5.00 students)

The Questors present

**Waiting for Godot**  
by Samuel Beckett

20th-century comedy masterpiece of two irascible tramps' touching dependence on each other while waiting for Mr Godot to arrive.

22-26 May at 7.45pm

*In the Playhouse*

*Tickets: 22-24 May – £11.50 (£10.50 concessions, £5.50 students);  
25-26 May – £13.50 (£12.00 concessions, £6.50 students)*

The Questors present

**Company**  
music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim,  
book by George Furth

Beautiful, bittersweet musical about five marriages.

2, 5-9, 13-16, 20-23 June at 7.45pm,  
3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23 June at 2.30pm

*In the Studio*

*Tickets: £10.50 (£9.50 concessions,  
£5.00 students)*

The Questors present

**The Trojan Women**  
by Euripides

An arrogant and powerful military leader crosses the known world to attack another country. In the long, drawn-out war that follows, thousands are killed, the country ravaged, and the innocent suffer the most. Sounds familiar? Our staging of this moving Greek classic sets the drama in the modern-day Middle East.

16, 19-23 June at 7.45pm,  
17 June at 2.30pm

*In the Playhouse*

*Tickets:  
16-21 June – £11.50 (£10.50 concessions, £5.50 students);  
22-23 June – £13.50 (£12.00 concessions, £6.50 students)*



## Getting the most from your membership

**Many members join just to see shows, but there is so much more on offer to Company Members. So why not get involved?**

Front-of-House is a great place to start. No previous experience is needed for selling programmes, stewarding or serving in the Café; and training is provided 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 – and you can volunteer for just one night or several.

Backstage staff – including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, 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 space to be a designer. But even without experience, you can help out on shows, and you're sure to get some hands-on experience. The same goes for lighting and sound – the Playhouse and Studio are both well-equipped and excellent places to learn.

You can direct if you have some experience or training, but if not then we offer various learning opportunities. The Questors have a high standard of acting, and to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – so if you have some training or experience of acting, call the Theatre Office for details of the forthcoming auditions.

There are many other activities you can join in to help out. If you're free during daytimes, you can help with our monthly mailing or delivering leaflets, and if you're handy with maintenance then there are always little jobs to be done.

Only Company members can take part in our activities, so please contact the Theatre Office if you would like to get involved or receive further information about Company membership.