

www.questors.org.uk

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

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.

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.

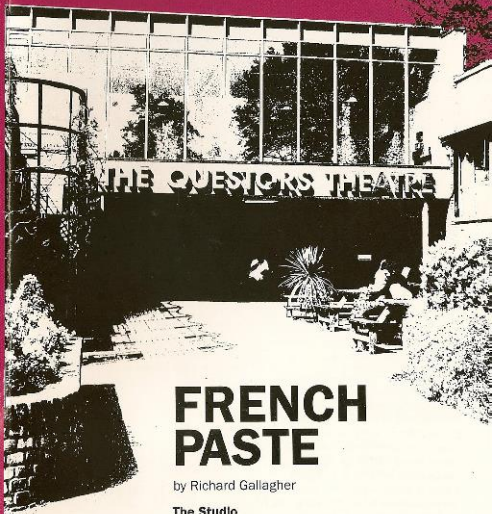
Or you could join as a Company Member and receive a 50 per cent discount on your ticket and opportunities to get involved in our productions, in addition to all the benefits for Playgoer Members.

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

Registered Charity no 207516

FRENCH PASTE

by Richard Gallagher

The Studio
7 – 14 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



FRENCH PASTE

by Richard Gallagher

FRENCH PASTE

In the late seventies and early eighties, long before this play was written, I started college and began associating, for the first time, with people of my own age. My new friends presented me with two surprises: the first was that most adolescent males had never heard of Ethel Merman; the second was that I could enjoy music that had not begun its life on Broadway.

I still played my old records but, at the same time, dipped my toe into unfamiliar musical waters. The resulting chimera of a collection caused eyebrows to be raised: 'Lou Reed? Billy Joel?'

(I would shrug nonchalantly.)

'You don't look the type.'

A further surprise came some time later when I became friendly with a gay man who, I had been told, was 'very like me'. On my first visit to his bedsit, I looked at the posters on his walls and felt curiously at home: Carol Channing, Dorothy Squires ... and, poking out of his record shelf, a familiar sleeve. When he suggested putting some music on, like the true connoisseur that I was, I gave a one-word answer: 'Judy.'

We went from Ms Garland to Liza Minnelli to Ethel Merman and so on. My friend was delighted that I knew all the lyrics to a host of musicals that had closed before either of us was born. I learned that my friend and I shared a heritage that I had found desolate the horrors of growing up gay in Oldham.

Then along came the pernicious effects of Thatcherism. 'Clause 28', James Anonoro (the homophobic Chief Constable of Greater Manchester) and, later, AIDS. I became a 'hardened' gay activist and swapped Ethel Merman for Tom Robinson.

When I was asked by Roar Material Theatre Company - sadly, now defunct - to write *French Paste*, I was still bristling at the incredible injustices I saw all around me and fondly considering myself to be Manchester's answer to Howard Brenton. It was only at the read-through, when my colleagues began laughing,

that I realised that I had written a comedy (honestly!). Later, the play was to be done again with Michael Cashman as Stephen. Michael, who is now a MEP, had just come out of *Eastenders*, having shocked the nation with soap's first gay men's kiss. In real life, he combined integrity and bravery with a lasers-sharp impersonation of Eartha Kitt and so embodied the man I wanted to be when I grew up.

I had played Stephen myself during the original run and so Michael's performance brought me some objectivity. I experienced that familiar feeling when my characters begin to take on a life of their own: Tom and Stephen were parts of myself metamorphosing into two, very different, people who had a life outside my imagination. The play's politics were still relevant and Tom's more universal demands for self-affirmation despite all opposition promised its longevity and a wider audience.

This is a new version of the play, re-written to accommodate the time that has past. Nearly twenty years on, the battles have largely been fought and won. Today's young gay men prefer Kylie to Judy, Lou Reed is played on Radio 2 and my camper recordings would be valuable antiques were it not that the CD versions are available (*Readers' Digest* recommend them as an 'ideal present for Grandma'). My play, which in the nineties I considered to be 'dated', may now call itself a 'period piece'. I could ease up on the agitprop and get down to the necessary task of fixing it in its own time. I recalled the storms of 1987 and realised that the recurring theme of *The Wizard of Oz* had at long last found its cyclops. I used this and other, sly, little images from *Oz* and then began to pare away the parts of the script that time had made redundant. Pam came in from offstage; Geraldine was demoted from a television star to a wannabe; Stephen was able to relax a bit and Tom ... Well, what could anyone ever do with Tom?

Tom and Stephen's marital strife can be seen as a metaphor for any kind of domestic upheaval. Politically, we can look back - gay and straight -

and see, as Mr Sondheim put it, 'how we got there from here'. However, we must guard against complacency; prejudice still exists, not just for gays and lesbians, but for all minorities.

After one performance of *French Paste*, a woman told me that her twenty-three year-old son had chosen my play as a suitable prelude to telling her that he was gay. Magnanimous, maternal and unintentionally patronising, she declared: 'I liked your play and, after all, you're just people like everybody else.' As soon as his mother went to

the loo, the son downed a stiff gin and sang a snatch of *Gai Happy*. His mother arrived back and caught him at it. She smiled indulgently, giving him the courage to risk a quick Betty Davis quote.

If his mother had ever wondered why he'd never brought girlfriends home to tea, she need only have looked at his record collection ...

Richard Gallagher

The Questors Youth Theatre present

Aftermath

by QYT Group 11A, Rachel Knightley and Samantha Wright

Teenagers are forced to deal with the consequences of a tragic event.

21 April at 2.30pm and 7.45pm

In the Playhouse

Tickets: £5.00

The Questors Youth Theatre present

Cogner au Plafond (Bashing on the Ceiling)

a play in French and English
by Wanda Duszyńska

Poignant and comic drama of English students who encounter more than they bargained for on a school trip.

25-28 April at 7.45pm,
28 April at 2.30pm

In the Playhouse

Tickets: 25-26 April - £11.50
(£10.50 concessions, £5.50 students);
27-28 April - £13.50
(£12.00 concessions, £6.50 students)

FRENCH PASTE

by Richard Gallagher

First performance: 7 April 2007

CAST

Tom	Dieter Thomas
Stephen	Timothy Howes
Pam	Gillian Jacyna
Geraldine	Louise Kavanagh

The play takes place in Brixton in October 1987.

There will be one interval of 15 minutes.



Timothy Howes, Louise Kavanagh, Gillian Jacyna and Dieter Thomas

Production Team

Director	Francis Lloyd
Co-director	Richard Gallagher
Designer	Chris Ifould
Stage Manager	Alec Atchison
Deputy stage manager	Eric Lister
Lighting Designer	Tim Hayward
Sound	Colin Horne
Lighting operator	Sally Milton
Wardrobe	Jennie Yates
Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Construction	Danny Bailey
Set assistant	Alison Gregory
Video and projection	Nigel Worsley
Rehearsal prompt	Pam Smith
Hair, wigs and make-up	Corrina Edwards Tabita Manolea
Photography	Ian Cole David Mosby
Programme editor	Rachel Knightley
Programme design and print	www.considerthisuk.com
Publicity	Ian Briggs

THANKS TO: Julia Cruttenden, John Dobson, Tim Donnelly, Stanley Gallagher, Sarah Gaulton, Greesepoint, Freddy Henry, Fleur Lloyd, Alex Marker, Jane Mason, Tom McGuire, Chris Newall, Lindsay Pearson, The Questors office staff, Joel Schrire, Stephen at *QX Magazine*, Tessa Vale, John Wibberley and the many others who have helped.

Cast Biographies

Richard Gallagher – *Writer and co-director*
Parts played at The Questors include Terri in *Privates on Parade*, Daniel in *My Night With Reg*, Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*, Hugh in *Absolute Hell*, Doctor Feldmann in *Duet For One* and James Joyce in *Travesties*. He recently directed *Habeas Corpus*.

Timothy Howes – *Stephen*
Timothy has been involved in drama on-and-off for many years, makes a living as a drama teacher and is constantly busy directing something. He also helps to run a theatre group in the Midlands, with whom he regularly performs. This is his first appearance at The Questors since joining late last year.

Gillian Jacyna – *Parr*
Gillian trained with The Questors Student Group 53. Productions have included *Right You Are! (If You Think So)*, *The Happiest Days of Your Life*, *Conversations After a Burial*, *Into The Woods* and *Bye Bye Blues*. Gillian also went to the Edinburgh Fringe with *Marriage*.

Louise Kavanagh – *Geraldine*
Louise joined The Questors in 2004 and has appeared as Sylvia in *This Happy Breed* and Alice in *Dance of Death*. She also performs regularly with Beaconsfield Theatre Group and Chiltern Shakespeare Company, most recently in *Twelfth Night*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Our Country's Good*, *Present Laughter* and *An Englishman Aboard*.

Francis Lloyd – *Director*
Francis joined The Questors to play Bohun in *You Never Can Tell*. Parts since then include Henry Bol in *The Revengers Comedies*, John in *Ioanna*, Martolini in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Henry Carr in *Travesties* and Wicksteed in *Habeas Corpus*. Last season he directed *After the Dance* by Terence Rattigan.

Dieter Thomas – *Tom*
Dieter has been a Questors member for seven years and has enjoyed a wide variety of roles but is confident no one will have seen him like this before. Recent roles include Polidor in *Bloody Poetry*, Kristian in *Code4m4ket*, Marco in *Dolly West's Kitchen* and Dan in *New Boy*.

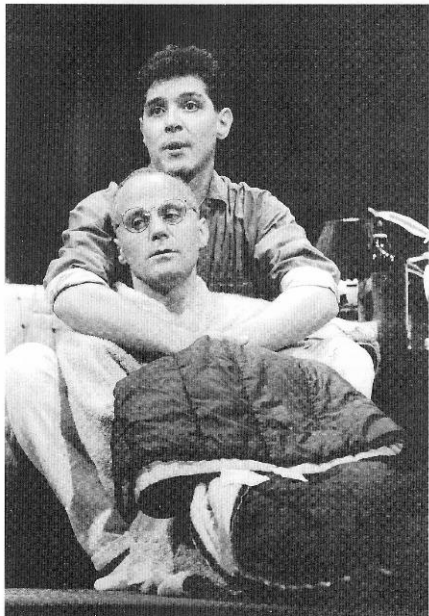
The Questors present
Arsenic and Old Lace
by Joseph Kesselring

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

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)



Tom (Tim Donnelly) and Stephen (Michael Cashman) in the original production.

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)

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 and you'll start getting our E-News in your Inbox.



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.