

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.

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**



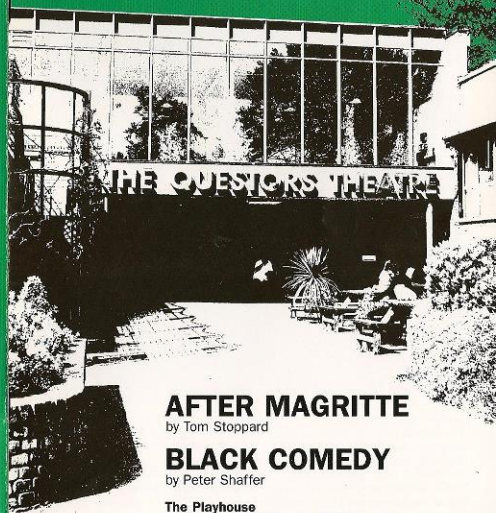
THE QUESTORS THEATRE
12 Mattock Lane
Ealing W5 5BQ

Box Office:
020 8567 5184

Theatre Office:
020 8567 0011

Email:
enquiries@questors.org.uk

Registered Charity no 207516



AFTER MAGRITTE

by Tom Stoppard

BLACK COMEDY

by Peter Shaffer

The Playhouse
26 January – 2 February 2008



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



AFTER MAGRITTE

by Tom Stoppard

BLACK COMEDY

by Peter Shaffer

After Magritte and Black Comedy

It would be hard to deny that the authors (both, as it happens, Jewish) of these two plays are among the most important playwrights of the late 20th century (and indeed, since both are still alive and writing, the early 21st century). These two farces have no intention other than to entertain, yet they both bear the hallmarks of great playwrights at their peak, and both plays were written between the respective authors' first and second major successes with full length plays.

TOM STOPPARD spent his early years as a refugee. He was born Tomas Straussler in Czechoslovakia in 1937, but when the Nazis invaded in 1939 his family moved to Singapore. Two years later, when the Japanese invaded Singapore, he was evacuated to India, while his father remained in Singapore as a British army volunteer and died in a Japanese prison camp after capture. In India, Stoppard received an English education, and following the remarriage of his mother to an Englishman by the name of Stoppard, he moved to England in 1946, where he continued his education, leaving school at 17. He never went to university, but worked as a journalist, including two spells as a drama critic, and began writing plays. He was noticed almost immediately, and after a few minor successes, began work on his first masterpiece, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. This went through several iterations (indeed an early version was workshopped at The Questors) before creating a sensation at the National Theatre

in 1967. Before his next big success at the National, *Jumpers*, Stoppard wrote several one-act plays, including *After Magritte*, which premiered at the Green Banana Restaurant in 1970. He has since gone on to write such major classics as *Travesties* (seen at The Questors in 2005), *Arcadia* and *The Coast of Utopia*. His most recent play was the award-winning *Rock 'n' Roll* in 2006.

If there is a hallmark to Stoppard's work it is that no matter what the subject matter or style, there is always an underlying philosophical theme. Each play is more than it seems at first sight, and is often intellectually and structurally complex; it is almost always also very clever. Stoppard likes to tie together a lot of disparate strands into a coherent whole. This is as true of a short, light farce like *After Magritte* as it is of his more serious work. He takes as his starting point an absurd tableau, of the kind that might be seen in a painting by the surrealist artist René Magritte, and gradually builds up a logical justification for it, thus demonstrating that absurd theatre and art are never (theless rooted in real life. Indeed the inspiration for the play came from a real life anecdote: A friend of Stoppard's had a couple of peacocks in the garden, and one escaped while he was shaving. He had to cross a main road to catch it, and he was standing in his pyjamas with shaving foam on his face holding the peacock, when the traffic started going by. He observed that anyone

passing by in a car at that moment would not have believed their eyes.

For those who are not familiar with Magritte's witty, non-naturalistic paintings, it may be helpful to understand that a great many of them contain images of tubas and bowler hats.

PETER SHAFFER was born in Liverpool in 1926, the twin brother of the playwright Anthony Shaffer (the author of *Sleuth*). He moved to London at the age of nine, and was educated at St Paul's School. He spent three years' national service during the war working in a coal mine, before going to Trinity College, Cambridge. After university he spent three years in America before returning to London and working among other things as a literary critic and music critic. He started writing plays in the late 1950s and had a West End success with *Five Finger Exercise* which ran for two years at the Comedy Theatre. However the play that really brought him attention was the major classic *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, performed by the National Theatre in 1964.

In 1965, the National Theatre had committed themselves to a production of Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, to open in Chichester and move to the Old Vic, and were looking for a piece to complete a double bill. The announcement had to be made in a few days and they had nothing. Kenneth Tynan (the National's literary manager), lunching with Shaffer, mentioned the problem and Shaffer

reluctantly tossed him an idea that he had, based on a classic Chinese sketch, in which two men fought a duel in the dark, but with the stage fully lit. Enthused, Tynan whisked him off to see Laurence Olivier (the artistic director), where he described the idea. Shaffer stressed that he had no plot, no shape and no characters – it was just an idea; and he was about to go to New York to write a film script. However Olivier took a deep breath, said "It's all going to be thrilling", and Shaffer found himself commissioned to produce a play that he hardly had time to write, with no more than the most elementary starting point, and which had already been given a title, publicised and had its first night set.

It was, in Olivier's words, "a farce written under farce conditions". Writes and rewrites kept crossing the Atlantic, revisions were still being made right up to the first night, rehearsal time was very limited because the cast were simultaneously working on two other productions, and there was not a single preview before press night. But, needless to say, *Black Comedy* was a stunning success, leaving its audiences literally rolling in the aisles in agony.

Shaffer has since gone on to write other major plays, including the world famous classics *Equus* and *Amadeus*.

David Emmet

AFTER MAGRITTE

by TOM STOPPARD

BLACK COMEDY

by PETER SHAFFER

First performance of this production: 26 January 2008

THE CAST

AFTER MAGRITTE

Reginald Harris	David Hovatter
Thelma Harris	Emma Hounsell
Mother	Michele Waddock
PC Holmes	Russell Fleet
Chief Inspector Foot	John Downs

Scene: A house in a north London suburb, 1971.

Running time: about 30 minutes.

INTERVAL OF 20 MINUTES

BLACK COMEDY

Brinsley Miller	Tristan Marshall
Carol Melkett	Jessica Payne
Miss Furnival	Anne Sawbridge
Colonel Melkett	Alan Waddock
Harold Gorringe	Russell Fleet
Clea	Jo Maw
Schuppanzigh	Paul Vincent
Bamberger	Christopher Hodgson

Scene: a flat in Victorian House in South Kensington, 1965.

Running time: about 1 hour 15 minutes.

THE CREW

Director	David Emmet
Designer	Claire Dell
Costume Designer	Sarah Andrews
Lighting Designer	Ben Sandford
Sound Designer	Martin Choulos
Stage Managers	Martin Choulos Pam Cullen Jo Matthews Mercedes De Lahitte
Deputy Stage Manager	
Properties	Claudia Kees
Construction	Zyg Staniaszek Colin Horne Mark Horne
Drapery	Jo Matthews Annie Gilmour Russell Fleet
Set Painting	Bron Blake Jenny Richardson Alex Marker Jool Schrire
Flying	
Assistant Stage Managers	Keith Raeburn Wadan Mubgar
Lighting Operators	Ceole Clerkin Rajan Sharma
Sound Operators	Rhiannon Bevan Magda Kurek
Make up and Hair	Catherine Frankel Caroline Seton
Programme Editor	Penelope MacLachlan
Programme Design and Print	ConsiderthisUK.com

Euphonium kindly loaned by Calling Strings and Horwell Brass Band

Very special thanks to Jonathan Burrey, who was to have played PC Holmes

Thanks to:

Martin Stoner, Mike Hagan, Tim Hayward, Paul Wilson, Raff, Powell Sowa, Andy McDonald, Chris Rowell, Francois Langton, Tim Edwards, Richard Mead, Chris Edwards, Peter Collins

Biographies

John Downs (Foot) first appeared at The Questors 20 years ago in *Blood Wedding*. Other productions have included *Benefactors*, *The Typists* and most recently *Arsenic and Old Lace*. His absences have been filled with community productions in Buckinghamshire.

Russell Fleet (Harold Gorrings) joined The Questors in September 2006 and after taking part in a new actors' showcase, he has appeared in *Bloody Poetry*, as Balthasar in *Much Ado About Nothing* and as Hysterium in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.

Emma Hounsell (Thelma) trained at Webber Douglas and joined The Questors a year ago. She has previously appeared on stage and in film, and took part in a new actors' showcase last year. This is her first Questors production.

David Hovatter (Harris) joined The Questors in 1983 and his first production was *Charley's Aunt*. Since then he has become a stalwart, appearing in a great many productions, most recently *After the Dance*, *Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *R.U.R.* He has also occasionally turned his hand to directing.

Tristan Marshall (Brindsley) came to The Questors from Northern Ireland a few years ago since when he has acted in *Suddenly Last Summer*, *A Russian in the Woods*, *Oh! What a Lovely War* and as Lord Byron in *Bloody Poetry*.

Jo Maw (Clea) joined The Questors a year ago and is playing her first part here, though she took part in a new actors' showcase last year. She trained at St Mary's University College and her previous experience is in theatre and film and television.

Jessica Payne (Carol) joined The Questors only in the autumn of 2007, having studied drama at Hull University. Previous plays have been at Hull and on the Edinburgh Fringe, but this is her first appearance of any kind at The Questors.

Anne Sawbridge (Miss Fumival) trained in The Questors Student Group (Group 38) 25 years ago and has since appeared in numerous productions, including *Daisy Pulls It Off*, *The Art of Success* and most recently *After the Dance*, *The London Cuckolds* and *The Lady in the Van*.

Paul Vincent (Schuppanzigh) has been a member of The Questors for 25 years, appearing in many productions, including *Hamlet*, *Daisy Pulls It Off*, and most recently *Travesties*, *The London Cuckolds* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Alan Waldock (Colonel) was an actor at The Questors in 1979-1982, playing Alceste in *The Misanthrope*, Higgins in *Pygmalion*, Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral* and Tesman in *Hedda Gabler*. He lived in America for 25 years, and has recently returned to The Questors, acting in *Dog in the Manger* and as Jiggers in *Great Expectations*.

Michele Waldock (Mother) was a member of The Questors in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but has since acted with various companies in Portland, Oregon, where her roles included Emily Stilson in *Wings*, Delia in *Bedroom Farce* and Petruccio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. She returned to The Questors stage last year in *The Trojan Women*.

David Emmet (Director) trained in The Questors Student Group and has directed 48 productions at The Questors since 1978, the most recent being *Early Morning*, *The Clandestine Marriage*, *Far Away and More Adventures in Time and Space*. He is also the Director of Studies for the Student Group.

Claire Dell (Designer) trained in theatre design at Central St Martin's School of Art, and first came to The Questors to help on *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. This is her first design for The Questors.

The Country & Knives in Hens

8 - 23 February 2008

In the Studio

Two outstanding modern plays presented in repertoire over two weeks.



Art Exhibitions

Our regular art exhibitions offer a wonderful opportunity for local artists to display their work.

Please take time to have a look when visiting the theatre.

For details on upcoming exhibitions or on exhibiting your work, please contact Jane Mason in the Questors Office on 020 8567 0011.

Arabian Nights

19 - 23 February 2008

In the Playhouse

The Questors Youth Theatre presents a fantastically theatrical production full of tall tales and adventure.



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!

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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.