



Coming up at The Questors

BEDROOM FARCE

by Alan Ayckbourn,
opens 29 September 2008

MACBETH

by William Shakespeare,
opens 31 October 2008

THE MINACK THEATRE

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In the interest of safety and comfort members of the audience are requested:

- Not to walk on the stage at any time and to keep to the paths and steps when in the Theatre
- Not to smoke anywhere in the Theatre
- To place all litter in the bins provided

Next week at The Minack Theatre

The Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre Company presents

WILD OATS

by John O'Keefe

The Minack Theatre on the Cliffs of Porthcurno



The Questors Theatre presents



CHARLEY'S AUNT

by Brandon Thomas
4 to 8 August 2008

ABOUT THE QUESTORS

The Questors is the largest community theatre in Europe, with an audience membership of around 3,000, of whom around 600 are actively involved in productions.

Situated in Ealing, west London, we offer our members a wide range of activities and social events, in addition to a season of around twenty shows a year, a variety of courses and workshops, and a regular programme of visiting companies. We also have a very lively social club in The Grapevine Bar. Members can get involved in all aspects of production, as well as participate in the running of events, marketing, front-of-house, and other activities.

Since our foundation in 1929, The Questors has had a reputation for achieving the highest standards of any amateur theatre in the world, both in quality and the professionalism of its productions. With our theatre complex (the Playhouse seats up to 400 people and the Studio caters for more intimate audiences of around 100), rehearsal space, workshop and professional technical facilities, we offer opportunities for excellence in all areas of theatre production and design.

As well as exploring the mainstream of modern and classical world drama, The Questors has always been respected for championing new or rarely performed plays, and for encouraging experimentation. The Company's artistic aims and objectives are outlined in The Quest.

Our theatre complex in Mattock Lane, Ealing has good public transport links and free parking adjacent to the theatre.

For further information please contact:

THE QUESTORS THEATRE
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CHARLEY'S AUNT

by Brandon Thomas
4 to 8 August 2008



Charley's Aunt

Charley's Aunt was first performed at the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds on 29th February 1892, before transferring to the Royalty Theatre in London and then to the Globe. Starring W.F.Penley, a popular comedian who had made his reputation in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and with Brandon Thomas himself as Sir Francis Chesney, it was an instant success, running for a record 1,466 performances. Also in the cast, as Ela Delahay, was Nina Boucicault, who was later to become famous as the first Peter Pan. The play opened in America in 1893, where it also ran for more than four years. It has been filmed five times, once with Syd Chaplin (Charley's brother), once with Arthur Askey (under the wince-making title of *Charley's Big Hearted Aunt*) and, most famously, with the great American comedian, Jack Benny. A role call of the actors who have played Lord Fancourt Babberley reads like a Who's Who of great comedians, and includes Ray Bolger (the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*), Norman Wisdom, Frankie Howerd, Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones. Straight actors too have played the part: Jose Ferrer, John Mills (in a celebrated production directed by Sir John Gielgud) and Michael Kitchen among them. Even Danny La Rue and John Inman have had



a go, although I can't say I'm sorry to have missed the former performance. Frank Loesser (of *Guys and Dolls* fame) turned it into the musical *Where's Charley?*, now best remembered for the classic number *Once in love with Amy*. It has been translated into virtually every language under the sun, and had the comrades of Brezhnev's USSR rolling in the aisles when it appeared in Moscow in 1975 under the title *Hello I'm Your Auntie* (apparently that line's a belter in Russian). There is even a Danish musical version, which had a big hit with Babbs's song: *Det ev svaert at vaere en kvinde nu til dags*.

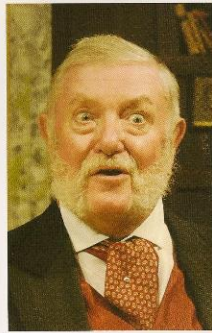
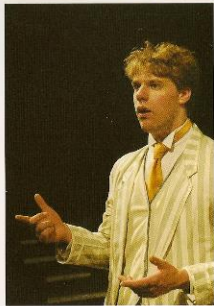
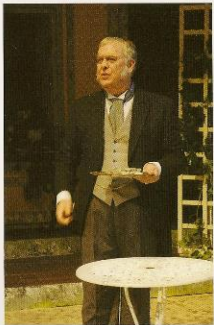
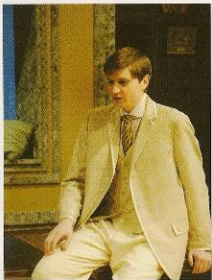
Apparently that translates as *It's hard to be a woman nowadays*. I don't know if that was an early Eurovision Song Contest entry, but it certainly sounds as though it should have been.

So what makes the play so successful? Obviously, the first reason is that it is sublimely, deliciously funny. We all love the silly-ass Babbs dragged up as the old frump of an aunt, and his pursuit by the money grabbing Spettigue. But aside from the farce, what makes the play so enduringly appealing is that it is also a great romantic comedy without

an ounce of malice. It is, quite simply, the most good-natured, happy play ever written. None of your French boudoir cynicism here; this is a tale of quintessential English decency – dashing chaps and gorgeous girls all brought together in the most perfectly contrived farcical plot. *Charley's Aunt* has survived for more than 100 years, and I see no reason why it should not go on for many hundreds more. Working on the play has been an unalloyed pleasure.

Francis Lloyd





CHARLEY'S AUNT

by Brandon Thomas

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 21 June 2008

First performance of this production at The Minack Theatre: 4 August 2008

THE COMPANY

Jack Chesney	Henry Lewis
Brassett	Michael Hayes
Charley Wykeham	Cherlie Cahill
Lord Fancourt Babberley	Anthony Curran
Kitty Verdun	Marianne Waite
Amy Spettigue	Eleanor Misselbrook
Sir Francis Chesney	Paul Francis
Stephen Spettigue	Alan Waldoock
Donna Lucia d'Alvadorez	Sarah Morrison
Ela Delahay	Chloe Lewis
Director	Francis Lloyd
Stage Manager	Clare Watson
Tour Manager	Jane Arnold-Forster
Deputy Stage Manager	Ruth Parry
Set Design	Alison Gregory
Lighting Design	Martin Stoner
Lighting/Sound Operator	Derek Stoddart, Lizzie Averill
Wardrobe	Nichola Thomas Therese Anderson
Costume Designer	Raymond Childie
Ladies' gowns made by	Joan Derby, Sue Peckitt, Therese Anderson, Pam Smith, Jennie Yates, Susan Millhouse, Janis Forber

Men's costumes organised by	Nichola Thomas
Wardrobe Assistants	Anne Neville Bridgett Stevens
Deputy Stage Manager	Bernice Wollenden
Assistant Stage Managers	Chris Edwards, Henry Broom, Chris Bath, Carol Hunter, Ali Hunter
Construction	Clive Whitcroft, Jim Craddock, Chris Edwards, Penny Lillie, Gordon Miller, Geoffrey Morgan, Sanjay Rampura, Richard Williams, Paul Wilson
Hair and Make-up	Luisa Ridge (Minack), Caroline Setton (The Questors and Minack)
Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Photography	Peter Collins
Front of House	Nigel Bamford, Alan Chambers, James Goodden, Kerri Logan, Maria Daker, Tina Harris, Alec Atchison, Penny Seyfert, Bridgett Stevens, Alun Jones
Programme Editor	Penelope Madiechlan
Programme Design and Print	Considerthisuk.com

Thanks to:

Julie Cruttenden and The Minack Theatre

Act 1

Jack Chesney's rooms, St Olde's College, Oxford. Morning

Act 2

Exterior of Jack Chesney's rooms. Afternoon

Act 3

The drawing room in Stephen Spettigue's House, North Oxford. Evening

The play runs for 2 hours and 20 minutes, including one interval.

Biographies

Charlie Cahill – Charley Wykeham

Charlie has done most of his acting at Durham University. Parts included Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Skinny in *Mojo* and most recently Joe Pitt in *Angels in America*. After graduating last year, Charlie joined The Questors and is very pleased to be taking part in his first production here.

Raymond Childe- Costume Designer

After training as an actor at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Raymond worked professionally in weekly rep and touring companies for several years. Roles included Ronnie Winslow in *The Winslow Boy* and Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*. In a change of career, Raymond spent 20 years at Thames Television designing costumes. For The Questors, Raymond has acted in and designed costumes for many shows including *The Country Wife*, *Cinderella*, *The Seagull*, *Tartuffe*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Snow Queen*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Oliver!* and *Peter Pan*.

Anthony Curran – Lord Fancourt Babberley

Anthony is a graduate of Student Group 47 and has been an acting member since 1994. Among his favourite parts are Kite in *The Recruiting Officer*, Tony Lumpkin in *She Stoops to Conquer* and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*. He recently starred as Truffaldino in *The Servant to Two Masters*.

Paul Francis – Sir Francis Chesney

Paul has been a member of The Questors for many years and has played parts ranging from Badger in *The Wind in the Willows* to a man-eating plant in *Little Shop of Horrors*. Leading roles include Judge Brack in *Hedda Gabler* and Kent in *King Lear*.

Michael Hayes – Brassett

This is Michael's third appearance at The Questors. He played Larry in the Sondheim musical *Company*, last summer, and The King in last year's Christmas show. *Cinderella*. Noteworthy appearances in the USA: Hiram Sweet in *The Drinking Gourd* and The Devil in *The King of Soul*.

Chloe Lewis – Ela Delahay

Chloe most recently appeared as Biddy in *Great Expectations*. She also played Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 2004. Other roles include Mary Brenham in *Our Country's Good* at the Theatre Royal Studio, York, Jacie 333 in *Comic Potential* at the Friargate Theatre, York and Stiggypipple in *Teragrammaton* at the Smimoff Underbelly, Edinburgh Fringe.

Henry Lewis – Jack Chesney

Henry has been at The Questors for five years. He was a member of the Youth Theatre and the Introductory Student Group. He will start training at LAMDA this year. Questors credits include: *Guards! Guards!*, *Scenes From the Fair*, and *Peter Pan*. Other recent theatre credits include *The Cherry Orchard* and *Resurrection*.

Francis Lloyd – Director

Francis joined The Questors in 1994, when he played Bohun in *You Never Can Tell*. Acting roles since then include John in *Oleanna*, Henry Carr in *Travesties* and Wicksteed in *Habeas Corpus*. For The Questors he has directed *After the Dance* and *French Paste*.

Eleanor Misselbrook – Amy Spettigue

This is Eleanor's first role after becoming an acting member of The Questors this year. She graduated from Leeds University with an acting degree in 2005. Comedy has always been a great love of hers. She says it has been fantastic working with such a great company, alongside some great comedy actors. She hopes this is her first performance of many to come at The Questors.

Sarah Morrison – Donna Lucia d'Alvadorez

This show will be Sarah's 49th production with The Questors, but only the second time she will have been to The Minack since first appearing there in *The Rivals* way back in 1991. Recent performances include Domina in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and Ethel in *This Happy Breed*. Favourite roles from the past include Truvy in *Steel Magnolias* and Marlene in *Top Girls*.

Martin Stoner – Lighting Design

Martin has designed the lighting for many Questors productions over the years. Recently he designed the lighting for *Time and Time Again* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*. He has been a member of The Questors for more years than he cares to admit.

Marianne Waite – Kitty Verdun

After joining The Questors in 2006 and appearing in a New Actors Showcase, Marianne played April in *Company* in June 2007. Marianne attended Stagewise Theatre School and was a member of Bournemouth Little Theatre in her home town in Dorset, where she performed in various concerts and productions, and in Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*.

Alan Waldock – Stephen Spettigue

After a 25-year sojourn in the New World, Alan is delighted to be treading the boards with The Questors once more. Recent appearances include *Black Comedy* (Colonel Melkett), *Great Expectations* (Mr Jaggers) and *The Dog in the Manger* (the Marquis Ricardo).

Clare Watson – Stage Manager

Clare has worked in various capacities in over 12 productions during the five years she has been a member of The Questors. She has recently taken on the role of Production Director, helping all Questors productions run smoothly.