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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 £27.00 for Playgoer membership and £55.00 (£38.00 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.

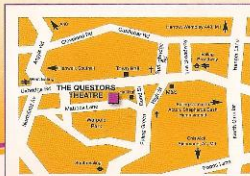
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Find out all about our forthcoming productions – along with a lot of other information about The Questors – on our web site.

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**Questors** Ealing's Theatre



# FESTEN

by David Eldridge

**The Playhouse**  
26 April – 3 May 2008

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



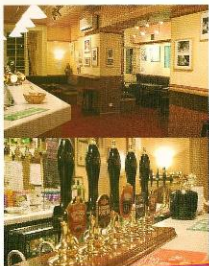
## Questors Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to the members of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as serving audience members on show nights. The club is open seven nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers. We are the proud holders of a Cash Marque award for the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2008 edition of The Good Beer Guide, and we have been named as West Midlands CAMRA Club of the Year 2007. Real ales recently on tap include Fuller's London Pride, Twickenham Suncancer and Fuller's Old Winter Ale. We also provide a range of draught lagers and ciders, as well as wines and spirits – all at very reasonable prices.

### Opening hours:

7.00-11.00pm (10.30pm close on Sundays)

also Sunday lunchtime 12.00-2.30pm



## FESTEN

by David Eldridge

The Playhouse  
26 April – 3 May 2008

# Festen

"Welcome to this curious birthday party".

I was asked to find a "challenging" play to direct for this slot in The Quostors 2008 season. Festen was one of a number of plays that I suggested. I did not think that we would get the rights and I was surprised and delighted when we did.

When we announced Festen in the season I had members stop me (usually in the bar) and tell me what a fantastic choice it was. I had more actors at the Festen audition for than for any other play I have directed here. However, I also had many people, actors and production team members, take the trouble to contact me to wish me luck with the show, to tell me that they had read Festen and would not be auditioning, or would not be available, because of the nature and content of the piece - it was "not for them". These are people whose views and beliefs, religious and secular, that I value and respect and they gave certainly gave me pause for thought.

Festen is a play that divides people. It is a play of big themes - love, brothers and sisters, loss, death, shame, guilt, denial, loyalty, celebration and ritual, power, and choice. But above all, for me, Festen is a play about family and so we have tried to place the "story" of the Hansen family on abating Holger's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday at the heart of our production.

## FESTEN - DOGME - THE FILM - THE PLAY

Festen started life in 1998 as a film made by the Danish collective Dogme 95. Founded as a backlash against, what they believed was the creeping death of narrative in Hollywood blockbusters, Dogme created "The vow of chastity" - a set of 10 rules that they would adhere to in their film-making. The aim was to return story to the heart of their film-making. Festen, (*The Celebration*), by Thomas Vinterberg, Mogens Rukov and Bo Hr. Hansen, was their first film. It went on to win the coveted Special Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

After a number of European stage adaptations, some which toured to the UK, David Eldridge's English language version opened at the Almeida Theatre in London in 2004. It was nominated for five Olivier Awards, including Best New Play. It went on to a hugely successful West End transfer, winning two Evening Standard Awards for Best Director and Best Design.

Eldridge's adaptation remains faithful to the Dogme film by keeping narrative at the heart of the writing and, also, by utilising the device of a family dinner as the context for a tragic back comedy about dark family secrets. Helge, the head of the family, is sixty. His family has returned home to celebrate. His eldest son, the surviving twin, will raise the first toast. He is prepared a speech. The festivities begin. This seemingly common-place scenario is turned on its head as the unfolding revelations that build an atmosphere of tension, anxiety and tragedy.

## FESTEN - THE FAMILY - TRAGEDY.

"It is only necessary for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph"

Like almost all great tragedy Festen is a play about families: the once sacred unit torn apart by revelations from the past, as in *The Orestes* or *Oedipus*. Like *Hamlet* or *Hecuba*, Festen is about a son, symbolically named Christian, who destroys his father with accusations from the past. As you will see, David Eldridge acknowledges the plays antecedents with numerous *Hamlet* references.

But Festen is a tragedy for today that, arguably, takes the form in new directions and redefines it for the modern age. Perhaps, most notable, as Michael Billington has commented, "It is the way the characters preserve their social rituals in the face of amazing accusations". To illustrate his point he quotes what Edmund Burke allegedly said, "it is only necessary for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph," and argues that that the real theme of Festen is the tragedy of moral inertia.

Festen is a most contemporary tragedy because it illustrates how we use social ritual to protect ourselves from our most uncomfortable truths. It shows us what can happen if we sit back and do nothing. I can only agree with Michael Billington when he says:

"Festen is a landmark play: one that gives new life to tragedy by showing us how it can be wrought out of our emotional inertia and moral vacancy."

## FESTEN - THE LITTLE GIRL - ALEX AND EVELYN

We have said in our publicity material that Festen is a play suitable for audiences over 15, so how can we ask a young girl play in it? I would like to take this opportunity to thank Alex and Evelyn and their parents for allowing them to take part and explain the process that led to

their involvement. Initially, I wrote a letter about the production, describing the play's themes, which was passed on to the parents of potentially suitable children from The Quostors's Youth Groups selected by our Youth Theatre Director who knows them well. I then talked to parents who expressed an interest on the phone and sent them a script to read. We then met and discussed how the play would be staged, why we believe Festen is an important and moral play, the points that the Little Girl is on stage, and necessary dressing room and chaperone arrangements. At all times our main concern has been that this should be a positive and enjoyable experience for them. They have both been a joy to work with and I hope that they have enjoyed it nearly as much as I have.

Roger Beaumont

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# FESTEN

by David Eldridge

First performance of this production: 26 April 2008

## THE COMPANY

Christian	Simon Roberts
Little Girl	Alex Codrington
Little Girl	Evelyn Forsyth-Muris
Mette	Tara Stewart
Michael	John Barron
Lars	Tim Jelley
Helene	Jananne Rahman
Else	Caroline Bleakley
Helge	Michael Langridge
Pia	Amy Brangwyn
Grandfather	John Hines
Helmut	Martin Halvey
Poul	Mark Redrup
Kim	Jason Francis
Gbatokai	Eddie Connor
Director	Roger Beaumont
Designer	Roger Beaumont Zyg Staniaszek
Stage Manager	Jane Arnold-Forster
Lighting Designer	Alan N Smith
Assistant Lighting Designer	Richard Broadhurst
Lighting Operator	Phillippa Forster
Sound Designer	Alan N Smith
Costume designer	Sarah Andrews
Wardrobe	Nichola Thomas Mary Davies Helen Karasiewicz
Properties	Susan Fitzpatrick Liz Cooper Peter Salvietto

### Deputy Stage Manager

### Fights

### Constructor

### Construction

### Prompt

### Scenic Artist

### Set Dressing

### Assistant State Managers

### Music

### Hair and Make-up

### Programme Editor

### Programme Design and Print

### Get-in Crew

Chris Bath, Tina Harris, Neil Lacey, Paul Wilson, Chris Edwards, Gordon Miller

### Thanks to:

Julie Cruttenden, Mike Hagan, SCREW-U, Bridgette Strevens, Country Love Ceramics, Event Hire Company

### Special thanks to:

Whisk, in High Street, Ealing, for the loan of two canteens of cutlery

Anna Sawyer  
Nicholas Jonne Wilson  
Zyg Staniaszek  
Gordon Miller  
Paul Wilson  
Geoffrey Morgan  
Ruth Simpson  
Michael Cuming  
Dennis Dracup  
Jenny Richardson  
Henry Broom  
Dan McCready  
Martin Jeffes  
Paul Hutchinson  
Sian Reece  
Louisa Norman  
Esöhe Iyamu  
Audrøy Thomas  
Caroline Setton  
Penelope MacLachlan  
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## Biographies

### John Barron – Michael

John Barron has been involved in amateur theatre since university. His roles at The Questors include: Derek in *Once a Catholic*, Yasha in *The Cherry Orchard*, Orin the chemist in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Mesrin in *The Dispute* and Shelley in *Bloody Party*, among others. This is his first Scandinavian 'toy'.

### Caroline Bleakley – Elsie

Caroline has appeared in over 30 plays at The Questors including: *Translations*, *The Rhinos*, *Yerma*, *Dancing At Lughnasa* and *Heartbreak House*. Parts played include Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Elizabeth Procter in *The Crucible*, Betty in *Lady Betty*, Fanny Squeers in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Muriel in *Habemus Corpus* and Hecuba in *The Trojan Women*. Was also Assistant Director on *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Great Expectations*.

### Amy Brangwyn – Pia

Amy has performed with the National Youth Theatre and is a recent graduate of The Questors Student Group. She has appeared in *Coda 4 Macbeth*, *The Visit*, *Separate Tables* and *Richard III* at The Questors Theatre. Look out for Amy in the forthcoming production of *Charley's Aunt*!

### Alex Codrington – Little Girl

Alex joined The Questors Youth Programme when she was seven years old and has been there ever since. She also recently danced in the production of *That's a Wrap!* which took place at the theatre in March.

### Eddie Corner – Gbortoku

Eddie attended Mountview Drama School and wrote his first play at 16, which won the Young Writers Festival at the Royal Court Theatre. His television credits include *The Bill*, *My Hero* and *Daylight Robbery*. He coes voiceovers for television and radio. He is looking forward to his first production at The Questors.

### Evelyn Forsyth-Muris – Little Girl

Evelyn is 10 years old and is a member of The Questors Youth Theatre. She is also a member of her school drama club and is appearing as a brother in the forthcoming production of *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. In 2007 she appeared as Pauline in the RADA final year production of *Touched* by Stephen Lowe.

### Jason Francis – Kim

Jason is a graduate of The Questors 59<sup>th</sup> Student Group. He has appeared in *Henry V*, *Saturday Sunday Monday*, *The Dog in the Manger*, *Richard III* and *A Servant to Two Masters*.

### Martin Halvey – Helmut

Festen is Martin's second production and he is enjoying it immensely. His first acting experience with The Questors was as the Friar in *Much Ado About Nothing* which was quite a spiritual experience for him.

### John Hines – Grandfather

John has been involved in numerous productions with The Questors since his first performance in 1955. He has performed with the company in Japan, Israel, and at the Edinburgh Fringe. He is a member of The Questors Reminiscence Roadshow Team. He was last seen in *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

### Tim Jolly – Lars

Tim joined The Questors in 2006 and played Stecher in *Perich Paste*. He is also closely involved with the Lookout Theatre Company in the Midlands, with whom he regularly performs.

### Michael Langridge – Helge

Michael has appeared in over 100 plays including *Faust*, *Hurmet*, *Edward II*, *The Promise*, *Othello*, *Bedroom Farce*, *Silence*, *Treats*, *Butley*, *The Front Page*, *Good Wives*, *All My Sons*, *Faith Healer*, *Heartbreak House*, and *Translations*. As director, shows include *Pack of Lies*, *Holmes Off*, *Privates On Parade*, *The Crucible*, *Lady Betty*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and most recently *Great Expectations*.

### Jananne Rahman – Helene

Jananne joined The Questors in 1996. Her most recent appearance was as Mrs Joe in *Great Expectations* (2007). Previous productions include *Company* (2007), *The Lady in the Van* (2007), *Little Shop of Horrors* (2005), *Oh What a Lovely War!* (2005), *The Recruiting Officer* (2004) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (2003).

### Mark Redrup – Poul

Mark has been acting for The Questors since 1990. His last three parts were: *Samy*, *Sally* and *The Comedians*, *Teddy* in *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Graham* in *Time and Time Again*.

### Simon Roberts – Christian

Since rejoining The Questors in 2001, Simon has appeared in a number of productions. These have included: *Pip* in *Great Expectations*; *Vladimir* in *Waiting for Godot*; *John Reid* in *After the Dance*; and *Lopankin* in *The Cherry Orchard*. He's looking forward to directing next year.

### Tara Stewart – Mette

Tara joined The Questors at Christmas. She studied drama at university and has a background with The Hollywood Players, Northern Ireland, where she won Best Supporting Actress for Amy in David Hare's *Amy's View* 2003, and a Scholarship for Mrs Alonby in Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* 2007 in the All Ireland Amateur Finals.

### Roger Beaumont – Director

For The Questors, Roger has directed *Design For Living* (Nicol Coward) 2003, *Closer* (Patrick Marber) 2003, *Duet for One* (Tom Kempinski) 2004, *Sweetest Normal Desire* (Tommaso Williams) 2004, and *Waiting For Godot* (Samuel Beckett) 2007. He has also acted in *Russian in the Woods* (Peter Whelan) 2003 and *Mouth to Mouth* (Kevin Flynn) 2006 and *Great Expectations* in 2008. He was recently elected a Trustee.

### Jane Arnold-Forster – Stage Manager

Jane joined The Questors in 2005. She was Deputy Stage Manager for *Oliver!* in 2005. Since then she has stage managed *The Weir* (2006), *Vincent in Brixon* (2006), *Trojan Women* (2007) and *Great Expectations* (2007). She has also operated sound and light in extremis.

### Anna Sawyer – Deputy Stage Manager

Anna is a new member and Festen is her second production. Previously she was an Assistant Stage Manager in *A Servant to Two Masters* and only broke a few glasses. They are keeping her away from breakables this time around.

### Alan N Smith – Light and Sound Designer

Believes light and sound should come together as a complete design entity. Credits range from *Hans Kohhaas* (1972), *Amnottung Paris* (1983), *Lark Rise* (1984), to more recently *Waiting for Godot*, *Great Expectations* and *Servant to Two Masters*. Has enjoyed the challenge of working with Festen's Director on all his previous Questors' productions.

### Liz Cooper – Properties

In 2003/4 Liz took The Questors Acting For All and Stage Management courses. Since then she has worked backstage on productions ranging from musicals to dramas such as *This Happy Breed* and *Great Expectations*. Liz is particularly interested in properties and last year provided the properties for *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

### Peter Salvietto – Properties

Peter has been a member from 2003. He has 'propood' on shows from *Oliver!* to *Richard III*. Others include *This Happy Breed*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Into The Woods*, *The Weir*, *Vincent in Brixon*, *Peter Pan*, and most recently, *A Servant to Two Masters*. Greatest challenge: a roust goose for *Oliver!* – Christmas, 2005.

### Zyg Staniaszek – Constructor

Zyg has helped create a few sets in his time. *Peter Pan*, *Lady in the Van*, *Black Comedy* and *Dinner* spring immediately to mind. He's acted in *Peter Pan*, *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Oh, he's directed a bit too.

### Henry Broom – Assistant Stage Manager

Member of The Questors since 1992, working in Stage Management, Set Construction and Lighting. Recent productions include *A Servant to Two Masters*, *Great Expectations* and *The Trojan Women*.

### Ruth Simpson – Prompt

Ruth Simpson has been a member of The Questors for 20 years and, among other productions, prompted for *The Trojan Women*. You may occasionally see her looking stressed in the box office!

### Michael Cuming – Prompt

This is Michael Cuming's third prompting experience at The Questors, having recently prompted for *The Comedians* and *The Trojan Women*. It's a great way to see how a play is put together and how the Director works to mould the final product.



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

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## 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 daylight hours, 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.