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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 a lot 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.

Stay in touch

Sign up for our weekly or monthly emails, full of the latest news, at www.questors.org.uk or send us your name and address and we'll post you our bi-monthly season card.

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

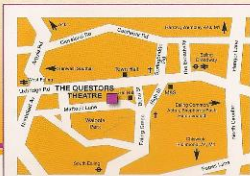
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www.questors.org.uk

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Questors Ealing's Theatre

HAY FEVER

by Noel Coward

This production is supported by Mark and Steve Kirby in fond memory of their parents, Eric and Meg

The Studio

27 December 2008 – 4 January 2009

www.questors.org.uk



Questors Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly duo bar open to the members of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as serving audience members on show nights. The duo is open seven nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers. We are the proud holders of a Cask 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 Middlesex CAMRA Club of the Year 2007. Real ales recently on tap include Fuller's London Pride, Twickenham Sundancer 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



REVIVING A POPULAR SUCCESS Noel Coward refreshing some of the cast who are taking part in the revival of his brilliant comedy, Hay Fever, which G. B. Cochran presented at the Shaftesbury last week. Left to right Joyce Barbour, Patsy Sweeney and Tyrone and Gladys Henson.

HAY FEVER

by Noel Coward

The Studio

27 December 2008 – 4 January 2009

Hay Fever

Born just before Christmas 1899, hence the "Noel", Coward was a boy actor by the age of 10, had made his first silent movie, Griffith's *Hearts of the World* with Lillian and Dorothy Gish by the time he was 16, and by the time he was 21 he had his first, albeit short lived, play in the West End.

By 1925, he had also established himself as the writer of revue songs and sketches for Beatrice Lillie and Gertrude Lawrence, and in 1924, made his name as an actor, author, director, and partial designer of *The Vortex*, a play about drug taking (in fact, homosexuality) and maternal obsession, long before alcoholism was an acceptable stage subject.

In 1925, *Hay Fever* was to launch his career as a comic playwright. He had the idea for it back in 1921 when, on his first impoverished and unsuccessful visit to America, he had been taken by his childhood friend Lynn Fontanne to a Sunday evening up on Riverside Drive in New York, where the Broadway star Laurette Taylor and her playwright husband Hartley Manners would give nightmarish dinner parties involving the playing of elaborate word games which usually ended in tears.

Back in London, Noel wrote the play in three days as a vehicle for the Grande Dame of her time, Marie Tempest. She, however, speedily declined the work of a still unknown dramatist and it wasn't until 1925, by which time Noel had *The Vortex*, *London Calling* and *Fallen Angels* all playing in the West End, that her agent asked Noel to resubmit *Hay Fever*. "But," he replied, "she didn't care for it three years ago". "I think," said the agent, "you will find that she cares for it very much now." And, with Noel directing, the play opened in the West End in June of that year.

Despite its small cast, *Hay Fever* is actually a very difficult play to perform. Any performance of it relies heavily on individual performances and it is the interplay of the characters on which the play is founded. It is full of awkward moments, social embarrassments and comic misunderstandings where traditional social conventions fall when pitted against the bohemian antics adopted by the Blisses. Coward himself said: "*Hay Fever* is far and away one of the most difficult plays to stage that I have ever encountered, but its technical symmetry always appealed to me, and although I wrote the thing in less than three days, I enjoyed directing and watching it very much indeed."

So did most of the critics, though already the words "flippant" and "trivial" were recurring with alarming frequency in their Coward reviews, as though somehow other stage comedies of this period were deeper and imbued with all kinds of significance denied by Coward to his audiences. It was as though the brittle, sometimes flash nature of his writing often distracted from the contrast between what his characters said and what they actually meant. Years later both Harold Pinter and John Osborne said that it was Noel who first alerted them to the possibility that an audience could hear something other than what was being spoken on stage.

As John Russett Taylor was to put it: "Coward's comic creations do live as people, and their lives go on behind and under and around what they are saying; the text provides only the faintest guidelines as to what is really happening between people in his plays."

James Agate for *The Sunday Times* was considerably less ecstatic: "There is neither health nor cleanliness about any of Mr Coward's characters who remain the same vicious babies sprawling upon the floor of their unwholesome crèche... Mr Coward is rumoured to write his plays in a flowered dressing-gown and before breakfast; what I want to know is what kind of work he intends to do after breakfast, when he is clothed and in his right mind."

Nevertheless *Hay Fever* was to run on this triumphant first outing for more than a year, though on Broadway where Laurette Taylor had first inspired it the comedy survived for less than six weeks. It remained frequently in revival in Britain however, and in 1964 Noel was invited by

Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Tynan to direct it at the new National Theatre (Old Vic) where he duly became the first living playwright to have their play performed at the National. The cast of that revival (Edith Evans, Maggie Smith, Derek Jacobi, Lynn Redgrave, Robert Stephens) could, as Noel noted, "have read the Albanian telephone directory with equal success"; but this was the production which spearheaded what Noel himself called Dad's Renaissance, and turned him almost overnight from an unfashionable tax exile to the grand old man of British Theatre.

Events of 1925

- Births:** American musical star **Elaine Stritch**
British comic actor **Peter Sellers**
British director **Peter Brook**
British actress **Angela Lansbury**, long resident in America
Welsh actor Richard Walter Jenkins, aka **Richard Burton**
- Deaths:** American artist **John Singer Sargent**, "the Van Dyck of our age" as Rodin called him
British Publisher **Sir Edward Hulton**
- Notable Premieres:** James Joyce's *Exiles* opens in New York
In the West End Tallulah Bankhead stars in Michael Arlen's controversial *The Green Hat*
Gladys Cooper opens in Lonsdale's *The Last of Mrs Cheyne*, which has a two-year run at the St James's.
George Jessel opens as *The Jazz Singer* (by Sam Raphaelson), later to become the first talking picture with Al Jolson
West End opening of *No, No, Nanette!*, long running American musical
- Hit Songs:** Tea for Two
Show Me the Way to Go Home
Always
Manhattan
- Calendar:** F Scott Fitzgerald publishes *The Great Gatsby* which became a play as early as 1926, a film with Alan Ladd in 1949 and with Robert Redford in 1976, and in 1999, an opera for the Met in New York.
State of Tennessee outlaws the teachings of Darwin on human evolution, later famous trial and play/film *Inherit the Wind*. The prosecuting attorney, William Jennings Bryan, died later that year.
Posthumous publication of Kafka's *The Trial*.
P G Wodehouse publishes *Carry On Jeeves*, later play, film musical and television series
Virginia Woolf publishes *Mrs Dalloway*, later acclaimed play and film
Porgy, the novel on which *Porgy and Bess* was based, is published by DuBose Heyward

HAY FEVER

by Noel Coward

First performance of this production: 27 December 2008

THE COMPANY

Sorel Bliss	Ania Alexander
Simon Bliss	Iain Stirling
Clara	Anne O'Brien
Judith Bliss	Meryl Griffiths
David Bliss	Robert Baker-Glenn
Sandy Tyrell	Lawrence Green
Myra Arundel	Lindsay Pearson
Richard Greatham	Stephen Kavanagh
Jackie Coryton	Tara Dowd
Director	Georgina Burns
Set Designer	Pam Garnett-Lawson
Lighting Designer	Francois Langton
Costume Designers	Nichola Thomas Susan Millhouse
Hair & Makeup	Sophia Chriscuolo
Sound Designers	Phil Tucker
Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Stage Manager	Pam Redrup
Deputy Stage Manager	Olivia Howard
Assistant Stage Managers	Rafid Golby Juliet Vaughan Turner Fay
Prompt	Jean Masters Gordon Miller
Piano maker	Gordon Miller
Stairs made by	John Feather
Construction	Mike Hagan Kingston First Year Students
Programme Editor	Penelope MacLachlan
Programme Design and Print	Considerthisuk.com

Thanks to:

Mike Hagan, Camila Cadier, Julie Cruttenden, Juliet Vaughan Turner, Pam Garnett-Lawson, Phil Tucker, Pam Redrup and all who helped with get-in, including house services.

Warning: Some of the actors smoke during the performance

The action of the play takes place in the hall of the Bliss's house at Cookham in June 1925.

Act 1	Saturday afternoon Interval of 15 minutes
Act 2	Saturday evening Interval of 15 minutes
Act 3	Sunday morning

Foyer entertainment during the run will be from

Singers: Vicki Butler, Russell Fleet, Dominique Gerrard, Kerri Logan, Francis Lloyd, Robert Scatter, Sarah Storer, Robert Vass

Pianists: Sue Solomon, Nick Moorhead and Errol

Biographies

Ania Alexander – Sorel Bliss

As part of The Questors Student Group 54, Ania played the eponymous lead in *Trelawny of the Wells* and Maria in *The Government Inspector*. She recently returned to The Questors stage as one of the Ugly Sisters in *Cinderella* and as the innocent Clarice in *A Servant to Two Masters*.

Robert Baker Glenn – David Bliss

Robert's first appearance at The Questors was in *The Cherry Orchard* and he has since gone on to *After the Dance*, *The Abolition Islands*, *The Cyanosine Marriage*, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*, *The London Cuckolds*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Cinderella* and *The Chavs*.

Georgina Burns – Director

Georgina has choreographed, for The Questors, Stephen Sondheim's *Company*. She is the principal of Chiswick Theatre Arts – www.chiswicktheatrearts.com and teaches dance and drama to children and adults. She trained at Birds College and ALRA and has worked professionally as a dancer, actress, presenter, choreographer and director.

Pam Cullen – Stage Manager

Pam would like to take this opportunity to ask you all to come get involved with The Questors. It's fun, hard work, a great place to be, so come on and be a part of the show.

Tara Dowd – Jackie

Tara graduated from The Questors Student Group in 2006 and this will be her fifth play performed here. Performances include *Henry V*, *Saturday*, *Sunday*, *Monday*, *Trojan Women* and *Richard III* at The Questors and *The Merchant of Venice* at Berons Court Theatre.

Pam Garnett-Lawson – Set Designer

After gaining an Honours degree in Theatre Design, Pam worked for several years in provincial rep, including *The Crucible*, Sheffield and The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. She then joined the BBC as a Scenic Artist, and left to pursue a freelance career in films and TV. She is currently working on her own paintings. This is her first production at The Questors.

Lawrence Green – Sandy Tyrell

Lawrence is very happy to be appearing for the first time at The Questors as Sandy in Noel Coward's classic *Hay Fever*. He is normally to be found going between performing plays and musicals as well as taking part in independent and feature films. Most recent shows include *The Importance of being Ernest* (Algermon), *Fur Coat no Knickers* (Mark), *Chess* (The Actor) and *Midsummer Nights Dream* (Lysander).

Meryl Griffiths – Judith Bliss

This is Meryl's first play at The Questors. Past credits include *An Ideal Husband* (Mrs Cheverley), *Faith Healer* (Grace) and *Hystena* (Jessica). Since studying at ALRA 25 years ago she has happily juggled theatre, business and a very understanding husband. She is thrilled to be spending Christmas with the Bliss family as well as her own.

Olivia Howard – Deputy Stage Manager

Olivia joined The Questors in 2008 and worked backstage for the student production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Having had previous experience on and off stage in Australia, she has now put herself to task as the *Hay Fever* deputy stage manager.

Stephen Kavanagh – Richard Greatham

Stephen has been active at The Questors Theatre since 2005, completing the student course in 2007. Previous parts included leading roles in Friedrich Durrenmatt's *The Visit* and Terence Rattigan's *Separate Tables*. Stephen's other roles include parts in *Richard III*, *As You Like It*, *Polish Shorts* and more recently Malcolm in *Avicbourn's Bedroom Farce*.

Susan Millhouse – Costume Designer

Susan has been a member of The Questors since 1998. She has designed on the following shows: *Season's Greeting*, *Breaking the Code*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Absolute Hell*, *This Happy Breed*, and *Separate Tables*. Specific costumes she has created include Captain Hook's Coat in *Peter Pan* and the golden ball gown in *Cinderella*.

Annie O'Brien – Clara

Annie has been a member of The Questors since the early 1980s, appearing in *Bartholomew Fair*, *Moll Flanders*, *Anna Christie*, *Surgeon of Honour*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Measure for Measure*, *Don Juan*, *The Mother*, *A Family Affair*, *Alice through the Looking Glass*, *Pinocchio* and *Once a Catholic*. Last year she appeared in *Big Maggie* at the Pentameters Theatre and subsequently toured Ireland with INDA (Irish Network of Dramatic Arts) UK.

Lindsey Pearson – Myra Arundel

Lindsey has been a member of The Questors since 2005 and in that time has appeared in *The Evolution of Esther* (2005) directed by David Howarter, *Trojan Women* (2007), directed by Anne Neville and *Cinderella*, directed by Sarah Galton.

Iain Stirling – Simon Bliss

Iain recently appeared as Vincent in *Vincent in Brighton* at the Mary Wallace Theatre, Twickenham. Previously at The Questors, Iain has played Leonard in *Time And Time Again* and Peter in the Stephen Sondheim musical, *Company*.

Nichola Thomas – Costume Designer

Nichola joined The Questors six years ago and has worked in costume and wardrobe throughout that time, helping on various shows and specifically designing costumes for *A Russian in the Woods*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Plaza Suite*, *This Happy Breed*, *Seascapes/Charade*, *Dance of Death*, *Waiting for Godot*.

Separate Tables, *Charley's Aunt* (men), *Macbeth*, *Two*, and *The Seagull* (men).

Phil Tucker – Sound Designer

Phil teaches Media production. This is his second production for The Questors, having previously been the Sound Designer on last year's musical, *Company*.

Juliet Vaughan Turner – Assistant Stage Manager

Juliet's first production at The Questors was *Dracula* when she was 14. She has since (amongst others) been assistant stage manager and stage manager for *UBU* and most recently was deputy stage manager for *Company*. She is normally seen on the stage, and her most recent role at The Questors was Anna in *Time and Time Again*.

The Alchemist

24 – 31 January 2009

In the Playhouse

Comic cons in '60s London

Further than the Furthest Thing

31 January – 7 February 2009

In the Studio

Secrets on a remote island



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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 fancys 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.