

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 £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.

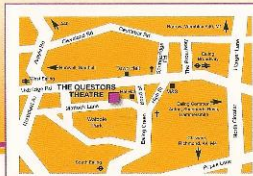
Stay in touch

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.

- ▶ What's on
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www.questors.org.uk



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Questors Ealing's Theatre

INSIGNIFICANCE

by Terry Johnson

The Studio
7 – 14 June 2008

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 lunches 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



INSIGNIFICANCE

by Terry Johnson

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Insignificance

Have you ever compared yourself with someone else, someone famous? Have you measured your looks, intelligence, prowess or status against them? Inadvertently, you have been using the Specific Theory of Relativity.

But what, you say, does $E=mc^2$ have to do with tonight's play? Well, as the Actress demonstrates to the Professor in the course of their night together, "all measurements of space and time are necessarily made relative to the observer, and are not necessarily the same for two independent observers". And not just space and time. As the play makes plain, how we measure ourselves and others can never be the same as the others' view of themselves, or of us.

Each of the four characters in *Insignificance* – the Actress, the Professor, the Ballplayer and the Senator – will be familiar to you. The Actress's dress, the Professor's calculus, the Senator's hatred of Communists, the Ballplayer's jealousy; we know about these people. They are obviously Marilyn Monroe, Albert Einstein, Joseph McCarthy and Joe DiMaggio. We know who they are, what they did, how they behaved.

Or do we? As the Professor says, "Knowledge without understanding is nothing". We may measure these characters, but do we understand them? What we imagine them to be like may have no basis in reality. And it is this gap between image and reality that intrigues Terry Johnson.

So why does Johnson not just name the characters Marilyn, Einstein, McCarthy and DiMaggio? For the same reason. These are not real people; these are his measurements of who they are. So why does he prefer the company of characters with whom audiences already have their own relationship?

"Well, there's no great mystery," he says. "It's just that I find it easier to write people who come pre-packaged. [...] The same thing that attracts me to them attracts an audience to them, in that they know who they're coming to see. They arrive with pre-conceptions that you can play with."

And that's certainly true in *Insignificance*. Without wanting to give the plot away, each of the characters is measuring themselves against someone or something else; and how they judge each other is pivotal in the decisions they make, for good or bad.

However, it is not just the Theory of Relativity that is examined in the play. The shape of the universe, and our place within it, is also examined and a dramatic equivalent found.

The preface to my edition of *Insignificance* yields a quote from Albert Einstein:

"I believe with Schopenhauer that one of the strongest motives that leads men to Art and Science is escape from everyday life with its painful crudity and hopeless dreariness, from the fetters of one's ever-

shifting desires. With this negative motive goes a positive one. Man tries to make for himself in the fashion that suits him bast a simplified and intelligible picture of this world: he then tries to some extent to substitute this cosmos of his for the world of experience and thus to overcome it. Each makes this cosmos and its construction the pivot of his emotional life in order to find in this way the peace and security he cannot find in the whirlpool of personal experience."

So from our measurements and judgements and opinions and comparisons we fashion a world that we inhabit; one that is a subset of the actual universe but is easier for us to rationalise and control. But whom do we look to and hold responsible? The very people that we measured in the first place to give us our position in "our" world.

Back to Terry Johnson:

"The reason people identify with celebrities is a kind of necessity to define their humanity in relation to the best, or the most extraordinary, or the most outré. And that's surely to do with our need to try to define ourselves in this scary quivering mass of humanity."

So by using these famous characters and placing them in this imaginary situation, Johnson shows the universal constant in us all: that we will always try and reassure ourselves by placing ourselves in some arbitrary pecking order, and that those in the public eye bear the weight of the

expectation that comes from such comparisons.

Interestingly it is the character of the Senator who cuts right to the centre of this idea. Declaring himself a solipsist, he believes that only he exists, and everything (and everyone) else exists only in his imagination. In this way he has perfect control over his world and it is the "special people" he dreams up who suffer the mental and emotional traumas of life.

The final irony of this, as the Professor explains in the play, is that while we judge ourselves, the universe makes no such judgements: "The stars tell us we can walk on the grass, talk to anyone we meet, touch those people, ask anything of them; the stars won't think the worse of us. The stars won't even notice."

Despite the scientific terms that surface throughout the play, you won't need a physics degree to understand *Insignificance*. Just an open mind. Don't compare, don't measure; just enjoy.

John McSpadyen

INSIGNIFICANCE

by Terry Johnson

First performance of this production: 7 June 2008

THE COMPANY

The Professor	Tony Diggle
The Senator	Andrew Hill
The Actress	Nessa Wrafter
The Baseball Player	Anthony Green
The Heavy	John Fryer

The action of the play takes place in a hotel room in New York over the course of a hot summer's night in 1953.

There will be one interval of 15 minutes.

Director/Set Design Concept	John McSpadyen
Set Design Consultants	Pam Cullen Mike Hogan
Lighting Designer	Nigel Lewis
Sound Designer	Colin Home
Stage Manager	Michelle Weaver
Deputy Stage Manager	Camilla Cadler
Assistant Stage Manager	Rachel Jarvis
Properties	Claudia Kees
Wardrobe	Sylvia Wall

Set Construction	Mike Hogan Jim Craddock Daniel Burt Hannah Woodman Joe Marler Stuart Campbell
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Lighting Operator	Corla Ryan
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Photography	Ian Cole
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Hair & Make-up	Skye Adams Elizabeth Whites
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Front of House	Jane Arnold-Forster Geoffrey Morgan
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Programme Editor	Penelope Madachlan
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Programme Design and Print	Considerthisuk.com
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Biographies

Terry Johnson – Author

Terry Johnson's plays include *Insignificance*, *Unsuitable for Adults*, *Hysteria*, *Dead Funny*, *Cleo*, *Camping*, *Emmanuelle & Dick*, *Hitchcock Blonde* and *Piano/Forte*.

He has also directed many West End productions including *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, *Elton John's Glasses* and *Dumb Show*, as well as many of his own plays. He has worked with Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre, directing John Malkovich in Stephen Jeffrey's *The Libertine*.

He has written and directed many television dramas, most recently *Not Only But Always*, which won Rhys Ifans a Best Actor BAFTA for his portrayal of Peter Cook.

The film version of *Insignificance*, with screenplay by Johnson, was directed by Nicolas Roeg and was the official British entry at the Cannes Film Festival in 1985.

Tony Diggle – The Professor

Tony Diggle joined The Questors in 1980. First appearance *Murder in the Cathedral*, 1981. Most recent appearance *The London Cuckolds*, 2006 (The Questors and Minack). He is also the Treasurer of Player-Playwrights, a writers / actors group that exists to read and discuss new scripts, and the author of nine unpublished plays.

Charley's Aunt

21 - 28 June 2008

In the Playhouse

This farce has delighted audiences since 1892.

Andrew Hill – The Senator

This is Andrew's first production at The Questors but the second time he's played this role in *Insignificance*. The first occasion was 20 years ago in Strassburg. Andrew has appeared in professional theatre up and down the country. His most recent TV was for a Japanese drama-documentary about Harold Shipman.

Nessa Wrafter – The Actress

This is Nessa's debut for The Questors. Her last theatre performance was Abigail in *The Crucible* for Chelsea Players. She has also acted in independent short films and recently began TV presenting. She holds an MA entitled 'The Body & Representation' from Reading University, where her academic focus was on performance and sexuality.

Anthony Green – The Baseball Player

Anthony has been a member of The Questors since 1997. His previous appearances include *Arcadia*, *Absolute Hell*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Dispute*, *The Lady in the Van* and *Richard III*. He is a former member of the National Student Theatre Company and the Pendley Shakespeare Company.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

12 - 19 July 2008

In the Playhouse

Shakespeare's comedy enchants us with its romance and magic.

John McSpadyen – Director / Set Design Concept

Since joining in 2000, John has directed seven plays for The Questors, including *Trainspotting*, *Dolly West's Kitchen*, *Road* and *Bloody Poetry*. He also directs for the Tower Theatre and anyone else who asks nicely. He may even try retreading the boards after appearing in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in the Playhouse.

Pam Cullen – Set Design Consultant

Pam has now been a member of The Questors for about 18 months now. She usually stage manages, her first show being *Lady in the Van*, but is trying her hand at set design. This show will be her second in this department, her first being *A Servant To Two Masters*.

Mike Hagan – Set Design Consultant

After a career starting at Shepperton Studios, over 20 years at the BBC and nine years with the National Theatre, Mike is now House & Technical Manager at The

Questors. As well as advising on design and construction for in-house productions, he also teaches students from Kingston College. In his spare time he can be found on his allotment.

Nigel Lewis – Lighting Designer

Nigel was a frequent lighting designer at The Kenneth More Theatre, Ilford and The Queens Theatre in Hornchurch during the 1980's. Nigel has worked in many fringe theatres and carried out a re-light for Starlight Express. He is the founder and Company Director of Ealing Lighting Design Limited.

Colin Horne – Sound Designer

Colin Horne, Sound Designer, has lost count of his sound designs during his 30-plus years at The Questors, but numbers shows such as *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *The Happy Breed*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *King Lear* and *Deathtrap* among his favourites. He designed sound for the three original Coarse Acting Shows at Edinburgh, in the West End and at The Questors.



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.

Art Exhibitions

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



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
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.