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Join Us

If you enjoy theatre, why not join us and become a member of The Questors?

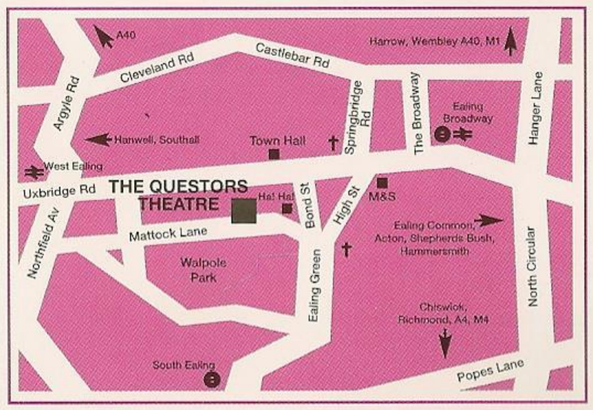
If you enjoy a regular night out at the theatre with friends, why not become a member of The Questors? As a Playgoer Member, you'll receive a 20 per cent discount on your ticket to most Questors productions, free tickets for your children to most Questors productions, regular information about our productions, and membership of the Grapevine Bar, so you can 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 this for just £30 for Playgoer membership and £60 (£45 concessions) for Company membership, until 31 August 2009, with discounts for payment by Direct Debit. You can find membership application forms by Box Office, or download one from our web site.

Stay in touch

Sign up for our weekly or monthly emails and get the latest news of our productions. Find out at questors.org.uk.



Full details on our web site

You'll find full details of our current and forthcoming productions – along with lots more information – on our web site.

- **What's on**
- **Online booking**
- **Getting involved**
- **Courses**
- **Hire facilities**
- **Grapevine Bar**
- **Art exhibitions**
- **QYT youth theatre**
- **Weekly Open Evenings**
- **Receive our email news**

THE QUESTORS THEATRE
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Email:
enquiries@questors.org.uk

Questors Ealing's Theatre

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

by Thomas Hardy

The Playhouse
11 – 18 July 2009

questors.org.uk

Café

Enjoy a coffee during the Interval at our Café in the Upper Foyer. It's open before the performance and during the Interval for most performances in the Playhouse. (Studio audiences can enjoy a coffee in the Grapevine Bar instead.)

Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to 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 Cask Marque award for the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2009 edition of The Good Beer Guide, and we have been named as West Middlesex CAMRA Club of the Year 2008. Real ales recently on tap include Fuller's London Pride, Adnams The Bitter and Sambrook's Wandle 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

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

by Thomas Hardy

The Playhouse
11 – 18 July 2009

Thomas Hardy's

Far From the Madding Crowd

Adapted by Mark Healy

Coming to an adaptation of a much-loved novel, as director or as audience, requires concessions. To create a play which can stand alone, independent of the novel, necessitates structural change. The alternative would be glib summary. We have to acknowledge that any staged version short of a straightforward, uncut dramatisation of one's own imagined version of the novel – and therefore of several hours' duration – will involve sacrifices. The skill is in making the right ones.

Mark Healy's dramatisation of Hardy's first and best-loved "Wessex" story summarises its plot but does not compromise its spirit or sense of place. Instinctively we feel we know where we are, if not quite able to pinpoint it geographically or historically: several miles west and – as Hardy cites elsewhere – twenty years prior to the time of writing. We feel we recognise the very English "Greek Chorus" in the Malthouse too; feel fond frustration at the gossip and, eventually, pride in their loyalty. They are too much themselves in strengths and flaws to be dismissed as stereotypes, or even as archetypes. When the journeys are real, so will be our engagement and empathy with them; precisely the right challenge for a student actor. Certainly we will identify with aspects of some or all the protagonists, and appreciate Hardy's correlation between their sense of responsibility to the land and their moral character: a message our generation, finally forced to face ecological home truths, is just coming round to.

What we do lose is Hardy's narration, affectionately pointing up the finer and sillier points of his characters, but this is recaptured in Healy's subtle instructions. A concise picture of each character waits in insightfully selected lines and stage directions – all of them directly quoted from the novel. In this way, it is hard to imagine a more suitable choice for student actors. When successful, the actor is bringing to three-dimensional life a flawed human being, who we can see has the strengths which put them where they are and the weaknesses that could be just strong enough to unseat them. The fact that it is those who keep their ties to the land who are ultimately rewarded puts Hardy's fatalism at odds with his benevolent omniscience; but the centrality of the land and each inhabitant's relationship to it remains the key to understanding this entire cast of characters. Bathsheba may at times be a maddeningly inconstant heroine, but Gabriel is equally perverse in his constancy. Time chastises, rewards and unites them.

Another gain of the adaptation is its immediacy, a precedent approved by Hardy who oversaw a contemporary dramatisation of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and would have recognised the value for those readers who might have been put off by the style of nineteenth-century prose. Here, we can fully and immediately enjoy Boldwood's tortured response to Bathsheba's Valentine ("That's where the fun lies"), Troy's self-serving evocation of fate just as he is choosing to forsake Fanny; Bathsheba's over-frequent insistence that she cares nothing for Gabriel's opinion; and, most famously, Gabriel's hysterically incompetent proposal, in which he even goes so far as to leave rather than stay long enough to make it to niece instead of aunt. Healy offers us the core of the action, humour and message, and allows Hardy's characters to speak for themselves.

The 'winning tongue' of the soldier in the recurring ballad *On the Banks of Allan Water* reflects Troy, the antithesis of Gabriel's modesty and artless proposal. Present, superficial pleasure is a warning of later retribution and contrasts with that which is plainer and more constant, almost as nature is to art. Gabriel, like the land, will be there in the end if invested in, whereas Troy is always going to react against his initial passion, grow frustrated and move on. When Gabriel accepts Bathsheba's proposal and she his, we witness an arrangement between equal partners who have grown in knowledge of each others' imperfections and strengths. Healy's adaptation does gripping justice to the strength of time in bonding. We can see how the characters have changed, yet remained who they are in essentials, positive and negative.

Power and morality, love and happiness, toil and transcendence are explored not only through Gabriel, Bathsheba, Boldwood and Troy but in the land itself, phasing from melodramatic scenes to calm ones as their seasons come and go. In the close of the Author's Preface to *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy tells us "For these [characters] the indispensable conditions of existence are attachment to the soil of one particular spot by generation after generation." It is a practical philosophy which could be compared to anything between religious observance and common sense. It is one about maintaining the world: a world Healy profoundly understands and which Student Group 62 allow all of us, familiar with the story or not, to enter and enjoy as if for the first time.

Rachel Knightley
Assistant Director

Far From the Madding Crowd

by Thomas Hardy
Adapted by Mark Healy

THE CAST

Farmer William Boldwood	Efe Abboh
Soberance Miller, Merchant 1/Ensemble	Jessica Bailey
Matthew Moon, Lawyer, Banks, Vicar, Merchant 3, Ensemble	Nigel Barker
Sgt. Francis Troy	Lewis Brown
Fanny Robin, Temperance Miller	Cepie Clerkin
Maryann Money, Ensemble	Lydia Georgoula
Gabriel Oak	Jolyon Houghton
Joseph Poorgrass, Bailiff Pennyways, Ensemble	Wesley Lloyd
Henery Fray, Shepherd, Merchant 2, Soldier, Messenger, Ensemble	Andy Naughton
Jan Coggan, Mrs Hurst, Ensemble	Louisa Norman
Bathsheba Everdene	Sian Reece
Liddy Smallbury	Lucy Waring

All other roles played by members of the company

THE MUSIC

Hugo Alfven	A Country Tale Suite
Frank Bridge	3 Idylls
Edward Elgar	Sospiri
Howard Ferguson	Pastoral, Op.6
Gustav Holst	Egdon Heath
Gustav Holst	Somerset Rhapsody
John Ireland	Daydream
Ernest Moeran	G Major String Trio
Arvo Part	Fratres
William Walton	Hamlet
Anon	The Soldier's Joy

n.b. The Soldier's Joy was Thomas Hardy's favourite tune

THE COMPANY

Director	Mark Fitzgerald
Ensemble scenes directed by	Nicholas Jonne Wilson
Dance Choreography by	Zyg Staniaszek
Designer	Peter Collins
Assistant Director	Rachel Knightley
Lighting Director	Richard Mead
Lighting Operator	Paul Robinson
Sound Designer	Colin Horne
Wardrobe	Sarah Andrews, Pam Smith
Stage Manager	Camilla Cadier
Assistant Designer	Pam Redrup
Deputy Stage Managers	Tina Carnally
	Graeme Bloom
Construction	John Feathers
	Paul Smith
Assistant Stage Managers	Ewa Juryniec, Michelle Weaver, Claudia Kees
Photography	Peter Collins and Rachel Knightley
Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Get in crew	ScrewU, James Gadsdon, Kayvan Bazergan, Chris Edwards, Tina Harris, Tony Smith (and daughter)
Prompt	Pam Smith
Programme Editor	Penelope Maclachlan
Programme Design and Print	www.considerthisuk.com

The Questors Student Group Tutors are:

Head of Studies and First-year Tutor	David Emmet
Second-year Tutor	Mark Fitzgerald
Movement Tutor	Nicholas Jonne Wilson
Voice Tutor	Tim Berkit

Thanks to:

John Fryer, Tina Harris, Michael Dobson, Ian and Lucy Pearman, Claire Watson, Michelle Weaver, Mike Hagan, Ian Pearman, Pam Redrup, Abbott & Co (Wessex) Ltd.

Biographies

Efe Abboh – *William Boldwood*
Efe completed the Acting for All course with The Questors in 2007, prior to joining the 62nd Student Group. Roles in training include Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Hal in *Kvetch*, John Proctor in *The Crucible*, Tusenbach in *Three Sisters, Othello, Macbeth* and most recently *Henry VI*.

Jessica Bailey – *Soberance*
Jessica came from Millingtons Performing Arts School in Liverpool and joined The Questors Student Group in September 2007. She has been an extra in *Hollyoaks* and *Brookside*. She performed in the Look-In in the Studio last year, playing Goldilocks in *Forbidden Fruits*. Her most recent roles are the Duke of Somerset and Lady Bona in *Henry VI*.

Nigel Barker – *Matthew Moon, Lawyer Banks*
Nigel appeared in *Henry VI* as Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York (along with 14 other characters in various guises). During the Student Group he has played Teddy in *Homecoming*, Dr Chasuble in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Mum in *East*.

Lewis Brown – *Sgt. Francis Troy*
Since joining The Questors, Lewis has appeared in *Cogner au Plafond*, and *Mercury Fur* as Naz, his first play outside the Youth Theatre. With the Student Group he has played Steve in *Dahling You Were Marvellous*, Dorimant in *The Man of Mode* and recently Lord Clifford and Lord Hastings in *Henry VI*.

Cepie Clerkin – *Fanny Robin, Temperance*
Cepie started acting with her youth theatre group in Ireland and with them performed in various plays, later going on to Theatre Studies for one year in Dublin. After moving to London in 2005, she joined The Questors Student Group in 2007 and recently appeared as Prince Edward in *Henry VI*.

Lydia Georgoula – *Maryann*
Since joining The Questors in 2006, Lydia has played various parts in the 2007 production of *Cinderella* and with the Student Group in *The Crucible* as Rebecca Nurse and Elisabeth Proctor; *The Importance of Being Earnest* as Miss Prism, Linda in *Dahling You Were Marvellous* and Earl of Northumberland in *Henry VI*.

Jolyon Houghton – *Gabriel Oak*
Jolyon has been at The Questors since joining the Youth Theatre five years ago, performing in a variety of plays and devised pieces. Having started the Student Group he has enjoyed such parts as Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*; taking part in a stylised brawl in Berkoff's *Greek* and Edward Earl of March in *Henry VI*.

Wesley Lloyd – *Joseph Poorgrass, Bailiff Pennyways*
Before joining The Questors Student Group in 2007, Wesley trained with the On Stage Theatre School in Richmond. Recently he played King Henry VI and the French Court Messenger in *Henry VI*. He hopes to become a Questors Theatre Acting Member and work full-time within the theatrical industry.

Andy Naughton – *Henery Fray*
Whilst taking his degree in music at Guildhall, Andy played Krapp in *Krapp's Last Tape*. He played three small parts in *Dog in the Manger* at The Questors. During his studies he has played Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Henry V*, Frank in *Kvetch*, Damont in *The Man of Mode* and the Earl of Warwick in *Henry VI*.

Louisa Norman – *Jan Coggan, Mrs Hurst*
Before joining Group 62 of The Questors Student Course, Louisa was briefly an acting member when she appeared in *The Trojan Women* directed by Anne Neville. During the course she has played roles including Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, the Wife in *Greek* and Queen Margaret in *Henry VI*.

Sian Reece – *Bathsheba Everdene*
Sian joined The Questors Student Group in 2007. She has played various roles including Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and George Duke of Clarence in *Henry VI*. After completing the student acting course, Sian hopes to pursue a professional acting career.

Lucy Waring – *Liddy*
Whilst at Bristol University, Lucy acted in plays through the University drama societies. She joined The Questors Student Group in 2007 and has played roles including Donna in *Kvetch*, Gwendolyn in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Lady Percy in Henry IV and most recently, Henry Earl of Richmond and Edmund Duke of Rutland in *Henry VI*.

The Questors Student Group are students on the Acting: Foundation and Performance course, run by The Questors in conjunction with Kingston College.

Mark Fitzgerald – Director
Mark is Joint Artistic Director of The Questors Theatre. Directing includes: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Richard III, Separate Tables, The Visit, Henry V, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, This Happy Breed* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Mark also works as an acting coach for television and radio. Films include the award-winning *Seven Sins of England* for Channel Four.

Rachel Knightley – Assistant Director
Rachel is a graduate of Student Group 56; and of The Questors Youth Theatre for which she has since directed *Aftermath* (written with and for 11a, 2007), *Head On/Head Off* by Niall Tatchley (2004); *Parva Vale* (with Alex Marker, 2005). She writes and directs for theatre and radio.

Please remember to turn off all mobile phones

Please note photography is not permitted in the Playhouse

Otherwise Engaged

26 September – 3 October 2009

In the Playhouse

Black comedy

German Humour Goes Global

3 – 5 September 2009

In the Playhouse

Direct from the Edinburgh Fringe

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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 – where you can volunteer for just one night or several. Backstage staff – including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, painters, wardrobe staff, and costume and set designers – 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 place 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 – our 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 have 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 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.

QYT Youth Theatre

Our youth theatre – QYT – runs weekly drama classes for all ages from 6 to 16 years old. Younger groups meet on Saturday mornings and older ages meet on weekday teatimes. There's often a waiting list for membership, so put your name down now! You can find details online at questors.org.uk/qyt.