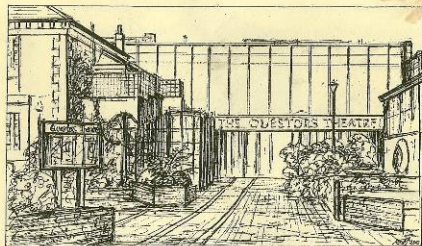




Questors, Ealing's Theatre



# DUBLIN CAROL

by Conor McPherson

The Studio

11 – 23 December 2010

## Qafé

Have you tried the Questors café experience yet?

Opening times Tuesday – Saturday:

Term time 9:00 am – 7:30 pm

Outside term time 11:30 am – 7:30 pm

On Playhouse show nights, through until the end of the first interval.

Serving specialist teas and coffees, hot chocolate and soft drinks, with a selection of sandwiches cut to order.

Pre-theatre hot meal menu available on show nights up to 7:00 pm.

## The Grapevine Bar

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to Members and Friends of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as 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 2011 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are 2010 CAMRA West Middlesex Club of the Year. A choice of at least three real ales is usually available, including Fuller's London Pride. 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 pm – 11:00 pm (10:30 pm close on Sundays)

Sunday lunchtime midday – 2:30 pm

See [questors.org.uk/grapevine](http://questors.org.uk/grapevine) for more details

**Neither the Qafé nor the Grapevine  
are able to accept credit or debit cards.**



## DUBLIN CAROL

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## Dublin Carol

Conor McPherson was born in Dublin in 1971, the only son of a middle class family. He has become one of Ireland's leading contemporary playwrights. His hit play *The Weir*, written when he was only twenty five, brought him an Olivier award and received a successful production at The Questors Theatre in 2006. He made his debut at the National Theatre in 2006 with his later work *The Seafarer*, which like *Dublin Carol* is set on Christmas Eve. He is also a director, having directed some of his own plays. More recently he has begun to work in films. The choice of *Dublin Carol* as the December Studio production will, it is hoped, provide audience members seeking a contrast to seasonal sentimentality with a thought provoking and moving experience.

McPherson began writing plays whilst at University College Dublin, where he studied English and philosophy. He knew he was destined to become a playwright after reading David Mamet's classic piece *Glengarry Glen Ross*. For him composition is, he has said, a way of exorcising the voices in his head and the demons in his life and of suppressing the constant anxiety from which he has suffered, at any rate in the past. His own problems thus form the background and are the source of many of the themes in his work. Although he has said that he does not set out to write about his own experiences, they nevertheless clearly colour his writing. Thus in *Dublin Carol* he explores such subjects as a character's persistent feelings of failure, the often disastrous consequences of the Irish culture of drinking at every social event from courtships and weddings to funerals, leading to dependency on drink and fractured family relationships. He has recalled how he was educated at a strict Catholic school, where he was subjected to regular beatings, which led to his own loss of religious belief by the age of fifteen.

The play was originally commissioned for the reopening of the Royal Court Theatre in 2000 and has also been performed in America, where it was directed by the playwright. It is a chamber piece for three actors set in present day Dublin. Given the date of its composition, Ireland's boom and bust and current economic crisis do not of course figure in the script, but it will be found that all the references to places, stores and bars are genuine. Thus it is set in an office in Fairview, a Dublin suburb, whilst one of the characters works in the department store Dunne's, (to be found in St. Stephen's Green shopping centre in central Dublin) and talks of visiting Major Tom's – a sports bar. This realistic underpinning supports the skilful imagination with which the author depicts his characters and those of others who he brings vividly to life, although we do not actually see them on stage. McPherson accepts that for the most part he has chosen to write about

men, but in this piece he has written a sensitive and demanding role for a woman. Relationships between the sexes in a country with what can often be regarded as old fashioned and conservative attitudes are fundamental to the structure of the play.

And what of the title? There are of course parallels to be found with the depiction of the travails of Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, principally in the portrayal of the central character John, a man who has become detached from any real contact with humanity. Just as Charles Dickens shows how Scrooge is forced to confront his own demons and to go through a process of emotional transformation, so McPherson too provides a sensitive examination of how someone can go through the difficult process of trying to reconnect and revive his relationships with other people. Moreover *Dublin Carol* is also set on Christmas Eve, a time when everyone becomes more than usually conscious of the presence or absence of meaningful relationships and when the rituals of past festive seasons are recalled. Whilst McPherson does not employ the artificial device of phantom spirits of Christmas to show the way, the future is explained by an examination of the characters' past and will undoubtedly be governed by their reaction to the problems of the present. All three seem to have elements of the author's view of himself in them: Mark is only twenty and has to make some tough choices about the life before him, Mary is in her early thirties and is facing an uncertain and possibly difficult future, whilst John, in his sixties, has a disastrous past which he has tried to put behind him and out of his mind. The difference in their ages and attitudes is skilfully represented on stage.

McPherson's style is very much in the great tradition of Irish story telling, although surprisingly he has said that in person he is not a good storyteller. However he is clearly an extremely gifted listener. His prose is carefully crafted and musical, but manages to be very realistic. He is not afraid to be mordantly funny or shocking – and at times is both at once. The dialogue, which ranges from the poetic to the blasphemous, works best when scrupulous attention is paid to the distinctive rhythms of Dublin speech. We have been very fortunate in having as part of our production team an Irish dialect coach, who has been of immense help to the cast in their attempts to shed their own English and Welsh accents. Most of the language should be fairly easily comprehensible from the context, but there are some words which pose more difficulty. For those who do not know the meaning already, the Gardai are the police and a "ban guard" is a woman police officer. Macardles is an Irish beer.

Since this is a short and concentrated play we have chosen to perform it without an interval.

Sue Solomon

# DUBLIN CAROL

by **Conor McPherson**

*First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 11 December 2010*

## CAST

**John**      **John Dobson**  
**Mark**      **Jed Chambers**  
**Mary**      **Emma Hounsell**

The play is set over one day, 24 December.

Part one, late morning;

Part two, early afternoon;

Part three, late afternoon.

The action takes place in an office on the Northside of Dublin,  
around Fairview or the North Strand Road.

The performance lasts approximately 90 minutes without an interval.

Please turn off all mobile phones, pagers and watch alarms.  
The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.  
Thank you.

## PRODUCTION

Director	<b>Sue Solomon</b>
Set Designer	<b>Alex Marker</b>
Costume	<b>Sarah Andrews</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Matthew Addison</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Paul Robinson</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Alec Atchison</b>
Deputy Stage Manager	<b>Geoffrey Morgan</b>
Assistant Stage Manager	<b>Sharan Chabria</b>
Rehearsal Prompter	<b>Gordon Miller</b>
Dialect Coach	<b>Camilla Bergin-Bath</b>
Lighting and Sound Operator	<b>Paul Robinson</b>
Lighting Assistant	<b>Andrew Richards</b>
Head Constructor	<b>Clive Whitcroft</b>
Constructors and Get-In Crew	<b>Henry Broom, John Howe, Philip Lindley</b>
Scenic Artists	<b>Sam Anthony, Gemma Batchelor, Matthew Waldren</b>
Photographer	<b>Peter Gould</b>
Thanks to:	<b>Eric Lister, Harriet Parsonage</b>

## Biographies

### Jed Chambers – Mark

Jed graduated from the two-year Questors Student Acting Course (Group 63) in 2010. He has appeared at The Questors in *The Accrington Pals* and *The Libertine*. He narrowly missed obtaining a drama school place this year but hopes to gain a place next year. He will appear in The Questors production of *The Wintering* in February 2011.

### John Dobson – John

John joined The Questors in 1981 and since then has played everything from an evil spider to a French maid, from Chekhov to a Japanese biker in black leather. Highlights include *The Faith Healer*, *Breaking the Code*, *The Lesson* and, most recently, *The Rover*. He spent many years editing The Questors club magazine and pioneered the website. Nowadays, in between acting, he looks after The Questors extensive archive of photographs, programmes and other historic documents.

### Emma Hounsell – Mary

Emma trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. She joined The Questors in 2006 and since then has appeared in *After Magritte*, the Polish short *Widows*, *A Comedy of Errors* and *Three Sisters*.

### Sue Solomon – Director

Sue Solomon has directed many plays at The Questors. Recent productions include those of her own translation of Marivaux's *The Legacy*, Lopez de Vega's *The Dog in the Manger*, *As You Like It*, *Madame Bovary* and *The Comedy of Errors*. She also researches eighteenth century theatre and opera.

### Alex Marker – Designer

Alex is Head of Design at The Questors where he has designed over 25 productions. He trained in design at Wimbledon School of Art and, since graduating, has designed professionally for a wide variety of venues, including West End theatres and The Finborough Theatre, where he is resident designer. He is also Director of The Questors Youth Theatre.

### A Little Book of Christmas Riddles by Alan Chambers

30 intriguing riddles to get the wits stirring over Christmas.

Just the thing to put in a Christmas stocking for children and grown-ups alike.

Available from the Front of House team or the Grapevine Bar.

Only £3.00 – all proceeds go to QRNew – the Questors Renewal Fund.

### Sarah Andrews – Costume

Sarah joined Questors in 1977 as a member of Student Group 32 and since graduating has appeared in many plays at the Questors, most recently in *The Comedy of Errors*. Sarah is one of the triumvirate that runs the Costume Department and has designed and dressed a countless number of shows, most recently *A Flea in Her Ear*, *The Libertine*, *The Rover*, *The Accrington Pals*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *A Christmas Carol*.

### Matthew Addison – Lighting Designer

*Dublin Carol* is Matthew's first show at The Questors this season. However, contrary to popular belief, this is not because he has moved to Manchester, Aberdeen or Iceland. Matthew works for LSI Projects, in their Lighting Projects team. As well as Lighting Design, Matthew is an experienced Stage Carpenter and runs his own photography business.

### Paul Robinson – Sound Designer

Paul has been a member of The Questors for a year and a half and has worked as lighting and sound operator on many shows in that time including, *The Rover*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Misery*. This will be the third show on which Paul has been the Sound Designer, after *The Accrington Pals* and *Jeffrey Bernard is Unwell*.

### Alec Atchison – Stage Manager

Alec joined The Questors in 1977. He was a member of the Committee of Management for many years and was Company Secretary and Stage Director at different times. He has worked on, helped with, follow-spotted on or Stage Managed numerous shows.

### Camilla Bergin-Bath – Dialect Coach

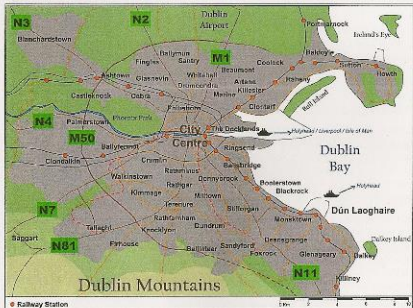
Camilla was born in Tralee, Co Kerry, and educated in Co. Tipperary, Ireland. She is a trained Voice and Elocution Coach. *Dublin Carol* is the first production she has worked on at The Questors and it has been a very enjoyable experience for her.

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## TALKBACK – Tuesday 14 December

Come and meet the Director and Cast for an informal discussion in The Upper Foyer as soon as possible after the first Tuesday performance.

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Map of Dublin's suburbs showing many areas mentioned in the play.

## More Christmas Entertainment at The Questors

### DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

music by Alan Menken,  
lyrics by Howard Ashman & Tim Rice,  
book by Linda Woolverton

11 – 31 December 2010

#### The Playhouse

Songs, magic and romance on stage for  
all the family to enjoy.

### CHRISTMAS GHOST STORIES

28 – 30 December 2010

#### The Studio

Why not come along and be chilled to  
the bone this Christmas?

Over three nights, actors narrate  
delightful tales of terror.

## Join Us

If you enjoy theatre, why not join us and benefit from membership:

- ✓ Half price personal tickets for Questors productions\*
- ✓ Discounted Guest tickets when you bring friends to Questors productions\*
- ✓ Children's FREE tickets!
- ✓ Opportunities to be actively involved in our productions
- ✓ Allowed to audition to join our company of actors
- ✓ Exclusive or discounted training courses
- ✓ Colour magazine three times a year
- ✓ Monthly Members' Newsletter
- ✓ Monthly programme card
- ✓ Vote at general meetings
- ✓ Access to iQ – the members-only website <http://members.questors.org.uk>
- ✓ Membership of The Grapevine Club

*\*Reduced prices exclude certain events. †Under 18 only, maximum four per event. Must be collected at the performance and accompanied by an adult member.*

**Introductory offer** – as a welcome for first time members, either try us out for six months at half price, or get your first 15 months' membership for the price of 12.

## Getting the most from your membership

We have a wide range of opportunities for you to become actively involved front-of-house or backstage. Volunteer help is always needed for selling programmes or stewarding, and training is provided if you'd like to work in Box Office with our computerized system. To meet members in a social setting, volunteer to help behind the Grapevine bar. Backstage staff including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, sound and light designers and operators, painters, wardrobe and costume and set designers are always welcomed, whatever your skills, we'll find a place for you. We also have courses for those wishing to direct.

The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.

## Questors Youth Theatre – QYT

Our Youth Theatre, QYT, runs weekly drama classes for all ages from 6 to 16. Younger groups meet on Saturday mornings and older ages at weekday teatime. There's often a waiting list for membership, so put your name down now! Details are online at [questors.org.uk/qyt](http://questors.org.uk/qyt).

Cover image: Elaine Hagan

Programme: Nigel Bamford &  
John MacCarrick

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