Questors, Ealing's Theatre

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

By William Shakespeare

The Playhouse

13 – 20 February 2010

questors.org.uk

designed and printed by The Questors Theatre

Qafé

Have you tried the new Questors café experience yet?

Opening times Monday – Saturday:

Term time 9:00 am – 7:30 pm

Outside term time 11:30 am – 7:30 pm

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

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

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

Take your membership card with you to receive discounts on hot meals and drinks!

The 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 2010 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are 2009 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

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The Comedy of Errors

The Comedy of Errors, at first sight simply a classic farce, proves to be much more than that. It is a play in which Shakespeare not only explored many of the themes he was to return to in later and better known works, but also one in which he daringly ventured into the world of tragi-comedy. In the opening scene we meet Egeon, an elderly merchant from Syracuse, who has just been condemned to death by the Duke of Ephesus for venturing into a state where Syracusans are banned. Why has he come to this forbidden realm? It is because he is on the last stage of a fruitless and despairing search for his surviving identical twin son, Antipholus. Antipholus himself had left Syracuse some years back to look for his long-lost twin, also named Antipholus, from whom he was separated in a violent storm when a baby. In that storm, Egeon not only became separated from one of his twin sons, but also his wife. Awaiting execution and unable to raise a sufficient ransom to commute the death sentence, Egeon recounts his tragic tale to the Duke of Ephesus, who gives him an extra day to see if he can raise the ransom. It is a very serious opening. But then the comedy begins and Egeon's fate fades into the background.

Yet even in the midst of the many farcical twists and turns of the plot, Shakespeare deals with some serious themes. Amongst these are the sense of separation felt by twins who have grown up apart, (Shakespeare was himself the father of twins), the problems of a married couple trying to keep a relationship together, the attitudes of masters to servants who sometimes overstep the mark, the difficulties experienced by servants who have to put up with the frequent cruelties of their masters, and last, but not least, how to deal with madness.

It is also a play with many references to witches, spirits and magic, and I have chosen to set it in an imaginary tropical island where strange occurrences can happen, rather than in the classical Ephesus of the original. All directors of this play are also faced with the choice of whether to cast separate actors to play each of the two pairs of identical twins who feature in the play. My decision will soon become apparent!

The Comedy of Errors is based on two plays by the Roman dramatist Plautus, *Menaechmi* and *Amphitruo*, the themes of which Shakespeare skilfully adapted, wove into his own plot and embellished. The action takes place in the course of a single day. The play, which is significantly shorter than many others, probably dates from the early 1590s. The first recorded performance took place at Gray's Inn in 1594 as part of an entertainment for lawyers (there are quite a number of legal references and jokes, some of which have been cut since they are far too impenetrable for a modern audience!) The language ranges from passages of blank verse to rhyming couplets and prose – the author seems to have been trying his hand at a range of styles and was also using a wide variety of different forms to suit the characters and the situations in which they find themselves. Unusually for one of Shakespeare's comedies it contains no songs. This has not prevented it being adapted for the musical stage: Stephen Storace, a contemporary of Mozart, wrote an operatic version called *Gli Equivoci*, with a libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte. It was also the source for the musicals *The Boys from Syracuse* by Rodgers & Hart and the modern *Da Boyz*.

Although *The Comedy of Errors* is not as well known as other comedies by Shakespeare, it has always been popular and has rarely been out of the repertoire. For actors and audiences alike it is a fascinating insight into the experiments of a playwright who was still learning his craft. It is an early example of his skill in creating demanding roles for women. It manages to be thought-provoking as well as funny and we hope it will prove to be an ideal antidote to the doom and gloom of this lengthy winter.

Sue Solomon
Director

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THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

By William Shakespeare

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 13 February 2010.

CAST

in order of appearance

Egeon, a merchant of Syracuse	**Tony Barber**
Solinus, Duke of Ephesus	**Paul Vincent**
Jailer	**Evan Rule**
Attendants	**André Le Brocquy, Alex Cummings**
First Merchant	**Gianluca Arcidiacono**
Antipholus of Syracuse	**Daniel Cawtheray**
Dromio of Syracuse	**Mike Hadjipateras**
Dromio of Ephesus	**Mike Hadjipateras**
Luce, a kitchen maid	**Natasha Jones**
Adriana, wife of Antipholus of Ephesus	**Sunita Dugal**
Luciana, sister to Adriana	**Victoria Allies**
Antipholus of Ephesus	**Daniel Cawtheray**
Angelo, a goldsmith	**Martin Halvey**
Balthasar	**Geoffrey Morgan**
Dromio of Syracuse	**Allan Soper**
Second Merchant	**Geoffrey Morgan**
Officer	**Evan Rule**
A Courtesan	**Emma Hounsell**
Pinch, a doctor	**Tony Diggle**
Abbess, Aemilia, wife of Egeon	**Sarah Andrews**
Antipholus of Syracuse	**James Ellis**

The performance lasts approximately two hours including one interval of 15 minutes.

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	**Sue Solomon**
Assistant Director	**Jenny Foxwell**
Designer	**Peter Collins**
Lighting and Sound Designer	**Alan N Smith**
Stage Manager	**David Emmet**
Deputy Stage Manager (rehearsals)	**Tina Carnally**
Deputy Stage Manager (performances)	**Helen Doughty**
Assistant Stage Managers	**Gianluca Arcidiacono, Alex Cummings, Katherine Gloss, André Le Brocquy, Neil Strangward**
Constructors	**Henry Broom, Clive Whitcroft**
Sound and Lighting Operator	**Paul Robinson**
Lighting Assistants	**Richard Broadhurst, Rossella Cortesi, Tim Hayward, Richard Mead, Ben Sandford, Paulina Slawinska**
Floor painted by	**Dennis Dracup**
Costumes	**Sarah Andrews, Jane Arnold-Forster, Mary Davies, Helen Karasiewicz, Becky Maynard, Andrea Sebestyen, Pam Smith, Josie Thomas, Sylvia Wall, Jenny Yates**
Hair, Wigs and Make-up	**Anna Sargent**
Scaffolding	**Tina Harris**
Photographer	**Peter Collins**
Thanks to	**Adrian Asher, Danny Bailey, Mike Hagan, Nicholas Jonne Wilson, Paul Wilson, Peter Winton**
Special thanks to	**Gunnersbury Museum**

Sue Solomon – *Director*
Has been a member since 1972, initially as an actor but quite soon also as a director. Her most recent productions have been *As You Like It*, *The Dog in the Manger*, *Madame Bovary – Breakfast With Emma* and rehearsed readings of new translations of Terence's *Phormio* and Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Peter Collins – *Designer*
Became a member about 20 years ago and started as a Stage Manager and constructor, but became a regular designer. His most recent designs were for *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *The Trojan Women*, *Further Than the Furthest Thing* and *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Peter is also a photographer and many Questors shows have featured his production photographs.

The Next Questors Productions

Kvetch
by Steven Berkoff
26 February – 6 March 2010
The Studio

Darkly comic drama about suburban anxieties.

The Pierglass
by Tim Norton
11 – 13 March 2010
The Playhouse

The Questors Youth Theatre presents a wonderfully witty melodrama with a love story to swoon over.

The Accrington Pals
by Peter Whelan
20 – 27 March 2010
The Studio

The Questors Student Group 63 presents a warm and moving drama of the Great War and the women left behind.

The Rover
by Aphra Behn
17 – 24 April 2010
The Playhouse

Restoration comedy of revenge and romantic surprises. Then, from the 6th September, at The Minack Theatre, Cornwall.

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
- ✓ Regular Members' Newsletter
- ✓ Regular programme card
- ✓ Vote at general meetings
- ✓ 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**.

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