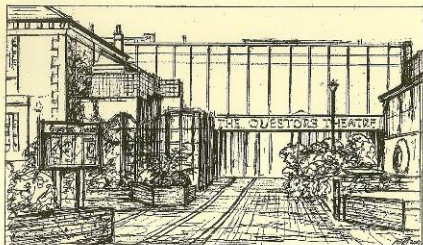




Questors, Ealing's Theatre



A FLEA IN HER EAR

by Georges Feydeau

Sponsored by Café Rouge

The Playhouse

30 October – 6 November 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

Autumn Beer Festival – Thursday 28 to Saturday 30 October

See questors.org.uk/grapevine for more details

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



A FLEA IN HER EAR

(or A Bee in Her Bonnet)

by Georges Feydeau

Sponsored by Café Rouge

The Playhouse

30 October – 6 November 2010

A Flea in Her Ear? Or A Bee in Her Bonnet?

Let me start by saying that I think the English title of this play is wrong. The French playwright Georges Feydeau knew exactly what he meant when he came up with the phrase *La Puce à l'oreille* ... which translates literally as "a flea in her ear". The female lead, Raymonde, is obsessed with the idea that her husband is unfaithful. In colloquial French, having a flea in your ear describes perfectly that state of mind. It is a nagging suspicion that you just cannot get out of your head. But in English, the meaning of the words is quite different. You send someone away with "a flea in their ear" when you make a stinging remark about their failings. To convey Feydeau's meaning, I think we would be better off with another old English phrase: *a bee in her bonnet*. It is the suspicion of infidelity, buzzing around inside Raymonde's head, that won't go away. Unfortunately, the meaning of the playwright's clever title has been lost in translation!

Never mind. The imperfect English title should not detract from what is a remarkable play from the master of French farce. Some critics can be a little dismissive about farce, perhaps regarding it as inconsequential and frivolous...mere light entertainment. Yet Feydeau's writing can be seen as a pointed social commentary on the people living at that time. Yes, it is hysterically funny, but it is comedy that can make you think. As one French scholar wrote: "*It permits us to look at aspects of our lives that we cannot yet bear to view both seriously and honestly*". So don't tell the French that this is not great classical theatre! They regard Feydeau as one of the greatest writers in their language.

Georges Léon Jules Marie Feydeau was born in Paris in 1862. His father was the novelist Ernest Feydeau, the author of the novel *Fanny* (1858). His mother, Lodzia Zelewska, was a Polish society beauty. Georges started writing plays as a child, apparently as a ruse to avoid more formal studies with his governess. He said that being lazy led him towards the theatre. Feydeau reached adulthood at a time when France was entering the *belles-années* – the "beautiful era" that began in the later years of the 19th Century and ended with the carnage of the First World War. It was a time of peace and growing prosperity, technological change and modernisation. The upper classes enjoyed an enviable lifestyle of wealth and privilege. The arts were transformed. Music, literature and painting saw the birth of new styles that reflected the modern world. In the theatre, playwrights began to portray real life in a way that shocked some audiences.

As a young man, Feydeau's own writing was starting to bring him some success. His first full-length play, *Tailleur pour dames* or *The Dressmaker*, was produced at the Renaissance Theatre in 1888 to considerable acclaim. However, he clearly was not satisfied with his own work, because he decided to take a break from writing to study the work of the masters of French farce. It proved to be a good decision. Two years later, he was back, showing that he had mastered the genre. Over a 16-year period, he produced a succession of plays, all received with critical and popular acclaim. *La Puce à l'oreille* was one of the big hits of 1907. He was made an officer of the Légion d'honneur and elected to the Académie Française, an honour not bestowed on Molière.

Feydeau located his plays in the *demi-monde*, on the fringes of polite society where wealthy men could indulge themselves with ladies of dubious reputation and strings of wealthy lovers. For me, it was important that our production should remain firmly rooted in Paris at the turn of the 20th Century. It is the *belles-années* of Feydeau that we are exploring.

Despite his great success, Feydeau's own life was plagued with problems. An extravagant lifestyle and a love of gambling brought serious financial problems. Like many other men who lived beyond their means, he thought he would find salvation in a good marriage, in his case to the daughter of a wealthy painter. It was not to last. By 1909, Feydeau had left the marital home, moving into the Hotel Terminus, where he lived for almost a decade. He divorced in 1916, and the tone of his final plays reflected the bitterness of his own experience of women and married life.

For a man who brought much laughter to theatre-goers, his own life was moving towards a tragic conclusion. He had long been a familiar figure in the cafes and clubs of Paris, mixing with the theatrical crowd. But increasingly, he just wandered the streets of the city, a lonely figure looking for anyone with whom he could strike up a conversation. Eccentricity turned to melancholia, and eventually syphilis led to insanity. He died in 1921 and is buried in the Montmartre Cemetery with his father, near other great artists such as Berlioz, Degas, Labiche, Offenbach and François Truffaut.

His plays are his great legacy. *A Flea in Her Ear* is one of his best, even if the English title could be improved. You may recognise the music that announces the start of each act. *The Flight of the Bumble Bee* was composed by Rimsky-Korsakov around 1900. I think it is a very appropriate choice, but I may just have a bee in my bonnet!

"There is no human drama that does not offer at least some comic aspects." (Georges Feydeau)

A FLEA IN HER EAR

(OR A BEE IN HER BONNET)

by Georges Feydeau, translated by Richard Halberstadt

Sponsored by Café Rouge

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 30 October 2010

CAST

in order of appearance

Camille Chandebise	Wesley Lloyd
Antoinette	Aimee Thomas
Etienne	Mark Redrup
Dr Finache	Alan Waldock
Lucienne Homenides de Histangua	Sarah Mannion
Raymonde Chandebise	Eleanor Misselbrook
Victor Emmanuel Chandebise	Mike Hadjipateras
Romain Tournel	Daniel Cawtheray
Carlos Homenides de Histangua	Lewis Brown
Eugenie	Claire Reid
Augustin Ferrailon	Paul Vincent
Olympe Ferrailon	Linda Shannon
Baptistin	Ken Ratcliffe
Herr Mann	Mark Hill
Poche	Mike Hadjipateras
Other parts played by	Sebastian Hulkov,
	Paula Koski,
	Jessie Moat,
	Veronica Sevegrand,
	Meena Toor

The action of the play takes place in Paris on Wednesday 5 June 1901.

Act 1 Monsieur and Madame Chandebise's apartment.

Act 2 The Fearless Pussycat Hotel.

Act 3 Monsieur and Madame Chandebise's apartment.

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes including two intervals of 15 minutes each.

PRODUCTION

Director	Richard Halberstadt
Set Designer	Helen Quinn-Gregson
Costume Designers	Sarah Andrews, Jenny Yates
Lighting and Sound Designer	Alan Smith
Stage Manager	Kate Townsend
Deputy Stage Manager	Arthur England
Assistant Stage Managers	Sharan Chabrin, Frances Sherwin
Properties	Jemma Auvache, John Gray, Kevin Sebastianpillai
Prompters	Julie Hadwin, Pam Smith
Lighting Operator	Paul Wilson
Sound Operator	Paul Robinson
Wardrobe	Mary Davies, Helen Karasiewicz
Constructors	Steve Cowan, Jim Craddock, John Feather, Mike Hagan, Richard Lewis, Richard Williams
Flying	Joel Schrire
Fight Arranger	Nicholas Jonne Wilson
Movement Advisor	Aimee Thomas
Makeup and Hair	Amy Gray, Rosie Guest
German Consultant	Paul Vincent
Spanish Consultant	Katharine Williams
Production Photographer	Peter Gould
Programme Notes	Peter Gould
Marketing	Peter Gould, Lucy Parker

Thanks to: M. & Mme Francois-Xavier Bery, Hazel Atashroo, Ian Briggs, Andrew Davies, David Emmet, Stella Firman, Scott Hastings, Alex Marker, Madelaine Miller, Harriet Parsonage, Callie Pincho, Pam Redrup, Jenny Richardson, Daniel Smith, Louise Templeton, Sylvia Wall, Alex Williams, Dominic Worstley, Nigel Worstley, House Services, The Questors Office Staff

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

Biographies

Lewis Brown – *Carlos Homenides de Histangua*

Lewis completed Student Group 62 in 2009, during which he played Clifford in *Henry VI* and Francis Troy in *Far From The Madding Crowd*. Other credits include *Mercury Fur* and *The Libertine*. His most recent appearance was in Unmasked Productions' *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Daniel Cawtheray – *Romain Tournel*

Daniel joined The Questors in 2009, after performing in over 50 productions on the Isle of Wight amateur circuit, including Biff Loman in *Death of a Salesman* and John Proctor in *The Crucible*. This is his fourth appearance on The Questors stage. He was recently in The Etherics' production of *Bent* (Horst) and for The Questors he has appeared in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Major Domo) and *The Comedy of Errors* (the twins Antipholus).

Mike Hadjipateras – *Victor Emmanuel Chandebise / Poche*

Mike joined The Questors in 2003 and has appeared in numerous productions, including *Bouncers*, *The Dispute* and *The Legacy*, *Conversations After a Burial*, *Richard III*, *The Seagull*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Marvellous Land of Oz* and *The Comedy of Errors*. When not acting, he teaches history at the Rudolph Steiner School in Hertfordshire.

Mark Hill – *Herr Mann*

Mark has appeared as Splodge in *Dogs Barking*, Uncle Henry/Emerald City Guard in *The Wizard of Oz*. He was also spotted in *The Railway Children* and the Polish short, *Widows*. He was last seen bursting a balloon, whilst sporting an outrageous Czech accent, in *Rock 'n' Roll* last Christmas.

Wesley Lloyd – *Camille Chandebise*

Wesley graduated from Questors Student Group 62 in 2009 after playing King Henry VI in *Henry VI* and Joseph Poogress in *Far From The Madding Crowd*. Last season he appeared in *The Marvellous Land Of Oz* (as various characters), *A Christmas Carol* (Young Scrooge), *Three Sisters* (Tusenbach) and was the DSM on *Kvetch*.

Sarah Mannon – *Lucienne Homenides de Histangua*

This is Sarah's second performance at The Questors after playing Irina in *Three Sisters* last June. Previous credits include Lily/Flo in *Allie* and Malet in *The Libertine* with KDC Theatre, Carla Alaura in *City of Angels*, Tina McCoy in *The Fix* and Jaquie in *Me and My Girl* at University.

Eleanor Misselbrook – *Raymonde Chandebise*

Eleanor graduated with a BA Hons in Acting at Bretton Hall, Leeds University in 2005 and joined The Questors Theatre in 2008. She has appeared in *Charley's Aunt* and this year in *Three Sisters*. This is her third performance with the Questors and she has still not managed to escape the corset!

Ken Ratcliffe – *Baptistin*

Ken joined The Questors in 1963 and first appeared in Pinero's *Dandy Dick* in 1964. Every year since then he has acted either in The Playhouse or The Studio (including on one occasion *The Shaw Room*). In his younger days he would sometimes appear in three or four productions a year.

Mark Redrup – *Etienne*

'It was twenty years ago' this November that Mark first appeared on The Questors stage. Since then, his modest talents have been liberally festooned in a multitude of parts. He was last seen slipping his discs in the record-breaking *Rock 'n' Roll*. 'A splendid time is guaranteed for all.'

Claire Reid – *Eugenie*

This is Claire's debut, having recently joined The Questors. Claire enjoys being on stage. However, her main experience is on or behind camera with over two years of TV presenting behind her. She has been part of TV production teams for BBC and Endemol.

CAFÉ ROUGE

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*Café Rouge, the all day Parisian brasserie, are pleased to sponsor
A Flea in Her Ear*

Exclusive offer

*Bring your A Flea in Her Ear ticket to Café Rouge Eating, Chinwick or Kew
to receive 25% off your total bill until the 30th November 2010*

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Valid any day, cannot be used with any other discounts, promotion or set menus.

One ticket valid for up to 6 people. For larger parties more tickets can be used.

TALKBACK – Tuesday 2 November

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

Linda Shannon – *Olympe Ferrailon*

Linda returns to The Questors stage after a few years' absence, during which time she did a postgraduate drama degree. Previous Questors productions include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Nicholas Nickleby* (parts 1 and 2), *The Twits* and *Abigail's Party* (1995). Linda has recently written and performed two one-woman shows, about Jane, wife of Thomas Carlyle, and about the comedienne Joyce Grenfell.

Aimee Thomas – *Antoinette*

This is Aimee's debut at The Questors. She trained at Queen Margaret University in 1998 and previously attended Central School of Speech and Drama obtaining an MA in classical acting. Her credits include Betty Paris in *The Crucible* (an A1 tour), and Lady Anne in *Richard III* and Ellen in *Outlying Islands* (both at The New Venture Theatre).

Paul Vincent – *Augustin Ferrailon*

Paul has been an acting member since 1983. Recent productions include *Travesties*, *The London Cuckolds*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Black Comedy*, *Macbeth* and *The Comedy of Errors*. He also serves as a Front of House Manager and chairs the Plays Advisory Group.

Alan Waldock – *Dr Finache*

Alan appeared in several productions for The Questors back in the early eighties, and then took a long sabbatical. Since his return, his appearances have included *The Seagull* (Shamraev), *Charley's Aunt* (Stephen Spettigue), *Black Comedy* (Colonel Melkett), *Great Expectations* (Mr Jaggers) and *The Dog In The Manger* (The Marquis Ricardo).

Music featured before and after each Act includes songs by Josephine Baker, Bourvil, Lucienne Boyer, Lily Fayol, Fréhel, Mistinguett, Berthe Sylva and Charles Trenet.

Next Questors Productions

LADIES DAY

by Amanda Whittington

5 – 13 November 2010

The Studio

A bittersweet and hilariously funny tale of four Yorkshire lasses on a posh outing to Royal Ascot Ladies' Day in the year it relocated to York.

DISNEY'S

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

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

12 – 31 December 2010

The Playhouse

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

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.

Cover Image: Elaine Hagan

Programme: Nigel Bamford & John MacCarrick

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