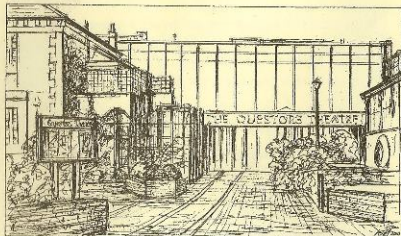




Questors, Ealing's Theatre



SWEENEY TODD

music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

book by Hugh Wheeler

based on a version of *Sweeney Todd* by Christopher Bond

The Studio

1 – 15 May 2010

Qafé

Have you tried the 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 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 2010 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:

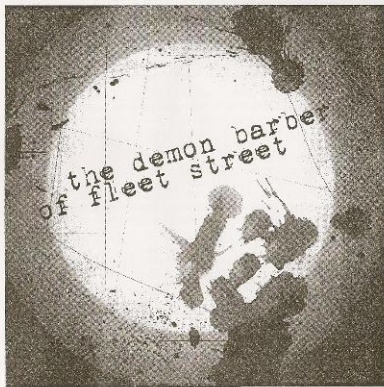
7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (10:30 pm close on Sundays)

Sunday lunchtime midday – 2:30 pm

Spring Mini Beer Festival: Thu 27th to Sat 29th May

See questors.org.uk/grapevine/ for more details

Unfortunately, neither the Qafé nor the Grapevine are able to accept credit or debit cards.



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Sweeney Todd

Forensic Science: Relating to the application of science to decide questions arising from a crime.

Dissection: A thorough and detailed analysis or examination.

Witness: To see something happen, especially a crime.

Improve: To make a substitute for something out of materials that happen to be available at the time.

I am sure we have all seen TV programmes and films that have brought us into to the world of forensic science and how it impacts on solving a crime. They illustrate how advanced microscopic examination of a crime scene or a victim is able to provide evidence that might lead to an understanding of how a crime was committed and who the perpetrator might be. Sondheim's musical of the Sweeney Todd story similarly puts his central character under the spotlight and peels back the myth and legend, offering us an insight into the mind of a man tormented by revenge and injustice.

Wherever there is crime there is almost certain to be witnesses, innocent bystanders caught up in the events for no other reason than the fact that they were at the scene of the crime at that precise moment when it happened. In this story we all become witnesses, both the Company and the audience, eavesdropping on events as they unfold.

This has been a totally collaborative production and the Sweeney Todd Company has contributed enormously to the finished product. We took for our creed a quote from Sweeney's opening incantation:

*There's a hole in the world like a great black pit
And the vermin of the world inhabit it
And its morals aren't worth what a pig could spit
And it goes by the name of London.*

*At the top of the hole sit the privileged few,
Making mock of the vermin in the lower zoo,
Turning beauty into filth and greed.*

This is a story about the dog-eat-dog philosophy that pervades a materialistic society. Man loses his identity and therefore is trampled on by those who crave what he has but do not recognise his rights as an individual. Given such a world, Sweeney reasons that he is only repaying mankind for the misery it has inflicted upon him. Sweeney is a man with a purpose to his life and a somewhat human, even tragic, quality to his soul. But apart from this gripping story of revenge, *Sweeney Todd* is also about love. The musical is full of the love stories of the protagonists: love unrequited, love tormented, passionate love, love that is lost and love that is won. Amidst this, the fiery relationship between the two central protagonists, Mrs Lovett and Todd, is as complex as the love of two people can be, brought together by circumstance and driven by desires on the one part and needs on the other. When Mrs Lovett confesses that she always had a fondness for Todd, this is clearly a euphemism for something much more powerful on her part.

Whereas Todd exclaims, "Mrs Lovett, how I've lived without you all those years I'll never know", when confronted by the prospect of a macabre future together.

At the early stage of rehearsals we held a workshop, exploring movement ideas and stylistic ways of creating the dramatic events of the play. Having decided very early on that we didn't want to re-create any previous productions of the show, we set out to explore how simply we could tell the story and how far we could use the actors to portray the emotions, set-pieces and dramatic moments without utilising a vast array of technical effects, equipment, costumes and props normally associated with a vast musical like *Sweeney Todd*. So in our version of *Sweeney Todd*, we have opted for a simple staging and a production with a contemporary slant making the story less bound by a period setting. Our production is set in a very particular environment where only those materials around can act as a support to the action. The Company was then set the task of using their imagination to come up with props that might be available to us in the world we have created. This exploratory process has continued through rehearsals enabling us to clarify and refine our ideas.

The other overwhelming element to *Sweeney Todd* is the most spectacular, exciting and striking score ever written for a musical. At times it is intensely powerful and thrilling, making your hair stand on end, and at others it is lyrical and poignant. Add to this some superb comic twists and turns, and you have a rich mixture of undoubtedly the best music Sondheim has ever written for a musical. Michael Billington was right when he said that *Sweeney Todd* is capable of working "at every kind of level – performed as a chamber piece or a vast musical or an operatic epic". We hope that what we have produced is a show that encapsulates as many levels as possible without losing its powerful narrative.

I have been blessed by a highly talented technical team for this show whose input and creativity has been so supportive to the production: Andrew Dixon for his inspired lighting design; Nichola Thomas for executing brilliantly our ideas for costumes; Peter Salvietto for being such a great props master; and Colin Horne for his genius in turning my designs into a reality.

Lastly, I want to thank the three people that started this journey with me way back in the late summer of 2009. I am indebted to John Hennessy for his outstanding commitment to the Company as Musical Director, Caroline Bleakley (Assistant Director) for her enormous support, inspiration and contribution to this production in addition to taking on the role of Mrs Lovett, and last, but not least, Pam Pedrup (SM and Trainee Director) for her input and total commitment to this production.

*Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd.
He served a dark and a vengeful god.
What happened then – well, that's the play,
And he wouldn't want us to give it away.
Not Sweeney.*

Mike Langridge

SWEENEY TODD

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by Hugh Wheeler

Based on a version of *Sweeney Todd* by Christopher Bond

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 1 May 2010

CAST

in order of appearance

Sweeney Todd	Paul Francis
Anthony	James Clifford
Beggar Woman	Victoria Butler
Mrs Lovett	Caroline Bleakley
Johanna	Lucy Fairburn
Birdseller	John Hines
Judge Turpin	Peter Brown
Beadle	Robert Vass
Tobias	Daniel Martin
Pirelli	Russell Fleet
Jonas Fogg	Derek Stoddart

The Company: **Peter Brown, Victoria Butler, James Clifford, Lucy Fairburn, Russell Fleet, Gemma Galley, Michael Hayes, John Hines, Lydia King, Daniel Martin, Sarah Morrison, Greg Smith, Tara Stewart, Derek Stoddart, Robert Vass**

Musicians: **Simon Briggs** (reed 1), **Richard Fairhead** (keyboard 1), **Alison Hoyland** (reed 2), **David Neville** (percussion), **Susan Plowrie** (keyboard 2), **David Sullivan** (trumpet)

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes including a 15 minute interval.

PRODUCTION

Director and Designer	Michael Langridge
Assistant Director	Caroline Bleakley
Musical Director	John Hennessy
Costume Designer	Nicholas Thomas
Lighting Designer	Andrew Dixon
Sound Designer	Ben Sandford
Stage Manager and Trainee Director	Pam Redrup
Deputy Stage Manager	Hunter Gibson
Assistant Stage Manager	Kelly Brown, Sarah Clopet, Michael Pemberton, Ursula Russell
Properties	Peter Salvitto
Construction Manager	Colin Horne
Lighting Assistants	John Green, Mel Pereira, Paul Robinson, Coria Ryan
Sound Operator	John Fryer
Rehearsal Pianist	Richard Fairhead
Additional Movement Advisor	Helen Parkinson
Wig Dresser	Camilla Collins
Get In Crew	Nigel Bamford, Henry Broom, Mark Fitzgerald, Mike Hagan, Tina Harris, Michael Hayes, Tim Hayward, Lydia King, Mark Redrup, Zyg Staniaszek, Martin Stoner
Photographer	Peter Collins
Thanks to	Jean Derby, Anthony Smith, Nigel Worsley, Film Medical, Greasepaint, Worley Parsons Europe

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

Caroline Bleakley – Mrs Lovett / Assistant Director

Caroline has appeared in over 30 plays at The Questors including *Translations*, *The Rivals*, *Yerma*, *Dancing At Lughnasa*, *Heartbreak House*, *Macbeth* (1994), *The Winter's Tale*, *The Crucible*, *Lady Betty*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Habeus Corpus*, *Festen*, *The Seagull* and, most recently, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Caroline was also Assistant Director for *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Great Expectations*.

Peter Brown – Judge Turpin / Company

This is Peter's second production at The Questors, having played Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* in 2009. Previous musical productions include *Gershwin's Girl Crazy* and *Oh, Kay!* Previous theatre includes *Copenhagen*, *Art*, *Hysteria*, *Macbeth*, *The Diary of a Someone*, *The Accrington Pals*, *Twelve Angry Men* and *Passion Play*.

Victoria Butler – Beggar Woman / Company

Victoria completed Student Group 51 in 1998. Her appearances since then include *The Wizard of Oz* (Glinda), *The Marvellous Land of Oz* (Glinda), *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum* (Philia), *The Lesson* (Pupi), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Starving) and *Little Shop of Horrors* (Audrey). She also co-designed sets for *The Taming Of The Shrew* and *The Marvellous Land of Oz*.

James Clifford – Anthony / Company

This is James' first Questors show, having graduated from Cumbria Institute of the Arts in 2009. James made his professional debut in the world premiere of *Make Believe the Musical* (Kenton Theatre) originating the leading role of Desmond Wilkins. Coming from an acting background, James has found the experience of playing Anthony a challenging but enjoyable one.

Lucy Fairburn – Johanna / Company

This is Lucy's first production with The Questors. She has been involved in amateur dramas and choirs in both Bristol and Cardiff before her recent move to London. More recent musical roles include Eliza in *My Fair Lady*, Lola in *Copacabana* and Mrs Molloy in *Hello Dolly*. She sang for a year with the BBC National Chorus of Wales and in several projects with the Welsh National Opera. She is delighted to have joined The Questors, has thoroughly enjoyed rehearsing *Sweeney Todd* and hopes to get involved in future productions.

Russell Fleet – Pirilli / Company

Russell's last musical outing at The Questors was as Hysterium in *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*. Other acting credits include *Bloody Poetry*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Black Comedy*. Russell also works backstage and has been DSM on *Bedroom Farce* and *The Alchemist*, curtain maker for *Affair Magritte* and gentlemen's outfitter for *Rock 'n' Roll*.

Paul Francis – Sweeney Todd

Roles at The Questors include Kent in *King Lear*, Judge Brack in *Hedda Gabler*, Badger in *The Wind in the Willows*, Sir Francis Chesney in *Charley's Aunt*, Kurt in *Dance of Death*, Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* and the Plant in *Little Shop of Horrors*. He has been a Questors Member for about 10 years.

Gemma Galley – Company

This is Gemma's first production for The Questors. She studied opera at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and Music Theatre at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. She has worked extensively in theatre and film. Highlights have included playing Jill in Hollywood Film Festival finalist *Shorn* and the title role in the Australian premier of Germaine Greer's *Lysistrata*.

Michael Hayes – Company

This is Michael's fifth appearance at The Questors since 2007. He played Larry in the Sondheim musical *Company*, the Cowardly Lion in *The Wizard of Oz*, Brassett in *Charley's Aunt* and King John in *Cinderella*. Most recently, Michael assistant directed *Abigail's Party*.

John Hennessy – Musical Director

John has worked both as a touring and a session musician, playing a diverse range of music from jazz to rock and has worked with many theatre companies. In recent years, John has been Musical Director for *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Smokey Joe's Cafe* for Trifid Productions. He was also Musical Director for The Questors productions of *Little Shop of Horrors* and *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*.

John Hines – Birdseller / Company

John has sung in opera, operetta, musicals, pantomime, revue and Questors Reminiscence Roadshows, with performances in Moscow, Leningrad and the Edinburgh Fringe. He sang lead tenor in Mike Green's course oratorio *Nebuchadnezzar II*, as well as Fredrik in *A Little Night Music*, Jackson in *The Hired Man*, Macheath in *The Beggar's Opera*, Pepe in *The Boyfriend* and in the 1978 *Oh, What a Lovely War!*

Lydia King – Company

Lydia has done many shows at The Questors, including *Nicholas Nickleby* and, most recently, *Rock 'n' Roll* in The Studio. She is so happy to be back working with Mike.

Michael Langridge – Director and Designer

Michael is an Actor, Director and Designer and has worked on over 100 productions at The Questors. Among the shows he has directed are *The Hired Man*, *Pack of Lies*, *Noises Off*, *Privates On Parade*, *The Crucible*, *Lady Betty*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Great Expectations*. He recently played Dr Hyman in *Broken Glass*.

Daniel Martin – Tobias / Company

Dan joined The Questors in September last year and was so keen that he decided to move into a flat on Mattock Lane. Being so close to the theatre made getting to rehearsals for his first show, *A Christmas Carol*, very easy indeed. He was hoping to don yet more fancy Victorian attire in *Sweeney Todd*; however, the Director soon obliterated this aspiration. Anyway, despite this, Dan is still looking forward to playing the part of Tobias 'Toby' Ragg.

Sarah Morrison – Company

Sarah has appeared in over 50 productions at The Questors. Those which involved singing as well as acting include: *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum* (Domina), *Fireman Sam* (Bella Lasagne), *Rhythm of the Road* (Rose), *Shakespeare Country* (Zana Ferris), *Cabaret* (Kit Kat Girl), *Aladdin* (Princess Jasmine) and *The Boyfriend* (Fay), these last two way back in 1981!

Greg Smith – Company

An acting member since 2008, Greg has trodden the boards at The Questors as the Thane of Argus in *Macbeth*, Jack Pumpkinhead in *The Marvellous Land of Oz* and in the sketch show *The Errors of Comedy*. He is very rarely seen impeccably shaved.

Tara Stewart – Company

Tara loves The Questors! Since joining, Tara has played Mette in *Festen* and Emilie in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Tara studied drama at university and has a background with The Holywood Players, Northern Ireland, where she won Best Supporting Actress for Amy in David Hare's *Amy's View* and a Scholarship for Mrs Altonby in Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* in the All Ireland Amateur Finals.

Derek Stoddart – Jonas Fogg / Company

Derek has been an acting member of The Questors since 1982. His most recent role was as Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol*. Over the past few years he has appeared in a number of memorable productions, most notably as Smike in *Nicholas Nickleby* and, in complete contrast, as Delilah in *Stiff*. He is looking forward to this, his first musical production at The Questors.

Robert Vass – Beadie / Company

Robert has been treading the boards for nigh on forty years! His most recent appearance at The Questors was as Scholz / Scarecrow in *The Marvellous Land of Oz*. He has also played the Baker in *Into the Woods*, Sergeant Major in *Oh, What a Lovely War!*, Mr Sowerberry in *Oliver!*, Harry in *Company* and Lycus in *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*.

TALKBACK

Come meet the Director and Cast for an informal discussion in The Studio as soon as possible after the performance on **Tuesday 4th May**.

The Next Questors Productions

THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA

by Federico García Lorca

28 May – 5 June 2010

The Studio

Exploring the themes of repression, passion and conformity in an all-female household in Andalucía.

THREE SISTERS

by Anton Chekov

5 – 12 June 2010

The Playhouse

Arguably one of the finest plays ever written by one of the greatest playwrights who ever lived.

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 tea-time. 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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