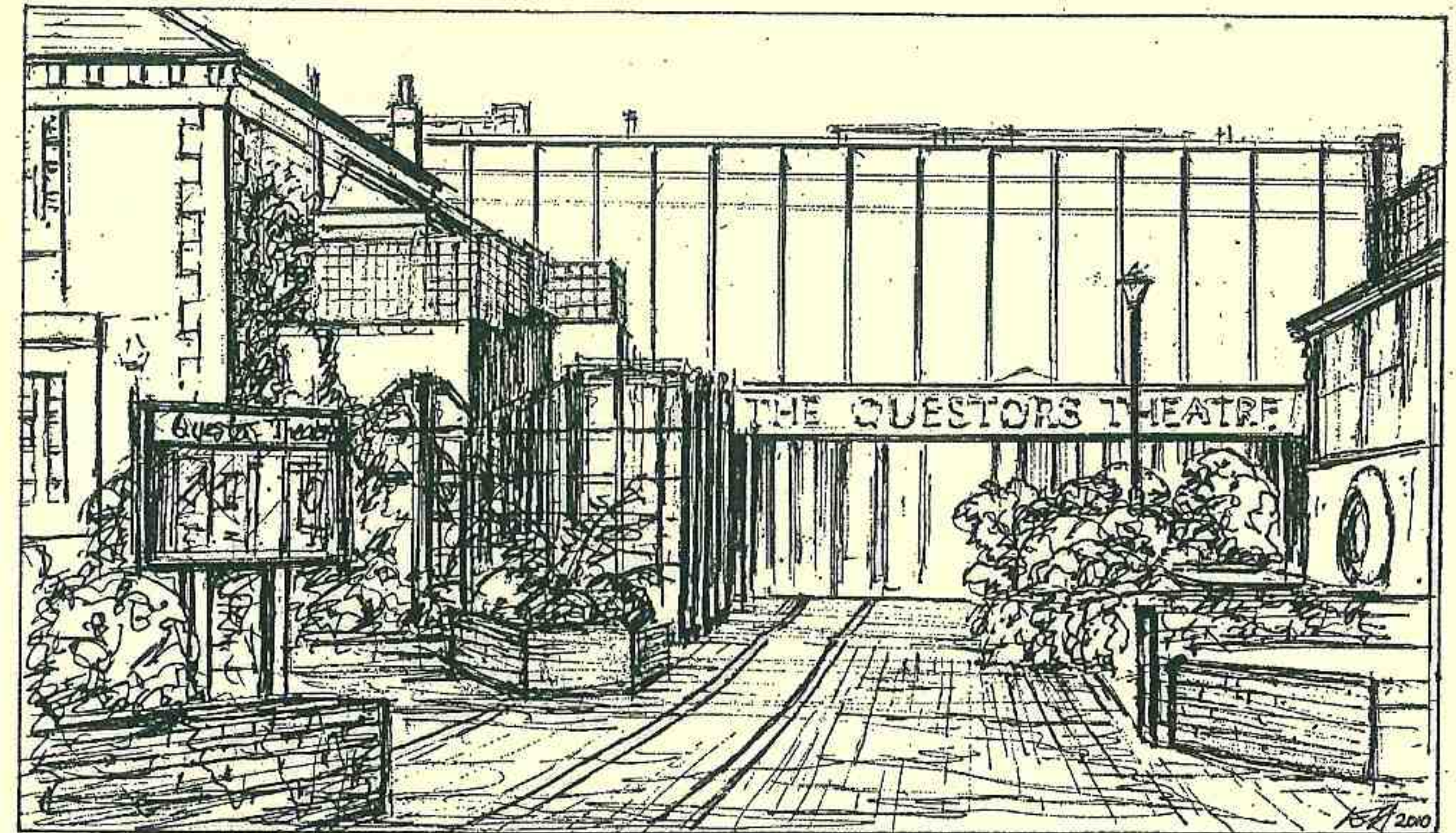




Questors, Ealing's Theatre



# PRESENT LAUGHTER

by Noël Coward

The Playhouse

29 October – 5 November 2011



# Qafé

Pop in for lunch or an afternoon snack – serving specialist teas and coffees, hot chocolate and soft drinks, with a selection of sandwiches cut to order.

Opening Hours:

Tuesday to Friday 11:30 am – 7:30 pm

Saturday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Sunday 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

For Playhouse productions:

Hot meal menu up to 7:00 pm followed by drinks, ice creams and snacks through the first interval.

# 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 2012 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are 2011 CAMRA Greater London 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

**Grapevine Malt Whisky Tasting – Friday 2 December**

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

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



Image: Alex Marker

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# Present Laughter

Noël Coward was an English playwright, composer, director, actor and singer. He was known for his humour, extravagance and his sense of personal style, a combination of cheek and chic, pose and poise. In praise of Coward's versatility, Lord Mountbatten said, "There are probably greater painters than Noël, greater novelists than Noël, greater librettists, greater composers of music, greater singers, greater dancers, greater comedians, greater tragedians, greater stage producers, greater film directors, greater cabaret artists, greater TV stars. If there are, they are fourteen different people. Only one man combined all fourteen different labels – The Master."

As a teenager, he was introduced into the high society in which most of his plays would be set, *Present Laughter* being one of them. Bitten early by the performing bug, he had appeared in amateur concerts by the age of seven. He attended the Chapel Royal Choir School as a young child but had very little formal schooling, although he was a voracious reader, encouraged by his ambitious mother. His first professional engagement was in January 1911 as Prince Mussel in the children's play *The Goldfish*. His stage and film career spanned six decades during which he starred in many of his own works. His plays and songs achieved new popularity in the 1960's and 1970's, and his work and style continue to influence popular culture.

*Present Laughter* was written in 1939 (which is the year in which this production is set) but was not performed until 1942, due to the outbreak of war. It was then performed in repertory along with *This Happy Breed*, with Coward playing the lead in both. *Present Laughter* is a comic self-caricature with an egomaniac actor as the central character. The rest of the characters are said to be based on the Coward family, calling themselves 'the firm': as Liz so clearly says, "...for the good of the firm..."

His advice to actors playing parts he had created was unequivocal, "Do not try and be me!" I have tried to achieve this and hopefully you

will agree that we have achieved the Noël Coward style but we have not tried to create Noël himself. My first note to the actors on our read-through was a quote I found in *My Life with Noël Coward* by Graham Payn: "The play is strong, the words are good. Play the part for what it's worth but be yourself..."

I am so honoured to be directing a Coward play as my first production. Having recently completed the student directors' course here at The Questors, to be offered the Playhouse season opening production was beyond my wildest dreams. I was not familiar with *Present Laughter* but was looking forward to the challenge. After reading the script, I researched both Coward himself and the play. I read Graham Payn's biography and watched a production of *Present Laughter*, which reminded me of what Graham Payn had said, "... too many actors have tried to recreate themselves in his image..." It only made one realise how original an 'original' can be. Donald Sinden was in the production that I watched and I knew that was not the way I wanted this one to be (far too stylised for my taste). This gave me the feeling that my initial thoughts about how to stage the play were right – to let the play speak for itself. So many productions tend to overdo it and it ends up unbelievable, over-the-top and theatrical – something I was keen to avoid.

When it came to casting, I had noticed that many of the actors who have played Garry were much older than 40. I wanted someone who could play this role near the age for which it is written and with the charisma of someone who had women and men falling at his feet, but also with the strength to carry this role throughout the play. Mike Hadjipateras was Garry from the first time he auditioned for me and this in turn enabled me to cast the rest of the actors at the age they are written by Coward. I can't believe my luck in having such a great cast and crew. All of them have worked so hard alongside me to bring this great production together and I thank each and every one of them so very much. I would also like to thank all those Questors Directors who gave me so much support.

I hope you enjoy the play as much as I have.

**Pam Redrup, Director**



# PRESENT LAUGHTER

by Noël Coward

*First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 29 October 2011*

## CAST

in order of appearance

Daphne Stillington	<b>Francesca McInally</b>
Miss Erikson	<b>Lucy Aley-Parker</b>
Fred	<b>Dylan Fryer</b>
Monica Reed	<b>Adele Mason</b>
Garry Essendine	<b>Mike Hadjipateras</b>
Liz Essendine	<b>Kerri Logan</b>
Roland Maule	<b>Wesley Lloyd</b>
Henry Lyppiatt	<b>Mark Redrup</b>
Morris Dixon	<b>Anthony Green</b>
Joanna Lyppiatt	<b>Tara Stewart</b>
Lady Saltburn	<b>Linda Shannon</b>

The action of the play passes in Garry Essendine's studio in London in 1939.

**Act I:** Morning

**Act II, Scene 1:** Evening, three days later

**Act II, Scene 2:** The next morning

**Act III:** A week later

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes including two 15-minute intervals.

## PRODUCTION

Director	<b>Pam Redrup</b>
Set Designer	<b>Philip Lindley</b>
Costume Designers	<b>Susan Millhouse, Nichola Thomas</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Francois Langton</b>
Sound Designer and Operator	<b>Paul Wilson</b>
Hair and Make-Up Designer	<b>Zehre Rushby</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Jane Arnold-Forster</b>
Deputy Stage Managers	<b>Jennifer Hall, Penny Seyfert</b>
Assistant Stage Managers	<b>Henry Broom, Liz Cooper, Isabel Glebocki, Matthew Graham, Stephen Jack, Stephanie Melikian, Andrew Morris, Tony Smith</b>
Properties	<b>Philippa Egan, Harriet Parsonage</b>
Prompter	<b>Debbie Abel</b>
Voice Coach	<b>Lucy Aley-Parker</b>
Pianists	<b>Andrea Little, Amanda Owen</b>
Lighting Operator	<b>James Stevens</b>
Constructors	<b>Toby Burbidge, Philip Lindley</b>
Portrait painted by	<b>Elaine Hagan</b>
Get-In Crew	<b>Tina Harris</b>
Hair and Make-Up	<b>Emma Corbett, Juita Hassan, Nicole Homer, Lizzie Keogh, Becky Owen</b>
Photographer	<b>Nicola Gaughan</b>
Thanks to	<b>Mark Fitzgerald, Richard Gallagher, Louise Kavanagh, Nigel Lewis, Delamar Academy of Make-Up, The Questors Office Staff</b>

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

### **Lucy Aley-Parker** – Miss Erikson

This is Lucy's seventh appearance at The Questors, having previously enjoyed roles in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Alchemist* and *A Servant to Two Masters* (which also toured to Venice). Lucy graduated from drama school some years ago and worked in repertory, TV and pantomime. She's delighted to be adding Swedish to her accent repertoire!

### **Dylan Fryer** – Fred

Dylan has been a member of The Questors for nearly a year and played Freddie in *Hobson's Choice* in January. He performed in many plays in Norwich before moving to Ealing two years ago. Away from the theatre, he works as a postman in Chiswick.

### **Anthony Green** – Morris Dixon

Anthony joined The Questors in 1997. His appearances include *Arcadia*, *The Wild Duck*, *Absolute Hell*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Insignificance* and impersonating Alan Bennett in *The Lady in the Van*. His most recent appearance was in *Titus Andronicus*. Anthony is also a member of the Tower Theatre Company and has appeared with the National Student Theatre Company and Pendley Shakespeare Company.

### **Mike Hadjipateras** – Garry Essendine

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 Dog in the Manger*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Seagull*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Marvellous Land of Oz*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Flea in her Ear* and *Doctor Faustus*. He teaches history at the Rudolf Steiner School in Hertfordshire.

### **Wesley Lloyd** – Roland Maule

Wesley graduated from Questors Student Group 62 in 2009. Last season he appeared in *A Flea In Her Ear* (Camille), *Beauty and the Beast* (Lumière), had dual roles in *The Talented Mr Ripley* and *Titus Andronicus* and played the lead role of 'Adam' in *Confessions of a Pose Plastique*.

### **Kerri Logan** – Liz Essendine

Kerri joined The Questors in 2002 from her native Northern Ireland, where she performed regularly at the renowned Lyric Theatre, Belfast, the Courtyard Theatre and the Grand Opera House. She has appeared in over a dozen Questors productions, including *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Dolly West's Kitchen*, *After the Dance*, *Company*, *Two*, *Misery*, *Ladies' Day* and *Hobson's Choice*. Her first Questors role was in another Coward classic, *Design for Living*, in 2003, and she is delighted to be back in the great man's company once again.

### **Adele Mason** – Monica Reed

Adele completed her acting training at the Birmingham School of Speech and Drama in the early nineties. After several years of working with regional touring productions and on the London fringe she retrained and now works in the health sector. *Present Laughter* is her first production with The Questors.

### **Francesca McInally** – Daphne Stillington

Francesca trained at East 15 and The Questors Student Group. In Norwich she performed at the Maddermarket, Theatre Royal and Sewell Barn Theatre in roles such as Gret and Angie in *Top Girls* and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She was last seen as Maggie in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*.

### **Mark Redrup** – Henry Lyppiatt

Mark has been acting for The Questors since 1990. He is a veteran from the 1998 production of *Present Laughter*, when he played Fred. He is happy to have been promoted from Garry's valet to his manager.

### **Linda Shannon** – Lady Saltburn

Linda Shannon has been an acting member of The Questors since 1995 and since that time has appeared in a variety of productions, including *Whatever Happened to Kathy Kirby*, several youth productions such as *Pinocchio* and *The Twits* (the musical) when she was one of three youth officers overseeing the now highly flourishing drama clubs for young people, *Nicholas Nickleby* (parts 1 and 2), *Little Shop of Horrors* and *A Flea in Her Ear*. Linda has also written and performed two one-woman shows, one about Jane Carlyle (wife of the Victorian writer Thomas Carlyle) and one about the 50's comedienne Joyce Grenfell.

### **Tara Stewart** – Joanna Lyppiatt

Tara loves The Questors and was last seen in *Festen*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *Sweeney Todd*. Tara studied drama at university, has a strong and competitive background with The Holywood Players, Northern Ireland, where she won acting scholarships and awards for Oscar Wilde, Chekov and David Hare roles. Tara also worked in the BBC for 15 years, where it was all drama and drama!

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## Meet The Company – Tuesday 1 November

Come and meet the director, cast and crew for an informal discussion in The Upper Foyer as soon as possible after the Tuesday performance.

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### Jane Arnold-Forster – Stage Manager

Jane has been stage managing at The Questors since 2006, when she stage managed *The Weir*. Her most recent productions include *Festen, Two, Glengarry Glen Ross, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Broken Glass* and *Abigail's Party*. She also works professionally as a production manager.

### Philip Lindley – Set Designer

Although trained as an architect, Philip began his theatre career as a set and lighting designer before joining the BBC TV Design Department. After 25 years working on every type of production, he left the BBC and worked as a freelance theatre consultant before moving to Lisbon where he continued to design sets and lighting for Portuguese theatre. He recently returned to live in the UK, despite the weather.

### Pam Redrup – Director

Pam Redrup has been a Questors member for nearly five years and in that time has stage managed many productions: her first being *The Lady in the Van* and her last *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. After completing the directors' course she was thrilled to be offered Coward for her first directing challenge. She's enjoyed it so much she can't wait for her next one!

### Zehre Rushby – Hair and Make-Up Designer

After contributing to *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, Zehre has returned to The Questors. After graduating from the Delamar Academy, Zehre worked on *The Hobbit* with wig and postiche expert Sarah Weatherburn. Since then, she has worked with the talented team on *Les Miserables* in the West End and with the alternative cabaret of The Box, Soho.

### Nichola Thomas – Costume Designer

Nichola has worked on numerous shows at The Questors over the past nine years including *This Happy Breed, Dance of Death, Waiting for Godot, Separate Tables, Two, The Seagull, Hay Fever, Broken Glass, Sweeney Todd, The House of Bernarda Alba, Humble Boy* and *Doctor Faustus*.

## Next Questors Productions

### VOYAGER & LOVERS

by Tony Rushforth

4 – 12 November 2011

#### The Studio

This premiere of two delightful and poignant new works by Tony Rushforth follows our previous premieres of his plays *Charade* and *Seascape* in 2005.

### THE FLINT STREET NATIVITY

by Tim Firth

2 – 17 December 2011

#### The Studio

A cast of adults re-create the intrigue, political wrangling and drama of a primary school nativity in this hilarious alternative to the usual Christmas fare.

## 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
- ✓ Access to *iQ* – the members-only website <http://members.questors.org.uk>
- ✓ A full-colour members' magazine three times a year
- ✓ Access to exclusive news on *iQ* and email newsletter
- ✓ Monthly programme card
- ✓ Membership of The Grapevine Club
- ✓ Voting rights in the company

\*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, get your first 12 months' membership for the price of six.

## 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.

## The 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

The Questors Theatre

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