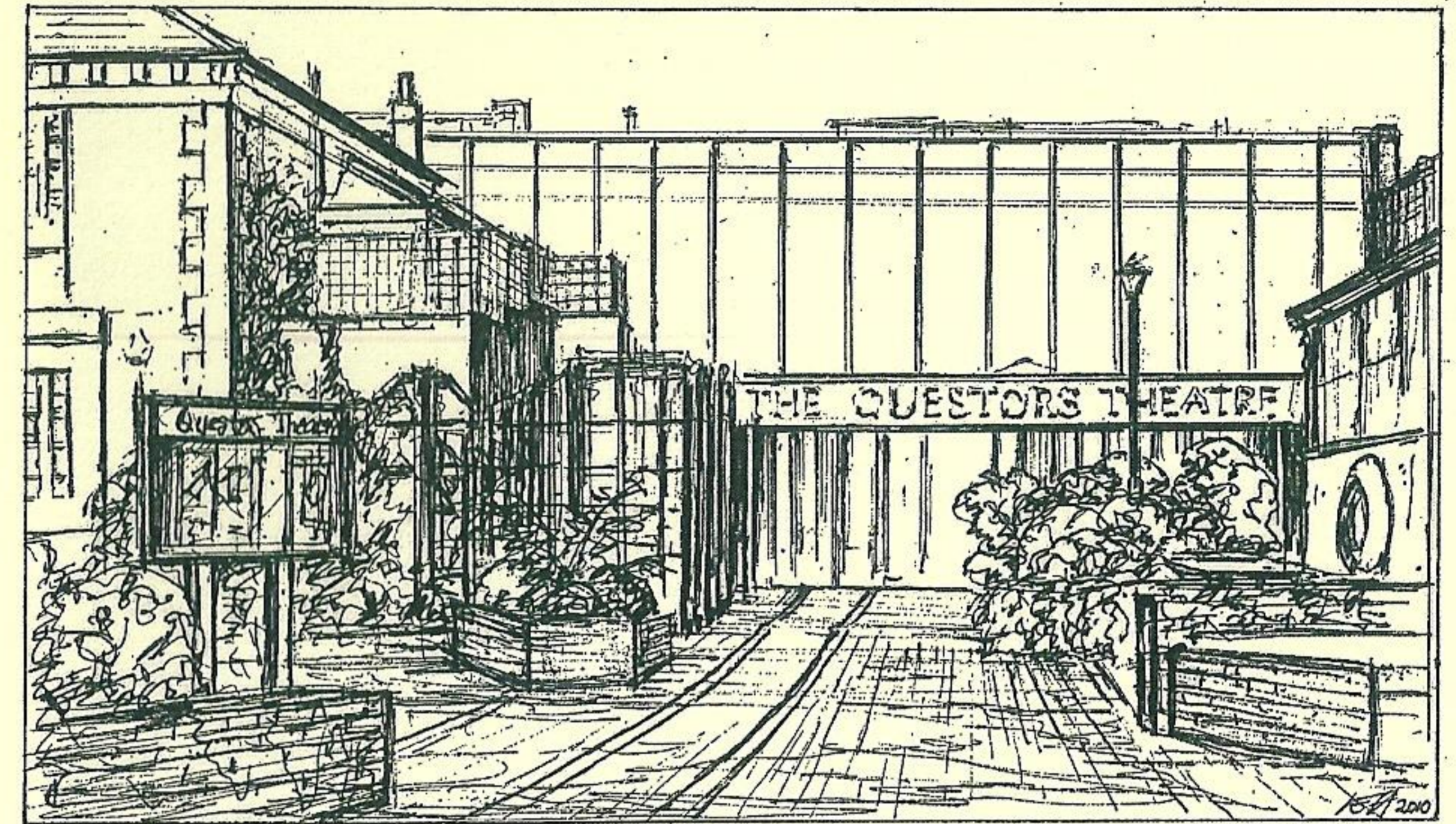




Questors, Ealing's Theatre



THE TEMPEST

by William Shakespeare

The Playhouse

22 – 24 March 2012



The Big Shakespeare Festival

Around spring 2010, I had a meeting with Executive Director Andrea Bath at which we discussed the Olympic Year. Discussion had been had on the subject of the Cultural Olympiad but at this stage we had no clear indication from the Mayor's Office. We had heard that the RSC may be doing something with amateur theatre companies, but again nothing firm.

Andrea said, "I think we should do something big on Shakespeare. You should lead it as you are passionate about his writing and maybe it should be three shows. What do you think?" I offered to go away and think about it.

Well I did, and in our next meeting I proposed we do three Shakespeares in repertory: *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* using one company of actors; and the third play should be an adaptation. Also I proposed one should be directed by me and one by a director who had never directed one of the Bard's plays. Alex Marker, head of the Questors Youth Theatre and of Design, suggested that the youth theatre should do *The Tempest* and that he should design a set to serve all of the shows. I offered to run workshops on verse acting and classes for as many of our acting membership who wanted them. Then Michael Langridge suggested we do the *Coarse Acting Shakespeares* by Michael Green as the third show.

Some people took convincing, but Chairman Richard Mead immediately stepped in to help make it happen. The Board of Trustees and the Team of Managers backed the project and we were off!

Helped by Maggie Turner, we put together a document to communicate this to our active members. Anne Gilmour, our Little Theatre Guild rep., took a copy to a meeting where Ian Wainwright of the RSC was announcing the Open Stages project. The Royal Shakespeare Company invited all of the UK's amateur companies to produce a Shakespeare work or themed play. Ian was impressed by what we proposed but said that he had already intended to come to speak to us.

RSC Artistic Director Michael Boyd had told him that he should contact The Questors. Unknown to us, Michael had grown up in Ealing and had been to The Questors to see shows. He felt we were a leading amateur company and that we should be the partner venue for the whole of the London Region, one of only ten across the UK and the only amateur partner. He believed we were a professionally organised company and that we could deal with the giant task. Again Richard Mead stepped in to organise the mammoth task of communicating with the 57 theatre companies in the London region.

Two years on, we have completed the open workshops (150 people attended) and we have trained 50 actors. Over 70 actors auditioned for the three shows. We have more Open Stages productions than any other company, seven in total. We did the first Open Stages show: *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*. We have hosted two skills exchange weekends for the RSC, attended by 57 theatre companies. We are now playing three shows in repertory with the youth theatre on after that. In fact everything we set out to do, we have done.

We are part of the International Shakespeare Festival and one of the venues for the Cultural Olympiad. In April we will host the London Region Open Stages Festival. Over three weeks, 22 amateur companies will perform on our stage.

Thank you to all the members who made this happen. I am proud to be a Questor. We hope you enjoy the shows.

Mark Fitzgerald, Artistic Director



Photo: Alex Marker

THE TEMPEST

by William Shakespeare

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22 – 24 March 2012

The Tempest: Director's Diary

I knew that agreeing to direct a Questors Youth Theatre (QYT) production would invite its challenges. I'd heard that the QYT were doing *The Tempest*, although I hadn't been involved here for four years, my previous show also being the QYT's *Arabian Nights*. I'd always admired *The Tempest*, it had always seemed an unreachable sort of play to me, and Prospero's strange relationship with Ariel and Caliban, his slaves, was fascinating. I didn't know the QYT students when starting, and experience told me that human resources on the show might be scarce – I didn't want to end up directing the play alone. That's no fun at all. When I chatted with Alice and Alex in the office here about taking the show on, I knew it would be important to have some support with me. Some of my previous A level drama students, came to mind – we'd had a lot of fun as well as some wildly creative times in the past – and so I called Louise, Alex, Sally and Lucy and said how about working on it with me. They all said yes!

There are about 500 students in the QYT. How many would come to the audition? We were told to expect between 80 and 100 and sure enough... So we had four audition days to call and recall. A huge task. We worked the students in some basic physical technique and I'd previously given them one of Caliban's speeches to learn. So 80 Caliban speeches later... The Questors Office was brilliant with the administration and by the end of the second recall we had a cast. There was a lot of interest from years 7 to 9 and we could have cast the play twice. There was also a strong male presence during auditions and I felt excited by the idea of a reasonably balanced cast; it also looked as though we weren't going to have to twist the play too much with a heavy cross-gender casting in favour of girls. Great. Casting is a mixture of luck, skill and intuition. I don't know how an actor may evolve during rehearsal unless there is prior experience, and of course it's as much about whom actors are playing opposite and a sense of the aesthetics of pairings than any individual. I was very impressed with the raw talent in the QYT and auditioning on the Playhouse stage gave everyone chance to show their awareness of audience and space. A strong cast began to emerge.

Do you know the feeling of sitting and watching a play and wishing it would just end, but you've got to wait for so and so's entrance in Act IV – two hours into the play? Or seeing young actors struggle with lines that they don't understand, haven't properly learned and who just slow the whole thing down? And the production just lurches on and on? So how could we engage the audience with this Shakespeare play potentially running two and a half hours long? All those words to deal with. I wanted to try and create two dynamic, fluent 45-minute experiences for the audience and still try and tell this fantastic yet difficult story. So I decided to heavily cut the play. I used a mixture of sources: recent film versions, the BBC animation and Steve Gooch's excellent edited Shakespeare. The compromises were many; character development and the play's beautiful poetry being the most noticeable. We hope, though, you won't be sitting waiting for it to end ☺.

It takes time for any company to gel. Some know each other, some don't – it takes time to build trust and a joint sense of purpose. We worked quickly for the first four weeks, getting the bulk of the images down and very loosely blocking the play. It's

hard creative work, to create the first draft in the empty space. It's much easier when there's something to work on. We were impressed with the way many came in with lines already learned. Often young people are unable to put scripts down until the dress rehearsal, 'it'll be all right on the night' and all that, but not with this youth theatre. The edited text helped and, as I write, three weeks away from first night, many of the cast are almost word perfect.

So we are in the middle of rehearsals and the play is roughly forming. As well as some tight choreography, there are freer scenes. We open though, with a stylised storm sequence, some of which has grown out of rehearsal exercises and warm-ups. The notes two nights ago to the cast were 'see what you can create'. And evidence of this is emerging. Actors are creators, they are not simply the playthings of the director. Please don't ask me what you should do! Tonight some scenes just took off, young actors feeling free from scripts and from the shackles of what they are supposed to do, or simply from 'being Shakespearean'. Earlier in the week, however, Sally and I just sat there, completely drained of ideas. We can't force creativity. It comes from within us, when we're ready.

So. *The Tempest*. What a challenge! I hope you enjoy seeing these young people give body and voice to, what is for me, one of Shakespeare's most beautiful and magical plays.

Duncan Alldridge, Director

Plot Summary

Twelve years ago, Prospero, the Duke of Milan, was usurped by his brother, Antonio, with the help of Alonso, King of Naples, and the King's brother, Sebastian. Prospero and his baby daughter Miranda were put to sea and landed on a distant island where ever since, by the use of his magic art, he has ruled over the spirit Ariel and the savage Caliban. He uses his powers to raise a storm, which shipwrecks his enemies on the island. Alonso searches for his son, Ferdinand, although fearing him to be drowned. Sebastian plots to kill Alonso and seize the crown. The drunken butler, Stephano, and the jester, Trinculo, encounter Caliban and are persuaded by him to kill Prospero so that they can rule the island. Ferdinand meets Miranda and they fall instantly in love. Prospero sets heavy tasks to test Ferdinand and, when satisfied, presents the young couple with a betrothal masque. As Prospero's plan draws to its climax, he confronts his enemies and forgives them. Prospero grants Ariel his freedom and prepares to leave the island for Milan...

Meet The Company – Friday 23 March

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

THE QUESTORS YOUTH THEATRE PRESENTS

THE TEMPEST

by William Shakespeare

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 22 March 2012

CAST

Prospero	Vincent Pettavel
Miranda	Dana Rimdjonoka
Ferdinand	Louis Tavare
Ariel Ensemble	Grace England Eleanor Hepper Tamara Jovanovic Emily Medhurst Zoe Pettavel Ezra Sartaj Hala Zein
Caliban	Nathaniel Leacock
Antonio	Matthew Tyrrell
Sebastian	James Ogley
Queen Alonsa	Lauriane Flais
Gonzala	Madeline Charlemagne
Trinculo	Tom Cowell
Stephano	Tom Hodder
Spirit Ensemble	Sepphia Barrett Rebecca Carrera Amelia Gehring Beth Neil Francesca Penny Hanna Pietrzycki Alice Reynolds Lucia Tremonti

The play is set on a magical island and there are two halves of about 45 minutes with a 15-minute interval.

PRODUCTION

Director	Duncan Alldridge
Assistant Directors	Alicia Britt, Alex Johnson
Choreographer	Sally Lewis
Costume Designer	Louise King
Set Designer	Alex Marker
Lighting Designer	Tim Heywood
Sound Designer / Operator	Alex Pemberton
Production Manager	Michelle Weaver
Deputy Stage Manager	Kate Townsend
Assistant Stage Managers	Bernard Brady, John Thompson
Wardrobe	Hannah Byrne
Lighting Operator	Tobias Gehring
Set Construction	Colin Horne
Additional Joinery	Toby Burbidge, Mark Fitzgerald, Zyg Staniaszek, Paul Wilson
Scenic Painters	Alex Marker, Emilia Staniaszek, Zosia Staniaszek
Photographer	Nicola Gaughan

Our thanks to **Charlotte Carrera**, for organising the chaperone team during the run, and to all those in the team.

Ariel's song composed by **Duncan Alldridge**.

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

Sepphiah Barrett – Spirit Ensemble

Sepphiah is 11 years old and has been interested in acting since she was five. She joined QYT in 2010 and has enjoyed her role and taking part in *The Tempest*, which is her first production. She is hoping that she will get into many more productions, do well and progress in acting.

Rebecca Carrera – Spirit Ensemble

Rebecca has been in The Questors since 2007. She has been in *The Wizard of Oz*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Annie* and now *The Tempest*. She has performed in the West End in *Anastasia!* Rebecca has studied dance since she was three years old at the Pamela Howard School of Dance. She loves the experience!

Madeline Charlemagne – Gonzala

Madeline is 13 but has been very interested in drama since she was four years old. Before recently joining Questors Youth Theatre, she attended Stagecoach for six years where she played Elphaba in *Wicked* and Nancy in *Oliver!* She is very excited to be in *The Tempest*.

Tom Cowell – Trinculo

Tom, 15, has been a part of Questors Youth Theatre for three years. Since joining, he has taken part in one other production, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. He has enjoyed the journey hugely and hopes that he will be able to perform in other productions in the future.

Grace England – Ariel Ensemble

Grace is 13 years old and is in QYT Group 9. She has been a member of The Questors for over five years. She has previously been seen in *A Christmas Carol*, *The Pierglass*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. TV appearances include *Essential Poems at Christmas* on BBC2 and a B&Q commercial.

Lauriane Flais – Queen Alonsa

Lauriane is 14 years old and has been part of The Questors for four years. She has been in three productions: *Brave New World* in 2009, *The Pierglass* in 2010 and *Alice Through the Looking Glass* in 2011. She has enjoyed taking part in *The Tempest*.

Amelia Gehring – Spirit Ensemble

Amelia is 13 and has appeared in the previous QYT production of *The Pierglass*. She has been a member of The Questors for many years and has always loved acting. This production has been a very interesting experience and Amelia has particularly enjoyed the physical parts of her role.

Eleanor Hepper – Ariel Ensemble

Elea has been a member of The Questors for five years. She is really enjoying the whole experience of *The Tempest*. This is her second show after *The Wizard of Oz*. She is looking forward to the performance immensely.

Tom Hodder – Stephano

Tom, 16, has been a member of Questors Youth Theatre since December 2010 and has taken part in *Beauty and the Beast* (2010) and *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2011). He has thoroughly enjoyed being a part of *The Tempest* and hopes to continue working with the theatre.

Tamara Jovanovic – Ariel Ensemble

Tamara has been at The Questors for five years, but this is her first show here, although she has performed in plays at school. She is enjoying being in *The Tempest* and loves acting as Ariel.

Nathaniel Leacock – Caliban

Nathaniel is 15 years old. From an early age he has been very passionate about acting, joining Stagecoach before The Questors. This is his fourth Questors performance having been in *A Christmas Carol*, *Alice Through the Looking Glass* and *Annie*. He has also been in many school productions.

Emily Medhurst – Ariel Ensemble

Emily, 14, has been a member of QYT for four years. *The Tempest* is her first performance at The Questors and she is very excited about her role as Ariel. Being a part of *The Tempest* has been a fantastic experience for her and she has loved working with her friends.

Ezra Sartaj – Ariel Ensemble

Ezra has been a member of Questors Youth Theatre since 2006. This is Ezra's third Questors production after *Alice Through the Looking Glass* and *Annie*. She has been very interested in performing arts from a young age and is very keen to expand, explore and develop new characters on stage.

James Ogley – Sebastian

James is 15 years old and has been a QYT member for just over two years. He has been in a few school plays but this is his first play with The Questors and he is enjoying it immensely as he isn't often let out of his cage.

Francesca Penny – Spirit Ensemble

Francesca have been doing drama for a very long time and has been in The Questors for about five years. She has been in *Beauty and the Beast* and in *Cinderella* (the pocket opera version). She thinks *The Tempest* has been fun and is really happy to have been in it!

Vincent Pettavel – Prospero

Vincent is 16 years old and has been a part of Questors Youth Theatre since September 2008. He has acted in one other play at The Questors: *The Pierglass* in 2010. Vincent is delighted to be performing in *The Tempest* and is massively enjoying the process of the play.

Zoe Pettavel – Ariel Ensemble

Zoe is 15 years old and has been a member of QYT for just over a year. She has been in three productions this academic year and is excited to be in another! She is a black belt in karate and is a national champion. She enjoys playing guitar in her spare time.

Hanna Pietrzycki – Spirit Ensemble

Hanna is 12 years old and has been interested in drama from a young age. She has performed in three shows with Dance Gallery at The Questors. Having attending QYT for less than a year, Hanna is privileged to perform in *The Tempest* with so many other talented actors.

Alice Reynolds – Spirit Ensemble

Alice is 14 and has already played Glinda in *Wicked* last year, singing, dancing and acting at Watermans Arts Centre. She has enjoyed getting a feel of how Shakespeare can come to life and especially the movement involved.

Dana Rimdjonoka – Miranda

Dana, 13, is in her third year at The Questors having attended QYT since Year 7. With *The Tempest* being her first production at The Questors, she is overwhelmed and very excited to be taking part. Dana has also been going to Stagecoach for seven years where she has learnt a lot about acting, which she loves so much.

Louis Tavare – Ferdinand

Louis has been in The Questors for a year now. This is his first large-scale production and he is both nervous and excited to be working with extremely talented performers. He has done a few Stagecoach productions. He hopes The Questors will provide him with needed experience and discipline to seek an acting career in later life.

Lucia Tremonti – Spirit Ensemble

Lucia is 12 years old and has participated in many drama schools, including Sylvia Young, Lamda Academy and The Questors. All seven Lamda grades were passed with a distinction. She has enjoyed many performances at The Questors and at other theatres as well as the Royal Opera House. She really enjoys *The Tempest*.

Matthew Tyrrell – Antonio

Matthew first joined QYT in September 2008. He is currently studying for a BTEC National Level 3 Extended Diploma in Performing Arts (Acting) at college. Matthew has made an appearance in a few shows here, including *Brave New World* (2009) and *The Pierglass* (2010); and he has also starred in the National Theatre Connexions project, *Too Fast* (2011).

Hala Zein – Ariel Ensemble

Hala, 13, has been in QYT since Year 7 and is now in her second year here. *The Tempest* is her first Questors production and she is looking forward to performing with the friendly cast. Hala has made many friends during the rehearsals and making of *The Tempest*. She enjoys acting and has been in many school productions, and loves her part as Ariel.

Duncan Alldridge – Director

Duncan's directing credits at The Questors include *A Clockwork Orange* and *There'll Always Be a Brentford*. Duncan also directed *The Arabian Nights* with the QYT in 2008 and has performed in many productions at The Questors since 1996. Duncan has worked as Head of Drama in schools and colleges and is now working freelance.

Alicia Britt – Assistant Director

Along side working with Duncan on *The Tempest*, Alicia is also a co-director of the independent youth theatre company, General Silliness Productions. This year they are writing and devising a play based on Carlo Goldoni's *A Servant to Two Masters* which is touring at The International Youth Arts Festival, Kingston, and at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This project is in collaboration with designers at Wimbledon College, where Alicia studies.

Alex Johnson – Assistant Director

Alex graduated from Exeter University in 2010 with a 1st class degree in Drama. Although this is his first experience of working with The Questors, Alex has worked with Duncan on several occasions. Recent director and assistant director credits include *Sparkleshark*, *Information for Foreigners*, *Decadence* and *An Evening With Elsie Parsons*.

Sally Lewis – Choreographer

Sally is trained in both ballet and contemporary dance and has a particular interest in physical theatre. Along with Lyci Britt, she is a member and co-founder of General Silliness Productions who will be performing at the International Youth Arts Festival and the Edinburgh Fringe this summer. Sally is also a member of Twickenham Operatic Society, currently rehearsing for a production of *Oklahoma!* When she is not living the high life at The Questors, Sally is studying a degree in Graphic Communication at Chelsea College of Art and Design.

Alex Marker – Set Designer

Alex has worked on nearly every youth production since 1991. He is Director of Questors Youth Theatre and trained in design at Wimbledon School of Art. He has designed over 100 productions for a wide variety of venues, including The Questors, fringe, colleges, national tours and the West End.

The Big Shakespeare Festival

RSC Open Stages 2011 – 2012 Showcase

Our Big Shakespeare Festival concludes with the RSC's selection of productions and performances by top amateur companies from across London and the south-east of England.

23 companies present part or complete productions spread across 12 performances between 12 and 28 April in The Playhouse.

See questors.org.uk for dates, details and tickets.

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 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.

Cover Image: Elaine Hagan

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