

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
- ✓ Receive a full-colour members' magazine three times a year
- ✓ Access to exclusive news on *iQ* and email newsletter
- ✓ Receive the regular programme leaflet
- ✓ Membership of The Grapevine Club
- ✓ Special invitations, events and offers not available to the public
- ✓ Ticket reservation facility (conditions apply)
- ✓ Voting rights in the company

*Reduced prices exclude certain events. †Under 18, excludes certain events, maximum four per event. Must be collected at the performance and accompanied by the 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 computerised 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 18. 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.

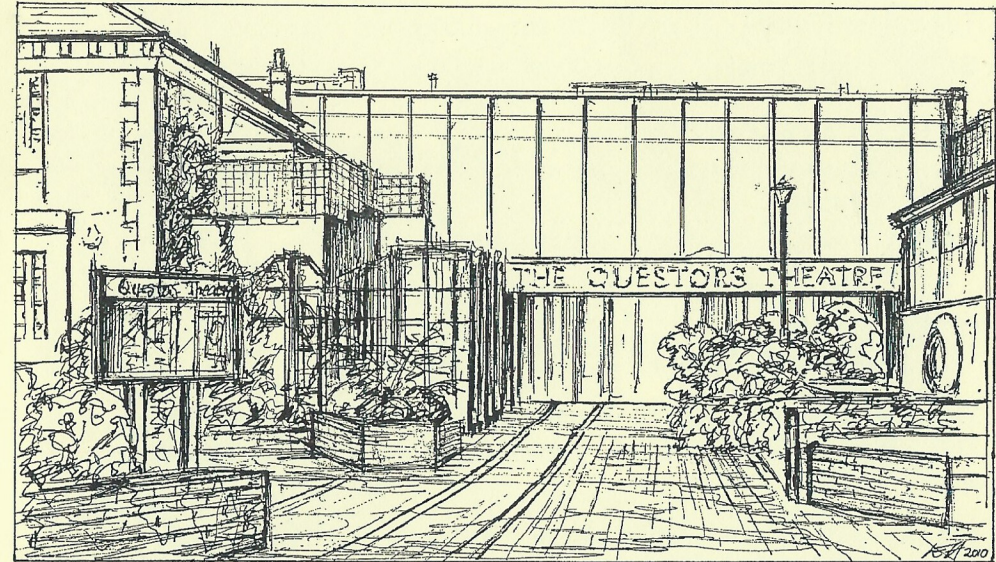
Cover Image: Elaine Hagan

The Questors Theatre
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Registered Charity No. 207516



Questors, Ealing's Theatre



LONDON ASSURANCE

by Dion Boucicault
adapted by Richard Bean

The Judi Dench Playhouse

1 – 8 November 2014

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 – 5:00 pm

Saturday (term time) 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

For Playhouse productions:

Hot meal menu up to 6:30 pm with drinks, ice creams and snacks during the first interval.

Sunday Cream Tea Matinees as advertised.

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 2015 edition of The Good Beer Guide and we are **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

See questors.org.uk/grapevine for more details

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



LONDON ASSURANCE

by Dion Boucicault
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1 – 8 November 2014

London Assurance

Despite his exotic name, Boucicault was an Irishman, born in Dublin, and probably the illegitimate son of his mother's lodger, one Dionysius Lardner, a professor. His questionable identity is reflected in the character of Dazzle in this play. His nominal father was Samuel Boursiquot, a merchant. At 17, Dion was in London and became an actor. There is a local connection as he lived for a time in Brentford where he performed in a Sheridan play. Married at least three times and considered a ladies' man and very good company, he lived very much in the public eye and travelled widely, even to Australia.

London Assurance was his first play, written at 21, in thirty days flat. The title is a play on the word 'assurance' which means a pledge and extreme self-confidence. It was first performed at Covent Garden in March 1841 and was an immediate and lasting success. Of his play Boucicault wrote, "I am aware it possesses all the many faults, incongruities, and excrescences of a hastily written performance. I attempted to instil a pungency in the dialogue and to convey vivid tones by a strong antithesis of character. The moral which I intended to convey is expressed in the last speech of the comedy".

Also like Dazzle, Boucicault was a jack of all trades, capable of changing his writing style and genre to fit in with what was commercially popular. For over four decades from that time, Boucicault wrote successfully in several theatrical genres and occasionally starred in his own plays. He was best known in his own day for his melodramas (especially his melodramas on the plight of the urban poor), his Irish plays (*The Colleen Bawn* and *The Shaughraun*, for example), a few notable plays about race and class relations in America (the best of which is *The Octoroon*) and that mid-Victorian blockbuster, his dramatization of *The Corsican Brothers*. The latter provided a star vehicle first for Charles Kean and later for Henry Irving, each of whom played *both* the brothers in a *tour de force* of romantic body-doubling. Queen Victoria saw *The Corsican Brothers* five times.

Boucicault was one of the most popular dramatists of the 19th century and has been described as the 'cleverest, raciest, and most theatrically inventive playwright of his age'. He has also been accused of plagiarism. *London Assurance*, a comedy of manners tending toward farce, owes much to Restoration and 18th-century comedy. It has the familiar opposition of Town and Country, with improbable disguises, an old fop courting a young girl and a duel. The characters too have names which describe them, like Cool, Dazzle, Pert and Meddle, a tradition which goes all the way back to Roman Comedy. There are two young men leaving debts in London for romance in the country which recall *She Stoops to Conquer* and

The Beaux' Stratagem. Boucicault comes halfway between Sheridan and Wilde and as such has been rather overshadowed by his fellow Irishmen.

However, *London Assurance* is full of phrases, lines and situations that sound like an echo of *The Importance of Being Ernest* – but for the fact that it was written half a century earlier. Wilde's fictitious Bunbury and Boucicault's Hamilton, the notorious handbag in one play and the hamper in the other, these are striking parallels. There are even matching characterizations: the fierce independence in marriage of Lady Gay Spanker and Lady Bracknell; the spongers Algernon and Dazzle; the London assurance of Cool, the servant, which finds its equivalent in Algy's valet Lane. Wilde's debt to Boucicault is large, and in more ways than one: when the two men met in Boston in 1883, Boucicault offered Wilde 'a couple of hundred' pounds. Wilde certainly saw *London Assurance* at least once – there is a letter by him describing the costumes (he liked them). So as the only comedy of manners between the 1780's and 1890's it acts as a bridge and this gives it an important place in theatrical history.

However this play also has some really strong comments about the 'mercantile' nature of 19th-century marriage, women's position in society and the shallow dishonesty of London life that are well worth listening to.

Though he was out of favour at times in the 20th century, the Royal Shakespeare Company staged a marvellous production of this play in 1972 starring the late Donald Sinden and Elizabeth Spriggs, while the National Theatre's 2010 production starring Simon Russell Beale and Fiona Shaw was a triumph. We are lucky enough to be using Richard Bean's version which he updated for that production.

The plot thematically works out the opposition of overly-refined town manners to the 'true' English manners of the countryside. The preening Sir Harcourt sets off to Oak Hall in the country in order to marry, as arranged, the lovely eighteen-year-old Grace, little realising that his roistering son, Young Courtly, is simultaneously wooing the same beauty under the assumed name of Augustus Hamilton. Young Courtly and his friend, Dazzle, plan with Lady Gay Spanker, a belle and noted huntswoman, to draw out old Sir Harcourt, who has fallen in love with her, so that Grace may be freed to marry the man she loves. Sir Harcourt, believing that Lady Gay reciprocates his affection, plans to elope with her. The double courtship, surrounded by a set of brilliantly comic characters, ultimately exposes the falsity of judgements based on money or fashion, as well as gleefully lampooning all manner of social eccentricities.

We have decided to stage the play in its original setting and time as it seems to suit the style and the characters.

Anne Neville, Director

LONDON ASSURANCE

by Dion Boucicault, adapted by Richard Bean

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 1 November 2014

CAST

in order of appearance

Cool, Sir Harcourt's valet	Francis Lloyd
Martin, Sir Harcourt's servant	Tim Pemberton
Charles Courtly	Will Langley
Richard Dazzle	David Hovatter
Sir Harcourt Courtly	Anthony Curran
Max Harkaway	Paul Francis
Pert, Grace's maid	Claire McCarthy
James, Harkaway's servant	Mark Hill
Grace Harkaway	Holly Gillanders
Mark Meddle	Simon Higginson
Lady Gay Spanker	Annabelle Williams
Adolphus (Dolly) Spanker	John Dobson
Solomon Isaacs	Mark Redrup
A servant	Richard Keeble

The action takes place in London and Gloucestershire over three days in 1841.

- Act One:** Sir Harcourt Courtly's house in London – morning
- Act Two:** The garden of Max Harkaway's House, Oak Hall, in Gloucestershire – early afternoon
- Act Three:** A room in Oak Hall, two days later – late afternoon
- Act Four:** A room in Oak Hall – late evening
- Act Five:** Outside Oak Hall – night
- Act Six:** A room in Oak Hall

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours 25 minutes including a 15 minute interval.

PRODUCTION

Director	Anne Neville
Set Designer	Peter Collins
Costume Designer	Claire Malyon
Lighting Designer	Tim Edwards
Sound Designer	Russell Fleet
Stage Manager	Toby Burbidge
Deputy Stage Manager	Penny Seyfert
Assistant Stage Managers	Andrina Dew, Sophie Haliburn, Rich Keeble, Charlotte Meekings, Jesselyn Ng
Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Prompter	Bridgett Strevens
Lighting & Sound Operator	Paul Wilson
Wardrobe Assistant	Anne Gilmour
Set Constructors	Toby Burbidge, Peter Collins, Paul Wilson
Get in crew	Roberto De Domenici Cohen, Imogen French, Sophie Haliburn, Vivian O'Donnell
Upholsterers	Jo Perse, Jenny Richardson
Hair	Lucy Aley-Parker
Photographer	Carla Evans
Thanks to	Andrea Bath and The Questors Office Staff; Ian Black; Nina Flitman; Colin Horne; Alex Marker; Juliet Vaughan Turner; House Services; Kingston Technical Theatre Students (Rebecca Clark, Simon Edgington, Lauren Beatrice Eyre, Hanna Lainsbury, Ben Marcelline, Charlie Ottmann, Grace Quazar-Tighe, Kate Richards); and UWL Students

Please turn off all mobile phones and similar electronic devices.
The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.
Thank you.

Biographies

Peter Collins – Set Designer

Peter has been an active member at The Questors for more than 20 years. He began designing sets in 2003; notable designs have included *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *The Trojan Women* and *Further than the Furthest Thing*. Recent designs have been *It's a Wonderful Life!*, *Antigone* and *West 5 Story*. He is also active in production photography.

Anthony Curran – Sir Harcourt Courtly

Anthony is a graduate of Student Group 47 and has appeared in roles as diverse as Estragon in *Waiting For Godot* to Arlecchino in *The Venetian Twins*. He recently appeared as the Tailor in *No Fairy Tale*. *London Assurance* is one of the few times that he has ever played his actual age!

John Dobson – Adolphus (Dolly) Spanker

John joined The Questors in 1981 and has played pretty well everything from an evil spider to a French maid and a Japanese biker in black leather. Highlights include *The Faith Healer*, *Breaking the Code*, *The Lesson* and *Dublin Carol*. In between acting, he looks after the Questors archives.

Tim Edwards – Lighting Designer

Tim became a member of The Questors aged 16 and has been lighting shows here for over a decade. His recent lighting design credits include *Rent*, *Broken Glass*, *The Libertine*, *Mercury Fur* and *The School of Night*. Tim also runs a lighting design company for productions in the West London Area.

Russell Fleet – Sound Designer

Russell is active at The Questors in various capacities. Recent work includes Sound Designer for *The Pride* and *Mrs Warren's Profession*, Assistant Director on *ENRON* and *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*, and Stage Manager for the upcoming new-writing double bill, *Futures & I am the Walrus*. He will also be acting in one of them.

Paul Francis – Max Harkaway

Roles at The Questors include: Judge Brack in *Hedda Gabler*; Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*; the title role in *Sweeney Todd*; Widow Twankey in *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp* and Badger in *The Wind in the Willows*.

Holly Gillanders – Grace Harkaway

Holly joined The Questors in 2011 as the vengeful Angel Gabriel in *The Flint Street Nativity*. Other Questors productions are *Calendar Girls* (Brenda/Elaine),

Engaged (Minnie), *The Duchess of Malfi* (Cariola), the 24-Hour Plays and *Trial and Errors*. Holly works at The Royal Opera House and is Charles Courtly's teaching assistant in the Questors Youth Theatre.

Simon Higginson – Mark Meddle

Simon has been a member of The Questors for 30 years, so if you can remember *Princess Ivona*, *The Master Builder*, *A Life* and *The Man Who Shot the Tiger* then you saw a much younger version. In 1985 he played Brindsley in *Black Comedy*, the UK entry at the Kanagawa amateur theatre festival in Japan. More recently he played Gary in *Noises Off*, Azolan in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and Laurence in *Abigail's Party*. Last year he was in the world premiere of *The Railway Siding* as the Train Guard and played Jeff Skilling in *ENRON*.

Mark Hill – James

Mark has been acting at The Questors since 2008 and been involved in comedies, family shows, musicals, kitchen sink dramas, French farce and Elizabethan tragedy. Roles have included Ned in *Parlour Song*, Splodge/Ray in *Dogs Barking*, Roderigo in *Othello*, Ass in *The Flint Street Nativity*, Uncle Henry/Gatekeeper in *The Wizard of Oz* and Herr Mann in *A Flea in Her Ear*. He has also appeared in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Rock 'n' Roll*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Miser*, the Polish short *Widows*, and his first production, *The Railway Children*.

David Hovatter – Richard Dazzle

David has been a member of The Questors for over 30 years and most recently took a show to a festival in Slovenia. Previous acting appearances have included *The Pride* and *House and Garden*. This year he devised a Dickens adaptation for The Questival, and also regularly writes, directs and acts in the 24-Hour Plays.

Will Langley – Charles Courtly

Will joined Questors Youth Theatre at age eight, appearing in *Cogner au Plafond* (a half-French/half-English play written for QYT and which represented Great Britain in the first World Youth Theatre Festival in Vienna), *Brave New World*, *The Pierglass* and *Chatroom*. He has also appeared in *Oliver!*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Romeo and Juliet* and last year as Wishee-Washee in *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*. His ambition is to become a professional actor and he is also a keen writer.

Francis Lloyd – Cool

Francis has been an acting Questors member for 20 years. Parts include John in *Oleanna*, Henry Carr in *Travesties*, Wicksteed in *Habeas Corpus*, Sir Robert Morton in *The Winslow Boy* and Stephen in *Dealer's Choice*. He also directs, most recently *Engaged* and *No Fairy Tale*.

Claire Malyon – Costume Designer

After tackling Renaissance Italians and Victorian students, Claire has found herself elbow deep in tailcoats, waistcoats and elegant frocks once again. As ever it has been enjoyable and exhausting in equal measure. Special thanks to Sarah for the loan of the riding habit!

Enjoyed the Show?

Let us know what you think, and connect with The Questors Theatre for updates on all upcoming productions and lots more.

Follow us @questorstheatre  and find us on Facebook  Like

Claire McCarthy – Pert

Claire joined The Questors in 2013, playing Pearl Trace in Ayckbourn's *House & Garden* and acting in this year's 24-Hour Plays. She is thrilled to be a part of the *London Assurance* cast in the role of Pert, giving her another opportunity to further develop her Questors speciality: maids with West Country accents.

Anne Neville – Director

Anne has been directing at The Questors since 1992. Productions include: *ENRON, The Weir, Macbeth, Trojan Women, The Winter's Tale, Faith Healer, Translations, A Servant to Two Masters, The Venetian Twins, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, The Deep Blue Sea, The Beaux' Stratagem, The Recruiting Officer* and *Secret Rapture*.

Tim Pemberton – Martin

This is Tim's fourth show at The Questors, following appearances in *Blue Remembered Hills* (John), *Night of the Soul* (priest) and *Coarse Shakespeare – The Final Folio*. Recent roles closer to home in Chesham include Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* and the Duke of Milan in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Mark Redrup – Solomon Isaacs

Mark appeared last month in *An Ideal Husband* as Tommy Trafford and Phipps. He is delighted to add Solomon Isaacs to his colourful gallery of characters.

Annabelle Williams – Lady Gay Spanker

Annabelle is known for her larger than life characterisations and her part in *London Assurance* does nothing to confound that reputation. A big life lover herself, she has found the part of Gay a joy to play and with such a strong cast, director and crew she has had a tremendous time.

Next Questors Productions

FUTURES

by Jonathan Skinner
26 – 29 November 2014
The Studio

This winner of the Paul Darby Prize for Dramatists is a sharply written, gentle, contemporary comedy of the relationship between a city futures trader and a homeless woman. Also, the runner-up play, *I am the Walrus* by Pete Barrett, will be performed.

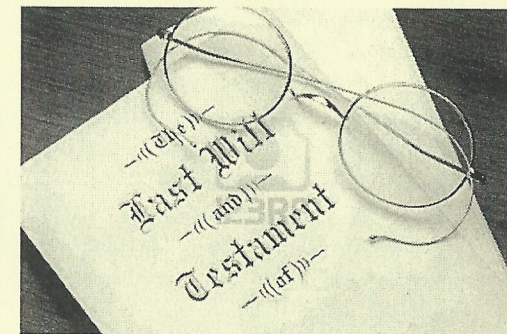
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

by Ben Crocker
13 December 2014 – 3 January 2015
The Judi Dench Playhouse

Will Jack get a good price for Daisy the Cow? Will the Princess be forced to marry the nasty Giant? And will the nasty Giant manage to enjoy his nap without being disturbed? Join us for this lively panto to entertain both young and old.

Become a BEQUESTOR

This season, The Questors, Ealing's theatre, is presenting 20 plays. This is a tremendous undertaking for our members, many of whom have demanding full time jobs. Everyone appearing on stage, and working unseen in our creative and technical teams, gives their hard work and dedication out of love of theatre. Even with modern



media, a live play can give us an experience which rewards us like no other – as theatre has been doing for thousands of years.

We receive no help from public funding for The Questors, although Ealing and London are hugely enriched by our work. Ealing would be a lesser place without The Questors at its heart. And local children and young people would be deprived of opportunities without the Questors Academy, which provides classes for over five hundred children and teenagers every week.

Please consider making a donation to help us continue to make our huge contribution to Ealing's cultural life. You may prefer to do this while you are alive. Or you may prefer to leave a legacy in your will (or in a codicil if you have already made a will).

No gift is too small to help and any gift, either while you are alive or in your will, attracts tax relief. You can find a Gift Aid form and an example of simple forms of legacy can be found on our website at questors.org.uk/giving.

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Your donation or legacy may be anonymous if you wish, or The Questors may acknowledge your generosity publicly.

The Trustees of The Questors, which is a charity, will ensure that your gift is put to the best possible use. But if you wish to allocate it to a particular purpose, please feel free to speak in confidence to Andrea Bath, our Executive Director, on 020 8567 0011.