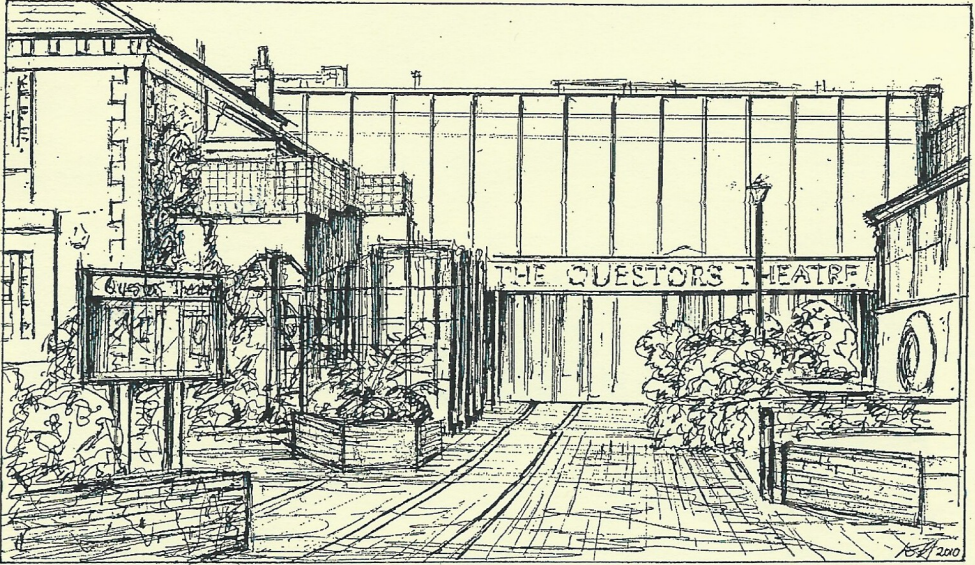




Questors, Ealing's Theatre



UNCLE VANYA

by Anton Chekhov
translated by Michael Frayn

The Studio

27 February – 7 March 2015

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.**



UNCLE VANYA

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Uncle Vanya

Anton Chekhov was a fascinating man. His early life was difficult; he had a physically stern and abusive father, who became bankrupt when Chekhov was 16. The father then escaped, concealed in a cart, from Taganrog, (a port in Southern Russia) taking his family to live in squalid conditions in Moscow where his two eldest sons were studying at university. He left Anton behind, to board with a family friend. Anton worked to support himself, fund his own education and, as far as he was able, his family in Moscow. One way of doing this was by writing sketches for newspapers. He continued writing short stories – at least 600 of them – throughout his life, often under pseudonyms, and gradually acquiring fame and respect. He has been referred to as ‘the father of the modern short story’. He himself moved to Moscow three years later, to study medicine, but continuing to earn money through the publication of his humorous stories and sketches. He was one of nine people sharing his family’s basement flat in a red-light district.

In his lifetime he was celebrated most as a writer of short stories; this is still the case in Russia. But he was also later hailed as ‘the founder of modern drama’, and, in Britain and the USA especially, it is as a playwright that he is mostly celebrated. He wrote 17 dramatic works, with some of his one-act plays, especially *The Bear* and *The Proposal*, proving very popular and providing him with a welcome income.

Like Astrov in tonight’s play, he became a doctor, working very hard for very little financial reward. He was a close and thoughtful observer of human beings, empathetic, but with an eye for irony and comedy. It is one of the ironies of his own life that the tubercular condition which he began to develop in his 20s led to his death in 1904 at the early age of 44; as a doctor he must have recognised the condition and known of its seriousness. So the world was robbed of one of its greatest playwrights. As with other playwrights who died far too young (Marlowe and Orton spring to mind) we can only speculate what he might have gone on to produce.

The four great plays by which he will always be remembered are: *The Seagull* (1896), *Uncle Vanya* (1899), *Three Sisters* (1901) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904). The disastrous opening night of *The Seagull* is well-known; it was under-rehearsed and performed by a mis-cast company who didn’t understand it. As on other occasions in his life, Chekhov decided to abandon writing for the stage for ever. But its triumphant second production is equally well-known – this time at the Moscow Art Theatre under the direction of Stanislavski, which led to a seagull being adopted as the permanent symbol of the company. In Stanislavski, Chekhov found a director who understood the elusive quality and the sub-text of his plays, although he did not always agree with Stanislavski’s interpretations or his over-elaboration of naturalistic effects, especially sound.

At one point in a rehearsal, Chekhov remarked that he would begin his next play with a character saying: '*How wonderful! How quiet! One can hear no birds, no dogs, no cuckoos, no owls, no nightingales, no clocks or bells, not so much as a cricket.*'

These plays defy easy categorisation. Notoriously, and perhaps provocatively, Chekhov insisted to Stanislavski that his plays were comedies. If they are (and there are strong comic elements) they are painful comedies of the kind which work in the same way as the darker plays of Alan Ayckbourn – who has sometimes been called 'the English Chekhov'.

But Chekhov did not arrive fully-formed as a playwright. He had to develop his craft and his individual style. Russian theatre in the 19th century was in the doldrums, very much as the British theatre was, until the Naturalist movement gave it a shot in the arm. Chekhov, Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann and Shaw were all in different ways to contribute to a rejuvenation in Europe of serious theatre with a naturalistic approach. Chekhov's move away from some of the essentially melodramatic conventions of 19th century theatre, to the creation of complex characters and relationships, and the reduction of plot as an element makes him appear over a century later as a very modern writer.

In *Uncle Vanya* we are able to track the development of some of Chekhov's dramatic technique. The play exists in an earlier version, *The Wood Demon* (1889) which met with no success when originally performed. The characters of Serebryakov, Yelena, Maria Vasileyna and Sonya appear in this play (with these names) and the characters of Kruschev, Georges and Dyadin have strong similarities to Astrov, Vanya and Telegin. There is no equivalent of Marina, however, although there are several other characters who are removed in the later play. Many of the ideas and some of the scenes are substantially the same. Going into further details will run the risk of spoiling the pleasure of anyone seeing *Uncle Vanya* for the first time tonight; for old hands, suffice it to say that the target of the gun in Act 3 is entirely different and that Act 4 brings about a forced happy ending with some arbitrary pairing-off. The later play is by far the more engaging, has greater depth, and combines moments of pathos and comedy in a recognisably Chekhovian style. And, of course, whereas in the earlier play, the title related to the Astrov character (*The Wood Demon*), it is Vanya who gives his name to the later play.

It's the mark of great plays that they are open to interpretation. *Uncle Vanya* has been translated by a number of distinguished playwrights – among them David Mamet, Christopher Hampton, David Lan and tonight's translator, Michael Frayn, a Russian speaker. It's also given rise to various film versions – *Vanya on 42nd Street* (1994), *Country Life* (1994, set in Australia) and *August* (1996, set in Wales). Tonight's production, however, is firmly set in Russia, in the period at which and for which it was originally written.

John Davey, Director

UNCLE VANYA

by Anton Chekhov, translated by Michael Frayn

Presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 27 February 2015

CAST

in order of appearance

Marina, <i>the old family nurse</i>	Dorothy Lawson
Astrov, <i>a doctor</i>	Simon Roberts
Vanya, <i>son of Maria Vasilevna</i>	Francis Lloyd
Serebryakov, <i>a retired professor</i>	Alan Waldock
Yelena, <i>his second wife</i>	Sarah Mannion
Sonya, <i>his daughter by his first marriage</i>	Lisa Varty
Telegin, <i>an impoverished landowner</i>	Derek Stoddart
Maria Vasilevna, <i>widowed mother of the professor's first wife</i>	Cathy Wallace
Workman	Nigel Lawrence

The action takes place on the family estate in Southern Russia.

Act 1: the garden terrace, late July

Act 2: the dining-room, two weeks later

Interval

Act 3: the drawing-room, early September

Act 4: Vanya's room, later the same day

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

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

PRODUCTION

Director	John Davey
Associate Director	Sarah Stoddart
Set Designer	Ray Dunning
Set Realisation	Bron Blake
Costume Designer	Moonika Leisson
Lighting Designer	Tim Hayward
Sound Designer	Alan N Smith, Paul Wilson
Stage Manager	Tina Harris
Deputy Stage Manager	Penny Seyfert, Laurie Swan
Assistant Stage Managers	Bernard Brady, Andrina Dew, Jack Hanrahan, Tristan Jones-Smith, Nigel Lawrence, Jesselyn Ng, Emma Sampford, Daniel Weinberger, Melissa Woodside
Properties	Peter Salvietto, Kathryn Stonebridge, Geoff Moore
Prompter	Pam Smith
Construction Manager	Colin Horne
Construction Assistants	Andrina Dew, Jack Hanrahan, Geoff Moore
Lighting Operators	John Green, Carole Swan
Sound Operator	Kamil Marek, Paul Wilson
Hair and Make-Up	Hannah Ortner
Marketing	Jennifer Nettles
Photographer	Michael Smith
Thanks to	Sue Collins, James Gadsdon, Terry Mummery

Biographies

Nigel Lawrence – *Workman*

More likely these days to be found front of house or back stage (most recently on *Be My Baby* and *4.48 Psychosis*), this is Nigel's first appearance on stage since *Coarse Shakespeare – The Final Folio* in 2012.

Dorothy Lawson – *Marina*

Dorothy has been a Questors member since the mid 80's but only became an acting member in 2013 following her appearance as an interval singer in *Engaged*. She has since appeared in *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp* (The Empress of China), *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* (Sadie) and *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Daisy the Cow). She also enjoys working backstage and in the Reminiscence Roadshows.

Francis Lloyd – *Vanya*

Francis has been a Questors member for 20 years. Acting parts include Henry Carr in *Travesties*, John in *Oleanna*, Sir Robert Morton in *The Winslow Boy* and Stephen in *Dealer's Choice*. As director, his most recent productions were *Engaged* and *No Fairy Tale*.

Sarah Mannion – *Yelena*

Sarah is pleased to return to The Questors where she was last seen in *Three Sisters* (Irina) and *A Flea in Her Ear* (Lucienne). She currently works in development at The Place, London's premier centre for contemporary dance, having just completed an MA in Culture, Policy and Management at City University.

Simon Roberts – *Astrov*

Recent acting roles have included: Ray Say (*The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*); Crofts (*Mrs Warren's Profession*); Peter (*Blue Remembered Hills*); Felix Humble (*Humble Boy*); Christian (*Festen*); Pip (*Great Expectations*) and Vladimir (*Waiting for Godot*). For The Questors, Simon has directed *Rope*, *Betrayal*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Abigail's Party* and Jim Cartwright's *Two*. He teaches English for Academic Purposes at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

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.

Derek Stoddart – *Telegin*

Derek has acted in a wide range of productions over the last 30 years at The Questors. Most recently he appeared in *Jack and the Beanstalk* and, prior to that, *Shadowlands*, *House & Garden*, *Mary Stuart* and *The School of Night*. Other notable productions include *Sweeney Todd*, *Great Expectations* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Lisa Varty – *Sonya*

Lisa studied theatre at the University of Glasgow, where she was an active member of the renowned STaG (Student Theatre at Glasgow), performing in many of their productions. She joined The Questors in 2011 to train in the 66th Student Group; playing Lotte in *Trojan Barbie* and Frau Fischer in *On the Razzle*. Since then, she has played Sally Platt in *House & Garden*, Norma in *Be My Baby* and, most recently, Penny in *Futures*.

Alan Waldock – *Serebryakov*

Alan's most recent appearance was in *An Ideal Husband* (Lord Caversham). He has also been seen in *Shadowlands* ('Warnie' Lewis), *House & Garden* (Warn), *Engaged* (Symperson), *After October* (Brian Guest), *The Winslow Boy* (Arthur Winslow), *A Flea in Her Ear* (Dr Finache), *The Seagull* (Shamraev), and *Charley's Aunt* (Stephen Spettigue).

Cathy Wallace – *Maria Vasilevna*

Cathy has been a member of The Questors for over 30 years. She has appeared in over 20 productions, most recently in *Brassed Off* and *Antigone*. She is delighted to be acting in her first Chekhov production for The Questors.

Bron Blake – *Set Realisation*

An active member since the early 70s, Bron has been doing set design and scenic art since 2004. Productions include *Vincent in Brixton*, *The Seagull*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Broken Glass*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Voyager & Lovers*, *The School of Night*, *After October*, *Betrayal*, *Be My Baby* and *Rope*.

Next Questors Productions

THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE

by Joan Aiken,
adapted by Russ Tunney

18 – 21 March 2015

The Judi Dench Playhouse

Questors Youth Theatre goes steampunk in this chilling adaptation of a winter classic.

FEAR AND MISERY OF THE THIRD REICH

by Bertolt Brecht,
translated by John Willett

20 – 28 March 2015, 7:30 pm start

The Studio

Questors Student Group presents one of Brecht's most naturalistic and accessible dramas.

John Davey – Director

Over the last 40 years, John has acted in and directed numerous plays at The Questors, including *The Seagull* in 1989 (also at The Minack). He was Artistic Director for five years and Chair for eight, and is reigning World Coarse Acting champion with his play, *The Glass Ménage à Trois*.

Ray Dunning – Designer

Ray has been designing for The Questors since 1985. He established himself with sets for *The Daughter-in-Law*, *Bartholomew Fair* and *The Glass Menagerie* and worked for a decade or so on numerous productions in the Playhouse and the Studio. Following an enforced break due to pressure of work, he returned in 2012 to design sets for *The Winslow Boy* and *After October*. In 2013 he retired to his birthplace in the Brecon Beacons.

Tim Hayward – Lighting Designer

Tim's recent shows at The Questors include a period production of W S Gilbert's *Engaged*, *Be My Baby* and *West 5 Story*. The style of his next show, *Equus* is very different from *Uncle Vanya* but it's looking just as powerful.

Moonika Leisson – Costume Designer

Moonika has been part of the wardrobe team for nearly three years and during that time has designed several productions including *NSFW*, *Be My Baby*, *After October*, *Doña Rosita*, *The Miser*, and created costumes for many more such as *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*, *Mary Stuart* and *It's a Wonderful Life!*

Alan N Smith – Sound Designer

Alan designs both Sound and Lighting, including for *Hans Kohlhaas* (1972), *The Accrington Pals*, *Lark Rise*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Great Expectations*, *The London Cuckolds*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Festen*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Voyagers & Lovers* and *Brassed Off* (2012)

Sarah Stoddart – Associate Director

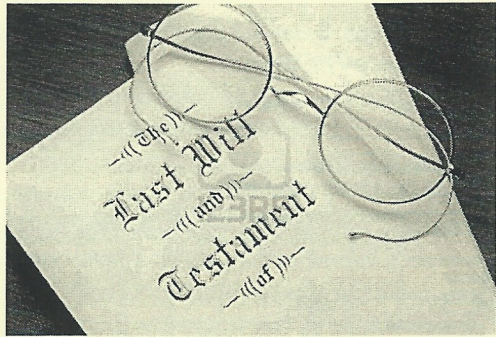
An active acting member since 1980 (as Sarah Morrison), Sarah has appeared in over 60 productions, performing many varied roles, Shakespearian and classical, modern, comedic and musical. Recently turning to directing, she directed the stage premiere of *The Railway Siding* (2012) and *Be My Baby* (2014). Sarah also serves on the Auditioning Panel.

Meet the Company – Wednesday 4 March

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

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



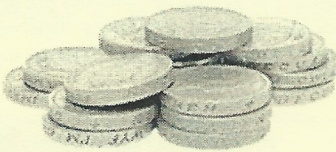
media, a live play can give us an experience which rewards us like no other – as theatre has been doing for thousands of years.

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 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.

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 lighting 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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