

## 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
- ✓ Opportunity to audition to join our company of actors
- ✓ Exclusive or discounted training courses
- ✓ Access to *iQ* – the members-only website: [members.questors.org.uk](http://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.

## 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](http://questors.org.uk/qyt).

Cover Image: Elaine Hagan

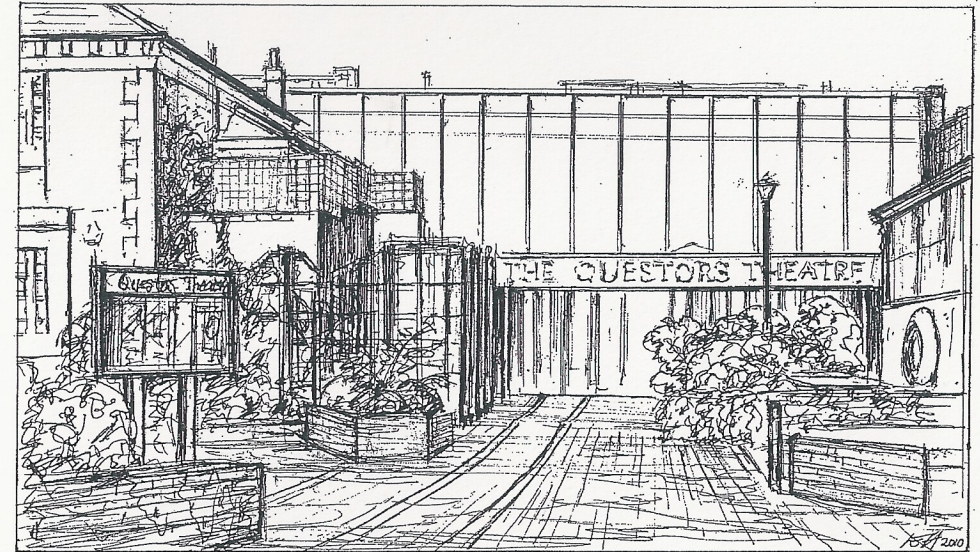
The Questors Theatre  
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Programme: Nigel Bamford

12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ  
Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011  
Registered Charity No. 207516



## Questors, Ealing's Theatre



# THE EXONERATED

by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen

The Studio

28 October – 5 November 2016





## Vintage Tearoom at The Questors

Come and relax in our vintage tearoom during your busy day.

Open Tuesday to Sunday, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Serving light lunches and delicious cakes with a pot of tea or coffee, all using vintage china.

Also open before and during the interval of Judi Dench Playhouse evening and matinee performances, serving tea and coffee to takeaway, ice cream and a selection of cold drinks.

See [teadarling.co.uk](http://teadarling.co.uk) for more information about Tea Darling.

## 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 2017 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:

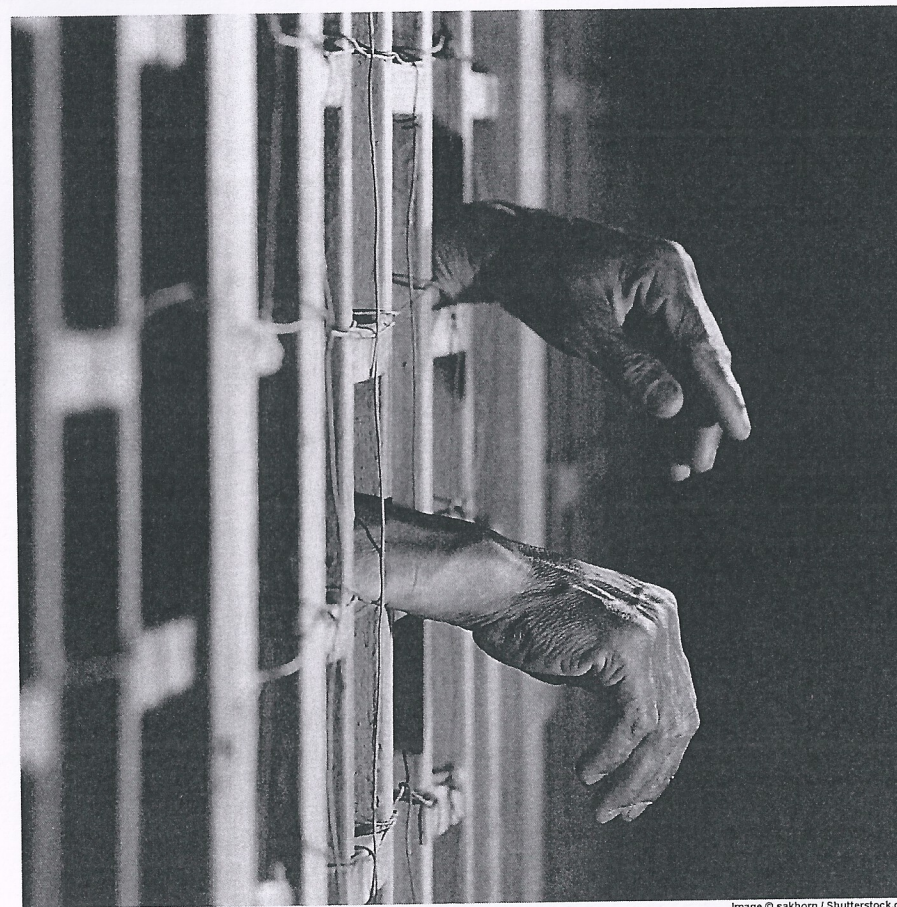
7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (10:30 pm close on Sundays)

Sunday lunchtime: midday – 2:30 pm

**Grapevine Autumn Beer Festival – 27 to 29 October**

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

**The Grapevine now accepts payments by card (contactless only).**



# THE EXONERATED

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**28 October – 5 November 2016**



# The Exonerated

The last people to be hanged in Britain went to the gallows in 1964. Abolishing capital punishment brought an end to some grim rituals: the judge placing the black cap on his head before passing sentence; anguished relatives of the condemned prisoner appealing for clemency; a crowd waiting outside the prison gates as the clock ticks away the minutes before execution. Unless you grew up in post-war Britain, you won't remember any of this, happily. And as a nation, we have never come close to restoring capital punishment since then.

It's a different story in the United States. In many states, the most serious crimes are punishable by death, and the sentence is frequently used. There are nearly three thousand prisoners on death row in penitentiaries across the United States. On average, they will wait more than ten years for the sentence to be carried out; some have spent thirty years on death row before being executed. The delay is due to the American legal system, with its lengthy process of appeals. Some prisoners will be innocent. But they will need luck and a good lawyer to find the evidence needed to get their conviction overturned.

Over the past forty years, more than one hundred and fifty death row prisoners have been set free. Two young actors, Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen, realised that behind the bald statistics there must be some extraordinary human stories. So they set out across America in an old car, with notebooks and a tape recorder, determined to find the material for a play. What they discovered is on our stage tonight ... a powerful piece of verbatim theatre that tells the stories of six prisoners, in their own words. The script is drawn from court transcripts and interviews with the prisoners in their homes.

It is a unique challenge for our actors, playing real people rather than acting out a figment of someone's imagination. We all agreed that we would need to research our text carefully, to convey accurately the thoughts and the emotions of *The Exonerated*. We did not want to impersonate them on stage, but we did want to capture the essence of their experience and reveal the human spirit that allowed them to survive.

The writers caution theatre companies not to portray the released prisoners as people who are full of anger and bitterness, and this is good advice. In their different ways, each has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for forgiveness and a desire to find a positive outlook on their lives. This is

something I have noticed talking to people acquitted after long prison sentences. During rehearsals, I met a man called Ray Hinton who was recently set free after thirty years on death row in Alabama. He maintains the only reason he was convicted was the fact that he was poor and black. So what, I asked him, did he think about the people who had locked him up for so long? He smiled, and explained that yes, he had been pretty angry for the first five years. But he came to realise that a desire for revenge would only destroy him; he had to move on. That was the point at which he became a survivor.

The other thing that helped him, he explained, was a sense of humour and the ability to see the funny side of situations in his darkest moments. He said he had once dreamed of being a free man and calling at Buckingham Palace to take afternoon tea with the Queen. "*Milk or lemon, Mr Hinton?*" As he imitated the royal voice, he chuckled at the memory. We were talking during Ray's first visit to London. As a free man, he now enjoys walking in the rain, because he never felt rain drops on his head for thirty years. And tea at the palace doesn't seem like such an outrageous idea these days. Ray was the 152nd person to be exonerated after spending time on death row. As he is acutely aware, others are fighting their own battles, as the clock ticks down towards their execution day.

Our play was first performed in the United States in 2002. The cast changed frequently, as a succession of A-list movie stars queued up to take a role. The issues explored by *The Exonerated* are still just as relevant today. We have had some painful reminders of that during the rehearsal period, with a number of death row prisoners approaching their date on the calendar. Their hold on life is precarious. In Texas, Barney Fuller was executed after he told his lawyers to give up any further appeals. He said he couldn't go on living in the hellhole that was death row. Thirty-eight minutes after receiving a lethal injection, he was finally pronounced dead. Another prisoner, Tommy Arthur from Alabama, has been scheduled to die during our run. It's the seventh time he has been given an execution date. In a letter to me from death row, he appealed for help, saying the court of public opinion was now his only hope.

In recent months, the pace of executions in the United States has slowed because some states found it difficult to obtain the drugs needed for lethal injections. It seems there is now a new supply, and the state of Ohio is planning to resume executions in January. However, the public mood is moving away from capital punishment. A recent opinion poll suggests that fewer than half of all Americans now support the use of the death penalty. No doubt the arguments will continue in the months and years ahead. Our play is part of this debate.

**Peter Gould, Director**



# THE EXONERATED

by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen

*First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 28 October 2016*

## CAST

Delbert	<b>Zac Sargusingh</b>
David	<b>Wayil Eisa</b>
Robert	<b>Jason Welch</b>
Sunny	<b>Wendy Megeney</b>
Kerry	<b>Mark Redrup</b>
Gary	<b>Mike Hadjipateras</b>
Male Ensemble	<b>Anthony Curran Joe Foster</b>
Female Ensemble	<b>Tolani Joacquim Laura Moore</b>

The performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 35 minutes with no 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	<b>Peter Gould</b>
Assistant Director	<b>Ellen Gould</b>
Set and Costume Designer	<b>Andie Dew</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Terry Mummery</b>
Assistant Lighting Designer	<b>Andrew Whadcoat</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Martin Choules</b>
Dialect Coach	<b>Jennifer Nettles</b>
Stage Managers	<b>Jane Dwyer, Pam Redrup</b>
Deputy Stage Manager	<b>Michelle Weaver</b>
Prompter	<b>Grace Craddock</b>
Lighting and Sound Operator	<b>Andrew Whadcoat</b>
Follow Spot Operator	<b>Terry Mummery</b>
Wardrobe Assistants	<b>Alex Marker, Pia Antoinette Weston</b>
Set Constructors	<b>Imogen Ffion Brown, Emma Lee Clegg, Hannah MacDonald</b>
Set Carpenter	<b>Ben O'Grady</b>
Photographers	<b>Jane Arnold-Forster, Peter Collins</b>
Videographer	<b>Peter Gould</b>
Marketing Assistant	<b>Lucy Aley-Parker</b>
Thanks to	<b>University of West London and Kingston College Students</b>



# Biographies

## **Anthony Curran – Male Ensemble**

Anthony Curran 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 Johnypateenmike in *The Cripple of Inishmaan*.

## **Wayil Eisa – David**

This is Wayil's first production with The Questors, having joined the acting company earlier this year after many years dipping in and out of the amateur drama scene with other companies in London.

## **Joe Foster – Male Ensemble**

Joe started acting whilst studying at the University of Bradford, as well as at the nearby J.B. Priestley Theatre. When he returned to his home city of Nottingham, he performed in various productions at The Arts and at The Lace Market Theatres. Joe joined The Questors as an actor and is also one of the co-creators of the Questors Videography Group. Joe recently played here in *Don't Dress For Dinner*.

## **Mike Hadjipateras – Gary**

Mike joined The Questors in 2003. His favourite roles include Trigorin in *The Seagull*, Aaranow in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Faustus in *Doctor Faustus*, Garry Essendine in *Present Laughter*, Jim Bayliss in *All My Sons*, John Proctor in *The Crucible* and, most recently, Kotov in *Burnt by the Sun*. Mike teaches History and Drama at the Rudolf Steiner School in Hertfordshire.

## **Tolani Joacquim – Female Ensemble**

Tolani has been acting since she was five years old, although this is her first appearance in a Questors production. She is a Project Manager in the Civil Service.

## **Wendy Megeney – Sunny**

Wendy's roles have ranged widely from comedy, such as Mucky Molly (*Tom Jones*, Minack 1985), Doreen (*Tartuffe*) and Clea in *Black Comedy* (British entry in an international drama festival in Japan), to tragedy such as Andromache (*Trojan Women*) and Lady Macduff (*Macbeth*), and singing in the musical *Somewhere in England*. Most recent parts are Mari in *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, Catherine in *Arms and the Man* and Mammy in *The Cripple of Inishmaan* earlier this year.

## **Laura Moore – Female Ensemble**

Laura trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama and worked as a professional actor in her 20's. She was a founding member of Shunt and has many years' experience as a theatre practitioner and teacher of drama. *The Exonerated* is Laura's first production at The Questors.

## **Mark Redrup – Kerry**

Mark has been acting for The Questors since 1990, appearing in over fifty shows. Recent parts include Rev. Parris in *The Crucible* (2015). This is the first time he has played a living person and hopes that he will do Kerry justice.

## **Zac Sargusingh – Delbert**

Zac is delighted to be performing again at The Questors. His last appearance in the Studio was in *Clybourne Park* in 2013.

## **Jason Welch – Robert**

Jason holds a BA (Hons) in Film and Moving Image Production from the Northern Film School in Leeds, and works as a freelance filmmaker. *The Exonerated* is his first play since finishing Student Group 69, which he took to continue improving his skills as a Director. Jason has previously been in *Dead White Males* as Col Judd, *Stags and Hens* as Eddy Ainsworth and *All Joy of the Worm* as Mercutio and Prince Hal for Shakespeare's 400th anniversary.

## **Peter Gould – Director**

Peter is a writer and broadcaster who has reported on the criminal justice system for many years. He studied playwriting at the London School of Film, Media & Performance, and directing at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. His last Questors production was Noel Coward's *Red Peppers*.

## **Ellen Gould – Assistant Director**

Ellen is a freelance theatre director and languages tutor. She studied Spanish at the University of Oxford, and trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and the National Youth Theatre. At Questors, she has directed *Chatroom* (2010) and *Foyer Tales* (2016), and assisted on *Red Sunset* (2015).

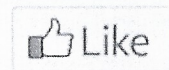
## **Martin Choules – Sound Designer**

Martin has recently designed the sound for *Interference: Bernard*, the Directors' Showcase 2016, *Rhinoceros*, *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* and *NSFW*. He is next to be seen (or rather heard) in *Improbable Fiction*.

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## 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.

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**Andie Dew –Set and Costume Designer**

Andie is back at The Questors after another year at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Whilst studying Theatre Production at University of West London, she has been involved in many a production since 2014's *London Assurance*. She was Assistant Designer on Alex Marker's *Asking Rembrandt*, Co-Designer of *Dead White Males* and Associate Designer of *Epic Love and Pop Songs*, which debuted at Edinburgh's fringe this year.

**Terry Mummery – Lighting Designer**

Terry has been lighting productions at The Questors since the mid-1990s. After a gap of several years he has returned to Lighting Design. Recent shows include *Rhinoceros* and *Questival II*, and assisting with the design of *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*. He has also devised and assisted with the projections for several productions

**Jennifer Nettles – Dialect Coach**

After working on *Red Peppers* with Peter, where she performed with an English accent, Jennifer has enjoyed teaming up with him again on the other side of the curtain, this time using her native American accent. She has enjoyed assisting the cast in finding their individual American voices.

**Andrew Whadcoat – Assistant Lighting Designer**

Andrew has been a member since 1995 but only became involved in lighting in 2013. Since then he has been involved in several shows as operator and assistant. He designed the lighting for this year's Directors' Showcase and will be designing the lighting for next year's *Scarborough*.

## Next Questors Productions

**MEASURE FOR MEASURE**

by William Shakespeare

4 – 12 November 2016

The Judi Dench Playhouse

Shakespeare's queasy, unsettling and bawdy drama of justice, destructive sexual passion and government, where Isabella has to decide whether to save her own immortal soul or her brother's life.

**CINDERELLA**

by Ben Crocker

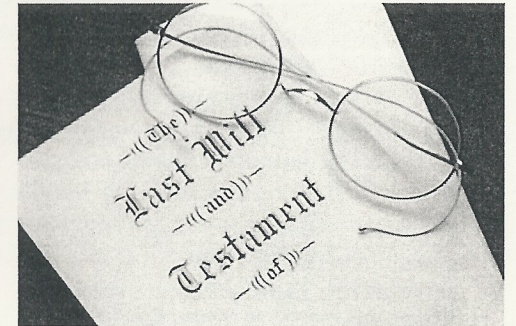
15 December 2016 – 2 January 2017

The Judi Dench Playhouse

This Christmas meet Cinderella, left scrubbing the stairs while her scheming stepsisters go to the Ball. Will Cinders meet her handsome Prince? Whose foot will fit the slipper? And who ate all Beryl and Cheryl's sweets? Ealing's fun-filled pantomime.

## Become a BEQUESTOR

This season, The Questors, Ealing's theatre, is presenting 18 productions – old and modern classics, challenging recent drama, comedies and our great annual Panto. 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. You're reading this because live theatre means a great deal to you too.



Ealing and West London 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. But we receive no public funding.

Please consider making a donation to help us continue to make our huge contribution to the cultural life of the capital. 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](http://questors.org.uk/giving).

Your donation or legacy may be anonymous if you wish, or The Questors may acknowledge your generosity publicly – every gift of £1000 or more will be commemorated on the donor board in the foyer.

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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, or would like any further information, please feel free to speak in confidence to Andrea Bath, our Executive Director, on 020 8567 0011.