

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
- ✓ 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.

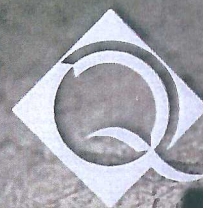
The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.

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.

The Questors Theatre
12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ
Registered Charity No. 207516

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Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011
Box Office: 020 8567 5184
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Questors, Ealing's Theatre



KRAPP'S LAST TAPE & ROCKABY

a double bill by
Samuel Beckett

The Studio
26 – 28 July 2018

Fields at The Questors

Fields at The Questors serves Italian coffee, fine teas, hearty meals and handmade cakes, and is the perfect spot for a pre-theatre meal or intermission ice-cream.

Order interval drinks before the show to beat the crowds.

Regular opening hours:
Monday to Saturday,
9:00 am to 7:30 pm

Also open before and during the interval of all Judi Dench Playhouse evening and matinee performances.

Find **Fields** on **Facebook**.



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 2018 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.

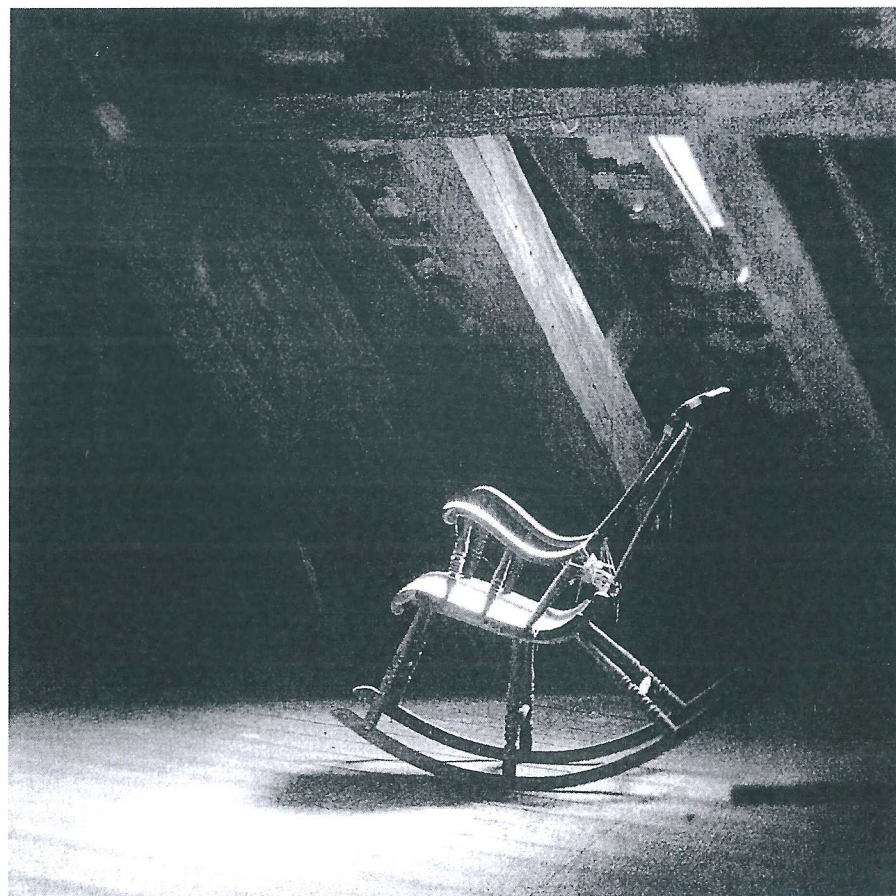
Opening Hours:

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.

Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.



KRAPP'S LAST TAPE & ROCKABY

a double bill by
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KRAPP'S LAST TAPE & ROCKABY

Krapp's Last Tape (1958), written a year after *Endgame* which was recently played at The Questors, is a further example of Beckett's minimalist representation of the human condition. The knowable stage world is now reduced to a single 'wearish old man' and a tape recorder, the action largely confined to the piecemeal playing-back of a diaristic recording made some thirty years earlier. As with *Endgame*, thematic bleakness is offset by flashes of physical and verbal comedy, and also by passages of an unsettling lyricism:

"I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on and she agreed, without opening her eyes. (*Pause.*) I asked her to look at me and after a few moments – (*pause*) – after a few moments she did, but the eyes just slits, because of the glare. I bent over to get them in the shadow and they opened. (*Pause. Low.*) Let me in. (*Pause.*) We drifted in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem! (*Pause.*) I lay down across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side."

The play was written with Patrick Magee (who played in the première production at the Royal Court) in mind, several months after Beckett had listened to a BBC Third Programme broadcast of a selection from his own prose writings as read by the Irish actor. The dramatist's response is apparent in his stage directions – 'cracked voice, distinctive intonation' – for the onstage 69 year-old Krapp, whose live speech alternates with the taped diary extracts – 'strong voice, rather pompous' – from his 39 year-old younger self.

Rockaby (1981) is one Beckett's shorter late works, resonantly described by Billie Whitelaw, who acted in the first productions of a number of them (*Rockaby* included), as 'animated paintings'. Here, Beckett's stage pictures are composed with an absolute precision; hard-edged images revealed from darkness as though frozen in time and space, then activated until again reclaimed by darkness.

Beckett's establishing directions for the piece exemplify this approach:

W[oman]: Prematurely old. Unkempt grey hair. Huge eyes in white expressionless face. White hands holding ends of armrests.

Costume: Black lacy high-necked evening gown. Long sleeves. Jet sequins to glitter when rocking. Incongruous frivolous headdress set askew with extravagant trimmings to catch light when rocking.

On a musical analogy, this brief play is composed in four movements in the manner of a fugue, each commissioned by the rocking woman in an ever-weakening voice:

"The first movement of *Rockaby* describes a far-flung search for 'another like herself' even while the living woman agrees that it is 'time she stopped'. In the second movement she searches from her window, with continued admonition that it is 'time she stopped'. The third movement limits and ends the window search. The fourth and longest movement traces a descent from

the upstairs window down to the rocker where a mother 'all in black/best black' died and where a living actress sits and rocks. The moving chair, 'mother rocker,' lulls its occupant to death ... Like a tipsy angel of death, the figure in black is finally enfolded in the rocker/cradle/coffin." (Ruby Cohn, 'The Femme Fatale on Beckett's Stage')

There is bleakness in the work, but also a stark beauty, both linguistically and pictorially.

These two one-act, one-actor plays offer diverse spins on the early incorporation of recording tape technology into live theatre. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, the younger Krapp – on tape – is in effect a distinct, and contrasting, character. In *Rockaby*, the disembodied (taped) voice of the old woman reiterates a narrative of isolation as the time of the onstage character winds down to a reenactment of her mother's death. The plays are linked by this motif and its concomitant image of a blind 'let down' to signify a death in the house; small yet telling details in a nexus of formal and thematic correspondences.

Beckett's work is habitually characterised by a marked degree of self-reference, the modernist text both acknowledging its status as text and offering its form as a mode of content:

Krapp: 'Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago.'

Woman: '... saying to the rocker/rock her off/stop her eyes/fuck life ...'

In the early 1980s, a student of mine was pursuing research into stage picture and visual metaphor in Beckett's later plays, and I suggested that she write to him via his Paris publisher and ask if he would be so kind as to meet with her. She had an Irish surname, as it happens. And meet her he did, treating her to hot chocolate in a Montparnasse café and dealing patiently and at some length with her list of questions.

Two of his responses now come to mind. Asked about the ongoing reduction of scale in both prose fiction and drama, he made the point that he tried to retain only what seemed essential, accompanying his observation with the gesture of several times running a knife down his forearm as if to pare to the bone. And, asked about the 'how' of his writing, he replied that it was simply what he had to do. He added that he had always hoped that the process of writing would become easier for him as he aged, as he assumed it had for Yeats whom he very much admired, but that he was 'reduced to finding ever new ways of saying much the same thing' – an inordinately modest expression of the remarkable consistency of theme and vision which he sustained across a lifetime's work.

On a more personal note, I first encountered Beckett's theatre when Brenda Bruce played Winnie in the 1962 Royal Court production of *Happy Days*. More than half a century on I continue to find his writing wholly absorbing, both as reader and as director. So, thank you to Samuel Beckett; and thank you too to the cast and creative team for this production, with whom it has been an absolute pleasure to work.

George Savona, Director

KRAPP'S LAST TAPE & ROCKABY

a double bill by Samuel Beckett

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 26 July 2018

KRAPP'S LAST TAPE

Krapp

Simon Taylor

ROCKABY

Woman / Voice

Christine Fox

The performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes
including a 15-minute interval.

The audience is asked kindly to vacate the auditorium during the 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

George Savona

Costume Designer

Sarah Andrews

Lighting Designer

Terry Mummery

Sound Designer

Russell Fleet

Production Advisor

John Davey

Stage Manager

James Peake

Deputy Stage Manager

Shaan Latif-Shaikh

Lighting and Sound Operator

Russell Fleet

Prompter

James Peake

Photographer

Rishi Rai

Thanks for advice and assistance offered are due to:
**Claudia Carroll, Tim Halliday & Carl Kirk (University of Northampton),
Doug King, Alex Marker, Jane Mason, Anne Neville, Harriet Parsonage,
Peter Salvietto, Alan Smith, Paul Wilson, Carole Wood
and Nigel Worsley**

Biographies

Sarah Andrews – Costume Designer

Sarah joined The Questors in 1977 as a member of Student Group 32 and since graduating has appeared in many plays. In addition to acting she has designed and dressed a countless number of productions, most recently *The Country Wife* and *Sleepers in the Field*. For this production she has followed Samuel Beckett's very detailed costume prescription. Sarah can also be found involved in managing Front of House.

John Davey – Production Advisor

John has been directing and acting at The Questors since the 1970s and has been both Artistic Director and Chair of the Theatre. Recent productions have been *Uncle Vanya*, *The Master Builder*, *The Country Wife*, *Sleepers in the Field* and a double-bill of David Greig plays at the Jermyn Street Theatre, Piccadilly. Next season, he will be directing *That Face* in the Studio.

Russell Fleet – Sound Designer

Russell trained as an actor in the 1990s and joined The Questors in 2006. He has been involved in 28 productions as an actor, sound designer, stage manager and director. Recent credits: *Sweet Charity* (Director), *When the Rain Stops Falling* (Gabriel York), *The Bear/A Priest in the Family* (Stage Manager), *Taking Sides* (Helmuth Rode) and designing the sound for *Daisy Pulls It Off* and *Mojo*.

Christine Fox – Woman / Voice

Christine trained at Mountview and Central and has acted for many years in classic and contemporary plays, and in improvised and devised work. Roles have included Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Xenia in *Summer* by Edward Bond, as well as work in devised theatre pieces. She has also performed in her own black comedy, *Divided Soul*, at the Canal Café Theatre. Working at The Questors on *Rockaby* has been both a pleasure and a profound learning experience thanks to the director's skill and his affinity for Beckett's writing.

Shaan Latif-Shaikh – Deputy Stage Manager

Shaan originally joined the Youth Theatre in 2007, and started working backstage in 2013. He has been involved in many productions in various roles both on and off stage. He last worked as a DSM on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He was Stage Manager for *Rafta Rafta* in the Playhouse, this spring. He also works frequently as a puppeteer and puppet maker.

Terry Mummery – Lighting Designer

Terry has been lighting productions at The Questors since the mid-1990s. In the last few years he has been exploring how special effects and projections can enhance the audience's experience of a production. His recent work as lighting designer includes *The Exonerated*, *Larkin with Women*, the Student Look-In 2017 and *Eventide*.

James Peake – Stage Manager

James' Questors journey began with a Wednesday night tour in September 2017, as a result of which he was asked to put his professional BBC production skills to good use as ASM on *Season's Greetings*. Since then he has been involved as trainee SM on *Taking Sides* and ASM on *Mojo*. Most recently he worked on *Eventide* as DSM. James has found that working on this double bill has been a wonderful experience. Getting to know more of Beckett's unique work and style, it's been a privilege for him to work with two such talented actors in Simon and Christine.

Rishi Rai – Photographer

Rishi is a portrait and wedding photographer with a particular interest in theatre. He has worked on a number of theatre productions for a variety of companies, and loves the challenge of telling stories through his photography. A noted West End director recently described his work as 'awesome'. His portfolio is available to view at rishiraiphotography.com.

George Savona – Director

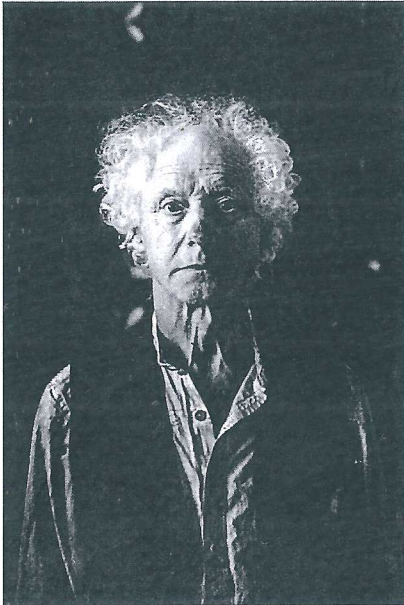
This is George's first Questors production, having worked previously on *Sleepers in the Field* as production advisor. He trained and directed professionally courtesy of the (then) ABC Television repertory theatre directors' scheme, and has subsequently taught in university theatre studies departments while continuing to direct with community and student groups. He has particular interests in Greek, Jacobean and Modernist drama; and experience also of devising and of film-making.

Simon Taylor – Krapp

Retired teacher and experienced actor, Simon has also directed around 100 shows, including for his own 25-year-old Minack Theatre company. Proud to be a Questor, he follows his *Measure for Measure* debut and Furtwängler in *Taking Sides* with this memorable old recluse. He has found it an honour to be playing Krapp, especially with a fine director who loves and knows his Beckett inside out.

Rehearsal Photographs

by Rishi Rai



UNIVERSITY OF
WEST LONDON
London College of Music

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 John.davey@uwl.ac.uk



Train with us...

Did you know that The Questors have been training actors for over seventy years?

Fun and friendly weekly classes, short courses and intensive training. Whether you're a complete beginner or preparing for a career in the theatre, The Questors Academy has something for you.

Auditions for the *Foundation Course in Acting* opening soon.

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