

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
Box Office: 020 8567 5184
Email: enquiries@questors.org.uk

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

Questors, Ealing's Theatre

PEER GYNT

by Henrik Ibsen adapted by Steve Fitzpatrick

The Studio

18 – 26 May 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:

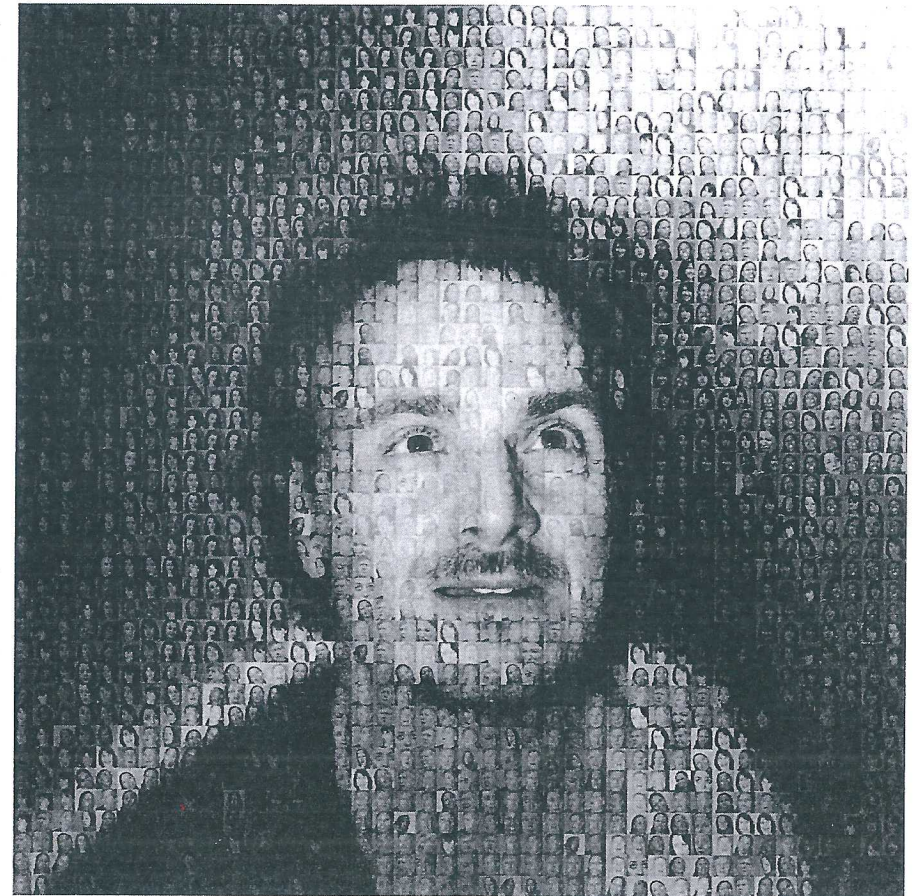
7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (10:30 pm close on Sundays)

Sunday lunchtime: midday – 2:30 pm

Spring Mini Beer Festival 14 – 16 June

See questors.org.uk/grapevine for more details.

Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.



PEER GYNT

by Henrik Ibsen adapted by Steve Fitzpatrick

The Studio

18 – 26 May 2018

PEER GYNT

The Play and the Poet

If you only know Ibsen's naturalistic prose plays, such as *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts* or *Hedda Gabler*, his poetic masterpiece *Peer Gynt* may come as a bit of a surprise.

Ibsen wrote it in 1867 at the age of 39. He had previously written eleven plays, all in verse, and afterwards he wrote a further 15, all in prose. So *Peer Gynt* was his last play in verse, and, apart from a book of poems published in 1871 but mostly written earlier, was his last word as a poet.

In Norway, Ibsen is considered a great poet as well as a great playwright, and *Peer Gynt* was conceived as a dramatic poem that was never intended to be staged. It is written in ingeniously rhymed verse throughout, and its action is by turns romantic, comic, satirical and surrealist, but never remotely naturalistic. There is no trace of the social realism of his later plays, with their claustrophobic concentration on mostly domestic themes. Instead, we have a fantasy exploring a mythic world (though according to a very personal mythology) that ranges from the Norwegian folktales that Peer's (and Ibsen's) mother told about 'trolls and kings and stolen brides', to a satirical attack on capitalism, religion and academic scholarship, to a bleak symbolic disquisition on despair, death and dissolution.

It is possibly Ibsen's most personal work, often described as a 'disguised autobiography', and he never wrote anything else quite like it – but, then again, nor has anyone else.

Peer the Anti-Hero

The play strikes us as 'modern' in many ways. It looks forward to all sorts of twentieth-century theatrical idioms, such as symbolism, surrealism, absurdism and epic theatre, but above all it presents us with that thoroughly modern phenomenon, the anti-hero.

Peer is a liar, a philanderer, a bride-abductor and deserter, an outlaw, a dreamer, a colonialist, a blasphemer, a slave-trader, a procrastinator and almost a murderer. He is certainly no role-model, and yet, as the critic Harold Bloom described him, he 'has the largeness of the grandest characters of Renaissance imaginings. Dickens, Tolstoy, Stendhal, Hugo, even Balzac have no single figure quite so exuberant, outrageous, vitalistic as Peer Gynt'.

The Cult of Self

'To thy own self be enough' say the Trolls, and it's a lesson that Peer takes very much to heart. His whole life is a quest for identity and self-sufficiency. It was a central tenet of the Romantic Movement, and still a potent belief today, that individuality is obviously a good thing and that 'being yourself' is always a praiseworthy aspiration. Ibsen would not necessarily have agreed. For him the boundary between admirable self-sufficiency and deplorable selfishness was only too easily blurred.

Peer's journey takes him from the self-assertion of his ambitions and dreams at the beginning, through a process of successive disengagements: from society's rules and conventions through his abduction of Ingrid and his consequent outlawing; from love and happiness with Solveig through a combination of sexual guilt and moral cowardice; from his mother by her inevitable death; from the world of business and companionship through the loss of his ship and wealth; from the revelations of religion and the distractions of sexuality through the betrayal of Anitra; and finally from the consolations of study and scholarship through the loss of sanity and the ultimate egomania of madness. In Act Five he returns home, shrunken rather than enriched by his travels, to an existence of virtual solipsism, wandering through a limbo of lost causes and broken dreams towards the discovery that all his searching has brought him not self-realisation but only dissolution and nothingness.

Self, Ibsen seems to be saying, depends ultimately on others. Peer rejects his community – or it rejects him, because it is certainly a cruel world in which the morbidly sensitive Peer already feels an outcast. He fails to see, until too late, that the selfless Solveig is where his salvation lies. Even Nature itself, as represented by a troupe of apes, spits him out – and so in his desire for self-actualization he becomes an empty shell: an onion with nothing at its centre.

Dreams and Reality

It is difficult to know where reality stops and fantasy begins in the play. The Trolls, the Great Boyg and the Woman in Green are, presumably, figments of Peer's imagination, yet they have real world consequences, and seem to straddle the two realms quite comfortably. Sometimes Peer only has to **think** something – feel desire for the Woman in Green, pray for the destruction of his ship, hope for a horse – for it to happen, and there is more than one clue to suggest he dies in the shipwreck, and is already dead for the rest of the play. We have not made any attempt to resolve such ambiguities, for they go to the heart of the play, evoking Ibsen's ultimate question: 'If you lie, are you real?'

Music

When, nearly ten years after he published it, Ibsen decided that the play could be staged, he asked Edvard Grieg to write some music for it, and he obliged with ninety minutes worth, much of it needed to cover the interminable scene changes. Today Grieg's music is much better known than the play itself, but you won't be hearing a note of it tonight. I am not alone in finding it too sugary for such an astringent play, and actually neither Ibsen nor Grieg thought their collaboration was a success. On the other hand, music is certainly necessary – not just for Solveig's famous song, but because the play itself often seems to progress more like music than narrative, repeating and varying its themes, modulating through different keys, and following a logic that has little in common with conventional story-telling. But I felt something more elemental was required, though there were advantages in keeping a (roughly) Scandinavian connection. Consequently, all the music for this production comes from the works of Sibelius.

Steve Fitzpatrick, Director

PEER GYNT

by Henrik Ibsen adapted by Steve Fitzpatrick

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 18 May 2018

CAST

in order of appearance

Peer Gynt	Mike Hadjipateras
Aase, <i>his mother</i>	Lisa Day
Neighbour, Bridegroom's Mother, Kari	Anne Marie Ryan
Neighbour, Solveig's Mother, Anitra	Charlotte Greer
Aslak, Mr Johnson, Huhu, Ship's Cook, A Thin Person	Christian Search
Bride's Father, Troll King, Mr Cotton, Hussein, Button-Moulder	John Dobson
Mads Moen, Herr Trumpeterstraale, Fellah, Strange Passenger	Wesley Lloyd
Solveig's Father, M. Ballon, Herr Begriffenfeldt, Ship's Captain	Robert Gordon Clark
Helga, <i>Solveig's sister</i> } Boy }	Malaika Ahmad*, Helena von Roon* Zoe Kemp**, Francesca Young**
Solveig	Stella Strange
Ingrid, Woman in Green/Troll Princess	Francesca Nicholls
Neighbours, Passers-by, Wedding-Guests, Trolls, Thieves, Apes, Lunatics, Sailors and all other parts:	
Jana Foerster, Michael Kavanagh, Ann-Marie Samuels, Tony Sears, Veronika Smit and the cast	

* appearing 18th, 20th, 23rd & 25th

** appearing 19th, 22nd, 24th & 26th

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

PRODUCTION

Director	Steve Fitzpatrick
Costume Designer	Jennie Yates
Lighting Designer	Chris Newall
Sound Designer	Mark Łucek
Choreographer	Charlotte Greer
Stage Manager	Tilly Benson-Reid
Deputy Stage Manager	Tracy Wickens
Rehearsal Prompter	Pam Smith
Dano-Norwegian Consultant	Artur Mrozek
Singing Coach and Pianist	Sarah Stoddart
Wardrobe Assistants	Laura Hurley, Jenny Richardson, Sylvia Wall
Lighting Operator	Cecily Johnson
Lighting Riggers	Terry Mummery, Andrew Whadcoat
Get-In Assistance	Toby Burbidge, Martin Choules, Tina Harris, Stephen Souchon
Photographer	Peter Collins
Thanks to	Alex Marker

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

Lisa Day – Aase

A Questors member for 32 years, this is the first time Lisa has been a troll. She has however been a Twit (*The Twits*), an evil Queen (*The Snow Queen*) and a mischievous ghost (*Blithe Spirit*) so it was only a matter of time. But she has played several long-suffering mothers, most recently Mrs Higgins (*Pygmalion*) and Elizabeth Law (*When the Rain Stops Falling*).

John Dobson – *Bride's Father, Troll King, Mr Cotton, Hussein, Button-Moulder*

John joined The Questors in 1981 and has played everything from a French maid to a rhinoceros. Over 80 appearances include *The Faith Healer, Breaking the Code, Dublin Carol, Equus* and, most recently, *Season's Greetings*. He edited The Questors newsletter and website for many years and is now custodian of The Questors' archives.

Robert Gordon Clark – *Solveig's Father, M. Ballon, Herr Begriffenfeldt*

An acting member since 1983, Robert is again working with Steve Fitzpatrick – the last time was *The Taming of the Shrew* (Gremio). Previous ensemble shows include *Oh, What a Lovely War!* (Haig and others) and *ENRON* (trader, journalist etc). Robert's most recent productions have been *When the Rain Stops Falling* (Joe Ryan) and *Pygmalion* (Colonel Pickering).

Charlotte Greer – *Neighbour, Solveig's Mother, Anitra / Choreographer*

Charlotte became a Questors Acting Member in 2016. She has appeared in Fringe Theatre Productions and is a professional burlesque dancer. Charlotte's most memorable parts to date are Jacie Triplethree in Ayckbourn's *Comic Potential* and Amina of Zaria (Queen/Protector of Africa) by Mohammed Kabir Umar. Charlotte has choreographed routines for The Questors: *The Black Buddha* 24-Hour Play and *Sweet Charity*, plus *Dance Hall* at the Lyon Theatre.

Mike Hadjipateras – *Peer Gynt*

Mike joined The Questors in 2003. Favourite roles include: Trigorin in *The Seagull*, Faustus in *Doctor Faustus*, Gary Essendine in *Present Laughter*, Abanazar in *Aladdin*, John Proctor in *The Crucible*, Dr Bayliss in *All My Sons*, Kotov in *Burnt by the Sun* and, most recently, Louis in *The Ladykillers*. Mike teaches History at the Rudolf Steiner School in Hertfordshire.

Wesley Lloyd – *Mads Moen, Herr Trumpeterstraale, Fella, Strange Passenger*

Wesley graduated from Student Group 62 in 2009 after playing King Henry in *Henry VI* and Joseph Poorgrass in *Far From the Madding Crowd*. This season, he co-wrote and co-starred (with Mike Hadjipateras) in The Etheric's production of *A Bigger Boat* in the Studio in November and appeared in *Houdini and Bess* as part of Questival III.

Francesca Nicholls – *Ingrid, Woman in Green/Troll Princess*

Francesca graduated from Oxford in acting, and acted with the Oxford University Shakespeare Company playing such roles as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night* and Popova in *The Bear*. She has starred in the short film *Try My Guy* as Krissie and is currently working full-time as an actor as part of the Merlin Entertainments company. This is her first Questors production.

Anne Marie Ryan – *Neighbour, Bridegroom's Mother, Kari*

Anne Marie is a graduate of Brown University, where she acted in numerous student productions. Last year she returned to the stage via the Encore class and made her Questors debut in *Diana of Dobson's*. When she's not pretending to be a troll or a lunatic, Anne Marie writes and edits children's books.

Christian Search – *Aslak, Mr Johnson, Huhu, Ship's Cook, A Thin Person*

Peer Gynt is Christian's eighth production with The Questors. His portfolio of characters ranging from a Blacksmith and a Mental Asylum patient, to a Ship's Cook and The Devil is the latest addition to a rather colourful collection of past Questors characters, including a cynical Byron-esque Cavalry Officer, a ditch-dwelling drunken misanthrope, a highly-strung (and very busy) waiting woman, a lecherous lusty horse doctor, a Prince and the thickest man in the village. Bravo!

Stella Strange – *Solveig*

Stella is making her debut at The Questors since becoming a member in March 2018. Prior to this, she has been performing on stage in Northern Ireland, as well as taking part in student films. Right now, she is pursuing her dream to become a full time actress.

Steve Fitzpatrick – *Director*

Steve has directed over 25 productions for The Questors, most recently *Emil and the Detectives* and *Arms and the Man*. Others include *The Winterling* (Jez Butterworth), *Annie, Much Ado About Nothing, The Alchemist* and Strindberg's *Dance of Death*. He has written several professionally produced or published plays, and previous adaptations for The Questors include works by Aristophanes, Molière, Marivaux, Goldoni, Chekhov and Feydeau. He has also acted in 20 or so productions, most recently as Sir Jabez Grinley in *Diana of Dobson's*.

Mark Łucek – *Sound Designer*

Mark's involvement with The Questors began all the way back with *Andromache* (far too many years ago to even think about!). Since then he has designed over a hundred shows, both inside and outside of The Questors. Most recently Mark designed sound for *Pygmalion* as well as his first radio drama.

Chris Newall – *Lighting Designer*

Chris has designed the lighting for more than 40 Questors productions, several Musical Theatre Summer Schools and a couple of RSC Showcases. Most recently he collaborated on *Mother Goose*, the 2018 Questival, *The Country Wife* in the Judi Dench Playhouse and at the Minack open air theatre in Porthcurno, and *The Village Bike* and *Endgame* in the Studio.

Jennie Yates – *Costume Designer*

Since joining The Questors in 2000, Jennie has worked on innumerable productions, and is now Head of the Costume Department. The shows she has worked on are too numerous to list, but the most recent are *Grimm Tales, Dead White Males, Improbable Fiction, Sweet Charity* and *Diana of Dobson's*.

Meet the Company – Wednesday 23 May

Come and meet the Director, Cast and Crew for an informal discussion in the Studio as soon as possible after the Wednesday performance.

A Note on the Adaptation

As already mentioned, *Peer Gynt* was not originally intended for the stage, and one consequence of this is that it is, for a stage-play, ridiculously long. Ingmar Bergman once directed an uncut version that lasted over five hours. We, you may be relieved to know, have opted to perform a shorter adapted text.

So this version would appear, if you do the maths, to be only 40% of *Peer Gynt*, and it is true that I have made some substantial cuts. But where possible I have condensed rather than cut, and tried to preserve as much as possible of Ibsen's narrative and meaning, though certainly not all his actual words. In the original, Peer in particular is extravagantly voluble, and many of his speeches go on for several pages at a stretch, so it was not especially difficult to compress them into fewer words.

Still, there have certainly been cuts, and it's only fair to let you know what you're missing. The biggest single cut concerns a young man who – observed by Peer – chops off one of his own fingers to avoid being conscripted into the army. In the fifth act, Peer witnesses his funeral, where we learn – at inordinate length – that despite his shame, the young man redeemed himself, raised a family and lived a life of responsible honest toil. The contrast with Peer's irresponsibility and wasted life is obvious – so obvious that it seemed unnecessary to include the episode at all.

I have also cut the scene where Peer meets and is seduced by three Mountain Girls, on the grounds that Peer's susceptibility to sexual temptation was already sufficiently established; and his visit to the Statue of Memnon seemed too similar to his viewing of the Sphinx to be worth retaining.

A rather famous scene in which fallen leaves, threadballs, dewdrops and other inanimate objects taunt Peer with his regret for the deeds he left undone was cut at a fairly late stage of rehearsal, since it didn't seem to be adding much (and not at all because my actors had any difficulty impersonating dewdrops or fallen leaves). And finally, I confess I have altered Ibsen's ending, which I'm afraid I find nauseatingly sentimental, to something a little more acerbic.

Otherwise, no further incidents have been cut, but an awful lot of talk has been. The last two acts, which in the original are longer than the first three put together, have been particularly severely trimmed, with several scenes run together. Ibsen, who once proposed cutting Act Four in its entirety, would perhaps not have objected too much.

He certainly would have objected, though, if the play had been translated into prose. He once said that he would prefer it not to be translated at all, rather than countenance a prose version. His original is written entirely in rhymed verse and in a huge variety of different metres. Neither of these features works well in English, so I have opted mostly for blank verse, with occasional use of octosyllables or ballad metre, and restricted rhyme to the Trolls.



Learning through plays?

BA (Hons) Theatre Production (Design and Management)

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Next at The Questors

DAISY PULLS IT OFF

by Denise Deegan

1 – 9 June 2018

The Judi Dench Playhouse

It's never easy being the new girl, as poor Daisy Meredith discovers at the spiffy Grangewood School for Girls. Denise Deegan's comic parody of 1920s schoolgirl adventure stories is a thrill from start to finish. After bursting onto the West End in 1983 it ran for over a 1,000 performances at the Gielgud Theatre.

EVENTIDE

by Barney Norris

26 – 30 June 2018

The Studio

In the back of The White Horse Inn, three people drink and chat and joke – about a ferret performing miracles; that smoking is really all about sex; and the true value of being an alcoholic. Has it all been missed chances and disappearing dreams for this trio? Or will the seeds of change bring new opportunities their way?