

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.

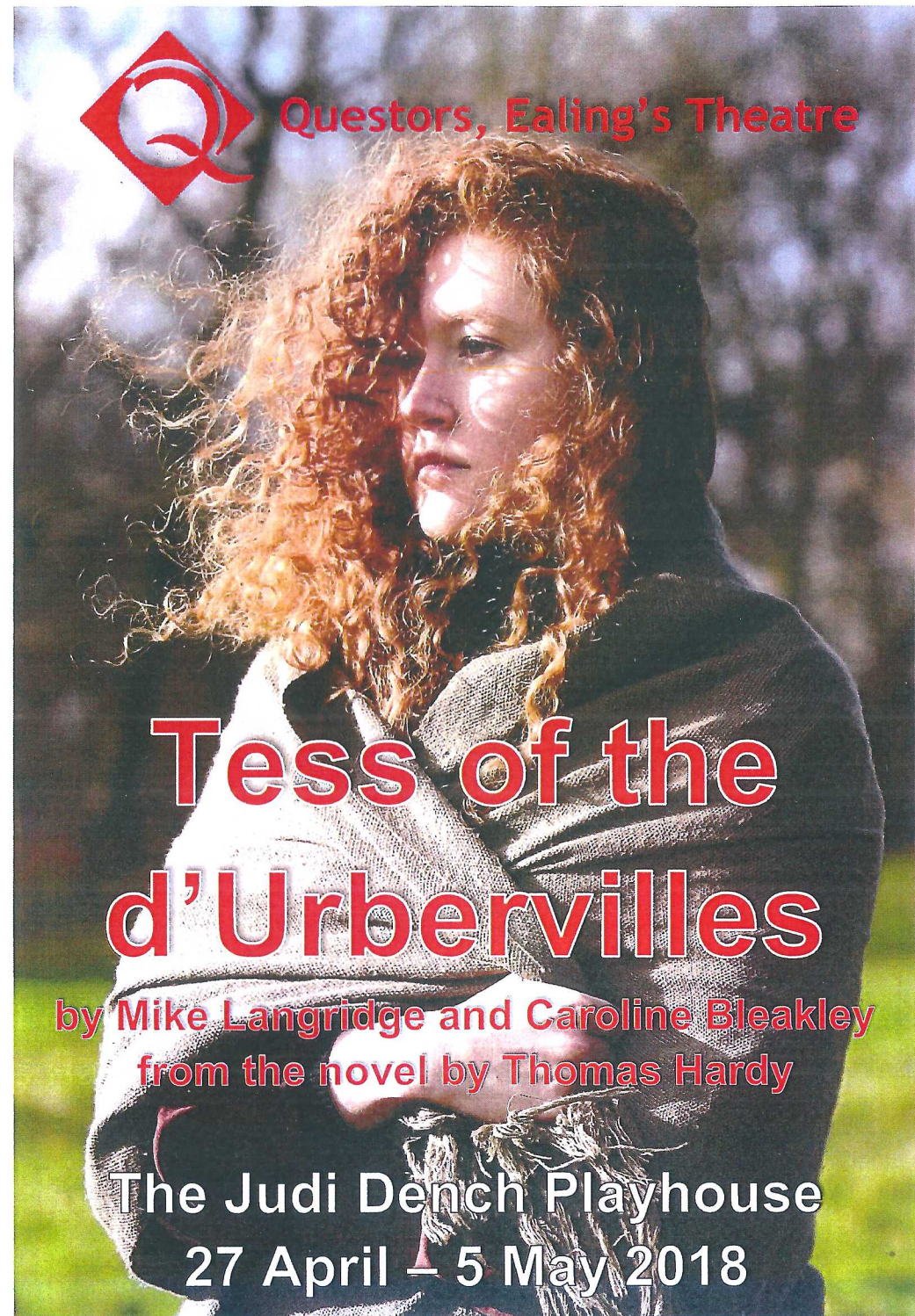
The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.


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**

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

by **Mike Langridge and Caroline Bleakley**
from the novel by **Thomas Hardy**

The Judi Dench Playhouse
27 April – 5 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

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

Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.



image: Jane Arnold-Forster

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

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Tess of the d'Urbervilles

From Novel to Play

It is exactly ninety years since the death of Thomas Hardy, but his epic novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* contains enormous parallels with the attitude towards women and the social and sexual morality of today. Tess declares "I am not any woman!" as she tries to survive poverty, injustice and betrayal in the harsh world of 19th century rural Wessex. In creating a new version for the stage we wanted to stress the highly relevant and significant themes that impact on Tess and that would be recognised by a modern audience. Those themes are sexual abuse, abandonment, injustice, hypocrisy, inequality, cruelty and manipulation. It is abundantly clear to anyone who reads his books that Hardy was an ardent feminist way before his time. His stories feature many heroic and powerful women who undergoing extremes of hardship and pain at the hands of men in a world where women were second class citizens and victims to perpetual abuse and ill treatment. These stories Hardy skilfully intertwines with a passion and love that tries to overcome the darker influences surrounding the protagonists. As if this wasn't enough, Hardy also adds another major theme: that of fate and the power of the gods, the 'immortals' who influence our lives and create inevitability that will ultimately lead to tragedy. This is never more apparent than in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* where Hardy's heroine is subjected to more than her fair share of ill fortune. In contrast, and away from these darker themes, Tess is also a powerful love story in all its guises and convolutions. It is love that drives Tess forward to fight for what is just and fair, regardless of the consequences.

In the light of this, how then does one approach the daunting task of taking this classic novel of 150,000 words and putting it on the stage to be performed in one evening? The most important task of any adaptation is to tell the story and to be true and honest to the original work. We took Hardy's text and looked at all the dialogue and the significant scenes and what it was that made the story engaging, exciting and dramatic. Caroline, as a professional film editor, then mapped a storyboard of how the narrative progressed through these scenes and what was relevant and would make an engaging and exciting stage play. Many passages of Hardy's dialogue can be lifted directly from the page and left more or less intact. There were other sections though which wouldn't easily translate well to a piece of theatre and so we had to edit and adapt these to be more accessible to a modern audience. We also wanted the play to have a voice that delivered a strong response to the themes outlined earlier. The process of writing the

first draft took almost a year, after which we arrived at a script ready for the process of editing and refining. The book is very episodic and contains some of the most exquisite descriptions of the English countryside. Hardy was a brilliant observer of all things natural. He understood geology, architecture, the seasonal variations of the country, and the flora and fauna. In his books he refers to all these subjects in enormous detail in a most poetic and evocative way. Whilst these are wonderful to read, it is hard to put this onstage despite the lyrical way Hardy writes about them. In spite of this it was important to hear Hardy's voice and how he describes the action, the seasons and time passing. To honour Hardy's homage to Aeschylus and the concept of the 'immortals' in the book, we have the Company as a Chorus take on this role. The device of a Chorus is enshrined in Greek theatre and epic plays that drive themselves inexorably towards tragedy. In this play our Chorus also becomes the conscience of Tess and shares in her emotional journey.

From Play to Performance

Staging a play of this complexity requires a dedicated company prepared to go on a journey of discovery. Whilst we had a provisional script, it was clear that it was too long and probably contained sections that might not work or necessarily move the narrative forward. Also our experience of staging other epic adaptations, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Great Expectations*, has taught us that you have to adopt a style for the production that can move the drama forward seamlessly. The Tess Company had to be aware that they were going to be required to become an ensemble, capable of playing more than one part, embracing some aspects of physical theatre and bonding into a group capable of all that we could throw at them. In addition they would be working with a script that would be fluid and constantly changing and adapting.

The rehearsal period was extended to allow for initial text work and the development of the physical aspects that we were keen to explore. We have been blessed with a company of actors who have done all of this and more. Their bravery and commitment to the project has been paramount in staging this show and their inventiveness and willingness to contribute has made this a truly collaborative production. We are also fortunate to have been joined by an experienced and highly talented creative team, many of whom have worked with us before, and for whom we have the greatest respect and who have applied their infinite skill and imagination to how this production looks and sounds.

Mike Langridge and Caroline Bleakley

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

by Mike Langridge and Caroline Bleakley

from the novel by Thomas Hardy

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 27 April 2018

CAST

Joan Durbeyfield / Caretaker	Alison Griffin
Marian / Car Darch / Modesty / Girl at May Dance	Lucy Hayton
Angel Clare	Rory Hobson
Tess Durbeyfield	Ella Hooper
Mrs Crick / Mercy Chant / 2 nd Woman	Hannah Hughes
Felix / Abraham / Groom / Postman	Zac Karaman
John Durbeyfield / Groby / Man at Kingsbere	Nigel Lawrence
Revd Clare / Jonathan / Driver / Policeman	Francis Lloyd
Liza-Lu / Retty Priddle	Maddy MacConnol
Mrs Clare / Mrs d'Urberville / Mrs Brooks / 1 st Woman	Alex McDevitt
Alec d'Urberville	Victor Mellors
Cuthbert / Parson Tringham / Mr Crick / Prince	Derek Stoddart
Izz Huett / Hope / Elizabeth / Girl at May Dance	Hannah Webster

Other parts and livestock played by members of the company.

The play spans a period of five years from May 1873 to June 1878.

The action takes place in Marlott, Trantridge, Talbothays, Emminster, Flintcomb Ash, Kingsbere, Sandbourne, Stonehenge and Wintoncester in the County of Wessex.

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 50 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

Directors	Mike Langridge, Caroline Bleakley
Set Designer	Mike Langridge
Costume Designers	Nichola Thomas, Jenny Richardson
Lighting Designer	Andrew Dixon
Sound & Original Music	Daniel Beilby
Choreography	devised by the Company
Stage Manager	Bernie Brady
Deputy Stage Manager	Sukhi Kainth
Assistant Stage Managers	Jennifer Kerr, Doug Willis
Properties	Sue Collins
Prompter	Bridgett Strevens
Dialect Coach	David Emmet
Movement Advisor	Nicholas Jonne Wilson
Wardrobe Assistants	Mary Davies, Helen Karasiewicz, Claire Malyon, Holly Merrick
Lighting Operators	Nikki Amory, Sally Milton, Carole Swan
Sound Operator	Cynthia Eke
Lighting Riggers	John Green, Tim Hayward, Terry Mummery, Chris Newall, Tim Pemberton, Andrew Whadcoat
Master Carpenter	Colin Horne
Get-In Team	Bernd Gauweiler, Tina Harris, Doug King, Shaan Latif-Shaikh, Stephen Souchon
Photographer	Jane Arnold-Forster

Biographies

Daniel Beilby – *Sound & Original Music*

Since joining The Questors in 2012, Daniel has made a reputation as its 'house composer'. He has previously contributed original music to ten productions including *The Ladykillers*, *The Crucible* and recently *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Caroline Bleakley – *Playwright / Director*

Caroline adapted and directed *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* jointly with Mike Langridge. She jointly directed *Shadowlands* and has been Assistant Director on many shows including *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Great Expectations*, *Lady Betty*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *Burnt by the Sun* and *The Last of the Haussmans*. She has been a Questors actor since 1984. Productions include *The Rivals*, *Yerma*, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Heartbreak House*, *Macbeth* (1994), *The Winter's Tale*, *The Crucible* (1999), *Lady Betty*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Trojan Women* (2007), *Festen*, *The Seagull*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Mary Stuart*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *Shadowlands*, *All My Sons*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan* and most recently as Desiree in *A Little Night Music*.

Andrew Dixon – *Lighting Designer*

In 2018, Andrew will have been lighting for 60 years... from amateur dramas to BBC epics. He finds them all equally exciting. He hopes his enthusiasm is picked up by young new members of The Questors.

Alison Griffin – *Joan Durbeyfield / Caretaker*

Following a 15-year break from working as an actress and director, Alison began classes at The Questors in 2012. She became an acting member in 2015 and has really enjoyed performing again. Questors productions to date include *All My Sons*, *Rhinoceros*, *The Lying Kind*, *Questival II*, *Improbable Fiction* and most recently *Season's Greetings*.

Lucy Hayton – *Marian / Car Darch / Modesty*

This is Lucy's first appearance at The Questors having recently moved from the Midlands, where she worked with The Criterion in Coventry and The Loft in Leamington Spa. Most of her experience has been as an actor but she has also tried her hand at directing and worked behind the scenes.

Rory Hobson – *Angel Clare*

Rory joined Questors Youth Theatre at the age of 7. Acting credits at The Questors include Fleance in *Macbeth*, John Tate in *DNA*, Boy 1 in *Steel Tumbleweed*, Branwell Brontë in *Wuthering Depths* and Alan in Student Group 71's production of *Blood Sports*. Rory is a QYT teaching assistant and is actively involved in Front of House and backstage.

Ella Hooper – *Tess Durbeyfield*

Ella started acting in 2015 after leaving Sixth Form, and then joined Student Group 70 where she performed in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Trelawny of the Wells*. Ella has since been in two short plays in The Studio: *The Lonely Hearts Club* and *Lady Susan*.

Hannah Hughes – *Mrs Crick / Mercy Chant*

Hannah is thrilled to be back in the Playhouse, after a taster performing in *Questival II*. Having enjoyed developing her acting in the Questors student group, she then completed an MA Acting at Arts Ed. Throughout rehearsals, she has relished exploring physical theatre as part of a dynamic ensemble.

Zac Karaman – *Felix / Abraham / Postman*

Zac is a recent graduate of Student Group 70, where he appeared as Sir William Gower in *Trelawny of the Wells* and Sir Nathaniel in *Love's Labour's Lost* (having made his Questors debut in *Hello Darkness, My Old Friend*). Coming off the back of *Taking Sides*, where he played Lt David Wills, Zac is very excited to try his hand at many parts with expansive movement pieces to boot.

Mike Langridge – *Playwright / Director / Designer*

Mike adapted and directed *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* jointly with Caroline Bleakley. He has directed and designed many productions at The Questors including *The Hired Man*, *Pack of Lies*, *Noises Off*, *Privates on Parade*, *The Crucible*, *Lady Betty*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Great Expectations*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *Shadowlands*, *Burnt by the Sun* and *The Last of the Haussmans*. He has appeared in over 100 plays including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Treats*, *The Front Page*, *Good, Faith Healer*, *Heartbreak House*, *A View from the Bridge*, *Festen*, *The Seagull*, *Broken Glass*, *Shadowlands*, *All My Sons* and *The Cripple of Inishmaan*.

Nigel Lawrence – *John Durbeyfield / Groby*

Since appearing in the Student Group 40 production of *The Man Who Came to Dinner* in 1987, Nigel has appeared in over 25 productions at The Questors. His previous work with Mike and Caroline includes *The Crucible* (1999), *Lady Betty* (2000), *Nicholas Nickleby* (2003), *Great Expectations* (2007) and *Burnt by the Sun* (2016).

Francis Lloyd – *Revd Clare / Jonathan*

Francis has appeared in a number of Langridge/Bleakley productions, including *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Great Expectations* and *Shadowlands*. Other parts include John in *Oleanna*, Wicksteed in *Habeas Corpus*, Vanya in *Uncle Vanya* and Sir Robert Morton in *The Winslow Boy*. Plays he has directed include *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Engaged*, *Season's Greetings*, and Brian Abbot's *No Fairy Tale* and *Bird on the Wire*. Next season, he will be directing *For Services Rendered* by Somerset Maugham.

Maddy MacConnel – *Liza-Lu / Retty Priddle*

Maddy is very excited to be performing in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, having last performed at The Questors as the principal boy in the 2017 Christmas pantomime, *Mother Goose*. She loves the way this very different show has helped her to overcome new challenges and grow as an actor.

Alex McDevitt – *Mrs Clare / Mrs d'Urberville / Mrs Brooks*

Since graduating from Student Group 60, Alex has worked with many different theatrical styles playing, amongst others, The Sphinx in Berkoff's *Greek*, Clara in Durrenmatt's *The Visit* and Ruth in Pinter's *The Homecoming*. Tess has been an exploration in working as part of an ensemble group, using stylised movement to convey the emotional complexities and hardships of late 19th century rural society.

Victor Mellors – *Alec d'Urberville*

Victor is ecstatic to be returning to The Questors once again. His theatre credits here include Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*, Dorilant in *The Country Wife* and Leslie in *Sleepers in the Fields*, as well as Trofimov in *The Cherry Orchard* (20th Century Theatre), Pompey in *Measure for Measure* (Bloomsbury Theatre), the Doctor in *Macbeth* (Bloomsbury Theatre) and Luciano in *They Had a Dream* (Cochrane Theatre).

Jenny Richardson – *Costume Designer*

After many years working in stage management, props and set design, Jenny enjoyed a change of direction to costume design, most recently for *Equus*, *All My Sons*, *The Lying Kind*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *Measure for Measure*, *Scarborough*, *Sweet Charity*, *Larkin with Women* and *Mojo*. Jenny can also be found working in Box Office, and is frequently in demand as an upholsterer.

Derek Stoddart – *Cuthbert / Parson Tringham / Mr Crick*

Derek has acted in a wide range of productions since joining The Questors in 1983. Most recent productions include *Burnt by the Sun*, *Twelfth Night*, *Uncle Vanya* and *House & Garden*. He was last seen as Baron von Rumpensmakka, being bad in *Mother Goose*.

Nichola Thomas – *Costume Designer*

Nichola has worked on numerous shows at The Questors over the past 15 years, including more recently *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *House & Garden*, *Shadowlands*, *Burnt by the Sun*, *The Last of the Haussmans* and *Endgame*.

Hannah Webster – *Izz Huett / Hope / Elizabeth*

Hannah joined The Questors in 2002 and later went on to graduate from Student Group 65. Shows she has performed in at The Questors include *Pygmalion*, *Bird on the Wire*, *The Master Builder*, *Macbeth*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *Dofia Rosita & Yerma* and *Teechers*.



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
London College of Music

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john.davey@uwl.ac.uk



Next at The Questors

PEER GYNT

by **Henrik Ibsen**
adapted by **Steve Fitzpatrick**

18 – 26 May 2018

The Studio

Ibsen's charismatic anti-hero travels through realms fantastic and real, on an extravagant journey from youth to old age and death. On the way he encounters lovers, trolls, thieves, Bedouin princesses, lunatics and phantasms, while holding to the maxim 'To hell with all others – to thyself be enough.'

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.