

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
- ✓ 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.

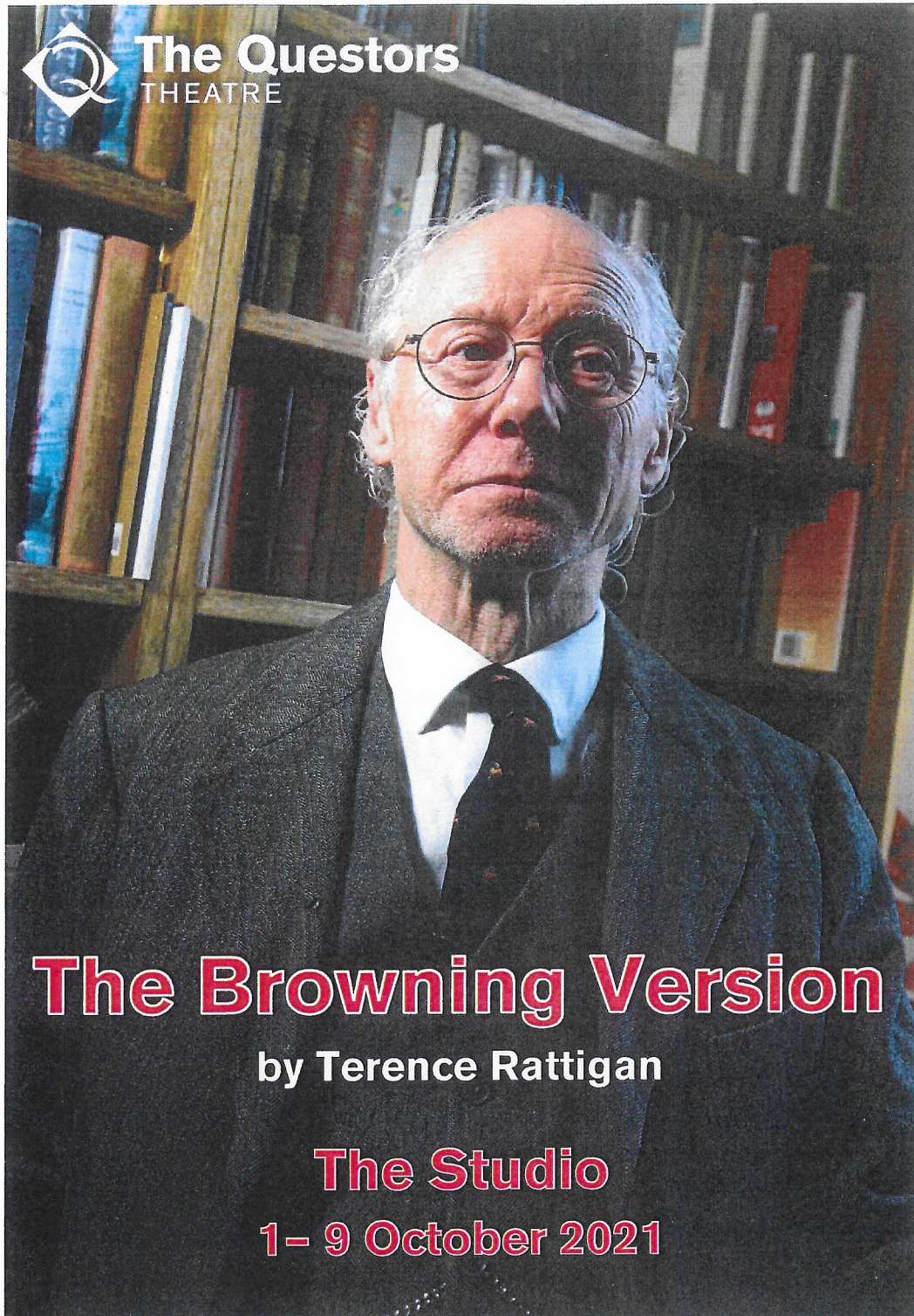
The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.

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

Programme: Nigel Bamford
Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011
Box Office: 020 8567 5184
Email: enquiries@questors.org.uk



The Questors
THEATRE

The Browning Version
by Terence Rattigan

The Studio
1- 9 October 2021

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 six 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 2021 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 – 10:30 pm (Monday – Wednesday)

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (Thursday – Saturday)

Sunday lunchtime: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

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

Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.

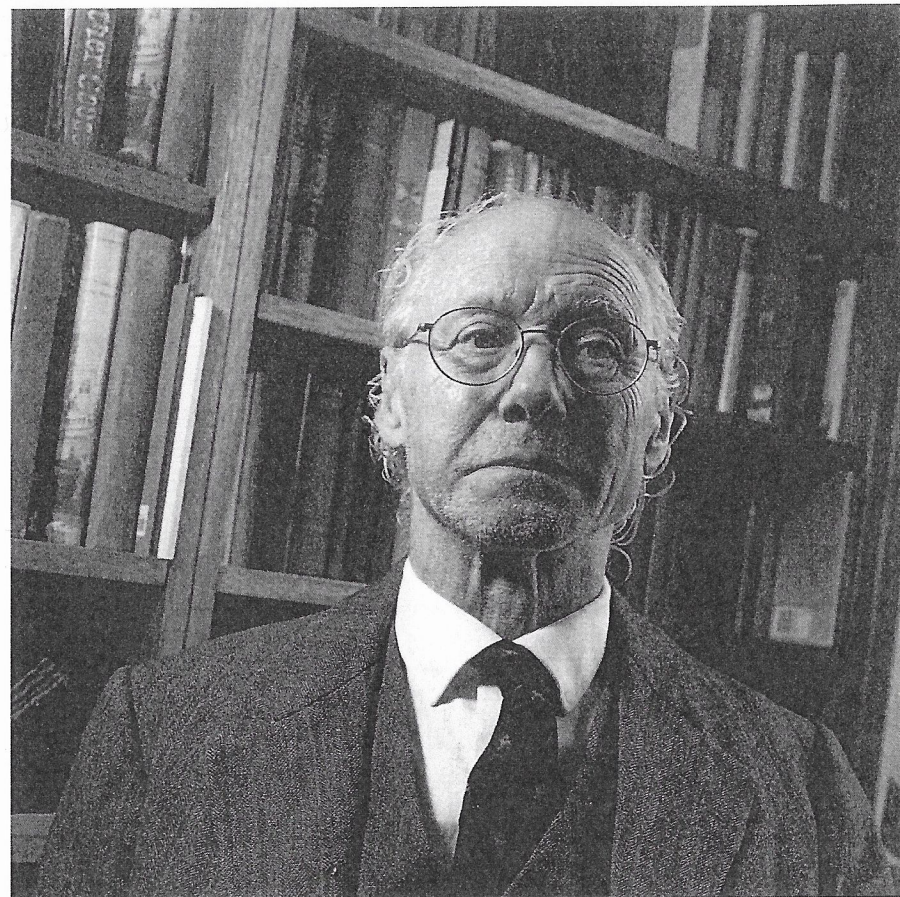


Image: Jane Arnold-Forster

The Browning Version

by Terence Rattigan

The Studio

1 – 9 October 2021

THE BROWNING VERSION

When Rattigan wrote *The Browning Version* in 1946, he was at the height of his fame. *Flare Path* and *While the Sun Shines* had both had long, successful runs in the West End during the War, and *Love in Idleness* (thanks to the starring performances of the Lunts) had given him a rare triumph in New York. His first post-War play, *The Winslow Boy*, had similarly succeeded in the West End and was about to be made into a film.

It took two years to get *The Browning Version* to the stage, mainly due to difficulties with casting. Rattigan wanted his old friend, Sir John Gielgud, to play the role of Crocker-Harris, but although Gielgud expressed enthusiasm for the play, previous commitments eventually meant he had to turn it down. This was a great disappointment to Rattigan, following on from Gielgud's earlier rejection of the part of Sir Robert Morton in *The Winslow Boy*. Rattigan then courted Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivienne Leigh, but they too decided that the play was not for them. Eventually the lead role was given to the Yorkshire-born actor, Eric Portman.

Presented in a double bill with the farcical comedy *Harlequinade*, the play opened at the Phoenix Theatre on 8th September 1948. Harold Hobson, the newly appointed critic of *The Sunday Times*, called the play "nearly a masterpiece" and wrote: "Mr Portman's playing and Mr Rattigan's writing are play-going experiences one encounters only once in a thousand nights. If as often". Other critics were equally enthusiastic.

The play was not a success, however, on Broadway, where it closed after only 62 performances. It is interesting to consider that the near-contemporary *Death of a Salesman* had met with only limited success in London, following its transfer from New York where it had triumphed. A small comment, perhaps, on differing English and American theatrical taste shortly after the War. Maybe the Americans found the tale of a failed schoolmaster in an English public school altogether too parochial. Certainly Andrew Crocker-Harris is an unlikely tragic hero. Rattigan appears to have based the character on an unpopular Classics Master at Harrow (where he was at school, and where he was happy and successful, opening the batting against Eton at Lord's in 1929). J.W. Coke-Norris was a clergyman with a prominent Adam's apple which fascinated his pupils, and who was apparently given to commencing his sermons with the words: "Thucydides tells us..." Young Terry Rattigan – like the fictional Taplow – mimicked him mercilessly.

On a personal note, Rattigan was my mother's favourite playwright, and *The Browning Version* her favourite play. Naturally this meant that I grew up to think him a tired old hack creating safe, comfortable plays to delight the Middle Classes who went to Shaftesbury Avenue and not the Royal Court. I therefore delighted in reading the savage attacks made on Rattigan by Kenneth Tynan, which so damaged Rattigan's reputation in the 1950s and which came close to destroying his creative power.

Then, in 1976, I saw a superb production of *The Browning Version* at The King's Head, and I realised that maybe my own tastes were rather closer to my mother's than to Kenneth Tynan's; a not altogether comfortable experience.

I was delighted to discover, much later, that Rattigan had himself attended that production. He was by then terminally ill with cancer. Geoffrey Wansell, in his fine biography of Rattigan tells us:

"At the first night in January 1976, he again broke down in tears. Stewart Trotter [the director] told [the critic] Freddie Young afterwards, 'The play really took off that night, and at the end it was difficult to say who was crying most – a group of trainee teachers at a table to our left or Rattigan himself'. After the final curtain, Trotter took Rattigan backstage to meet the cast, which included Nigel Stock as Crocker-Harris. 'But the treatment he was having made him pee a lot. So first I took him upstairs to the grotty King's Head loo. Standing outside, I heard a gurgling sound that made me happier than I can say. It was Rattigan singing'".

The hoped-for West End transfer of the King's Head production never materialised, and Rattigan's death only a year later meant that he did not see that this production marked the beginning of a gradual revival of his reputation to the point where he must now be considered one of our very finest writers. His admirers have included such unlikely fans as Harold Pinter and David Mamet. Perhaps Michael Billington expressed his achievements best in the obituary he wrote in *The Guardian*:

"Rattigan's work is a sustained assault on English middle-class values: fear of emotional commitment, terror in the face of passion, apprehension about sex. Few dramatists this century have written with more understanding about the human heart than Terence Rattigan".

This is the fourth Rattigan play I have been involved in, either as an actor or as a director. It is always a joy to explore the work of a master craftsman and a wonderfully insightful, compassionate human being.

Francis Lloyd, Director

THE BROWNING VERSION

by Terence Rattigan

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 1 October 2021

CAST

in order of appearance

Taplow	Quinn Goodliffe
Frank Hunter	James Burgess
Millie Crocker-Harris	Caroline Ash
Andrew Crocker-Harris	Simon Taylor
Dr Frobisher, the Headmaster	Robert Gordon Clark
Peter Gilbert	Oscar Gill
Mrs Gilbert	Jordan Fowler

The play is set in the sitting-room of the Crocker-Harris' rooms
in a public school in the South of England.

It is the end of the Summer Term, July 1948.

The performance will last approximately 1 hour and 15 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.

Staying Safe when you attend The Questors

We are delighted to see you at The Questors this evening. In-line with government advice to 'remain cautious', and for your health and safety, we have NOT sold the Studio to capacity. In addition, we ask you to:

- use the hand sanitizer stations about the building;
- wear a mask when you are in communal areas;
- wear a mask when you are seated watching the show.

If Covid is diagnosed following a visit to The Questors please notify us via c19notifications@questors.org.uk stating when and where you were at the theatre.

PRODUCTION

Director	Francis Lloyd
Set Designer	Stephen Souchon
Costume Designer	Helen Cooper
Costume Design Advisor	Raymond Childe
Lighting Designer	Tim Hayward
Sound Designer	Russell Fleet
Stage Manager	Jane Arnold-Forster
Deputy Stage Manager	Paula Robinson
Assistant Stage Manager	Alex Ferguson
Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Lighting/Sound Operator	Russell Fleet
Lighting Rigger	John Green
Set Constructor/Get In	Daniel Cawtheray
Hair and Make-Up Advisor	Lucy Aley-Parker
Photographer	Jane Arnold-Forster
Seating Get-in Crew	Nigel Bamford, Henry Broom, Daniel Cawtheray, Wilfie Goodliffe, Cecily Johnson, Alun Jones, John Turner, Brooke Webster, Jon Webster
Thanks to	Steven Cowan, Winchester College

Biographies

Caroline Ash – Millie Crocker-Harris

This is Caroline's second production at The Questors following her role as Ethel Bartlett in *For Services Rendered* in 2018. Caroline has also performed at The Bridewell Theatre, with credits including: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Merteuille); *Trivial Pursuits* (Mona); and *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* (Joanne).

James Burgess – Frank Hunter

James trained as an actor at Drama Studio London. His productions at The Questors include: *Six Bad Poets*; *Pride and Prejudice*; *King Charles III*; *Absent Friends*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Season's Greetings*; *The Country Wife*; *Measure for Measure*; *Titus Andronicus*. Other theatre includes: *Naughty* (White Bear Theatre); *Dido, Queen of Carthage*; *The Alchemist* (Rose Playhouse).

Jordan Fowler – Mrs Gilbert

Jordan joined The Questors in 2017 as part of Student Group 72 where she played Kaye in *Future Conditional* and Donna Lucia D'Alvadorez in *Charley's Aunt*. Since then, she has appeared as Elizabeth/Sarah in *Table* and most recently provided the voice of Margherita in the Questors audio drama *That Spot of Joy*.

Oscar Gill – Peter Gilbert

Oscar's previous credits at The Questors include Prince Harry (*King Charles III*), Steve (*Days of Significance*) and Various Parts (*Table*).

Quinn Goodliffe – Taplow

Quinn's first play at The Questors was *The Duchess of Malfi* in 2014, and he has since played a part in many productions, such as youth theatre, pantomimes and Shakespeare plays. He is a member of QYT and studies drama and film at A level.

Robert Gordon Clark – Dr Frobisher, the Headmaster

Robert's recent roles include John (*The Letter of Last Resort*), Charles Prime (*Six Bad Poets*), Mr Bennet (*Pride and Prejudice*), Parsons (*George Orwell's 1984*), Wilfred Cedar (*For Services Rendered*), Colonel Pickering (*Pygmalion*) and Joe Ryan (*When the Rain Stops Falling*).

Simon Taylor – Andrew Crocker-Harris

Simon's favourite Questors roles include Beckett's Krapp, Wilhelm Furtwangler in *Taking Sides* and Robin in *The Children*. The plague rudely interrupted *The Browning Version* rehearsals, but yielded four film shorts and an extraordinary feature film. Simon is thrilled to have landed the Crock and a director who loves the play as much as he does.

Francis Lloyd – Director

The first play Francis directed at The Questors was also by Rattigan – *After the Dance* in 2006. Plays directed since then include *Charley's Aunt*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Engaged*, *Hobson's Choice*, *Otherwise Engaged*, *Season's Greetings* and *For Services Rendered*. He has also directed new plays by Richard Gallagher (*French Paste*), Brian Abbott (*No Fairy Tale* and *Bird on the Wire*) and Christopher Reid (*Six Bad Poets*). As an actor, roles include Henry Carr (*Travesties*), John (*Oleanna*), Wicksteed (*Habeas Corpus*), Mantolini (*Nicholas Nickleby*), Sir Robert Morton (*The Winslow Boy*), Vanya (*Uncle Vanya*) and Victor (*Private Lives*).

Raymond Childe – Costume Design Advisor

After studying drama at Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Raymond worked as a professional actor for some years before becoming a costume designer in television for 30 years. He has also designed many productions at The Questors since the 1970s, including 16 Christmas shows. Many others include *Hedda Gabler*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Mary Stuart* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Helen Cooper – Costume Designer

Helen joined The Questors in late 2019, and worked on *George Orwell's 1984*, *Robin Hood* and *Hairspray*. This is Helen's first show as a costume designer. She would like to thank the ever-helpful wardrobe team, and especially Raymond Childe for his invaluable wisdom and support in guiding her through the process.

Russell Fleet – Sound Designer

Russell trained as an actor in the 1990s and joined The Questors in 2006. He has been involved in nearly 50 productions as an actor, sound designer, stage manager and director. Most recent sound designs include *The Letter of Last Resort*, *What The Dickens!*, *Quietus* and *India Gate*.

Tim Hayward – Lighting Designer

In a near 50-year career at The Questors, Tim's most recent lighting designs include those for: *Di, Viv and Rose*; our sell-out production of *The 39 Steps*; *Albert Make Us Laugh*; *The Effect*; and *The Ladykillers*.

Stephen Souchon – Set Designer

Stephen joined The Questors in 2016 and has been actively involved in building sets for a range of productions including *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *The Ladykillers*, *The Country Wife*, *Sleepers in the Field* and *George Orwell's 1984*. Stephen has designed sets for *Season's Greetings*, *Rosmersholm* and *Things I Know to be True*.