

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

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The Questors
THEATRE



Dear Brutus

by J. M. Barrie

The Studio

17 – 28 December 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 2022 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 (subject to change):

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

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17 – 28 December 2021

DEAR BRUTUS

"Men at some time are masters of their fates;" Cassius tells his co-conspirator in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, "the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings." Beginning with this quote as a premise, J.M. Barrie tests Cassius' notion in his play *Dear Brutus* by taking an oddly assorted group of characters and giving them the second chance that so many people wish they could have.

Barrie's thesis – that the exigencies of human life are the fault of the individual, not of so-called Fate – is fancifully developed in *Dear Brutus* by means of a folk superstition. Although the play's idea comes from *Julius Caesar*, its shape and mood are closer to that of another Shakespearean play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The time of the second chance is Midsummer's Eve, the locale is an enchanted wood, and the manipulator of the action is Lob, a modernised Puck, a child-man of ancient, but indefinite age. Like Shakespeare before him, Barrie uses the myth of the magical midsummer night's dream to represent the abstract concept of love.

The play is fantastic and realistic at the same time; fantastic in that its characters are transported into the realm of the unreal, realistic in the perfectly candid way in which the various relationships among the characters are portrayed. One critique, following its successful revival at the Southwark Playhouse in 2017, the 100th anniversary of its first production, is that the play can't make its mind up what sort of genre it falls into. Formally, *Dear Brutus* is a dramatic comedy. Complications are introduced in Act 1, reversed in the magical woods in Act 2, and resolved in Act 3. But while the relationships of one set of characters falls almost into the realm of farce, another relationship is written in a way more akin to the psychological drama of the late twentieth century.

The characters in *Dear Brutus* are similar to those in other plays by Barrie. Barrie sometimes finds heroes and heroines among the common people – butlers, charwomen, scullery maids, or starving artists – but in *Dear Brutus* he explores the strengths and weaknesses of the affluent with similar results. The theme of a second chance at life is raised in his other works, for example *The Little White Bird*, *The Admirable Crichton* and *Mary Rose*. The character of Mary Rose is often tied to that of the might-have-been daughter of Will Dearth in *Dear Brutus* in that both are 'delightful creatures' who disappear

before they ever grow up. Also, as in *The Admirable Crichton*, Barrie pokes playful fun at the aristocratic social structure of early twentieth century England. One woman finds no happiness in marrying upwards instead of downwards, while another is most happy when she is the wife of a servant, although, like Lady Mary in *The Admirable Crichton*, she cannot accept the social disgrace when she returns to the 'real' world of Act 3.

The question Barrie leaves us with in the final act is whether or not the magical experience of having seen themselves fail at their second chances will enable the party guests to effect real changes in their lives. Some of them, at least, come to understand their own mediocrity even if they can do little about it and, for Barrie, even such a modest shedding of illusions is a good thing. It is also hinted that for the best of them, Will and Alice Dearth, there is some possibility of a real change and the regaining of the 'rather wild love' which, as Barrie states in an early stage direction, they had for each other before it went 'whistling down the wind'.

There is a case to be made that *Dear Brutus* is the most autobiographical of Barrie's works. It was written twelve years after the success of *Peter Pan*, a success which made Barrie rich and famous. Yet the fame and fortune meant very little to Barrie as far as bringing him happiness went. His life had been marked by the sadness of loss. His mother spent the last years of her life in constant mourning after the death of David, his older brother, and he had at times tried to replace David by dressing in his clothes and whistling the tunes he used to whistle. As an adult, Barrie's childless marriage failed, in all likelihood because it was unconsummated, and his wife embarked on a well-known and scandalous affair which resulted finally in an acrimonious divorce. In *Dear Brutus*, several characters regret the marriages they made and Will Dearth, the gone-to-seed artist, wonders aloud if having children would have saved his marriage. In one sentence in Act 2, Dearth speaks as though for Barrie: fame is rot, daughters are the thing. The message in a bottle.

Although written in 1916, there is no mention of the Great War. Barrie's *Dear Brutus* is, then, ultimately an escapist comic fantasy for adults, although dealing with much darker concerns, and as such is perhaps the perfect choice for a twenty-first century audience still dealing with the after-effects of a decade of austerity, a huge economic rupture and a global pandemic.

Sit back and enjoy being transported to another dimension, one where the cares of this world fall away. However, the learning is that other cares emerge. In short: be careful what you wish for!

Russell Fleet, Director

DEAR BRUTUS

by J. M. Barrie

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 17 December 2021

CAST

in order of appearance

Mrs Dearth (Alice)	Alex McDevitt
Lady Caroline Laney	Nicola Littlewood
Mrs Purdie (Mable)	Sally Parker
Mrs Coadé (Emma)	Maggie Turner
Joanna Trout	Arabella Jacobson
Matey (Jim)	Simon Higginson
Lob	Phillip Sheahan
Mr Coadé	Iain Reid
Mr Purdie (Jack)	Joshua Perry
Mr Dearth (Will)	David Hovatter
Margaret	Mia Lepper / Fiona Pabst
Understudies	Russell Fleet, Alison Griffin

Act 1: the drawing room

Act 2: the wood

Interval

Act 3: the drawing room

The performance will last approximately 1 hour 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

Director	Russell Fleet
Set Designer	Alex Marker
Costume Designer	Carla Evans
Composer	Oleta Haffner
Lighting Designer	Andrew Whadcoat
Sound Designer	Martin Choules
Stage Manager	Michelle Weaver
Deputy Stage Manager	Paula Robinson
Assistant Stage Manager	Emily Hawley
Properties Supervisor	Harriet Parsonage
Prompter	Maggie Anderson
Costume Makers	Jane Arnold-Forster, Anne Gilmour, Jane Higginson
Wardrobe Assistant	Jenny Richardson
Hair and Make-Up	Emma Grant, Flo Quinlan
Lighting/Sound Operator	Russell Fleet
Design Assistant	Charlie Dixon
Set Constructor/Painter	Beata Rozycka
Photographer/Videographer	Jane Arnold-Forster
Thanks to	Monica Gilardi, John Green

Biographies

Simon Higginson – Matey (Jim)

Simon has been a member of The Questors for over 30 years, and *Dear Brutus* is his 25th production. His roles have included Brindsley in *Black Comedy*, Gary in *Noises Off*, Laurence in *Abigail's Party*, Jeff Skilling in *ENRON*, Professor Marcus in *The Ladykillers* and Cheryl the Ugly Sister in the 2017 Questors pantomime!

David Hovatter – Mr Dearth (Will)

David joined The Questors in the mid-eighties and, after primarily acting to begin with, has also been directing and devising productions, most recently *The Dog & the Scarf*, *Bard in the Yard*, *What the Dickens?*, as well as contributing to all of the Overnight Plays since their inception. His most recent acting roles have been in *Rabbit Hole*, *Nell Gwynn* and a recent audio drama, *The Intruder*.

Arabella Jacobson – Joanna Trout

After graduating from Cambridge with a degree in psychology, Arabella became a member of the National Youth Theatre, completing the Epic Stages course in 2017. She has since completed training in acting and writing at the Arcola before joining Student Group 73 in 2018. At The Questors, Arabella has taken part in the Overnight Plays, *George Orwell's 1984*, *Bard in the Yard*, *Quietus* and *Strange Orchestra*.

Mia Lepper – Margaret

Mia has been a member of the Questors Youth Theatre since 2017 and has appeared in *Animal Farm*, *Bugsy Malone* and two pantomimes. This is her first appearance in a Questors main house show.

Nicola Littlewood – Lady Caroline Laney

Nicola was an Acting for All & Encore student 2015-16, during which time she performed in two end-of-year public showcases and was involved in the production of *Twelfth Night* in 2016. She became an acting member in 2016 and her first role as an acting member was Ramia in *Galatea* in 2017.

Alex McDevitt – Mrs Dearth (Alice)

Alex has played a variety of roles at The Questors, exploring many different styles of theatre, such as The Sphinx in Berkoff's *Greek*, Ruth in Pinter's *The Homecoming* and was part of the ensemble players in the highly acclaimed Tess production. Alex was last seen on the Questors stage cavorting in Butlin's, Bognor Regis with the Pickwick Club.

Fiona Pabst – Margaret

Fiona has been a member of Questors Youth Theatre since 2019 and this is her first appearance in a Questors main house show.

Sally Parker – Mrs Purdie (Mabel)

Sally is new to The Questors and is thrilled to be part of this production. Previously, she studied Drama at university, having attended local performing arts schools in Essex, allowing her the opportunity to perform in a variety of productions from Shakespeare to musicals.

Joshua Perry – Mr Purdie (Jack)

Josh has been a member of The Questors since 2017 when he started and completed Student Group 72, during which time he performed in *Future Conditional* and *Charley's Aunt*. Since then he has also had roles in *Days of Significance*, *Bull* and has appeared in the Questival. He is delighted to be back in *Dear Brutus*.

Iain Reid – Mr Coade

Iain was a member of Student Group 29 and since then has acted, sung and even danced in many Questors productions up to the end of 1992, including *The Fall of the House of Usher* and others with Nicolas Johnne Wilson, *The Boy Friend*, *Cabaret*, *Animal Farm*, *Dimetos*, *Deathwatch*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Marat/Sade*, *Men Should Weep*, various Christmas shows and *Soapsud Island* (first PlayBack project). Since returning in 2013, he has appeared in *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*, *West Five Story*, *Macbeth*, *Rhinoceros*, *Red Peppers*, *Measure for Measure*, *Rosmersholm*, *The Dog & the Scarf* and *First Love is the Revolution*.

Phillip Sheahan – Lob

Phillip has been a member of The Questors for over 40 years. He has acted, written, directed and toured with the theatre. Phillip's more recent performances have been as Lord Arlington in Jessica Swale's *Nell Gwynn* and the ensemble cast of The Questors' 90th Anniversary production of *George Orwell's 1984*.

Maggie Turner – Mrs Coade (Emma)

Maggie is a graduate of Student Group 22 and her Questors appearances include *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Fen*, *Men Should Weep* and, more recently, *Equus*, *Diana of Dobson's*, *George Orwell's 1984* and *India Gate*. A regular performer in poetry evenings and the Overnight Plays, Maggie was in the original Coarse Acting cast, including successful Edinburgh Fringe tours and the West End transfer. She also works as a professional actor.

Martin Choules – Sound Designer

Martin has recently designed the sound for *Fault Lines*, *Future Conditional*, *Absent Friends*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Animal Farm*, *Improbable Fiction*, *The Exonerated*, *Rhinoceros*, *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich* and *NSFW*.

Carla Evans – Costume Designer

Carla joined The Questors in 2013 with an interest in all kinds of backstage craft. She instantly fell in love with the workshop and wardrobe, and has since worked on over 40 productions as a costume maker, set designer, photographer and poster illustrator. Her most recent designs include the set for *How to Spot an Alien* and costumes for *The Ghost Train*.

Russell Fleet – Director

Russell trained as an actor in the 1990s and joined The Questors in 2006. He has since taken on other roles as a Stage Manager, Sound Designer and Director. This is his fifth outing in the big chair, following *The Lying Kind*, *Boeing-Boeing*, *Sweet Charity* and *The Heiress*. He holds an MA (Actor Training and Coaching) from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Oleta Haffner – Composer

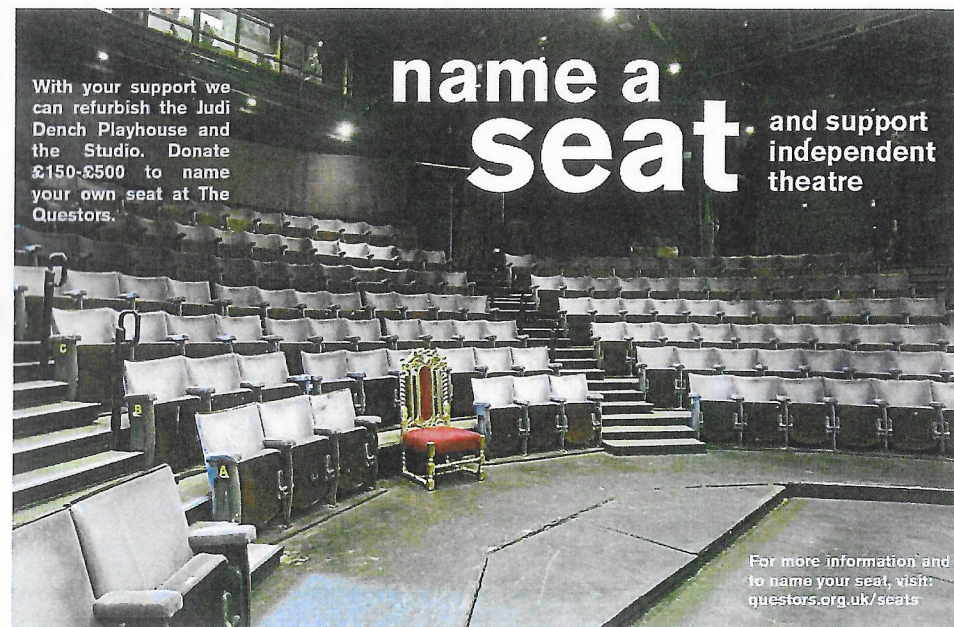
Oleta is a freelance music composer. Questors shows for which she has written music include *Not About Heroes*, *George Orwell's 1984*, *Things I Know to be True*, *The Children* and Questors audio dramas including *That Spot of Joy* and *The Intruder*.

Alex Marker – Set Designer

Alex is currently the Artistic Director of The Questors and director of Questors Youth Theatre. Trained as a stage designer at Wimbledon School of Art, he has designed over 150 productions ranging from fringe to the West End. Recently at The Questors he designed *The Children*, *Hairspray* and this year's pantomime, *Snow White*. www.alexmarker.com

Andrew Whadcoat – Lighting Designer

Andrew has worked in lighting since 2013. Recent lighting designs include *Not About Heroes*, *The Dog & the Scarf*, *The Letter of Last Resort*, *India Gate*, *Bull & Contractions* and *The Ghost Train*. He has also designed for AppEaling Theatre, Idle Discourse, Orange Moon and Playgc Theatre both at The Questors and other venues



Next at The Questors

APOLOGIA

by Alexi Kaye Campbell

1 – 5 February 2022

The Judi Dench Playhouse

A disastrous family reunion is the occasion for a sharp and perceptive look at what has happened to 60s idealists and their children. Kristin Miller is an eminent and successful art historian. As a young mother she followed her politics and vocation, storming Parisian barricades and moving to Florence. Her birthday should be a time for celebration but, when her two sons deliver their versions of the past, everyone must confront the cost of Kristin's commitment to her passions.

CONSENT

by Nina Raine

5 – 12 February 2022

The Studio

Why is Justice blind? Is she impartial? Or is she blinkered? Friends Ed and Tim take opposing briefs in a rape case. The key witness is a woman whose life seems a world away from theirs. At home, their own lives begin to unravel as every version of the truth is challenged. *Consent*, Nina Raine's powerful, painful, funny play, sifts the evidence from every side and puts Justice herself in the dock.