

## 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<sup>†</sup>
- ✓ 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](http://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. <sup>†</sup>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](http://questors.org.uk/qyt).

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Registered Charity No. 207516

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 **The Questors**  
THEATRE



The Remarkable Theatrical Adventures of

# Peregrine Proteus

by Jane Dewey

The Studio

16 – 31 December 2022

## Fields at The Questors

Fields at The Questors serves Italian coffee, fine teas, snacks and handmade cakes, and is the perfect spot for a pre-theatre café stop or interval ice-cream.

Place your interval order before the show to beat the crowds.

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 2023 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, spirits and soft drinks – all at very reasonable prices.

Opening Hours (subject to change):

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

Sunday lunchtime: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

See [questors.org.uk/grapevine](http://questors.org.uk/grapevine) for more details.

**Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.**



## The Remarkable Theatrical Adventures of **Peregrine Proteus**

by Jane Dewey

**The Studio**

**16 – 31 December 2022**

# PEREGRINE PROTEUS

Tonight's playwright, Jane Dewey, writes below about what gave her the inspiration for the play. It's easy to see why *The Life of an Actor* by Pierce Egan (written in 1825) sparked her interest. Firstly, she's a long-standing Questors actress, with a track record in recent years for writing and developing plays. These include two different adaptations of Jane Austen's novel *Lady Susan* (30 years apart – 1987 and 2017) the first of which Alfred Emmet referred to as 'a delightful and charming entertainment' in his chapter in *A Few Drops of Water*. She wrote three children's plays as Christmas shows in successive years in the 1980s and in that same decade won the World Coarse Acting Championships with her play, *Present Slaughter*. She is also one of the founding members of PlayBack, the reminiscence theatre arm of The Questors, which does such valuable work with the local community. So, she has the playwright's instinct for good material.

And, secondly, *The Life of an Actor* is undoubtedly good material. Jane refers in her note below to the play most associated with Pierce Egan – *Tom and Jerry*, which was, in fact, an adaptation of his 1820 novel, *Life in London, or The Day and Night Scenes of Jerry Hawthorn, Esq. and his Elegant Friend Corinthian Tom in their Rambles and Sprees through the Metropolis*. (They often went in for long titles in those days.) But it was a natural for the stage – and the first ever play to achieve a continuous run of more than 100 performances in London. As you might suspect, there is a direct link to the now more famous version of *Tom and Jerry* – the long-running cat and mouse cartoon. The phrase 'Tom and Jerry' entered the language as a direct result of Pierce Egan's book; it was used widely to describe two young blokes having a good time on the town in Regency London – and the expression stuck.

It's perhaps surprising, therefore, that there has been no stage adaptation of his 1825 novel – until now. Now what we have is a company play for nine actors. Eight of them play 44 parts between them; you can guess who the one exception is, with only one (huge) part to play. We follow Peregrine from his birth through his various adventures – all linked with his theatrical ups-and-downs, including his big romantic adventure. We also get a glimpse of the realities of life for many performers in the period, from the eking out of an existence in bizarre conditions to the giddy heights of what were at the time the relatively few 'legitimate' theatres. Charles II had created the conditions for the profession in 1660, when he re-introduced theatre to Britain after the Restoration, after Cromwell had outlawed theatres for 18 years – and granted licences to only two London theatres (Drury Lane and Covent Garden). In an early act of cronyism, those licences went to two of his friends. Other theatres remained operational, but 'illegitimate', restricting their repertoire. Proteus's journey takes him to the whole range of British theatres of the time.

Music is a central feature of this production. Graham Reid, our Musical Director, has done a tremendous job in creating the score, using Charles Dibdin's songs of the period as the basis, but adapting them flexibly to suit the changing moods of the production. The sheer variety of activity and roles over 19 scenes has placed significant demands on all our 'backstage' departments, especially costume and props, and they have risen splendidly to the challenge. And the actors themselves have had to perform taxing feats of memory, not least having to recall who and where they are at any given point.

So, my heartfelt thanks go to all of the team – and to Jane for creating this splendid opportunity to present you with *The Remarkable Theatrical Adventures of Peregrine Proteus*. We hope you enjoy it as much as we have.

**John Davey, Director**

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Back in pre-Covid days, I came across a copy of Pierce Egan's *The Life of an Actor*. Prior to this, all I'd known of this early 19th-century writer was his social satire *Tom and Jerry*. Further investigation revealed that he was a prolific and extremely popular sports journalist/novelist with a special interest in horse-racing and boxing. In addition, readers of the novels of Georgette Heyer may recognise Egan's details in many of her descriptions of prize-fights and use of lively Regency cant.

Like Dickens, Egan was a critical commentator of the social injustices of his time. One aspect of these was found in another of his interests, the world of the theatre. This was a world with which he was very familiar. In fact, he dedicated his novel to the celebrated actor, Edmund Kean, calling him 'a Hero among Heroes'. Egan was disturbed by the situation whereby many actors were the victims of callous exploitation leading to hardship and poverty. But also, like Dickens, his way of presenting a serious commentary was through the use of comic scenes and a host of eccentric characters. It was these elements which made me think that *The Life of an Actor* offered exciting potential for adaptation for the stage.

So, I had a go! The challenge was to create a single narrative from the book's complex plots and sub-plots as well as the extensive footnotes and theatrical anecdotes. Hopefully, the result is an entertaining yet thought-provoking tale of stage-struck Peregrine Proteus' dramatic journey. My aim was to make it accessible to a modern audience, but keeping faith with Pierce Egan's spirit and style.

The production will feature melodies from Charles Dibdin, the popular late Georgian composer, actor and playwright. He had over 600 songs to his credit and was an influential figure in the world of Regency theatre.

We have also chosen to feature the humorous engravings with which Egan chose to illustrate his book. He championed the young artist and engraver, Theodore Lane, whose promising career was tragically cut short at the age of 28.

**Jane Dewey, Writer**

# THE REMARKABLE THEATRICAL ADVENTURES OF **PEREGRINE PROTEUS**

by Jane Dewey

*First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 16 December 2022*

## CAST

the cast play a large number of parts; the main named parts are given here

Peregrine Proteus	<b>Zac Karaman</b>
Quill	<b>David Bentley</b>
Plausible Screw, Quarto, Sir Harry Hassit	<b>Simon Higginson</b>
Miss Kick-Her-Heels	<b>Hollie Hurrell</b>
Miss Made-Up	<b>Dotti Lawson</b>
Maria	<b>Saskia Moon</b>
Scenic Emphasis, Mr Mildmay	<b>Iain Reid</b>
Mr Proteus, Truncheon	<b>David Sellar</b>
Mrs Proteus, Miss Scream-Out	<b>Despina Sellar</b>

The slides projected before the show and after the interval are some of the original illustrations created by Theodore Lane for the first edition of Pierce Egan's *The Life of An Actor*.

The play lasts approximately 2 hours and 10 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	<b>John Davey</b>
Musical Director/Keyboard	<b>Graham Reid</b>
Set Designer	<b>Ray Dunning</b>
Set Designer and Realisation	<b>Bron Blake</b>
Costume Designer	<b>Jenny Richardson</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Andrew Whadcoat</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Emerson Bramwell</b>
Projections Designer	<b>Terry Mummery</b>
Choreographer	<b>Rob Jarman</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Tina Harris</b>
Deputy Stage Managers	<b>Chris Benson, Michelle Weaver</b>
Assistant Stage Manager	<b>Darren Maffucci</b>
Properties Manager	<b>Joanna Mludzinska</b>
Paper Properties	<b>Geoff Moore</b>
Rehearsal Prompters	<b>Debbie Abel, Anne Sawbridge</b>
Set Realisation	<b>Sue Collins, Rob Willin</b>
Get-In Assistance	<b>Roger Brace, Henry Broom</b>
Photo/Videographer	<b>Evelina Plonyté</b>
Thanks to	<b>Benji, Ben Dunning, Kall Kwik Chiswick</b> and to <b>Dr Andy H King</b> for permission to use his edition of Charles Dibdin's music

# Biographies

## **David Bentley – Quill**

David Bentley hails from England but did all his theatrical and acting training in South Africa at the Johannesburg School of Art, Ballet, Music and Drama and then the Performing Arts Workshop. Professional work includes a main role in the television series *Brent House Boys*, plus other television appearances, and support roles in plays at the Market Theatre and the Grahamstown Festival. He has now returned to London where he is pursuing his acting career.

## **Simon Higginson – Plausible Screw, Quarto, Sir Harry Hassit**

Simon has been a member of The Questors for over 35 years, and *Peregrine Proteus* is his 27th production. His roles have ranged from Brindsley in *Black Comedy* (which toured to Japan,) 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 2016 Questors panto. This has been a busy year for him as he was also in the re-booted *Dear Brutus* and *Hangmen*.

## **Hollie Hurrell – Miss Kick-Her-Heels**

Hollie joined The Questors this year and this is her first show. Her introduction to The Questors was through a showcase, held here by Company BE last October. Hollie trained with The London Meisner Company and remains a member of their masterclass. Recently, she appeared on stage as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as winning Best Actor at the Infinity Film Festival, Summer Selection 2022 for one of her short film appearances.

## **Zac Karaman – Peregrine Proteus**

Zac, whilst part of Student Group 70, played Sir William Gower in *Trelawny of the Wells* and Sir Nathaniel in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Afterwards he appeared in *Taking Sides* (as Lt David Wills), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (as Abraham / Felix / Groom), *Eventide* (as Mark), *The Heiress* (as Morris Townsend), *Sleeping Beauty* (as Prince Orlando), *King Charles III* (as Cootsy and Nick), *The Dog & The Scarf* (as actor and puppeteer!) and *First Love is the Revolution* (as Basti).

## **Dotti Lawson – Miss Made-Up**

Dotti became a Questors member in the mid-1980s but not an acting member until 2013. She has appeared in four pantos and also *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Ladykillers* and *Nell Gwynn*. Dotti has worked backstage as DSM, ASM and Props and also more visibly as FOH and in the Grapevine.

## **Saskia Moon – Maria**

Saskia studied theatre for four years at the Brit School for Performing Arts. Whilst there, she acted in student films and performed in many plays, most notably as Nora in *A Doll's House*. Saskia joined The Questors last year after leaving the Brit and this is her first show here.

## **Iain Reid – Scenic Emphasis, Mr Mildmay**

Iain left Student Group 29 in 1976, then acted in many Questors productions to 1992, including *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Boy Friend*, *Twelfth Night*, *Men Should Weep*, various Christmas shows and *Soapsud Island* (the first PlayBack project). Returning in 2013, he appeared in *Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp*, *West Five Story*, *Measure for Measure*, *Red Peppers*, *The Dog & the Scarf*, *First Love is the Revolution*, *Dear Brutus* and *India Gate*.

## **David Sellar – Mr Proteus, Truncheon**

David's first appearance at The Questors was five years ago in Peter Whelan's *Sleepers in the Field* followed by John Rutherford in *Rutherford & Son*, two roles in *Charles III* and then *Things I Know to be True*. Productions with previous companies include *What the Butler Saw*, *The Birthday Party*, *Prisoner of Second Avenue*, *Chicago*, *Guys and Dolls* and *A Little Night Music*.

## **Despina Sellar – Mrs Proteus, Miss Scream-Out**

Despina's first appearance here was five years ago in Peter Whelan's *Sleepers in the Field*, then as Ann Rutherford in *Rutherford & Son* and Fran in *Things I Know to be True*. Roles with previous companies include Mrs Manningham in *Gaslight*, Maggie in *Outside Edge*, Amanda in *Private Lives* and Beatrice in *A View from the Bridge*. Directing credits include *Shirley Valentine*, *Stones in his Pockets*, *Moonlight and Magnolias* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

## **Emerson Bramwell – Sound Designer**

Emerson is a composer and sound designer with a background in drums and percussion. He has composed original music and designed sound plots for a variety of productions over the last seven years. Most recently, he composed the theme music for *God of Carnage*, designed the sound of a spectral train for our production of *The Ghost Train* and created immersive soundscapes for *Apologia*, *Hangmen*, *On Me*, *Two Cleaners* and *Death and the Maiden*.

## **John Davey – Director**

John has been directing and acting at The Questors since the 1970s and has been both Artistic Director and Chair of the Theatre. More recent productions have been *Uncle Vanya*, *The Master Builder*, *The Country Wife*, a double-bill of David Greig plays at the Jermyn Street Theatre, Piccadilly, the World Première of Peter Whelan's *Sleepers in the Field*, *That Face* and *Dead Boy Café*.

### **Ray Dunning – Set Designer**

Ray has been designing for The Questors since 1985. Starting with *The Daughter-in-Law* and *The Glass Menagerie*, he has worked subsequently on numerous productions in the Playhouse and the Studio. More recently his sets have included *After October* (2012), *Uncle Vanya* (2015), *The Master Builder* (2015), *The Country Wife* (2016), *Sleepers in the Field* (2018), *That Face* (2019) and *Dead Boy Café* (2020).

### **Rob Jarman – Choreographer**

Rob is delighted to be back choreographing at The Questors following his previous work on *Love's Labour's Lost* in 2017. Rob started dancing at the age of five and later trained at the Northern Ballet School. He can regularly be seen performing in the North-West London and Hertfordshire area, most often at Watford Palace Theatre with Cassio Productions.

### **Graham Reid – Musical Director/Keyboard**

A graduate in music from Edinburgh University, Graham has been musical director, composer, arranger and pianist on several productions, including *Red Peppers*, *The Country Wife*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Lady Susan*, *Animal Farm*, *Daisy Pulls It Off* and *Nell Gwynn*.

### **Jenny Richardson – Costume Designer**

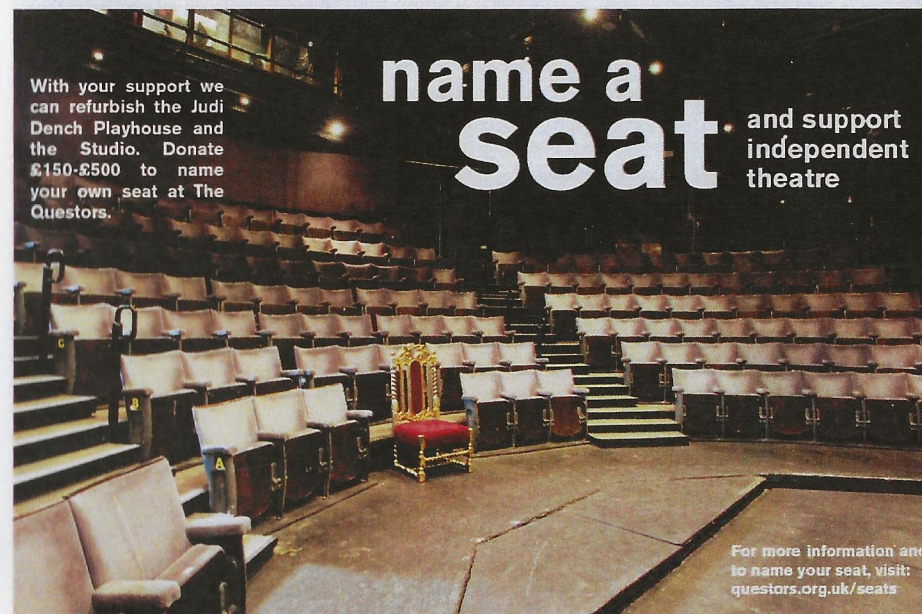
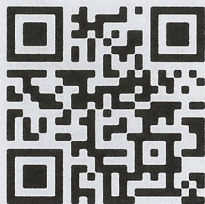
After many years working in stage management, props and set design, Jenny enjoyed a change of direction to costume design, recently for *Hangmen*, *Apologia*, *The Children*, *First Love is the Revolution*, *Fault Lines*, *George Orwell's 1984* and *Blue/Orange*. Jenny is frequently in demand as an upholsterer.

### **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*, *Bull & Conditional*, *The Ghost Train*, *Dear Brutus*, *Death and the Maiden* and *Haunting Julia*. He has also designed for AppEaling Theatre, Idle Discourse, Orange Moon and PlayGC Theatre both at The Questors and other venues

## **Show Feedback Form**

Your thoughts and opinions are important to us. Please scan the QR code with your camera phone to fill out our anonymous show feedback form. This is so we can continually improve our audience experience and our productions. Thank you so much for coming to visit The Questors Theatre. We hope that you enjoyed the show.



## **Alternative Christmas Entertainment**

### **KING ARTHUR AND THE TWELFTH KNIGHT**

**by James Rushbrooke**

**8 – 31 December 2022**

#### **The Judi Dench Playhouse**

Ealing's Annual Christmas Pantomime returns! Drayton's Court is abuzz. King Arthur, Queen Guinevere and their retinue are coming to Ealing on their quest to find the mystical Twelfth Knight of the Round Table. But when Morgana La Fey overthrows the Court and bewitches Arthur, the residents of Ealing are forced to fight for their lives against the forces of darkness. Can a merry band of misfits save King Arthur and Christmas?

### **CHRISTMAS GHOST STORIES**

**19 December 2022**

#### **The Studio**

The maritime world is rich in folklore and superstition, from ships abandoned with no living crew aboard to derelict vessels left to drift aimlessly, or phantom ships which presage disaster. Throw in some smuggling, a few pirates, and a haunted passenger liner, and you have a recipe for a chilling evening of ghost stories on a nautical theme.

Don't know your Flying Dutchman from your Mary Celeste? Climb aboard... at your peril!