

QUESTOPICS

THE QUESTORS THEATRE · MATTOCK LANE · W5 5BQ · 567 0011 · Box Office 567 5184

No. 254 MARCH 1985

This month on stage . . .

BEDROOM FARCE

opens 8th March

Ayckbourn's
runaway comedy
success.



FAIR PLAY

opens 5th March

Geoff Webb's follow-up to his
hugely successful comedy of last
season, *Long Way Away*.

QUESTICKLES!

opens 8th March

A late-night revue
that reaches the parts
other shows don't.

MAKE 'EM LAUGH

Comedy comes to The Questors with a vengeance this month, so anyone with a nervous disposition is advised to steer well clear of the place for the next few weeks!

For the rest of us, sell-out performances look set to be the order of the day as first Geoff Webb's comic exposé of backstage traumas and tantrums moves into the Studio, to be joined later in the week by a late-night revue that does grievous bodily harm to the audience's sensibilities, and finally Alan Ayckbourn's phenomenally successful *Bedroom Farce* opens in the Playhouse.

Like most things good in life, this comedy 'three-piece suite' came together quite unintentionally. The three shows were planned separately, and it wasn't until some time later that anyone realized that we had a comedy 'mini-season' within our programme.

Demand for seats is bound to be immense, so BOOK NOW!



Michael Howard and
Barbara Hutchins
rehearsing *Bedroom Farce*

Y P G

WORKSHOPS

During the week of March 11th our Young People's Groups will move into the Studio to present a series of workshops. All of the Stage Two and Junior Drama Workshop groups will be taking part, some on the Tuesday, others on the Thursday, and the remainder on the Saturday.

The reason we never advertise these workshops is that space is extremely limited, and with about 50 young people taking part each evening, family and friends tend to take all the seats. However, like last year, it is hoped that there will be a few extra tickets available at the door for all three performances. So if you are interested in the work of our YPGs, do come along. It's only 75p.

"ARE YOU SURE THIS TAPE-MEASURE'S RIGHT?"



Lindsay Udell makes sure that vital office supplies don't go astray.

Several burly scene-shifters turned up a good two hours before the Grapevine was due to open, one Sunday morning, and started to dismantle various desks, filing cabinets, and notice boards with gay abandon. As the old office fell in ruins about him, the Artistic Director valiantly continued to make phone calls, and desperately clutched his sheets of notes to his person lest Jill and Lindsay snatch them away along with their carton-loads of documents.

As it turned out, reducing the old office to a bomb-site was no real problem. The difficulty came in trying to match the furniture with spaces in the new office that — no matter which way they were measured — were always an inch too small.

After much lateral thinking (*viz.* someone suggested laying a filing cabinet on its side so that it would fit under a desk), everyone agreed on a layout that the Editor of *Questopics* had suggested thirty

minutes earlier if only someone had been listening to him. The heavies then retired to the Grapevine for their liquid lunches, and Jill and Lindsay had a nervous breakdown each.

(The new office, for those interested, is just to the right of the tunnel facing you as you arrive at the Theatre.)

BITS (1)

Colin Walters is offering for sale a copy of his portrait head of Alfred Emmet in resin bronze. Enquiries: please ring 571 3794.

BITS (2)

White Light Theatre Company take over our theatre for a week, from 18-23 March, to present *The Promise* by Aleksei Arbutzov — a moving story, set in modern Russia, of a love triangle that spans 17 years. Tickets, price £3.00, are available on 351 4661.

The Questors is a Club Theatre, and only members may purchase tickets, for themselves and an unlimited number of guests. Ten full Playhouse productions each season are free to members. Membership forms are available at the theatre and at the weekly Introductory Tour.

INTRODUCTORY TOUR

For new members and interested non-members this backstage tour gives a fascinating insight into our activities, and there are full opportunities for either joining the theatre or becoming actively involved in our work. The tour is completely free.

Every Wednesday at 7.45pm.

TICKET PRICES

Members and Guests (unless otherwise stated elsewhere):

	Playhouse	Studio
Sun. to Thurs.	£2.30	£1.50
Fri. & Sat.	£2.70	£2.00

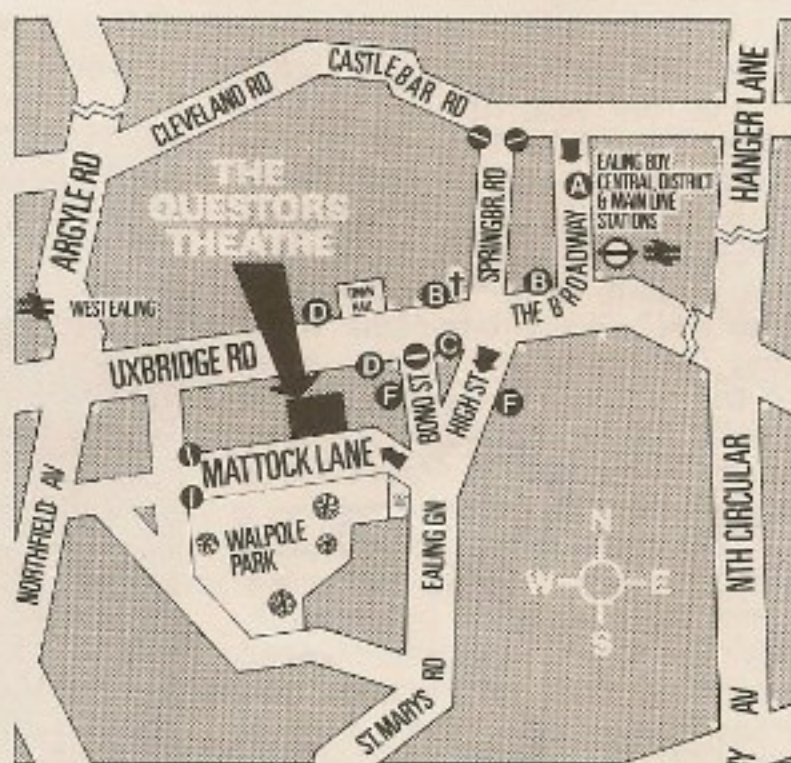
BOX OFFICE OPEN NEXT

3 — 16 March from 6.45 — 8.45pm.

(But remember that you can still book by post when the Box Office is closed.)

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

MATTOCK LANE · LONDON W5 5BQ



KEY: ● BUS STOPS. ○ TRAFFIC LIGHTS
A: 274, 273, 65, E1, E2, 112. B: 207, 83. C: 274, 207, 83. D: E1, E2. F: 65.
274: EALING BOY - HAYES STN. 273: EALING BOY - RUISLIP STN.
207: UXBRIDGE - SHEPHERDS BUSH. 112: EALING BOY - FINCHLEY
83: HANWELL - GOLDERS GRN. 65: EALING BOY - CHESSINGTON ZOO
E1, E2: GREENFORD - BRENTFORD

LET'S DO THE SHOW RIGHT HERE, KIDS!

The most acclaimed production of the last season at The Questors — much to the surprise, and delight, of those involved — was Geoff Webb's comedy *Long Way Away*. What was particularly unusual about the show was that when rehearsals started, there was no script and no-one knew what the final play would be. (The title, it can now be revealed, came about because when Geoff was asked, several months in advance, what his play was called, he replied, "Oh, it's still a long way away...")

For Geoff's new play, *Fair Play*, he has some idea of what it will be about, but again no script will be written until after several weeks of rehearsal. Which prompts the question: what does Geoff get his actors to rehearse if there is no script?

"We're doing a lot of improvisations about the backstage problems of putting a play on. For instance, we've just done an improvisation in which the cast showed one another round The Questors as though they were new members. Unfortunately, Gerry Blake kept coming up to them and kissing them — which doesn't usually happen to new members! That was one of the problems of putting *this* play on..."

Once the improvisations have begun to lead somewhere, Geoff starts to tape-record them, and stitches a script together by keep-

BEDROOM FARCE

Written by Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by David Pearson

Designed by Peter Knight

Cast includes: Grace Craddock, Neville Cruttenden, Michael Howard, Barbara Hutchins, Gillian Kerswell, Michael Langridge, Keith Parry, Sonia Pearson

Performances:

8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16

March

at 7.45pm

in the Playhouse

sponsored
by



FLETCHER DENNY'S
SYSTEMS

Ayckbourn's runaway success of the National Theatre's 1977 season — which subsequently transferred to the West End and Broadway — is now seen as one of his best (as well as his funniest) plays, with its sympathetic portrayal of human foibles and frailties, and the hilarious disasters that follow. The action takes place in three bedrooms simultaneously as Trevor and Susan cause complete havoc, with their marital discord, in the lives — and bedrooms — of three other couples. As one catastrophe follows another, and the chaos multiplies, Ayckbourn creates a refreshingly contemporary comedy that allows us to both laugh at the characters and identify with their predicaments. In the hands of this experienced cast we can look forward to an evening of wholehearted entertainment.

ing the most "character-ful" lines and re-writing the rest. The cast then make further changes to Geoff's script, until they come up with a final version.

"This way the comedy all comes from the situation and the characters rather than from intentionally funny lines. It's bloody hard work, I can tell you!"

Last season, for *Long Way Away*, the audience voted with their feet and turned up in droves. This season, with *Fair Play*, Geoff is looking forward to an even bigger turn-out.



Geoff Webb's rehearsals

FAIR PLAY

Devised and directed
by Geoff Webb

Cast includes: Ruth Arnold, Ian Chitty, Robert Gordon Clark, Tony Cox, Jane Dewey, Robert Hands, Andrew Haynes, Mari King, Ruth Lister, Helen Walker, Julie Woods

Performances:

5, 6, 7, 8, 9 March

at 7.45pm

in the Studio

Fair Play may easily turn out to be the funniest show of the season. Set in an amateur theatre (not unlike The Questors...) this hilarious comedy takes us through the crises that befall the first rehearsal of an appalling new play. *Fair Play* is devised by Geoff Webb using his experiences of directing our productions of *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Habeas Corpus*: hilarious though these shows were, the antics in rehearsal were even better! So here's your big chance to live through the agonies and the tantrums of rehearsal, discover what ASMs and designers really get up to, and see the well-oiled wheels behind the scenes grind slowly to a halt.

DATES

* Box Office open 6.45-8.45pm

† Box Office open 6.45-8.00pm

March		
Mon	4*	
Tues	5*7.45	FAIR PLAY
Wed	6*7.45	FAIR PLAY
Thur	7*7.45	FAIR PLAY
Fri	8*7.45	BEDROOM
	7.45	FAIR PLAY
	10.45	QUESTICKLES
Sat	9*7.45	BEDROOM
	7.45	FAIR PLAY
	10.45	QUESTICKLES
Sun	10*7.45	BEDROOM
Mon	11*7.45	BEDROOM
Tues	12*7.45	BEDROOM
Wed	13*7.45	BEDROOM
Thur	14*7.45	BEDROOM
Fri	15*	—
Sat	16*7.45	BEDROOM
Sun	17	—
Mon	18	—
Tues	19 7.30	Y P G
	7.45	Discussion
Wed	20	—
Thur	21 7.30	Y P G
Fri	22	—
Sat	23 7.30	Y P G
Sun	24	—
Mon	25	—
Tues	26	—
Wed	27	—
Thur	28	—
Fri	29	—
Sat	30	—
Sun	31	—
April		
Mon	1	—
Tues	2	—
Wed	3	—
Thur	4	—
Fri	5	—
Sat	6	—
Sun	7	—
Mon	8*	—
Tues	9*	—
Wed	10*	—
Thur	11*	—
Fri	12*	—
Sat	13*7.45	A LIFE
Sun	14*7.45	A LIFE
Mon	15*	—
Tues	16*7.45	A LIFE
Wed	17*7.45	A LIFE
Thur	18*	—
Fri	19*7.45	A LIFE
Sat	20*7.45	A LIFE
Sun	21	—

QUESTICKLES!

The late-night revue that lives dangerously by not frisking the audience for offensive weapons as they arrive. Everything is fair game for a 'working over by the boys' in this fast moving sequence of topical sketches, political satire and music — performed by the assembled stars of stage, screen and padded cell. (Members are warned that failure to attend this 'worthwhile and philanthropic event' may be bad for your health — on account of the boys will be round to staple your toenails to the ceiling if you don't turn up!)

'Organization' by
Martin ("Musa") Lev
With The Questors All-Stars

Performances:

8, 9 March
at 10.45pm
in the Studio
All tickets: £1.00

QUESTOPICS UNDER ATTACK

In the January edition of *Questopics* I included an anonymous review of *The Importance of Being Earnest* by a shy reviewer who asked me not to reveal their identity. I don't usually do this, but I felt that the review was particularly combative and well-written, and that it was worth making an exception.

I'm now making another exception to my usual practice by allowing the director to reply and explain why he's so annoyed. In those hallowed words, 'this correspondence is now closed'. IB

I am writing in defence of all the actors, directors and designers at this theatre. We spend many months of hard conscientious and hopefully creative work building each production which we hope

will give pleasure to its audiences. In doing this we are putting our work on display and therefore expect the inevitable criticism from one quarter or another, but what we do not expect is to read in Questopics (along with 4000 others) a few vague and somewhat theatrically pretentious paragraphs written by someone who does not even have the courage to add their name to their opinion. When a play is performed by ANON, designed and directed by ANON, then let it be reviewed by ANON.

Whatever happened to constructive criticism? Who reviews the reviewers?

What is the editor playing at? Let us know who is shooting at us!

JOHN WILSON

NEXT MONTH

A LIFE

by Hugh Leonard

Directed by Neville Raschid

A beguiling comedy by arguably Ireland's finest living writer — warm, funny, and cannily aware of the sad complexity of life.