

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

In the Studio

Rhythm of the Road by Jim O'Connor & Tony Chapman

There have been laundry women, schools and film studios — and now the fourth reminiscence project rides into the Studio on its own two wheels to tell the story of cycling in Ealing from the 1930s to the present day by uniting the stories of seven men and three women.


17 - 24 June at 7.45pm

In the Playhouse

Dancing at Lughnasa by Brian Friel

A major success in the 1980s for the National Theatre and one of the most talked about plays of that decade, this work tells the story of five sisters and their brother, setting the play in Donegal at the time of the pagan festival of Lughnasa in the Summer of 1936. Moving and amusing but above all else enriched by a beautifully rich and poetic use of language.

24, 27 June - 1 July at 7.45pm
25 June at 2.30pm

Sponsored by Grant Thornton 

In the Foyer — Rehearsed Readings **1994 Student Playwriting Competition** **Joint Runners-Up**

There will be a *Rehearsed Reading* of the plays by the joint runners-up in the Foyer.

7.30pm **Guarded Territories** by Laurence Lebarge
9.00pm **Holloway Road** by Tim Plester

Sunday 25 June

Admission Free

In the Playhouse

The Questors 48th Student Group production **A Midsummer Night's Dream** by William Shakespeare

The Second Year Student Group present their final production, the most magical of Shakespeare's plays, with its poetry, its romance, its fantasy and its comedy. This is a play which will give this talented student 'year' ample scope to display their versatility. A treat to look forward to.

15, 18-22 July at 7.45pm
16 July at 2.30pm

THE ENGLISH PREMIERE OF BIOGRAPHY BY MAX FRISCH

TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL BULLOCK • DIRECTED BY SPENCER BUTLER

BIOGRAPHY



The Editor talks to Spencer Butler

- S.B. "What reality does not permit, the theatre permits: to change, to begin again, to try out another biography."
- Ed. I beg your pardon?
- S.B. I was quoting Frisch. That's what this play's about. I'm sure we've all wondered how our lives might have changed if we had made a different decision at certain points in our lives — if we had taken a different job, had a different lover, married a different person, not made a certain journey. Would it have made us a different person? The protagonist, Herr Kürmann, is given the chance to do this, to go back and make different decisions.
- Ed. How can he do that?
- S.B. We watch his life as a kind of rehearsal. Every now and again the action stops or a motive or decision is re-examined. Then the scene is replayed and Kürmann takes a different turning. The trouble is that his memory is imperfect — as with all of us — and The Recorder, like the director of a play has to remind him of what really happened in the first place. So the play teases us with what of his life is fact, what is fantasy. The Recorder is the only person in the play who knows.
- Ed. Could Kürmann's life have been very different?
- S.B. If I tell you it might spoil the play for you. But he is a behaviourist. Woven into the play are references to philosophers in whom Frisch was very interested — Hegel, Adorno, Wittgenstein. Their philosophy on behaviour is reflected in the play. Are we like Pavlov's dogs? Can we change our responses? Can we change as people?
- Ed. Sounds a bit heavy!
- S.B. Far from it. The play is full of wit and humour. Setting it at a rehearsal allows Frisch to have fun with theatrical convention. The camera turns back. The scene is replayed with subtle and witty changes. Stage crew reset the scene with care for continuity. Characters step from one time to another, backwards or forwards, with hardly a 'gear-change'. The Recorder behaves as directors notoriously do. (Spencer says this with a self-deprecatory shrug. A blush perhaps?)
- Ed. The play covers a lot of time then?
- S.B. About 7 years basically. It starts circa 1960. Some of the fun in the play — and a lot of its tension too — comes from the time switches.
- Ed. I see this production is an English première of this play. Seems strange, since Frisch is well respected in this country.
- S.B. Yes. I can't think why, unless that its an uncommercial play because of its large cast. I first read it many years ago and it has always been my ambition to direct it. Perhaps Frisch himself was conscious of the casting difficulty because he wrote a different version with a cast of five.
- Ed. Were you not tempted to do that one?
- S.B. I didn't discover it till after I'd started on this one, but I don't think I'd have used it in any case. It's not just an adaptation, its a total rethinking of the play and I feel it narrows the perspective. And any way we have solved the casting problem with plenty of 'doubling' and this also adds in places to the humour of the play. It does have a different and deeper significance, too, with cross-resonances in some of the doubles. But to get back to Frisch's other version. It has a different translator and I have found it useful for reference in the different translation of a

word or the change in emphasis perhaps given to a scene. We'd all discuss it together, cast and I.

- Ed. I know you are very keen on involving cast in the shaping of a production. This must have been particularly true in this somewhat enigmatic play.
- S.B. Very much so. And not only cast, but backstage too. Tim Hayward and Peter Walters, who are doing the lighting, and Ian Howlett, on sound, were in on many early rehearsals. Their suggestions for facilitating or emphasising the many sudden time and place switches were useful in bringing out different aspects of the action and often led the cast and me up new roads in our interpretations. It's been real team work.
- Ed. It always is, but it's interesting to hear you emphasising this.
- S.B. And *Biography* has a particularly interesting backstage 'crew'. With the exception of our DSM and Props person they are all new to the job, and Stage Manager Eric Lister has enlisted them from our 'New Members Meetings' and trained them himself. There's an especially good esprit-de-corps and enthusiasm among them. It adds a real impetus to the production.
- Ed. Particularly important in a production like this where they are so much part of the 'on-stage' action?
- S.B. Yes. They're certainly being flung in at the deep end, but I think they're enjoying it as much as the rest of us.
- Ed. Since the play moves around in time and place so much, does it demand a very complicated set?
- S.B. We've kept it very simple to facilitate speed — fluency, using space, light and sound, and props. The only asset is two huge book cases — 19 feet high — which contain memorabilia of all Kürmann's life. We use music too — that's very important.

Apart from a student production in Glasgow, *Biography* has never before been staged by a major British theatre company. This production marks its English première and gives the audience a chance to savour the work of one of Europe's master playwrights.

Max Frisch, who died in 1991, was one of Switzerland's leading writers and a contemporary of Osborne and Pinter. *Biography* is essentially a comedy but it also reveals the depth and range of this talented writer. Subtly interwoven into the drama are references to some of the greatest philosophers and scholars of our time. To the untrained eye these references may seem superfluous to the drama that unfolds. What can Wittgenstein, Adorno and Hegel contribute to our understanding of Herr Kürmann's dilemma? Nothing, except that they too dedicated their lives to examining the human condition and each had a different approach to the kind of problems humanity faces.

It would be interesting to hear their views on this enigmatic and thought provoking play. What would they make of Herr Kürmann's assertion that he can change his biography by acting differently one single time. Indeed, what do we as the audience make of such a supposition? *Biography* allows us to explore this question in a most entertaining manner. There is the added delight of watching a play that uses the chicanery and conventions of the theatre to spy on an individual caught in a continuous rehearsal of his life.

Finola Kelly: (excerpt from press hand-out)

BIOGRAPHY

by Max Frisch

First performance of this production Saturday 20 May 1995

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Hannes Kürmann NORMAN WILKINSON
Antoinette Stein LORNA McEUEEN
The Recorder LYN JONES
Snot TOM DAVIES
Doctor, Pastor JOHN MARTIN
Professor Hornacher, Herr Guggenbühl, Herr Schneider ... DEREK CHANDLER
Nurse, Refugee Woman, Frau Witzig GLENDA SMITH
Frau Kürmann, Frau Hubalek, Marlis FFRANGCON WHELAN
Helen, Frau Schneider, Nurse Agnes SUSAN REOCH
Herr Kürmann, Policeman, Herr Stahel, Herr Snottler GEOFF WEBB
Frau Guggenbühl, Professor Krolevsky MONYENE KANE
Thomas, Henrik Wizik, Doctor Funk DAVID SKEGGS
Katrin Guggenbühl, Pina ELENA MUNOZ

Max Frisch does not specify the exact location of the action except to say that it takes place in Kürmann's study between 1960 - 1967 and various locations in the past.

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes



THE PLAYHOUSE IS EQUIPPED WITH AN INFRA-RED SOUND TRANSMISSION SYSTEM FOR USE BY PEOPLE WITH HEARING DIFFICULTIES. IT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO USE THIS SYSTEM WITH PERSONAL HEARING AIDS SWITCHED TO THE T POSITION. To obtain the appropriate receiver please contact the Duty House Manager.



THE PLAYHOUSE IS EQUIPPED WITH A LIFT, WITH ACCESS TO THE BAR AND UPPER FOYER LEVELS FOR THOSE WITH MOBILITY PROBLEMS.

PRODUCTION

Director SPENCER BUTLER
Assistant Director FELICIA MASSIAH
Set Designer SPENCER BUTLER
Costume Designer SYLVIA WALL
Lighting Designers PETE WALTERS
TIM HAYWARD
Sound Designer IAN HOWLETT
Movement DIANA NESBITT

Stage Manager ERIC LISTER
Deputy Stage Manager JACKIE LITTLE
Assistant Stage Managers NICK ADAMS

BRENDA CHAPMAN, FINOLA KELLY,
MAUREEN SAGE, DAVID SPENCER, VERONICA SOUTO
Properties CLAIRE GOTT
Prompter JILL GEE
Wardrobe Assistants MARY ANGUS

JEAN DERBY, OSSIE PELED,
JOY ZARYWACZ, JENNY RICHARDSON

Construction ROGER BRACE
assisted by STEVE GREGORY

Research Assistant STEVEN BEHROOZI

Lighting Operator MERYL WADE

Sound Operator LEILA BAYANDOR

Make-up and Wigs BECKY CHALLIS

KAREN PERKINS, SARAH DRAPER

Thanks to: JOHN WALKER & SONS, BENTALLS, EALING HOSPITAL NHS TRUST,
EALING FLOWERS, GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE,
BRIAN SMITH-BOWERHOUSE COLLECTION,
GOETHE INSTITUTE, JOHN ROLFE, TRACEY THOMPSON, JO PERSE, WAYNE
ROBERTS, GEOFF MOORE, CHRISTIAN DURHAM, FLEUR LLOYD,
RAJ AHIR, KELVIN WEST, SONIA KLAUBER, MICHAEL CARVER

The music used in the production is from *Die Harmonielehre*, *The Chairman Dances* by John Adams

1. The taking of food and drink into the auditorium is NOT permitted.
2. The use of cameras, video-cameras or tape equipment during the performance is also prohibited.
3. Patrons are requested to turn off portable telephones and beepers in the auditorium, since the activation of these during a performance is offensive to audience and actors alike.

ART EXHIBITION IN THE UPPER FOYER

1 - 31 May 1995

THE MONDAY CLUB

The six members of the *Monday Club*, Manouk Baghjian, Georgia Clayton, Daphne Gaffen, Jane Harding, Joan Stokes, and Richard Wodynski are all members of Ealing Art Group and have exhibited together locally. Between them they represent the diversification of talent, media and technique that can be found in Ealing's very own art group.

For details of Ealing Art Group, Secretary - Mrs Gould 998 5662.

ART EXHIBITION IN THE GRAPEVINE GALLERY

20 May - 4 June

COLIN HEINSEN

The paintings of Colin Heinsen embrace a most original style of creative expression. He employs a unique innovative process of painting on glass to achieve dynamic images that actively live and reflect with the changing light.

In 'A Journey Within...' Colin seeks to take the viewer upon an imaginary voyage to explore the spirit within and to share some of the joy of his paintings.

THE COMPLETE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FOR...

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Harley White are commercial, business and personal insurance specialists. We find the best rates and offer free quotations with leading companies and Lloyds and computerised motor quotations. You can rely on our fast and friendly claims service.

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We pride ourselves in finding quickly the best mortgage for domestic and commercial finance. Whatever your requirements, we will do our best to help; remember, you don't have to find the home you want before talking to us about a loan.

PENSIONS

Plan ahead for a happy retirement, free from money worries. Individual and group disability schemes are available to replace income lost due to sickness or accident. Our flexible plans are tailor-made for individuals, companies and the self-employed.



HARLEY WHITE



Harley White Group, Sinclair House, The Avenue, Ealing W13 8NT

0181-998 4942

INFORMATION

THE GRAPEVINE CLUB

The Questors has a fully licensed Bar which is now open to all members. The Bar is open every evening plus lunchtimes on Sundays. Questors members are requested to sign in their guests when entering the bar.

THE HOTPLATE

Delicious hot and cold food is available in the upper Foyer between 6.30pm and 8.00pm during the run of Playhouse productions, and coffee, tea, and cakes are served during the interval. No hot food will be provided at the Sunday matinées.

NOTE

The Hotplate is not open for Studio productions, but when Studio performances coincide with those in the Playhouse, it will endeavour to serve those audiences whenever this is possible.

NEW MEMBERS EVENINGS

Why not attend one of our new, or prospective members evenings, and have a conducted tour of the Theatre complex. Tours start and finish at the Grapevine Bar, 8.00pm every Wednesday.

THE STUDENT GROUP

The Questors runs a two year part time student course in Acting; details can be obtained from the office.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS

There are a number of groups for younger members. These cater for all age groups, from 5-17. The classes are intended to create awareness of the theatre and provide a stimulating channel for imagination.

For The Questors Theatre

Artistic Steering Committee Chair
Studio Director
Director of Studies
Chair
Vice-Chairman
Company Secretary
Club Secretary
Finance Director
Stage Director
Marketing Director
Theatre Manager
Productions Secretary
Membership Secretary
Marketing Officer
Programme Editor
Questopics Editor
Sponsorship
Box Office Management
Programme Sales Organiser
Front of House Manager
Press Relations
Haberdashery
Wardrobe Equipment
Wardrobe Care

Alan Chambers
Simon Thomas
David Emmet
John Davey
Steve Hames
Sue Blake
Christine Garland
Ken Kettle
Kris Collier
Simon Green
Elaine Orchard
Christine Greening
Alice Pennicott
Fleur Lloyd
Vincent McQueen
Nigel Lawrence
Geoffrey Sellman
Ken Parker
Val Blaxland
Eric Lister
Trish Fox
Tootal Craft
Wilkinson Sword Scissors..Fiskars Ltd
Persil, Comfort and Stergene
courtesy of Lever Bros.
Dry-cleaning by C.D.S.

Administration

The Questors office is open from 9.30am until 5.00pm every weekday. If you wish to make contact for details of membership, or hiring the Theatre and rehearsal rooms, telephone the office on 0181-567 0011.

Membership

If you wish to become a member please fill in the application form (copies in the Foyers); just send it to the Theatre with the appropriate subscription. 0181-567 8736.

Box Office

For personal callers the box office is open every Wednesday evening 6.45pm to 8.30pm; Monday to Friday 11.00am to 12 noon; during productions 6.45pm to 8.30pm; Sunday matinées 2.00pm to 2.30pm; Studio productions 6.45pm to 8.00pm.