

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

is based in West London where it has its own premises including a modern, flexible Playhouse, a Studio theatre, three rehearsal rooms, a workshop, an extensive wardrobe department and, of course, the Grapevine Bar, which is the hub of the theatre.

It has nearly 3,000 members, all of whom get involved in one way or another, either in the 20 plus productions that are staged each year, in the day to day running of the theatre, or as members of the audience.

As well as presenting a wide variety of plays, the Questors runs a two-year course for actors, plays host to visiting companies from home and abroad, mounts regular art exhibitions, runs workshops and clubs for young people and tours productions in this country and abroad.

In short, there is something for everyone at The Questors.

The Questors Theatre

Mattock Lane
Ealing, W5 5BQ

Box Office: 020 8567 5184

Admin: 020 8567 0011

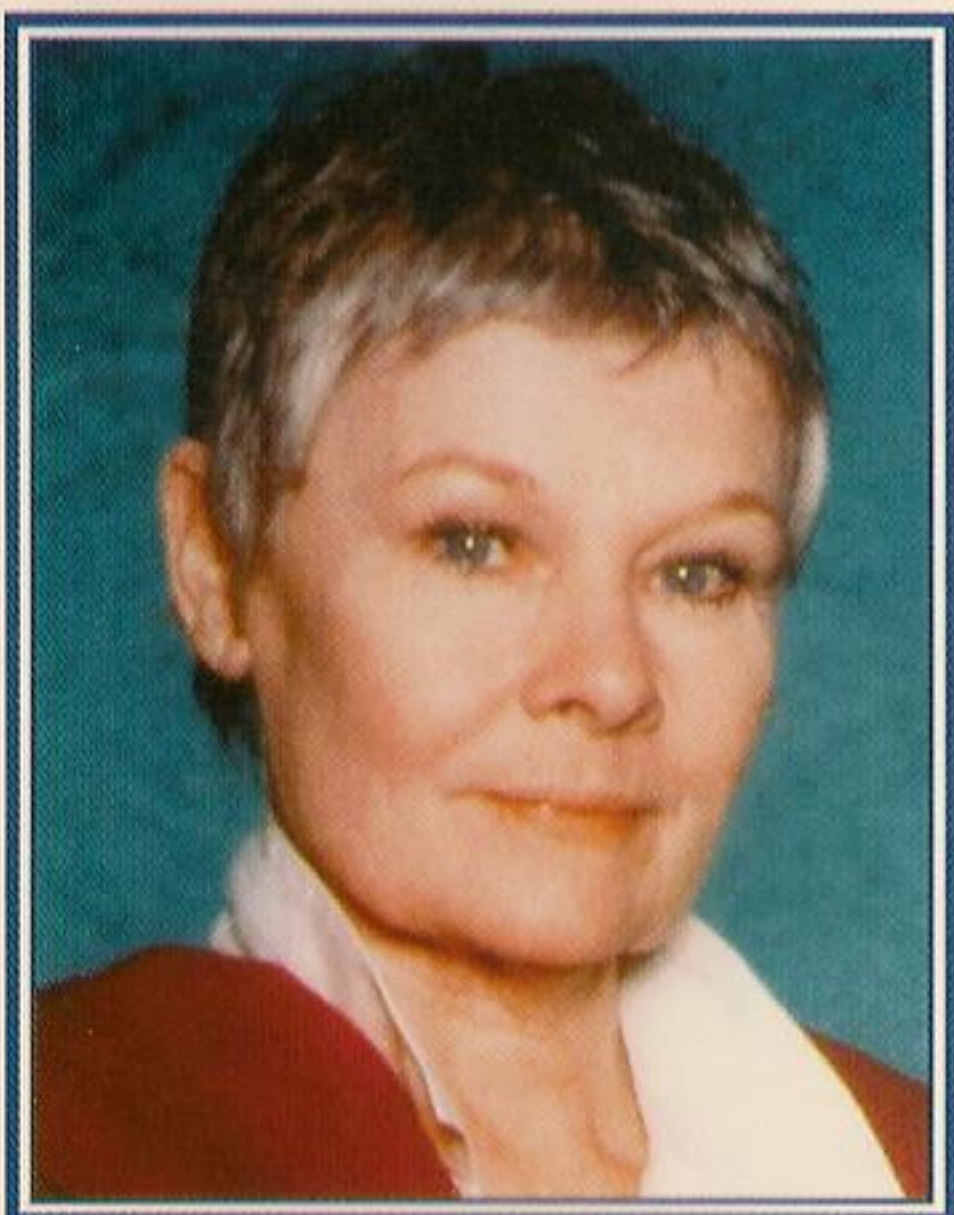
Fax: 020 8567 8736

Email: enquiries@questors.org.uk

Website: www.questors.org.uk



THE BACCCHAE
THE QUESTORS THEATRE



Enquiries: 020 8567 0011
Box Office: 020 8567 5184
Fax: 020 8567 8736
e-mail: enquiries@questors.org.uk
Web site: www.questors.org.uk

Welcome to The Questors Theatre, one of London's best kept secrets - except to its 3,000 members. How do I know about the Questors? I am proud to have been their President for over 16 years. Founded in 1929, it has since grown into the largest community theatre in Europe with a reputation for the highest standards, not only in acting but in direction and design as well. Luckily, with so many members, we have a wealth of talent to call on for all aspects of production and members are encouraged to be as actively involved as they would like. Alternatively, they simply enjoy the social side of the club, including the friendly Grapevine Bar (one of the many perks of membership) and the many and varied shows in our newly refurbished 350 seater Playhouse Theatre and more intimate Studio Theatre.

The Questors runs a professionally recognised two-year acting course in conjunction with Kingston College. There are also acting courses for beginners, free backstage training courses, visiting companies from home and abroad, regular art exhibitions, and workshops and clubs for young people. In short, there is something for everyone and with annual membership costing as little as £23.50 (including up to 10 free shows) it's great value for money as well.

But don't just take my word for it, the next time you're in West London call into The Grapevine Bar on any Wednesday evening at 8pm for a free tour of the theatre and a drink on us!

Worth looking into?

Definitely!

Dame Judi Dench
President of The Questors Theatre



THE BACCHAE

by Derek Mahon, after Euripides
with music by Michael Carver

THE BACCHAE

by Derek Mahon, after Euripides

Some notes on directing the production, by Spencer Butler

I began Working on *The Bacchae* over a year ago. I had read two translations and decided to read as many others as I could find. I also read commentaries on *The Bacchae*, and about the history of the period in which it was written, about Euripides, and about the development of theatre itself. Eleven translations and versions later Michael Carver, who was to compose the music for our production, and I chose the modern version, by the Irish poet Derek Mahon, that you will hear tonight.

Why do this? Because I believe the director's job is to try to convey, with the actor, what the author is saying. And in such a way that the audience will be able to form their own opinions. This is relatively easy with living writers - you just ask them - but slightly more problematic with a play written over four hundred years BC. And it is made even more difficult with a play where almost all commentators agree that it is impossible to define what the play is about.

So where do you start? With research. And with yourself. The other thing I believe about directing is that the personal response to the text by the director - and the actor, the designer, and anyone else involved in the creative process of mounting a production - must inform what the audience is eventually asked to consider. I also believe that the performance is only the starting point in what mounting a production is about. The other part is the discussion after the performance. I gave up a long time ago trying to guess what the author was saying and directing a production in such a way that all the audience would enjoy it and approve of it all of the time. I accept that different members of an audience will have different views on the meaning of what they have seen and heard - informed as they are by their own feelings, experiences and knowledge.

Having said this I do think it is important as a director to find a way of conveying your response to the text in a manner that does not obscure the meaning that you have found in the piece. A production has to be created in such a way that the debate *can* take place after the performance.

The first Greek tragedy I directed was *Electra* by Sophocles, at the Questors in 1975. I wanted to create something *authentic*. We had a chorus of fifteen women bound from head to toe in sacking covered in what looked like pigeon shit and they trudged around the stage covered in ashes conveying, authentically, the misery of their wretched lives. Was this authentic? Well, no. Authentic would have meant a chorus wearing masks, moving only from left to right and back again across the stage, the fifteen women would have been fifteen men and boys chosen from the local village, and a statue of Dionysus would have been carried up Mattock Lane and installed in the theatre prior to the performance.

If the play was the re-enactment of a historical event, or the politics that created it, a production set in the relevant period might be justified, but where this is not the case it becomes more interesting. With *The Bacchae* most commentators agree that it is almost impossible to say what it is about, and the rest disagreeing anyway. So, you're back to yourself.

For me *The Bacchae* says a lot about beliefs - religious and personal - while asking us to consider the validity of other's beliefs, and the possible consequences of not taking them into consideration. *The Bacchae* conveys its ideas and arguments by examining the nature of cults. So much in the play is relevant to our current lives that to set it in ancient Greece would, for me, not only obscure the immediacy of our own recent experiences relating

to religious and political cultism, but also deny the relevance and irony of events that have taken place in the name of religion since the play was written.

Derek Mahon's version was chosen because of its clarity in telling the story and its use of modern language, but, for me, modern day Greece does not convey what the play has to say about adherence to cults and their consequences. Although America does not have an exclusive on cults, it does have its fair share tucked away in the hills, and so I chose to set this production in a climate similar to that of Thebes in Greece, in the little known town of Thebes, Arizona. At the end of the twentieth century.

Euripides' *The Bacchae*

Euripides is the last of the three great tragedians, after Aeschylus and Sophocles. Though we can be quite sure from later scriptures that he lived around 485 to 406 BC, we have little information on his life other than that which can be derived from the hostile jokes made of him by later comics. This may be the result of his solitary lifestyle; he wrote most of his plays, reportedly, in a cave in Salamis. His plays reflect a change from the old tragic style so favoured by Aeschylus and Sophocles, in that they give prominence to unconventional and untraditional views, and to socially insignificant people like women and slaves. Of the nineteen plays we possess (out of ninety two Euripides is said to have written) thirteen are named after women.

The Bacchae ('female followers of Dionysus', or 'Bacchus' as he was known in Italy) won all the Greek drama competitions in 405 BC (produced posthumously by Euripides' nephew) as part of a trilogy with *Iphigeneia in Aulis* and *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, the latter of which has not survived the years. *The Bacchae*, therefore, was possibly the last tragedy and is therefore a very remarkable insight into the struggle between contemporary and traditional forms and opinions. Indeed Euripides is thought to have been very interested in the sophist movement which swept through Greece at that time and is known to have been closely acquainted with Socrates himself; Euripides' works introduced to the masses philosophical ideas and thoughts for the first time.

Consequently he was not very popular! A few years before *The Bacchae* was first produced he withdrew from Athens, the seat of cultural learning, and instead was placed in the court of King Archelaus of Macedon. There he stayed, meanwhile writing his last tragedy, until his death, reputedly torn to pieces by Archelaus' dogs. Shortly after his death was the great festival of Dionysia where Sophocles commemorated his work. It seems poignant to mention, in view of the presentation of the chorus that you will witness tonight, that this commemoration was in the form of the first ungarlanded chorus in the History of Greek tragedy.

He would approve of the contemporary face placed upon this presentation of *The Bacchae*. He liked to have his traditional heroes and heroines speak in contemporary language and human terms. He depicts people struggling with powerful irrational forces within themselves which would certainly have been hard for the uneducated audiences of his day to understand. Similarly unconventional were his sceptical attitudes to traditional religion and morality. *The Bacchae* is a new version of a supposed historical event, the introduction into Greece of a new religion which by Euripides' time had long been accepted as part of Greek life. Worship of Dionysus, the god of wine and ecstasy, offered a wildly different religious experience from that of the other, more traditional Olympian gods. This play shows the power of Dionysus, a power beyond good and evil, and the fate of those who resist him. Avid theatre-goers may be interested to learn that the Dionysian religion later cultivated drama itself; to witness this play is to worship Dionysus and thus you are safe from his wrath. Just make sure you also visit the bar afterwards, just in case!

THE BACCHAE

by Derek Mahon, after Euripides

Music by Michael Carver

First performance of this production: 13th April 2002

This production is set in Thebes, Arizona at the end of the twentieth century

CAST (in order of appearance)

Dionysus	Jonathan Warde
Chorus	Carol James Judith Rae Claire Bennett Maria Brusa Renata Nash
Tiresias	Ken Ratcliffe
Cadmus	John Hines
Pentheus	Andrew Michael Jones
Sheriff	Michael Dineen
Deputy	Christian Ani
Herdsman	Ben King
Agave	Monyene Kane

BAND

Mike Carver	Keyboard
Paul Hughes	Bass
Andrew Keck	Clarinet/Sax
Giles Kennedy	Cello
Eileen McManus	Clarinet/Sax
Pat Monro	Flute/Piccolo
Adaleine Teo-Richards	Horn

The production runs for 80 minutes without an interval

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Spencer Butler
Music Director	Michael Carver
Movement	Julia Cooke
Set Design	Spencer Butler with Peter Collins
Costume Design	Suzy Deal
Lighting Design	Peter Walters
Sound Design/Operator	Susan Anthoney
Makeup	Gabriela Hajdikova, Anat Manobla and Suzie Watson of Greaspaint
Stage Manager	Jennie Rawlings
Deputy Stage Manager	Liz Prior
Assistant Stage Managers	Christian Ani, Kate Harper, Sonia Klauber and Amanda Venning
Lighting Operator	Nigel Bamford
Lighting Crew	Tim Hayward, Chris Ifould
Wardrobe	Hazel Ashworth and Suzy Deal
Props	Hazel Ashworth and Cathy Kelleher
Prompt	Gordon Miller
Dialect Coach	Susan Gerlach
Construction	Roger Brace, Peter Collins, Jim Craddock, Gordon Miller and Jennie Rawlings
Get-in Construction	Nigel Bamford, Chris Bennett, Guy Morrogh, Even Rule and Jon Webster
Scenic Painting	Elaine Hagan
Set Painting	Cathy Kelleher
Starman	Chris Ifould

Many thanks to: Julia Etoria, Sarah Galton, Loren Gerlach, Colin Horne, Nigel Lawrence, Eric Lister, Marguerite Minster, Joel Schrire, Mark Ayers, Anne Gilmour and Sandra Baxter of Co-Op Funeral Services, Hayes.

COMING SOON

HEDDA GABLER by Henrik Ibsen, translated by Christopher Hampton

In **The Studio**, 20th April - 4th May

This is an explosive theatrical masterpiece from one of the world's greatest dramatists. Hedda is a passionate and manipulative woman trapped in an unfulfilling marriage and frustrated by the bourgeois world in which she finds herself. Unable to exert a positive influence, she toys destructively with the lives of others and her need for power leads to the disturbing and tragic climax.

HAPPY DAYS by Samuel Beckett

In **The Studio**, 18th May - 1st June

Winnie is buried up to her waist, and later her neck, in a huge pile of earth. Day after day a bell wakes Winnie and sends her to sleep. She is an eternal optimist, facing the harsh realities of life with impenetrable cheerfulness. One of the most unique and powerful voices of the Twentieth Century, Beckett conjures up a bizarre world where tragedy and comedy collide in a bleak illustration of the human condition and the absurdity of existence.

THE MADNESS OF GEORGE III by Alan Bennett

In **The Playhouse**, 7th - 15th June

For reasons unknown even to the best physicians in the king's service, His Majesty's personal plumbing is malfunctioning. In fact, his water seems to have turned an alarming shade of blue. What's worse, the King's physical infirmities seem to have spread to his brain, his behaviour becoming increasingly more eccentric until everyone is forced to agree, with the prompting of his debauched scheming son, that he has lost his mind. This is a riotous comedy full of hilarious bawdy physical comedy, balanced by moments of touching intimacy.

PLAYHOUSE CREATURES by April De Angelis

In **The Studio**, 16th - 30th June

April De Angelis has taken the lives of five famous actresses, some of the first on the English stage, and created a funny, gutsy, bawdy comedy. It moves between their backstage and onstage lives as they deal with unpredictable lovers, fickle audiences, the pressures of performance and the painful gap between their private hopes and public disappointments. What are the roles that women play and who has the power to assign them?

ART EXHIBITIONS

April 5th - May 5th 2002

IN THE FOYER

Jane Harding S.W.A., Joan Stokes and Georgia Clayton

IN THE GRAPEVINE

Greenford Art Workshop

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I/We wish to apply for membership of The Questors Theatre.

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Name(s)

Address

.....

.....

Tel. no.

e-mail

Date of Birth

Membership Type *(please tick one)*

- | | |
|---|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | £39.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint | £71.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concessionary
Senior Citizens, UB40s, Leisure Pass holders | £23.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Concessionary | £39.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Family
One adult and all children under 17 | £47.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Family
Two adults and all children under 17
<i>(please include names and dates of birth of all children for both types of family membership)</i> | £81.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student
All tickets at half price on production of NUS card - no free shows | £13.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate
For those outside a 25-mile radius of The Questors - no free shows | £15.00 |

Where did you hear about The Questors?.....

- I enclose a cheque/postal order payable to The Questors Ltd. for £.....
- I would like to pay by Credit Card - Mastercard / Visa.

Card No Expiry date /

Cardholder's Name

Address *(if different from above)*

.....

.....

Signed Date

NEW MEMBERS TICK SHEET

Many members join just to see the shows.

However, if you want to get more involved, please tick the areas you are interested in below. Remember that experience isn't always necessary.

☐ **Acting**

You will need to take an audition to join the acting company.
Please fill in a form (available from the office).

☐ **Directing**

You will need either a proven track record or hands-on theatre experience for this.

☐ **Backstage**

Including stage management, construction, lighting, sound, props, and wardrobe.

☐ **Design**

Set and/or costume design

☐ **Front of House**

Including stewarding, box office, programme selling, Questors café.

☐ **Publicity**

Leaflet distribution, open day etc.

☐ **Photography**

Experience and own camera required.

☐ **Grapevine Bar**

Bar staff.

☐ **Envelope Stuffing**

Daytime - including general office help.

☐ **Maintenance**

Any + every odd job.

Details of any relevant experience:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Orchard Travel

We will turn your dream holiday into reality.
We can arrange all aspects of your vacation
whether it be total relaxation on a beach,
an adventure holiday or a city break...and at
competitive prices.

Just call or E-mail us for information.

020 8567 4647

46 Northfield Avenue
Ealing, London
W13

sales@orchardtravel.fsbusiness.co.uk

Tailor-made
Holidays

•
City Breaks

•
Family Holidays

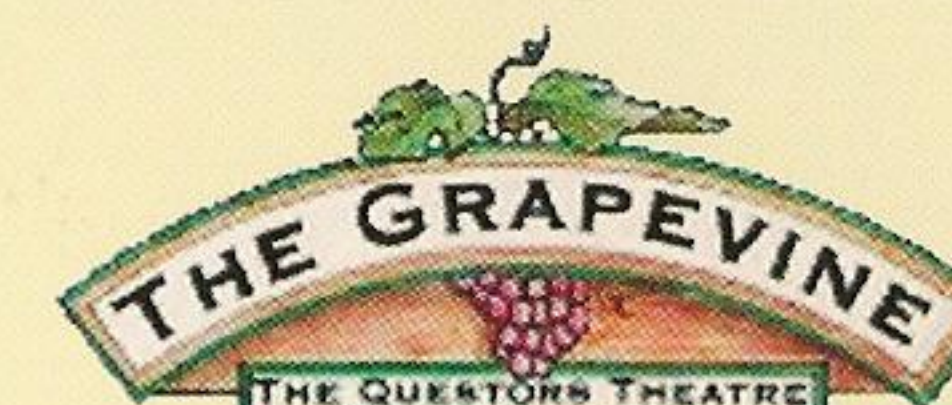
•
Worldwide Flights

•
Late Deals

•
Hotels

•
UK Breaks

£25 off every booking
over £500 for
Questors Members



WORTH CROSSING EALING FOR!

For your interval or after show drinks visit the friendly and comfortable Grapevine Bar. It's open seven nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes. We pride ourselves on the quality of our cask ales, which usually include Fuller's London Pride, Fuller's Chiswick Bitter and a guest ale. We also provide a range of draft lagers and ciders as well as wines and spirits - all at very reasonable prices.

www.myfavouritepub.com/questors