

www.questors.org.uk

Find out all about our forthcoming productions – along with a lot of other information about The Questors – on our web site.

Stay in touch

Just send us your details, and we'll keep you informed about our forthcoming productions at The Questors.

You can either write, phone or email us with your details.

Join us

If you enjoy theatre, why not join us and become a member of The Questors?

If you enjoy a regular night out at the theatre with friends, why not become a member of The Questors? As a Playgoer Member, you'll receive a 20 per cent discount on your ticket to most Questors productions, free tickets for your children to most Questors productions, regular information about our productions, and membership of the Grapevine Bar, so you can come and enjoy a cult evening in the Grapevine throughout the year.

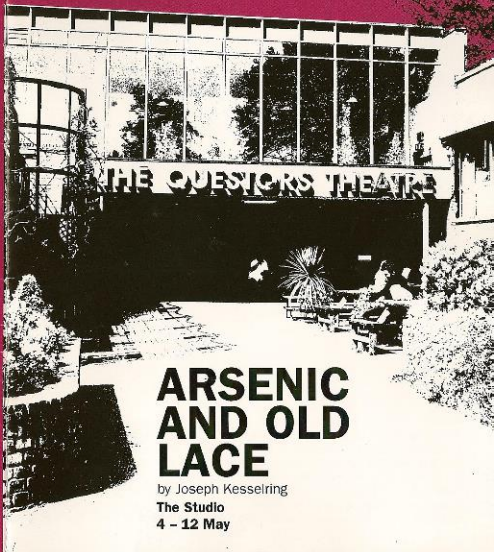
Or you could join as a Company Member and receive a 50 per cent discount on your ticket and opportunities to get involved in our productions, in addition to all the benefits for Playgoer Members.

You can get all of this for just £26.00 for Playgoer membership and £52.50 (£34.00 concessions) for Company membership, with discounts for payment by Direct Debit.

You can find Membership Application forms in the Box Office Foyer, or just phone the Theatre Office.



THE
QUESTORS
THEATRE



THE QUESTORS THEATRE
12 Mattock Lane
Ealing W5 5BQ

Box Office:
020 8567 5184

Theatre Office:
020 8567 0011

Email:
enquiries@questors.org.uk

Registered Charity no 207516

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

by Joseph Kesselring

The Studio
4 – 12 May



THE QUESTORS THEATRE



Welcome to The Questors Theatre, one of London's best kept secrets – except to its 2,000 members.

How do I know about The Questors? I am proud to have been its President for over 20 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 perks of membership) and the many and varied shows in our 370 seat Playhouse theatre and our 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 The Questors Youth Theatre. In short, theatre is something for everyone, and with annual membership from £12.00 to £52.50 depending on your chosen level of



commitment, it's great value for money as well.

But don't just take my word for it. The next time you're in Ealing, 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



ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

A Play in Three Acts by Joseph Kesselring

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

In 1941, New Yorkers were seeking some entertainment to take their minds off the war in Europe and the growing fear that America would be pulled into it. On January 10, Broadway gave them exactly what they were looking for in the form of a farcical and macabre play by Joseph Kesselring. The production became an immediate critical and popular success, running for 1444 performances. In post-blitz London, it was again a hit, opening at the Strand Theatre on 23 December 1942.

The play became even better known through the release of the film version, which was held back until the end of the Broadway run. Directed by Frank Coore (who went on to direct *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*) and starring several of the actors from the Broadway version, together with Cary Grant, Raymond Massey and Peter Lorre, the film was – and remains – as successful as the play.

Ronald Regan and Jack Benny had turned down Grant's role of Mortimer Brewster. Bob Hope originally accepted the part, but Paramount refused to 'lend' him to Warner Brothers.

Grant apparently considered his acting in this film to be 'horribly over the top' calling it 'the least favorite' of his movies. He costed his entire salary of \$100,000 to the US War Relief Fund, equivalent to \$10 million in today's money.

Joseph Kesselring was born in 1902 in New York of German parents. He left teaching music after two years to take up a career on the vaudeville stage and free lance play writing. *Arsenic and Old Lace* was his only notable success. After his death in 1967, The National Arts Club created the Joseph Kesselring Prize – \$50,000 awarded annually to promising playwrights nominated by theaters across the USA and funded by his widow, Charlotte.

Horror film actor Boris Karloff played Jonathan Brewster in the Broadway production – a self-referential running joke in both the play and then all subsequent versions. The Questors Theatre last performed *Arsenic and Old Lace* almost twenty-five years ago, in a run which opened on New Year's Eve, 1982. Many of the cast and crew are still active Questors members; several are involved in today's performance, as you will see...



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Get all the latest news and offers for our shows by joining our e-mail lists.

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- We'll keep the e-mails as short and simple as possible - because we know you'd prefer it that way.
- And we'll have an unsubscribe facility (which actually works) at the bottom of every message!

It's easy to sign up – just a few clicks is all it takes.

Visit www.questors.org.uk/e-news.html and you'll start getting our E-News in your Inbox.

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

by
Joseph Kesselring

CAST (in order of appearance)

Abby Brewster	Tessa Vale
The Rev. Dr. Harper	Michael Gerrard
Teddy Brewster	Mark Rodrup
Officer Brophy	Zyg Stanlaszek
Officer Klein	John Fryer
Martha Brewster	Doborah Vale
Elaine Harper	Stephanie Williams
Mortimer Brewster	David Palmer
Mr. Hoskins	Michael Smith
Mr. Gibbs	Reg Woodley
Jonathon Brewster	John Downs
Dr. Einstein	Gooff Webb
Mr. Spenalzo	Michael Smith
Officer O'Hara	Andrew McGuinness
Lieutenant Rooney	Derek Chandler
Mr. Witherspoon	John Hines

ACT I: Late afternoon

Interval of 15 minutes

ACT II: That same night

Interval of 15 minutes

ACT III:

Scene 1: Later that night

Scene 2: Early the next morning

Crew

Director/Designer
Stage manager
Wardrobe

Props
Lighting designer
Sound designer
Deputy stage manager
Assistant stage managers

Lighting and sound operation
Construction
Scenic artists

Hair and make-up
Photography
Production coordination
Programme editor
Programme design and print

John Horwood
Pam Cullen
Sarah Andrews, Anne Gilmour,
Jennie Yates
Liz Cooper
Martin Stoner
Joel Schrire
Claudia Kees
Sophie Bellou, Milan Fernando,
Zoe Hammond
Leon Downer, Arun Rama Varma
John Horwood, Zyg Stanlaszek
Bron Blake, Sue Collins,
Dennis Dracup, Elaine Hagan
Jenny Richardson, John Stacey
Sophie Liddiard, Diane Valtislaris
David Mosby
John Wibberley
Rachel Knightley
www.considerthisuk.com

THANKS TO: Neil Lacey (get in), Mike Hagan, Michelle Weaver, Studio House Services Team and all those involved too late to be included in the programme.

The entire action of the play takes place in the living room of the Brewster home in Brooklyn in October 1941.

Cast Biographies

SARAH ANDREWS Sarah became a Questions member and joined The Questions Student Group in 1977. She is an Acting Member and part of the team running Wardrobe. Recent productions for which she has designed and/or made costumes include *The London Cuckolds*, *The Dog in the Manger*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Visit*.

DEREK CHANDLER Derek joined The Questions in 1982 and has appeared in many plays, old and new. Early appearances included *Henry IV Part 1* in the Old Tru Hut and *Death of a Salesman* in the Stanislavsky Room (now the Studio). More recently, he appeared in *An Enemy of the People* and *Comedians*.

LIZ COOPER In 2003/04 Liz took the 'Acting for All' course followed by a stage management course and since then has worked backstage on a variety of productions including *The Good Person of Szechwan*, *This Happy Breed*, *The Little Shop of Horrors*, *As You Like It* and the last three Christmas shows.

PAM CULLEN Pam is a new Questions member working on only her second show, her first having been *The Lady in the Van*. She previously stage managed while studying for her drama degree in Lancashire. She has also toured in Germany with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

JOHN DOWNS John returns to The Questions after a gap of nearly 15 years, during which time he's been involved in community theatre projects in Buckinghamshire. His last role was the Devil in *The Passion Play in Annersham*. Now he plays Jonathan, a homicidal maniac. He doesn't take his work home with him.

JOHN FRYER At The Questions, John was Fight Director on *Henry V* and *Peter Pan*. Previously John participated in the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival, fringe productions and a number of touring pantomimes as well as having written plays including a version of *Frankenstein* that was performed in London, Edinburgh, Hamburg and The Hague.

MICHAEL GERRARD Michael has been a Questions member for over twenty years, and has appeared in numerous shows, including *Front Page*, *Wozzeck*, *Anna Christie* and *The Baroque*.

JOHN HINES John has been a member of Questions since 1955. He has enjoyed working in classical dramas, musicals and comedies. He has recently taken parts in *The Dog in the Manger*, *Comedians* and *French Paste*. He is also a member of the Reminiscence Road Show team.

JOHN HORWOOD Other directing and design credits in the Questions Studio include – *Rock, Tariffic, Ubu Twicel*, *Comedians* (twice), *Marriage* (thrice), *Guns*, *Moby Dick*, *The Maids*, *The Sisterhood*, *The Government Inspector*, *Here Comes a Chopper*, *A Taste of Honey* (twice), *Like Like Pigs* and *Permanent Damage* (Eating Arts Awards; Best Production, Direction, Design).

ANN GILMOUR A member since 1983, Anne has spent many happy hours in wardrobe, adopting, making, gluing and stapling costumes. Her role as Chairman of ITG, an umbrella organization of theatres like The Questions, provides insight into the work of other 'little' theatres, helping to ensure that we are more outward looking.

CLAUDIA KEES Questions backstage work: *Absent Friends*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Oh! What a Lovely War*, *Guards! Guards!*, *Mouth to Mouth*, *Sundays*, *Monday*, *Comedians* and *The Visit*.

ANDREW MCGUINNESS Andrew graduated from the Questions Student Group in 2000. His Questions productions include *Saturday*, *Sunday*, *Monday*, *The Happiest Days of Your Life*, *Right You Are* (if You Think So) and *Five Card Trick* (which he also wrote). Professional credits include *Eastenders*, *The Inspector Lynley Mysteries* (BBC) and *Stonemasons* (National Theatre).

DAVID PALMER David has been a Questions member since 1956. Recent performances have included *Otto in Design For Living*, *Gratiano in The Merchant of Venice*, *Tristan Trava in Travesties*, *Bergotte in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *Rambie in The London Cuckolds* and *The Storyteller in Peter Pan*.

MARK REDRUP Mark has been acting at The Questions since 1980. His most recent parts

were *Hovstad in An Enemy of the People* and *Sammy Samuels in Comedians*.

JOEL SCHRIRE Joel has designed and operated both sound and lights on many productions and on occasions has ended up as the resident mug flying props. He is much happier behind the lights than in front.

ZYO STANIASZEK 1986: Theatre West4, roles including *Tony Lumaca - She Stoops to Conquer*, 1991-1999: Dance shows at Slopers Wells, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Her Majesty's Theatre. 1998-2004: 15 London fringe shows. 2006: The Questions directing *Guards! Guards!* and *Texas Verdes*; stage manager, constructor and pilot in *Peter Pan*.

MARTIN STONER Martin has been a Questions member for many years. He has designed the lighting for many Questions productions, including the previous version of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Others include *Codewalkers*, *The Fan*, *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, *Seapool Island*, *Heartbreak House*, *The House of Bernard Alba* and *Tom's Midnight Garden*.

DEBORAH VALE Theatre includes *Too Clever by Half* (Jonathan Miller, Old Vic), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (European Tour), *Romeo and Juliet* (National Tour), *Discote* (Wimbledon), *Cowardy Custard*. Film includes *Quits*, *High Hopes*. TV includes *The Great Kavinsky*, *The Tomorrow People*, *Jim Henson's The Storyteller*, *Nan Blackstock's Oliver Twist*, *Border* and *The Sooty Show*.

TESSA VALE Theatre includes *Too Clever by Half* (Old Vic), *Cowardy Custard* (National Tour), *Rattle of a Simple Man* (Frinton). TV includes *Border*, *The Great Kavinsky*, *Inspector Wexford Mysteries*, *The Tomorrow People*, *Oliver Twist*, *The Sooty Show* and *Directing Spive* (King's Head, Islington). Film includes *102 Dalmatians*, *Quits*, *High Hopes* and *About a Boy*.

GEOFF WEBB A member of The Questions Student Group before acting talent was obligatory, Geoff specialises in playing non-commissioned officers and agricultural workers. Recently, his range has expanded to include police officers and local government employees (Grades 2 & 3). Geoff directed the last Questions production of *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

JOHN WIBBERLEY John graduated from front-stage to backstage at school. Designing/constructing/producing at *The Questions* includes *The Wind in the Willows*, *Translations*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Look Back in Anger*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Into the Woods*, *The Clandestine Marriage*, *Oliver*, *Peter Pan* and *The Lady in the Van*. His next challenge is coordinating the Foyer refurbishment.

STEPHANIE WILLIAMS Graduating from The Questions Student Group in 2001, playing *Dobchinsky in The Government Inspector* and *Maurice O'Dwyer in Troilus and the Walls*. Subsequent Questions roles include *Emilia and Dances in The Winters Tale*, *Bobby in Goodnight Children Everywhere* and the *Elf Queen* in *Tony Fratchett's Lords and Ladies* (Point 303).

REG WOOLEY A one time Eur in *Reccato*. A former Chairman of the Forest Operatic Society in East London; played *Lord Brookhurst* in *The Boyfriend*, Colonel Pickering in *My Fair Lady* and *Buffalo Bill* in *Anne Get Your Gun*. At the Questions, he has appeared in *The Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice*.

The Questors present

Waiting for Godot

by Samuel Beckett

20th-century comedy masterpiece of two irascible tramps' touching dependence on each other while waiting for Mr Godot to arrive.

22-26 May at 7.45pm

In the Playhouse

*Tickets: 22-24 May - £11.50 (£10.50 concessions, £5.50 students);
25-26 May - £13.50 (£12.00 concessions, £6.50 students)*

The Questors present

Company

music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim,
book by George Furth

Beautiful, bittersweet musical about five marriages.

2, 5, 9, 13-16, 20-23 June at 7.45pm,
3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23 June at 2.30pm

In the Studio

*Tickets: £10.50 (£9.50 concessions,
£5.00 students)*

The Questors present

The Trojan Women

by Euripides

An arrogant and powerful military leader crosses the known world to attack another country. In the long, drawn-out war that follows, thousands are killed, the country ravaged, and the innocent suffer the most. Sounds familiar? Our staging of this moving Greek classic sets the drama in the modern-day Middle East.

16, 19-23 June at 7.45pm,
17 June at 2.30pm

In the Playhouse

*Tickets:
16-21 June - £11.50 (£10.50 concessions, £5.50 students);
22-23 June - £13.50 (£12.00 concessions, £6.50 students)*



Getting the most from your membership

Many members join just to see shows, but there is so much more on offer to Company Members. So why not get involved?

Front-of-house is a great place to start. No previous experience is needed for selling programmes, stewarding or serving in the Café; and training is provided for anyone who fancies working in Box Office. If you want to meet people and have a good time, then the best place to be is behind the Grapevine Bar – and you can volunteer for just one night or several.

Backstage staff – including stage managers, prop makers, set builders, painters and wardrobe staff – are always welcomed, and whatever your skills we'll find a place for you. If you have some experience then The Questors is a wonderful space to be a designer. But even without experience, you can help out on shows, and you're sure to get some hands-on experience. The same goes for lighting and sound – the Playhouse and Studio are both well-equipped and excellent places to learn.

You can direct if you have some experience or training, but if not then we offer various learning opportunities. The Questors have a high standard of acting, and to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – so if you have some training or experience of acting, call the Theatre Office for details of the forthcoming auditions.

There are many other activities you can join in to help out. If you're free during daytimes, you can help with our monthly mailing or delivering leaflets, and if you're handy with maintenance then there are always little jobs to be done.

Only Company members can take part in our activities, so please contact the Theatre Office if you would like to get involved or receive further information about Company membership.