

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†
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Receive a full-colour members' magazine three times a year
- ✓ 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. †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.

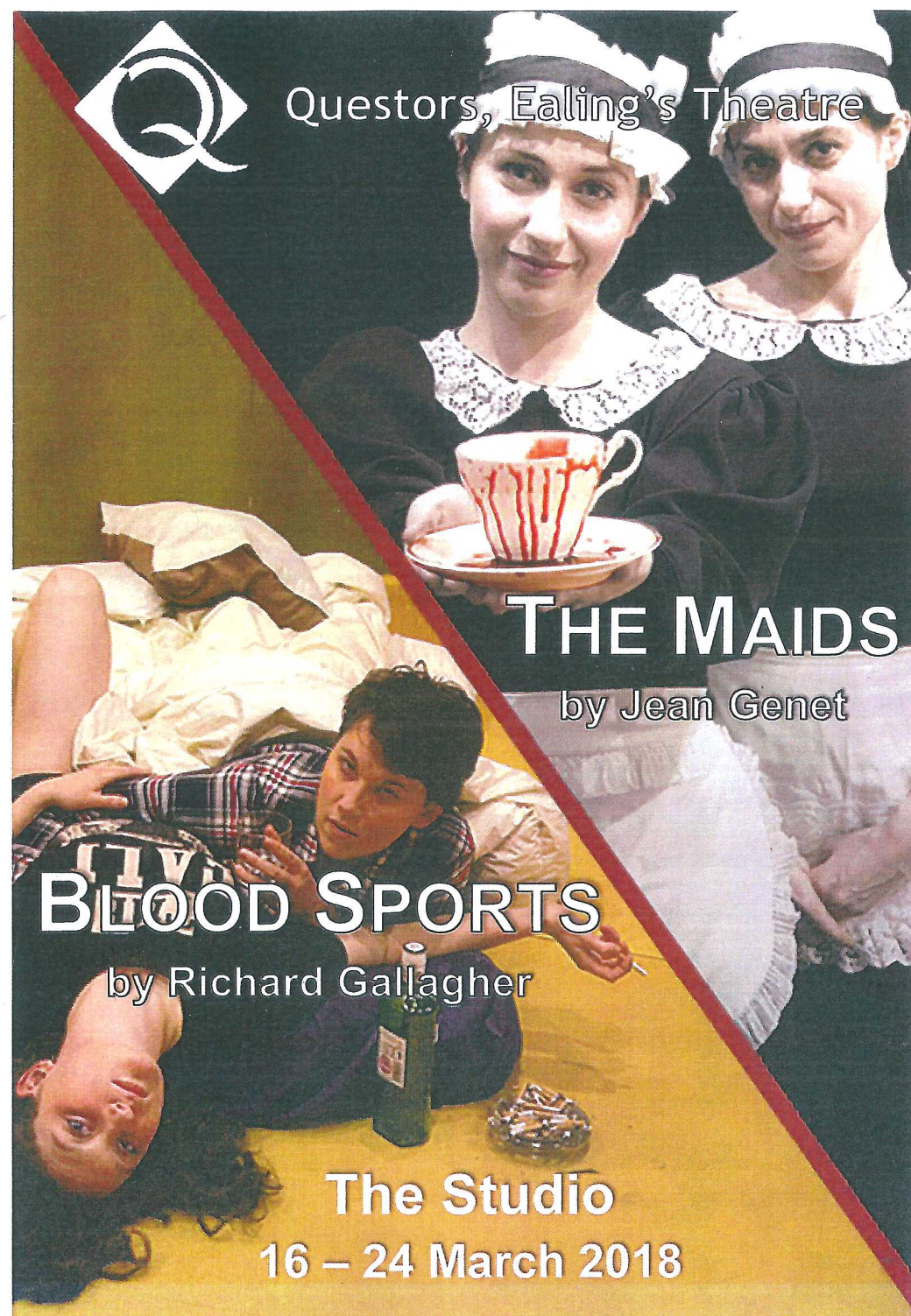
The Questors has a high standard of acting and, to maintain this, everyone wanting to act must first take an audition. These are held every month – call the Theatre Office for details of forthcoming auditions.

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.

The Questors Theatre
Box Office: 020 8567 5184
Email: enquiries@questors.org.uk

Programme: Nigel Bamford
12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ
Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011
Registered Charity No. 207516



Questors, Ealing's Theatre

THE MAIDS

by Jean Genet

BLOOD SPORTS

by Richard Gallagher

The Studio

16 – 24 March 2018

Fields at The Questors

Fields at The Questors serves Italian coffee, fine teas, hearty meals and handmade cakes, and is the perfect spot for a pre-theatre meal or intermission ice-cream.

Order interval drinks before the show to beat the crowds.

Regular opening hours:
Monday to Saturday,
9:00 am to 7:30 pm

Also 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 seven 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 2018 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 and spirits – all at very reasonable prices.

Opening Hours:

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm (10:30 pm close on Sundays)

Sunday lunchtime: midday – 2:30 pm

See questors.org.uk/grapevine for more details.

Fields and the Grapevine accept payments by card.



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BLOOD SPORTS

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16 – 24 March 2018

BLOOD SPORTS & THE MAIDS

It's a happy coincidence that the themes of these two plays coincide. It's true that, with a little bit of ingenuity, one can find links between almost *any* two pieces but the connections here are stronger and more evident. Our publicity officer entitled the evening *Alternative Lives*. And there you have it: lives of missed opportunity and wasted energy.

I wrote *Blood Sports* (originally for the Drill Hall, London) in the wake of Margaret Thatcher's administration (John Major had just taken over). To my, admittedly biased, mind, Mrs Thatcher entered the premiership in a completely disingenuous mode when her speechwriter persuaded her to quote St Francis of Assisi. ('Where there is discord, may we bring harmony; where there is error, may we bring truth; where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope.') Maybe, it wasn't her fault: I'd been told she had never heard the quote before being given it. However, to my mind, she significantly failed to do any of what St Francis recommended: in fact, she resolutely did quite the opposite. Eleven years later, she left a divided country where the only talent that was recognised was the accumulation of wealth; those who couldn't manage that were discarded and left seething with self-doubt and no way out of their situation. Hence, on the first and second productions of *Blood Sports*, we had the strapline, '*Thatcher's children have grown up*' (i.e. 'the disqualified were starting to have a voice').

In the play, Alan's naïve and hopeful Thatcherite (he *is* a Thatcherite, despite his claim that he 'gave up when Ted Heath did') has his roots in Gorky's *The Lower Depths* where the stranger, Luka, tells a bunch of no-hopers that there is a better world outside their squalor. In Gorky's play, Luka's determined optimism results in one of the 'tramps' hanging himself when he finds out the lie.

Susan's search for self-worth is one I saw played out many times during the eighties and nineties: people who had been left on 'the scrap heap' and were frequently blamed for their own plight. I intended it to be a socio-political play and I trust it remains so, despite the passage of time. I hope that those of you who don't share my view will, maybe, find other things in it but history is how we understand and judge the present and I have always thought reflection to be a good thing. Now older and more amenable to what was, at the time, a completely intractable divide, I will lean towards Alan's point-of-view in order to say that I do agree with him

when he says that 'People will always defend their own unhappiness'. What he *can't* see is that, given their circumstances, their attitude might, at least, be understandable. What *Susan* can't see is she is determinedly unhappy when another option is staring her in the face: she could have a perfectly good relationship with a woman who loves her. Nicola is caught between the two and has her own problems: problems caused by the situation in which life has placed her and by society's, then, attitudes towards a lesbian single mother. The three characters are all, in their own way, victims of circumstance. I would hope for them that they all have a better life but I've deliberately left it open because 'Who knows ...?'

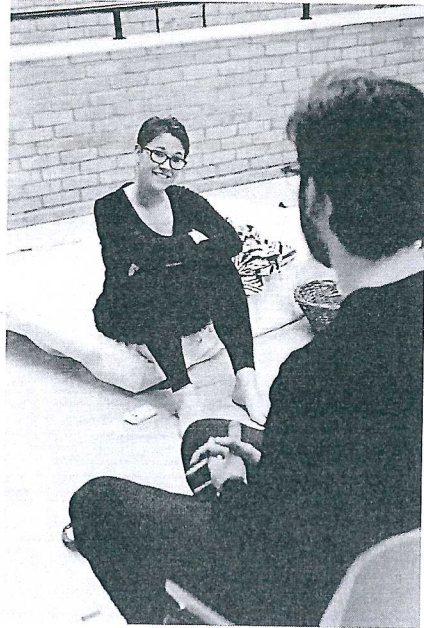
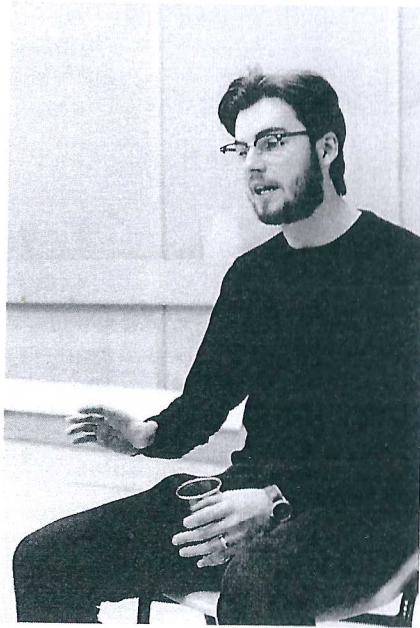
In Genet's *The Maids* (*Les Bonnes*), we have two sisters who are, similarly trapped: this time, in their servitude and their hatred of their employer. In our production, they are, in fact, one person. We have ridden over the instructions in the original script and turned it into a psychiatrist's 'session': a role-play. Madame (in this production, the 'psychiatrist') becomes Solange's paranoia: that which stops her from breaking out of her low opinion of what she is. Meanwhile, Claire is a figment of Solange's imagination: again, a block to her realising her own potential.

It's loosely based on a real case: that of the Papin sisters (Christine and Léa) who, in 1933, murdered their mistress and her daughter. Genet always denied this obvious connection. He was keen to point out, however, that, in his play, he is not concerned with the plight of servants or the ingratitude of employers. As he frequently does in all his work, he is dealing with shifting identity and 'mirrors within mirrors'. It isn't a play one should intellectualise too much, either as an audience member or, indeed, as an actor. Its roots are in raw emotion and it comes over as a surreal howl of both pain and eventual release. Like the characters in *Blood Sports*, the two 'maids' hold on to their despair. 'Madame' is the root of that: their opinion of themselves is what keeps them imprisoned in (self-created) chains. The two sisters try to kill Madame but it is always they themselves who thwart the actual murder. It could be seen as analogous to the way one of life's self-perceived failures might blame the nearest successful person for their plight but never deals with their own lack of self-confidence (which is, in fact, what is preventing their success). Claire and Solange can only unify as a healthy person when they stop blaming 'Madame' and get rid of their paranoia.

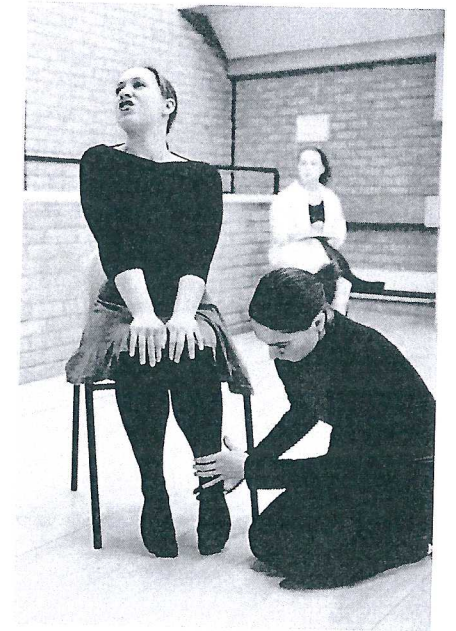
The ending is hopeful but, as ever with Genet – who was always slightly biased towards the psychopathic – we are left somewhat disturbed.

Richard Gallagher, Director

Blood Sports



The Maids



THE QUESTORS STUDENT GROUP 71 PRESENTS

ALTERNATIVE LIVES

First performance of these productions at The Questors Theatre: 16 March 2018

BLOOD SPORTS by Richard Gallagher

Susan **Maya Markelle**

Nicola **Georgina Keck**

Alan **Rory Hobson**

The play takes place somewhere in the north of England in 1991.

THE MAIDS by Jean Genet translated by Bernard Frechtman

Madame **Maria Gebhardt**

Claire **Gaia Cicolani**

Solange **Ana-Maria Lacusteanu**

The programme lasts for approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes
including a 15-minute interval.

PRODUCTION

Director	Richard Gallagher
Associate Director	Natasha Vasandani
Assistant Director	Dorothy Lawson
Set Designer	Victoria Smith
Costume Designer	Sadie Crowder
Lighting Designer	Nigel A. Lewis
Lighting Associates/Operators	Angus Duke, Andrew Quick
Sound Designer	Olly Potter
Stage Managers	Sadie Crowder, Olly Potter
Deputy Stage Manager	Paul Souchon
Assistant Stage Managers	Sunaina McCarthy, Matthew Saldanha
Properties	Dorothy Lawson, Abena Weston
Wardrobe Mentor	Sarah Andrews
Set Constructors	Francis Bell, UWL Students
Production Photographer	Peter Collins
Poster Photographer	Carla Evans
Social Media	Natasha Vasandani
Thanks to	Daniel Cawtheray, Shaan Latif-Shaikh, Jennie Yates
Special Thanks to	Alex Marker

Please turn off all mobile phones and similar electronic devices.
The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.
Thank you.

Jean Genet (1910 – 1986)

Genet, whose mother was a prostitute and whose father was unknown, was adopted. His formative years were financed by the French state and, maybe because of this, he always saw himself as an outsider. Despite a relatively secure home life, he often ran away, surviving as a petty thief. His biographer, Edmund White, claims that he cultivated a fictitious image of a deprived childhood in order to add veracity to his 'outlaw' persona. When his foster mother died, he was placed with an elderly couple from whom he stole money.

As a result of this and various other transgressions, at the age of fifteen he was sent to a penal colony, where he remained for the best part of three years after which he joined the French Foreign Legion. He was dishonourably discharged when he was discovered to be homosexual.

He wandered around Europe, living on his wits, thieving and prostituting himself. His early prison experiences are documented in *The Miracle of the Rose* (1946) and his subsequent vagrancy in *The Thief's Journal* (1949). His life continued to include frequent prison terms for various crimes including theft, falsifying papers and homosexual encounters. It was during his incarceration that he wrote his first poem – *Le Condamné à Mort: The Man Condemned to Death* – in memory of the twenty-five year-old Maurice Pilorge who was guillotined for murder. Later, commenting on his novel, *Our Lady of the Flowers* (1944), he wrote, 'Without Maurice Pilorge, whose death is still poisoning my life, I would never have written this book'. Genet claimed Pilorge as a friend although White thinks it unlikely they ever knew each other; he points out that, as well as Pilorge's age, Genet had the date and location of the execution wrong. Thus, we learn that Genet was quite happy to alter the facts of other people's lives, just as he was his own.

Jean Cocteau was impressed by *Our Lady of the Flowers* and was instrumental in getting it published. When Genet was threatened with a life sentence, it was Cocteau and others – including Jean-Paul Sartre and Pablo Picasso – who successfully petitioned the president for his release. By 1949, Genet had completed five novels, three plays and many poems: his career as a writer was established. His writing was controversial: uncompromising in its depictions of homosexuality and its lauding of the criminal. Aside from the titles mentioned above his work includes the novels *Our Lady of the Flowers* (1942/43), *Querelle of Beste* and *Funeral Rites* (both written between 1947 and 1953).

His plays include *Deathwatch* (1944, rewritten in 1949), *The Maids* (1946/7), *The Blacks* (1955/1958/9), *The Screens* (1956 – 1961, rewritten 1964) and *The Balcony* (1955/1956/1957).

In the late 1960s, he became a political activist, campaigning for various causes including immigrants; particularly against police brutality towards Algerians. In 1970 he spent six months visiting Palestinian refugee camps and he met Yasser Arafat.

After developing throat cancer, Genet was found dead in a hotel room in Paris on the 15th April, 1986. It is possible his death was caused by a fall. He is buried in Morocco.

I am of the opinion that he was writing about himself. In truth, I suppose that is what all we scribblers do.

Biographies



Gaia Cicolani – Claire

Gaia was born in Torino, Italy. Strongly rooted in contemporary and ballet dance, she is passionate about the interaction between different kinds of art and artists. Gaia trained at Trinity Laban Conservatory of Music and Dance. At The Questors, she performed in *Galatea*, directed by Claudia Carroll, and collaborated with the productions of *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Emil and the Detectives* and *Trelawny of the 'Wells'*.



Maria Gebhardt – Madame

Maria joined The Questors in September 2016 to become part of Group 71. She played Sophie Scholl in a Dark Monday production of *We Will Not Be Silent*. Apart from that, she was ASM for several productions at The Questors including *The Ladykillers*, *The Diamond Ring*, *Larkin With Women*, *Trelawny of the 'Wells'* and, most recently, *The Country Wife* at the Minack Theatre. Maria hopes to study at drama school.



Rory Hobson – Alan

Rory joined The Questors Youth Theatre at the age of seven. Acting credits at The Questors include Fleance in *Macbeth*, John Tate in *DNA*, Boy 1 in *Steel Tumbleweed*, Augur in *Galatea* and Branwell Brontë in *Wuthering Depths*, part of The GIANT Coarse Acting Festival. Rory is a QYT teaching assistant and is actively involved in Front of House and backstage.



Georgina Keck – Nicola

After seven years in the youth theatre, this is Georgina's debut as an adult on The Questors stage. She has also performed in comedy skits and assisted in photo shoots and comedy videos at events in London and Glasgow. In her free time she makes costumes, learns sign language, and plays the ukulele.

**Ana-Maria Lacusteanu – Solange**

An actor, singer and dancer, Ana-Maria returns to The Questors as a member of Student Group 71 after initially joining Student Group 70 in 2015. Her performance as Solange marks her debut on the London stage. Her previous work includes, *The Star-Spangled Girl* (The Comedy Company), *Shakespeare, I Love You* (musical performance: Wake Art Theatre) and *The Wedding* (Gaudeamus Theatre).

**Maya Markelle – Susan**

Maya featured as Wendy in the award winning short film, *Happy Thoughts* and as Sarah the Maid in *Trelawny of the 'Wells'*. Raised in India, Maya now finds herself an ambassador for The Monobox, a charity with the aim of empowering and training actors in what can seem like a daunting industry. She graduated from the Met Film School in 2017. Her hobbies include extreme prop building for plays without a budget and events such as the Notting Hill Carnival.

Sadie Crowder – Stage Manager and Wardrobe

Sadie is currently in her second year studying for a BA Hons in Theatre Production at the University of West London. This is Sadie's third show for The Questors: her first as joint stage manager and wardrobe having worked previously on *Sleepers in the Field* as DSM, and last year's student group production of *Love's Labour's Lost* working as assistant lighting designer and operator. She looks forward to many more opportunities.

Angus Duke – Lighting Associate/Operator

Angus has scurried around The Questors for four years as ASM in *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, appearing as a horse in *Equus*, a drunken prospective bridegroom in *Stags and Hens* and a love-sick manservant in *Trelawny of the 'Wells'*.

Richard Gallagher – Director and Writer

Richard trained at the Manchester Polytechnic School of Theatre. At The Questors, his last full Playhouse performances were as Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and as Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*. More recently, he appeared as Clarence in *All Joy of the Worm* in honour of Shakespeare's 400th anniversary and, in the Studio, *Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite*. He has been tutor/director for the second year student group since Group 64. Also for The Questors, he wrote the 2013 pantomime, *Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp*.

Dorothy Lawson – Assistant Director

Dorothy has been Assistant Director for the student productions of *Dead White Males* and *Stags and Hens* and DSM for six other student productions. She is a member of the Reminiscence Roadshow team, has been an accent coach for three recent productions and serves in the Grapevine Bar. Her most recent appearances on stage were in *Dick Whittington* and *The Ladykillers*.

Nigel A. Lewis – Lighting Designer

Nigel has been lighting the stage for over thirty years. He is a lecturer in theatre lighting design at the University of West London to BA (Hons) students and also at Kingston College to BTEC and HNC level students. Nigel still manages to light around thirty-five productions per year under his company name, LX Designs Ltd. He is a professional designer with the Association of Lighting Designers, resident lighting designer to nine London-based opera companies and over thirty production companies.

Olly Potter – Stage Manager and Sound Design.

Olly is currently studying a BA Hons in Theatre Production at the University of West London. This will be his third sound design at The Questors Theatre with previous work including *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Season's Greetings*. Olly has worked in various capacities in different productions at The Questors and elsewhere.

Victoria Smith – Set Design

Victoria is currently a second year student at the University of West London studying Theatre Production. Previously, she worked on productions such as *Twelfth Night* at Pendley Shakespeare Festival and assisted on various Questors shows. This is her first Questors set design and she looks forward to future opportunities.

Natasha Vasandani – Associate Director

Natasha joined The Questors in 2014 as part of QYT. She works as an actor/writer and enjoys producing comedic work that brings people together. Natasha also teaches acting, singing and dancing. Her last appearances at The Questors were as Angela Judd in *Dead White Males* and Carol in *Stags and Hens* (Student Group 69). This production marks her debut as an associate director here.

Abena Weston – Properties

Abena is studying theatre production at UWL. At The Questors, she worked on *Season's Greetings* and *Pygmalion* (operating lights and sound), *Sleepers in the Field* (DSM and ASM), *Emil and the Detectives* (ASM) and *Diana of Dobson's* (construction). At UWL, she was part of the crew for *West Side Story*. Abena designed and helped construct the set for the youth production of *Girls Like That* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Questors Student Group Tutors

Director of Studies and First Year Tutor
Second Year Tutor
Voice Teacher
Movement and Physical Theatre Teacher

David Emmet
Richard Gallagher
Gemma Drummond
Nicholas Jonne Wilson

University of West London Tutors

John Davey, Nigel A. Lewis, Alex Marker

Students from the second year of the BA (Hons) Theatre Production course at the University of West London (in Ealing) have contributed significantly to the design and management of this production. The course, which starts again in September, is run in close collaboration with The Questors. If you'd like to find out more, visit the website at www.uwl.ac.uk or email the course leader, John Davey (john.davey@uwl.ac.uk).



Learning through plays?

BA (Hons) Theatre Production (Design and Management)

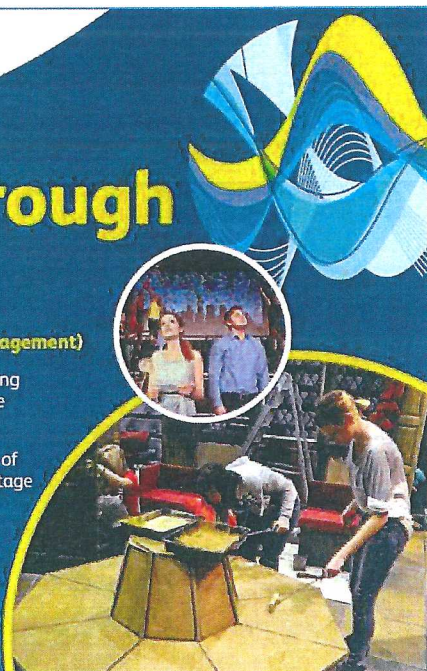
Gain theoretical and practical experience whilst working backstage on shows at both **The Questors** and in the **London College of Music**.

This two-year accelerated course covers a wide range of theatre-related skills, including stage management, stage technology (lighting and sound) and design.

Apply now to start September 2018

uwl.ac.uk/theatreproduction

john.davey@uwl.ac.uk



Next at The Questors



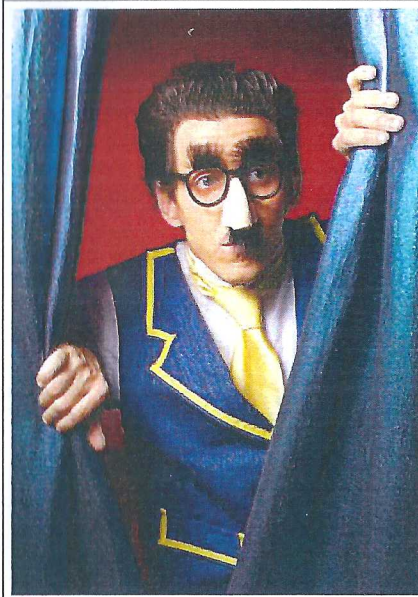
QUESTORS YOUNG STUDIO PRESENTS

BURNING BIRD by John Donnelly

18, 19 March 2018

The Studio

Set against the backdrop of the London riots, *Burning Bird* questions the decisions we make and explores the freedoms we find when authority goes missing. It's the height of the summer, and Daisy's fifteenth birthday. She has an important delivery to make across town. When Morell offers her a ride in his uncle's car, she sets off down a road from which there might be no turning back.



THE QUESTIVAL

22 – 24 March 2018

The Judi Dench Playhouse

The third Questival presents three days of an eclectic mix of theatre: drama, comedy, new writing, physical theatre and everything in between. Every night will be different and there will be something for everyone – so please come along to experience The Questors very own fringe festival.

Buy tickets for all three nights for the price of two.