

## Join Us

If you would like to be involved in the world of theatre, why not join us as a Member.

### Club Membership – Benefits

- ✓ The right to participate in club activities, including putting on shows
- ✓ A say in the running of the club through voting rights at the AGM and in electing the Board of Trustees
- ✓ Access to our members' website and receive a regular club newsletter by email
- ✓ Full credit to your account for booked tickets to Questors productions if you let us know that you can't make the show
- ✓ Priority booking for courses or special events
- ✓ Meet new people and learn fresh skills as part of the Questors team
- ✓ Feel great about being a member of one of Europe's largest community theatres with over 90 years of contribution to the arts

Note that this new, lower-priced membership does not include ticket discounts.

We have a wide range of opportunities for you to become actively involved throughout the theatre. Volunteer help is always needed for selling programmes, stewarding or serving behind the bar, and training is provided if you'd like to work in Box Office with our computerised system. 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 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.

### Season Pass – Benefits

A Season Pass is also available to both members (the combined cost is equivalent to that of the old-style membership) and non-members, which gives the following benefits:

- ✓ Ticket discounts for every Questors production (except the pantomime):
  - an adult ticket at a 50% discount for the Season Pass holder
  - £2 off ANY number of additional adult or concession tickets
  - up to FOUR child tickets at 50% discount
- ✓ Will receive other *audience loyalty* special offers from The Questors or other organisations performing at The Questors
- ✓ Available to all – you do not need to be a club member

Further details and pricing of Club Membership (and enhanced Supporter Memberships), the Season Pass and Questors Youth Theatre can be found on the Questors website: [questors.org.uk](http://questors.org.uk).

The Questors Theatre  
12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, W5 5BQ  
Registered Charity No. 207516

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 **The Questors**  
THEATRE


# TABLE MANNERS

by Alan Ayckbourn



# 12-19 JULY 2025





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Write your name into the history books of our theatre by sponsoring one of the new seats in the Judi Dench Playhouse. Find out more and name your seat: [questors.org.uk/seats](http://questors.org.uk/seats)

## THE GRAPEVINE BAR

The Grapevine is our friendly club bar open to Members of The Questors Theatre and their guests, as well as audience members on show nights.

The club is open six nights a week and Sunday lunchtimes, and is managed and staffed entirely by volunteers.

We are proud of the quality of our real ales, we appear in the 2025 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, spirits and soft drinks – all at very reasonable prices.

Opening Hours (subject to change):

Monday – Saturday: 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm

Sunday lunchtime: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

See [questors.org.uk/grapevine](http://questors.org.uk/grapevine) for more details.



image: Robert Vass

## TABLE MANNERS

by Alan Ayckbourn

The Judi Dench Playhouse

12 – 19 July 2025

This amateur production of "Table Manners" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

# TABLE MANNERS

This is the second Alan Ayckbourn play of the season, following the wonderful production of *Relatively Speaking* in the Studio. This double billing wasn't exactly planned.

I'm often asked how we choose the student group plays and, in this instance, it was a case of not being able to obtain the rights to a different play that we first applied for. For the original cast of six actors that we started out with, this play seemed to fit and, not having much time to dither about we were happy to do a double.

For any involved biography of Sir Alan (as he now is), I will refer you to the excellent programme notes that my friend and colleague, Anne Neville wrote for that first of his plays at The Questors this season.

Suffice to say that he is England's most prolific playwright and he has always worked from his home in Scarborough where the three incarnations of the 'Stephen Joseph Theatre' have always first staged his work before an almost inevitable London transfer.

So, rather than the playwright's life and career, I will concentrate on *Table Manners*.

Ayckbourn has almost always had a 'trick' or a clever quirk in his plays – dinners taking place in different houses at different times and melded together, three different Christmas parties, all seen from the various kitchens, a woman's vision of the family she longs for, seen alongside the real thing ... The Questors was one of the few theatres that was able to mount *House & Garden*: two plays that interlock, one in the Studio and one in the Playhouse, the actors running between the two spaces with split-second timing.

*Table Manners* is one of the plays in a trilogy, *The Norman Conquests*. The 'trick' is, though each play stands alone, each also tells the same story; we see the events from the dining room, the living room and then the garden (actually, the order of seeing them doesn't matter too much).

Astoundingly, Ayckbourn wrote the whole trilogy in just one week. He claims to thrive on the problems his various, intricate plots present him with: in this case, three plays, each a 'stand alone', each telling the same story and each cleverly interlacing with the other two.

Anne Neville referred to Peter Hall's comparison of him with Chekhov. It's undoubtedly true: if Ayckbourn's plays weren't so funny, they would be tragedies. As my colleague, David Emmet said, 'He doesn't write happy

marriages.' His characters are almost always middle-class, bored or frustrated and it's his razor-sharp observation that makes us laugh at what are, after all rather desperate situations.

Scarborough is a coastal resort and Ayckbourn was conscious that his main audience for that first production in 1973 would be holidaymakers. Because of this, he was going to have to compete with bingo (or whatever) and not expect that his potential audience would necessarily see all three plays in the week they were spending in the town. This is why each of the three plays stands alone and why we are confident that *Table Manners* tells its story without knowing what happens in the living room or the garden.

Reservations about a trilogy almost prevented the play being performed in the West End. Michael Codron (the producer) didn't think the concept would sell seats. Were it not for a sell-out run in Greenwich, *The Norman Conquests* might have faded away. However, the Greenwich run proved Codron wrong and it quickly became another Ayckbourn hit, winning three 'Best Play' awards.

Those of you who know Ayckbourn's work will recognise the various characters that he so often uses: the 'put upon' (in this case, Annie, who has been left to care for an unseen invalid mother), the 'organiser' (who never really does anything at all). This is Sarah who clearly feels hard done by but we can equally sympathise for her husband, Reg, who is a boy/man, downtrodden husband, who likes to play with his balsa wood aeroplanes. His children (whose names he sometimes can't remember) aren't at all enthusiastic about their dad's hobby. Then we have Ruth, the high-flyer who is the only one who can really handle the other great Ayckbourn trope: her husband, Norman. Norman is the great pain in the neck who sends this whole family's weekend into chaos. He gets away with it because he has charm and a genuine desire to 'make everybody happy'. Tom is the visiting vet – and would-be suitor to Annie. He is awkward, shy and never sure what his role is in the proceedings. He rounds off this list of 'types' and, though they don't always all appear in every one of the ninety-one plays (and counting) that he has written, Ayckbourn said that all three of these men include aspects of himself but he always wanted to be like Norman. In fact, he suspects he has more of Tom in him.

I've always thought that the great American playwright, Neil Simon, can be said to be a sort of mirror to Ayckbourn. Having said that – and good as he undoubtedly is – Simon's plays always seem to insist on a happy ending, which Ayckbourn is never afraid of dismissing. Simon's middle-class, American Jewish characters have the same tragedy behind them but they always work it out. We, British, don't feel the need to make life anything other than the painful, funny, sometimes disastrous thing it actually is.

Sarah says that she is 'so hoping the family can get through this evening without one angry word.' We know they won't.

**Richard Gallagher, Director**



QUESTORS STUDENT GROUP 77 PRESENTS

# TABLE MANNERS

by Alan Ayckbourn

*First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 12 July 2025*

## CAST

in order of appearance

Annie	<b>Nate Clarke</b>
Sarah	<b>Mia Biagio</b>
Tom	<b>Wesley Lloyd</b>
Reg	<b>Jacob Dalton</b>
Norman	<b>Herman Svartling Stolpe</b>
Ruth	<b>Filipa Maia</b>

### 1973 Suburbia

**Act One Scene 1:** 6.00 p.m. Arrival

**Act One Scene 2:** Breakfast, next morning

### Interval

**Act Two, Scene 1:** Sunday evening. 8.00 p.m.

**Act Two, Scene 2:** 8.00 a.m. Monday. Departure

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

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

## PRODUCTION

Director	<b>Richard Gallagher</b>
Associate Director	<b>Pam Redrup</b>
Set Designer	<b>Mobolaji Babalola</b>
Costume Designer	<b>Sarah Andrews</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>John Green</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Jane Arnold-Forster</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Joanna Mludzinska</b>
Deputy Stage Managers	<b>Michelle Weaver, Tariq Said</b>
Properties	<b>Claudia Kees</b>
Fight Director	<b>Scott Tilley</b>
Hair and Make-Up	<b>Sarah Andrews</b>
Administrator / Pooh-Bah	<b>Dorothy Lawson</b>
Lighting / Sound Operator	<b>Graeme Kaye</b>
Lighting Rigger	<b>Andrew Whadcoat</b>
Set Design Assistant	<b>Rue Mdawarima</b>
Set Realisation	<b>Ian Black, Bron Blake</b>
Set Constructors / Painters	<b>Joy Akintan, Tito Babayemi, Chloe Coxhill, Monét Drummond, Faria Jahangir, Hilda Kagaba, Doug King, Yann Konan, Shealin Murphy, Paddy Russell, Robert Spencer, Olayinka Taiwo</b>
Photographer	<b>Robert Vass</b>
Videographer	<b>Jane Arnold-Forster</b>
Community Captioner	<b>Michael Eppy</b>
Thanks to	<b>Kath Cooke, Angus Duke, Caroline Gibbon, Rory Hobson</b>

# Biographies



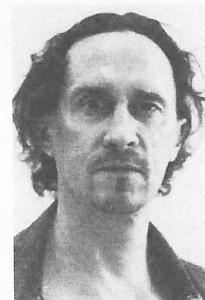
**Mia Biagio – Sarah**

Mia arrived in London in 2005 with little intention of a long-term stay. It was here that her long-held love of the arts, movement and storytelling truly flourished and saw her continued performance training, alongside a corporate career. She enrolled as a member of Student Group 77, where she made her Questors debut as Lottie in *Trojan Barbie*. Previous theatre credits include *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



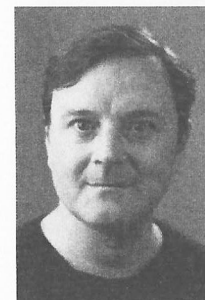
**Nate Clarke – Annie**

Born in central London, Nate, fell in love with the arts after a school trip to see *The Lion King* in preparation for a school play. She began her career in the PR world whilst freelancing as a writer and poet before swapping into production where she met a former Questors student who attended thirty years ago. Nate is currently working on a collection of short films whilst continuing playwriting and building her stage experience. She played Hecuba in *Trojan Barbie*.



**Jacob Dalton – Reg**

With a background in writing and directing and two award-winning short films to his name, Jacob is completing his second year in Group 77 following his appearance as Jorge/Clive/Menelaus in *Trojan Barbie*. A previous appearance at The Questors was in 2024 in *You Can't Take It With You* as Paul Sycamore.



**Wesley Lloyd – Tom**

Wesley is making his third guest appearance in a student group production in four years after playing Dr Chasuble in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2022 – Group 74) and Mr Walker in *London Wall* (2024 – Group 76). He himself graduated from Student Group 62 in 2009. Wesley was last seen at The Questors as Octavius Caesar in the Etheric Players' production of *Antony and Cleopatra* in the Studio in May.



**Filipa Maia – Ruth**

Filipa started acting in Lisbon, Portugal where she completed diverse acting courses. She became involved in amateur and university theatre groups, performing in plays by Shakespeare and by Portuguese authors. In London, she further developed her skills at the Unseen Acting School before joining The Questors. Majoring in English and Spanish literature, Filipa has had a passion for acting and writing stories since childhood. Filipa played Cassandra in *Trojan Barbie*.



**Herman Svartling Stolpe – Norman**

A member of Student Group 77 since last year, Herman is also in his fourth year of composition studies at the Royal College of Music. During his third year at the RCM, he wrote, directed and co-composed the music for *Apartment 49*, in which he also appeared. Herman played Max/Talthybius in *Trojan Barbie*.

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T&Cs: Offer for dining in at Bobo Social Ealing Broadway. Includes any main dish from our A La Carte Menu and excludes meals from our Brunch menu. Price is determined by the dish of higher value/cost. Must present a Questors Theatre ticket or ticket confirmation email to redeem. Offer valid once per person per ticket/show. Must be redeemed within 1 week of your booked performance. Offer available Tues - Fri from 12PM and Sat - Sun from 3PM. Offer not available in conjunction with other promotions, including Happy Hour.



### **Sarah Andrews – Costume Designer**

Sarah joined The Questors in 1977 as a member of Questors Student Group 32 and has since appeared in many plays. In addition to acting, she has designed and dressed a countless number of productions, most recently *Krapp's Last Tape & Rockaby*, *King Charles III*, *How to Spot an Alien*, *The Water's Edge*, *Consent*, *India Gate*, the Caryl Churchill double bill, *On the Razzle*, *The Rehearsal*, *Find Me*, *London Wall*, *The Mystery of Fellstone Manor* and *Trojan Barbie*.

### **Jane Arnold-Forster – Sound Designer**

Jane has been part of The Questors since 2005, since when she has been involved in most aspects of making theatre. After a period as a professional production manager, she came home to The Questors in 2012. *Table Manners* is the sixth show for which she has designed sound, including *London Wall*, last year's student Playhouse production.

### **Mobolaji Babalola – Set Designer**

Mobolaji is a set designer, builder and mechanical engineer. She has been at The Questors since the age of 17 when she was in the Youth Theatre. Since then, she went to university to get her degree and is back to help out backstage. She was involved in *Blithe Spirit* and *The Cane*, and recently designed and built *The Anniversary*. She also loves to help out in the Grapevine from time to time and has an interest in the costume department. She aims to become a set designer in the future and really appreciates the support she has received from the community at The Questors.

### **Richard Gallagher – Director**

Richard trained at the Manchester Polytechnic School of Theatre. At The Questors, his last 'full time' acting appearances – now quite a while ago – were as Lady Bracknell in Francis Lloyd's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 2009 and as Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*. He appeared as Clarence in *All Joy of the Worm* in honour of Shakespeare's 400th anniversary and in *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*.

### **John Green – Lighting Designer**

John has had a lifelong interest in the use of light to sculpt a space, set a mood and direct the eye. He has been involved with lighting at The Questors for 15 years and has designed the lighting for shows including *Dead Boy Café*, *How to Spot an Alien*, *Whispers in the Wings*, *Tom Jones*, *The Cane* and *Lionboy*.

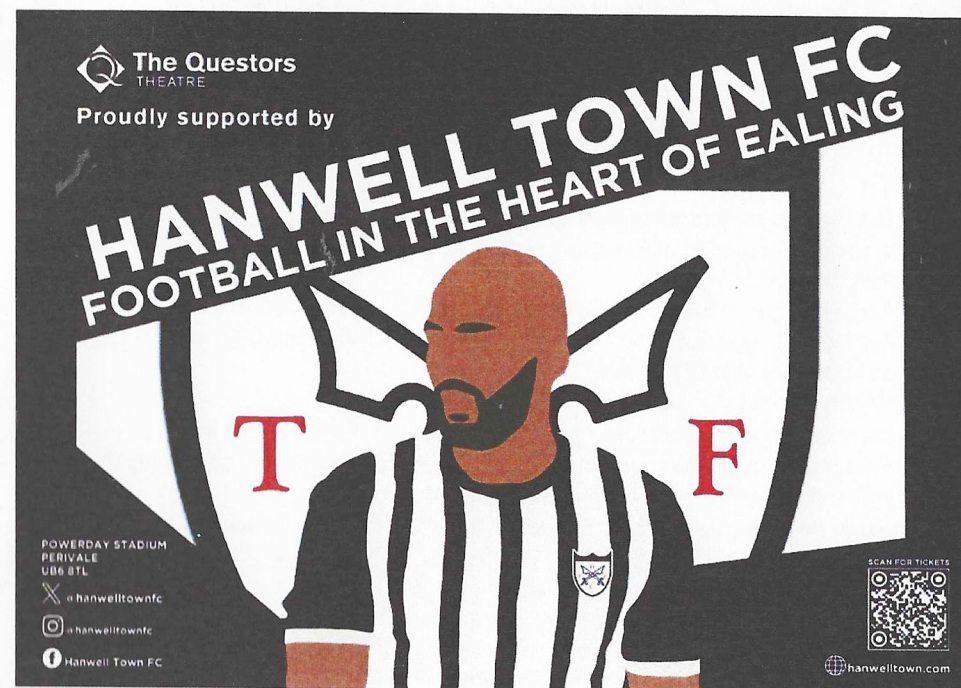
## **Questors Student Group Tutors**

Director of Studies and First Year Tutor **David Emmet**

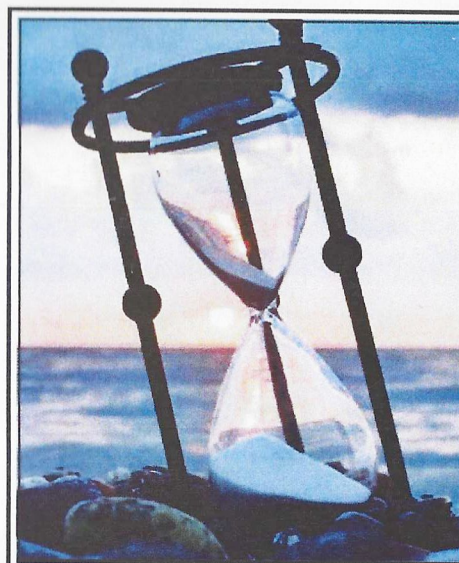
Second Year Tutor **Richard Gallagher**

Voice Teacher **Anouche Delprat-Khoubesserian**

Movement and Physical Theatre Teacher **Nathalie Joel-Smith**



## **Next at The Questors**



### **QEXTRA BEAUTIFUL HOUR FESTIVAL 21 – 26 July 2025 The Studio**

A further development in our ongoing mission to find new worlds and ways for new writing to thrive. 12 QExtra associate writers, directors, musicians and actors have been given an hour each across six nights to create a theatrical experience that is both beautiful and undeniable. Audiences are encouraged to attend as many hours as possible and to engage and be involved with this festival of visions and voices. Let the act of watching be as important as that of performance. Details at [questors.org.uk](http://questors.org.uk)