

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.

Programme: Nigel Bamford, Anayis N. Der Hakopian, Guy Smith
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 The Questors
THEATRE

QEXTRA THE BEAUTIFUL HOUR FESTIVAL



The Studio

21 - 26 July 2025

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Mon 21	Beautiful Hour 1	<i>A Feast of Tender Hearts</i> and <i>x A Sprite for Spoilage x</i> by Anayis N. Der Hakopian
	Beautiful Hour 2	<i>A Good Girl</i> by Debbie Sherwell
Tue 22	Beautiful Hour 3	<i>The Adventures of Georges Remi</i> by David Hovatter
	Beautiful Hour 4	<i>Take Pains, Be Perfect, Dance</i> by Julian Smith
Wed 23	Beautiful Hour 5	<i>60 Goulden Moments</i> a collection of work by Peter Gould
	Beautiful Hour 6	<i>The More Things Change...</i> by Martin Choules
Thu 24	Beautiful Hour 7	<i>George Orwell: Scenes From My Life</i> devised by Guy Smith
	Beautiful Hour 8	<i>One and Only</i> by Isabel del Rio
Fri 25	Beautiful Half Hour 9	<i>David Erdos: No Last Word</i> by David Erdos
	Beautiful Hour and a Half 10	<i>Ssweeet</i> by BH Fraser
Sat 26	Beautiful Hour 11	<i>The Pitshanger Poets</i>
	Beautiful Hour 12	<i>The Fleeting</i>

Each evening at 7:30 in the Studio with £5 tickets on the door

THE BEAUTIFUL AND UNDENIABLE

The QExtra Beautiful Hour festival, unlike previous new writing nights I have mounted over the last three years, is an attempt to showcase writing members in or associated with the QExtra team. Each of these individuals approaches theatre writing in a different way and each one is dedicated, or so I like to think, to the promotion of words which have as much currency in the air as they do on the page.

This is an important distinction to make as so many new plays these days are so informed by film and television that there is no real division in terms of language and structure between the two mediums. Naturalism is so called every day moment by moment behaviour or interaction and has no intrinsic dramatic value. Realism, where anything can happen is a heightened state and emblematic of where plays actually take place; in an invented and often inverted world where ideas and observations and to some extent conclusions can be explored. Surrealism which essentially follows dream logic is in effect the musical, where at the moment of crisis, people burst into song and reality changes.

I am not saying that each, or any of these plays follow or are guided by these thoughts, but having expressed them and stated that in my view, (as QExtra's man behind the curtain), that the real purpose in terms of creating plays is to make something both beautiful and undeniable, which can then entertain, elucidate or illuminate all manner of things for an audience, I believe the instruction has been honoured.

This also applies to other forms, with music being the highest form of all, doing more in two notes than one can in twenty pages, and poetry is the natural medium where the aim of personal expression and musicality or theatricality converge, for even when a poem is not read aloud it still can create its own stage.

So from the high exotica of **Anayis Der Hakopian**, to the **David Hovatter**'s Tintinian escapades; from the philosophical poetics of **Isabel del Rio**, to the ebullience of **Julian Smith**; from the familial darkness of **Debbie Sherwell**, to the singular poetics of **BH Fraser**; from **Martin Choules**' accessible eccentricism, to **Guy Smith**'s earnest exploration of Orwell, I have assembled a range of responses to my chosen brief. Most poignant of all, the week features a celebration of **Peter Gould**'s work for *The Questors*, presented by his wife **Julie Hadwin** and children **Jamie** and **Ellen Gould**; an event which perfectly fulfills the stated commission. The week concludes with two different kinds of recital, from QExtra Host **Nick Barth** and **The Pitshanger Poets** and QExtra Band in residence, **The Fleeting**.

Dare you miss it? Well, perhaps. But if you choose to do so, you will avoid the opportunity to take part in an ongoing exploration of form, style and what is of real importance when considering what new theatre writing can be and more crucially, what it can do.

Yours, **David Erdos**

MONDAY 21 JULY – BEAUTIFUL HOUR 1

A FEAST OF TENDER HEARTS

written and directed by **Anayis N. Der Hakopian**



An affection-stung boy named Aziz searches for a lore-told hearteater to take away the ache of his rejected heart, a beat that keeps endlessly loving the surrounding buds at first sighted glances. In the exchange, he converses on the value of loving to the one who consumes it, in all its broken and greedy pieces.

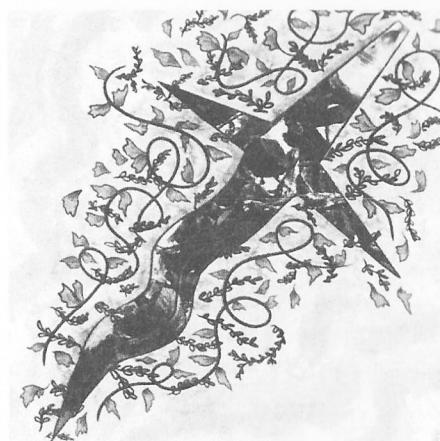
Anayis N. Der Hakopian as Janan
Lloyd Lovell as Aziz

X A SPRITE FOR SPOILAGE X

written and directed by **Anayis N. Der Hakopian**

Nimble looks to pick the best of spoils for his spell-cast crafted hand, threading new parts in scavenged sacrifices and needed vision. That is until one, formed in the moulting and spoiling bodies, revives with a sudden intake of breath in front of this fey's curious eyes for refiguring.

Sam Hegedus as Nimble
Louis Jaffa as Abel



BEAUTIFUL HOUR 2

A GOOD GIRL

written by **Debbie Sherwell**
directed by **Clare Cooper**



A Good Girl is a story of generational dysfunction, following the chaotic lives of Janet, Rita, Connie and Matt; who have to navigate traumatic events, family feuds and heartache.

Carol Fullilove as Janet
Catherine Luff as Connie
Harry Roebuck as Matt
Hannah Victory as Rita



"This play was inspired by the monologues of the established actor and writer Alan Bennett, which have energized Debbie to write for the stage."

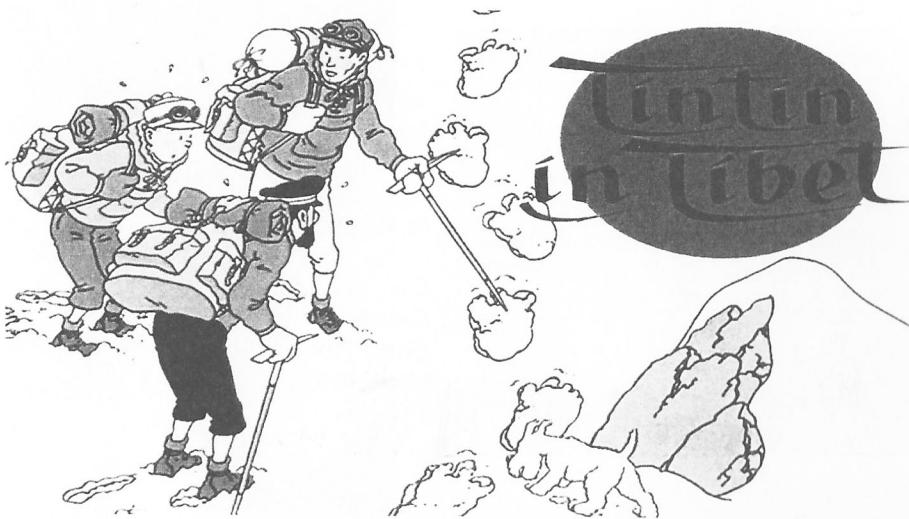
Being informed by her working class background has built Debbie's aims to write with as much realism as possible, often dealing with the effects of the loss of a loved one, and the problematic issues within families and relationships."

Affected by the themes presented in this play?
Call **The Samaritans**: 116 123 and **The Survivors Trust**: 08088 010 818

TUESDAY 22 JULY – BEAUTIFUL HOUR 3

THE ADVENTURES OF GEORGES REMI

written and directed by David Hovatter



In 1959, Georges Remi had a difficult year. An illicit affair caused turbulence in his marriage, and he was trying to draw *Tintin in Tibet*.



This piece explores the personal challenges that Remi faced, examining the link between his private life and his famous creation, ending with a dramatisation of the last few pages.

Ant Foran as
Remi / Tintin

Rochana Jayasinghe as
Fanny Vlaminck / Chang

Alison Griffin as
Remi's Wife Germaine / Yeti

Mark Redrup as
Bob de Moor

Craig Nightingale as
Therapist / Captain Haddock

BEAUTIFUL HOUR 4

TAKE PAINS, BE PERFECT, DANCE

written and directed by Julian Smith



Tea dances, role-play,
Thelonious Monk
and dishonest truths.

Loosely based on Jean Genet's *The Maids*, this play explores the relationship between two sisters in a brutal household.

Oyinka Yusuff as Maria
Rachael Oriowo as Freda

"I definitely like writing about double acts who love each other but also can't help themselves but fight or bicker. I am probably always striving to recreate the beauty and poetry of Laurel and Hardy. This piece has grown out of a friendship that came from all of us working together with Punchdrunk Enrichment on *Enitan's Game*. We are forever grateful for the opportunity to find each other and share a beautiful experience."

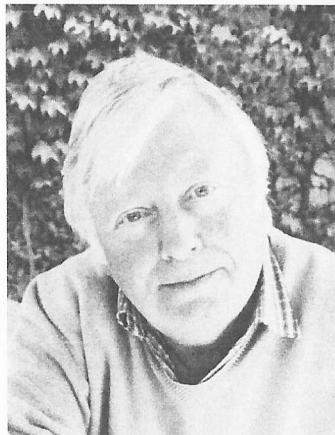
"Never ever accept second class humanity" – **Noel Greig**



WEDNESDAY 23 JULY – BEAUTIFUL HOUR 5

60 GOULDEN MOMENTS

a collection of work by **Peter Gould**
presented by **Julie Hadwin**



Goulden Moments celebrates the creativity and storytelling of **Peter Gould**, a writer, director, filmmaker and journalist who was a long-standing member of The Questors and an important contributor to the new-writing community. Peter, who was also a founder of the Ealing Film Festival, died unexpectedly earlier this year.

Curated and presented by Peter's family, this hour showcases some of Peter's writing and directing across stage, screen and audio. It features three short pieces he wrote and produced for The Questors – two short films and an audio play – offering an insight into

his creative approach. The programme will also include a few words from his family about his life and writing, along with a short reading from another of his plays, not yet staged, which will be performed by his children.

The programme includes four short works that reflect Peter's range as a writer and director: *Blue Eyes*, *The Intruder*, *Divine Intervention* and a scene from *War Zone*.

Blue Eyes is an award-winning short film – a thoughtful exploration of the psychological impact experienced by a London train driver who witnesses a traumatic event, told through a conversation with her therapist.

Directed by **Peter Gould**, performed by **Alexandra McDevitt**

The Intruder is an audio drama inspired by ideas of restorative justice, examining the complexities of grief and the limits of forgiveness after a man breaks into the home of the parents of a teenager he accidentally killed some years earlier.

Directed by **Lucy Aley-Parker**, performed by **David Hovatter**,
David Erdos and **Amanda Benzecry**, with Sound Design by **Gavin Jones**

Divine Intervention, another short film, offers a wry take on the human condition, as God – portrayed with a glass of wine in hand – considers her response to the latest request from one of her many supplicants seeking intervention from a higher power.

Directed by **Peter Gould**, performed by **Alexandra McDevitt**

Finally, **War Zone** draws on Peter's own experience as a journalist. It engages with the political and professional complexities of international journalists reporting from conflict zones – but also the less edifying personal rivalries that can arise. The scene we have chosen from the play focuses more on the latter.

Performed by **Ellen Gould** and **Jamie Gould**



BEAUTIFUL HOUR 6

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

written by **Martin Choules**
directed by **Wanda Duszynska**



Patricia O'Brien as Millicent
Isabella Cottrell Kirby as Vivienne
Francis Lloyd – voice of the BBC Announcer

Daniel Carey as Finch
TBD as Tom

"It has always puzzled me how theatre audiences are largely lefty, yet how they cheer on plays that uphold the status quo: from Sophocles to Shakespeare and even via Bernard Shaw, it is the aristocrats and the well-educated that will save the world, and the working class are no more than servants and the occasional comic relief. Yes, audiences like you, reading this while waiting for the lights to go down. We keep on reviving the same plays with the same attitudes, and we keep on paying to watch them. And I can hardly pretend not to be thoroughly middle-class myself, it's true. And I also love to see good costumes and lavish sets, and articulate protagonists with the leisure to ponder the big questions. It's a fair cop, guv, I'll fetch my coat..."

THURSDAY 24 JULY – BEAUTIFUL HOUR 7

GEORGE ORWELL: SCENES FROM MY LIFE

devised and directed by Guy Smith



It's January 1950 and arguably the most influential British novelist, essayist and journalist of the twentieth century lies in hospital gravely ill with tuberculosis.

As his strength ebbs away, he recalls some of the incidents and episodes in his rich and highly varied life that shaped his distinctive style of writing and his forthright political views...

Performed by **Mark Stratford** as George Orwell

Mark is known to many Questors members for his popular touring one-man shows *Macready! Dickens' Theatrical Friend* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Audio Design by **Oliver Ings**



"We all know George Orwell – or think we do – but this play is an attempt to reveal the man behind such renowned and enduring books as *Animal Farm* and *1984* and maybe even to introduce him to new readers so they too can be inspired to discover his stories."

BEAUTIFUL HOUR 8

ONE AND ONLY

written by **Isabel del Rio**
directed by **Harry Roebuck**



Catherine Luff as Clare and Katie Russell as Clare

"In *One and Only*, we are privy to a most private conversation, complete with disagreements and conflicts. And what greater conflict than within us, following the struggle between what we believe in and what we do. From the poetic to the mundane and from the emotional to the coldly rational, the play conveys the dualities we must bravely face up to. And along that arduous journey to become one with ourselves, we tell stories to convince others that what we say is undeniably true..."



Are they two women, or are they the two halves of the same woman? Should we become one with ourselves when making major life decisions, or can we continue to live in two minds? The play explores the themes of love and loss, and how the experience of motherhood can tear us apart.

FRIDAY 23 JULY – BEAUTIFUL HOUR 9

DAVID ERDOS: No LAST WORD

written and performed by David Erdos



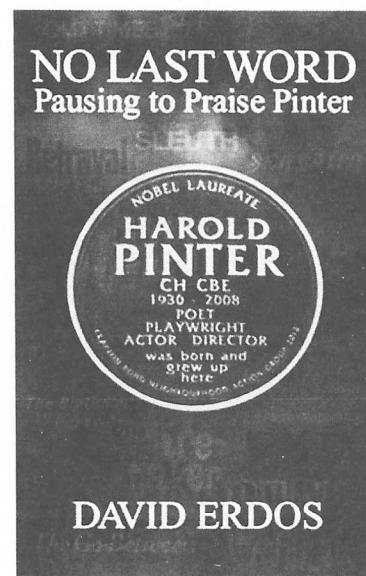
In much less than an hour **David Erdos** will read from his new book on Harold Pinter channeling and sharing his first source of inspiration after a lifetime of dedication.

This monograph is a reflection on Harold Pinter's work as a whole and his contribution to world drama and our understanding of it.

Accompanied by a suite of poems that commemorate his passing, alongside tributes to such luminous Pinter peers as Heathcote Williams, Edward Bond, Bernard Kops, Trevor Griffiths and Henry Woolf, *No Last Word* is an attempt to spread and honour the word of a previous generation to those that follow.

‘David Erdos is a vital part of our 21st century counter-cultural connectome, skittering across the literary landscape like a bead of mercury and leaving freshly-soldered synaptic linkages in his wake. If it’s a matter of importance, synthesis, or beauty, then Erdos is there to document, dissect and celebrate: an enthralling chatterbox of the human condition.’ – **Alan Moore**

‘As psycho-geographer of the zeitgeist David Erdos has a rich hinterland to draw upon, being himself poet, actor, director, composer, illustrator, musician and critic. The reader soon learns that the writer is well informed on very many levels and that he’s in safe hands for what proves to be a rewarding, penetrating and often breathtaking ride.’ – **Heathcote Williams**

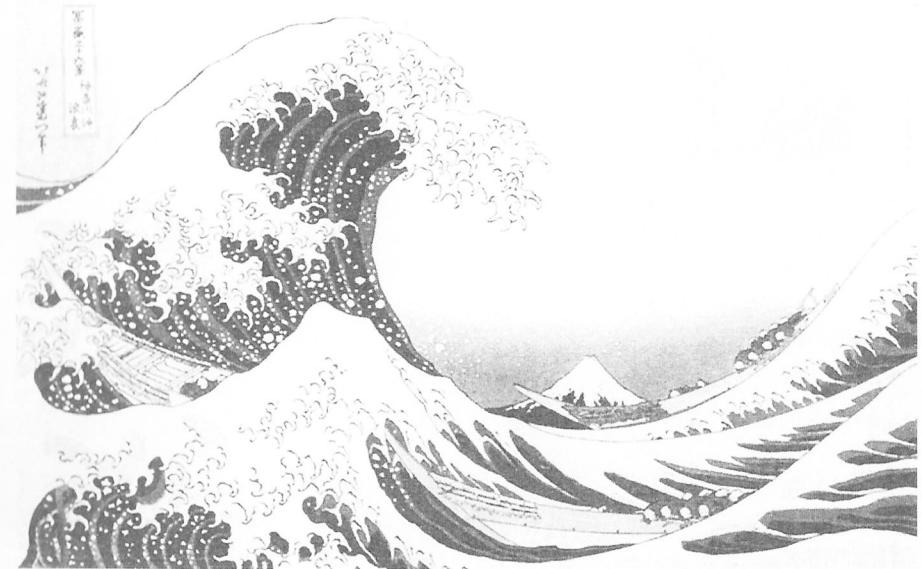


BEAUTIFUL HOUR 10

SSWEET

written and directed by **BH Fraser**
in association with **David Erdos**

A protest about a new airport has catastrophic consequences.



A single individual, Mads, takes a stand against her town over the building of an airport. She is outside the norms and lives by what she knows. Her home is a tree on a beach next to the town. The tree needs to be removed in order to build the airport.

The townspeople, made up of a Narrator/Nana, Chorus and university students, talk up the environment but want to destroy the tree and build the airport so they can enjoy their holidays more. They are hypocrites.

Grace Connett as Mads
Soju Sanna as 2F
David Erdos as Gates

Harry Roebuck as Chorus

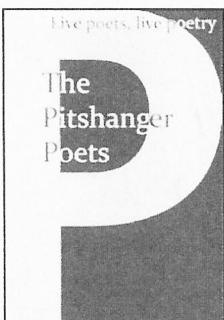
projections by **Terry Mummery**

Kerala McGrail as Lins
Catherine Luff as Silver
Benjie Fraser as Nana

thanks to **Martin Choules**

FRIDAY 24 JULY – BEAUTIFUL HOUR 11

THE PITSHANGER POETS



In this section of the QExtra Beautiful Hours Festival, the Pitshanger Poets, The Questors' own embedded poetry workshop will present a beautiful hour of beautiful poetry. Seven Pitshanger Poets have been selected to bring stories of beauty, truth, sadness, joy, anger, and on occasion, simple ennui.

Come and experience the kind of sparkling writing the Pitshanger Poets have made their own.

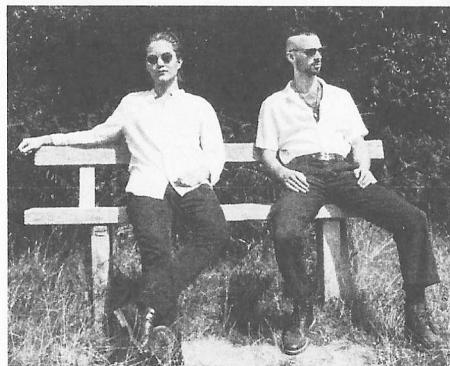
Nick Barth will invite **Roger Beckett, John Hurley, April Hill, Amir Darwish, Anna Matyjiw, Isabel del Rio and Martin Choules** to the stage. Each of them comes equipped with their own 'machines made of words' as William Carlos Williams put it, which they will wind up and set free in the security of the QExtra Studio.

BEAUTIFUL HOUR 12

THE FLEETING



The Fleeting are a Folk Rock duo, formed in 2023 by **Matthew Saldanha** and **Jakub Watrobski**. They are gearing up to release their debut album later this year.



Tonight they are playing to celebrate the release of the album's first single, *Canine Faith*, which is written from the perspective of an abandoned dog, who maintains the belief that he will see his owner again. The song is about the purity of animals, and how animals rely on human compassion.

They will play all of the songs from the impending album, along with some of their previous releases, and other as-yet unreleased material.

THE QEXTRA TEAM

Creative Producer/Director

David Erdos

Associate Festival Director

Guy Smith

Head of Lighting

Andrew Whadcoat

Head of Sound

James Connor

Technical Operators

Robyn Blackhouse, Martin Choules, Andrew Whadcoat

Festival Photographer

Chagla Mehmet

Associate Directors

Anayis N. Der Hakopian, David Hovatter, Guy Smith, Julian Smith

Associates

Nick Barth, Martin Choules, Isabel del Rio, Simon Healeas, Andrew Morris, Terry Mummery, Debbie Sherwell

COMING UP – NEXT SEASON IN QEXTRA

BH Fraser's Russian Revolution

An evening with Tim Dowley

New Writing Initiations

Pitshanger Poets prevail

Joe and Harold playreading

Donald Cammell and Peter Wyngarde return

Lost Gold – celebrating forgotten playwrights

Acting and directing for stage and screen

Email enquiries@questors.org.uk