

## Join Us

### 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

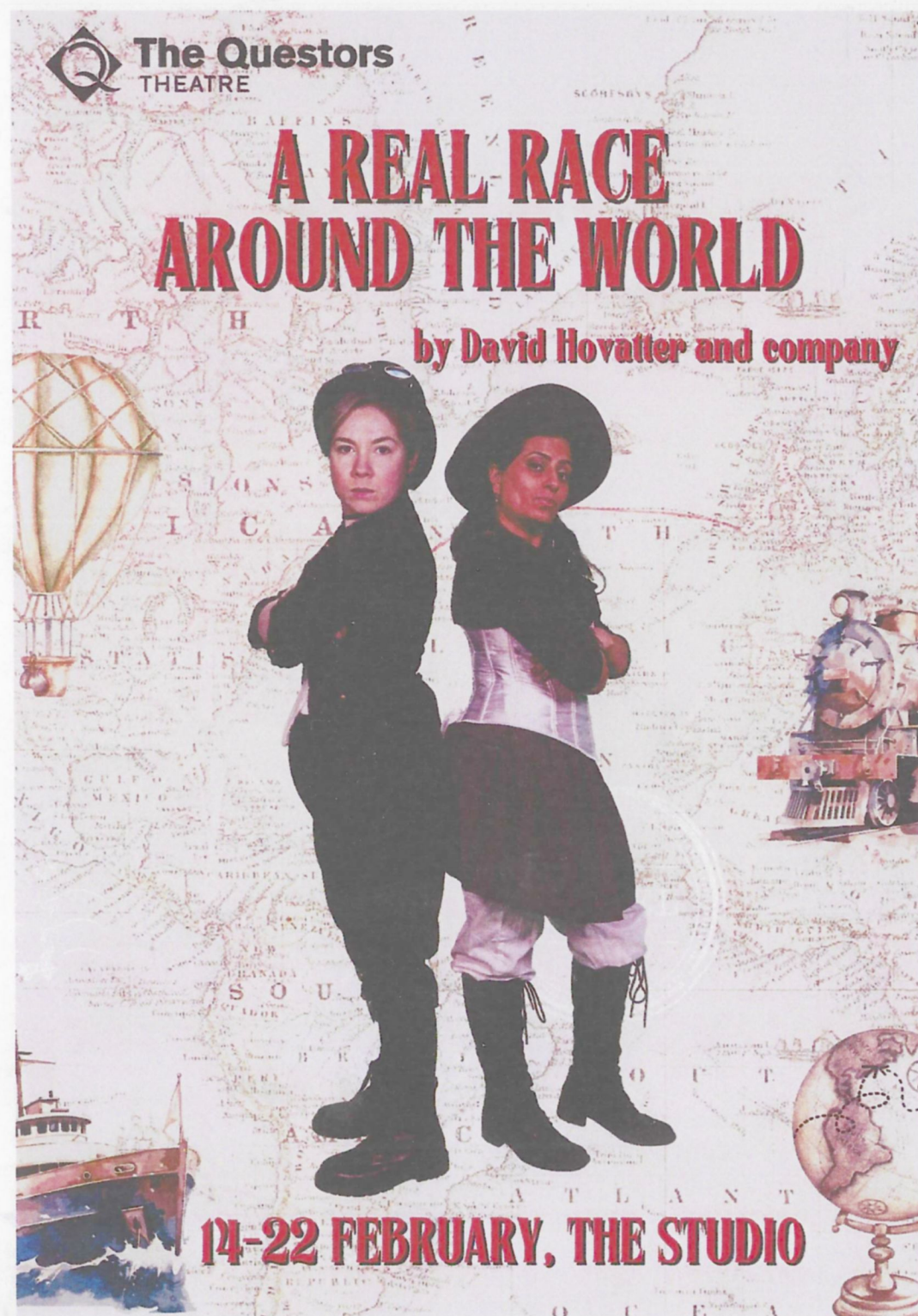
A Season Pass is also available to both Club Members (the combined cost is equivalent to that of the old-style membership) and non-members, which gives the following benefits:

- ✓ Ticket discounts for every Questors production (except the pantomime):  
up to 50% discount on an adult ticket for the Season Pass holder (to a minimum ticket price of £10, £8 concessions)  
£2 off ANY number of additional adult or concession tickets  
up to FOUR child tickets at up to 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

Programme: Nigel Bamford  
Theatre Office: 020 8567 0011  
Box Office: 020 8567 5184  
Email: [enquiries@questors.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@questors.org.uk)







# NAME A SEAT

## AND SUPPORT INDEPENDENT THEATRE

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: Paula Robinson

# A REAL RACE AROUND THE WORLD

by David Hovatter and Company

The Studio

14 – 22 February 2025



# A REAL RACE AROUND THE WORLD

The idea to go round the world in less than 80 days was Nellie Bly's. Nellie Bly (real name Elizabeth Cochrane – she adopted Bly as a byline) was born in a small mill town in Pennsylvania in 1864, moving to Pittsburgh, a town full of smoke-belching factories, in 1880. After the death of her father, Nellie supported her mother as best she could, not having had much of an education. An article in a local paper belittling women coerced her into writing a withering riposte, which earned her a chance to write for the paper, and eventually a career in journalism. She became notorious for her undercover reports which often exposed corruption and the disadvantageous conditions under which many women lived and worked.

By contrast Elizabeth Bisland, born at the tail end of the Civil War, lived with her family in a sugar cane plantation in Louisiana. Times were hard as, like most Southern families after the war, hers had very little money. Her mother had literary aspirations which fed Elizabeth's love of poetry, eventually submitting her poems and stories to literary journals. Recognition of her literary talent inspired her to move to New York, where she not only found acclaim for her writing, but also became somewhat of a society hostess.

When the Round the World race began, both women lived a few blocks from each other in New York. And when they died of pneumonia, both women were buried in the same cemetery in the Bronx, within a quarter mile radius.

I'd never heard of either women until I saw a *Drunk History* episode featuring the race. The more I researched the facts behind the race, the more I wanted to show how different the women were, although each having inordinate courage and determination. Bly was tough. She had seen her mother suffer after the death of her husband and her subsequent remarriage to a drunk and abusive man. Bly was determined that she would never have to rely on a man to support her, and to make a career and a life for herself.

Bisland was a much more refined character, full of Southern gentility, but with an inner steel of belief in her own ability and her literary voice. Her writing has an astonishing beauty, whereas Bly writes reportage: facts, facts and nothing but the facts.

I found their stories inspiring, and I wanted to celebrate their achievement in circumnavigating the world with songs and dancing. Luckily I found a group of actors who were incredibly creative and imaginative. I thought it seemed appropriate that women should tell this story, which is why, apart from the musicians, the cast are female. They have been as fearless and irresolute as Bly and Bisland.

I decided to use a mixture of live and pre-recorded music. Julian Smith, the musical director, has reworked brilliantly the 1930s songs I am using, giving old songs new life. The sound designers have been able to erase the vocals from 1930s recordings, allowing the cast to sing alongside some of the best jazz orchestras of that era.

I wanted to use swing dancing, and a Questors actor, Freddy Henry, offered her skills as a swing dancer to choreograph some of the dance numbers.

**David Hovatter, Director**

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## SONGS

<i>Chant of the Jungle</i>	sung by the cast
<i>I Love to Take Orders from You</i>	sung by Hannah Victory and cast
<i>Let's Go Places and Do Things</i>	sung by Jennifer Nettles and cast
<i>Rhythm of the Sea</i>	sung by Rebecca Llanes
<i>Snake Charmer</i>	sung by Rebecca Llanes
<i>Following You</i>	sung by Fionna Gough and Asha Gill
<i>When the World Is at Rest</i>	sung by Fionna Gough and cast
<i>Geisha Girl</i>	sung by Falko
<i>If You Want the Rainbow You Must Have the Rain</i>	sung by Phoebe Fitzgerald
<i>Back in Your Own Backyard</i>	sung by Asha Gill and cast

# A REAL RACE AROUND THE WORLD

by David Hovatter and Company

First performance of this production at The Questors Theatre: 14 February 2025

## CAST

Nellie Bly	<b>Fionna Gough</b>
Elizabeth Bisland	<b>Asha Gill</b>
John Cockerill, Editor of <i>The World</i>	<b>Hannah Victory</b>
John Brisben Walker, Editor of <i>The Cosmopolitan</i>	<b>Jennifer Nettles</b>
<i>World</i> Reporter, Ensemble	<b>Rebecca Llanes</b>
<i>World</i> Reporter, Ensemble	<b>Kate Kasampali</b>
<i>Cosmopolitan</i> Reporter, Ensemble	<b>Phoebe Fitzgerald</b>
<i>Cosmopolitan</i> Reporter, Geisha girl, Ensemble	<b>Falko</b>
Musician, Jules Verne	<b>Gareth Bevan</b>

The performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes  
including a 15-minute interval

## PRODUCTION

Director	<b>David Hovatter</b>
Musical Director	<b>Julian Smith</b>
Costume Designer	<b>Jenny Richardson</b>
Choreographer assisted by	<b>Freddy Henry Falko</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Andrew Whadcoat</b>
Sound Designers/Operators	<b>Yousef Sheikh-Warak, Mike Wyer</b>
Stage Management	<b>Sadie Crowder, Lloyd Wallis</b>
Wardrobe Assistants	<b>Kath Cooke, Caroline Gibbon, Helen Karasiewicz, Delia O'Rourke</b>
Lighting Rigger	<b>Terry Mummery</b>
Photographer	<b>Paula Robinson</b>
Videographer	<b>Jane Arnold-Forster</b>
Thanks to	<b>Carla Evans, Anne Gilmour</b>

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



# Biographies

## **Gareth Bevan – Musician, Jules Verne**

Gareth's background is in musical theatre and so he was really intrigued when David approached him with the idea for *A Real Race Around the World*, especially with the added incitement of teaming up again with Julian Smith. Gareth's recent involvements at The Questors have included *The Ealing Club*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Treasure Island*.

## **Falko – Cosmopolitan Reporter, Geisha Girl, Ensemble**

Falko has been involved in a number of theatrical fields, including: drama training with Questors Student Group 56, a Musical Theatre Diploma from CityLit and training at Academy Drama School (Whitechapel); BSL theatrical interpreting at Off Cut Festivals of new writing (Riverside Studios) and *Twelfth Night* (Compass Theatre and The Dell); acting at the TVI Studios Los Angeles; as well as dance in Zimbabwe, various cabarets (Workout99 and Bodytech) and choreography with Falko & the Freekout Faktory.

## **Phoebe Fitzgerald – Cosmopolitan Reporter, Ensemble**

Phoebe is an actor and singer from West Sussex. Training includes BA Musical Theatre at the London College of Music and ISP Foundation at Trinity Laban Conservatoire. Phoebe has worked in professional Pantomimes and Theatre in Education. Credits include *Jack and the Beanstalk* (tour), *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (tour), *Legally Blonde* (LCM), *Evita* (LCM), *Losing My Mind: A Sondheim Disco Fever* (LCM).

## **Asha Gill – Elizabeth Bisland**

An active member at Richmond Shakespeare Society, you will usually find Asha hiding backstage directing, writing, or fiddling with hair and make-up. This is her first play at The Questors, and she's so glad to be finally putting her Physical Theatre degree to good use.

## **Fionna Gough – Nellie Bly**

Fionna is a professional actor with plenty of experience on stage, screen and voice over. Her previous Questors credits include Mia in *That Face*, Hannah in *Days of Significance*, Rdeca in *First Love is the Revolution*, Julia in *The Ghost Train*, Zara in *Consent*, Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Hannah Rusted in *The Welkin*.

## **Freddy Henry – Choreographer**

Freddy has been a Questors member since 1993 and Student Group 49. Productions include *Here Comes the Chopper*, *The Suicide*, *A Taste of Honey*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Playhouse Creatures*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Oliver*, *New Boy*, *Dogs Barking*, *La Ronde*, *Bedroom Farce*, *Hayfever*, *The Miser* and *The 39 Steps*. Freddy is very happy to be back, now using her dancing skills.

## **David Hovatter – Director**

David joined The Questors in the mid-1980s. Having acted for a while, he began devising plays, starting with *Moby Dick* and, more recently, *The Dog and the Scarf*, *The Haunted Kimono*, *The Enchanted Knight*, *The Overcoat*, *Potter's Amazing Fleas*, *The Marvellous Land of Oz* and, during Covid, *The Bard in the Yard* and *What the Dickens?*

## **Kate Kasampali – World Reporter, Ensemble**

Kate trained at Drama Studio London and joined The Questors, performing in *The Physicists* and *Tom Jones*. In summer 2024, she starred as Tiresias in the digital rhapsody *Nekyia* by Homer at Greece's Ancient Theatre of Philippi (capacity 4,000). In the past, she has captivated audiences in a variety of plays, including *Rotterdam* (Alice), *Closer* (Alice Ayres/Jane Jones), *Angels in America* (Harper Pitt), *Julius Caesar* (Portia), and *Helen* by Euripides. She recently completed LAMDA training in the Chekhov technique.

## **Rebecca Llanes – World Reporter, Ensemble**

Rebecca is excited to make her onstage Questors debut in *A Real Race Around the World*. Previously, she was an assistant stage manager for *The Mystery of Fellstone Manor*. Since moving to the UK, she has been involved at Richmond Shakespeare Society, performing in *ENRON* (Ensemble) and *The Flint Street Nativity* (Gabriel). Back in the States, Rebecca was seen on her university's stage in several productions such as *Heather the Musical*, *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Picnic*. Rebecca would like to thank her loving husband for all of his support – happy Valentine's Day.

## **Jennifer Nettles – John Brisben Walker**

Jennifer is delighted to be singing and dancing her way back to the Questors stage after working on shows in South London. She has always loved musical theatre, but never dreamed she would have a chance to perform in such an exciting race around the world.



**Jenny Richardson – Costume Designer**

After many years working in stage management, props and set design, Jenny enjoyed a change of direction to costume design, recently for *The Anniversary*, *The Cane*, *The Pillowman*, *Medea*, *The Slaves of Solitude*, *Whispers in the Wings*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Albion*, *The Herd*, *The Contingency Plan*, *Murder on the Nile*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Little Dorrit*. Jenny is also frequently in demand as an upholsterer.

**Yousef Sheikh-Warak – Sound Designer**

Yousef has extensive experience in Music Education, specialising in Music and Music Technology. As a part-time lecturer at University College London, he explores inclusion and the impact of disabilities on musical performance. His technical contributions have been acknowledged at the prestigious Music Tech Festival in Berlin.

**Julian Smith – Musical Director**

Julian's acting credits at The Questors include Feste in *Twelfth Night*, Edward Kynaston in *Nell Gwynne*, Clov in *End Game*, Winston Smith in *George Orwell's 1984*, Balthasar in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar*. He runs touring theatre company Teatro Unfortunato and has an unhealthy obsession with ukuleles and peanut butter sandwiches.

**Hannah Victory – John Cockerill**

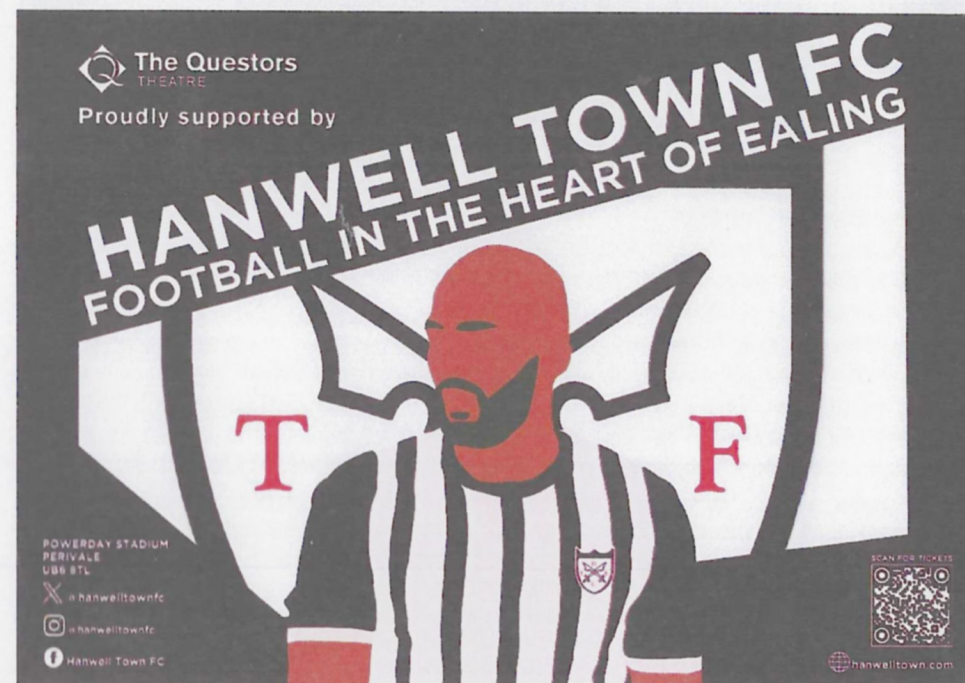
Hannah is an actor-musician and circus aerialist. Credits include *The Welkin*, *Tom Jones* (The Questors), *Gentleman Jack*, *TARO*, *Three Sisters* (Brockley Jack), *Richard II* (Bread & Roses), *The House of Bernarda Alba* (London Theatre), *Julius Caesar* (V&A), *Barge Baby* (Courtyard & EdFringe), *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead* (Wright Theatre), *The Seagull* (Jarman Theatre).

**Andrew Whadcoat – Lighting Designer**

Andrew joined the lighting team in 2013 and enjoys lighting shows in the Studio and Playhouse and training new members. Recent lighting designs include *The Ghost Train*, *Peregrine Proteus*, *Little Dorrit*, the Churchill double bill, *Murder on the Nile*, *Dragon's Teeth*, *The White Carnation*, *Find Me*, *London Wall*, *How to Disappear Completely*, *The Mystery of Fellstone Manor* and *The Anniversary*.

**Mike Wyer – Sound Designer**

Mike joined The Questors in 2023, fifteen years after using the Studio for the Edinburgh preview of *Plague! The Musical*. At The Questors, he recently co-designed the sound for *The Anniversary*. Previous sound design credits for other companies include the London premiere of Alan Ayckbourn's *Life and Beth*, as well as productions of *Flare Path*, *Calendar Girls* and *King Lear*.



## NEXT AT THE QUESTORS

**LIONBOY**

by Zizou Corder,  
adapted by Marcelo Dos Santos  
25 February – 1 March 2025

**The Judi Dench Playhouse**

Charlie Ashanti lives in a future where cars are banned and companies are more powerful than countries. Charlie is a perfectly normal boy, except that he can speak to cats. When his parents are kidnapped, he sets off on a rescue mission – with help from a floating circus and its pride of lions. *Lionboy* is presented here by Questors Youth Theatre, but was commissioned and first produced by award-winning theatre company Complicité in 2013.

**TROJAN BARBIE**

by Christine Evans  
21 – 29 March 2025  
The Studio

Past and present violently collide when Lotte, a 21st century doll repairer, is captured while touring the ruins of Troy and flung back into ancient war-torn times. The Questors Student Group's production of *Trojan Barbie* retells the epic fall of Troy through the modern eyes of our unlikely heroine. Inspired by Euripides' *Trojan Women*, this play explores the trauma and trials women have faced since war first raged thousands of years ago.