

# THE QUESTORS THEATRE

## YOU WANT TO ACT AT THE QUESTORS...

Experience has taught us that some notes are appreciated by those considering applying for an audition to become an acting member. To simplify things, we have set the information out in the form of questions and answers.

## WHY DO I HAVE TO AUDITION?

Because we are anxious to maintain the standard of acting that has helped to earn The Questors its high reputation. Although we are amateur, our standards are generally at a professional level. We insist on high standards in everything we do. We want our actors to be actors of quality. We do not believe that auditions will always enable us to judge this, but we do not know of any other means that is feasible or more reliable. Your audition is likely to show us what we could expect from you as an actor if we were to accept you.

## SHOULD I APPLY FOR AN ACTING AUDITION?

Unless you have some reasonable experience, or some training, the answer is probably "no". Acting is a skill that takes years to develop and whatever natural talent you start with has to be nurtured and trained. If you do not have experience or training, your chance of success in the audition is very small. Nevertheless, if you show the kind of professional standard we are looking for, lack of experience or training is not a bar.

If you are looking for a hobby to keep you interested for a couple of nights a week, again the answer is "no". Being a Questors actor involves time, and hard work and dedication - but it is, of course, worth it!

If you've had some relevant acting experience or training, if you're serious about acting and want to extend your experience, the answer is "yes". Fill in the attached application form and send it to the Auditions Secretary at The Questors.

If you are not sure what kind of standard we are looking for, you are strongly advised to see one or more Questors productions before applying.

If you have the talent, but not the training or experience, your best route to becoming an acting member of The Questors might be to apply for our Acting Foundation course (the Student Group)– see below.

## WHEN AND WHERE DO AUDITIONS TAKE PLACE?

Usually once a month (except August) on a weekday evening in a reasonably sized rehearsal room. You will be asked to come at 7.30 pm and to stay if necessary all evening (i.e. until 10.15 pm).

## WHO AUDITIONS ME?

A panel of experienced Questors directors and actors, at least 2, usually 3 or 4, sometimes 5 or 6. The chairman is David Emmet.

## HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR THE AUDITION?

You are asked to prepare two short pieces of your own choice, each lasting no more than 2-3 minutes. There is no requirement that one should be Shakespeare, though of course you may do Shakespeare if you choose.

Your two pieces should be contrasting in some way, so as to show different aspects of your acting. The contrast may be, for example, one of the period, style, verse and prose or character type. Each speech should be the speech of *one* character; if necessary, a member of the auditioning panel will

give you the odd cue-line, but it is quite permissible to 'tack' speeches together, providing that this makes sense and has genuine continuity. We do not advise you to imagine the cues in a conversation and leave appropriate pauses. You should also know the play which the speech comes from, so that you have a broader idea of the character and situation than that provided merely by the speech.

You should be clear about the physical conditions you wish to play in - there will be a limited assortment of furniture available (mainly tables and chairs) and a reasonable amount of space. You are not expected to address your speech to the panel (who are seated behind a table) unless it is valid to do so in the context of the play. Remember that movement can also be a significant factor in an audition. We don't expect you to audition in any kind of costume unless you regard it as absolutely essential to your piece.

If any special prop is indispensable, we advise you to bring it with you, although the miming of props is usually perfectly acceptable. Nor do we expect you to produce copies of your audition pieces for us to read, and we do not normally expect to have to act as prompters. Obviously, you are expected to have learnt your pieces thoroughly. You are not expected to give each piece a formal introduction, but if we do not know the play, we will probably ask you to give some background information about situation and character.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE AUDITION?**

The audition will begin at 7.30 pm with a short warm up involving all the evening's applicants. This is to enable you to loosen up, relax and begin to get to know each other and the panel.

Then each applicant will be invited into the room one at a time to present their two audition pieces. You will give your two pieces straight through with only a short break in between, if you wish to have one.

Thereafter, the form of the audition is flexible, and will be decided and explained to you by the panel. Everyone will be invited to sit down individually with the panel for a short interview and talk about their work. For some applicants that will then be the end of the audition. But other applicants may be invited to work further, either to do one or both their pieces again, or to be directed by the panel on one of their pieces, or to do an improvisation. This is not a sign that you have done badly; it means simply that the panel wants to look at you more closely and try to ensure that they make the right decision.

There is no element of competition between those at the audition. You are being looked at as individuals. If everyone comes up to the right standard, everyone will be accepted as an acting member.

### **WHAT STANDARD IS BEING LOOKED FOR?**

The test that the panel apply in deciding whether you should be accepted is: "Do we feel confident, based on what we have seen, that we could put this actor on the Questors stage, and expect to see a performance at least up to average Questors standard?" This takes into account your voice and movement, as well as your acting.

### **WHAT ARE MY CHANCES?**

Averaged over time, the success rate is just over 50%.

### **WHEN AM I TOLD IF I'VE BEEN ACCEPTED?**

At the end of the evening, after the panel have deliberated, David Emmet will speak to you, tell you the result, give you advice and if asked give you some limited feedback on your pieces. You are encouraged to stay for this, though you are free to leave after your interview if you wish.

In any event, a letter confirming the result will be sent to you by the Auditions Secretary the next working day.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM ACCEPTED?**

You will then become an acting member of The Questors. This entitles you, so long as you keep up your subscription, to audition for productions at The Questors. All acting members are sent regular information on the productions coming up, the performance dates, when rehearsals start, and when and where the auditions are being held. The rest is up to you. Being an acting member does not guarantee that you will get cast in a play, but with up to 22 productions a year, there are many opportunities. Those actors who audition regularly *do* get cast.

## **WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT IF I AM CAST IN A PRODUCTION?**

Plays are cast usually about 6-8 weeks before the first rehearsal. The rehearsal period is usually 8 weeks. Over that period, rehearsals take place 5 times a week, 4 weekday evenings from 7.30 to 10.15 and on Sunday, usually from 2.30 to 9.00. Of course, the extent to which you are required will depend on the nature of the play and your part, but in the last two weeks of rehearsal, probably the whole cast will be called to every rehearsal. There will then be 7 or 8 performances over 1 week, though some shows run for longer, especially the Christmas shows.

It is also understood that all members of The Questors, actors included, will do their share of occasional duties to help keep the theatre running: front of house, bar work, programme selling, refreshments etc. You are also strongly encouraged to work in backstage departments from time to time as well.

## **WHAT IF I AM NOT ACCEPTED?**

If you are unfortunately not accepted, the panel will do their best to advise you.

A very common piece of advice is that you should apply for our Acting Foundation Course (the Student Group) - see below. This advice, if given, is most certainly not a flat rejection. On the contrary, it means that the panel consider that you have considerable talent, which if trained could enable you to become a Questors actor after completing the course. The course is very highly regarded both within and outside The Questors. About a third of our acting members are graduates from this course. If you are a beginner to acting, you may well be advised to join Acting for All – a three-term beginner's acting group, which you can join at the start of any term.

You may audition again, especially if the panel expressly recommend you to do so, but you should consider carefully the feedback you receive in order to judge your chance of success. If you do decide to re-audition, you are advised not to do so immediately, but to leave it for a while: become active at The Questors and get to know us and our work.

And lastly, of course, whatever the outcome of your audition, The Questors will always welcome you as a member. There are many other ways in which you can get involved: working backstage, designing, constructing, making costumes, doing publicity etc.

## **THE ACTING FOUNDATION COURSE (THE STUDENT GROUP)**

This is a one-year part-time course which starts every September. It involves classes on Saturday afternoons and Tuesday and Thursday evening. It leads on to a second year - the Advanced Performance Course, which culminates in two full-scale productions. The aim is to prepare talented actors who lack experience or training to work at The Questors, or to go on to drama school. The training is both methodical and practical, and stresses the need to learn by doing, while at the same time understanding what it is that you are doing. Students who complete the course are likely to have a better understanding of the art of acting than they would get from many full-time drama schools. The minimum age is 18; there is no maximum age.

## **AND FINALLY...**

Good luck with your audition! If there is anything else you'd like to know, ring 020 8567 0011 weekdays 9.30-7.00, or email [enquiries@questors.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@questors.org.uk)



Please give details of your interest in or experience of other branches of theatre.

What Questors productions have you seen? If many, list the most recent.

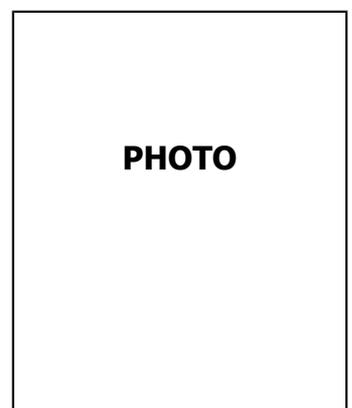
Can you sing, dance or play a musical instrument? Please indicate to what standard.

**[Tick one of the following. If you tick (b) or (c), please fill in the payment form on the next page.]**

- (a) I am already a member of The Questors.
- (b) I am not already a member of The Questors and wish to join irrespective of whether I pass my audition. Please enrol me straight away.
- (c) I am not already a member of The Questors and wish to join only if I pass my audition. Please do not take any payment at this stage.

Signature..... Date.....

**Now please attach a small passport size photograph, with your name written on the back.**



**Send this form to:**

**Auditions Secretary, The Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, Ealing W5 5BQ**

# Membership Payment

Please tick one box below to indicate your membership category and fee:

- Standard: £65 (£5.42 monthly\*)       Under 26: £30 (£2.50 monthly\*)  
 Age 65 and over: £55 (£4.58 monthly\*)       Receiving benefits: £40 (£3.33 monthly\*)

\* Direct debit only

**OPTION 1** Please charge my **credit or debit card** (payable annually only)

**Mastercard / Visa** (delete as appropriate) (unnecessary if you complete direct debit form below)

Card number..... Expiry date.....Security code.....

Name (as it appears on card).....

Billing address.....

.....Postcode.....

Signature..... Date.....

**OPTION 2** I wish to pay by **direct debit** and have completed the mandate below.  
 I want to pay annually/monthly\* (delete as appropriate)

<b>Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit</b>										
Please return the completed form to: The Questors Theatre Mattock Lane London W5 5BQ	Service User Number <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;">9</td> <td style="width: 20px;">8</td> <td style="width: 20px;">0</td> <td style="width: 20px;">1</td> <td style="width: 20px;">5</td> <td style="width: 20px;">9</td> </tr> </table>		9	8	0	1	5	9		
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Bank/Building Society account number <table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 20px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>									Instruction to your bank or building society Please pay The Questors Ltd Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with The Questors Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.	
Branch Sort Code <table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 20px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>							Signature(s)..... ..... Date..... .....			
Name and address of your bank/building society Name..... Address..... .....Postcode.....										
Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account										
<b>The Direct Debit Guarantee</b> This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits. If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit, The Questors Theatre will notify you 7 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Questors Theatre to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of your request. If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Questors Theatre or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society. If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Questors Theatre asks you to. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.										