

About your Trinity examiner



Peter Thomson

Peter is a writer, director and actor. He went up to Oxford as a Choral Scholar, and finished as an English Scholar. After graduating, Peter began his career as an actor, and played lead roles in numerous West End, repertory and fringe productions, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Boyfriend*, *Salad Days*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Cabaret*, *Privates on Parade*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Anthony and Cleopatra*.

During his time as an actor, Peter gained extensive experience in both directing and writing. This led to a decision to focus more on writing and directing. To date he has had over thirty plays produced on BBC radio, and fifteen stage plays in theatres around the UK. His work as a playwright includes adaptations of *The White Devil* and *Richard II* for the World Service, and the original plays *Sweet William*, *Love is Strange*, and *Larry the Lamb* for Radio 4. *Larry the Lamb*, based on Kafka's story *The Hunger Artist* was subsequently adapted for the stage and produced at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast. His most recent work for radio was an adaptation of *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* for Radio 4. Actors appearing in his plays have included Bill Nighy, Brian Cox, Jenny Agutter, Samuel West, Jim Broadbent, and even the late lamented cricket commentator Brian Johnston.

He has also written numerous plays for children, including twelve individual plays, each one based on the stories behind the Zodiac signs. He has had one picture book published - *The Palace of Cards* - and has recently published a book about a return to his home town in Iran - *The Gulf: A Journey Back to Iran*. This is written under a pseudonym.

Peter has worked extensively as a director, both in repertory theatre and on the fringe. His adaptation and production of Gogol's *The Nose* at the King's Head, Islington, won a fringe award for Production of the Year. He has worked both as a teacher and director in several drama schools and universities. He was head of Postgraduate Acting at Guildford School of Acting, and has been a visiting lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia, and in Theatre Studies at the University of Surrey and Roehampton Institute. He also assisted director Mike Alfreds in a production of George Bernard Shaw's *Too True to be Good*, on a tour finishing at the Lyric, Hammersmith.

During lockdown he conducted a series of interviews with Mike Alfreds about his life, career and working methods. In addition to these conversations with Mike Alfreds, he also talked to actors who had worked with him, and been influenced by him, including Sir Ian McKellen, Sir Mark Rylance, the American film actor Michelle Williams, Pam Ferris

and Sian Thomas. These extensive interviews are on Peter's YouTube channel, which also includes performances of his own work - and some talks and readings.

Peter has written the libretto for a choral piece - *A Knock On the Door* - commissioned by Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture, with music by Sally Beamish, which was performed in November 2022. A Christmas carol - *Can You Hear Me* - was performed at the Royal Albert Hall over Christmas 21/22, and is now available on Spotify and Apple Music. He has directed a semi-staged premiere production of *The Judas Passion* (libretto David Harsent, music Sally Beamish) for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, which was performed in Saffron Walden and St. John's Smith Square. He is now working regularly with Sally Beamish as librettist, director and dramaturg.

He is currently casting his film *Mole*, and is drafting a documentary about his South African cousin Barbara Hogan, who was imprisoned for 10 years under the apartheid regime, before becoming Nelson Mandela's finance minister. He is also in the process of editing a short film of a piece he has written called *Mac the Anecdote*

Peter still enjoys performing - he has appeared as the Narrator in Sally Beamish's *The Seafarer Trio* in a number of performances from Norway to Australia; he recently appeared with Jonathan Tafler in his short film *Bomb* - a two-hander based on his father's war-time experience as a spitfire pilot. Since the 2020/2021 lockdown he has been regularly performing as lead singer and bass guitarist in a jazz group - *The York Road Band* - both on his doorstep, and in a variety of community settings. Most recently the band played with and supported legendary jazz violinist Christian Howes.

Peter has two sons, lives in Brighton, and is married to composer Sally Beamish.

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