PRIVATE LIVES

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PRODUCTION SUPPORT IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY M. FAINER
DIRECTOR’S NOTES

COMETS IN THE SKY

BY CAREY PERLOFF

At the beginning of my directing career, I had the good fortune to be in rehearsal with Harold Pinter, who took me aside one day and said, “If you respond so strongly to my stuff, perhaps it’s time for you to direct Noël Coward.”

It has taken thirty years for me to follow his advice, but as soon as I got into the room with Coward’s forensic language and his desperate, hilarious, love-sick characters, I understood what Pinter meant. It is often assumed that Coward’s world is a kind of brittle upper-class exercise in style, but (as is the case with Pinter) the gorgeous surface of his language belies a kind of existential and chaotic despair underneath. “Expert use of language is to me a perpetual joy,” Coward averred; in particular, he was a master at language that conceals as much as it reveals, that protects the speaker from exposure or humiliation.

Because the characters in Private Lives have no defined professions and no clear direction in life, they careen around in a kind of no man’s land looking for guideposts around which to orient their behaviour. The 1930s was an era of exploding modernity in which speed was all and pre-war morality had been turned on its head. When love is the flip side of possession, and romance can turn instantly to combat, what are the rules of behaviour? How should we live? What is “normal” behaviour, anyway? Coward (again, like Pinter) was an entirely self-made man, extraordinarily erudite but without a university education, comfortable at the swankiest levels of British culture but hailing originally from a poor and anonymous background. So everything in his theatrical universe is invention and role-playing. Every moment exists to question the status quo. His characters may say they don’t believe in anything, but their feelings run high. Desire is often the most painful (and the most hilarious) emotion possible.

After Antoni Cimolino asked me to direct Private Lives at Stratford this season, I paid a visit to the Coward Archive at Birmingham University in England. Inside dozens of boxes in that library was the whole saga of the creation of Private Lives: Coward’s trip to Shanghai, his waking in the night with an image of Gertrude Lawrence in a Molyneux gown on a balcony in France across from her ex-husband, his writing the play in four days in his hotel room while recovering from flu, his frantic negotiations with Gertie to première the play immediately in spite of her commitment to starring in a cabaret which she first tried to weasel out of and
finally abandoned. What was immediately palpable was the reckless joy Coward took in writing, coupled with the discipline of an actor who knew what it was to charm an audience eight times a week. It has been said that Coward was a performer who wrote, rather than a writer who performed, and it is the crystalline and heartbreaking roles that he created for himself and other actors that most distinguish his work.

Indeed, his favourite acting partner for many years was Gertrude Lawrence, for whom Coward created fierce and fabulous modern women testing the waters of a new world order. These were women who refused to be victimized or patronized; they gave as good as they got, even when that meant breaking gramophone records over their lover’s head. So who, we might ask, are Coward’s characters to us now, ninety years after their creation? Rather than judge them by some realistic standard either of our own time or his, perhaps it is more useful to imagine them like force fields or comets streaking through the night sky, occasionally colliding and exploding in their elliptical quest for direction or meaning.

“If all the various cosmic thingummys fuse at the same moment, and the right spark is struck, there’s no knowing what one mightn’t do. That was the trouble with Elyot and me, we were like two violent acids bubbling about in a nasty matrimonial bottle,” Amanda explains to Victor. I found that image arresting. So in lieu of realistic balconies and a literal Parisian apartment, we have set our Private Lives inside the curved walls of Ken MacDonald’s paper cut-out fantasy world.

Against the undulating shapes of these Gaudí-like surfaces, Coward’s language can fly free of encumbrance, backed by starlit skies or fuchsia walls that perhaps echo the Shanghai where the play was composed. The walls function like puzzle pieces that transform the space from Act I to Act II, mirroring the shifting alliances of Coward’s two matrimonial couples who collide, separate, and regroup before our eyes. Love, in this play, is infinitely changeable, prismatic, delicious, violent and terrifying. Perhaps that’s why it’s so exhilarating to revisit Private Lives.

SET DESIGN BY KEN MACDONALD
Noël Coward never believed he had just a talent to amuse. A man who spent a lifetime merchandising his de-luxe persona, Coward liked to make a distinction between accomplishment and vanity: “I am bursting with pride, which is why I have absolutely no vanity.” A performer’s job is to be sensational; and in his songs, plays and public performances, Coward lived up to the responsibility of making a proper spectacle of himself. His peers had difficulty in fathoming this phenomenon. T. E. Lawrence thought Coward had “a hasty kind of genius.” Sean O’Casey spat spiders at the mention of his name: “Mr. Coward hasn’t yet even shaken a baby-rattle of life in the face of one watching audience.” J. B. Priestley, as late as 1964, taxed him mischievously: “What is all this nonsense about being called the Master?” Shaw, who prophesied success for the fledgling playwright in 1921, warned him “never to fall into a breach of essential good manners.” He didn’t.

A star is his own greatest invention. Coward’s plays and songs were primarily vehicles to launch his elegant persona on the world. In his clipped, bright, confident style, Coward irresistibly combined reserve and high camp. He became the merry- andrew of moderation, warning mothers to keep their daughters off the stage, confiding, in Present Laughter (1942), that sex was “vastly overrated” and sardonically pleading: “don’t let’s be beastly to the Germans.” Coward was a performer who wrote: not a writer who happened to perform. He wrote his svelte, wan good looks into the role of Nicky Lancaster in The Vortex (1924): “He is extremely well-dressed,” explain the stage directions. “He is tall and pale, with thin nervous hands.” The play made Coward a sensation both as an actor and as a playwright. Coward was his own hero; and the parts he created for himself were, in general, slices of his legendary life. Leo (Design for Living), Charles Condomine (Blithe Spirit), Hugo Latymer (A Song at Twilight) are all smooth, successful writers. Garry Essendine (Present Laughter), George Pepper (“Red Peppers” from Tonight at 8:30) and Elyot Chase, a man of no apparent métier in Private Lives who nonetheless manages a dance and a few songs at the piano, all exploited Coward’s theatrical past. Even in the Second World War, when he hoped his writing talent could be put to some serious use, it was Coward’s presence that was valued. “Go out and sing ‘Mad Dogs and Englishmen’ while the guns are firing – that’s your job,” Churchill told him. Coward’s massive output (sixty produced plays, over three hundred published songs, plus screenplays, volumes of short stories, autobiography and fiction) contributes to his legend. His work was so successful an advertisement for himself that Kenneth Tynan, I think rightly, observed: “even the youngest of us will know in fifty years’ time what we meant by ‘a very Noël Coward sort of person’.”

In the introduction to his first volume of plays (1925), Coward mentions “the present democratic destruction of all social barriers.” Coward himself personified the myth. The son of a Teddington piano salesman found himself the rage of café society in London and New York, “up to my arse in nobles.” As Coward wrote, “the imposing doors of the stately homes of England” were no longer “austerely closed to the theatrical profession … the cream of the aristocracy enthusiastically hobnobs with the clotted cream of the profession….” The equality of the theatre world was hardly an accurate barometer of English society, where one per cent of the population still owned two-thirds of...
the national wealth and three-fourths of
the population owned less than a hundred
pounds. It was easier to democratize the
stage world than the real one. And Coward
did just that. His streamlined dialogue was
a red flag to the John Bulls who thought
his vernacular English subversive to their
patrician world view. In the mischievous
opinion of Somerset Maugham, Coward
spearheaded the new naturalism that
“reproduced the average talk with its
hesitations, mumbling and repetitions and
broken sentences, of average people.”

Coward came to see that the machinery
and assumptions behind the traditional
well-made play were inadequate for
chronicling a society transformed by the
World War. . . . [He] updated drawing-room
drama by introducing both a new pace
and new people. His characters are still
rich. They are still an elite; but their status
comes not only from birth but from some
exceptional quality of mind. A talentocracy
mixes with the aristocracy. They use
manners; but they are not bound by them.
Instead of acting out the pre-war sense
of continuity in English life, Coward’s
characters register the post-war isolation.
They are, like the indulgent “Children of
the Ritz” in Coward’s song (1932), “only
half aware / That all we’ve counted on is
breaking into bits.” In the pre-war formula,
the characters’ sense of self is defined
by society. But in Coward’s best early
comedies (Hay Fever, Private Lives, Design
for Living), the “exigencies of the world”
no longer apply. The characters’ worlds
are defiantly private and self-obsessed.
The pre-war drawing-room drama was
built out of people acting against strict
moral/social principles. In Coward’s
comedies, the drama is built around people
testing principles. Unlike their plot-heavy
antenecedents, Coward’s characters live
comparatively plotless lives. Although
Coward’s comedies are well-made, the life
they depict has lost its thru-line.

The Depression put an end to the question
of which set of values would prevail. Private
Lives (1930), a triumph of personality and
pace, caught the mood of dissolution.
The bright, breezy veneer of its cross-talk
hid disenchantment with a smile. The old
narrative stage conventions had disappeared
as well as anything remotely resembling
the old values. Romance is a put-on, honour
a masquerade, loyalty hardly an issue,
communication a kind of truce between
flying lamps. . . . Minimal as an art deco curve,
Private Lives’ form matched its content: a
plotless play for purposeless people.

Frivolity, as Coward embodied it, was an
act of freedom, of disenchantment. He had
been among the first popular entertainers
to give a shape to his generation’s sense
of absence. His frivolity celebrates a
metaphysical stalemate, calling it quits with
meanings and certainties. “We none of us
ever mean anything,” says Sorel Bliss amid
the put-ons at the Bliss house party in Hay
Fever (1925). The homosexual sense of
the capriciousness of life is matched by a
capricious style. “I think very few people
are completely normal really, deep down
in their private lives. It all depends on a
combination of circumstances. If all the
various cosmic thingummys fuse at the
same moment . . .”: thus Amanda in Private
Lives. This high-camp style, of which
Coward was the theatrical master, worked
as a kind of sympathetic magic to dispel
both self-hatred and public scorn. “Has it
ever struck you that flippancy might cover
a very real embarrassment?” someone
asks, again in Private Lives. The most
gossamer of his good plays, Private Lives
is adamant on the subject of frivolity.

ELYOT (seriously): You mustn’t be serious,
my dear one, it’s just what they want.

AMANDA: Who’s they?

ELYOT: All the futile moralists who try to
make life unbearable. Laugh at them. Be
flippant. Laugh at everything, all their sacred
shibboleths. Flippancy brings out the acid in
their damned sweetness and light.

AMANDA: If I laugh at everything, I must
laugh at us too.

ELYOT: Certainly you must. We’re figures of
fun all right.
The battle in Coward’s best comedies is not between licence and control but between gravity and high spirits.

Coward’s best work follows, more or less, this recipe for chaos. His reputation as a playwright rests on *Hay Fever*, *Private Lives*, *Design for Living*, *Present Laughter*, *Blithe Spirit* (1941) and the brilliant cameo *Hands Across the Sea* (1936). In all these comedies of bad manners, the characters are grown-up adolescents. There is no family life to speak of, no children, no commitment except to pleasure. The characters do no real work; and money, in a time of world depression, hunger marches and war, is taken for granted. Monsters of vanity and selfishness, they appeal to the audience because their frivolity has a kind of stoic dignity. Written fast and in full, confident flow (*Hay Fever* – five days; *Private Lives* – four days; *Present Laughter* and *Blithe Spirit* – six days), Coward’s best work has the aggressive edge of his high spirits. “It’s all a question of masks,” explains Leo in *Design for Living*. “Brittle, painted masks. We all wear them as a form of protection; modern life forces us to.” But Coward’s acute awareness (and insistence) on the performing self comes out of a homosexual world where disguise is crucial for survival. Although elsewhere Coward sang about following his secret heart and being mad about the boy, he didn’t push it on stage. His plays tread cautiously around his deeper meanings. The comedies hurry the audience past issues which the dialogue tries tentatively to raise.

[Kenneth] Tynan called Coward “a virtuoso of linguistic nuance.” But it is a disservice to the splendid energy Coward gave to his half-century to put him so elegantly on the literary shelf. His triumph was noisier and, thankfully, more vulgar. He ventilated life with his persona. And it is the frivolity in his plays which has proved timeless. The reason is simple. Frivolity acknowledges the futility of life while adding flavour to it.


**IN SEARCH OF SOLLOCKS**

**BY DAVID PROSSER**

In *Private Lives*, Elyot and Amanda agree to call truce in their quarrels by using the code phrase “Solomon Isaacs,” or “Sollocks” for short.

Solomon Isaacs is a character in Dion Boucicault’s 1841 comedy *London Assurance*, which Coward doubtless would have known. But there are other places where he might have come across the name. A Solomon Isaacs appears in *The Mysterious Stranger*, a novel that Mark Twain struggled, unsuccessfully, to complete before his death. In 1878, *Belford’s Monthly Magazine* ran a Christmas story called “Solomon Isaacs,” by one B. L. Fargeon. The name also belonged to a real-life copper magnate painted by popular nineteenth-century portraitist John Wesley Jarvis. At the other end of the social scale was Isaac (“Ikey”) Solomon, a notorious criminal in Victorian London who is believed to have been Charles Dickens’s inspiration for Fagin in *Oliver Twist*.

But wherever the name came from, its appeal to Coward must surely have lain in the shortened form used by his quarrelling couple. Meaningless though “Sollocks” may be, it does sound just a little bit rude.

*David Prosser is the Stratford Festival’s Literary and Editorial Director.*
RULES OF PALSHIP

In 1911, the young Noël Coward appeared in a children’s play, *Where the Rainbow Ends*. Others in the cast included thirteen-year-old Esmé Wynne (born Dorothy Ripper), with whom Coward formed a close and enduring friendship. She was seventeen and he fifteen when, in August 1915, the two drew up the following “Rules of Palship” to regulate what appear to have been their frequent arguments — rather as Elyot and Amanda try to do in *Private Lives*.

1. We must not tease each other and if we begin we must stop directly we are asked.

2. We must take it in turns to go and see one another and if one goes twice running to the other’s house, the other must do the same afterwards.

3. We must never split on one another even if the PALSHIP is dissolved and we must hold all confidences sacred.

4. We must share all profits in any transaction made together, however slight the help of the other may be. Profits are excluded from any expenses incurred during the said transaction.

5. In case of serious quarrel a week or a fortnight may be taken to think things over before abolishing the PALSHIP.

6. If one hits the other either in anger or fun, he must allow the other to hit back. Any other offence must be paid for.

7. We must stick up for each other against anyone or anything, and stand by each other in all danger.

8. We must tell each other all secrets concerned with ourselves, other confidences may be held sacred even from one another.

9. We must not talk RELIGION unless it is inevitable.

10. When writing to mutual friends we must tell each other, we must also tell each other what we have said in the letter.

11. We must swear by “HONOUR AS A PAL” and hold it THE most sacred of bonds in the world.

12. We must tell each other what we think about the other’s appearance or behaviour.

13. We must go straight to one another in case of mischief being made and believe NOTHING unless it comes from the other’s own lips.

14. NO ONE, not even our Parents, may keep us from one another.

15. If any other rules are formed or thought of, they must be added (with the consent of both) at the end of this document.

16. NO OTHER PERSON may be admitted into our PALSHIP or SECRETS.

Coward and Wynne continued their friendship into adult life, performing together on stage and collaborating on a number of revue sketches, songs and one-act plays. Wynne married in 1918 and left the stage in 1920, her farewell performance being as Faith in the comedy *I’ll Leave It to You*, the first of Coward’s plays to be produced in the West End. She went on to become a novelist and journalist, and died in 1972.
PLAYWRIGHT

NOËL COWARD

Noël Peirce Coward was born on December 16, 1899, in Teddington, Middlesex, England. He made his professional stage debut (as Prince Mussel in the children’s play The Goldfish) at the age of twelve, which led to many child-actor appearances in the next few years.

Several of his own early plays reached the London stage briefly, but it was the controversial The Vortex (1924), with its overt references to drugs and adultery, that made his name as both actor and playwright in the West End and on Broadway. A string of successes ensued: Hay Fever (1925), Fallen Angels (1925) and Easy Virtue (1926), as well as several revues for which he wrote both words and music. He also wrote his first “book” musical, Bitter Sweet (1929).

In Private Lives (1930), Coward appeared with childhood friend Gertrude Lawrence, a professional partnership that continued with Tonight at 8.30 (1936). Cavalcade (1931) was adapted for film and won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1932. That same year brought another revue, Words and Music.

As World War II broke out, Coward had two plays ready to be produced – This Happy Breed and Present Laughter – but they did not open until 1943; meanwhile, the run of Blithe Spirit (1941) outlasted the war. Coward gave troop concerts at home and overseas, toured in plays, produced such classic films as Brief Encounter and In Which We Serve (which he co-directed with a young David Lean as well as writing the score and playing the lead) and acted as an unofficial spy for the Foreign Office.

In the post-war years, when his plays enjoyed only modest success, Coward reinvented himself as a cabaret and TV star. In 1955 he played a sold-out cabaret season at the Desert Inn, Las Vegas, performing such hit songs as “Mad About the Boy,” “If Love Were All,” “Mad Dogs and Englishmen” and “I’ll See You Again.” In all, he wrote more than six hundred songs.

Leaving the U.K. in the mid-1950s, Coward settled in Jamaica and Switzerland. In the early 1960s, he became the first living playwright to have his work produced by the National Theatre when he directed Hay Fever there. Late in his career he was lauded for his roles in such films as Our Man In Havana (1959) and The Italian Job (1968). Knighted in 1970, he died peacefully in 1973 and was buried in his beloved Jamaica.
COWARD: THE SELF-MADE MAN
Chalmers Lounge, Avon Theatre, Wednesday, July 24, 10:45 a.m.–noon. From $25
He’s been described as “his own contribution to the twentieth century,” and his allure survives into the twenty-first. A panel of Noël Coward experts and enthusiasts, including actor-playwright Sky Gilbert and writer and journalist Robert Cushman, discuss how a boy from the London suburbs transformed himself into an international synonym for sophistication.

PRIVATE LETTERS, PUBLIC LIVES
Chalmers Lounge, Avon Theatre, Wednesday, October 2, 10:45 a.m.–noon. From $20
Noël Coward wrote Private Lives as a vehicle for himself and Gertrude Lawrence, and they triumphed in it. As well as being lifelong friends, they were prolific and entertaining correspondents. Company members Sarah Orenstein and Geraint Wyn Davies read a selection of letters between the two as Robert Cushman leads us through an examination of their professional and personal relationship and its impact on Coward’s work.

IF LOVE WERE ALL: A COWARD CABARET
Studio Theatre, Saturday, October 19, 2–4:30 p.m. From $35
Enjoy an afternoon of Noël Coward’s romantic songs performed by Geraint Wyn Davies, Stephen Patterson and others in a cabaret-style celebration.
PRIVATE LIVES | BY NOËL COWARD

THE CAST
in order of appearance

Sibyl Chase
Sophia Walker
Elyot Chase
Geraint Wyn Davies
Victor Prynne
Mike Shara
Amanda Prynne
Lucy Peacock
Louise
Sarah Dodd

UNDERSTUDIES

Sean Arbuckle Elyot Chase
Sarah Dodd Amanda Prynne
Ijeoma Emesowum Sibyl Chase
Jennifer Rider-Shaw Louise
Andrew Robinson Victor Prynne

THERE WILL BE ONE
20-MINUTE
INTERVAL

AUDIENCE ALERT
E-cigarettes are used in this production.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cover: Geraint Wyn Davies, Lucy Peacock. Creative direction by Punch & Judy Inc. Photography by David Cooper.
ARTISTIC CREDITS

Director Carey Perloff
Set Designer Ken MacDonald
Costume Designer Christina Poddubiuk
Lighting Designer Kimberly Purcell
Sound Designer Thomas Ryder Payne
Music Director Laura Burton
Fight Director Anita Nittoly
Choreographer Sara-Jeanne Hosie

Producer David Auster
Casting Director Beth Russell
Creative Planning Director Jason Miller

Assistant Director
Julia Nish-Lapidus
Assistant Set Designer
Julia Kim
Assistant Costume Designer
Patricia Reilly
Assistant Lighting Designer
Logan Raju Cracknell
Associate Fight Director
Geoff Scovell
Dance Captain
Jennifer Rider-Shaw
Fight Captain
Andrew Robinson

Stage Manager
Bona Duncan
Assistant Stage Managers
Bruno Gonsalves
Holly Korhonan
Apprentice Stage Manager
Cassidy Gallant
Production Assistant
Scarlett Larry
Production Stage Managers
Meghan Callan
Michael Hart
Janine Ralph

Technical Director
Eleanor Creelman

BACKSTAGE

Production responsibilities during the performance accomplished by:

Head Carpenter
Paul Gorman
Head Electrician
Greg Bride
Alternate
Christopher Wylie
Head Property
Alan Hughes
Head Sound
Stewart Cappie
Crew
Mark Fisher
Wardrobe Head
Mary-Lou Mason
Swing
William C. Kraft

Wigs and Makeup Show
Head
Teddi Barrett
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Director of Production
Simon Marsden
Production Administrator
Carla Fowler
Administrative Assistant
Cindy Jordan
Associate Technical Director
David Campbell
Metcalf Foundation Intern in Production Management
C.J. Astronomo
Design Coordinator
Mary-Jo Carter Dodd
Technical Director – Scenic Construction
Andrew Mestern
Scene Shop Manager
Evan Bonnah-Hawkes
Technical Management Assistant
Michael Besworth
Transportation
Dirk Newbery
James Thistle
Electronics Technologist
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Dylan Mundy
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Victoria Spain
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Katelyn Vere
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SCENIC ART
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Duncan Johnstone
Assistant Head Scenic Artist
Daniel McManus
Assisted by
Kira Duff
Kevin Kemp
Lisa Summers
Michael Wharran
Steve Wiseman
Blair Yeomans

SCENIC CARPENTRY
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Ryan Flanagan
Assistant Head Carpenter
Paul Cooper
First Hands
Krista Nauman
Sewers
Susy Arnold
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Bijoux/Decoration
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Connie Puetz
Dyeing
Linda Pinhay
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Sylvia Minarcin
Costume Painting
Lisa Hughes
Millinery
Thea C. Crawford
Assisted by
Kaz Maxine
Monica Viani
Apprentice Milliner
Chantel Laurendeau
Purchasing Coordinator
Penelope Schledewitz
Purchasing Assistant
Erin Michelle Steele
Toronto Wardrobe Buyer
Susan Rome
Wardrobe Apprentice
Erin Lounsbury
Additional Costumes by
Evan Stillwater

Warehouse Supervisor
William Schmuck
Warehouse Assistant
Michael Piscitelli

Erica Croft
Jessica Elsbrie
Lena Festoso
Tracy Frayne
Dave Kerr
Angela Moncur
Barbara Newbery
Mallory Reeves
Alana Scheel
Julie Scott
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Head of Wigs and Makeup
Gerald Altenburg
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THE CRUCIBLE
INSPIRED BY HISTORICAL EVENTS, THIS CLASSIC WILL CONSUME YOU.

BOOK YOUR DRAMA

THE CRUCIBLE
BY ARTHUR MILLER
DIRECTED BY JONATHAN GROD

PRODUCTION SUPPORT IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY
SYLVIA & CHRONOS, BY MARTIE & BOB SACHS,
BY ALICE & TIM THORNTON AND BY THE THORNTON FAMILY

Photo: Marish Campus
SEAN ARBUCKLE


SARAH DODD

2019: Louise in Private Lives, Hostess of The Garter in The Merry Wives of Windsor and Mollie Malloy in The Front Page. 10th season. **Stratford:** Paradise Lost, The Comedy of Errors, Treasure Island, Romeo and Juliet, The Breathing Hole, The Importance of Being Earnest, House of Atreus trilogy, The Swanne, Richard III, Private Lives, The Merchant of Venice, Macbeth, The Cherry Orchard, The Alchemist, Julius Caesar, The Seaquill, King Lear. **Elsewhere** (selected): Mustard, The Small Room at the Top of the Stairs, Communion, Humble Boy, The Fall (Tarragon); Domesticated, A Whistle in the Dark, Marion Bridge (Company Theatre); Age of Arousal, The Penelopiad (Nightwood Theatre); Terminus (Outside the March); A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Canadian Stage); Bingo (Factory Theatre). **Film/TV:** Anne with an E (CBC/Netflix), Reign, Murdoch Mysteries. **Training:** George Brown Theatre School. **Awards:** Two Dora Awards, three nominations; Mary Savidge Award and a Jerry. **Et cetera:** Huge love and thanks to Max and Jay.

JENNIFER RIDER-SHAW

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

THE WOMEN ARE THE WINNERS IN THIS GLORIOUS, JOYFUL ROMP!

BOOK YOUR COMEDY

Stratford FESTIVAL

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR | BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTED BY ANTONI CICCOLINO

PRODUCTION SUPPORT IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY
JANE PETERSEN BURFIELD & FAMILY, BY DR. DISTA LEATHEE
IN MEMORY OF PAULINE LEATHEE AND BY DR. N. LEE MYERS

Photo: Brit Wilson (left), Sophia Walker, Gemma Wyn Davies (right)
MIKE SHARA  GERAINT WYN DAVIES  SOPHIA WALKER

Arrows, The Scottish Play
Theatr Clwyd's artistic associate (Welsh National Co.). Film/TV (selected): Company; (Red Bull); Canadian Stage’s Liv Stein
Elsewhere: King Lear Poetic License; New York: (Lincoln Center);
Dylan Thomas, Julius Caesar, Bottom, Polonius, Henry Higgins, Henry V, Bassanio, Tom Fashion, D’Artagnan, Richmond, Edward IV, Hortensio, Falstaff, Fluellen, Claudius, Möbius, Cook (Mother Courage), Gertrude Chiltern (Julius Caesar), Calpurnia (To Kill a Mockingbird), Octavius Caesar (Julius Caesar), Julia (The Two Gentlemen of Verona), Nerissa (The Merchant of Venice), Charmian (Antony and Cleopatra), Hemia (A Midsummer Night’s Dream), Lady Macduff (Macbeth), Lady Capulet (Romeo and Juliet), Luciana (The Comedy of Errors). Elsewhere: Catarina Loss (recurring) on Shadowhunters; Murdoch Mysteries, Carter Files, Carmilla: The Movie, How to Buy a Baby (web series), Designated Survivor, Guilty Party (miniseries), Black Cop, Carmilla III (web series), 12 Monkeys, Born to Be Blue, Vanessa in The DIVIDE (AMC), Happy One Year (Temple Street/City Life), Salma in Dora-winning production of Ruined (Obsidian/Nightwood). Training: Ryerson University, Birmingham Conservatory, Canadian Film Centre Actors’ Conservatory, 2016. Awards: Mary Savidge, Michael Mawson and Jean A. Chalmers awards, 2012 Dora. Et cetera: Love to my family and Gil.

MIKE SHARA

SOPHIA WALKER
2019: Sybil Chase in Private Lives, Mrs. Ford in The Merry Wives of Windsor and Mrs. Schmeller in The Front Page. 11th season. Stratford (selected): Lady Gertrude Chiltern (An Ideal Husband), Calpurnia (To Kill a Mockingbird), Octavius Caesar (Julius Caesar), Julia (The Two Gentlemen of Verona), Nerissa (The Merchant of Venice), Charmian (Antony and Cleopatra), Hemia (A Midsummer Night’s Dream), Lady Macduff (Macbeth), Lady Capulet (Romeo and Juliet), Luciana (The Comedy of Errors). Elsewhere: Catarina Loss (recurring) on Shadowhunters; Murdoch Mysteries, Carter Files, Carmilla: The Movie, How to Buy a Baby (web series), Designated Survivor, Guilty Party (miniseries), Black Cop, Carmilla III (web series), 12 Monkeys, Born to Be Blue, Vanessa in The DIVIDE (AMC), Happy One Year (Temple Street/City Life), Salma in Dora-winning production of Ruined (Obsidian/Nightwood). Training: Ryerson University, Birmingham Conservatory, Canadian Film Centre Actors’ Conservatory, 2016. Awards: Mary Savidge, Michael Mawson and Jean A. Chalmers awards, 2012 Dora. Et cetera: Love to my family and Gil.

GERAINT WYN DAVIES
2019: Elyot Chase in Private Lives and Falstaff in The Merry Wives of Windsor. 15th season. Stratford (selected): Sir Toby Belch, Sir Peter Teazle, Falstaff, Fluellen, Claudius, Mobius, Cook (Mother Courage), Antony, Duke Vincento, Leicester, Cymbeline, Malachi Stack, King Arthur, Stephano, Dylan Thomas, Julius Caesar, Bottom, Polonius, Henry Higgins, Henry V, Bassanio, Tom Fashion, D’Artagnan, Richmond, Edward IV, Hortensio, Antipholus of Syracuse, Pericles. Elsewhere: New York: King Lear (Lincoln Center), Poetic License, Do Not Go Gentle; Women Beware Women (Red Bull), Canadian Stage’s Liv Stein, The Elephant Man; Shaw Festival, five seasons; Prospero, Richard III, Cyrano (Shakespeare Theatre Company); Love’s Labour’s Lost (RSC); Hamlet, Henry VIII (Chichester); An Enemy of the People (Lyric Hammersmith, London); two seasons, Theatré Clwyd’s artistic associate (Welsh National Co.). Film/TV (selected): The Scottish Play, ReGenesis, Murdoch Mysteries, 24, Slings and Arrows, Black Harbour, Airwolf, Forever Knight, American Psycho II, Hypercube, One of the Hollywood Ten, Conspiracy of Fear.
MEGHAN CALLAN
2019: Music director of Private Lives and Little Shop of Horrors. 40th season. Stratford: The Rocky Horror Show, Guys and Dolls, A Chorus Line, The Sound of Music, Charlie Brown, Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris. Composer of numerous productions including Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Memoir and Inherit the Wind. Elsewhere: Musical director: Rich and Famous (director John Rand), A Christmas Carol (director Carey Perloff) (ACT San Francisco); Oliver!, The Music Man (Citadel Theatre, director Robin Phillips); Brent Carver in Concert (Soulpepper). Composer: I Am My Own Wife (NAC); Don Carlos (Soulpepper); Cyrano (Citadel Theatre); A Streetcar Named Desire (Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia). Awards: 2014 Tyrone Award and five Guthrie Awards (Stratford Festival), two Sterling Awards (Citadel) and nominated for Music Direction (San Francisco Bay Awards).

MEGHAN CALLAN
2019: Production stage manager of the Festival Theatre and Avon Theatre. 19th season. Stratford (selected): Paradise Lost, The Virgin Trial, A Little Night Music, The Physicists, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2014), Tommy, You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown, Jesus Christ Superstar, The Tempest (2010). Elsewhere: At Soulpepper, Meghan stage-managed The Virgin Trial and The Goat, or Who is Sylvia? Meghan has worked in stage management for the Shaw Festival, Atlantic Theatre Festival, New Brunswick, NAC, Citadel Theatre, Globe Theatre and Lighthouse Festival Theatre. She has also worked in stage management for corporate clients such as General Motors, Toyota Canada, the Retail Council of Canada and the Canadian International Auto Show. Training: BFA, York University. Awards: 2017 Tyrone Award, Stratford Festival. Et cetera: Much love and thanks to Beatrice, Ella and Peter for their support and for making her so happy.

LOGAN RAJU CRACKNELL

BONA DUNCAN

CASSIDY GALLANT
2019: Apprentice stage manager of Private Lives. Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Apprentice stage manager credits include The Monument (Factory Theatre); Sunshine Express, Buying the Farm, Midnight Madness, Birds of a Feather, Hilda’s Yard (Port Stanley Festival Theatre); Gift of the Magi, Stag and Doe, Mending Fences (Theatre Orangeville).
BOOK YOUR DRAMA

THE FRONT PAGE

POWERFUL 20TH-CENTURY STORY OF CORRUPTION AND TRUTH-TELLING

Stratford Festival

THE FRONT PAGE
BY BEN HECHT & CHARLES MACARTHUR
ADAPTED BY MICHAEL HEALEY
WORLD PREMIERE ADAPTATION, COMMISSIONED BY THE STRATFORD FESTIVAL
DIRECTED BY GRAHAM ABBEY

PRODUCTION SUPPORT IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY NORA MACDONALD HUSLIP

Photo: Ben Carson, Mary Beatty
ARTISTIC COMPANY

BRUNO GONSALVES


MICHAEL HART

2019: Production stage manager of the Avon Theatre and stage manager of Little Shop of Horrors. 23rd season. Stratford: The Rocky Horror Show, The Madwoman of Chaillot, Timan of Athens, The Adventures of Pericles, Blithe Spirit, Hay Fever, The Tempest (starring Christopher Plummer), The Importance of Being Earnest and King Lear (both starring Brian Bedford), The Taming of the Shrew, Fallen Angels, A Delicate Balance, The Duchess of Malfi, The Liar, The Swanne (all three parts), High-Gravel-Blind. Elsewhere: Silence (Grand), Heisenberg, Liv Stein (Canadian Stage), Constellations (Centaur/Canadian Stage), Body Politic (Buddies), The Death of the King (Modern Times), The Winter’s Tale (Groundling 2016), Bombay Black (Factory), Manon, Sandra and the Virgin Mary (Pleadies), Saint Carmen of The Main (NAC/Canadian Stage), Romeo and Juliet (NAC), Mother Courage and Her Children (NAC/MTC), Wit (Centaur), Real Live Girl (MTC Warehouse), Hamlet (Neptune).

SARA-JEANNE HOSIE

2019: Choreographer of Private Lives. Third season. Stratford: Assistant director, A Little Night Music; assistant director to Robert McQueen, Man of La Mancha. Direction/Choreography: Kiss of the Spider Woman (choreography – Eclipse Theatre); Out of Order (Drayton); Godspell, Blood Brothers, Altar Boyz, SUDS (Arts Club); Alice vs. Wonderland, My Fair Lady (Bluebridge); Into the Woods, Wintertime, West Side Story (CCPA); The Buddy Holly Story, Chicken (Cheinamus). Actor (selected): The Villain Sulphura, The Wizard of Oz (Ross Petty); Alison Bechdel, Canadian première, Fun Home; Kate, Wild Party; Dr. Charlotte, Fallettos; Mary Poppins; Sally Bowles; Patsy Cline; Fantine; Velma Kelly; Adelaide; Audrey; Ms Shields, Christmas Story; Betty, White Christmas; Rona, Spicing Bell. Upcoming: Miss Stacey, Anne of Green Gables (Charlottetown Festival). Recordings: In Case You Didn’t Know. Online: sjhosie.com. Et cetera: Thank you to the Talent House, and love to my wonderful Kevin.

JULIA KIM

2019: Assistant set and projection designer of Little Shop of Horrors, assistant set designer of Private Lives and The Neverending Story, and assistant projection designer of Birds of a Kind. Third season. Stratford: Assistant designer of Julius Caesar, assistant costume designer of Treasure Island. Elsewhere: Design: Cannibal (Scrap Paper Theatre/Next Stage Festival); Suitcase (Theatre Meda); Judas Noir (Obsidian Theatre/8BD Productions); Will You Be My Friend (Green Light Arts); One Short Sleepe, The Retreating World, Hello From Bertha, Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen (Neil Munro Intern Directors Projects, Shaw Festival); Armband (Human Body Expression). Set design: Seussical, Grease (KWMP), Costume design: Chasing the Path (Human Body Expression); The Lost Five Years (Daemon Theatre). Exhibition: Awaken Your Creativity (Toronto Nuit Blanche). Training: Ryerson University. Awards: Tanit Mendes Memorial Award, Ryerson University.

HOLLY KORHONEN

BOOK YOUR MUSICAL

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

A NEW MONSTER HIT FROM THE CREATIVE TEAM THAT BROUGHT YOU THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW
KEN MacDONALD

2019: Set designer of Private Lives. Fourth season. Stratford: Wanderlust, Moby Dick, The Trespassers. Elsewhere (selected): The Overcoat – A Musical Retailoring (Canadian Stage/Vancouver Opera/Tapastry); The Barber of Seville, Macbeth (Pacific Opera Victoria); Threepenny Opera, The Rake’s Progress, Susannah (Vancouver Opera); A Thousand Splendid Suns (ACT, Theatre Calgary, Grand Theatre, Old Globe San Diego, Seattle Repertory Theatre); Anything Goes, Sovereignty, The Shoplifters (Arena Stage); Engaged, Our Town, Sweet Charity, Arms and the Man, Our Betters, Doctor’s Dilemma (Shaw); Pantumerie, ‘Night Mother, Bilieh Spirit, The Government Inspector (Soulpepper); The Arsonists, The Overcoat, Vigil (Canadian Stage); Sextet, Amorous Adventures of Anatol, Mary Me a Little, Benevolence, The Dishwashers (Tarragon); The Shoplifters, The Waiting Room, Hamlet, Art (Arts Club); The Shoplifters (Centaur). Awards: Gemini Award, Outstanding Production Design, The Overcoat; two Dora Awards, a Betty Mitchell Award, 17 Jessie Richardson Awards. Online: kenandmorris.com.

JULIA NISH-LAPIDUS

2019: Assistant director of Private Lives. Stratford debut. Elsewhere: Co-Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Shakespeare BASH’d. Director: Richard III, The Comedy of Errors, The Duchess of Malfi (staged reading) (Shakespeare BASH’d); The Tom & Gertie Letters Project (SpringWorks); Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen, This Property is Condemned (Playwright Project). Text coach: As You Like It (Theatre By the Bay); Titus Andronicus (Hart House). Co-creator: Modern Love (Canadian Stage/Next Stage). Actor: Dublin Caroi (Fly on the Wall); The Forest (Red One); OVER, See Bob Run (Theatre Caravel); The Taming of the Shrew, Romeo and Juliet, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Hamlet, Twelfth Night (Shakespeare BASH’d). Training: Sheridan/University of Toronto. Online: @ShakesBASHd, shakespearebashd.com. Et cetera: “Love and thanks to my parents and James, for truly everything.”

ANITA NITTOLY


THOMAS RYDER PAYNE


CAREY PERLOFF

ARTISTIC COMPANY

CHRISTINA PODDUBIUK

2019: Costume designer of Private Lives. 16th season. Stratford: Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet, John Gabriel Borkman, Phèdre, All’s Well That Ends Well and Hamlet. Elsewhere: Designed many productions for the Shaw Festival including Pygmalion (costumes), Faith Healer, Come Back Little Sheba, On the Rocks and A Moon for the Misbegotten; The Wars (Grand Theatre); La Traviata (Manitoba Opera/Edmonton Opera/Pacific Opera/Vancouver Opera/Opéra de Montréal); The Audience (RTM/Cirque); The Light in the Piazza (Theatre Calgary); Don Quichotte (COC); Lucia di Lammermoor, Tosca, Capriccio (Pacific Opera Victoria); Romeo and Juliet (Denver Center Theater); A Doll’s House Part 2, Venus in Fur, A Tender Thing (Belfry Theatre); Romeo and Juliet (NAC); many productions for Soulpepper including the inaugural season’s Don Carlos; Love’s Labour’s Lost, Much Ado About Nothing, Othello (Chicago Shakespeare). Training: McGill University and the National Theatre School. Online: punchandjudy.ca.

KIMBERLY PURTELL


JANINE RALPH

2019: Production stage manager of the Avon Theatre. 29th season. Stratford: Last season Janine was the production stage manager of the Avon Theatre and prior to that production stage manager of the Tom Patterson Theatre. Past Stratford Festival credits include stage manager of a variety of productions at the Festival, Tom Patterson and Avon theatres, and the Masonic Hall. Elsewhere: Janine stage-managed at Resorts World Sentosa in Singapore and production-managed for Singapore Repertory Theatre. She has worked on the Asian Games’ ceremonies in Qatar; in various theatres in Ontario, including Young People’s Theatre; and for CBC TV in Toronto and BBC TV in England.

PATRICIA REILLY

2019: Assistant costume designer of Private Lives and The Merry Wives of Windsor. Third season. Stratford: Assistant costume designer of An Ideal Husband; assistant designer of Bakkhai. Elsewhere: Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre (The Drawer Boy, Jekyll!); The Glass Menagerie, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Of Mice and Men; Chemainus Theatre Festival (Glorious, Falling: A Wake); Pacific Opera Victoria (Rattenbury, La Voix Humaine); Theatre SKAM (Concord Floral, Joan, Shop Talk); Puente Theatre (Fado); Story Theatre (The Great Beanstalk Conspiracy, Rhymes Reasons and Rascals). Film/TV: Dashcam, Cold Camping, Hattie’s Heist. Training: Master’s Degree in Theatre Design (Wimbledon College of Arts, University of the Arts, London), BFA in Theatre Design and Technology (University of Victoria), Diploma in Technical Theatre Production (Red Deer College). Online: patriciareilly.com.

BETH RUSSELL

2019: Casting director of the Stratford Festival. 11th season. Elsewhere: In addition to casting, Beth has been an artists’ agent, co-producer of CBC-TV’s Triple Sensation, Senior Vice President: Casting and Creative Development for Livent, National Casting Director for CBC Radio Drama and Artistic Associate for Toronto Arts Productions (now Canadian Stage). As casting director, Ms Russell has been responsible for Broadway and West End premières of productions including Parade, Ragtime, Show Boat and Kiss of the Spider Woman, as well as productions of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Show Boat, Sunset Boulevard, Aspects of Love and The Phantom of the Opera in Canada, the United States, Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong.
ARTISTIC COMPANY

GEORGE COVELL

GEORGE COVELL


THE BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATORY FOR CLASSICAL THEATRE

Stephen Ouimette leads this intensive professional training program that nurtures talented young actors for a future in classical theatre. Selected by audition, participants are usually graduates of an accredited theatre training program who have at least two years’ professional experience. Upon completion of the program – which includes, among other activities, classes in voice, movement and text with Festival coaches and distinguished guest instructors – participants may be offered places in the following season’s acting company. Twenty-nine members of this season’s company are past participants.

The Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre is made possible by the support of the Birmingham family, the Stratford Festival Endowment Foundation and the Department of Canadian Heritage. The 2019 in-season work of Conservatory participants is supported by the Marilyn & Charles Baillie Fund and by John & Therese Gardner.

THE MICHAEL LANGHAM WORKSHOP FOR CLASSICAL DIRECTION

Overseen by Antoni Cimolino, Artistic Director, and Martha Henry, Director of the Michael Langham Workshop, this program offers an unparalleled opportunity for directors in the mid-stages of their careers to develop their craft within the rich artistry of the Stratford Festival. Each participant works as the assistant or associate director on one production in the season, as well as being offered classes focused on the classics. In the fall, selected participants direct a short piece of classical theatre performed for an invited audience.

Participants this season: Rodrigo Beilfuss, Mikaela Davies, Brad Hodder, Ash Knight, Andrew Kushnir, Julia Nish-Lapidus, Jennifer Stewart. Alumni this season: Graham Abbey, Alan Dilworth, Peter Pasyk, Zack Russell, Birgit Schreyer Duarte, Ted Witzel.

We extend our thanks to the Department of Canadian Heritage, the late Johanna Metcalf and the George Cedric Metcalf Foundation and the Philip and Berthe Morton Foundation.

The Michael Langham Workshop for Classical Direction is sponsored by