

## Three Plays Blithe Spirit Hay Fever Private Lives

The Seventh volume in the Coward Collection. On Quadrille: "Miss Fontanne plays the madcap Marchioness with the crackle and sheen of a five-pound note. Her eyes mock marvelously, her voice cuts like a knife into a wedding cake, and the scene in Act Three, on the eve of her elopement with Mr. Lung, is as delicious as crushed ice." Evening Standard, 1952. "The idea of Peace in Our Time", Coward wrote "was conceived in Paris shortly after the Liberation. . . I began to suspect that the physical effect of four years intermittent bombing is far less damaging to the intrinsic character of a nation than the spiritual effect of four years enemy occupation." The volume also contains four pieces from the Tonight at 8.30 sequence: We Were Dancing "provides a marvelously compact illustration of the way the English public school spirit prevails even in moments of strenuous passion." "Shadow Play is a musical fantasy. . . which gave Gertie and me a chance to sing as romantically as we could, dance in the moonlight and, we hoped, convince the audience that we were very fascinating indeed"; and "Family Album - a sly satire on Victorian hypocrisy, adorned with an unobtrusive but agreeable musical score. It was stylised both in its decor and its performance, was a joy to play and provided the whole talented company with good parts." Star Chamber, closely based on Coward's experiences trying to co-ordinate his Actors' Orphanage charity committee, is published here for the first time.

One of Coward's best-loved classics in a single-play edition Coward's wit and precision as a modern dramatist is nowhere better exemplified than in this classic modern plays from 1930. Elyot Chase and Amanda Prynne (originally played by Gertrude Lawrence and Noël Coward), recently divorced from one another five years previously, arrive coincidentally at the same French hotel. They are honeymooning with their respective new spouses. Encountering one another by chance, each is at once horrified and fascinated by the other. Together they leave for Paris and begin a roundelay of quarrels and love intrigues that culminate in their getting back together.

Containing Coward's best work from the last two decades of his life, this volume includes Relative Values, which ran for over a year in 1951-2, Look After Lulu (1959), his perennially popular Feydeau adaptation, Waiting in the Wings (1960), a bravura piece set in a home for retired actresses, and Suite in Three Keys (1965), a trilogy of plays which gave Coward his last roles on stage. The volume is introduced by Sheridan Morley, Coward's first biographer, and includes an extensive chronology of Coward's work.

Beautiful Untrue Things explores the astonishing flurry of Oscar Wilde forgeries that circulated in the early twentieth century, offering an innovative reading that considers literary forgery a form of fan fiction. "Coward's diaries from 1941 to 1969 offer an intimate look at...the life of the popular, sophisticated...playwright and author....give insight into Coward's well-connected life. Coward knew or met hundreds of people...encounters with Vivien Leigh, Marilyn Monroe, King George IV, Winston Churchill and the Queen Mother...Excellent footnotes...enough juicy tidbits to satisfy any biography-reading seeker of stars, starlets, and royalty. A thorough index enhances star browsing..."--Library Journal.

Philip Hoare, in his biography of Coward described Semi-Monde as his "most daring play to date. In a chic Parisian hotel, a series of sexual pairings take place through rendezvous, arguments, infidelities and reconciliations: sexual deviance is undisguised...set in the bisexual 1920s, the play could easily be populated by characters of Coward's society". Point Valaine is "the drama of a lurid episode of lust in the semi-tropics.. unmistakably the work of a master of the stage" (New York Times); South Sea Bubble which concerns "the Governor's lady in the Isle of Samolo who plays with native fire, nearly gets her wings singed, bashes her native admirer with a bottle and at one of those Coward next-morning-at breakfast scenes slips her way out of the scrape with feline grace." (Manchester Guardian) whilst Nude With Violin is a witty comedy about art fraud.

The play concerns a downtrodden, middle-aged salesman who, having saved up enough money to cut all ties, walks out on his wife, mother-in-law and "horrible adenoidal daughter", having first told all three what he thinks of them.

A reissue in hardback of critic John Lahr's famous 1982 study of Noël Coward's plays "Noël Coward," said Terence Rattigan, "is simply a phenomenon, and one that is unlikely to occur ever again in theatre history." A phenomenon he certainly was, and it is part of John Lahr's purpose in this book to show how that phenomenon called "Noël Coward" was largely Coward's own careful creation. Lahr's penetrating critical study of Coward's drama investigates all the major and minor plays of "The Master". Private Lives, Design for Living and Hay Fever make a fascinating group of "Comedies of Bad Manners". Blithe Spirit and Relative Values raise the "Ghost in the Fun Machine". Lahr then goes on to explore the "politics of charm" oozing through The Vortex, Easy Virtue and Present Laughter. In all Coward's plays Lahr uncovers a coherent philosophy in which charm is both the subject of Coward's comedies and the trap which made his very public life a perpetual performance. "A smashing, thoughtful and very good guide to Coward's plays" (Sheridan Morley)

The first single edition of Noël Coward's most controversial play. "Only in Semi-Monde does Coward find a successful metaphor for the sexual complications that lie behind his posturing. Semi-Monde is easily the most visually daring of his comedies, and the most intellectually startling ... made up of sexually mischievous tableaux vivants and gets much nearer the homosexual knuckle than Coward's public image allowed." - (John Lahr, London Review of Books) Written in 1926 and originally entitled Ritz Bar, Semi-Monde was considered too daring for its time: "its production in London or New York seemed unlikely as some of the characters, owing to lightly suggested abnormalities, would certainly be deleted by the censor" (Noël Coward, Present Indicative). The play finally received its public premiere only after Coward's death, at the Citizen's Theatre, Glasgow, in September 1977.

More than fifty specialists have contributed to this new edition of volume 4 of The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. The design of the original work has established itself so firmly as a workable solution to the immense problems of analysis, articulation and coordination that it has been retained in all its essentials for the new edition. The task of the new contributors has been to revise and integrate the lists of 1940 and 1957, to add materials of the following decade, to correct and refine the bibliographical details already available, and to re-shape the whole according to a new series of conventions devised to give greater clarity and consistency to the entries.

This Happy Breed covers twenty years in the life of the Frank and Ethel Bibbons and their children, from the end of World War I to the beginning of World War II. On one level the story is the chronicle of a middle class family. They haven't done well in the years between the wars, but in the face of another conflict, family unity spans the chasm between the generations. At another level, this is the story of England, torn at times by the conflicts of its own progress, but quietly firm in its historical moments of crisis.

Noel Coward's glorious wit and dramatic precision combine to form his 1930s masterpiece about modern romance. Private Lives continues to be one of his most performed and read works.

Volume Four of Noël Coward's plays contains a selection of Coward's plays from the thirties and forties which includes Blithe Spirit, a comedy that centres around the spirit medium Madame Arcati. The play that mocks sudden death was produced at precisely the moment when bombs were bringing it to Britain "I shall ever be grateful, for the almost

psychic gift that enabled me to write *Blithe Spirit* in five days during one of the darkest years of the war." The play was for years the longest-running comedy in the history of British theatre. *Present Laughter* follows the life of Garry Essendine, a world-weary, middle-aged projection of the dilettante, debonair persona - self-obsessed and dressing-gowned who struts through the play like an educated peacock. It is a comedy about the 'theatricals' that Noël best knew and loved, and was originally a star vehicle for himself. It is the closest to an autobiographical play that Coward ever wrote. *This Happy Breed* is a saga of a lower middle-class family; and three shorter pieces from *Tonight at 8.30* - is a farce set in the South of France, and serves as an oblique tribute to Frederick Lonsdale; *The Astonished Heart* is about the decay of a psychiatrist's mind through personal sexual obsession. *Red Peppers*, which closes the volume, was a cynical tribute to the lost music halls of the First World War.

Presents three comedies of manners by playwright Noel Coward, including "*Blithe Spirit*," in which a man is visited by the ghost of his first wife; "*Hay Fever*," the story of a family of bohemians who wreak emotional havoc on weekend visitors; and "*Private Lives*," in which a newly divorced couple find themselves in adjoining hotel rooms while honeymooning with their new spouses.

The plays in this volume demonstrate the extraordinary skill and versatility Coward's writing achieved in the late 1920s. The volume contains his best-loved classic, *Private Lives*, which was an immediate hit when it was first staged in 1930. Coward's sparkling dialogue and repartee have ensured the play's popularity ever since. Of *Bitter-Sweet* in 1929 Noël Coward wrote that it was "a musical that gave me more complete satisfaction than anything else I had yet written. Not especially on account of its dialogue or its lyrics or its music or its production but as a whole." *The Marquise* is an "eighteenth century comedy" filled with maids and duels, whilst *Post-Mortem* is a vilification of war that contains some of Coward's most powerful writing.

Remembered as one of the most haunting love stories, Noel Coward's *Brief Encounter* is adapted for the stage by Emma Rice in the year marking the 40th anniversary of Coward's death.

Please note that the content of this book primarily consists of articles available from Wikipedia or other free sources online. Commentary (plays not included). Pages: 53. Chapters: *Cavalcade*, *Private Lives*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Hay Fever*, *Present Laughter*, *Post Mortem*, *Design for Living*, *Easy Virtue*, *This Happy Breed*, *Tonight at 8:30*, *Ways and Means*, *Hands Across the Sea*, *After the Ball*, *Fumed Oak*, *Relative Values*, *Waiting in the Wings*, *Red Peppers*, *Still Life*, *Shadow Play*, *Sail Away*, *Family Album*, *The Astonished Heart*, *Conversation Piece*, *We Were Dancing*, *London Calling!*, *Cowardy Custard*, *A Song at Twilight*, *The Vortex*, *Star Chamber*, *Words and Music*, *Oh, Coward!*, *The Girl Who Came to Supper*, *Ace of Clubs*, *Nude with Violin*, *Sigh No More*, *Set to Music*, *Semi-Monde*, *This Year of Grace*, *Look After Lulu!*, *The Rat Trap*, *Operette*, *Pacific 1860*, *Quadrille*, *On With the Dance*, *Peace In Our Time*, *The Better Half*, *South Sea Bubble*, *This Was a Man*, *The Queen Was in the Parlour*, *Sirocco*, *Fallen Angels*. Excerpt: *Private Lives* is a 1930 comedy of manners in three acts by Noel Coward. It focuses on a divorced couple who discover that they are honeymooning with their new spouses in neighbouring rooms at the same hotel. Despite a perpetually stormy relationship, they realise that they still have feelings for each other. The play has fascinated various literary theorists. Its second act love scene was nearly censored in Britain as too risqué. Coward wrote one of his most popular songs, "Some Day I'll Find You," for the play. After touring the British provinces, the play opened the new Phoenix Theatre in London in 1930, starring Coward, Gertrude Lawrence, Adrienne Allen and Laurence Olivier. A Broadway production followed in 1931, and the play has been revived at least a half dozen times each in the West End and on Broadway. The leading roles have attracted a wide range of actors; among those who have succeeded Coward as Elyot are Robert Stephens, Richard Burton and Alan Rickman, and...

Noël Coward was one of the most celebrated characters in British theatrical history, with a career that spanned almost sixty years as a writer, actor, producer and director. This volume brings together his three autobiographies: *Present Indicative* charts his progress from a 'brazen odious little prodigy' to the immense success of *Cavalcade* in 1931; *Future Indefinite* deals with the war years, which saw the publication of *Blithe Spirit*, *Present Laughter* and *In Which We Serve*; and *Past Conditional* is the beginning of what was to be his third memoir, dealing with the 'missing' years in between.

Accompanied by more than two hundred photographs and illustrations, a definitive collection of letters, most never before published, to and from Noël Coward offers an intriguing portrait of the renowned playwright, actor, musician, director, artist, writer, and wit and his correspondence with Winston Churchill, Charlie Chaplin, Virginia Woolf, Katharine Hepburn, and others. 25,000 first printing.

At the centre of his own universe sits matinee idol Garry Essendine: suave, hedonistic and too old, says his wife, to be having numerous affairs. His line in harmless, infatuated debutantes is largely tolerated but playing closer to home is not. Just before he escapes on tour to Africa the full extent of his misdemeanours is discovered. And all hell breaks loose. Noël Coward's *Present Laughter* premiered in the early years of the Second World War just as such privileged lives were threatened with fundamental social change. This edition of the play is published to coincide with the National Theatre's production running from September 2007. The text features an introduction that considers the directorial decisions and interpretation in the National's production.

I will ever be grateful for the almost psychic gift that enabled me to write *Blithe Spirit* in five days during one of the darkest years of the war.' Written in 1941, *Blithe Spirit* remained the longest-running comedy in British Theatre for three decades thereafter. Plotted around the central role of one of Coward's best loved characters, a spirit medium Madame Arcati (originally performed by Margaret Rutherford) Coward's play is an escapist comedy about a man whose two previous wives return to haunt him. "A minor comic masterpiece of the lighter sort" Professor Allardyce Nicoll

The third volume of Coward's plays contains some of his best work from the thirties. *Design for Living* - is about a triangular alliance between two men and a woman, based on friends of

Coward's, which he waited to write "until she and he and I had arrived by different roads in our careers at a time and a place when we felt we could all three play together with a more or less equal degree of success." Cavalcade was Coward's most ambitious stage project, set during the Boer War, which cost £30,000 in its day and which includes scenes of the relief of the sinking of the Titanic and the coming of the Jazz Age. Conversation Piece is a musical comedy that Noël wrote for the Parisian star Yvonne Printemps and includes the song "I'll Follow My Secret Heart". Also in the volume are three short plays including Tonight at 8.30 - Hands Across the Sea, a gentle satire of colonials and London Society; Still Life which became the film Brief Encounter and Fumed Oak a suburban comedy about a 'worm who turns'. The volume is introduced by Sheridan Morley.

This is a new release of the original 1930 edition.

Mad Dogs and Englishmen, Don't Put your Daughter on the Stage, Mrs Worthington and over 250 more lyrics from Coward's musical masterpieces. Noël Coward is one of the greatest lyricists of the twentieth century. Songs such as A Room with a View, The Stately Homes of England, Mad Dogs and Englishmen and Mrs Worthington are known, sung and loved the world over. This edition gathers together over 250 of Coward's lyrics, arranged in chronological order and grouped by show. In addition, these masterpieces of verse are accompanied by an introduction and notes from the Master himself.

Provides the lyrics to all of Coward's compositions, including unknown material and the texts of four unfinished musicals

Comedy / Characters: 6 male, 3 female Scenery: Interior One of the "Tonight At 8:30" series produced in London and New York. Lady Gilpin (Piggie) is so busy with social duties and gossip that she has no time for coherent thinking. She is set aflutter when her drawing room is suddenly filled with her husband's naval conferees, blueprint delivery boys and dumpy Mr. and Mrs. Wadhurst from the Far East, who flighty Piggie mistakes for the Rawlingsons. The Wadhursts overhear intimate phone conver

This is a new release of the original 1933 edition.

The love and friendship between two married couples and best friends are put to the test when a postcard arrives with a picture of Capri on one side, and on the other, news of the imminent arrival of a certain handsome Frenchman.

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