



CONTACT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATRE ARTS GUILD



THE POND PLAYHOUSE
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Next at TAG: Present Laughter by Noel Coward

Present Laughter follows a few days in the life of the successful and self-obsessed light comedy actor Garry Essendines. While he struggles to plan his upcoming trip to Africa, his London flat is invaded by a love struck ingenue, an adulterous producer and a married seductress, not to mention Garry's estranged wife, his self suffering secretary and a crazed young playwright. Chaos runs rampant in this crowd-pleasing comedy, bordering on farce, from one of the world's greatest playwrights.

"Gales of laughter reached hurricane force. This play's a hoot." - Boca Raton News

The play was described by Coward as "a series of semi-autobiographical pyrotechnics". It has been said that he took a weekend to write the play and a lifetime to research the lead role. Author of *Hay Fever*, *Private Lives*, and *Blithe Spirit*, among many others, Coward enjoyed remarkable success very early in his career as an actor, director, composer, producer and of course, playwright. Written in 1939, when Coward, like Essendine, was reluctantly facing middle-age and beginning to register the wear-and-tear of a life in the theatre, *Present Laughter* provides a delightful look at life behind the stage curtain.

Present Laughter is co-directed by Rebecca Humphreys and Eric Rountree and produced by Phillip Joy.

TAG TICKET PRICES

\$13 - Members/Seniors/Students
\$16 - Non-members

Note: TAG prices include all Ticket Atlantic service fees except where tickets are purchased online (\$2 per online session)



Tickets on Sale
Friday, August 26, 2011
Ticket Atlantic

Buy Your Tickets

- * At the 23 participating Atlantic Superstore outlets
- * Charge by Phone at (902) 451-1221
- * At the door (subject to availability)
- * Online at www.ticketatlantic.com (\$2 fee per online session)
- * Ticket Atlantic Box Office

Mailing Address: Theatre Arts Guild 287 Lacewood Drive Unit 103 Suite 412 Halifax N.S. B3M 3Y7

August/September 2011 CONTACT

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the new 2011-12 Season and everybody is looking forward to another wonderful year of comedy, drama, music and of course Pantomime. The Annual General Meeting on September 12th at The Pond Playhouse is your chance to hear reports from the Board members about activity and progress in their areas of responsibility. Our year ending financial position will be presented, and not to steal our Treasurer's thunder, but it's pleasing to report we continue to operate on a completely debt free basis.

I have often waxed on about TAG's existence and continued health being totally reliant on everybody's simple desire for it to exist. That's a remarkable phenomenon these days where crucial sponsorship or government grants are needed to

keep organizations going. I think this is probably the underlying attraction of TAG, a place where ordinary people can become involved with theatre without the barriers of past experience, financial ability or other heavy handed constraints.

A great example of this spirit was our recently deceased member John Gratwick. John participated on virtually every level over the many years he was involved. It's hard to imagine an area of TAG activity he did not touch; all the way from the stage to the Board. One of my fondest memories of John was the role of Dad in the play Choices for the 2002 Liverpool International Theatre Festival. The role had no lines since the character had stopped talking during his slow journey into dementia. John

conducted extensive research within the medical community for this role and produced a stunning characterisation that won him the Best Supporting Actor category. And therein lies the heart of TAG, the open door for anybody to explore whatever area interests them without barriers of any kind.

This is my goodbye message as your President having filled the role three different times starting in 1994. I think the total is seven years, but it might be eight, and I have enjoyed them all immensely. I wish the incoming new Board all the very best in the future and express my thanks to the many people who have sustained TAG and ensured its continued success.

~ Nick Jupp, President

TAG @ THE LIBRARY



TAG recently paid a visit to the Spryfield Branch Library, in the Captain William Spry Community Centre. Our actors, Cathy Cameron, Jonathan Tyson, Michele Gaudet, Lorraine Cantwell, and Rick Eng performed two pieces: the extended poem, *Two Slatterns and a King*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay, and an excerpt from *The Ugly Duckling*, by A. A. Milne.

August/September 2011 CONTACT

Community Notes

Dartmouth Players presents *Cabaret* - music by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb, book by Joe Masteroff, directed by Ian MacDermid. A Broadway blockbuster and major motion picture, *Cabaret* captures the essence of the seedier side of Berlin in the early 1930s during the rise of Nazism. With brilliant and memorable music, comedy and pathos, *Cabaret* is sure to leave you humming!. The show is scheduled for November 9 - 26, 2011. Visit www.dartmouthplayers.ns.ca or call 465-PLAY or for more information.

Bedford Players presents Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, directed by Clair Henderson. *Private Lives* is a romantic Comedy full of love, romance, laughter, tears, passion, and anger. The stage is set alight with a classic battle of the sexes. The show runs October 27 to November 12, 2011. Visit www.bedfordplayers.ns.ca for more information.

AUDITION CALL Captain Hook's Revenge

Arr, me hearties It is time to give ye landlubbers a lesson in swashbuckling. Yo ho Ho!

A pantomime with a tropical feeling! Co-directed by Angela Butler and Lorne Abramson; musical direction by Bunny Shore with choreography by Melanie Abramson, the show will run December 1 -17, 2011.

Audition Dates & Times:

Sun. Aug. 28, 2011, 1-5 p.m.
Mon. Aug. 29, 2011, 7-10 p.m.

Location:

Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Rd.
(off the Purcell's Cove Rd.)

Casting male and female, ages 15 to 99, to create a wide range of characters.

Auditions will consist of a cold read from the script. Please prepare a song of your choice (a cappella). No appointments.

For additional information please email co-directors Angela Butler (rob-angela@hotmail.com) or Lorne Abramson (labramson@eastlink.ca).

Come and be a part of a tradition!

Closing TAG's 80th Season



Members enjoyed a special treat at the June 25th members' night - a cake served to commemorate the last show of the The Theatre Arts Guild's 80th anniversary season.

Buckle Up!

Cathy Cameron was the lucky TAG member at the opening night of Laundry and Bourbon / Lone Star on June 23rd. She won the official Dead Armadillo belt buckle pictured below.



Mark Your Calendars!

Present Laughter (Sep. 22 - Oct. 8, 2011) A crowd-pleasing comedy, bordering on farce, from one of the world's greatest playwrights. Written by Noel Coward and directed by Rebecca Humphreys.

Captain Hook's Revenge (Dec. 1 - 17, 2011) A British Pantomime with slapstick, silliness, and a fairy. Oh, and don't forget the neurotic crocodile! Written by Richard Coleman and co-directed by Angela Butler and Lorne Abramson.

Corker (Feb. 16 - March 3, 2012) A family drama by Governor General-nominated local playwright Wendy Lill, which explores how society treats those on the fringes. Directed by Lorraine Cantwell.

The Reluctant Resurrection of Sherlock Holmes (Apr. 19 - May 5, 2012) The ghost of Sherlock Holmes helps solve a mysterious death, whether or not author Arthur Conan Doyle wants his help! This comedy/mystery is written by Canadian playwright David Belke and co-directed by Renée Hartleib and Bill VanGorder.

The Drowsy Chaperone (June 21 - July 7, 2012) The internationally acclaimed and award-winning Canadian musical comes to Halifax. Hold onto your hats and get your seats now! Written by Bob Martin and Don McKellar and directed by Jacqui Good.



TAKE YOUR SEAT!

Dedicate a Seat for \$500 and take a permanent place in the history of the Pond Playhouse.

Your seat will be identified with an engraved plaque.

- ▶ Celebrate a special occasion/event
- ▶ Cherish the memory of a loved one
- ▶ Record a milestone
- ▶ Raise your company's community profile
- ▶ Show your support for the arts

Your contribution is tax deductible. Visit tagtheatre.com or email seatsale@tagtheatre.com for more information about this exciting fundraiser!

AN ENDEARING LEGACY - NOEL COWARD

Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary - the 38th in a continuing series...

TAG opens its 2011/2012 season with *Present Laughter*; Bedford Players will present *Private Lives* in October; Neptune Theatre included *Blithe Spirit* in its 2010/2011 season. I deduce that support for the works of Sir Noel Peirce Coward is alive and well and living in Nova Scotia!

Present Laughter is in fact the fourth of Coward's plays to be presented at the Pond Playhouse. (*Hay Fever* was the first in 1986, followed by *Nude with Violin* in 1988, repeated in 1994 and *Blithe Spirit* in 1992). In addition, in 1999, we showcased *Noel and Gertie*, an account by Sheridan Morley of the friendship between Coward and the English actress Gertrude Lawrence. (Apart from appearing in many of Coward's plays, Lawrence spent a good deal of her time in America and was the originator of the role of Anna in *The King and I* on Broadway in 1951).

So, what draws us back to Coward

time and again and ensures the continued performances of his work around the globe, when the work of his contemporaries is forgotten? (I can remember as a child seeing performances of *The Student Prince* and *The Desert Song* during summer vacations in the North of England. Both were

His style is unique – a way of depicting a particular setting, assembling a varied cast of characters and then, with a hefty dose of wit, watching their lives unravel!

huge successes for the composer, Sigmund Romberg, but how many folk now even recognize this name? Romberg's Austro-Hungarian counterpart, Franz Lehár has fared somewhat better, though, out of his forty operas and operettas, only *The Merry Widow* is regularly performed).

For me, one of the reasons for Coward's lasting popularity is his familiarity with his subject

matter. He wrote often about the theatre, a milieu in which he was immersed, having made his debut at eleven in a children's play. He remained connected to the stage as a writer, director and performer for the rest of his life. He was also a truly versatile creator. His output was prodigious – over fifty plays, musical revues, an operetta, poetry, short stories and some three hundred songs. Not only did he perform his own songs, act and direct in his own plays, but wrote and acted in films, receiving an Academy Honorary Award in 1943 for the naval drama, *In Which We Serve*. And his style is unique – a way of depicting a particular setting, assembling a varied cast of characters and then, with a hefty dose of wit, watching their lives unravel!

Noel Coward was known amongst his friends as the 'Master.' Come and enjoy *Present Laughter*, and you will see why!

~ Judy Reade

Renew Your TAG Membership!

\$15	Regular
\$25	Family
\$10	Senior (60+)
\$10	Student

Membership benefits include: \$3 discount off admission, newsletters and invitations to special members-only events. Visit www.tagtheatre.com for more information.

Want to Volunteer?
volunteer@tagtheatre.com
for more information

Join TAG on
Facebook/Twitter
Today!

Email your submissions to:
newsletter@tagtheatre.com

Notice Theatre Arts Guild Annual General Meeting

Gratwick Hall
Pond Playhouse
6 Parkhill Road
Halifax NS B3P 1R2

Monday, September 12, 2011
7:30 p.m.