

the maskers theatre company

“HAY FEVER”

by **NOEL COWARD**

Directed by **KEN SPENCER**



NOEL COWARD

Noel Pierce Coward, English actor, director, composer, and dramatist, was born in Teddington on December 16, 1899. He left school at an early age to begin acting and made his first professional appearance as Prince Mussel in *The Goldfish*, a fairy play for children, performed at the Little Theatre in London. Thereafter he was steadily employed as a child actor. He joined the army's Artists' Rifles in the winter of 1918 and was back onstage two years later as Ralph in Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. *I'll Leave it to You* (1920), his first produced play, met with some approval, but his first real success came in 1924 with *The Vortex*, a drama of the post-World War I period. After *The Vortex*, Coward began to produce the sophisticated comedies and farces that came to be typical of the postwar generation. In 1925 five plays by Noel Coward, including *Hay Fever*, *Fallen Angels*, *Easy Virtue*, and *On with the Dance*, were running simultaneously in London.

Other triumphs in which Coward combined the talents of actor, singer, composer, lyricist, stage manager, and director were *This Year of Grace!* (1928), a revue; and *Bitter-Sweet* (1929), for which he composed some of his most memorable songs. Having achieved financial as well as artistic success, Coward began traveling extensively. It was in Shanghai in 1929 that he wrote the comedy *Private Lives*, which was produced in London in 1930, starring himself and Gertrude Lawrence. Soon after he wrote *Cavalcade* (1931); *Design for Living* (1933), in which he starred with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne; and *Tonight at 8.30* (1935-1936). *Blithe Spirit*, his last big success, was produced in Manchester and London in 1941.

During World War II Coward toured with *This Happy Breed* (1942). He also produced, codirected, wrote and starred in the motion picture *In which we Serve* (1943), a tribute to the Royal Navy; made numerous appearances to raise funds and sell government bonds; and entertained Allied troops with his extraordinarily diverse talents. Although Coward continued to write for the theatre after the war, he never again achieved the popularity he enjoyed during the 1920s and 1930s. A three-act play, *Waiting in the Wings*, was staged in London in 1960. The next year Coward went to the United States to stage *Sail Away*, an unsuccessful musical for which he wrote the book, lyrics and music

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

SOREL BLISS	ELAINE GILL
SIMON BLISS	PETER PITCHER
CLARA	CHRISTINE BAKER
JUDITH BLISS	MOLLIE MANNS
DAVID BLISS	PETER NEVE
SANDY TYRELL	BRIAN STANSBRIDGE
MYRA ARUNDEL	JAN BRADSHAW
RICHARD GREATHAM	ALAN WATSON
JACKIE CORYTON	PAULA BINGHAM

HAY FEVER

The play is set in the hall of David and Judith Bliss's house in Cookham, in June

ACT I	-	Afternoon Saturday
ACT II	-	Evening Saturday
ACT III	-	Morning Sunday

There will be a long interval of 15 minutes between Acts I and II and a short interval of 5 minutes between Acts II and III.

Coffee and biscuits will be available during the first interval only.



FOR THE MASKERS

STAGE MANAGER	VALERIE BARWELL
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	SUE PARKES
LIGHTING	ALAN MOORE
PROPERTIES	CHRISSIE EVANS MARGARET HOUSE
SOUND	PETE KING
WARDROBE	LILLIAN GUNSTONE TAMAR THOMAS
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICITY	GRAHAM BUCHANAN JENNI WATSON
PROGRAMME DESIGN	BRIAN STANSBRIDGE

The Maskers Theatre Company wish to thank all their many friends who have assisted with this production.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT THE NUFFIELD THEATRE

"ASHES" by David Rudkin

Nuffield Theatre Studio 2 - 7 November
Bookings - Tel: Southampton 555028

"THE MASKERS MUSIC HALL"

Nuffield Theatre 7 - 11 December
Bookings - Tel: Southampton 555028

