



PRESENT LAUGHTER By NOËL COWARD

11 November – 13 December 2025

PRESENT LAUGHTER

CREATIVE TEAM

Director

Associate Director

Set Designer

Set Supervisor

Lighting/Sound Designer

Co-Costume Designer

Co-Costume Designer

Intimacy Director

Dialect Coach

Louise Fischer

Chad Traupmann

Tom Bannerman

Barry French

Michael Schell

Deborah Mulhall

Helen Kohlhagen

Megan Wray

Helen Tonkin

CAST (in alphabetical order)

Joanna Lyppiatt

Male Understudy

Garry Essendine

Miss Hamilton/Lady Saltburn

Liz Essendine

Fred

Female Understudy

Hetty Lyppiatt

Morris Dixon

Daphne Stillington

Roland Maule

Monica Reed

Lib Campbell

Harrison Collis Oates

Peter Evers

Liz Grindley

Molly Haddon

Oliver Harcourt-Ham

Holly Mazzola

Michela Noonan

Reuben Solomon

Larissa Turton

Luke Visentin

Emily Weare

PRODUCTION TEAM & CREW

Production Manager

Stage Manager

Asst. Stage Manager/Operator

Set Construction/Bump-in

Gemma Greer

Rosane McNamara

Thomas O'Meara

Rodger Wishart

David Marshall-Martin,

Omran Abuhalaiga

Thomas Fullerton

Mitch Lavender

Martin Kelly

Jay Murrin

Chris Lundie

Production Photography

Hero image: Al composite © New Theatre

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country on which we meet today, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

NOËL COWARD PLAYWRIGHT

Helen Tonkin, New Theatre Artistic Associate, 2025



Noël Coward was a performer, playwright, screen writer, composer, lyricist, director and wit; according to critic Cyril Connolly "one of the most talented and prodigiously successful people the world has ever known." Noël Coward virtually invented the concept of Englishness for the 20th century; he was defined by his Englishness as much as he defined it.

He grew up in genteel poverty. His father went out of business as a piano salesman, so his mother had to operate a boarding house. She was an enthusiastic supporter of Noel's theatrical ambition. He was on the stage by the age of six and acted in his first professional London production at age twelve. His extraordinary talent and achievements fill thousands of pages on the internet. One example of the success he enjoyed in his lifetime is the fact that in 1955 he was being paid forty thousand dollars a week to perform his cabaret act. It had been a hit in London, the Sunday Times observing, "His personality almost persuaded his audiences that he could sing."

Coward wrote several plays before the first that would become considered a masterpiece. This was Hay Fever (1923) which he wrote in three days. In 1924 The Vortex, in which he starred, made it clear he was a major playwright and actor.

Hay Fever, Private Lives, Design for Living, Present Laughter, and Blithe Spirit are always being performed somewhere in the world.

Present Laughter was written in 1939 but not produced until 1942 because the Second World War began while it was in rehearsal and British theatres closed. He wrote it in six days and he starred as Garry in the original UK production and later in the US and Paris. The Guardian's former chief drama critic, Michael Billington, has called it an "imperishable comedy". Coward himself said that the play was "written with the sensible object of providing me with a bravura part": the lead role of Garry Essendine. He also stated: "Present Laughter is not so much a play as a series of semi-autobiographical pyrotechnics."

Coward was a hedonist and snob who thrived on being surrounded by people as famous as himself and dominating the festivities with his wit. He seemed like nothing less than a character in a Noël Coward play. His existence was devoted to proving his contention that "the theatre is the most adventurous, exciting and glamorous life in the world."

THE BEST SEATS - ON THE HOUSE!

We're looking for fun and friendly volunteers to join our Front of House team.

Work a couple of hours behind the bar, looking after our patrons,
and we'll give you free tickets to use for any New Theatre show.

FOH volunteers must hold a current RSA certificate.

INTERESTED? CONTACT OUR THEATRE MANAGER: MANAGER@NEWTHEATRE.ORG.AU



LOUISE FISCHER DIRECTOR

Louise has an MA in Theatre Studies from UNSW and is currently Artistic Director of New Theatre. Directing credits at New Theatre include: *The Ballad of Maria Marten, Chimerica, Glengarry Glen Ross, Neighbourhood Watch, The Grapes of Wrath, August: Osage County, Australia Day, House of Games, Mother Clap's Molly House, Enron, The Farnsworth Invention, The Crucible* (which transferred to a sellout season at the Seymour Centre), *Cabaret, Brand Spanking New, Honeymoon Suite*,

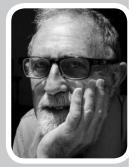
Richard III, Dancing at Lughnasa, Lemon Delicious, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, and Ink. Other directing credits include: The God Botherers (Darlinghurst Theatre); Stories from the 428 (Sidetrack Theatre); Macbeth.com (Lighthouse Theatre); Project SciFi (PACT); Birthdays, Christmas & Other Family Disasters (Tunks Productions); Bedtime for Bastards (Crypt Theatre); Roadkill (Short + Sweet); The Curious Pain of Louis XIV (Seymour Centre) and Hamlet (Harlos Productions).



CHAD TRAUPMANN ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

After 20 years climbing the corporate ladder, in 2023 Chad committed himself to the Creative Arts full-time. In 2025 he launched his production company Mi Todo Productions, which had its inaugural production Mary Jane at the Old Fitz in May, and he recently joined the board of New Theatre as the Vice-President. Chad has trained at the Sydney Acting Studio, and his previous work as an actor at New Theatre includes *Dangerous Liaisons, Shakespeare In Love, Ink,* and *Off The Record.* His other appearances as an actor are *Foam* (Gavin Roach Presents/

Otopia: Substation), Wally (Moon Bureau/KXT), The First Council (Deadhouse), Othello (Streamed Shakepheare), The Hollow (Genesian), and the feature films Welcome Back to My Channel, and To The Tooth. As a producer he has worked on Mary Jane (Mi Todo Productions/Old Fitz), The Humans (Mophead/Old Fitz), Between The Streetlights and The Moon (Mophead/KXT).



TOM BANNERMAN SET DESIGNER

Tom Bannerman's attraction to set-design began while a senior student at Balgowlah Boys H.S. in 1970/71. His first design, for Shaw's **Saint Joan**, won a state award, thus prompting a long and unbroken fascination with this practice. In 1977, he was invited by John Bell to design Sydney's premiere of Williamson's **The Club** (Nimrod). His set was acclaimed and the production itself exceeded all expectations, touring NSW before crossing the globe to London's Hampstead Theatre, then transferring

for its ultimate season at the Old Vic. His first production for New Theatre was *We Can't Pay, We Won't Pay*, directed by Jock Levy in 1980. Attracted by the ethos of the inner-city theatre, this is now his 84th production-design here. Additionally, he was Associate Set-Designer of *The Flea*. Other recent productions are: *Ink, Hangmen, Fighting, In the Next Room* and *The Frogs*; and for other companies: *Isolde and Tristan* (Sport for Jove), *Eight Gigabytes of Pornography* and Mark Colvin's *Kidney* (Mullumbimby's Drill Hall). Other than watching Coward films, his only experience of the author was designing a set for a production of *Blithe Spirit*, directed by David Goddard. His academic credentials include a MA in Theatre Studies (UNSW).

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MICHAEL SCHELL LIGHTING/SOUND DESIGNER

This production marks Michael's 391st Lighting Design and his 63rd for New Theatre. Becoming involved with New Theatre in 1977, Michael designed lighting for *The Pirates of Pal Mal*. Other notable productions include *All My Sons, Colonial Experience, The Matchgirls, Indians, First Class Women, Henry 1V Part 1, Macbeth, Cloud 9, A Man for All Seasons, The Chapel Perilous, The Wild Duck, The Woman in the Window, The Voysey Inheritance, Angels in America, The Lovely Bones, The Spook,*

Chimerica, Jellyfish, The Ballad of Maria Marten, and The Front Page. Michael has also designed sound for 221 productions, 12 of which have been for New Theatre, including

Present Laughter.



DEBORAH MULHALL CO-COSTUME DESIGNER

Deborah is a playwright and director and sometime costume/set/audio/lighting designer. Once even, an actor! Deborah has also produced and directed over 20 plays, including for New Theatre *Hangmen* in 2024. It is not her first time collaborating with Lou Fischer on a play. Previous costuming for Lou has included *Harvest, House of Games* and *Maria Marten*. There has also been involvement with international groups (Cambridge University Footlights and La Mama New York) and national groups. Once president of The Illawarra Council for the Performing Arts, a founding member of Parramatta Theatre Company and Education Officer

for New Theatre, she has lived and breathed theatre in some form for most of her life. Deborah is represented by Australian Plays Transform (APT)



HELEN KOHLHAGEN CO-COSTUME DESIGNER

Based in Sydney with many years of experience, Helen brings a passion for theatrical storytelling to every project. Most recently, she contributed to the success of Lane Cove Theatre Company's *Farndale Avenue Housing Estate - Murder Mystery* and Pymble Players' *Blithe Spirit*. Helen has a strong working history with the Genesian Theatre, where her credits include *Hotel Sorrento*, *What Santa does the Other Days of the Year*, and the recent production of *Four Flat Whites in Italy*. Her expertise is not limited to the local stage; she recently returned from Vietnam. There, she was part of a team providing creative and practical expertise to the

she was part of a team providing creative and practical expertise to the theatre students at Hanoi University. Helen is excited to bring her diverse experience and creative energy to help shape the world of Present Laughter.



MEGAN WRAY INTIMACY DIRECTOR

Megan is a participatory arts facilitator and Intimacy Director, with an interest in how theatre can create community, play, and empowerment. She loves using devised embodied work to find unique ways to express intimacy. This is Megan's first time working for New Theatre. Previous work as an Intimacy Director includes: *Macbeth* (Goldsmiths), *Dating Yourself*, and *Sleeping With Ghosts* (Short Film). She holds an Acting Foundation Diploma from LAMDA, a BA of Applied Theatre and Community

Performance from Goldsmith's University, and has completed the NFTS Intimacy Co-ordination Film and Television Short Course.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT NEW THEATRE?
VISIT OUR HISTORY WEBSITE:
http://newtheatrehistory.org.au



ROSANE MCNAMARA STAGE MANAGER

Rosane has Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English and Drama and she studied acting at the Ensemble Theatre with Hayes Gordon. For New Theatre: as actor, Hard Times; as director, A Man for All Seasons, The Chapel Perilous, King Lear, Oh What a Lovely War Mate, Summer of the Seventeenth Doll, Entertaining Mr Sloane, Hay Fever, The Clean House, Broadway Bound, The Spook. She has also stage managed, production managed and operated lights/sound on many productions. For other companies: as actor, Pride & Prejudice (Ensemble Rep); The Diary of Anne Frank (Voices Theatre); as director, The Crucible (Ensemble Rep); Prelude to a Kiss (Belvoir Downstairs); and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Voices Theatre). Rosane is a Life Member of New Theatre and currently serves as President.



THOMAS O'MEARA ASST. STAGE MANAGER/OPERATOR

Having graduated with a BA in Screen production from AFTRS, Thomas had always thought making stories for the screen was where he belonged. However he cough't resist the allure of the theatre and it's dynamic and exciting nature. Present Laughter will mark Thomas's first production at New Theatre.





LIB CAMPBELL JOANNA LYPPIATT

For New Theatre: *The Spook*. Most recently Lib was seen at Melbourne's Comedy Theatre covering for David Collins (the hairy half of the Umbilical Brothers) in the national tour of *The 39 Steps* (Neil Gooding Productions). Lib spent 5 years working in the US where she was seen starring in *Peppa Pig's Big Splash* at New York's iconic Beacon Theatre and the subsequent international sellout tour. She has been a regular host on the Disney Channel (*How To Guide, Perry's Playoffs*) and was

a presenter and personality for the Nine Networks beloved children's program *The Shak*. Other recent theatre credits include *I Hate People or Timon of Athens* (Sport for Jove), *The Female of the Species* (Rogue Projects) and the very first staging of Roald Dahl's *The Magic Finger* with Mainstreet Theatre Company in Los Angeles. Next up you can catch Lib in the national tour of *Cluedo* (John Frost for Crossroads Live) in the role of Yvette.



(Mudlark).

HARRISON COLLIS OATES MALE UNDERSTUDY

For New Theatre: *Dangerous Liaisons*. With a burning passion for theatre and having completed his Bachelor of Creative Industries (Acting) at Charles Sturt University, Harrison has performed in numerous productions of both classic and new work including Kenny in *The Removalists* (UTE) and the dual roles of Nick/Leon in *Speaking in Tongues* (Freeroam Theatre), with his most recent performances in *Cloudstreet* (Lane Cove Theatre), *The Government Inspector* (Fingerless Theatre), and *The Box*



PETER EYERS GARRY ESSENDINE

Peter is a graduate of the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts. He is presently the Head of Drama at SCEGGS Darlinghurst. Peter is a passionate advocate for the Arts in education and a keen proponent of Australia's rich Arts heritage. As producer and host of STAGES Podcast, he features an array of guests that range from the elders who rightly wear the mantle of legend and star, to the emerging talents, set to shape and define the content of the future. For New Theatre: *Privates on Parade, Harvest, The Real Thing,* and *Australia Day.* Other theatre credits include:

The Voyage of Mary Bryant (Ensemble Theatre), An Ideal Husband (GFO), The Wizard of Oz (GFO), My Fair Lady (WA Music Theatre Company), How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying (The Production Company), Fallen Angels (E&S Productions), La Cage Aux Folles (Miranda MS), Rope (Bondi Pavilion), On Golden Pond (The Actor's Company), Winnie the Pooh, Noddy in Toyland, The Magic Faraway Tree (Garry Ginivan Productions) His film and television performances include: Danny Deckchair, Farscape, Water Rats, Backberner, A Difficult Woman, and Home and Away.



LIZ GRINDLEY MISS HAMILTON/LADY SALTBURN

For New Theatre: Debut. Liz has appeared in a variety of productions including: *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, and *Lady Windermere's Fan* for Genesian Theatre Company. You may also have seen her at Hunters Hill Theatre in *84 Charing Cross Road, Our Town, Calendar Girls*, or *Moon Over Buffalo*. If you're the jet setting type, maybe you caught her London performances; *The Changeling* and *Suddenly Last Summer* - at Tower Theatre.

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MOLLY HADDON LIZ ESSENDINE

For New Theatre: Sunset Strip. Molly has also appeared in Steel Magnolias, Sherlock Holmes and the Jersey Lily, Towards Zero, Figaro, A Murder is Announced, and Murder on the Nile for Genesian Theatre. Other theatrical work includes: The Money Shot (The Americas), Mrs Chisholm and the Female Home (Peach Productions), and Two Quarters Full (Moon Bureau). She has also appeared in the feature film Welcome Back to My Channel, and the short film Remembering You.



OLIVER HARCOURT-HAM FRED

For New Theatre: Shakespeare in Love. Oliver trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. He then completed a Meisner training at the Actor's Temple in London. After returning to Australia he has attended masterclass workshops with Richard Roxborough, Tess Haubrich, John Bell and Les Chantery. You may have caught his performances in Macbeth, The Tempest, and The Crucible, at Point Break Drama. Or his work at Genesian Theatre: The Hound of the Baskervilles, Murder on the Nile, and Lord

Arthur Savile's Crime. His other stage work includes: The One (Little Cup Productions), and Henry 6th Pt 1 (Sydney Shakespeare Company).



HOLLY MAZZOLA FEMALE UNDERSTUDY

For New Theatre: Debut. Holly Mazzola is a Sydney-based actor, director, and writer. Her 2025 credits include Jade in *Don't Save Me* at KXT (dir. Nelson Blake), and Mrs Cotter in Studio 5's production of *The Lotto Line* (dir. John Tsakiris, Megan Heferen). After graduating Actors Centre Australia in 2023, she commenced a national tour with the educational theatre company Poetry In Action. Holly spends her spare time researching how to build her own house out in the bush.



MICHELA NOONAN HETTY LYPPIATT

At 15, Michela made her stage debut as Juliet in ATYP's Romeo and Juliet. Since then, she has worked extensively as an actress in both Australia and Italy. Her film and television credits include Roar, The Code, Farscape, Devil's Playground, Two Step, Ruvido, Water Rats, Wildside, Spellbinder, The Sugar Factory, All Saints, Apnea, and Allegro non troppo. She lived and worked in Rome, where she filmed II destino ha quattro zampe at the iconic Cinecittà studios. Michela received an

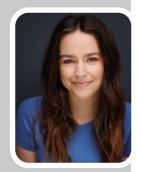
AFI (AACTA) nomination for Best Actress for her role in the Australian feature *Strange Fits of Passion*, and was awarded Best Actress at the prestigious Gallio Film Festival for her performance in the Italian feature *Quore*. In 2023, she was the lead in the premiere of *Off the Record* at the New Theatre. Her recent stage work includes Mrs. Erlynne in *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Genesian Theatre) and Aurora in *How He Lied to Her Husband* (Bittersweet Productions). She has also appeared in the short films *Little Light* and *Initiate-Connect*. Michela also works as a lawyer.





REUBEN SOLOMON MORRIS DIXON

For New Theatre: *Homos; Or everyone in America, The Front Page, Hangmen.* Originally from Perth, Reuben took the long road on his way to formal actor training with a BA in English Literature and Philosophy under his belt before graduating from ACA in 2023. Between these two degrees he spent several years living in Central Australia working in Youth Work and Community Development.



LARISSA TURTON DAPHNE STILLINGTON

For New Theatre: *The Frogs: In Hell They Sing Show Tunes*. Larissa graduated from ACA in 2023. Recent credits include: *She Threaded Dangerously* (Senseless Productions), *The Lotto Line* (Studio 5 Productions), *The Players* (Bell Shakespeare), *Banana Phone* (Studio 5 Productions), *The Partygoers* (Studio 5 Productions), *Alice in Wonderland* (Cloud Educational Theatre), *Sherlock Holmes* (Cloud Educational Theatre), *KEATING! The Musical* (Kore Productions), and

Coming Out On Broadway (Moon Bureau). For screen she has appeared in the short films: Feather Dance (Bus Stop Films), Broken Record (dir. by Federico Andersen), and Without You (dir. by Jarred Fantom).



LUKE VISENTIN ROLAND MAULE

Luke has a BFA in acting from NIDA. For New Theatre: The Vibrator Play, Hir, Control, and Atlantis. Other theatre credits are: Come Again, Lunch with Bernays, and Rhomboid (KXT), Hamlet and Cinderella (Opera Australia), Did You Mean To Fall Like That and Sophia=Wisdom (Patrick Kennedy Theatre Machine), Manic Pixie Meltdown and Fairytale of My Life (Shopfront Arts Co-op), Chasing Dick (Melbourne Fringe), A Czar is Born (Sydney Fringe), Morning to Midnight

(The Opera Centre), assorted puppet shows (Horizons Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet* tours (Such Stuff Productions), *Wind in the Willows*, and school incursions of all the major Shakespeare plays (The Australian Shakespeare Company). Luke was assistant director for *The Pigeons* (KXT), and *The Flea* (New Theatre), and acting coach for *The Tempest* (Such Stuff). Luke is also an acting teacher with 'Drama Scene' and 'Musical Theatre for Kids'", and a teaching artist with Sport for Jove.



EMILY WEARE MONICA REED

WAAPA trained Emily's theatre credits include; The Real Thing, August Osage County, Angry Fags, Ink (New Theatre), Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet (Sydney Shakespeare Co.); The Dysfunchsonalz, Lady Windemere's Fan, The Unscrupulous Murderer, The Frail Man, Fit to be Tied (Darlinghurst Theatre); Much Ado About Nothing, Comedy of Errors, (Shakespeare on the Green); Twelfth Night (Coogee Arts Festival and State Theatre Company, WA); Redheads (Old Fitzroy); Live Acts Onstage (Griffin

Theatre Co.); Fallen Angels (Tap Gallery and Belvoir Downstairs); The Graduate (Really Useful Co.); A Midsummer Night's Dream (HVTC and Aust. Shakespeare Co.); Money and Friends, Sons of Cain, Travellers (HVTC); Laundry and Bourbon (Underground Productions); On the Verge, Daisy Bates and the Dancer (State Theatre Company, WA); Cox 4, A Woman in Mind (Perth Theatre Co.); Noel and Gertie (Dress Circle Productions). Big screen credits include; A Waltz Through the Hills, Zucker, Deadly and Pink Balloons. She played Grace in the ABC sit-com After The Beep and enjoyed guest roles on many Australian TV series. A Drama teacher, Director and tutor, Emily has been a proud member of Equity since 1983.





WHO'S WHO AT NEW THEATRE 2025

STAFF

THEATRE MANAGER & PRODUCTION COORDINATOR Gemma Greer

PUBLICIST Alice Livingstone

TECHNICAL MANAGER Mehran Mortezaei

FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGERS Eddy S Dharmadji (Coordinator) Marica Fumanti Harlee Timms

LICENSEE
Dr David Marshall-Martin JP

PLAY ASSESSORS
John Keightley (Coordinator)
Annie Bilton
Michael Briggs
Doug Cairns
Susan Jordan
Rayma Watkinson
Raymond Patman (Administrator)

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Rosane McNamara

VICE PRESIDENT Chad Traupmann

TREASURER

Mathew Sigmund

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Louise Fischer

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE Margaret Thanos

LITERARY MANAGER Helen Tonkin

MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS COORDINATOR Sahn Millington

SECRETARY (EX-OFFICIO)
Gemma Greer

EMERITUS THEATRE CAT 'Mouse'

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SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE 'PRESENT LAUGHTER' TEAM

Thomas Fullerton, Emmanuel Nicolaou, Omran Abuhalaiqa, New Theatre Management Committee, staff and volunteers.

NEW THEATRE MEMBERSHIP

If you want to join the New Theatre family, why not join our membership? For \$30 a year you receive the following benefits:

- Notice of all auditions via email plus a guaranteed audition if the part is right for you
- \$30 tickets to all productions
- Voting rights at company meetings and the eligibility to stand for Management Committee positions
- Use theatre facilities at discounted rates
- Participation in Hold Cold Reads our series of 'cold reads' cast on a first-come basis
- Spotlight, the regular members' newsletter

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