



Worthy Players
Amateur Dramatic Society



Present Laughter

by Noël Coward



Director's Note

During the overture of a show at The Desert Inn, Las Vegas in around 1965, one of Noel's lyrics was "For I believe that since my life began the most I've had is just a talent to amuse." His understated romantic style, his razor sharp wit and use of prose have given us more amusement over the years than he let himself believe.

Many, many people who 'remember' Noel Coward's work, understandably, have expectations concerning the performance of his plays. We can never reproduce him, but we can capture him and portray his style and we hope we meet with your approval tonight.

For myself, I think his unique style stands the test of time. Our play this evening takes us back to the 1930's. The best we can hope for is that we've re-created it adequately. We so hope you enjoy this evening. We have certainly enjoyed preparing the evening for you.

Present Laughter

by Noel Coward

Designed and Directed by Peter Nouwens

Act I

Morning

Act II

Scene I. Evening. Three days later

Scene II. The next morning.

Act III

Evening. A week later

There will be an interval between each Act.

The Cast

GARRY ESSENDINE.....	Nick Kearns
LIZ ESSENDINE.....	Wendy Gomm
MORRIS DIXON.....	David Woolford
HENRY LYPPIATT.....	Richard Gomm
JOANNA LYPPIATT.....	Liz Leask
MONICA REED.....	Sylvia Davidge
FRED.....	Michael Edwards
MISS ERIKSON.....	Gill Walker
DAPHNE STILLINGTON.....	Clare Walker
LADY SALTBURN.....	Gerrie Stead
ROLAND MAULE.....	Mike Heseldin

The Crew

STAGE MANAGER.....	Jackie Nouwens
LIGHTING DESIGNER.....	Richard Aldous
COSTUMES.....	Gill Walker
PROMPT.....	Gerrie Stead
POSTER & PROGRAM.....	Peter Nouwens
FRONT OF HOUSE.....	Sarah Hammond
BAR MANAGER.....	Sarah Hammond

Sylvia Davidge

Sylvia returned to the stage after a gap of many years when she joined the Worthy Players in 1989. Initially, she only came along as company for her daughter, Sarah, and said she would make the coffee. That didn't last long however, and a debut part in *The Other Fellow's Oats* was followed by a string of other performances, and in *Pardon Me Prime Minister* she showed that she was not against the removal of clothes on stage! She has taken part in Music Halls and pantomimes, and will most recently be remembered as the playwright Phyllis Montague in *Play On*, and as Miss Schoen's secretary in *Lettice & Lovage*. Tonight she is the secretary again! Daughter Sarah is now our Bar Manager, so be careful what you say about Sylvia during the interval!

Michael Edwards

Michael has not been acting for as long as he says it feels! In the last ten years he has been in Music Hall both with the Worthy Players and St Cross, though a poor singer and worse dancer, and has played detectives and various solicitors (*The Business of Murder* and others), strange neighbours and relatives (including *Darling Mr London*, *Last Tango in Little Worthy* and *Run For Your Wife*), policemen, the Devil and various other biblical characters, and Elizabethan celebrities and non-entities (courtesy of the W.I. Millennium show). He seems now mostly to play old and "mature" men (some on — or in - their death-bed!) as well as character parts, and last year he starred as Leo Buchanan — the ghost — in *Laying the Ghost*. He likes making props for the stage almost as much as acting and, if asked, can usually turn his hand to making anything from full-body plaster to swords, axes, trees, video cameras or almost anything that will fit in his garage!!

Richard Gomm

This is my second appearance in a Noel Coward play. My first was as the doctor in *Blithe Spirit* in 1989. That was a technically more difficult play which required two ghosts to appear and for furniture and other props to move about by themselves, all

of which I had to build and operate. This production requires less of me to simply learn lines and not fall over the furniture.

Wendy Gomm

Following several years of being in the chorus for Music Hall, Wendy finally took the plunge, playing the role of ginny in *Outside Edge*. She has subsequently appeared in *play On*, *Visiting Hour*, *Bedroom Farce* and *Party Piece* as well as panto. In 2004 she co-produced with her husband Richard "*I.T.W.A* to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the end of WW2. Wendy has enjoyed her first Noel Coward experience.

Mike Heseldin

Mike's first part with the Worthy Players was as the panto dame in *Humpty Dumpty* (back in 1993 as far as he can remember), and he has made numerous appearances since in music halls, pantos and plays. His favourite part was the lead in *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* (1999). However, having spread himself thinly (despite middle-age spread!) with other groups such as the Chesil and the St Cross Drama Group, his last appearance with the Worthy Players was lying down in *Bedroom Farce* (his sort of part!). He is very pleased to be returning as Roland Maule.

Nick Kearns

Nick has been involved in amateur dramatics for over 25 years in a number of different groups and guises. He joined the Worthy Players in 1992 to fill a bit part in *When We Are Married*. Since then he has appeared in Music Halls, plays including *Local Affairs*, *Outside Edge* and *Bedroom Farce*, and pantomime. He was the ugliest sister in last year's production of *Beauty and the Beast*. He is also a long-standing member of the Chesil Theatre where stage appearances have included Evans in *Terra Nova* and *On Golden Pond*. Nick is currently the group's Treasurer, so make sure you tackle him after the show if you want a refund!

Liz Leask

Liz has been treading the boards since the age of 7, mostly in her native Suffolk, appearing in numerous plays, festivals and pantomimes. Her first performance with The Worthy Players was as Prince Cedric / The Beast in last Christmas's pantomime *Beauty and the Beast*. She is very much looking forward to Present Laughter, her first play with the group and her first time in a Noel Coward play.

Gerrie Stead

Geraldine Stead first joined the Worthy Players in 1991 and has taken part in many productions, helping both behind the scenes and Front of House, as is a requirement of amateur dramatics! Parts played have ranged from panto, comedy, drama and Music Hall melodramas and she is pleased to be involved in our current production which marks a welcome return to the stage after a couple of years absence.

Clare Walker

Having recently moved to the village, Clare wanted to get involved with the local community. She spotted one of our posters a couple of years ago and was soon on stage in *Robin Hood*. She enjoyed the experience so much that she came back for more in the 40s Revue, *ITWA*, and as Sadie in *Laying the Ghost*, her third Worthy Players' production in succession. Clare joined the group's committee in January and is now busy organising our social events.

Gill Walker

Gill has been a member of the Worthy Players since 1976 and for most of that time has run our box office so hopefully most of you know her telephone number —

She has appeared on stage every year since then in a variety of parts from straight plays and farces to pantomime and Music Hall. Memorable parts include title role in Andrew Davies's *Rose*, the Goose in Mother Goose's Golden Christmas, where she spent a claustrophobic time totally encased in yellow rubber, and two plays, *Pardon Me Prime Minister* and *Breezblock Park* where she appeared with her daughter Ruth. She also has happy memories of performing *The Hole in the Elephant's Bottom* in Music Hall! Last year she appeared in our 40s Review and later as Margot Buchanan in *Laying the Ghost*, and this year she has already directed our spring show, *Party Piece*.

David Woolford

David has most recently appeared on stage as Mrs Hinson's ill-fated neighbour in our spring production of *Party Piece*. He is also well-remembered for writing last year's pantomime, *Beauty and the Beast*, along with wife Alison. Both have been stalwart members of the Worthy Players for over 20 years, and David claims "he has the scars to prove it"! Many of you may also have enjoyed their production of *Aladdin* two years ago. He has been involved in all aspects of drama with the group, and was seen last year in both the Forties Review and *Laying The Ghost*, where he will long be remembered for carrying a stretcher whilst working the lights at the same time!

The Worthy Players would like to thank Wessex Windows for allowing patrons to park on their premises this evening. Their support is greatly appreciated.

