

Did you know?

- Noël Coward formulated the idea of *Present Laughter* over three years and completed writing it in six days.
- *Present Laughter* was originally titled 'Sweet Sorrow'.
- Garry Essendine's surname is an anagram of 'neediness'.

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National Theatre Live

A production from
THE OLD VIC

NOËL COWARD'S

PRESENT LAUGHTER

Cast in order of appearance

Daphne Stillington.....Kitty Archer
Miss Erikson/Lady Saltburn...Liza Sadovy
Fred.....Joshua Hill
Monica Reed.....Sophie Thompson
Garry Essendine.....Andrew Scott
Liz Essendine.....Indira Varma
Roland Maule.....Luke Thallon
Helen Lyppiatt.....Suzie Toase
Morris Dixon.....Abdul Salis
Joe Lyppiatt.....Enzo Cilenti

Creative Team

Director.....Matthew Warchus
Set and Costume.....Rob Howell
Co-Lighting.....Tim Lutkin
and Hugh Vanstone
Sound.....Simon Baker
Casting.....Jessica Ronane CDG
Associate Director.....Joe Murphy

Broadcast Team

Director for Screen.....Marcus Viner
Technical Producers.....Julia Nelson
and Christopher C. Bretnall
Lighting Consultant...Gemma O'Sullivan
Sound Supervisor.....Conrad Fletcher
Script Supervisor.....Annie McDougall



Running time:

2 hours and 30 minutes, including a 20-minute interval.



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On Noël Coward and *Present Laughter*

An extract by director Matthew Warchus from *The Old Vic* programme.

In 30 years of directing, I've never attempted any Noël Coward. I'm not exactly sure why. I love a good comedy and Coward is one of the most successful and celebrated comic writers there is, so the omission is much more by accident than design. And yet, it's fair to say that the world of Coward — and his contemporaries — has always been something of a foreign land to me. I've very much enjoyed seeing them in performance from an audience's perspective but never really known what I could bring to the table as a director. I honestly think it's imperative that directors find ways to connect to the material they're charged with delivering; some personal attachments, essential handholds, ways to fill a production with purpose. And so, I was excited, and relieved, to discover (actually very quickly) three key pathways to lead me towards this version of *Present Laughter*.

The first was a proposal to experiment with changing the gender of some of

the characters. This was a spontaneous idea that Andrew Scott and I, in our early discussions about the play, happened upon literally simultaneously. It seemed like something Coward might possibly have approved of and in truth doesn't actually change the sexuality of the central character who is already (albeit more discreetly) given both male and female sexual partners in the original script. The second appeared when I read Coward described as 'the original pop star'. This seemed particularly relevant to his depiction of Garry Essendine, the famous matinee idol who is the central character of this play. We are all used to observing in the news the chaotic (sometimes tragic) lives of major pop stars as they navigate (or fail to navigate) between the extraordinary highs and lows of their celebrity lives. But do we pause to properly consider that this lifestyle is itself a form of trauma...partly self-inflicted and partly inflicted by the intense adulation of fans?

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Prima Facie

by Suzie Miller
directed by Justin Martin

In cinemas 12 September

Jodie Comer's sensational performance as young barrister Tessa in the smash-hit play returns to the big screen this autumn.

★★★★★

'West End debuts don't come much more astonishing than this'

Telegraph

Nye

by Tim Price
directed by Rufus Norris

In cinemas now

Michael Sheen plays Nye Bevan in the epic Welsh fantasia following one man's dream of the NHS.

★★★★★

'Michael Sheen is perfect in this surefire hit'

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