

**WIMBORNE**  
DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

# RELATIVE VALUES

A COMEDY BY **NOËL COWARD**

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26 - 28 MAY 2016  
**TIVOLI THEATRE WIMBORNE**

# Director's notes

Welcome to the Tivoli Theatre for this performance of Noël Coward's satirical comedy *Relative Values*. Written in 1951, it is Coward's commentary on the social and political contradictions of Britain in the years immediately after the end of the Second World War. He satirises the British obsession with 'class' and as the popularity of *Downton Abbey* has shown, our fascination with the 'class system' has never gone away. He also pokes fun at Hollywood, its vacuous and vain movie stars, and 'celebrity'.



Richard Neal at Noël Coward's memorial in St Paul's, the 'actors' church', Covent Garden

This is the third Noël Coward play that I have directed, after *Hay Fever* and *Present Laughter*. As with all the plays written by 'The Master', it is well structured, has a wide range of characters with very human values, has Coward's usual wit and stylish impudence, but it is also blessed with the spirit of PG Wodehouse.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank my wonderful cast, for bringing the play to life on stage so brilliantly, and my creative team, especially Chris Durham, Ken Fletcher, Phyllis Spencer and my wife Chrissie Neal, without whose support the whole experience would have been so much harder and far less enjoyable. A big thank-you also to Kyle Best and his technical team, and all the staff and volunteers here at the Tiv, for their assistance.

Enjoy the play!

**Richard Neal - Director**

# Master strokes

Noël Coward was born in December 1899 in suburban, middle-class south London in genteel poverty, the second son of an unsuccessful piano salesman and a doting, ambitious mother who took in lodgers to keep the family afloat.

He was phenomenally successful from an early age, driven by his determination to escape the suburban world he did not care for, although not his mother whom he adored. His multi-faceted talent

as an actor, writer, composer and producer brought him into close contact with the great and the good in film, literature and politics. He could count members of the Royal Family among his friends, was invited to eye-opening parties at country homes of eccentrics, was a war-time propagandist, and beloved entertainer of the troops. He also loved to travel, especially by ship, where he was equally at home dining in the officers' wardroom or socialising with the ordinary seamen.

Although blessed with natural talent, and having a tendency at times to revel in his playboy image, he still worked incredibly hard – he saw work as a kind of religious discipline – often to the point of exhaustion, and there were many episodes of illness and recovery throughout his life.

With such rich and varied life experiences, no wonder 'The Master' could populate his plays with such a wide range of characters with very human values.



*Noël Coward during rehearsals for Relative Value, 1951*

# 1951: a good year

"On the whole, a good year" Noël Coward wrote in his diary on New Year's Eve 1951.

The success of *Relative Values* that year made Coward believe that he had been restored to favour after the comparatively lean post-war period when he and his work had been dismissed as irredeemably old-fashioned.

The second reason to be grateful to 1951 was his wildly successful reinvention that autumn as a cabaret performer

which made him once more the darling of London society. A sensational cabaret season in Las Vegas in 1955 kept him in the public eye until the 1960s when his work as a playwright was re-valued and returned him to critical respectability.



*Relative Values at the Savoy Theatre, 1951*

## Noël Coward on politics:

“Long talk with Lornie [Lorne Loraine, his secretary] when I got home...We decided that the present [Labour] government is the worst that this country has ever had, and that if the ordinary people do not pull out of their idiotic apathy and learn to want to work again, we shall be taken over amiably by America and serve us bloody well right. ”

(Diary entry,  
1 September 1949)

Coward began writing *Relative Values* on Friday 23 March 1951. He recorded in his diary: "Good Friday. Very good Friday really. Suddenly evolved a comedy called *Moxie*. It feels the sort of play I want to write." And on 26 March he wrote: "Eight pages done of *Moxie* and rather good." He finished the play, now re-titled *Relative Values*, on 18 April. It premiered in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 15 October 1951 starring Gladys Cooper, Judy

Campbell and Angela Baddeley. It opened at the Savoy Theatre, London on 28 November and ran until January 1953.

*Relative Values* is a satire of snobbery in all its guises, dealing with the clash of cultures of English tradition and American glamour.

Class consciousness was supposed to have been overturned by the Second World War. But it was exactly the contradictions of that period after the war that Coward was interested in. The 1945 Labour Government, which gave us the NHS and the basis of our welfare system, was overturned, as Clement Attlee paid the price for his failure to deliver an end to rationing, and Winston Churchill returned to power in 1951. Britain has yo-yoed from right to left and back again in the years since.

Sixty-five years on, with the popularity of TV programmes such as *Downton Abbey*, the never-ending fascination with the Bullingdon Club at Oxford circa 1987 when David Cameron and Boris Johnson were members, the column inches written about so-called 'posh' actors like Eddie Redmayne getting all the best roles, or the media's sometimes sniffy opinion of the Duchess of Cambridge's middle-class family, we are still as fascinated by class and its workings.

### Noël Coward on Hollywood:

“I had generated in my mind a strong prejudice against the moving-picture business, a prejudice compounded of small personal experience and considerable intellectual snobbery. I had convinced myself that it was a soul-destroying industry in which actors of mediocre talent were publicised and idolised beyond their deserts, and authors, talented or otherwise, were automatically massacred. Of all my plays, only one, *Cavalcade*, had been filmed with taste and integrity. The rest, with the possible exception of *Private Lives*, which was passable, had been re-written by incompetent hacks, vulgarised by incompetent directors and reduced to common fatuity.”

(*Future Indefinite*, 1954)

# Cast in conversation

## Have you any interesting family history, or famous relatives?

**TRACEY NICHOLLS:** My great great grandfather was Laurence Olivier's dresser.

**ROB CORDING:** Wilbur Smith, the novelist, is my Gran's cousin.

**ANTHONY WYLD:** My family occupied the Commandery in Worcester from around 1430 to 1677 - providing sanctuary to Charles II before the battle which took place in the grounds of the house in 1649. Whilst one Wyld got the chop for his efforts, it did mean we came back as the court jeweller to Charles II.

**SHEILA DOVE:** When my father enlisted in the army in the early part of World War II, he was one of only two recruits in his unit who were not shipped out to Singapore immediately after their initial training. It seems that the army at that time was short of men like my Dad who knew how to drive and maintain heavy vehicles. As a result he remained in this country as a driving and mechanics instructor for the duration of the war. It was something that he never spoke of until a few years before his death, because he wrongly felt ashamed that he had not really taken part in the war itself. But it was something that probably saved his life, or at least saved him from internment in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. Either way I may well never have been born.

## Have you ever been mistaken for someone famous?

**ANTHONY WYLD:** I was once mistaken for Tom Cruise by a young school friend of my daughter. The fact that she had extremely poor eyesight problems explains some of this and she was immediately taken to the Sanitorium for checks afterwards.

**GARY PAINE:** On more than one occasion I have been likened to Seb Coe.



Gary Paine and Shella Dove



Chris Durham and Holly Boeva



Anthony Wyld and Jan Stevenson

# RELATIVE VALUES

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## The Cast in order of appearance

Crestwell, the butler	<b>CHRIS DURHAM</b>
Alice, the housemaid	<b>HOLLY BOEVA</b>
Mrs Dora Moxton (Moxie)	<b>CAROLINE BURR</b>
Felicity, Countess of Marshwood	<b>SHEILA DOVE</b>
Lady Cynthia Hayling	<b>JAN STEVENSON</b>
The Hon. Peter Ingleton, Felicity's nephew	<b>GARY PAINE</b>
Admiral Sir John Hayling	<b>ANTHONY WYLD</b>
Nigel, Earl of Marshwood	<b>ROB CORDING</b>
Miranda Frayle	<b>TRACEY NICHOLLS</b>
Don Lucas	<b>SAM MOULTON</b>

The action of the play passes in the library of Marshwood House, East Kent, during early July 1951

Act I	Scene 1	Saturday afternoon
	Scene 2	Two hours later
Act II	Scene 1	Before dinner
Interval		
Act II	Scene 2	After dinner
Act III	The following morning	

Running time approximately 2 hours 45 minutes including interval

## The Creative Team

Director	<b>RICHARD NEAL</b>
Designer	<b>CHRIS DURHAM</b>
Company Stage Manager	<b>PHYLLIS SPENCER</b>
Deputy Stage Manager	<b>JOHN WILLMOTT</b>
Tivoli Production Manager	<b>KYLE BEST</b>
ASMs	<b>JUDY GARRETT</b>
	<b>CALUM HEARN</b>
	<b>CHRISSIE NEAL</b>
	<b>BARRY BAYNTON</b>
Lighting	<b>KIERAN HENSHAW-RAY</b>
Sound	<b>MOIRA HAWEY</b>
Costumes Supervisor	<b>HEATHER FLETCHER</b>
Costumes	Supplied by <b>"HIREARCHY"</b>
Set Construction	<b>CHRIS DURHAM</b>
	<b>KEN FLETCHER</b>
	and members of the company

## Production Acknowledgements

We are also grateful to the following organisations for their assistance: **Daisy Graphic, Dumpton School, Gullivers Bookshop, Prezzo, Royal British Legion Wimborne, St Mary's Church Ferndown, Tivoli Theatre and Wimborne Tourist Information Centre**





**ROB CORDING:** I've been told that I have a likeness to Hugo Lloris, the Spurs goalie.

**JAN STEVENSON:** Someone did stop me many years ago, in my youth, asking if I was someone off the telly. It is so long ago that I cannot remember her name!

### Ever met a famous celebrity?

**CAROLINE BURR:** Whilst at university in the 1970s I dated Peter Duke, the son of former world motorcycle racing champion Geoff Duke.

**HOLLY BOEVA:** A few years ago I was working as concierge at Apple headquarters in London and met actress Amanda Seyfried who was promoting her latest film.

**SAM MOULTON:** I was next to Michael Kitchen in the checkout at Tesco two weeks in a row. He was very friendly (the first time). I was Charles Dickens and Jamie Theakston was Scrooge in a school production of *A Christmas Carol*. And I





Tracey Nicholls and Sam Moulton

once wore a costume that had originally been made for John Mills.

**TRACEY NICHOLLS:** I was at the theatre in Stratford and found myself walking down the stairs behind Ian McKellen and Richard Wilson - I'm not sure that I didn't curtsy... I've also met Samantha Bond after seeing her playing Lady Macbeth in London, she was absolutely lovely.

**ROB CORDING:** I've acted alongside Leah Bracknell (Zoe Tate in *Emmerdale*) in *Turn of the Screw*. I also met Christopher Dean in London and have his autograph.

**JAN STEVENSON:** I once met Spike Milligan when he opened a small car show a group of us had organised for charity. He was very nice.

**SHEILA DOVE:** Years ago I stood for ages on the Bournemouth cliff tops watching the filming of a short sequence of an Eric Sykes and Hattie Jacques comedy. What I remember most is that they would say only a few lines of script over and over and then disappear into their various caravans to warm up for a while. It seemed to me to be the most boring of professions at the time. Each shot seemed to be filmed endlessly. How they ever got into the characters and the mood of the excerpts they were doing I shall never know. Live theatre seemed so much more fulfilling to me after that!

### **Tell us something amazing that we may not know about you**

**CHRIS DURHAM:** I had a private pilot's licence and part-owned a Cessna. I have flown over both the Canadian Rockies and Niagara Falls.

**SAM MOULTON:** I once drove several hundred miles across America in a 1967 Cadillac, before I had a licence.

**JAN STEVENSON:** I won medals in junior school for swimming (not very far!)

**HOLLY BOEVA:** When I was younger I was in the army cadet force and won awards for being the best at drill and rifle shooting.

**GARY PAINE:** I was recently interviewed on Sky Sports in my capacity as chairman of Morden F.C. to discuss our goalkeeper who at the age of 62 is still playing regularly!

**CAROLINE BURR:** I am currently studying for a PhD in Consumer Behaviour.

**TRACEY NICHOLLS:** I know all the words of every song in *Les Misérables*. Sadly, I don't have the vocal ability to match my memory!

# Cast biographies

## HOLLY BOEVA

(Alice)

This is Holly's first stage role since studying performing arts when she played Roxy Hart in *Chicago* and The Rat in *The Canterbury Tales*. Since then she has done film work - her favourite role being Chloe in a zombie film called *Death Walks* due for release this year - and some modelling jobs including one for Rubicon Mango "which involved walking around with another model wearing one big Hawaiian shirt and drinking lots of juice whilst being photographed!" Holly was born in Bournemouth and works as a Musculoskeletal Sonographer.

## CAROLINE BURR

(Moxie)

Caroline played Lady Catherine de Bourgh in our open air production of *Pride and Prejudice* last year, but this marks her first appearance at the Tivoli. Her favourite roles have been Cecilia in *The Ark* for Broadstone Players and Beverley in *Abigail's Party* for Roundabout Theatre Company. Born in Chippenham, Wiltshire, Caroline is a University Lecturer.

## ROB CORDING

(Nigel, Earl of Marshwood)

Poole-born Rob has been with WDP since 2007 and has appeared in several productions here at the Tivoli. He is also a regular in our summer plays at Deans Court, appearing as Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* in 2015. His favourite parts have been Simon Bliss in Noël Coward's *Hay Fever* and Lord Arthur in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*. He works as an Insurance Team Leader.

## SHEILA DOVE

(Felicity, Countess of Marshwood)

Sheila was born in Wolverhampton and is a retired school teacher. In 2015 she played Mrs Wilberforce in *The Ladykillers*, one of her favourite roles, along with Grace in *Entertaining Angels*, Isobel in *An Experiment With an Airpump*, both with Broadstone Players, and Anna in *The Day After the Fair* ("when I was much younger!"). In 2004 she received a Daily Echo Curtain Call award for her portrayal of Mary in *The Memory of Water*, also with Broadstone Players.

## **CHRIS DURHAM**

(Crestwell)

Former army major Chris was born in London and now works as a Military Communications & IT consultant. Since joining WDP in 2013, Chris has played Warnie Lewis in *Shadowlands* and the Duke of Norfolk in *A Man for All Seasons*, two of his favourite roles alongside Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* for Blandford Camp Drama Club. He has also designed and built sets for *Pride and Prejudice*, *A Man For All Seasons* and now this play.

## **SAM MOULTON**

(Don Lucas)

Born in Cuckfield, Sussex, Sam has been a very active member of WDP since joining in 2011 and has appeared in both of our two most recent Noël Coward plays, *Hay Fever* and *Present Laughter*. His favourite roles, however, have been the dramatic ones: Sir Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons* and CS Lewis in *Shadowlands*. Sam is a teacher.

## **TRACEY NICHOLLS**

(Miranda Frayle)

Tracey was born in Hammersmith, London and works as an Operations Manager. She has been with WDP for 15 years, actively involved in all aspects of the company, has acted in many productions and also directed *A*

*Man For All Seasons*. Her favourite roles with WDP include Joy Gresham in *Shadowlands*, Elizabeth Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice* and Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

## **GARY PAINE**

(The Hon. Peter Ingleton)

Gary played Rev. Harry Harrington in our recent production of *Shadowlands* and Mr. Bennet in last summer's *Pride and Prejudice*, one of his favourite roles along with Milo Tindle in *Sleuth* for Broadstone Players with whom Gary had a long association. Gary was born in Weymouth and works as a Sales Representative.

## **JAN STEVENSON**

(Lady Cynthia Hayling)

Jan has been with WDP for more than 30 years and has been involved in more plays than she probably cares to remember! She played Lady Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice* last year. Among her favourite roles is Madam Arcanti in *Blithe Spirit* by Noël Coward. Jan is now retired and originally hails from Reading.

## **ANTHONY WYLD**

(Admiral Sir John Hayling)

Anthony was born in a British military hospital in Tripoli, Libya.

"My Mama was tucking into a gin and tonic on the beach when I knocked - and I was born less than an hour and a half later. Its been my favourite tippie almost ever since." This is Anthony's first role for WDP. Favourites in the past include Buttercup in *HMS Pinafore* before rising to Queen of the Fairies in *Iolanthe*, culminating as Empress of China in *The Mikado* - "a fine demonstration of social climbing". Anthony looks after around 20,000 acres of forests scattered around the UK - "it's great as they do no harm to anyone and actually money does seem to grow on them".

## WIMBORNE DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

# HABEAS CORPUS

By Alan Bennett

20th - 22nd October 2016

A rollicking farce as saucy as a seaside postcard, directed by Barry Baynton

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# HABEAS CORPUS

*A rollicking farce as saucy  
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OCTOBER  
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