

47. *The Astonished Heart*

Two set designs by Calthrop for *The Astonished Heart*, one of the plays in *Tonight at 8.30*.

Piano score: Symphonic Suite from *The Astonished Heart*

Photograph of Noël Coward and Gertrude Lawrence in the original production of *The Astonished Heart* (1935).

Quotes in the text taken from:

The Letters of Noël Coward, edited by Barry Day

and

Present Indicative, by Noël Coward.

Exhibition curated by Jill Sullivan, Archives Assistant.

Cover Illustration: Noël Coward as Garry Essendine in Present Laughter, by Angus McBean. © Harvard Theatre Collection, Harvard University.

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Theatre Collection



The Master:
Noël Coward 1899-1973

21 March –15 July 2014

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In 2013 The Noël Coward Foundation generously funded the cataloguing of Noël Coward holdings in the Theatre Collection. These comprise over 4,500 items and this exhibition - the outcome of the project - includes a selection of items that celebrate the life and work of one of the most influential figures of British theatre.

'The Master' charts Coward's life and major productions and the people he worked with, notably the designer Gladys Calthrop. The exhibition records both the West End triumphs and amateur wartime productions; glamorous co-stars and an audience recollection; and the achievements of an extraordinary life.

Main Foyer

Case 1: Life and Achievements

1. Childhood and early roles

Photograph of Noel Coward aged 5

Photo-postcard of Noel Coward as a Mushroom in the children's ballet *An Autumn Idyll* (1912). This was one of Coward's earliest performances of which he wrote: 'My entrance consisted of a series of abandoned high kicks, slightly higher with the right leg than with the left, typifying the carefree *joie de vivre* of the average mushroom.'

Photograph of Noel Coward as 'Slightly' in Dion Boucicault's 1913 production of *Peter Pan*. It was, Coward recollected, 'all that I hoped it would be, and more'.

Photograph of Coward as 'Cannard' with Lydia Bilbrooke and Charles Hawtry in *The Great Name* (1911).

2. Photograph of Coward with orphans from the Actors' Orphanage. He took over the active organisation of their annual garden party from Gerald du Maurier in 1934 and also raised thousands of pounds by organising and appearing in charity shows for the Orphanage.

43. *Sigh No More*

Calthrop costume design for Joyce Grenfell as the 'Society Lady' singing 'Du Maurier' from the revue *Sigh No More* (1945)

Manuscript of the song with lyrics by Joyce Grenfell and music by Richard Addinsell.

44. *Pacific 1860*

Calthrop costume design for Mary Martin as 'Elena Salvador' in *Pacific 1860* (1946).

Production photographs of *Pacific 1860*. The party scene shows Mary Martin in the Calthrop designed costume, centre of scene.

Programme for *Pacific 1860* at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in 1946.

45. *Ace of Clubs*

Calthrop costume design for Pat Kirkwood as 'Pinkie Leroy' singing 'Josephine' in the musical play *Ace of Clubs* (1950).

Photograph of Pat Kirkwood in costume.

Programme for *Ace of Clubs* at the Cambridge Theatre, 1950.

46. *The Queen was in the Parlour*

Calthrop costume design for Madge Titheradge as 'Nadya' in *The Queen was in the Parlour* (1926).

Photo-feature from *The Sketch*, featuring Titheradge in this costume.

Programme for *The Queen was in the Parlour*.

Recollection by Theatre Collection volunteer Maureen Brown, of seeing *Present Laughter* with her parents, in 1942.

Photograph of Noël Coward as Garry Essendine in *Present Laughter*.

40. Conversation Piece

Published score for *Conversation Piece* (1934).

Portrait photograph of Noël Coward as Paul, Duc de Chaucigny-Varennnes in *Conversation Piece*.

Photographs of Noël Coward and Yvonne Printemps, and of the cast and orchestra at a recording session of *Conversation Piece* at the His Master's Voice studios.

Eau de Toilette inspired by the play 'Conversation Piece'.

41. This Happy Breed

Photographs of Noël Coward and Judy Campbell in the original stage version of *This Happy Breed* (1947).

Programme for *This Happy Breed* at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, April 1943.

Case Drawers. Please note: only one drawer at a time can be opened. Please ensure that each drawer is fully closed before the next one is opened.

42. Bitter Sweet

Calthrop costume design for Audrey Pointing as 'Harriet' in *Bitter Sweet* (1929).

Photograph of Evelyn Laye as 'Sari Linden' in *Bitter Sweet*.

Card invitation to a supper to celebrate the 300th performance of *Bitter Sweet* at the Savoy Hotel Ballroom, decorated with caricatures of the stars.

3. Photograph of Coward reading the Mander & Mitchenson *Theatrical Companion to Coward*. The majority of the items in this exhibition were collected by or donated to Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, who were friends with Coward.

4. Photograph of Coward with Roy Plomley recording *Desert Island Discs* in January 1963.

5. Noël Coward's silver embossed writing case. Recently conserved by the Leather Conservation Centre, Northampton, courtesy of Cameron Mackintosh.

6. Autographed menu for Noël Coward's 70th Birthday celebration held at the Savoy Hotel on 16 December 1969.

7. Photograph of Noël Coward with Gladys Calthrop and Joyce Carey, two of his closest female friends, at Buckingham Palace, where he was knighted in 1969.

8. Photograph of Coward at Firefly, his home in Jamaica.

9. Official programme for the unveiling of a memorial stone at Westminster Abbey on 28 March 1984.

[Items 10 and 11 are on the wall above Case 1]

10. Photograph of Coward by Dorothy Wilding, and inscribed to 'Gog and Magog', Coward's nicknames for Mander & Mitchenson.

11. Poster for *A Talent to Amuse*, produced at the Phoenix Theatre to celebrate Coward's 70th Birthday in December 1969.

Case 2: Productions.

Illustrating the range of genres and occasions within which Coward worked, from garden party satires to drama, musical revues and ballet.

First shelf: revues, satire, and a guest appearance

12. London Calling

Photograph of Coward with chorus girls in 'Other Girls' from the revue *London Calling*, co-written with Ronald Jeans (1923). The review also included the sketch 'Swiss Family Whittlebot', a satire of the literary Sitwell family (see also 13).

Piano-vocal score for 'Other Girls'

13. 'The Swiss Family Whittlebot'

Programme for The Grand Giggle Company charity show for the Royal Hospital Gardens, Chelsea in 1931. The 'Whittlebot' sketch in *London Calling* had invoked the wrath of the Sitwell family who had written to Coward. Coward recollected: 'To this day I am still a little puzzled as to why that light-hearted burlesque should have aroused [them] to such paroxysms of fury. But the fact remains that it did, and I believe still does.' Undeterred, Coward continued with the theme, writing poems based on Edith Sitwell's modernist style and reciting them at this garden party.

The Poems of Hernia Whittlebot. Coward privately published and circulated copies of this satire on the poems of Edith Sitwell.

Press cutting photograph of 'The Swiss Family Whittlebot' in *London Calling*

14. Vocal score for 'Cosmopolitan Lady' from the revue *On with the Dance* (1925)

15. Programme for The Quaints at the Victoria Theatre, Singapore. The company was performing *Journey's End*, which Coward admired and asked to join the cast for one performance. He later wrote of the company: 'they were excellent and I was good in spots.'

Second shelf: Coward's co-stars

16. John Gielgud

Production photograph of the play *Nude With Violin* (1956)
Letter from Noël Coward to Gielgud's mother, regarding her son's

Forces suffered a severe loss.'

Lift Lobby

[Items 32 to 38 are on the walls, numbered from left to right]

32. Oil painting of the designer Gladys Calthrop by Clemence Dane.

33. Set design by Calthrop for *This was a Man* (1926 but not performed in England as it had been refused a licence by the Lord Chamberlain).

34. Set design by Calthrop for *Present Laughter* (1942).

35 and 36. Set designs by Calthrop for *This Happy Breed* (1942).

37 and 38. Set and costume design by Calthrop for the 'Loch Lomond' number in the revue *Sigh No More* (1945).

Screen: Noël Coward and Gladys Calthrop

An introduction to the working relationship of Noël Coward and Gladys Calthrop and costume designs for the 'Midnight Matinée' number in the revue *Set to Music* (1938).

Case 4: Noël Coward's Dressing Gown

(Bequeathed to Raymond Mander)

Case 5: Calthrop and Coward: Designs in Context

39. *Present Laughter*

Photograph of Judy Campbell as Joanna Lyppiatt

Programme for Haymarket Theatre production in 1947.

Photograph of Noël Coward as Garry Essendine and Avis Scott as Daphne Stillington in the original Haymarket Theatre production of *Present Laughter* (1942).

26. Screen: Conflict in the Theatre: *The Vortex* (1925)

Case 3: The Impact of War on Coward's Work

27. Post-Mortem

Noël Coward's play *Post Mortem* was a reaction to the First World War; in his own words 'an angry little vilification of war'. It was written in 1930 and published the following year but not professionally performed until 1992. In January 1943, British POWs at the Eichstätt Camp put on a production.

Copy of original photograph taken during the Eichstätt performance.

Press review of the POW production from *The Sketch*, 22 March 1944.

Programme for the Eichstätt production.

28. Souvenir programme for Coward's performances with EAEME during his wartime tour of Africa during the Second World War. The tour raised thousands of pounds for War Charities.

29. Official photograph of Coward broadcasting during the war.

30. Noël Coward signing an autograph for a member of the Forces in a seemingly informal photograph but which was taken by the Army Film and Photographic Unit and carries the stamp of War Office approval on the reverse.

31. Peace in Our Time

Programme for the Lyric Theatre production (1947), which controversially considered an alternative outcome of the Battle of Britain and a subsequent German invasion of Britain.

Photograph of John Molecey, Trevor Ward, George Lane, Helen Horsey, Sybil Wise, Elspeth March, Beatrice Varley, Bernard Lee and Maureen Pryor in the Lyric Theatre production. The voice from the radio announces that: 'In the Mediterranean, German Naval

performance as Sebastien.

Programme for the Globe Theatre production, directed by Coward. Gielgud wrote to Lilian Gish that the play 'is original and neat, and seems to me the best thing Noël has written in years.'

17. Marion Spencer

Cecil Beaton photograph of Marion Spencer's costume fitting for the part of Charlotte, Mrs Axel Diensen in *Quadrille* (1952).

Signed letter from Noël Coward to Marion Spencer regarding her performance as Gertrude in *Hamlet* in 1944. The reverse of the letter continues: 'I am so delighted to see in *The Daily Mail* that Mr Philip Page thought poorly of you. This practically makes you the Ellen Terry of our day. Yours really was a fascinating & brilliantly intelligent performance. Yours, Noël Coward'.

18. Gladys Cooper

Photograph of Gladys Cooper, Judy Campbell, Angela Baddeley and Simon Lack in Act 2 of *Relative Values* at the Savoy Theatre (1951).

Signed Photograph of Gladys Cooper.

Programme for *Relative Values* at the Savoy Theatre.

19. Gertrude Lawrence

Production photograph of Noël Coward, Gertrude Lawrence, Laurence Olivier and Adrienne Allen in the final scene of *Private Lives* at the Phoenix Theatre (1930).

Photograph of Coward and Gertrude Lawrence in the same production. Coward once wrote: 'Sometimes in *Private Lives* I would look across the stage at Gertie and she would simply take my breath away.'

20. Third shelf: *Cavalcade*

Probably the most lavish and famous of Coward's productions, *Cavalcade* charted the life of a family - both upstairs and downstairs - from 1899 to 1930, against the backdrop of major events in the British history. The play was featured in every medium, from stage to screen, radio and newspaper. George Bernard Shaw once wrote: 'Noël Coward will survive in history. With *Cavalcade* alone he did more for Britain than all the generals at Waterloo.'

Programme for the original stage production at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (1931).

Production photograph of Scene 2 (Dockside: Troop ship departing for the Boer War, January 1900).

Behind the scenes photograph of Scene 2 (A London Street) from the film set of *Cavalcade* in 1932.

The Play Pictorial Vol LX (1931), featuring *Cavalcade*.

Advertisement from *The Daily Mail* promoting the forthcoming newspaper serialisation of the play script.

Radio script. The BBC broadcast the play on 24 June 1936. It was produced by Felix Felton and Val Gielgud and featured the BBC Theatre Orchestra and Revue Chorus. This script belonged to Laura Smithson, who played Cook.

Photograph of Laura Smithson in role.

Good Luck telegram sent to Smithson at Drury Lane, by Noël Coward.

Fourth shelf: *Blithe Spirit* and the ballet *London Morning*

21. *Blithe Spirit*

Press cutting photograph of Margaret Rutherford and Noël Coward in rehearsal.

Photograph of Joyce Carey, Noël Coward and Judy Campbell taking a bow at the Piccadilly Theatre, 1941.

Trick photograph by Cecil Beaton of the original production cast.

Programme for a production by the Gedida Players at an ENSA Garrison Theatre in Egypt (c.1944).

Programme for an ENSA production starring Emlyn Williams, in Holland (1944).

22. *London Morning*

Colour flyer for the World Premiere of London Festival Ballet in *London Morning*.

Souvenir programme for the 10th Anniversary Production of *London Morning* by the London Festival Ballet, open at the article by Coward in which he describes the premise and development of the production.

Birthday card with colour photograph of John Gilpin and Jeanette Minty in *London Morning*.

[Items 23 and 24 are on the wall next to Case 2 and item 25 is on the stairs.]

23. Photographs of Noël Coward and Gertrude Lawrence in two of the short plays from *Tonight at 8.30* (1935): 'Has anybody seen our ship' from *Red Peppers*, and *Shadow Play*.

24. Trio of photographs of Noël Coward in *Suite in Three Keys* (1966), as (from left to right): Verner Conklin in *Come into the Garden Maud*; Hugo Latymer in *A Song at Twilight* and as George Hilgay in *Shadows of the Evening*.

Irene Worth wrote to Coward in 1965, writing that:

'I can't tell you how much I admire the 1st play - so spare, true...so grown up, human, vulnerable, touching, very powerful, full of pity for all men, and great dignity.'

25. Water colour painting of Dover, late 1940s by Noël Coward.