

The Genesian Theatre Company

presents

COWARD

AT

CHRISTMAS



By arrangement with ORIGIN THEATRICAL on behalf of SAMUEL FRENCH LTD.



About the Genesian Theatre

The Genesian Theatre Company is a non-professional group operating from an historic church in Kent Street in the heart of the Sydney CBD. We boast among our alumni numerous household names in Australian theatre and film such as Bryan Brown, Baz Luhrmann, Judi Farr, and John Bell. We are, however, just as proud of the hundreds of talented amateur actors, directors, designers, lighting and sound specialists who have contributed to Sydney's unique little theatre over the years.

Over the years the company has developed into a group providing a training ground for young actors and a place where those who love the theatre can meet, share and extend their knowledge of the performing arts. The Genesian Theatre is one of Sydney's most active theatre companies. In addition to six or seven main stage productions each year we run classes, workshops and many other activities.

Membership of the company is open to all people over the age of eighteen.

The building that houses The Genesian Theatre Company was originally St John the Evangelist Church and dates from 1868. It has served as both a church and a poor school until 1932 when it became the Kursaal Theatre, housing the Sydney Repertory Company. In 1938 it became the first Matthew Talbot Hostel. Since 1954 it has been the home of The Genesian Theatre Company, which was formed in 1944.

Membership

If your interest is in acting, directing, stage management, sound, lights, publicity, admin, etc, or if you just want to experience being a member of the group, we would welcome you as a member. You don't need to be experienced, we can provide training and can cater to different levels of involvement. Please see our web site for further information.

COWARD AT CHRISTMAS

The Genesis Theatre has a reputation for producing Noël Coward plays. In recent years we have charmed audiences with seasons of *Relative Values*, *Blythe Spirit* and *Hay Fever*. What's not to love about Coward? His wit cannot help but entertain and amuse. His close observations of the follies and foibles of all classes of British society are developed through engaging characters, and storylines which twist and turn.

Coward said his plays dealt with the common themes of life, death, love, sex, money and food. But Noël always manages to find new ways to explore them. They have lasted the test of time and still delight. Known fondly as 'the Master', Coward's career spanned over half a century. He led a life full of successes as a writer, playwright, director, actor, composer, singer, dancer and cabaret performer.

Coward won an Academy Honorary Award in 1943 for his naval film drama, *In Which We Serve*. The former Albery Theatre was renamed the Noël Coward Theatre in his honour in 2006. It is the only theatre in London to be named after a 'theatrical artist'.

Early next year, as part of the 2013-14 season, The Genesis Theatre hopes to produce Noël Coward's first great theatrical success as a playwright- *The Young Idea* (1922). So stay tuned, as the upcoming season will soon be announced and tickets will be available.

Running time: 2 hours

There will be one interval of 15 minutes

COWARD AT CHRISTMAS DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Debbie Smith has always loved Coward's humour, characters and plots. A few years back she directed a workshop production at the Genesian Theatre with had a few of Coward's sketches in it. This became the seed which has grown into *Coward at Christmas*. Believing that his sketches are just as important as the full length works, but are rarely staged and enjoyed by audiences, she set upon the challenge to get permission to perform them especially for the Genesian Theatre patrons. So, with the help of Steve Holland's writing and research skills, Debbie devised a show, which not only brings his characters to life, but gives the audience an opportunity to feel the magic of Noël Coward, as he reminisces about his life. This production was collaboratively directed by Debbie Smith and Ylaria Rogers.



DIRECTOR/DESIGNER: DEBBIE SMITH has been an active member of the Genesian Theatre for a number of years and is currently working as Secretary on the Board of the theatre. Although occasionally seen on stage, Debbie prefers to direct and design. Her most recent productions include *And Then There Were None* and *Journey's End* for GTC, *Enchanted April* for Hunter's Hill Theatre (2011) and *Come Blow Your Horn* (2012) for Lane Cove Theatre. In 2013, she will be directing *Educating Rita* for Riverside Lyric Ensemble and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* for Hunter's Hill Theatre.



SINGER: ROBERT GREEN last appeared at the Genesian theatre in *The Fantasticks*. He has been passionate about Noël Coward since the unlikely age of fifteen. He has recently completed a show of Coward songs called *Here and Now* at El Rocco Jazz Cellar. He hopes to tour his show to cabaret festivals.

COWARD AT CHRISTMAS CAST



Cam Barnes enjoyed a busy 2012. He performed in the Short + Sweet Festival, Sydney Fringe Festival & numerous television productions. His study at Darlo Drama & with Natela Dzuliashvili has fuelled and refined his passion for live performance. Cam has a great appreciation for the classic wit of English playwrights & subsequently approaches the role of 'The Master' with gusto!



Ros Bilbe has enjoyed a long association with Noel Coward. When only a child she saw her mother appear in *Tonight at 8.30* with Madge Elliott and Cyril Ritchard. She then herself performed in *Present Laughter*, *Hay Fever* and *Relative Values*, the latter being here at the Genesian Theatre in 2004. She's delighted to be once again having fun with Noël.



Fiona Connolly recently joined the GTC. She has been acting in one way or another since she was small. She has appeared in numerous school and community productions, at the Rocks Players, on TV and in amateur musicals including *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Leader of the Pack* and *Oklahoma!* She is currently enjoying acting the goat in this production of Coward at Christmas.



Robert Drew *Coward at Christmas* will be a welcome light-hearted change for Robert's more dramatic roles, having recently performed the role of Mr. Jaggers in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* at the Genesian Theatre. His most challenging roles have been in *Hamlet* (Polonius), *Blithe Spirit* (Charles) and *The Imaginary Invalid* (Argan). In 2013, he will play the role of Alfieri in Arthur Miller's *A View From The Bridge* at the Arts Theatre.



Bruce Gerard is new to the Genesians. For many years he was involved in amateur theatrics in Goulburn. He has performed in Gilbert and Sullivan with the Argyle Society and comic roles on the famous Lieder stage. His favourite roles include Mr Waldo in *Under Milkwood*, Sir Percy Shorter in *Habeas Corpus* and the Porter in *Macbeth*.

COWARD AT CHRISTMAS CAST



DEARBHLA HANNIGAN spent several years working as a professional actor in her home country of Ireland before getting bitten by the travel bug. She fell in love with Sydney and was forced to get a real job to stay. She joined the Genesian Theatre just a year ago and appeared in *Crown Matrimonial* last April.



JAMES HARTLEY is an actor, writer and director who has performed and directed in Australia, the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia. This is the second time he has worked with Debbie Smith, who directed him in *Practising Passion* (2011) for the Short and Sweet Festival, where he had to 'make out' with an orange and be kissed by a guy.



LOIS MARSH trained at the Independent Drama School at North Sydney. She has appeared in television commercials and has had guest spots in popular TV serials. This year has seen Lois return to the stage at the Genesian Theatre where she has appeared in *Great Expectations* and the workshop *After Liverpool* directed by Laura Genders.



MEG MOONEY has appeared in numerous productions for the GTC. Most recently she played Jessica in David Williamson's *Dead White Males* and Mrs Allan in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. She is thoroughly enjoying bringing the comic genius of Noel Coward to the stage for the festive season.



DEBBIE NEILSON recently graduated from Screenwise. Recent musical productions include *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Les Miserables*, *Spelling Bee*, *Footloose* and *Anything Goes*. In 2012, she also starred in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (Marianne) and *Come Blow Your Horn* (Peggy). Next year, she will be portraying Dorothy in Strathfield Musical Society's *Wizard of Oz*.



JULIE ZIMMERMAN returns to the Genesian stage after a 2 year hiatus, last playing in *Dead White Males*. She has worked in short and independent films and appeared on *Home and Away* and *All Saints*. She is enjoying the challenges of an ensemble cast and thrilled to be playing in the works of her first love in theatre: Mr Noel Coward.

Production Team

Director/Set Design	Debbie Smith
Director	Ylaria Rogers
Co-writer/Researcher	Steve Holland
Production Manager	Debbie Smith
Lighting Designers	Mark Banks & Michael Schell
Sound Designers	Mark Banks & Debbie Smith
Pianist	Alexander Sussman
Costumier	Susan Carveth & Cast
Stage Managers	Symeon Thompson
Biobox Technicians	Liliana Komljenovic & Adrian Thyne
Photography	Mark Banks
Programme/ Poster	
Design	Ross Oblea
Transport	Debbie Smith

*With Special Thanks to Members of the Genesian Theatre Company
providing services in Ticketing, Marketing, Box Office & FOH Staff,
Set Construction and all the numerous duties needed to be done for
Coward at Christmas to occur.*

Coming next to the Genesisian Theatre...

Charley's Aunt

by Brandon Thomas

Directed by Shane Bates

12th Jan - 23rd Jan 2013

Subscriptions are available
www.genesiantheatre.com.au