

Private Lives



By Noel Coward

Genesis Theatre

5th March - 16th April 2011

Private Lives

ACT 1

A terrace of a hotel in France. Summer evening

Interval

ACT 2

Amanda's flat in Paris a few days later. Evening.

Short Musical Interlude

ACT 3

The same. The next morning.

Director's Notes

This gorgeous piece of writing was written by Noel Coward over four days whilst recovering in Kowloon in 1930. Originally written for himself and Gertrude Lawrence it has stood the test of time. Most recently, Kim Cattrall from *Sex in the City* and Matthew McFadden from *Pride and Prejudice* played the wildly in love Amanda and Elyot to rave reviews.

Private Lives is at its core a passionate love story. There is no doubt, no doubt anywhere that Elyot and Amanda are besotted with each other, but their love turns so easily to violence and bickering. The old adage “can’t live her, can’t without live with her” comes to mind. Their story is of big romantic love and breaking the conventions that in 1930 only the wealthy could do. It was considered very risqué in its day and Coward had to perform the love scene by himself to the Lord Chamberlain to enable it to pass the censorship. It is curious the lines for Amanda and Elyot are almost interchangeable. She is a very emancipated and almost masculine woman, while Elyot at times is somewhat feminine in his outlook. That’s Noel Coward for you.

Coward had a remarkable gift for language just as Oscar Wilde and Shakespeare had and his fiery couple can spar verbally with the best of them. In Amanda and Elyot, Coward created his own Beatrice and Benedict or Petruchio and Kate. They are worthy adversaries to debate what is ‘normal’ in society.

In Victor and Sybil, he shows us the stuffy, bourgeois, bland people that he wanted to avoid becoming at all costs. Their descent onto the same level as our heroes shows us that even the dull can become interesting. Coward placed them there for window dressing to the main event but I believe that their relationship is every bit as important as Elyot and Amanda. They are all great characters and fabulous parts for an actor to play.

Come meet Amanda, Elyot, Sybil and Victor. This play is deservedly a classic and the *Private Lives* of the rich and famous that fascinated us in 1930 do so to this day. Enjoy!

Cast

SUSAN CARVETH -

Maid

Susan does costumes for Genesian productions but occasionally is let out of the wardrobe. Genesian roles have been in *Hay Fever*, *Ring Round the Moon*, *Worry Warts*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Lipstick Dreams*, *Pygmalion*, *Dinkum Assorted*, *I Have Five Daughters*, *Mansfield Park*, *Shadowlands*, *The Chalk Garden*, *The Forsyte Saga*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Morning Sacrifice*, *Verdict* and *The Conditional Pardon of Felix Heywood*. For Ryde Dramatic Society *Steaming*, Phoenix Theatre *Grapes of Wrath* and for Rockdale Light Opera *Viktoria and Her Hussar*.



GINA LAMPRELL -

Sybil

Gina has recently returned from New York's Atlantic Acting School where she studied the Practical Aesthetics technique with some of the USA's finest. After her most recent performance at the UK's Platform festival she is now overjoyed to get the chance to put that British accent to use, dabbling in the delights of the somewhat simple, but nonetheless sensational Sybil!



NATALIE TAYLOR -

Amanda

Private Lives is Natalie's first play with the Genesian theatre and her first Noel Coward experience. Natalie has however had the joy of performing in a variety of professional theatre productions over the years including a one woman show, *Junk Rooms* in which she played a heroin addict. Natalie has also had the pleasure of playing a salvage diver in *Fools Gold*, and has graced the small screen in a variety of TVC's, music video clips and indie films. Natalie is thrilled to have you here to share in the silly hilarity that is Noel Coward.



JOHN WILLIS-RICHARDS -

Elyot



This is John's first foray into the world of Coward. He once played the 'Bard' in David Williamson's *Dead White Males*, Baron Toozenbach in Chekov's *Three Sisters* and Polonius in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*. With the Castle Hill Players he was the foppish Herr Versati in Steve Martin's *The Underpants* and he played a distinguished Winston Churchill in Howard Barker's *The Power of the Dog* at UWS Nepean's graduation performance. In 2009 he played the witchfinder general in Caryl Churchill's *Vinegar Tom* with the San Francisco State University. He has also done the odd musical but he's not going to boast about that. He hopes you have a delightful fun filled evening and maybe a spot of brandy at the interval!

ANDREW O'CONNELL -

Victor



Andrew first appeared at the Genesian in 2009 as 'Horatio' in Hamlet and most recently returned as 'Jim' in *The Glass Menagerie*. Andrew also enjoys writing. His show, *Three Unlikely Conversations* featured at last year's The Sydney Fringe and this year he's hoping to put on another one - the story of the (mis)adventure of two Aussies in Colombia!

HENRY JENNINGS -

the Director



This is Henry's debut as a director for the Genesian Theatre. He was most recently seen by Genesian audiences playing the role of the long-suffering director in *Noises Off*. Although his first for the Genesian, Henry is an experienced hand having directed *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Women*, *Dead White Males* and *Don's Party* for the Peninsula Theatre Company together with *Mojo* and *Get Gary* for his own production company, Phantom Management. He is also an experienced actor and has appeared in *Shakespeare by the Sea* as well as other productions around Sydney together with some TV and Film work.

Production

Director: Henry Jennings
Set Design: Debbie Smith
Costume Design: Susan Carveth
Lighting Design: Owen Gimblett
Light Rigging: Eric Bicnell & Tom Massey
Sound Design: Michael Schell & Henry Jennings
Millinery: Nicola Griggs
Set Construction: Debbie Smith assisted by
Cynthia, Mark, Kristie, Jane,
Meg, Tim, Theresa, Roger,
Adrian and the cast
Production Manager: Barry Nielsen
Photography: 8th&Goes Fotografia
Piano construction: Dean Wright
Graphics/Program: Ross Oblea, Tom Massey

Crew

Stage Manager: Di Henderson
Lighting Operator: Ted Robinson
Pianist: Henry Coleman

Cast

Amanda: Natalie Taylor
Elyot: John Willis-Richards
Sybil: Gina Lamprell
Victor: Andrew O'Connell
Maid: Susan Carveth

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.

Coming next to the Genesian Theatre...

The 39 Steps



By John Buchan

14th May - 25th June 2011

Subscriptions are available
www.genesiantheatre.com.au