



Noël Peirce Coward (16 December 1899 – 26 March 1973)

Coward was born in Teddington, the son of Arthur Coward, a piano salesman, and Violet. The second of their three sons, he was attracted to theatre and concerts from a very early age and appeared on stage from the age of six.

His first professional appearance was in a children's play called *The Goldfish* and, it is fair to say, the rest is history. Various stage engagements followed and his career as a playwright and wit began with his first play *The Rat Trap* which he wrote in around 1918, although not presented until 1926 at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead. As his talent and fame grew he had his first critical and financial hit with *The Vortex* which was something of a succès de scandale with its theme of cocaine addiction. Other early classics included *Easy Virtue*, *Hay Fever* and *Fallen Angels*.

By 1929 Coward was one of the highest-earning writers in the world with an annual income of £50,000 (around £2.8million today) and the plaudits and money continued to roll in with successes like *Cavalcade*, *Private Lives*, *Design for Living*, *Tonight at 8.30*, *Present Laughter* and *This Happy Breed*.

Crew

Director	Chris Loft
Assistant Director	Amanda Sharpe-Conroy
Stage Manager	Peter Clark Kerrie Thompson
Lights & Sound	Andrew Coulson
Special Effects	David Plewis
Props	Marji Waterhouse
Prompt	Tori Hayhow
Set Design	Amanda Sharpe-Conroy Chris Loft
Set Construction & Dressing	Del De Lorme, Luke Taylor Derek Thompson, Dawn Jones
Backstage Assistance	David Wilson, Kairn Bignall Darren Little, MLT Members
Wardrobe	Elaine Thompson and cast
Box Office	Janet Watson

With special thanks to Vera Conroy for props and furniture, Stephanie Anderson for Ruth's costumes, and David Plewis for special effects.

Son et Lumière

Andrew Coulson (Lights and Sound) first appeared on the MLT stage in *The Same Sky* at the end of our first season in 1959. His first lighting responsibility was *Cabaret* in 1985, and since then he has been part of the technical team for over 30 productions, winning Best Lighting twice at the KDA Drama Festival, and as Stage Director until a year ago was responsible for all the theatre's technical facilities.

Cast

Natalie Davies as Ruth Condomine

This is Natalie's first show at Medway Little Theatre, having previously played Beatrice in the Blissful Theatre Company's *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Jules Doe as Elvira Condomine

Jules Doe (*What the Butler Saw*, *Noises Off*), is thrilled to be playing Elvira. She auditioned for the role, unsuccessfully, in the MLT production thirteen years ago, so for her it is a dream role in many ways.

Mike Dickinson as Charles Condomine

Mike has previously appeared as Sherlock Holmes in our spoof *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, as Dirk Gently in *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*, and as Michael in *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*.

Kate Brooks as Mrs Bradman

Kate has made her debut MLT appearance as Edith in *Blithe Spirit* in 2007. This time she has taken on the role of Mrs Bradman the doctor's wife, a woman who has an unfortunate way with words. She has appeared in many plays at MLT including *Relatively Speaking*, *Hay Fever* and *'Allo 'Allo*.

Allister Kay as Dr Bradman

Allister joined MLT in 2010 and has appeared several productions since. He was one of the murder victims Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*, and later played Sergeant Mellors in *A Murder Is Announced*.

Amy Morgan as Edith

Amy's first show with Medway Little Theatre was *Sitting Pretty*, where she played life model Zelda. She now finds herself stepping into the elegant and unexpected world of Noël Coward.

Alex Lawes as Madame Arcati

Alex has been seen on our stage as Mitzi the maid in *A Murder Is Announced*, Dolly in *One Man, Two Guvnors*, Fanny in *Mary Shelley*, and an assortment of wacky characters in *The 39 Steps*.

Sir Noël at Medway Little Theatre

The plays of Noël Coward have always proved popular with our audiences, especially *Blithe Spirit*, and since our formation have included:

Play	Season	Year	Director
<i>Blithe Spirit</i>	2nd	1959	Eric Copley
<i>Look After Lulu</i>	10th	1967	Duncan Rand
<i>Blithe Spirit</i>	22nd	1980	Ruth Winter
<i>Hay Fever</i>	24th	1982	Ruth Winter
<i>Tonight at 8.30</i>	26th	1984	Hazel White
<i>Fallen Angels</i>	39th	1997	Hazel White
<i>Blithe Spirit (youth)</i>	43rd	2001	Jan Gransden/Don Kemp
<i>Hay Fever</i>	47th	2005	Paul Tomkies
<i>Blithe Spirit</i>	50th	2007	Maggie Palmer
<i>Private Lives</i>	53rd	2011	Andy Taylor
<i>Hay Fever</i>	59th	2017	Jules Doe

Apologies to any directors whose productions are omitted.