

Cape May Stage

Cape May, NJ 08204

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June 20, 2008

Cape May Stage presents Noel Coward's Classic Comedy "Private Lives"

(Cape May, NJ)- The Robert Shackleton Playhouse is poised to erupt with laughter and brim overflow with romance as Cape May Stage, Cape May's premier professional Equity theatre, presents Noel Coward's classic comedy *Private Lives*, running July 2nd through August 16th, 2008.

In *Private Lives*, passion, laughter, romance, anger, and love set the stage for a classic battle of the sexes. On the terrace of an elegant hotel in the resort town of Deauville, France, we meet two unsuspecting newlywed couples: Elyot and Sibyl Chase, and Victor and Amanda Prynne. Sophisticated Elyot and glamorously self-reverential Amanda were each previously married, a matter which causes some anxiety for their new spouses. In fact, they were married to each other! When they meet unexpectedly on the adjoining balconies of their honeymoon suites, passions are rekindled and old wounds re-opened as they scratch and claw their way towards true love.

Hailed by *The New York Times* as a "gorgeous, dazzling, fantastically funny, brilliant comedy," *Private Lives* will be directed by Michael Carleton, whose previous directing credits at Cape May Stage include *The Price*, *Moonlight & Magnolias*, *Going to St. Ives*, *The Woman in Black*, and *Hyde, In the Shadows*.

Chicago-based actor Mark Rector and Philadelphia-based actress Grace Gonglewski assume the leading roles of Elyot and Amanda in Cape May Stage's six-week production. Rector, previously seen in *Moonlight and Magnolias* (2007), *Around the World in 80 Days* (2005), *Hyde, in the Shadows* (2004), returns for his eighth season to share the spotlight with Barrymore Award winner Grace Gonglewski. Ms. Gonglewski, the recipient of four Barrymore Awards, F. Otto Haas Award, and the Dorothy Haas Fellowship, has appeared most recently at Cape May Stage in *Going to St. Ives* (2007), *The Guys* (2005) and *Park Your Car in Harvard Yard* (2004). These Cape May favorites will appear alongside New York-based actor Rob Maitner (previously seen in 2006's *The Big Bang*) as Victor and newcomer and Orlando based-actress Kristin Collins in the role of Sybil.

Noel Coward (December 16, 1899 - March 26, 1973) was an English actor, playwright, and composer of popular music. His celebrity reached a peak in 1930 with "Private Lives," by which time he had become the highest earning author in the western world. With the onset of World War II he redefined the spirit of the country in films such as *This Happy Breed* (1944), *In Which We Serve* (1942), *Blithe Spirit* (1945) and, perhaps most memorably, *Brief Encounter* (1945). As well as over fifty published plays and many albums' worth of original songs, Coward also wrote comic revues, poetry, several excellent volumes of short stories, a novel (*Pomp and Circumstance*, 1960), and three volumes of autobiography. The late 1960s saw a revival in his popularity, with several new productions of his 1920s plays and a number of revues celebrating his music. He was knighted in 1970 and died in 1973. He is buried in Firefly Hill, Jamaica.

This show previews on Wednesday, July 2nd and ticket prices that evening will be half-price. The official opening night performance will be the following night, Thursday July 3rd with an after party at the King Edward Bar at the Chalfonte Hotel on Howard Street immediately after the performance.

During the current run Cape May Stage is participating with 18 Cape May gourmet restaurants in a money-saving “Dinner & A Show” package promotion - a special night out. Restaurants involved in the promotion include 410 Bank Street, Aleathea’s, The Blue Pig Tavern, Bloody Mary’s Bar and Grill, Café Promenade, Café Verandah at the Hotel Alcott, Copper Fish, Cucina Rosa, The Ebbitt Room, Frescos, The Mad Batter, Martini Beach, Merion Inn, Oyster Bay Restaurant & Bar, The Pier House, Tisha’s Fine Dining, Union Park, and The Washington Inn. Call the individual restaurants for reservations and information.

“**Private Lives**” performances are Tuesdays thru Sundays at 8pm thru August 16th at the Robert Shackleton Playhouse of the Cape May Stage. Tickets are \$35 adults, \$25 seniors, and \$12.50 students. Call (609) 884-1341 for reservations and information or visit the theatre’s web-site, www.capemaystage.com.

This production is generously **sponsored by La Mer Beachfront Inn and co-sponsored by Capri Motor Lodge.**