

Jermyn Street Theatre announces **The Reaction Season**

15 plays and musicals staged from 10 April – 18 August
including the first complete London revival since 1936
of Noël Coward's **Tonight at 8.30**

Jermyn Street Theatre announces **The Reaction Season**, its third as a producing theatre.

Running from 10 April to 18 August, **The Reaction Season** will feature 15 plays and musicals - 12 of them one-act - based around themes of reacting and re-enacting.

It will also include the first complete London revival of Noël Coward's **Tonight at 8.30** since 1936.

Tonight at 8.30 and **Tomorrow at Noon** - a cycle of 12 one-act plays arranged into four trios - will play in repertory.

Noël Coward's **Tonight at 8.30** features nine one-act plays ranging from music-hall pastiche, to light comedies, to heartbreaking drama. These have been arranged into three trios entitled *Secret Hearts*, *Nuclear Families*, and *Bedroom Farces*, with the chance to see all three trios (nine plays) in a single day on Saturdays and Sundays.

Tonight at 8.30 plays in repertory with **Tomorrow at Noon**, featuring three new plays by Jenny Ayres, Emma Harding, and Mor-na Young, each of which reacts to one of Coward's **Tonight at 8.30** plays, and responds to it in a contemporary voice. Ayres, Harding and Young were chosen from over 390 anonymous entrants.

Tom Littler directs **Tonight at 8.30**, and the theatre's Deputy Director Stella Powell-Jones directs **Tomorrow at Noon**.

Casting will be announced shortly.

Esther Freud is well known as a bestselling author, with novels including *Hideous Kinky*. Her first play, **Stitchers**, is about the prison reformer Lady Anne Tree, who reacted to the state of Britain's prisons with an original idea - she would teach needlecraft to convicts. It is directed by BAFTA-winning filmmaker Gaby Dellal.

Stella Powell-Jones Stella Powell-Jones will direct the European premiere of Boo Killebrew's highly praised **The Play About My Dad**, a quick-witted and deeply moving drama, set in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Boo and her Dad compete to tell his story – with unforeseen consequences.

Rounding off the season is **Hymn to Love**, devised by Annie Castledine, Elizabeth Mansfield and Steve Trafford, which re-enacts the life of Edith Piaf, featuring 13 of her songs in new translations. It is a co-production with York Theatre Royal and Theatre by the Lake, in association with Ensemble. It is directed by Damian Cruden and stars Elizabeth Mansfield.

Tom Littler said: "This is the most ambitious season in our 24-year history, and I am incredibly grateful to all of the people who have helped to set it up. I am very excited to be directing the whole of Noël Coward's **Tonight at 8.30** - in our intimate studio space, I think these plays can be revealed as works of extraordinary insight, wit, and emotional impact. Although each trio stands alone, I hope people will come to experience the full breadth of this remarkable cycle, which I count as Coward's finest achievement. And I cannot wait to see how the three playwrights of **Tomorrow at Noon** react to Coward. Esther Freud's **Stitchers** and Boo Killebrew's **The Play About My Dad** are both remarkable, fierce, funny works that I couldn't put down and so looking forward to seeing on stage. And **Hymn to Love** is not just a delight for any lover of Edith Piaf, it's a serious piece of art in its own right, made with deep integrity and performed by the remarkable Elizabeth Mansfield. Everything here reacts to everything else; the plays sit in a lively conversation with each other, and I hope audiences will be along to see everything in the season and join in that conversation."



THE REACTION SEASON PRESS NIGHTS

Tonight at 8.30

Saturday 21 April
11.30am Bedroom Farces
3.30pm Nuclear Families
7.30pm Secret Hearts

Sunday 22 April
11.30am Secret Hearts
3.30pm Bedroom Farces
7.30pm Nuclear Families

Critics are invited to attend the trilogy on either day
but they can also 'mix and match'
between the two days.

Tomorrow at Noon
Tuesday 1 May at 7.30pm

Stitchers
Friday 1 June at 7.30pm

The Play About My Dad
Friday 29 June at 7.30pm

Hymn to Love
Friday 27 July at 7.30pm

THE REACTION SEASON IN FULL

10 April – 20 May

TONIGHT AT 8.30

Nine one-act plays by Noël Coward

Bedroom Farces (*We Were Dancing*, *Ways and Means*, *Shadow Play*)

Secret Hearts (*Star Chamber*, *Red Peppers*, *Still Life*)

Nuclear Families (*Family Album*, *Hands Across the Sea*, *The Astonished Heart*)

Noël Coward's dazzling versatility shines across nine one-act plays. From the railway station of *Still Life* to the Pacific island of *We Were Dancing*; from the music-hall of *Red Peppers* to the ache of *The Astonished Heart*, this is the first complete London revival since 1936.

We have arranged the nine plays into three tríos, called *Nuclear Families*, *Bedroom Farces*, and *Secret Hearts*. Each trio stands alone, but we hope you see all three! On Saturdays and Sundays, you can see the entire cycle across a single day, with breaks for lunch and dinner.

With a Weekend Trilogy Ticket + Meal Deal your day will include a delicious two-course dinner at Getti Restaurant.

The plays are directed by our Artistic Director, Tom Littler.

Bedroom Farces

"I knew marrying you was a mistake seven years ago – but I never realised the thoroughness of the mistake until now." Affairs of the heart, the bed, and the chequebook are wittily and touchingly captured in this trio of plays, containing some of Coward's most popular music.

We Were Dancing, a comedy featuring Coward's song of the same title, is set on an idyllic island, where the guests of a country club are enmeshed a complex web of extra-marital affairs.

Ways and Means is a comedy about the bohemian Stella and Toby, who go from villa to villa on the Côte d'Azur. But when they cannot pay their gambling debts, they plan to make an easy fortune...

Shadow Play is a 'musical fantasy'. Peppered with songs and dances including 'Play, Orchestra, Play', it is a moving portrait of a marriage under strain.

Running time approx 2 hours 15 minutes, including an interval.

Secret Hearts

"I know that this is the beginning of the end – not the end of my love for you – but the end of our being together." Secret dreams, unfulfilled ambitions and impossible desires: this trio of two plays and one musical comedy has everything from outrageous farce to heartbreaking romance.

Star Chamber is a comedy about a charity committee meeting, set in a theatre and peopled by outrageous characters.

Red Peppers is a riotous tribute to music-hall. George and Lily Pepper battle with tiny dressing rooms, a grumbling audience, and a drunken pianist.

Still Life was later immortalised as *Brief Encounter*. In a station refreshment room, Laura meets Alec.

Running time around 2 hours 15 minutes, including an interval.

Nuclear Families

"You'd better come and dine tonight – I'm on a diet, so there's only spinach." The glitter of middle-class life is exposed as the thinnest of façades in these three plays, ranging from laugh-out-loud comedy to mesmeric drama.

Family Album is a social comedy wickedly poking fun at Victorian sentiment. The Featherways family have gathered to mourn their father. But the siblings are not on their best behaviour.

Hands Across the Sea is a glittering comedy reminiscent of *Hay Fever*. Naval officer Peter Gilpin and his wife 'Piggie' are the most eccentric party hosts in London.

The Astonished Heart is a gripping drama of secrecy and betrayal. A brilliant psychiatrist, Christian appears to have the perfect life. Then he meets Leonora...

Running time around 2 hours 30 minutes, including an interval.

TONIGHT AT 8.30 PRESS NIGHTS:

Saturday 21 April & Sunday 22 April - performances at 11.30am, 3.30pm, 7.30pm

Critics are invited to attend the trilogy on either day but they can also 'mix and match' between the two days.

Creative Team

Directed by Tom Littler
Set design by Louie Whitmore
Costume design by Emily Stuart
Lighting design by Tim Mascal
Sound design by Tom Attwood
Choreography and associate
direction by Gabbie Bird
Musical direction by Stefan Bednarczyk

Show Times:

Wednesday to Friday at 7.30pm. Saturdays and Sundays at
11.30am, 3.30pm, and 7.30pm.

Tickets:

For Bedroom Farces or Secret Hearts or Nuclear Families):
£30 / £20 concessions.
Concessions available to over-60s, theatre unions, unwaged,
access, students.
Please note that after Sunday 29 April all tickets are full price.

Weekend Trilogy Ticket

Enjoy all three performances with our Trilogy Tickets. Each ticket
gives you:

- A seat for the 11.30am, 3.30pm and 7.30pm performances on the
same day.
- A signed programme and free drink.

£50 for concessions (£10 cheaper than booking individually), or
£75 full price (£15 cheaper than booking individually).

Weekend Trilogy Ticket + Meal Deals

Include a delicious, specially designed two-course dinner and a
glass of prosecco at Getti Restaurant, directly above the theatre,
to enjoy between the matinee and evening performances. £72.50
for concessions or £97.50 full price. Available for Saturday or Sun-
day performances, excepting the previews on Sunday 15 April.

Previews

Tuesday 10 April to Sunday 15 April. £15

Under 30?

100 tickets at £10 are available for under-30s. Available before
Friday 20 April.



24 April – 15 May

Tomorrow at Noon

Three new one-act plays reacting to Noel Coward's **Tonight at 8.30** by Jenny Ayres, Emma Harding, and Morna Young

"She's been coming here every Sunday for the past fifty years and he still hasn't turned up."

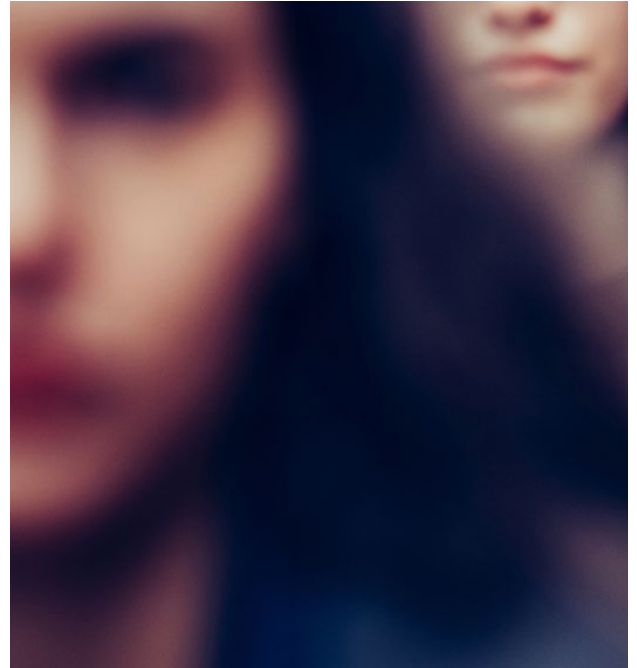
The playwrights of these three funny, moving and provocative plays were chosen from 390 entrants to write a contemporary female response to Noel Coward's **Tonight at 8.30**. They are directed by our Deputy Director, Stella Powell-Jones.

Jenny Ayres' **Glimpse** is inspired by Coward's **Still Life**. It is the story of a woman whose history holds too much for her to leave behind. In a world that never stops, are we brave enough to wait? What might we glimpse if we miss the train?

Emma Harding's **The Thing Itself** reacts to Coward's **Shadow Play**. When the sun fails to come up one morning, Vic and Simone must face the dark. But what emerges from the shadows? Truth or illusion?

Morna Young's **Smite** is inspired by Coward's **The Astonished Heart**. It is a story of buried answers, blind hearts, and life after loss.

Running time around two hours and 15 minutes, including an interval.



Press Night for Tomorrow at Noon: Tuesday 1 May at 7.30pm

Creative Team

Directed by Stella Powell-Jones

Set design by Louie Whitmore

Costume design by Emily Stuart

Lighting design by Tim Mascal

Sound design by Tom Attwood

Show Times

Mondays at 7.30pm.

Tuesdays at 3.30pm and 7.30pm.

Tickets

£30 / £20 concessions.

Concessions available to over-60s, theatre unions, unwaged, access, students. Concessions are available at all performances.

Previews

Tuesday 24 April and Monday 30 April. £15

Under 30?

100 tickets at £10 are available for under-30s. Available at all performances.

30 May – 23 June

£30 / £20 concessions.

Concessions available to over-60s, theatre unions, unwaged, access, students.

Please note that after Saturday 9 June, all performances are full price.

Previews

Wednesday 30 May – Thursday 31 May. £15

Under 30?

100 tickets at £10 are available for under-30s. Available until Saturday 9 June.

Gala Performance

Thursday 7 June. Details to be confirmed; this special fundraising evening, in association with Fine Cell Work, will include drinks, a post-show Q&A, and a reception. £120. Please telephone the box office to book.

30 May – 23 June

Stitchers

By Esther Freud

"Nothing can go missing. No wool, no kits. Especially no needles."

Lady Anne Tree – one of the most aristocratic women in England – spent her life in prisons. As a visitor, she saw first-hand the aggression, low self-esteem, and high reoffending rates among the most hardened criminals. Lady Anne thought she had the answer. She would teach them needlecraft. Based on a true story, this is an inspiring and heartwarming debut play by best-selling novelist Esther Freud, directed by BAFTA-winning filmmaker Gaby Dellal.

Praise for Esther Freud.

"A superbly gifted writer" The New York Times

"Fresh, witty, involving and touching" The Independent

Esther Freud's first novel *Hideous Kinky* was made into a film starring Kate Winslet. Granta named her one of the Best Young Novelists under 40. She has since written seven novels, including *The Sea House*, *Love Falls*, *Lucky Break* and most recently *Mr Mac & Me*.

Gaby Dellal is a British director of film, television and theatre based in America. She won a Best Film BAFTA for *On a Clear Day*. Her most recent feature film, *Three Generations*, starred Elle Fanning, Naomi Watts and Susan Sarandon.

Running time around two hours, including an interval.

**Press Night for Stitchers:
Friday 1 June at 7.30pm**

Creative Team

Directed by Gaby Dellal
Set and costume design by Liz Cooke
Lighting design by William Reynolds

Show Times
Monday to Saturday at 7.30pm.
Saturday matinees 3.30pm.

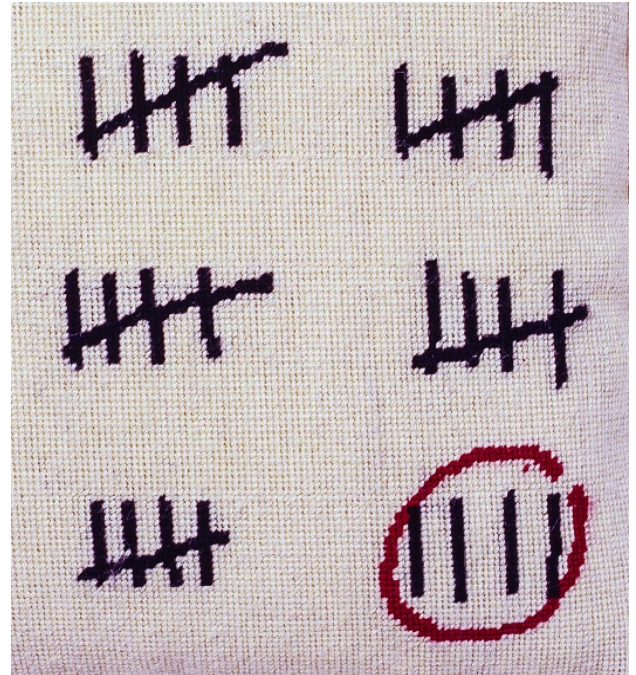
Tickets
£30 / £20 concessions.
Concessions available to over-60s, theatre unions, unwaged, access, students.

Please note that after Saturday 9 June, all performances are full price.

Previews
Wednesday 30 May – Thursday 31 May. £15

Under 30?
100 tickets at £10 are available for under-30s. Available until Saturday 9 June.

Gala Performance
Thursday 7 June. Details to be confirmed; this special fundraising evening, in association with Fine Cell Work, will include drinks, a post-show Q&A, and a reception. £120.
Please telephone the box office to book.



27 June – 21 July

THE PLAY ABOUT MY DAD

By Boo Killebrew

"Dad. Could you start? But, you know, like it's you, just talking?"

It's not easy putting on a play. It's even harder when your dad is the lead character, he's playing himself, and even though you're the professional playwright and he's the emergency surgeon, he keeps trying to rewrite your script. After Hurricane Katrina swept through her home town, Boo was determined to write a play about it. But she never imagined it would be this hard...

Playful, funny, and fiercely emotional, Killebrew's acclaimed play explores what it means to be a father – or a daughter.

Directed by Stella Powell-Jones, Deputy Director of Jermyn Street Theatre.

Praise for **The Play About My Dad**

"A poignant and very personal attempt to heal the public and private wounds of Katrina" The Huffington Post

"Extraordinarily moving" Time Out

Boo Killebrew is a rising star of American theatre. She has received two New York Innovative Theater Awards, two Fringe Excellence Awards, and The Bette Davis Foundation Award. Her plays include *Miller, Mississippi* (The Leah Ryan Prize); *Romance Novels for Dummies* and *Days Like Diamonds*.

Stella Powell-Jones is Deputy Director of Jermyn Street Theatre, funded by the Carne Trust. She recently returned to London after establishing a successful career in New York, where she directed new work by writers including Bathsheba Doran, Samuel D. Hunter and Nick Jones.

Running time 90 minutes no interval.

Press Night for The Play About My Dad: Friday 29 June at 7.30pm

Show Times:

Monday to Saturday at 7.30pm. Saturday matinees 3.30pm.

Tickets:

£30 / £20 concessions.

Concessions available to over-60s, theatre unions, unwaged, access, students.

Please note that after Saturday 7 July, all performances are full price.

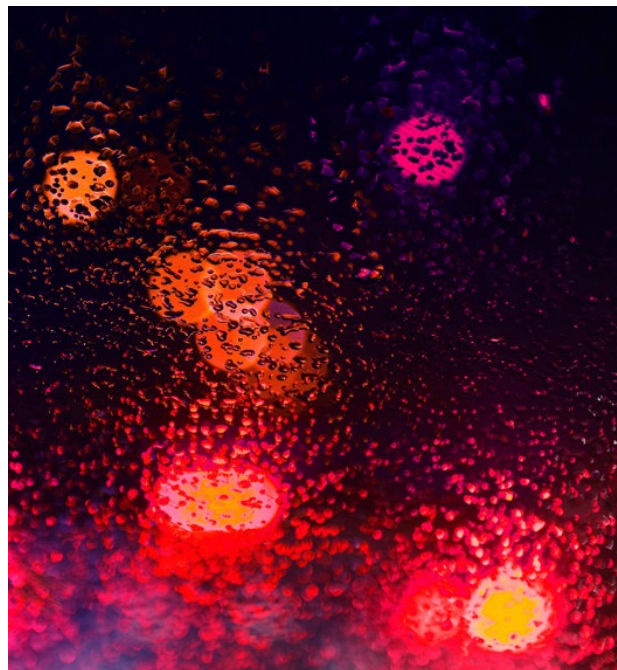
Previews:

Wednesday 27 June – Thursday 28 June. £15

Under 30?

100 tickets at £10 are available for under-30s.

Available until Saturday 7 July.



25 July – 18 August

HYMN TO LOVE

Homage to Piaf

Devised by Annie Castledine, Steve Trafford, and Elizabeth Mansfield

Starring Elizabeth Mansfield

"I'm singing tonight. There's nothing else. Nothing but singing."

In a Manhattan hotel room, Edith Piaf rehearses for her last US concert. But for Piaf the hotel holds memories. Eight years earlier she had telephoned her lover, boxer Marcel Cerdan, begging him to overcome his fear of flying and leave France to be with her. Hours later she heard the terrible news that his plane had crashed. Marcel was dead.

An extraordinary musical homage to Piaf, **Hymn to Love** explores love, loss and longing with 13 of Piaf's songs, each given fresh meaning in vibrant new translations. Passionate, memorable and unmissable theatre.

Starring Elizabeth Mansfield

Praise for **Hymn to Love**

"*A triumph!*" The Independent

"*Mansfield delivers the famous songs superbly*" The Guardian

"*Beautifully staged... electrifying singing*" The Daily Telegraph

Damian Cruden directs. Cruden is Artistic Director of York Theatre Royal, and his production of *The Railway Children* won an Olivier Award in 2011.

Elizabeth Mansfield plays Piaf. Mansfield was nominated for a Best Actress Olivier Award for her performance as Marie Lloyd in *Marie*, and has worked at most of the UK's leading theatres.

Running time around two hours, including an interval.

**Press Night for Hymn To Love:
Friday 27 July at 7.30pm**

Creative Team

Songs by Edith Piaf

Translated by Steve Trafford

Directed by Damian Cruden

Lighting by Andrew J Lindsay

Sound by Yvonne Gilbert

A Theatre by the Lake and York Theatre Royal co-production, in association with Ensemble.

Show Times:

Tuesday to Saturday at 7.30pm. Saturday and Sunday matinees 3.30pm.

Tickets:

£30 / £20 concessions.

Concessions available to over-60s, theatre unions, unwaged, access, students.

Please note that after Saturday 4 August, all performances are full price.

Previews:

Wednesday 25 July – Thursday 26 July. £15

Under 30?

100 tickets at £10 are available for under-30s.

Available until Saturday 4 August.



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