

## Casting announced for Noël Coward's 'Private Lives' directed by Tam Williams



Casting is today announced for a sparkling new production of Noël Coward's comedy *Private Lives*, directed by Tam Williams, at the Mill at Sonning.

*Private Lives* will run 7 weeks from Thursday 20 June - Saturday 3 August.

**Press are invited to review Thursday 27 June at 2.15pm and Sunday 7 July at 2.15pm (lunch included and served from 12.15pm)**

Set majestically on the banks of the River Thames, the Mill at Sonning Theatre is celebrating more than 30 years of entertainment. Uniquely, as the only dinner theatre in the United Kingdom, it has gained unrivalled praise both nationally and internationally. All tickets include a delicious two-course meal in the restaurant before the show.

The cast features **Tom Berkeley** (Buddy Holly in the 30th anniversary tour of *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story*); **Darrell Brockis** (Dr Watson in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and Charles Condomine, *Blithe Spirit*, both at the Mill at Sonning); **Celia Cruwys-Finnigan** (*The Secret Garden*, Barn Theatre, Cirencester, and Vi Petty, *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story*); **Lydea Perkins** (Margaret/Lucy Steele in *Sense & Sensibility*, and Dierdre, *Bold Girls*, both at Theatre by the Lake); **Eva-Jane Willis** (recently played Rachel in *The Rubenstein Kiss* at Southwark Playhouse).

Tam Williams returns to the Mill at Sonning after previously directing Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* there in 2016 and also *Dead of Night* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Set Designer: Michael Holt. Casting Director: Kate Plantin CDG.

1930, Deauville, France. After a tumultuous and fiery marriage, divorced couple Elyot and Amanda find themselves in adjacent suites while honeymooning with their new partners - Sybil and Victor. The view from their adjoining balconies is shimmering sea and moonlight. So romantic! And when Amanda overhears a familiar voice singing *Some Day I'll Find You*, old passions reignite and the estranged lovers run away together to Paris to flirt and fight before being tracked down by their jilted spouses - with explosive and hilarious consequences!

Since its opening at London's Phoenix Theatre in August 1930, *Private Lives* has retained its remarkable appeal, captivating audiences world-wide. After his huge success with *Blithe Spirit*, The Mill is delighted to welcome back Tam Williams to direct another of Noël Coward's glittering comedies.





The Mill at Sonning prides itself on offering customers a unique Dinner-Theatre experience. Every ticket at The Mill includes a delicious home-cooked pre-show two-course meal.

The riverside restaurant, which overlooks the beautiful river Thames, has recently been refurbished and is now the perfect place to indulge before a show.

The first main course is served buffet style before our friendly team of waiters and waitresses help you to your table and take your dessert and drink orders.

#### **KIERON DANIELS - THE NEW EXECUTIVE CHEF**

The Mill at Sonning recently appointed Kieron Daniels as its Executive Chef, who comes with a wealth of national culinary experience at the highest level, working with chefs Paul Gaylor, Raymond Blanc and Ian Donald.

Kieron has refreshed the menu and food options, including his heart-warming take on a Mill favourite beef pie and mouth-watering desserts, all made with the finest locally sourced ingredients.



#### **THE MILL AT SONNING**

There has been a mill at Sonning for many centuries. In the Domesday Book of 1086 three mills at 'Sonninges and Berrochescire' are mentioned. In the 1600s the rents for the mill went to the Royal Revenue.

During the Civil War when Cromwell had his headquarters in London and King Charles had his in Oxford, the troops met in the middle - Reading. It was Sonning which supplied the flour for the besieged garrison in the town. The site of the earliest Sonning mill could very well have been in a different place. Wooden buildings had a habit of burning down. The current one dates back to the 18th century but the main parts of the present theatre building are from around 1890. It was owned then by the Witherington family who added the top two storeys and the larger waterwheels for more power to drive the machinery. Around 1898 they put in a steam engine to supplement the water power.

The Phillimore family took over the mill in 1913 but they still traded under the name of C.H. Witherington and Sons Ltd. They remodelled the inside of the mill the following year. Up until 1950 the mill had its own fleet of barges which brought wheat from London right up to its door. In 1962, when the business was taken over by Associated British Foods Ltd., they remodelled yet again and introduced electric engines although the main source of power was still produced by the wheels.

When the mill closed in 1969, it was one of the last flour mills on the Thames driven by wheels. The new port mill at Tilbury had opened and Sonning, being much smaller could not compete economically. Also, one of Sonning's major customers, Huntley and Palmers, stopped making biscuits in Reading.

The mill remained empty until 1977. It was then that Tim and Eileen Richards, who had a great love of theatre, found the derelict building and decided to convert it into The Mill as it is today. Tim invited his brother Frank to join them and the transformation took four years to complete. THE MILL AT SONNING DINNER THEATRE opened on July 22nd 1982.

Sadly Frank Richards died in 1994, Tim Richards in 2002 and Eileen Richards in 2015. Her daughter Sally is now Managing Director of The Mill which continues to go from strength to strength thanks to its ever loyal staff and audience, having produced an abundance of plays and musicals.

In 1984 The Mill at Sonning was given a conservation award by The Times newspaper and The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors for the design, restoration and conversion of the derelict mill into a dinner theatre.

It was named Most Welcoming Theatre by the Theatre Managers Association for the past three years running, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

## Private Lives

by Noël Coward

Directed by Tam Williams

### The Mill at Sonning Theatre

Sonning Eye  
Reading  
RG4 6TY

Box Office: 0118 969 8000

[www.millatsonning.com](http://www.millatsonning.com)

20 June - 3 August

Evening shows: Tuesday - Saturday  
at 8.15pm (dinner from 6.15pm)

Thursday matinees at 2.15pm  
(lunch served from 12.15pm)

Saturday matinees at 2.15pm  
(lunch served from 12.15pm)

Sunday matinees  
from 30 June - 28 July at 2.15pm  
(lunch served from 12.15pm)

All tickets include a 2 course meal with coffee,  
programme on your table and the show

Tickets: from £51.00

Social

Facebook  
@MillAtSonning

Twitter  
@MillAtSonning

Instagram  
@MillAtSonning

Getting to The Mill at Sonning

Rail:

The Mill is a 10 minute taxi ride from Reading,  
Twyford, Earley and Wargrave stations

Road:

From the M4 Junction 8/9:  
Take the A404(M) to the A4, then follow the B478  
From the M4 Junction 10:  
Take the A329(M) to the A4, then follow the B478  
From the A4155: Take the B478

There is ample car parking space available



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S O N N I N G



**UK'S MOST  
WELCOMING  
THEATRE**  
2016, 2017 & 2018

**PRESS**

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