

noel coward monologues

noel coward monologues offer a fascinating glimpse into the sharp wit, social commentary, and often poignant observations of one of the 20th century's most celebrated playwrights. These self-contained dramatic speeches are not merely exposition dumps; they are miniature masterpieces, showcasing Coward's unique voice and his unparalleled ability to capture the nuances of human emotion and societal expectations. From the biting sarcasm of his upper-class characters to the underlying vulnerability beneath their polished exteriors, Noel Coward monologues have captivated audiences for decades. This article delves into the enduring appeal of these speeches, exploring their key characteristics, iconic examples, and their significance in both theatre history and contemporary performance. We will examine how these monologues illuminate character, drive plot, and offer timeless insights into the human condition, making them a rich subject for actors, directors, and theatre enthusiasts alike.

- Introduction to Noel Coward Monologues
- The Artistry of Noel Coward's Monologues
- Key Characteristics of Noel Coward Monologues
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The Artistry of Noel Coward's Monologues

Noel Coward was a master craftsman of language, and his monologues stand as testaments to his linguistic genius. He possessed an uncanny ability to distill complex emotions and societal critiques into perfectly sculpted phrases, often delivered with a seemingly effortless grace. His dialogue, particularly within monologues, crackles with intelligence, wit, and a sophisticated understanding of human foibles. These speeches are not merely spoken; they are performed, demanding a performer capable of conveying both the surface charm and the deeper currents of thought and feeling. The rhythm and cadence of Coward's writing are as crucial as the words themselves, contributing to the overall impact and memorability of his dramatic speeches.

Key Characteristics of Noel Coward Monologues

Several distinctive features define Noel Coward's monologues, setting them apart in the landscape of dramatic literature. These elements contribute to their unique style and enduring appeal, making them instantly recognizable as his work.

Unmistakable Wit and Wordplay

The hallmark of any Noel Coward piece is its razor-sharp wit. His monologues are laced with epigrams, clever turns of phrase, and a sophisticated, often understated, sense of humour. This verbal dexterity allows him to dissect social conventions, poke fun at human pretension, and deliver profound observations with a light touch. The wordplay is not gratuitous; it serves to reveal character and advance thematic concerns, often masking deeper emotional truths with a veneer of flippancy.

Social Commentary and Satire

Beneath the glittering surface of Coward's dialogue lies a keen eye for social observation and often biting satire. His monologues frequently address the absurdities of class, relationships, and the societal expectations of his era, many of which resonate even today. He expertly exposes hypocrisy, the superficiality of certain social circles, and the often-unspoken rules that govern human interaction. The satire is rarely heavy-handed, instead delivered through subtle ironies and pointed observations that encourage the audience to think critically.

Psychological Depth and Emotional Nuance

While celebrated for his wit, Coward was also a master of conveying psychological depth. His monologues often reveal a character's inner turmoil, unspoken desires, or moments of profound vulnerability. The polished facade frequently cracks, offering a glimpse into the more complex emotional landscape of his characters. This emotional nuance prevents his characters from becoming mere caricatures, imbuing them with a relatable humanity that transcends their often privileged backgrounds.

Conciseness and Precision

Coward's writing is characterized by its economy and precision. He wastes no words, ensuring that every sentence serves a purpose. His monologues are typically lean and impactful, avoiding unnecessary exposition or digressions. This conciseness makes his speeches memorable and potent, allowing the core message and emotional weight to land with maximum effect. The precision of his language is a key factor in their enduring power.

The "Cowardly" Tone

A distinctive "Cowardly" tone often permeates his monologues. This is not a reflection of timidity but rather a specific stylistic choice characterized by a detached, almost nonchalant delivery of often emotionally charged material. There's a sophisticated coolness, a refusal to indulge in overt melodrama, which paradoxically amplifies the emotional impact when it does surface. This characteristic tone is a crucial element for actors to capture when performing these speeches.

Iconic Noel Coward Monologues and Their Significance

Several of Noel Coward's monologues have achieved iconic status, celebrated for their literary merit, their theatrical impact, and their enduring resonance. These speeches provide excellent examples of Coward's mastery.

"Mad Dogs and Englishmen" from Set to Partners (originally a song, but often performed monologically)

While originating as a song, the lyrics of "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" are so narrative and character-driven that they function powerfully as a monologue. It satirizes the perceived British stoicism and their often-foolhardy attempts to maintain composure in extreme climates. The humour arises from the juxtaposition of polite English manners with the harsh realities of the tropics. Its significance lies in its ability to encapsulate a national stereotype with a witty and memorable narrative.

Amanda's monologue in Act II of Private Lives

Amanda's speech, where she describes her disastrous honeymoon and subsequent encounters with her ex-husband, is a tour de force of comedic and dramatic tension. It showcases her volatile personality, her passionate nature, and her complex, tumultuous relationship with Elyot. The monologue reveals her underlying unhappiness and her inability to escape the gravitational pull of their shared history. Its significance lies in its raw emotional honesty delivered with Coward's signature blend of wit and sharp observation, demonstrating how love and loathing can coexist.

Garry Essendine's monologues in Present Laughter

The character of Garry Essendine, a flamboyant and self-absorbed actor, is the subject of numerous monologues in *Present Laughter*. These speeches often reveal his vanity, his theatricality, and his surprising moments of self-awareness (or lack thereof). They highlight the disconnect between his public persona and his private anxieties. The significance of these monologues is their exploration of the nature of

performance, both on and off stage, and the blurred lines between illusion and reality.

Elvira's spectral pronouncements in Blithe Spirit

Though Elvira is a ghost, her monologues in *Blithe Spirit* are imbued with a mischievous wit and a chilling detachment. Her pronouncements from the spirit world offer a unique perspective on the living characters' predicaments, often with a darkly humorous undertone. Her existence and her speeches disrupt the mundane reality of Charles and Ruth's lives. The significance of Elvira's monologues is their contribution to the play's supernatural comedy and their commentary on the lingering power of past relationships.

Themes Explored in Noel Coward Monologues

Coward's monologues, despite their often lighthearted presentation, delve into a surprisingly diverse range of human experiences and societal issues.

- The complexities of romantic relationships, including love, marriage, divorce, and infidelity.
- The nature of class and social standing, and the expectations and limitations they impose.
- The performative aspects of identity and the masks people wear in social situations.
- The search for happiness and fulfillment in a world often dictated by convention.
- The passage of time and the anxieties associated with aging.
- The delicate balance between wit and genuine emotion.

Performing Noel Coward Monologues

Bringing a Noel Coward monologue to life requires a specific set of skills and an understanding of his unique stylistic demands. Actors often find these speeches a rewarding challenge.

Understanding the Subtext

The key to performing Coward lies in understanding what is left unsaid. The wit and polish often serve as a shield for deeper emotions. Actors must explore the subtext, the unspoken desires, fears, and vulnerabilities that drive the character's words. The audience should feel the weight of what is implied, even if it is not explicitly stated.

Mastering the Rhythm and Pacing

Coward's dialogue has a distinct rhythm and cadence. Actors must internalize this musicality, allowing the words to flow naturally while maintaining clarity and impact. The pacing is crucial, with pauses strategically placed to emphasize wit or allow for emotional resonance. A rushed delivery can undermine the sharpness of the humour and the depth of the emotion.

Embracing the "Cowardly" Style

The characteristic detached coolness, the seemingly effortless delivery, is essential. This doesn't mean a lack of emotion, but rather an emotional control that makes the moments of vulnerability all the more striking. Actors must avoid overacting or indulging in excessive sentimentality, allowing the inherent strength of the writing to shine through.

The Importance of Nuance

Every word, every inflection, carries weight in a Coward monologue. Actors need to explore the subtle nuances of meaning and emotion. A slight change in tone or emphasis can alter the audience's perception of the character and their situation. The goal is to create a performance that is both intelligent and emotionally engaging.

The Enduring Legacy of Noel Coward's Speeches

The enduring legacy of Noel Coward monologues is undeniable. They continue to be studied, performed, and appreciated by new generations of theatre-goers and performers. Their timeless themes, their brilliant craftsmanship, and their sharp observation of the human condition ensure their relevance. Coward's ability to blend profound insights with sparkling wit has solidified his place as a literary giant, and his monologues remain a powerful testament to his enduring genius.

Frequently Asked Questions

What makes Noel Coward's monologues so enduringly popular?

Their enduring popularity stems from their witty dialogue, sharp social commentary, and often poignant exploration of human foibles. Coward's masterful use of language, combined with relatable themes of love, loss, and societal expectations, continues to resonate with audiences centuries later.

Which Noel Coward monologues are considered his most iconic?

Among the most iconic are 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen' (often performed as a song, but with monologue-like narrative), 'I'll Follow My Secret Heart' (again, song-based but highly theatrical), and shorter, spoken pieces from plays like 'Private Lives' and 'Blithe Spirit,' which showcase his signature style.

What are the typical themes explored in Noel Coward's monologues?

Themes commonly found in Coward's monologues include the absurdity of social conventions, the complexities of romantic relationships, the ennui of the upper classes, the fleeting nature of happiness, and a dry, often cynical, observation of human behavior.

How has the performance of Noel Coward monologues evolved over time?

While retaining their core wit and elegance, contemporary performances often bring a fresh interpretation to Coward's characters. Actors may emphasize different aspects of the text, exploring subtler emotional nuances or highlighting the timelessness of the social critiques for a modern audience.

Are there specific acting techniques best suited for performing Coward monologues?

Yes, actors often benefit from a keen understanding of subtext, precise diction, impeccable timing, and the ability to convey a range of emotions with understated gestures. A sense of detached observation, combined with moments of vulnerability, is key to capturing Coward's unique voice.

What challenges do actors face when performing Noel Coward monologues?

Challenges include mastering the sophisticated and often rapid-fire dialogue, capturing the specific social nuances of the era, and finding the underlying emotional truth beneath the polished surface. The perceived effortlessness Coward achieved requires immense skill to replicate.

Where can I find and experience Noel Coward monologues today?

You can find them in published play scripts, anthologies of his work, and through various stage productions of his plays. Many actors and theatre companies also perform Coward's monologues as standalone pieces in cabaret or recital settings.

What is the relationship between Noel Coward's monologues and his plays?

Monologues in Coward's plays often serve to reveal a character's inner thoughts, motivations, or observations, providing crucial exposition and character development. They are integral to the plot and allow the audience direct access to a character's perspective and wit.

Besides his plays, are there other contexts where Noel Coward monologues are found?

While his plays are the primary source, some of his songs, like 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen,' possess strong narrative and character-driven elements that function much like theatrical monologues, offering a glimpse into his distinctive worldview and lyrical genius.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to Noel Coward monologues, each with a brief description:

1. The Incomparable Noel Coward: Collected Monologues

This compilation gathers the most celebrated and poignant monologues penned by the legendary Noel Coward. Spanning his prolific career, these pieces offer sharp wit, poignant observations on society, and unforgettable characters. Readers will find a rich tapestry of human experience, delivered with Coward's signature elegance and biting humor.

2. Mad Dogs & Englishmen: Coward's Definitive Soliloquies

A curated selection of Noel Coward's most iconic and theatrical monologues. This volume delves into the eccentricities and emotional depths of his creations, showcasing his mastery of character and dialogue. From the blasé to the heartbroken, these soliloquies provide an intimate glimpse into the minds of his unforgettable characters.

3. Easy Virtue: Monologues of Wit and Wisdom

This collection focuses on Noel Coward's more socially observant and often satirically tinged monologues. Explore his keen eye for the absurdities of modern life, the foibles of the upper class, and the complexities of human relationships. The pieces are characterized by their sophisticated language and enduring relevance.

4. Private Lives, Public Tongues: Coward's Expressive Voices

Private Lives, Public Tongues presents a diverse array of Noel Coward's monologues, highlighting the dramatic range he commanded. From moments of grand pronouncement to quiet introspection, these performances capture the essence of individual characters grappling with love, loss, and societal pressures. It's an essential read for understanding his dramatic prowess.

5. The Vortex Within: Noel Coward's Inner Monologues

This volume explores the more introspective and emotionally charged monologues from Noel Coward's repertoire. While known for his sparkling wit, Coward also possessed a profound ability to convey vulnerability and inner turmoil. These pieces offer a powerful testament to the complexities of the human heart.

6. Still Life, Swift Words: Noel Coward's Dramatic Soliloquies

Focusing on monologues that, while static in setting, are dynamically charged with emotion and thought, this book showcases Coward's brilliance. These pieces often capture characters at pivotal moments of realization or decision. The conciseness and impact of each monologue are a testament to his enduring genius.

7. Design for Living, Delivered: Coward's Monologue Masterpieces

A vibrant collection of Noel Coward's monologues, emphasizing those that capture the spirit of his glamorous and often unconventional characters. These pieces are filled with sharp dialogue, memorable pronouncements, and a unique blend of sophistication and emotional honesty. It's a celebration of Coward's distinct theatrical voice.

8. Blithe Spirit, Bitter Truths: Coward's Monologue Spectrum

This compilation offers a broad range of Noel Coward's monologues, from the hilariously absurd to the deeply moving. It demonstrates his versatility in portraying a multitude of personalities and experiences. Each piece is a masterclass in concise storytelling and character revelation.

9. The Vortex: A Noel Coward Monologue Collection

Drawing its title from one of his seminal plays, this collection delves into the dramatic and psychological landscapes of Noel Coward's monologues. These works explore themes of addiction, desire, and societal judgment with unflinching honesty and Coward's characteristic flair. Readers will find a potent and often unsettling exploration of human frailty.

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Noel Coward Monologues: A Sparkling Exploration of Wit, Character, and Social Commentary

Ebook Title: A Masterclass in Delivery: Unpacking the Genius of Noel Coward's Monologues

Outline:

Introduction: The Enduring Appeal of Noel Coward and His Monologues

Chapter 1: Analyzing Coward's Style: Wit, Wordplay, and Social Observation

Chapter 2: Key Themes Explored in Coward's Monologues: Love, Loss, Identity, and Social Class

Chapter 3: Famous Monologues: A Detailed Analysis of Select Pieces (e.g., "Mad About the Boy," excerpts from Present Laughter, Private Lives)

Chapter 4: Performing Coward: Techniques and Considerations for Actors

Chapter 5: Coward's Monologues in Modern Context: Relevance and Adaptability

Conclusion: The Legacy of Coward's Monologues and Their Continued Influence

A Masterclass in Delivery: Unpacking the Genius of Noel Coward's Monologues

Introduction: The Enduring Appeal of Noel Coward and His Monologues

Noel Coward, a name synonymous with wit, sophistication, and a distinctly British brand of cynicism, remains a theatrical giant. While his plays are celebrated for their intricate plots and sparkling dialogue, his monologues stand as individual masterpieces, offering a concentrated dose of his unique genius. These short, sharp pieces aren't mere snippets of larger works; they're fully formed character studies, exploring complex emotions and societal nuances with breathtaking economy. Their enduring appeal lies in their ability to simultaneously entertain and provoke, offering insightful commentary on human nature that resonates across decades. This ebook delves into the world of Coward's monologues, analyzing their stylistic features, thematic concerns, and enduring relevance. We'll explore how they can be effectively performed and consider their continued importance in the modern theatrical landscape.

Chapter 1: Analyzing Coward's Style: Wit, Wordplay, and Social Observation

Coward's genius lies in his mastery of language. His monologues are characterized by a razor-sharp wit, a playful use of wordplay, and a keen observation of social dynamics. He employed a sophisticated vocabulary, often deploying irony and understatement to devastating effect. This isn't simply clever wordplay; it's a carefully constructed performance of social identity. The characters in his monologues are often upper-class or aspirational, using language to both mask and reveal their insecurities, anxieties, and desires. His use of pauses, carefully chosen silences, and shifts in tone adds further layers of meaning, hinting at unspoken emotions and underlying tensions. Analyzing the structure of his sentences, the rhythm of his phrasing, and the careful selection of vocabulary reveals a meticulous crafting of character and emotion. His monologues are not just spoken; they are meticulously performed through language. Consider, for instance, the subtle shifts in tone that betray a character's vulnerability beneath a façade of effortless sophistication. This mastery of

language is what elevates Coward's monologues beyond mere entertainment to true works of art.

Chapter 2: Key Themes Explored in Coward's Monologues: Love, Loss, Identity, and Social Class

Coward's monologues explore a range of universal themes, often interwoven and subtly nuanced. Love, in its many guises – from passionate romance to disillusioned affection – is a recurring motif. His characters often grapple with the complexities of relationships, navigating the treacherous waters of infidelity, betrayal, and the elusive pursuit of happiness. Loss, whether romantic or otherwise, is explored with both poignancy and a characteristically dry wit. The characters' responses to loss reveal their inner strength (or weakness) and shape their understanding of themselves and the world. The exploration of identity is central. Many monologues delve into the masks individuals wear in society, revealing the discrepancies between public persona and private self. Social class, particularly within the context of British society, is another significant theme. Coward's characters often navigate the complexities of social hierarchies, using language and behavior to both assert and question their place within these structures. These themes aren't presented in a heavy-handed manner; rather, they are subtly woven into the fabric of the monologue, adding depth and complexity to the characters and their situations.

Chapter 3: Famous Monologues: A Detailed Analysis of Select Pieces

This chapter will provide in-depth analysis of specific monologues, showcasing Coward's range and skill. We'll examine "Mad About the Boy," a humorous and poignant reflection on aging and romance; excerpts from *Present Laughter*, demonstrating Garry Essendine's charming yet self-destructive nature; and selections from *Private Lives*, highlighting the witty banter and complex relationship dynamics between Elyot and Amanda. Each monologue will be dissected, examining its structure, language, themes, and the character's motivations. We'll look at how Coward uses language to reveal character, builds tension, and creates humor. The analysis will also include discussion of potential interpretations and the impact of different performance styles on the overall effect of the monologue. This section serves as a practical guide to understanding and appreciating the artistry of Coward's writing.

Chapter 4: Performing Coward: Techniques and Considerations for Actors

Delivering a Coward monologue effectively requires a specific skill set. This chapter will explore the techniques necessary to capture the essence of Coward's style. It will cover aspects such as pacing, timing, vocal projection, and the use of physicality. We'll discuss the importance of understanding the character's motivations and emotional landscape to create a believable and engaging performance. The nuances of Coward's wit, the subtle shifts in tone, and the precise delivery of his lines all contribute to a successful performance. This chapter will also explore the challenges inherent in performing Coward, such as the potential for the material to feel dated or artificial if not approached with sensitivity and understanding. Practical advice and exercises will be included to help aspiring actors develop the necessary skills to bring Coward's characters to life.

Chapter 5: Coward's Monologues in Modern Context: Relevance and Adaptability

Despite being written decades ago, Coward's monologues retain a surprising relevance in the 21st century. His observations on human nature, social interactions, and the complexities of relationships remain remarkably insightful. This chapter will explore how Coward's themes resonate with contemporary audiences and discuss the ways in which his work can be adapted and reinterpreted for modern settings. We'll examine examples of contemporary adaptations and explore the potential for new interpretations that might further illuminate Coward's work for a new generation. The

adaptability of Coward's monologues lies in their universality. The core themes of love, loss, identity, and the search for meaning remain timeless. This chapter will emphasize that Coward's insightful observations on the human condition continue to provoke thought and discussion, making his work just as relevant today as it was during his lifetime.

Conclusion: The Legacy of Coward's Monologues and Their Continued Influence

Noel Coward's monologues stand as a testament to his unparalleled talent as a playwright and wordsmith. Their enduring popularity demonstrates the timeless appeal of his wit, his insightful character studies, and his ability to explore profound themes with effortless grace. This ebook aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the artistry, themes, and performance techniques associated with Coward's monologues. By analyzing his style, exploring key themes, and examining specific pieces, we have revealed the multifaceted nature of his work and its enduring relevance. Whether enjoyed as a reader or performed on stage, Coward's monologues offer a unique and rewarding experience, enriching our understanding of human nature and the power of language.

FAQs:

1. What makes Noel Coward's monologues unique? His unique blend of wit, social commentary, and insightful character studies sets him apart.
2. Are Coward's monologues suitable for modern audiences? Yes, his exploration of universal themes remains remarkably relevant.
3. What are some key techniques for performing Coward's monologues? Precise timing, nuanced vocal delivery, and understanding character motivations are crucial.
4. What themes are most prominent in Coward's monologues? Love, loss, identity, and social class are frequently explored.
5. Which are some of Coward's most famous monologues? "Mad About the Boy" and excerpts from *Present Laughter* and *Private Lives* are popular choices.
6. How can I find more resources on Noel Coward? Biographies, critical analyses, and recordings of his work are readily available.
7. Are there modern adaptations of Coward's monologues? Yes, his works are frequently reinterpreted for contemporary settings.
8. What is the significance of Coward's use of language? His skillful use of wit, wordplay, and understatement shapes character and meaning.
9. Are Coward's monologues suitable for amateur actors? Absolutely, with appropriate preparation and coaching.

Related Articles:

1. The Wit and Wisdom of Noel Coward: An exploration of Coward's comedic genius and his enduring legacy.
2. Noel Coward's Social Commentary: An analysis of his satirical observations on class and society.
3. The Psychology of Coward's Characters: A deeper dive into the motivations and complexities of his characters.
4. Staging Noel Coward: A Director's Perspective: Insights into the challenges and rewards of directing Coward's plays.

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7. Modern Interpretations of Coward's Plays: A look at contemporary adaptations and their impact.
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9. Teaching Coward in the Classroom: Methods and resources for using Coward's works in educational settings.

noel coward monologues: The Modern Monologue Michael Earley, Philippa Keil, 2013-09-27 The Modern Monologue in two volumes, one for men and one for women, is an exciting selection of speeches drawn from the landmark plays of the 20th century. The great playwrights of the British, American and European theatre-- and the plays most constantly performed on stage throughout the world--are represented in this unique collection. Monologues of all types--both serious and comic, realistic and absurdist--provide a dynamic challenge for all actors: the student, the amateur and the professional. A fuller appreciation of each speech is enhanced by the editors' introduction and commentaries that set the plays and individual speeches in their dramatic and performance contexts.

noel coward monologues: 50 Fabulous New Classical Monologues for Men Freyda Thomas, Jan Silverman, 2008 Fifty fabulous, fresh, new classical monologues for men await you within these pages. Everyone from the ancient Greeks to novelists of the 19th century is represented. They are not translated; they are adapted to the actor's needs and accessible to modern audiences. There are 25 dramatic and 25 comic--the largest collection of comic classical monologues on the market. The book is divided into 4 sections: Young Men's Dramatic, Mature Men's Dramatic, Young Men's Comedic and Mature Men's Comedic. Mo

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noel coward monologues: **Contemporary American Monologues for Men** Todd London, 2012-10-25 Audition monologues for male characters selected from recent works by American playwrights including Tony Kushner, Jon Robin Baitz, Constance Congdon, Paula Vogel, Donald Margulies, Emily Mann, Eric Bogosian, Nicky Silver, and others. Unique to the TCG monologue series is a bibliography of other works by the playwrights included.

noel coward monologues: **The Ultimate Scene and Monologue Sourcebook, Updated and Expanded Edition** Ed Hooks, 2007-10-16 All actors and acting teachers need The Ultimate Scene and Monologue Sourcebook, the invaluable guide to finding just the right piece for every audition. This remarkable book describes the characters, action, and mood for more than 1,000 scenes in over 300 plays. This unique format is ideal for acting teachers who want their students to understand each monologue in context. Using these guidelines, the actor can quickly pinpoint the perfect monologue, then find the text in the Samuel French or Dramatist Play Service edition of the play. Newly revised and expanded, the book also includes the author's own assessment of each monologue.

noel coward monologues: *Present Laughter* Noël Coward, 2023-05-04 An honest, even profound reflection on the price of fame, with some genuine sexual frisson and an undercurrent of pathos. - The Hollywood Reporter At the centre of his own universe sits matinee idol Garry Essendine: suave, hedonistic and too old, says his wife, to be having numerous affairs - his line of harmless, infatuated debutantes is largely tolerated but playing closer to home is not. Just before he escapes on tour to Africa the full extent of his misdemeanours is discovered... and all hell breaks loose. Noël Coward's *Present Laughter* premiered in the early years of the Second World War just as

such privileged lives were threatened with fundamental social change, and remains one of the playwright's most enduring hits. This new edition is published in Methuen Drama's iconic Modern Classics series to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Coward's death and features a new introduction by Russell Jackson.

noel coward monologues: Private Lives Noel Coward, 1975 Een gescheiden echtpaar ontmoet elkaar weer na vijf jaar, terwijl zij beiden op huwelijksreis zijn met hun nieuwe partner.

noel coward monologues: Blithe Spirit Noël Coward, 2013-12-04 I will ever be grateful for the almost psychic gift that enabled me to write *Blithe Spirit* in five days during one of the darkest years of the war.' Written in 1941, *Blithe Spirit* remained the longest-running comedy in British Theatre for three decades thereafter. Plotted around the central role of one of Coward's best loved characters, a spirit medium Madame Arcati (originally performed by Margaret Rutherford) Coward's play is an escapist comedy about a man whose two previous wives return to haunt him. A minor comic masterpiece of the lighter sort Professor Allardyce Nicoll

noel coward monologues: The Modern Monologue Michael Earley, Philippa Keil, 1993-12-06 First published in 1994. The Modern Monologue is a continuation of the previous collection The Classical Monologue. This starts at the dawn of the modern age in 1892, presenting a survey of indispensable speeches from plays that continue to shape the course of modern theatre. The plays included in this collection also happen to be the ones that have helped to define modern acting in all its many guises. Modern playwrights such as Brecht, Genet, Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter, Shepard, Guare, Nichols and Churchill, to name only a handful of the dramatists represented here, assume that a play and its characters are malleable and shifting; that mood swings, strangeness and sudden eruptions are key components of modern theatre's compelling attraction.

noel coward monologues: Loose Knit Theresa Rebeck, 1994 Comedy Theresa Rebeck Characters: 2 male, 5 female Combination set: interior and exterior. Once a week in the heart of New York City five women gather to knit. As the sweaters pile up, their lives fall apart. Liz is having an affair with her sister's husband, Gina's lost her job, Paula is having an identity crisis, and Margie just wants a date. Into their lives steps Miles, a cool businessman who made his first million before he was thirty and is now looking for a wi

noel coward monologues: The Vagina Monologues Eve Ensler, 2008 Drawing on conversations with hundreds of women about their genitalia, the author presents a collection of performance pieces from her one-woman show of the same name.

noel coward monologues: The Vortex Noel Coward, 1924

noel coward monologues: Hay Fever Noël Coward, 2023-05-04 This 1925 comedy of manners that's funny yet also unorthodox and unsettling... a celebration of abnormality and at the same time a disquieting study of both the pleasures and the pains of not being able to restrain oneself. - Evening Standard When four guests, all invited by different members of the Bliss family, arrive for a weekend at their country house near Maidenhead, they're expecting a idyllic retreat. But this peaceful promise is quickly trounced when the self-absorbed eccentricities of the Blisses are trained on the guests, who leave the country mansion humiliated and embarrassed. First produced in 1925, *Hay Fever* is a technical masterpiece, seamlessly combining high farce with a comedy of manners, and delivering Coward his first major commercial success. This new edition is published in Methuen Drama's iconic Modern Classics series to coincide with the 125th anniversary of Coward's birth and features a new introduction by Michael Billington.

noel coward monologues: Shows for Days Douglas Carter Beane, 2017-03-16 It's May 1973 when a young man wanders into a dilapidated community theater in Reading, PA. The company members welcome him—well, only because they need a set painter that day. The young man then proceeds to soak up all the idealism and the craziness that comes with being part of a struggling theater company with big dreams. When a playwright looks back at his beginnings in the theater and decides to chronicle those experiences in a play, all sorts of things can happen. If you're Douglas Carter Beane, who grew out of his Reading, PA, community theater days to become one of the stage's master writers, it's bound to bring a measure of gimlet-eyed reflection, a large dollop of

self-deprecation, and a heaping dose of hilarity.

noel coward monologues: *Nude with Violin* Noel Coward, 1958

noel coward monologues: *Fallen Angels* Noel Coward, 1958 The love and friendship between two married couples and best friends are put to the test when a postcard arrives with a picture of Capri on one side, and on the other, news of the imminent arrival of a certain handsome Frenchman.

noel coward monologues: *How to Be a Working Actor, 5th Edition* Mari Lyn Henry, Lynne Rogers, 2010-07-07 The celebrated survival guide for the working actor - now completely updated and expanded with a foreword by Tony award-winning actor Joe Mantegna! Renowned for more than two decades as the most comprehensive resource for actors, *How to Be a Working Actor* is a must-read for achieving success in The Business. Now this Bible of the Biz has been completely revised and greatly expanded to address new markets, ever-changing opportunities, and the many new ways today's actors find work. Talent manager, teacher, and career coach Mari Lyn Henry and actress, author, and spokeswoman Lynne Rogers combine their extensive skills and years of experience to cover all the essentials of how to market yourself, land roles, and manage a successful career. They also include expert advice from scores of other industry experts - well-known actors, agents, managers, casting directors, and teachers. *How to Be a Working Actor* is loaded with advice on how to: - put together a professional wardrobe - get a head shot that brings out the real you - create a resume that really works - find the training to develop your talents - communicate effectively with agents and managers - use the internet to promote your business and explore new opportunities - get the most value out of union membership - excel at auditions and screen tests - discover how to get work in regional markets - cope with success *How to Be a Working Actor* takes a no-nonsense approach to the whole business of being a working actor, with detailed information on how to live on a budget in New York and Los Angeles, what the acting jobs are and what they pay, even how to find a survival strategy that will augment your career. And an extensive section on script analysis shows you how to investigate the depth of a character to create a memorable audition for roles in theatre, film, and television.

noel coward monologues: *Play the Scene* Michael Schulman, Eva Mekler, 2004-12-07 A collection of over a hundred scenes and monologues from plays from the Elizabethan period to contemporary Tony Award winners.

noel coward monologues: *Still Life* Noel Coward, 1965 Characters: 6 male, 5 female Interior Set One of the Tonight at 8:30 series, a success in London and New York. The movie *Brief Encounter* was based on this play. In a suburban rail station, Dr. Harvey removes a cinder from Laura's eye and they fall in love. Subsequent weekly meetings over tea, scenes debating respectability or love, and some sentimental moments transpire before they decide they must part forever. He is accepting a faraway post and she must return to a circumspect

noel coward monologues: *Design for Living* Noël Coward, 2014-05-08 'The actual facts are so simple. I love you. You love me. You love Otto. I love Otto. Otto loves you. Otto loves me. There now! Start to unravel from there.' *Design for Living* is a wickedly witty dark romantic comedy by Noel Coward. Initially banned in the UK, this provocative play portrays three amoral, glib and stylish characters and their hopelessly inescapable, if also unconventional, emotional entanglement. From 1930s bohemian Paris to the dizzying heights of Manhattan society, a tempestuous love triangle unravels between a vivacious interior designer, Gilda, playwright Leo and artist Otto - three people unashamedly and passionately in love with each other. They are trapped in what Coward called 'a three-sided erotic hodge podge.' With Coward's trademark piquant style, this lively, funny but also atypical play looks at dazzling, egotistical creatures and their self-destructive dependence on each other. Exploring themes of bisexuality, celebrity, success and self-obsession, *Design for Living* is a stylish and scandalous comedy.

noel coward monologues: *The Book of Comic and Dramatic Monologues* Michael Marshall, 1981

noel coward monologues: *The 24 Hour Plays Viral Monologues* The 24 Hour Plays, 2020-06-25 Since 1995 The 24 Hour Plays have been responding to theatre in the moment. As the

2020 Coronavirus pandemic brought an end to live theatre in the USA and Europe, the company sprang to work to keep the arts alive. Bringing together some of America's most prolific writers for the stage and screen, this unique and contemporary book of monologues collates the responses in dramatic fashion, making for an anthology of work that is timely, moving, irreverent and at its best, transcendent. Featuring original monologues by writers such as David Lindsay-Abaire, Clare Barron, Hansol Jung, Stephen Adly Guirgis, Christopher Oscar Peña, Jesse Eisenberg and Monique Moses this is a rich collection that can be enjoyed by actors, writers and those looking for creative responses to the global COVID-19 crisis. With over 50 monologues from the first three weeks of the project, edited by Howard Sherman, this is an important collection that documents an unprecedented moment in history whilst also offering practical resource for actors and performers.

noel coward monologues: My Life with Noel Coward Graham Payn, 1996-10-31 Other men made fabulous careers out of the opportunities Noel Coward declined. But Coward's inner compass charted him on his own course to greatness. And when he couldn't find the destination on his maps, he invented Samolo, his own South Sea island complete with its own indigenous rituals and customs. And of course, we revisit Coward's worlds constantly in revivals of his classic plays, *Hay Fever*, *Private Lives*, *Tonight at 8:30*, *Design for Living* and *Blithe Spirit*. This is the definitive memoir of the private Noel Coward by the only man with the compassionate insight and first-hand experience to write it. Graham Payn, star of many of Coward's shows, shared the Master's professional and private life for thirty years. When Coward kept the rest of the world at bay, Payn remained at his side as confidant and friend. No one else was as privy to Coward's doubts and dreams.

noel coward monologues: Selected Musical Plays by Noël Coward: A Critical Anthology Noël Coward, 2022-08-25 Although Noël Coward's work as playwright, songwriter and actor has long been celebrated, his contributions to the British musical have largely been forgotten. Selected Musical Plays by Noël Coward: A Critical Anthology rectifies this omission from the musical theatre landscape, demonstrating how Coward's adaptability, creativity, and myriad of styles is imitated in the incredible musicals he authored. From flop shows at Drury Lane with Mary Martin through to his Broadway hits with Elaine Stritch, this anthology chronicles the variety of styles written by Coward, from revue to musical comedy to operetta. The works in this volume provide a contemporary critical introduction that illustrates the breadth and depth of his work, and highlighting the diverse identities of the collaborators and performers with whom he worked. Though the style of these works varies, they are linked together by his creative thread, and his ability to craft barbed and witty observations of his social world. A timely portrait of Coward's oeuvre and its lasting influence on the wider world of the British musical, Selected Musical Plays by Noël Coward contains previously unpublished musical plays by a central figure in theatre history, collected together with critical apparatus for students, scholars, and fans.

noel coward monologues: *Make 'Em Laugh* Steve Allen, 2013-05-24 The success of Steve Allen's *How To Be Funny* led first to the republication of that book, and now occasioned a companion volume, *Make 'Em Laugh*. This new how-to book about the art of comedy includes an even richer assortment of examples of the author's unique humor. In *Make 'Em Laugh*, Allen laces his formal instruction with hilarious ad-libs, written jokes, TV comedy sketches, satires, song parodies, humorous essays, amusing autobiographical reminiscences, one-act plays, witty speeches, and stand-up monologues from his comedy concerts. Noel Coward called Steve Allen the most talented man in America, and he is probably the most borrowed-from comedian of all time. The perceptive reader will recognize many of the comic ideas that Allen originated during the Golden Age of television comedy - ideas that are still influential in the 1990's. If there were a college course in creating and performing comedy, *Make 'Em Laugh* would be the ideal textbook.

noel coward monologues: Overhearing Film Dialogue Sarah Kozloff, 2000-03-30 Since the birth of cinema, film has been lauded as a visual rather than a verbal medium; this sentiment was epitomized by John Ford's assertion in 1964 that, When a motion picture is at its best, it is long on action and short on dialogue. Little serious work has been done on the subject of film dialogue, yet what characters say and how they say it has been crucial to our experience and understanding of

every film since the coming of sound. Through informative discussions of dozens of classic and contemporary films—from *Bringing Up Baby* to *Terms of Endearment*, from *Stagecoach* to *Reservoir Dogs*--this lively book provides the first full-length study of the use of dialogue in American film. Sarah Kozloff shows why dialogue has been neglected in the analysis of narrative film and uncovers the essential contributions dialogue makes to a film's development and impact. She uses narrative theory and drama theory to analyze the functions that dialogue typically serves in a film. The second part of the book is a comprehensive discussion of the role and nature of dialogue in four film genres: westerns, screwball comedies, gangster films, and melodramas. Focusing on topics such as class and ethnic dialects, censorship, and the effect of dramatic irony, Kozloff provides an illuminating new perspective on film genres.

noel coward monologues: *The Duchess of Malfi* John Webster, 1997-06-15 More widely studied and more frequently performed than ever before, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* is here presented in an accessible and thoroughly up-to-date edition. Based on the Revels Plays text, the notes have been augmented to cast further light both on Webster's amazing dialogue and on the stage action. An entirely new introduction sets the tragedy in the context of pre-Civil War England and gives a revealing view of its imagery and dramatic action. From its well-documented early performances to the two productions seen in the West End of London in the 1995-96 season, a stage history gives an account of the play in performance. Students, actors, directors and theatre-goers will all find here a reappraisal of Webster's artistry in the greatest age of English theatre, which highlights why it has lived on stage with renewed force in the last decades of the twentieth century.

noel coward monologues: *Samuel French's Basic Catalogue of Plays* Samuel French, Inc, 1997

noel coward monologues: *Basic Catalogue of Plays and Musicals* Samuel French, Inc, 1997

noel coward monologues: *George Bernard Shaw in Context* Brad Kent, 2015-10-14 When George Bernard Shaw died in 1950, the world lost one of its most well-known authors, a revolutionary who was as renowned for his personality as he was for his humour, humanity, and rebellious thinking. He remains a compelling figure who deserves attention not only for how influential he was in his time, but for how relevant he is to ours. This collection sets Shaw's life and achievements in context, with forty-two scholarly essays devoted to subjects that interested him and defined his work. Contributors explore a wide range of themes, moving from factors that were formative in Shaw's life, to the artistic work that made him most famous and the institutions with which he worked, to the political and social issues that consumed much of his attention, and, finally, to his influence and reception. Presenting fresh material and arguments, this collection will point to new directions of research for future scholars.

noel coward monologues: *The Complete Professional Audition* Daren Cohen, Michael Perilstein, 2010-06-09 In the United States, there are 300,000 actors; 100,000 hold union cards. There are 184 college theater programs and 108 performing-arts high schools. There are 578 acting schools and coaches in New York City and Los Angeles alone. *The Complete Professional Audition* is the one book all of those actors need-because before actors can act, they have to pass the audition! Here's practical, hand-holding advice for choosing material, rehearsing, warming up, staying calm, standing out in a crowd, understanding casting, avoiding pitfalls, following up, getting the right headshot and resume, and accepting an offer. There's even a section on handling rejection-not that *The Complete Professional Audition* user is ever going to need that, of course. Ultra-useful appendices of recommended songs and monologues (yes!) make this the complete guide for everyone with an audition coming up. • Designed for both play and musical auditions • There are 300,000 actors and acting students in the US-and all of them want an edge at the audition • Through his workshops and seminars, author Darren Cohen knows exactly what actors need to pass an audition and get that part • Practical, down-to-earth ideas that work From the Trade Paperback edition.

noel coward monologues: *Dictionary Catalog of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound* Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, 1981

noel coward monologues: Catalog of Copyright Entries Library of Congress. Copyright Office, 1972

noel coward monologues: Puzzles and Essays from 'The Exchange' Charles R Anderson, 2018-10-24 Who said that? When did that happen? Where the heck does that thing come from? Was that French, or what? What's that supposed to mean? For 35 years, librarians in the United States and other countries sent puzzles they could not solve locally to "The Exchange," a column for reference librarians appearing in RQ (and later, RUSQ), the official journal of the Reference and User Services Division of the ALA. Other readers often furnished the answers--sometimes years or even decades later! Puzzles and Essays from "The Exchange" organizes those perplexing questions and answers into a reader-friendly reference format, embellished with essays that appeared in the column over the last fifteen years of its publication. This unique collection of questions and answers that stumped librarians on four continents over a 35-year period comes complete with authoritative bibliographic citations. It also contains an extensive subject, person, and keyword index, providing easy access to the material. Packed with fascinating information, little-known trivia, and hard-to-find facts, Puzzles and Essays from "The Exchange" is a wonderful reference source, answering difficult questions about: the origins of common--and not-so-common--customs, like giving engagement rings, driving on the right or left side of the road, tying yellow ribbons around trees in memory of captives, leg shaving, visits from the "Tooth Fairy," and much, much more! the origins of words, phrases, and terms that don't, when taken literally, make much sense the origins of popular sayings--The grass is always greener; The whole nine yards; It ain't over until the fat lady sings; Close but no cigar; Going down the tube; Light at the end of the tunnel; Katy, bar the door; Goodbye, cruel world; etc. the sources of famous quotations--both spurious and real! the sources of poetry fragments and bits of verse that have become part of the popular lexicon hard-to-find biographical information--from George Washington Carver's many uses for the peanut and the sweet potato to the name of Paul Revere's horse to the truth about the "let them eat cake" story attributed to Marie Antoinette trivia and miscellany--how lullabies began; why a yawn is contagious when a sneeze is not; what the names of the monkeys in The Wizard of Oz were; why pigeons bob their heads when they walk; what the vital statistics of the Venus de Milo are; and much more! the history of "The Exchange" itself! Puzzles and Essays from "The Exchange" will also challenge you with a list of so-far unanswered questions, unidentified quotations, and popular sayings whose origins are still generally unknown. Perhaps you'll be the one to answer the riddles that stumped the editors and readers of "The Exchange!"

noel coward monologues: Beyond Talent Andrea Uselman, 2008-12-06 Beyond Talent is a practical, tell-it-like-it-is handbook for starting and sustaining a performance career. With a collection of personal insights, Andrea Uselman dedicates pages to the critical and often overseen topics of the performance industry. Also included are tips and advice from seasoned professionals in music, theatre and dance who share their real-world experiences in what it takes to stand out and be recognized. With a broad range of information Beyond Talent is a working resource that readers will come to again and again as they see their performance careers take off!

noel coward monologues: Defying Gravity Jane Anderson, 2013-09-01 This free structured look at the 1986 Challenger disaster places the teacher who died with six others as they hurtled into space at the center of an exploration of our need to reach beyond ourselves and dare the universe. Defying Gravity artfully interweaves the past with the present and the lives of participants and bystanders, drawing parallels among painter Claude Monet's artistic quest, the zest of the teacher selected to the first civilian astronaut, the perspectives of her grieving daughter, the aspirations of elderly tourists who drive their Winnebago to Florida to watch the space shot and dream of hotels in space, the guilt felt by a NASA mechanic and his girl friend's fear of heights.

noel coward monologues: Stage Kiss Sarah Ruhl, 2015-02-02 Wickedly clever . . . Ruhl's unique, breezily elegant dialogue is fully present, as is her pleasingly loopy logic.—Variety In the smart, rollicking Stage Kiss . . . passion and fidelity engage in a kind of elegant pas de deux. . . . The play manages to be both wholly original and instantly recognizable . . . with its combination of

hilarity and trenchancy.—The New Yorker Award-winning playwright Sarah Ruhl brings her unique mix of lyricism, sparkling humor, and fierce intelligence to her new romantic comedy, *Stage Kiss*. When estranged lovers He and She are thrown together as romantic leads in a long-forgotten 1930s melodrama, the line between off-stage and on-stage begins to blur. A knockabout farce that channels Noël Coward and Michael Frayn (*Chicago Tribune*), *Stage Kiss* is a thoughtful and clever examination of the difference between youthful lust and respectful love. Ruhl, one of America's most frequently produced playwrights, proves that a kiss is not just a kiss in this whirlwind romantic comedy, which will receive its New York premiere at Playwrights Horizons in winter 2014. Sarah Ruhl's other plays include the Pulitzer Prize finalists *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* and *The Clean House*, as well as *Passion Play*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Demeter in the City*, *Eurydice*, *Melancholy Play*, and *Late: a cowboy song*. She is the recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award, a PEN/Laura Pels Award, and a MacArthur Fellowship. Her plays have premiered on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and have been produced in many theaters around the world.

noel coward monologues: The Best Men's Stage Monologues of 2008 Lawrence Harbison, 2009 For over thirty years Lawrence Harbison was in charge of new play acquisition for Samuel French, Inc., during which time he was responsible for the first publication of such luminaries as Jane Martin, Don Nigro, Tina Howe, Theresa Rebeck, José Rivera, William Mastrosimone, Charles Fuller, and Ken Ludwig, among many others; and the acquisition of musicals such as *SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN*, *PUMP BOYS AND DINETTES*, *A&MY NAME IS ALICE*, and *THREE GUYS NAKED FROM THE WAIST DOWN*. He is currently Senior Editor for Smith & Kraus, Inc., the nation's largest theatrical trade publisher, for whom he edits annual anthologies of best plays by new playwrights, best ten-minute plays, best monologues for men and for women and best stage scenes. He has for many years written a weekly column on his adventures in the theater for two Manhattan Newspapers, *The Chelsea News* and *The Westsider*, which will be posted on Smith & Kraus' website (www.smithandkraus.com) starting in September of 2008. He has also served as literary manager or literary consults for several theatres, such as Urban Stages and American Jewish Theatre. He is a member of the NYC press corps and is an Outer Critics Circle member. He has served many times over the years as a judge and commentator for various national play contests and lectures regularly at colleges and universities.

noel coward monologues: Three Days of Rain Richard Greenberg, 2006 Set in New York, *Three Days of Rain* centers on a brother Walker, his sister Nan, and their childhood friend Pip who meet to settle their parents' estate. The two fathers were long-time friends and partners in architecture; their legacy is the brilliantly daring creation, the 1960's Janeway House. In this tense and brittle reunion, much more is at stake than who gets the house. Brother and sister discover their father's sparse diary, and use it to create a story for themselves that will explain away the present and make sense of their parent's passionless marriage. Over the three days of rain entered in the young architect's diary, the same three actors then play their own parents and reveal a romantic significance and creative dilemma that none of these children could ever have imagined. Julia Roberts will make her Broadway debut in spring 2006 as Nan in a revival of Richard Greenberg's *Three Days of Rain*.

noel coward monologues: Miss Witherspoon Christopher Durang, 2008 *THE STORY*: Veronica, already scarred by too many failed relationships, finds the world a frightening place. Skylab, an American space station that came crashing down to earth, in particular, haunts and enrages her. So she has committed suicide, and is now

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