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National Theatre Live

A production from
THE OLD VIC

NOËL COWARD'S **PRESENT LAUGHTER**

Cast in order of appearance

Daphne Stillington.....Kitty Archer
Miss Erikson / Lady Saltburn..Liza Sadovy
Fred.....Joshua Hill
Monica Reed.....Sophie Thompson
Garry Essendine.....Andrew Scott
Liz Essendine.....Indira Varma
Roland Maule.....Luke Thallon
Helen Lyppiatt.....Suzie Toase
Morris Dixon.....Abdul Salis
Joe Lyppiatt.....Enzo Cilenti

Creative Team

Director.....Matthew Warchus
Set and Costume.....Rob Howell
Co-lighting.....Tim Lutkin
and Hugh Vanstone
Sound.....Simon Baker
Casting.....Jessica Ronane CDG
Associate Director.....Joe Murphy

Broadcast Team

Director for Screen.....Marcus Viner
Technical Producers.....Julia Nelson
and Christopher C. Bretnall
Lighting Consultant...Gemma O'Sullivan
Sound Supervisor.....Conrad Fletcher
Script Supervisor.....Annie McDougall



Running time:

3 hours, with one 20 minute interval.



Supported using public funding by
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Noël Coward, 'the original pop star'

An excerpt from Matthew Warchus' programme piece on directing Present Laughter.

I've heard Coward described as 'the original pop star'. This seemed particularly relevant to his depiction of Garry Essendine, the famous matinee idol who is the central character of this play.

We are all used to observing in the news the chaotic (sometimes tragic) lives of major pop stars as they navigate (or fail to navigate) between the extraordinary highs and lows of their celebrity lives. But do we pause to properly consider that this lifestyle is itself a form of trauma...partly self-inflicted and partly inflicted by the intense adulation of fans?

I love the brilliantly true Coward quote 'Extraordinary how potent cheap music is' and it's equally extraordinary how potent

the subject of fame and celebrity is when you look carefully at it. It tells you a lot of complicated things about human beings.

We often refer, maybe legitimately but also judgementally, to the ego and narcissism of the star, but what about the strange intense neediness of the fans? What is that form of love and desire all about?

There's no doubt that Coward was very interested in all this as he tried to deal with his own celebrity and the unavoidable identity crisis which accompanies fame. Not only are most of the characters in this play driven by an intense need for Garry to do or be something or other, but Garry Essendine's own surname is of course an anagram of 'neediness'.

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CYRANO DE BERGERAC

by Edmond Rostand,
in a new version by Martin Crimp
a Jamie Lloyd Company production

Broadcast live 20 February

Fierce with a pen and notorious in combat, Cyrano almost has it all - if only he could win the heart of his true love Roxane. There's just one big problem: he has a nose as huge as his heart.

James McAvoy (*X-Men*, *Atonement*) returns to the stage in an inventive new adaptation brought to life with linguistic ingenuity to celebrate Cyrano's powerful and resonant resistance against overwhelming odds.

The Welkin

by Lucy Kirkwood
a National Theatre production

Broadcast live 21 May

Rural Suffolk, 1759. As the country waits for Halley's comet, a young woman is sentenced to hang for a heinous murder. She claims to be pregnant, but is she telling the truth or simply trying to escape the noose? A jury of 12 matrons must decide her fate, and only a midwife seems prepared to defend her.

Maxine Peake plays the midwife and Ria Zmitrowicz plays the defendant in this bold and gripping production, directed by James Macdonald.