The J.T. & Margaret Talkington College of Visual & Performing Arts
School of Theatre & Dance
presents

HAY FEVER
by noël coward

director
ronald dean nolen

scene design
shawn ketchum johnson

costume design
emilia richardson^

lighting design
taylor alfred

sound design
tom laney III

props designer
meagan pierce

Taking photographs, with or without flash, and using video or audio recording equipment are prohibited during the performance. Eating, drinking, and smoking are not allowed in the event space. Thank you!
cast

judith bliss  hillary boyd
sorel bliss  delaney o’neal*
simon bliss  daniel dipinto
david bliss  nick mccord
sandy tyrell  lucas sanders
myra arundel  birdie stabeno
richard greatham  carlos medina-maldonado
jackie coryton  natalie dupre
clara  cara ellison
male swing  andrew de la garza
female swing  lauren voight

* Member - Alpha Psi Omega, National Theatre Honor Society
^ Member - United States Institute for Theatre Technology
production team

dramaturg
stage manager
assistant director
assistant stage manager
intimacy choreographer
vocal/dialects design
vocal captain
vocal coach assistant
assistant lighting designer
assistant costume designer
assistant technical director
scenic charge artist
prop masters
stage crew
light/sound crew
costume crew
program insert design
season artwork design

sarah johnson
angela aguilera
nina stewart
angela kennedy
hillary boyd
delaney o’neal*
rachel hirshorn-johnston
delaney o’neal
leah white
rafael aviles
katy mitchell
margaret walden
kelly murphey^
rebecca taylor
alex webster
elliot esquivel
joryhebel ginorio
lucas weber
chimdinma udeozoh
abigail cunningham
paris dupre
jacob francisco
gabriel mata
trey tucker
vzael vazquez
christina schoener
surasak namwatsopon
alicia goodman
Few names in theatre history are as iconic as Noël Coward. His legendary biting wit and flamboyant style made him one of the most successful theatrical savants of the 20th century. A performer, composer, writer, producer, and lover of theatre, Coward rose from humble beginnings to secure a place in the upper class which he often wrote about (and poked fun at). He started his career as a successful child star but gained fame and fortune as a writer in his twenties. Coward used his charm and storytelling skills, developed in the theatre offstage, to great affect: he worked for British intelligence during the second world war with his friend Ian Fleming in espionage. He transitioned into a film and television career, had a successful show in Las Vegas featuring performances of his hit songs, and retired in Jamaica where he died peacefully in 1973.

*Hay Fever*, written in 1925, contains all the hallmarks of Coward’s aesthetic: a fast-paced comedy of manners in which farce takes precedent over plot. The characters are extravagant, the setting decadent, and language distinctly of its time and place. *Hay Fever* contains many specific references to 1920s England, coded references to gay culture (Coward was a well-known but publicly closeted gay man), and meta-theatrical nods to show biz. The core of the comedy, however, requires no knowledge of these references: people behaving badly in shocking ways is funny all on its own. The title of the play, more than any other Coward play, remains a bit obscure. Thought to be a reference to the rural setting of the country home, we might also think of the unpleasant symptoms of hay fever and nearly allergic reactions to the Bliss family.

Making fun of the outlandish behavior of this family living in extreme privilege, Coward taps into a social commentary that feels perhaps even more true and urgent in nearly a century after it was written. In a world of Kardashians, Trumps, and Hiltons, our understanding of exponentially increasing wealth inequality and its intersection with celebrity makes *Hay Fever* feel utterly timely.

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“If by any chance a playwright wishes to express a political opinion or a moral opinion or a philosophy, he must be a good enough craftsman to do it with so much spice of entertainment in it that the public get the message without being aware of it.” - Noël Coward

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