

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOËL COWARD'S SPARKLING COMEDY "PRIVATE LIVES" BEGINS MAY 25 TO COMPLETE HUNTINGTON THEATRE COMPANY'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

WHAT

Huntington Theatre Company presents Noël Coward's *Private Lives*, directed by **Maria Aitken** (*Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps, Educating Rita*) and featuring **Bianca Amato** (*The Coast of Utopia* on Broadway) as Amanda and **James Waterston** (*As You Like It* at The Public Theater/NYSF) as Elyot.

WHEN May 25 – June 24, 2012

Evenings: Tues. – Thurs. at 7:30pm; Fri. – Sat. at 8pm; Select Sun. at 7pm

Matinees: Select Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2pm

Days and times vary; see complete schedule at end of release.

Press Opening: Wednesday, May 30, 7pm. RSVP online at huntingtontheatre.org/news.

WHERE

BU Theatre, 264 Huntington Avenue, Boston – Avenue of the Arts

TICKETS

Single tickets start at \$25 and FlexPasses are on sale:

- online at huntingtontheatre.org;
- by phone at 617 266 0800, or
- in person at the BU Theatre Box Office, 264 Huntington Ave. and the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA Box Office, 527 Tremont St. in Boston's South End.

\$5 off: seniors

\$10 off: subscribers and BU community (faculty/staff/alumni)

\$25 "35 Below" tickets for patrons 35 years old and younger (valid ID required)

\$15 student and military tickets (valid ID required)

A free ticket to *Private Lives* is included with the purchase of a seated subscription to the 2012-2013 Season.

(BOSTON) – The Huntington Theatre Company completes its 30th Anniversary Season with the perfect play for springtime: Lifetime Tony Award-winning playwright Noël Coward's beloved sparkling comedy *Private Lives*. Tony Award-nominated **Maria Aitken**, director of the Huntington's acclaimed productions of *Educating Rita* and the Olivier and Tony Award-winning *Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps* and director of the upcoming *Betrayal* (November 2012) helms. Filled with unforgettable dialogue and sparkling sophistication, *Private Lives* is a joyful romp of a good time.

In the play, newlyweds Elyot and Sibyl are honeymooning at a hotel in northern France where they unexpectedly encounter Elyot's ex-wife Amanda and her new husband Victor on the adjacent balcony celebrating *their* recent nuptials. The romance between Elyot and Amanda is quickly revived, and the two desert their new spouses and flee to Amanda's Paris flat. There, the stormy rivalry that first divided them rekindles in time for Sibyl and Victor to rediscover the pair in the throes of a passionate fight. One of the most shining examples of Coward's trademark wit, *The New York Times* calls this stylish and savvy play, "one of the funniest comedies of the 20th century."

"Noël Coward's signature wit and keen eye for human behavior make his plays vibrate emotionally," says Huntington Artistic Director Peter DuBois. "It's thrilling to have Maria Aitken, one of the world's greatest interpreters of Coward, here at the Huntington to bring his work to life."

Aitken, who has appeared in more West End productions of Coward plays than any other actress, played the role of Amanda in the 1980 West End revival of *Private Lives* opposite Michael Jayson. She was the youngest actress to play the part since close Coward friend and frequent collaborator Gertrude Lawrence, for whom the role was written and who played opposite the playwright in the original 1930 production. Aitken and Jayson carried on the long, rich legacy of acclaimed actors synonymous with the respective roles: Tallulah Bankhead and Donald Cook (Broadway, 1948), Brian Bedford and Tammy Grimes (Broadway, 1969), Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton (Broadway, 1983), and most recently Kim Cattrall with Matthew Macfadyen (West End, 2010) and with Paul Gross (Broadway, 2011).

"*Private Lives* is a pretty perfect play," says Aitken. "It is about love and pain and obsession and is very visceral. The fact that it is wrapped in elegance and wit makes it all the stronger. My admiration for Noël Coward increases with the years as I see what a stayer he is and how successive generations discover him and adore playing him. I've been involved with his work for I think 36 years, and it's with a sense of such promise that I approach this particular production in this, my favorite American theatre, with my extraordinary creative team and an incredible bunch of actors."

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The cast includes:

- **Bianca Amato** (Amanda): *Arcadia* and *Coast of Utopia* (Broadway), *The Broken Heart* (Theatre for a New Audience), *Trumpery* (Atlantic Theater Company), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Brooklyn Academy of Music);
- **James Waterston** (Elyot): *Gross Indecency* and *Ah, Wilderness!* (Huntington Theatre Company), *Parents' Evening* (The Flea Theater), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Brooklyn Academy of Music);
- **Autumn Hurlbert** (Sibyl): *Legally Blonde* and *Little Women* (Broadway), *Tomorrow Morning* (The York Theatre Company), *Killing Women* (Theatre Row);
- **Jeremy Webb** (Victor): *The Visit* (Broadway), *The Glorious Ones* (Lincoln Center Theater), *The Baltimore Waltz* (Signature Theater); and
- **Paula Plum** (Louise): *Jumpers* and *St. Joan* (Huntington Theatre Company), *Today I Am a Man* (Greenwich Street Theatre), *Mother Courage* and *No Exit* (American Repertory Theater).

Noël Coward (playwright, 1899-1973) was an English playwright, composer, director, actor, and singer known for his wit and what *Time* magazine called “a sense of personal style, a combination of cheek and chic, posh and poise.” He was born in a suburb of London and made his professional stage debut at eleven. He wrote and published more than 50 plays including *Fallen Angels*, *The Vortex*, *Hay Fever*, *Easy Virtue*, *Private Lives*, *Design For Living*, *Present Laughter*, *Blithe Spirit*, and *Waiting in the Wings*. He is also the author of more than 300 songs including “Mad About the Boy,” “Mad Dogs and Englishmen,” and “London Pride,” more than a dozen musical theatre pieces, poetry, short stories, the novel *Pomp and Circumstance*, and a three-volume autobiography. His stage and film acting and directing credits spanned six decades and included many of his own works. He was knighted in 1969, elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and received a Lifetime Tony Award in 1970.

Maria Aitken (director) previously directed *Educating Rita* and the pre-Broadway staging of the Olivier and Tony Award-winning production of *Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps* at the Huntington Theatre Company where she will direct Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* in November 2012. Other credits include *Man and Boy* (Broadway and Duchess Theatre), *The Gift* (Melbourne Theatre, Australia), *As You Like It* (Shakespeare Theatre Company), *Quartermaine's Terms* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Japes* (Bay Street Theatre), *Easy Virtue* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Lady Bracknell's Confinement* (Vineyard Theatre), *School for Scandal* (Clwyd Theatre), *As You Like It* (Regent's Park), and many others. As an actress at the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, and in the West End, her leading roles include *Blithe Spirit*, *Bedroom Farce*, and *Private Lives*, among others. Her film credits include *A Fish Called Wanda*. Ms. Aitken is a visiting teacher at the British American Drama Academy, The Juilliard School, Yale School of Drama, New York University, The Actors Center in New York, and the Academy for Classical Acting. She is also the author of two books, *A Girdle Round The Earth* and *Style: Acting in High Comedy*.

Choreography by **Daniel Pelzig** (*Candide* and *The Mikado* at the Huntington), Scenic design by **Allen Moyer** (*Before I Leave You* and *Educating Rita* at the Huntington); costume design by **Candice Donnelly** (*Fences* on Broadway); lighting design by **Philip S. Rosenberg** (*Bus Stop* and *She Loves Me* at the Huntington); sound design by **Rob Milburn** and **Michael Bodeen** (*How Shakespeare Won the West* and *Bang the Drum Slowly* at the Huntington). The dialect coach is **Stephen Gabis**. Production stage manager is **Leslie Sears**. Stage Manager is **Kevin Robert Fitzpatrick**.

SPONSORS

- Grand Patron: Boston University
- 30th Anniversary Sponsor: Carol G. Deane
- Season Sponsor: J. David Wimberly
- Production Sponsors: Nancy and Ed Roberts
- Production Co-Sponsors: Faith and Joseph Tiberio

ABOUT THE HUNTINGTON

Since its founding in 1982, the Huntington Theatre Company has developed into Boston's leading theatre company. Bringing together superb local and national talent, the Huntington produces a mix of groundbreaking new works and classics made current. Led by Artistic Director Peter DuBois and Managing Director Michael Maso, the Huntington creates award-winning productions, runs nationally renowned programs in education and new play development, and serves the local theatre community through its operation of the Calderwood Pavilion at the BCA. The Huntington is in residence at Boston University. For more information, visit huntingtontheatre.org.

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MEDIA NOTES

For interviews and more information, contact Communications Manager Rebecca Curtiss at rcurtiss@huntingtontheatre.bu.edu or 617 273 1537.

PHOTO DOWNLOAD INSTRUCTIONS

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1. Visit huntingtontheatre.org/news/photo-library.
2. Click on a thumbnail, and let the image load in your browser on the Flickr site. **Note caption information is displayed below the image.**
3. Click the **Action** button, located above the image on the Flickr site, and select **View All Sizes**.
4. Select the size you wish to download from the choices listed across the top of the image.
5. Let the image load in your browser, then right-click on it to save to your computer.

PRODUCTION CALENDAR AND RELATED EVENTS

PRIVATE LIVES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
AVENUE OF THE ARTS / BU THEATRE					25 •8PM	26 •p8PM
27 •p7PM	28 MEMORIAL DAY	29 •p7:30PM	30 *7PM	31 •7:30PM	1 o•8PM	2 •2PM 8PM
3 •2PM 7PM	4	5 •7:30PM	6 •7:30PM	7 ds10AM •7:30PM	8 •8PM	9 •2PM 8PM
10 h2PM	11	12 •7:30PM	13 •2PM •7:30PM	14 d7:30PM	15 •8PM	16 •2PM 8PM
17 •2PM	18	19 •7:30PM	20 d2PM •7:30PM	21 •7:30PM	22 •8PM	23 •2PM 8PM
24 2PM	MAY - JUNE 2012					

o = 35 Below Wrap Party
d = Actors Forum
h = Humanities Forum

• = Post-Show Conversation
* = Press Opening Night

p = Preview
s = Student Matinee

Post-Show Audience Conversations

Ongoing

Led by members of the Huntington staff. After most Tuesday - Friday, Saturday matinee, and Sunday matinee performances throughout the season. Free with a ticket to the performance.

35 Below Wrap Party

Fri. 6/1, following the 8pm performance

A post-show wrap party with drinks, live music, and exclusive backstage access. \$25 ticket includes admission to both performance and party. Learn more at huntingtontheatre.org/35Below.

Student Matinee Performance

Thurs. 6/7 at 10am

For students in grades 6-12. To reserve tickets, call 617 273 1558.

Humanities Forum

Sun. 6/10, following the 2pm performance

A post-performance talk exploring the context and significance of *Private Lives*.

Actors Forum

Thurs., 6/7 following the 10am student matinee

Thurs., 6/14, following the 7:30pm performance

Wed., 6/20 following the 2pm matinee

Participating cast members answer questions from the audience.