

SWITCHYARD THEATRE COMPANY

*presents*



**PRESENT**

—  —  
*Laughter*

February 23 - March 5, 2023  
PSI Theatre at the Durham Arts Council



Switchyard Theatre Company presents

**PRESENT**  
  
*Laughter*

**By Noel Coward**

**With**

**John Frazier   Shana Fisher   Tania Kelly   Akili Holder-Cozart**

**Joy Bryant   Dani Coan   Naveed Moeed   Gerald Rubin**  
**Stephanie Spohrer   Jamin Wade   Cameron Waters**

*Sound/Lighting Design*  
Valentina Moya

*Stage Manager*  
Mykira McFarland

*Costume Design*  
Jodeya Brown

*Scenic Carpenter*  
Jim Azarelo

*Properties/ASM*  
Kelley Williams

*Intimacy Coordinator*  
Jeff A.R.Jones

*Producer*  
Charles Machalicky

*Director*  
Nadia Bodie-Smith

“Present Laughter” is presented by arrangement with Concord  
Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.

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

The use of recording devices is strictly prohibited.

## A Note from the Director

Noel Coward wrote Present Laughter in 1939, but it could not be produced due to the onset of WW2. Inspired by a sense of patriotic duty, Coward wanted serve his country. With great wisdom, Prime Minister Winston Churchill asked him to do what he did best and entertain the troops.

It was not until 1942 that the play could be produced in London theatres, with Coward playing the lead role of Garry Essendine himself, with great success. Today, Present Laughter continues to entertain audiences with Coward's signature witty repartee and multilayered plot.

84 years after its inception, a diverse, non-traditional cast brings this classic farce to life with all of the flavor of their combined life experiences. Working with this cast and crew has been a true journey of exploration, collaboration and creativity. We learned a great deal about ourselves and each other, as is often the case when working closely when other artists.

We are better than when he started this process, because through the work we came to appreciate our differences as well as our commonalities which make us stronger together. And boy did we laugh!

We laughed at ourselves and we laughed at each other. We feel privileged to share this story one more time. In grand fashion, and in tribute to Noel Coward, we present the best of ourselves in Present Laughter.

- Nadia Bodie-Smith

## Cast (in order of appearance)

Daphne Stillington.....DANI COAN  
Miss Erikson.....STEPHANIE SPOHRER  
Fred.....GERALD RUBIN  
Monica Reed.....TANIA KELLY  
Garry Essendine.....JOHN FRAZIER  
Liz Essendine.....SHANA FISHER  
Roland Maule.....JAMIN WADE  
Hugo Lyppiatt .....NAVEED MOEED  
Morris Dixon.....CAMERON WATERS  
Joanna Lyppiatt .....AKILI HOLDER-COZART  
Lady Saltburn .....JOY BRYANT

## Scenes

The action takes place in  
Garry Essendine's apartment, 1939.

### *Act I*

**Scene 1: 10:30 am, Sunday morning**

**Scene 2: Midnight, three days later**

*Fifteen minute intermission*

### **Act II**

**Scene 1: The next morning**

*2 minute scene change*

**Scene 2: A week later, 10am, before Garry's  
departure**



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## Who's Who in the Cast



**John Frazier (Garry)** is a local actor whose performance experiences include stage, film, voiceovers, and video game motion capture work. John has performed in both urban and rural areas of America which include Chicago IL, Detroit MI, Washington DC, Durham NC; with cities throughout Montana and Utah. Additionally, he has been teaching performance since 2011, including Acting I, Acting II, African American Theatre, Theatre Appreciation, Shakespeare, script analysis, and Meisner. He has successfully directed and assistant directed for mainstage and black box performances. John is also a member in good standing with SAG and AFTRA. His most recent film work was with the Netflix Original Series, *Prank Encounters* E 4 & 6. His interests include VR/AR technologies, and gaming & performance. John is excited to be a part of the cast for *Present Laughter*, and he looks forward to a great show.



**Tania Kelly (Monica)** is a stage actor, writer, sketch comedian, event host/emcee that recently moved back to the Raleigh/Durham area in 2022. She has had fantastic roles in her career in Charlotte, NC including Charlotte from *Beyond Therapy*, both of the twins Dromio in *A Comedy of Errors*, Rosencrantz in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and the Narrator in the one-person play *Every Brilliant Thing*. She has also written and performed in countless performances of Charlotte's best sketch comedy group, Robot Johnson. This is her first performance since COVID and has had a blast with the cast and crew. She wants to thank her husband, dad, and

two kitties for their support. Many thanks to STC for taking a chance on her.



**Shana Fisher (Liz)** is excited to be performing in her first production with Switchyard Theatre Company. Recent theater adventures include *Clue: On Stage* with Cary Players and *Always a Bridesmaid* with Theatre in the Park. An attorney by day and proud mother of two amazing girls, Shana would like to thank Nadia and Charles for this opportunity, the cast and crew for being so wonderful to work with, and her husband for all of his encouragement and support..



**Akili Holder-Cozart (Joanna)** is excited to join STC for the performance of Present Laughter! She is a [mostly] self-taught thespian/musician, performing arts educator, stage director and entrepreneur. Her passion lies in performing and helping others find themselves on the pathway to artistic alignment. She began her artist journey as a singer-songwriter at 8 years old and utilized her freedom in college to explore the theater arts. Most recently, Akili starred as Gina in *Beehive: The 60's Musical* and the Charity Trio/Laundress in *A Christmas Carol* with Temple Theater. She also originated the role of Patience in *Finding Patience: The Musical*, starring on the soundtrack and in the *Ain't Nobody Sees Them* music video, bringing home three film festival awards for Best Music Video. She also bears the sigil of Broadway World's Raleigh Awards Winner for "Best Musical Performance". As an entertainer, she makes bold statements and yearns to inspire others with her work. She sends a HUGE thank you to Switchyard,

Charles Machalicky, Nadia Bodie and the cast for welcoming her. Thank you also to all her wonderful supporters and friends!



**.Cameron Waters (Morris)** comes from Tacoma, WA where he received his BFA in Acting/Directing at Pacific Lutheran University. He has appeared in productions of *Elf*, *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Godspell*, and *My Fair*

*Lady*, among others. You may have seen him perform in the *OdysseyStage 10x10 2022* or in *Long Story Shorts 2022* at UNC. Thank you to everyone at STC, the cast and crew, and to Miles for always being there.



**Naveed Moeed (Hugo)** is thrilled to be part of the Present Laughter family! He is a local critic, writer, actor, photographer and producer. Most recently he has stage-managed productions at the Communications

Department of UNC. He has also been involved in a number of staged readings in the area and is finishing up his first full-length play. A current board member at Bare Theatre and Thee Quaker Project, he is also a local champion of the Chicago Theatre Standards.



**Dani Coan (Daphne)** is so excited to be in her first show with STC! Her last piece of work was writing, producing and starring in her own one woman show, *Mosaic*, at NC State's TheatreFest. Other credits include Emily Webb in *Our Town*,

*10by10 Festival*, and *The Life of Galileo*. When she is not acting, Dani works at Duke University as a Clinical

Research Coordinator. She would like to thank her supportive partner, friends, and family for always coming to shows and cheering her on!

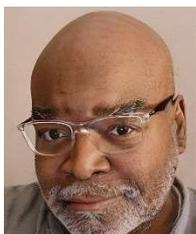


**Jamin Wade (Roland)** This is his first time back to the stage since 2015. Jamin is a NCCU Graduate. He currently is a associate producer at WRAL. He enjoys screenplay writing in his free time. Follow him on instagram: @Jaywade2



**Stephanie Spohrer (Miss Erikson)** is a recent transplant from Seattle. She is excited to be making her North Carolina debut with this wonderful production. Stephanie received a BA in Theatre Performance from SUNY New Paltz, NY.

Favorite roles include: Jen in *The Cake*, Dotty in *Out of Sterno*, Myrtle Mae Simmons in *Harvey* and Anne from *Stranger on a Train*. Stephanie has worked with CLIMB Theatre in Minnesota, as an actor educator, performing interactive classes for children. She would like to thank Mike as well as her family and friends for their continued support.



**Gerald Rubin (Fred)** Gerald has 9 years of improv background. He has been in 5 Play Slams. He has been in assorted readings in the Triangle. Gerald is an active member of the NO Shame theater in Carrboro. He has been in *On the Banks*

*Of the Eno*, *One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest* and *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner*.



**Dr. Joy Bryant (Lady Saltburn)**, a recipient of the Gus Witherspoon Community Arts Award, is a lyric soprano and theatre artist from Raleigh. She has performed throughout the Triangle with Agape Theatre Project, The Justice Theater Project, North Raleigh Arts and Creative Theatre, MOJOAA Performing Arts Theatre, Koffee Dance Company, The Women's Theatre Festival, Star Pocket Theatre, The Town of Holly Springs and North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Department of Theatre. Favorite theatre credits include *Front Porch Society* (Carrie Honey), *Bourbon at The Border* (Rosa St. John), *Caroline or Change* (Moon), *The Color Purple* (Daisy, ensemble), *A Member of the Wedding* (Bernice Sadie Brown), *Finding Patience* (Ernestine, slave), and *Escape to Freedom* (Nan, Georgia Anna). She thanks God for the gift of artistic expression and strives to touch the hearts of all who share in her theatrical and musical spaces. Laughter is Good Medicine!

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**Dr. Nadia Bodie-Smith (Director)**, from Nassau, Bahamas, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre at NCCU where she has been recognized twice for excellence in teaching. Her most recent directing work includes *Dreamgirls*, *Long Time Since Yesterday* and *Ain't Misbehavin*. In addition to her passion for directing, Dr. Bodie-Smith also serves as the Department's Prop Master, Set Decorator and Dialect Coach. She worked as the Production Designer for the 2022 film, *A Day to Die*, featuring Bruce Willis and Frank Grillo. She serves on

numerous university committees and as Board Member for the National Association for Dramatic and Speech Arts (NADSA), and Sweet Unknown South Studios, the first major film studio owned by an African American in Jackson, MS. She is also the Editor for the ENCORE Theatre Journal. Dr. Bodie-Smith continues to merge theatre, music and design toward helping students engage in social change through their artistry.



**Mykira Shamiah McFarland (Stage Manager)**, from Goldsboro, NC, is a senior Theatre Major at North Carolina Central University. She is thrilled to be a part of such an amazing process. She has also stage managed *Crisis of Moments*, and *The Right, Right Now Show* as a result of NCCU and Duke CTSI collaboration. She was also last seen stage managing, at NCCU for *Long Time Since Yesterday* and Fats Waller's *Ain't Misbehavin'*. After graduation, Mykira plans to continue stage managing and pursuing a career in directing, screenwriting/playwriting and producing.



**Kelley Williams (ASM/Props)** re-ignited her love of theatre when she became involved with STC as a stage hand during their most recent production, *Fuddy Meers*. Prior to that, she was a part of community theatre in her hometown, both on and off stage. Kelley is looking forward to working with the cast and crew in her role as Assistant Stage Manager for *Present Laughter*, and helping out with future productions!.



**Jodeya Brown (Costume Designer)** is a student at North Carolina Central University. She is very excited for everyone to see her work, as this is her first production as a costume designer. She would like to thank her family and friends for supporting her and she hopes you enjoy the show!

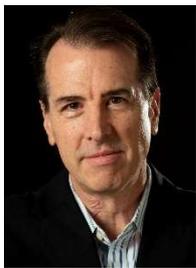


**Valentina Moya (Sound/Lighting Designer)** is excited to kick off this show season with lighting and sound work in *Present Laughter!* Their most recent design work was in the thriller comedy *Fuddy Meers*. Valentina began tech work with Holly Springs Theatre Company in 2016 and has now moved into the Raleigh Durham area. They are looking forward to an eventful year.



**Jeff A.R. Jones (Intimacy Director)** helps performers safely navigate moments of theatrical intimacy, from touching to kissing to scenes of sexuality. His staged intimacy work includes such productions as *Spring Awakening*, *I and You*, *Forever*, *Rocky Horror Show*, *Hair*, *The Wild Party*, *Vinegar Tom*, *Bad Roads*. He is recognized as a Fight Director, Certified Teacher, and Theatrical Firearms Instructor by the Society of American Fight Directors. He is a Certified Intimacy Director with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, with additional training from Intimacy Directors International, Theatrical Intimacy Education, and Intimacy Coordinators of Color. He is on faculty at Elon and William Peace University and can be contacted at [jarjones@att.net](mailto:jarjones@att.net) about his fight classes in Raleigh or the upcoming Triangle Intimacy Lab, a place for

practicing staging and performing theatrical intimacy scenes outside of production pressures.



**Charles Machalicky (Producer)** is a founding member of STC and is pleased to be producing their fourth show, after launching the company with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Half-Life of Marie Curie* and *Fuddy Meers*. A proud member of AEA, Charles began work as a performer

in Los Angeles, and expanded into producing, directing and choreographing productions such as *Weird Romance*, *The Zoo Story*, *Biloxi Blues*, *The Glass Menagerie*, Truman Capote's *A Christmas Memory* (which he also adapted) and others. He has developed courses in Arts Administration and the Business of Performing at William Peace University, drawing upon a wealth of experience in early-stage tech startups, media companies and an MBA from Duke University. Charles lives in Raleigh with his two nearly-grown-up children (love you, Alex and Lydia!), two nervy cats and an enthusiastic Shiba Inu/Jack Russell mix. [Charlesmachalicky.com](http://Charlesmachalicky.com).

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Our show could not have been possible without the generous donations of time, space, props, costumes and talent from the North Carolina Central University Department of Theatre. Special thanks to Dr. Stephanie Asabi Howard, Pamela Bond, Arthur Reese, and the many talented students who were invaluable in bringing this production to life.

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Producer .....Charles Machalicky  
Director .....Nadia Bodie-Smith  
Stage Manager..... Mykira Shamiah McFarland  
Assistant Stage Manager..... Kelley Williams  
Costume/Makeup Design.....Jodeya Brown  
Sound/Lighting Design..... Valentina Moya  
Sound/Lighting Operator.....Patrick Lillie  
Intimacy Coordinator..... Jeff A.R. Jones  
Technical Director..... Charles Machalicky  
Scenic Design.....Nadia Bodie-Smith  
Scenic Artists.....Caitlyn Meleski, Lydia Machalicky  
Scenic Carpenter.....Jim Azarelo  
Set Construction Manager.....John Paul Middlesworth  
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