



# PRIVATE LIVES

Directed by Blanche McIntyre

A Royal Exchange Theatre Production

NOËL COWARD'S

PRIVATE LIVES

ONLY UNTIL 2 MAY

★★★★★ THEATRE REVIEWS NORTH  
★★★★★ NORTH WEST END  
★★★★★ THE CULTURE CLUB  
★★★★★ THEATRE AND TOMIC  
★★★★★ MANCHESTER THEATRICAL  
★★★★★ JADAR

'BEAUTIFULLY ACTED'  
THE TELEGRAPH

'CLEVER & CHARISMATIC'  
MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS

★★★★★ MANCHESTER THEATRES  
★★★★★ THE REVIEWS HUB  
★★★★★ WHATSONSTAGE  
★★★★★ LANCASHIRE TELEGRAPH

'SPARKLES LIKE CHAMPAGNE'  
THE TIMES

50 A Homecoming

This visual story is designed for visitors to the Sensory Adapted performance of PRIVATE LIVES

# Information about the Royal Exchange Theatre

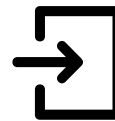
The Royal Exchange Theatre building is open from 12pm



If you're coming in a wheelchair, you can use the lift to enter the building from St. Ann's entrance.



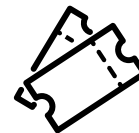
If you are walking, you can use both the St. Ann's entrance and the Cross Street entrance.



When you arrive, you might be asked by a member of the security team if they can look inside your bag. This should only take a few seconds.



You will also be asked to show your ticket.



You will then go into the Great Hall, which can be quite noisy and busy.



You will also see areas where you can buy souvenirs and refreshments.

You can put your coat in the cloak room for £1.



You will be able to take your seats from 5.30pm.



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## Content warnings for this show

Contains language and themes reflective of the attitudes of the period in which it was written, including racial slurs.

Private Lives contains lots of smoking - this is a key part of the action and comes from the original writing by Noël Coward. All cigarettes used are herbal cigarettes so they may smell a bit different to normal cigarettes.

It will look like the actors drink a lot of alcohol, but this isn't real.

The floor of the stage is able to rotate round in a circle. This means that during the first half, the stage constantly turns, but very slowly. In the second half, the stage constantly turns again, starting off slowly but then getting faster and faster before stopping. Once it stops, it doesn't move again.

Some of the characters argue and fight a lot. This means the actors will shout at each other, which can be quite loud, and also push and hit each other. The actors have clever ways to make it look real, but they don't actually hurt each other.

As part of these fights, objects are broken and thrown around, which might make you jump. This mostly happens halfway through the second half and lasts for a couple of minutes.

There is a grand piano on the stage which is pushed over at the end of the fight. This is supposed to happen, and doesn't damage the piano.

# The Great Hall

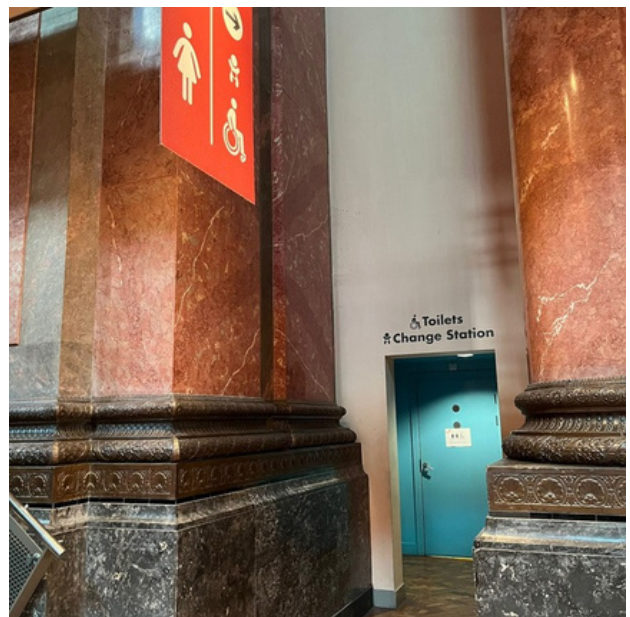
The Great Hall looks like this:



If you need to go to the toilet they are near the bar.  
The entrance to these looks like this.



There are also accessible toilets, which include a baby change station.



# The Great Hall continued

If you need to collect your ticket please go to box office. It is at the same end of the hall as the café. It looks like this:



There are also toilets near the studio Theatre. The entrance looks like this:



There are 3 bars and a café – they will open before the performance.



# Asking for help

If you need any help you can always ask one a member of staff.

They will be wearing a red lanyard round their neck

## Entering the Theatre

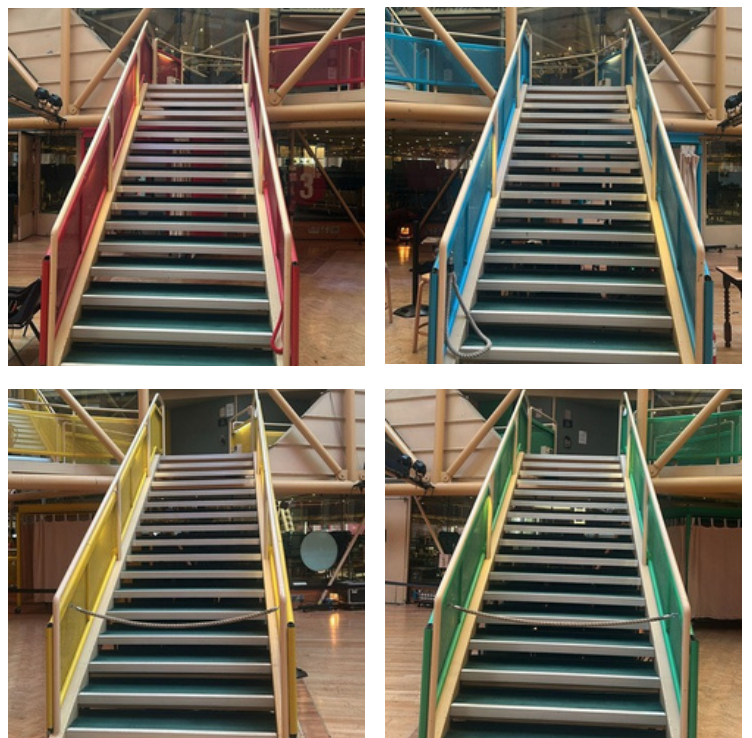
If you are sitting downstairs, you will need to go through the numbered door which is printed on your ticket.

They look like this.



If you are sitting upstairs, you will need to go up the coloured staircase which is printed on your ticket.

They look like this.



# Entering the Theatre

A member of staff will help you find your seat. It will have a number on it that matches the number on your ticket.

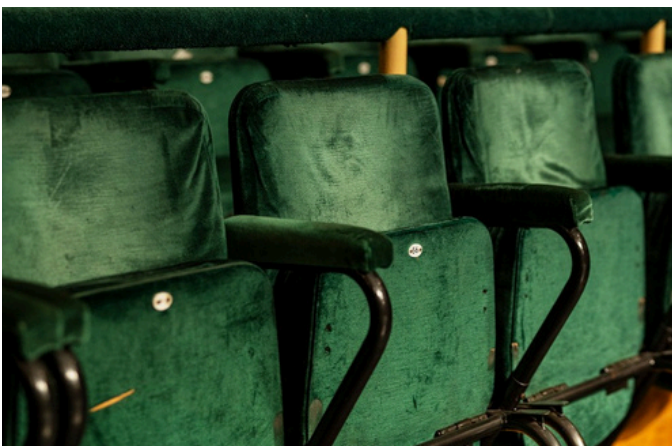
This looks like this.



The Theatre is where the audience sit and watch the performance.

The Theatre is made up of three levels. The ground level is called Stage Level and the upper levels are referred to as First or Second Gallery.

The round stage in the middle is where the actors perform. If you are sat on the ground level you may have actors walking past you during the show.



# Information about the show

The first half of the show starts at 6:00pm, there is then a 20 minute interval. The second half of the show will begin around 7:00pm.



This means the show will end at around 8.10pm.



The play is performed 'in the round' which means that the audience sits in a circle around the action on stage.



Mobile phones and tablet devices are permitted inside the Theatre. However, no photography is allowed during the performance.



Hot drinks are not allowed inside, but cold drinks can be transferred into plastic glasses.



You can come and go from the show. If you need to leave, it is okay to go and come back. During the play, there will be people around who you can ask for help if you need.



You are allowed to make as much noise as you like. The actors really enjoy it when you clap and get excited.

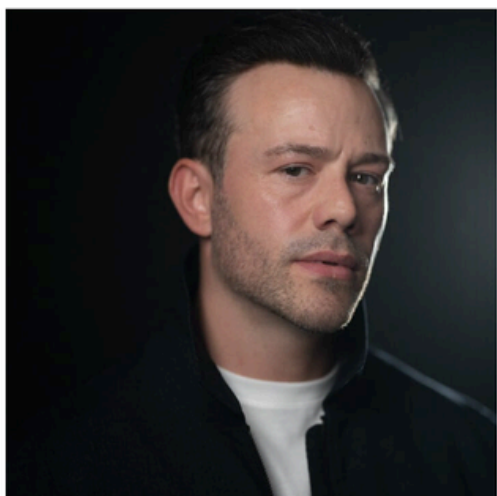


For this sensory adapted performance the intensity of sound and the lighting effects will be reduced, and the house lights will be kept on.



# Information about the cast and creative team

## List of the actors:



Oliver Devoti  
Offstage Understudy



Jill Halfpenny  
Amanda



Sara Lessore  
Louise



Daniel Millar  
Victor



Shazia Nicholls  
Sibyl



Steve John Shepherd  
Elyot

The actors in these pictures might be different from the actors performing on stage. This is because we sometimes have 'swing actors', who cover someone's role if they are unable to perform.

# **The Creative Team**

**Playwright: Noël Coward**

**Director: Blanche McIntyre**

**Designer: Dick Bird**

**Lighting Designer: Johanna Town**

**Sound Designer: Gregory Clarke**

**Casting Director: Annelie Powell CDG**

**Fight Director: Phillip d'Orleans**

**Assistant Director: Sadie Mears**

**Movement & Intimacy Director: Sundeeep Saini**

**Voice & Dialect Coach: Natalie Grady**

# Information about the set design

The floor of the stage can turn round in a circle, meaning that the set rotates at certain points during the show. During the first half, the stage constantly turns, but very slowly. In the second half, the stage constantly turns again, starting off slowly but then getting faster and faster before stopping. Once it stops, it doesn't move again.

Act One is set on a balcony of a hotel by the sea in France. It is a circular art deco balcony with metal rails that is divided down the middle of each balcony. There is a sofa/bench on each side for the couples to sit on.

Act Two takes place in Amanda's flat in Paris. It is a plush apartment with a gramophone, a chaise longue, some coffee tables and chairs all centred around a grand piano in the middle.

Act Three also takes place in Amanda's flat in Paris. The apartment is, however, now a mess after Amanda and Elyot's fight.



# Costumes

## Act one

Elyot wears a 1930s travelling suit before changing into classic black tie/ evening wear.

Sibyl wears a white 1930s travelling suite before changing into a green silky 1930s dress.

Victor wears cream trousers and a navy suit jacket before changing into a white suit jacket and black trousers for the evening.

Amanda wears a pink dressing gown before changing into a white silky 1930s dress.

## Act two

Amanda wears white silk pyjamas under a pink and orange kimono.

Elyot wears black Pyjamas under a black and gold dressing gown.

## Act three

Sibyll wears a burgundy velvet skirt and jacket

Victor wears a 1930s travelling suit.

Elyot wears the same 1930s travelling suit as Act One, with a hat.

Amanda wears a grey travelling suit with a hat and sunglasses.

Louise wears a grey maid's outfit.



# What is the story about?

**PRIVATE LIVES** is a witty comedy about a divorced couple, Elyot and Amanda, who unexpectedly meet again while honeymooning with their new partners.

Despite their past arguments and fiery relationship, they quickly realise they still have strong feelings for each other and impulsively run away together to Paris.

However, their romance soon falls back into the same pattern of love and conflict that ended their marriage before.



# What happens in the story?

## Act 1

Elyot and Sibyl are honeymooning on a Balcony in France. Sibyl asks Elyot if he loves her more than his first wife – Amanda. This frustrates Elyot, but they soon smooth things over and decide to get ready to go down and dine.

Victor and Amanda are honeymooning on the next balcony over to Sibyl and Elyot. They have a similar interaction to the first couple where Victor asks Amanda if she loves him more than her first husband – Elyot. Again, Amanda is frustrated but they smooth it over and agree to go down to the casino to dine.

Elyot comes back out on to the balcony dressed in eveningwear with two cocktails. Amanda comes out, also with two cocktails shortly after. The orchestra begins a tune which Elyot starts to hum. Amanda hears him humming, turns around and realises it is him – her ex husband. She then hums back to get his attention. They have a brief interaction where they both admit they are both on honeymoon before Amanda goes back inside.

Sibyl then comes back outside and Elyot attempts – unsuccessfully to convince Sibyl to leave for Paris tonight. Sibyl refuses and they argue.

Amanda and Victor come outside arguing as Amanda also tries unsuccessfully to convince Victor to leave for Paris.

With both their partners waiting downstairs for them to come to their senses, Amanda asks Elyot for a cigarette and they sit on their respective balconies. Elyot invites Amanda to come to his side for a cocktail. They chat about their previous relationship and realise that even after all this time, they are still in love. They decide to run away together to Paris, but first they make an agreement to prevent them from arguing. If they start to bicker they will use the phrase 'Solomon Isaacs' to stop all conversation for 2 minutes. They leave for Paris.

Sibyl and Victor come back up to their balconies only to realise their partners have disappeared. Victor offers Sibyl one of his cocktails and they stare out at the water.

# What happens in the story?

## Act 2

Amanda and Elyot are lounging in Amandas flat in Paris. They remark that they have done very well over the last 3 days and have barely used 'Solomon Isaacs' at all - they agree to shorten it to 'Sollocks'. They drink brandy and end up falling into arguments over past lovers – using Sollocks and inciting at 2 minute silence twice. Their final argument spirals out of control and Amanda breaks a record over Elyots head. They have a physical fight and shout abuse at each other, ending with them breaking the grand piano. Victor and Sibyl enter, catching the end of the fight as Elyot and Amanda rush off into their bedrooms. Victor and Sibyll move the furniture to block them coming out of their rooms and camp in the flat for the night.

## Act 3

The maid, Louise, enters seeing the wrecked apartment. She swears and wakes up Sibyl and Victor before exiting. Sibyl and Victor confront Elyot and Amanda asking to talk to them. They agree but insist that they must have breakfast first and Amanda orders Louise to get them coffee and rolls. Amanda and Elyot continue to spat with each other leading Victor and Elyot to have a confrontation, although Victor pulls back from it becoming a physical fight. Victor and Amanda talk and agree to not divorce for a year but to live separately, Elyot and Sibyl come to the same decision.

Louise, the maid, brings on a tray full of coffee and rolls. The group sit down and have a very awkward breakfast where they throw jibes at each other. Sibyl and Victor fall into an argument which becomes violent. The play ends with Amanda and Elyot leaving together once again.

# Glossary

**Art Deco** - the predominant decorative art style of the 1920s and 1930s, characterized by precise and boldly delineated geometric shapes and strong colours

**Solomon Isaacs** – Amanda and Elyot's phrase which they use to stop arguments.

**Sollocks** – The shortened version of Solomon Isaac's

# Questions

If you have any other questions please do reach out.

Find information online [here](#)



Email us at [access@royalexchange.co.uk](mailto:access@royalexchange.co.uk)



Call Box Office on **0161 833 9833**



Or come in and **talk to one of our friendly Box Office** team members, Monday - Saturday from 12pm



We hope you enjoyed your visit to the Royal Exchange Theatre.

See you soon!