



Coward The Playwright (Biography and Autobiography)

John Lahr

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A reissue in hardback of critic John Lahr's famous 1982 study of Noël Coward's plays

"Noël Coward," said Terence Rattigan, "is simply a phenomenon, and one that is unlikely to occur ever again in theatre history." A phenomenon he certainly was, and it is part of John Lahr's purpose in this book to show how that phenomenon called "Noël Coward" was largely Coward's own careful creation. Lahr's penetrating critical study of Coward's drama investigates all the major and minor plays of "The Master". Private Lives, Design for Living and Hay Fever make a fascinating group of "Comedies of Bad Manners". Blithe Spirit and Relative Values raise the "Ghost in the Fun Machine". Lahr then goes on to explore the "politics of charm" oozing through The Vortex, Easy Virtue and Present Laughter. In all Coward's plays Lahr uncovers a coherent philosophy in which charm is both the subject of Coward's comedies and the trap which made his very public life a perpetual performance.

"A smashing, thoughtful and very good guide to Coward's plays" (Sheridan Morley)



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