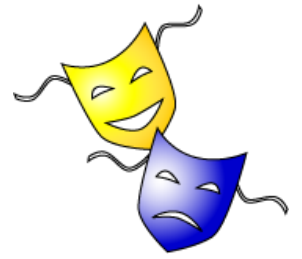


# Kilmardinny Players



Newsletter – January 2018



HAPPY  
NEW YEAR  
AND  
See You At  
the Theatre!

**See you at Kilmardinny House Arts  
Centre from 22-24 March 2018 to see  
“Separate Tables” by Terence Rattigan**

*Kilmardinny Players is a Registered Scottish Charity - Charity Number SC041872*

*visit our website for more information : [www.kilmardinnyplayers.org](http://www.kilmardinnyplayers.org)*

## Rattigan and the Royal Court Revolution

**Roland:** *What you don't realise is that the theatre of the future is the theatre of ideas. (He taps his forehead)* from 'Present Laughter' by Noël Coward.

In 1950 Rattigan embroiled himself in an unnecessary dispute. Like Coward's hero, Garry Essendine in 'Present Laughter', he was on the side of the theatre of character and narrative rather than the theatre of ideas. Coward made his point in a play with the opposition represented by a buffoon. Rattigan, lacking Coward's light touch, unwisely chose an article in the *New Statesman*. A furious response culminated in Bernard Shaw himself berating him. He compounded the problem three years later in a preface to his collected plays, with the invention of Aunt Edna, the imaginary audience for his plays – 'A nice, respectable, middle-class, middle-aged, maiden lady with time on her hands...'. The decisive blow came in 1956, at the premiere John Osborne's "Look Back in Anger". Standing on the steps of the Royal Court, he made the sneering suggestion that it should have been titled 'Look Ma, I'm not Terence Rattigan'. But the 'angry young men' were to hold British theatre in thrall for the next decade. As the 'revolution' took hold, Rattigan had self-identified as the enemy, the personification of conservatism, reaction and safe, cosy middle-class theatre. His critical reputation went downhill, not reviving until long after his death.



Noël Coward as Garry Essendine



Master of all he surveys.  
Terence Rattigan dominated London's West End for two decades

But if we look at the plays he wrote during the early fifties, a different Terence Rattigan emerges. 'The Deep Blue Sea' (1952) and 'Separate Tables' (1954) brought him to his artistic and popular zenith. As a boy Rattigan had sneaked into West End theatres and dreamed of the day when it would be his name in lights. Now he was the most commercially successful playwright in the English-speaking world. On one occasion, he had three plays running simultaneously in adjacent theatres on Shaftesbury Avenue. But he also wanted to be taken seriously as a writer. While Coward revelled in the pretence that he was a writer of frivolous airy nothings, Rattigan yearned for recognition and posterity. After 1956, the public saw only commercial success, Aunt Edna, suave manners and petulance in the face of criticism. In many ways, it was his own silly fault. But had he been judged on his work alone, he would have been leading the theatrical revolution, not it's most famous victim. Both 'The Deep Blue Sea' and 'Separate Tables' were simply decades ahead of their time in dealing with social issues. Not without irony, we can see them now as plays of ideas as well as character and narrative. 'The Deep Blue Sea' is the first post war feminist play. A woman wrestles with her own identity, having lived her whole life through the men around her – her father, her husband, her lover. In deciding to go on alone, she issues a clarion call to generations of women yet unborn and makes Rattigan appear prophetic. In 'Separate Tables', Rattigan eloquently makes the case for sexual tolerance at a time when gay men

were being arrested, fined, locked up or chemically castrated. But of course, the plays don't shout out their themes like angry young men. Everything is restrained, skilfully crafted, buried in the subtext, subtle. Nothing was ever 'on the nose' with Rattigan. The angry young men had to have their day in the sun but the plays of Terence Rattigan were built to last.

Rattigan's rediscovery began in 1993, with an acclaimed revival of 'The Deep Blue Sea' at the Almeida and has gathered pace ever since. A new audience has come to appreciate the universality of his themes, his extraordinary skill in conveying deep emotion in a few words and the richness of his characterisation of humanity. His major plays are now regularly revived and interest in minor works grows every year. The National Theatre's production of 'After the Dance' won the Olivier Award for Best Revival in 2011, the centenary of his birth, a year which saw major revivals of many Rattigan plays, including "Cause Célèbre" at the Old Vic, 'Flare Path' at the Theatre Royal Haymarket, 'The Deep Blue Sea' at West Yorkshire Playhouse, 'In Praise of Love' at the Royal and Derngate and 'Less Than Kind' at Jermyn Street Theatre. 2011 also saw a major (if unsatisfactory) Terence Davies film of 'The Deep Blue Sea'. This greatest of all Rattigan's plays finally made it to the National Theatre in 2016, putting Rattigan firmly back where he belongs - at the very heart of British theatre.



Faye Castelow and Benedict Cumberbatch in 'After the Dance' National Theatre 2011

Paul Cockcroft

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**The Rattigan Enigma** : If you would like an insight into the life and works of Terence Rattigan as told by Benedict Cumberbatch then click on these two links to go to a 2011 BBC 4 programme which I found very

interesting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEzTlqZn4A8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5Dlks9w1g>

## **Rehearsals in January:**

Rehearsals take place in Milngavie Lower Lesser Town Hall unless otherwise specified and begin at 7.30 pm and finish at 10 pm as follows:

Thursday 4 January
Monday 8 January
Thursday 11 January
Monday 15 January Bearsden Hub Lesser Hall
Thursday 18 January
Monday 22 January
Thursday 25 January
Monday 29 January

All members are welcome to come to rehearsals and support the cast and crew.

**Festive meal out: Friday 5 January** is the date that suits most members for a meal at 7.30 pm. Liz has booked The Den in Bearsden so let her know if you are coming along at [lizzie\\_1\\_2@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lizzie_1_2@hotmail.co.uk)



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**Facebook Advent Challenge:** After the Digital Skills course I created a facebook page as well as our group page. The aim of the page is to get as many likes as we can so I need you to go on facebook and not only



like our facebook page yourself but click on review and leave a review then share the page to your facebook and ask all of your friends to “like” our page – thus increasing our followers and getting more recognition for our group.

Thanks to those who “liked” or participated in my Advent challenge.  
*Christina*

**A word from our Acting chair person:**

*All*

*Hope you have all had a fabulous Christmas with your families/friends.*

*2018 is going to be an exciting year for us as we prepare to start rehearsals for Separate Tables, I hope those who are not in the cast come along to the occasional rehearsal too ! It would be great if we all get involved with this production and show our support.*

*And on the subject of tables, I hope to see you all at our a festive meal in January too.*

*Wishing all of you a happy New year !*

*Jane*