



The Noël Coward Diaries

By *Graham Payn, Sheridan Morley*

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Noël Coward is remembered as the most witty and elegant of theatrical personalities. He left behind over fifty plays, twenty-five films, hundreds of songs, and several books. Fortunately, he also left behind these diaries chronicling the last thirty years of his life, from 1941 to 1973. Moving through the theatrical, social, political, and historical worlds on both sides of the Atlantic, the impressive cast of characters includes Laurence Olivier, Frank Sinatra, Lauren Bacall, John and Jackie Kennedy, Harold Pinter, members of the Royal Family, and the Beatles, among a host of others. *The Noël Coward Diaries* is a social and theatrical chronicle as stylish and irresistible as the man himself.

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The Noël Coward Diaries By Graham Payn, Sheridan Morley Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #327413 in Books
- Published on: 2000-10-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.61" w x 6.00" l, 2.29 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 704 pages

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Coward's diaries from 1941 to 1969 offer an intimate look at the last 30 years of the life of the popular, sophisticated British playwright and author. While some of the entries are of the "Stayed out until 4 at Mrs. B___'s party" variety, more of them give insight into Coward's well-connected life. Coward knew or met hundreds of people working in the theater, the movies, and the government, and encounters with Vivien Leigh, Marilyn Monroe, King George IV, Winston Churchill and the Queen Mother, to name just a few, are included here. Excellent footnotes provided by editors Morley and Payn (*My Life with Noel Coward*) give a one-sentence description of such notables as "Larry" (Laurence Olivier) and "Dickie" (Lord Louis Mountbatten). Coward wrote these diaries with an eye toward publishing and therefore seemed to take great care to write, if not kindly about everyone, then perhaps not as harshly as he could have. Still, there are enough juicy tidbits to satisfy any biography-reading seeker of stars, starlets, and royalty. A thorough index enhances star browsing. For public libraries. J. Sara Paulk, Coastal Plain Reg. Lib., Tifton, GA
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Review

"Compulsive reading: a very clear portrait. What Coward has to say about other people is light-hearted, witty, often shrewd, totally without maliceHis final entertainment for everyone's pleasure is these diaries."
-- *Sunday Times, London*

"Through the pages glitters a galaxy of names that keep the editors footnoting like mad and the stagestruck reader wallowing in stardust....A theatrical compendium of the times." -- *Christian Science Monitor*

About the Author

Graham Payn, a lifelong friend of Coward who appeared in many of his most successful plays, now lives at Chalet Coward in Switzerland, from where he runs the Coward estate. **Sheridan Morley** is the drama critic of the *Spectator* and the *International Herald Tribune* and author of the first Coward biography, *A Talent to Amuse*.

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