



NOËL COWARD FOUNDATION MARKS CENTENARY OF PLAYWRIGHT'S FIRST PRODUCED PLAY WITH £50,000 DONATION TO ACTING FOR OTHERS COVID-19 FUND

In the centenary year of **Noël Coward's** first produced full-length play, *I'll Leave It To You*, the **Noël Coward Foundation** is donating £50,000 to **Acting for Others**, an organisation founded in 1963 as The Combined Theatrical Charities. Coward was an early champion of the charity, alongside Richard Attenborough and Laurence Olivier.

The donation is being offered in response to the extraordinarily difficult circumstances that the theatre profession is currently in, and will be distributed to two of Acting for Others' member charities - the **Actors' Children's Trust**, formerly known as The Actors' Orphanage, of which Noël Coward was President from 1934 to 1955, and the **Royal Theatrical Fund** in support of those working off-stage, either in front of house or backstage roles.

Noël Coward said on the opening of his play *Blithe Spirit* in 1941:

"It's a special occasion because it proved that in spite of blitzes, discomforts, inconveniences and alarms, the theatre can still function. How proud I am to be able to make even the small contribution of this play towards our universal valiant determination to get on with the job."

Alan Brodie, Chair of the Noël Coward Foundation, said today, *"This current crisis has caused us to postpone planned events to celebrate the centenary of Noël Coward's first play. Noël was a leader in the theatrical community organising events and bringing together his colleagues and celebrity friends to fundraise in support of the industry, so it feels fitting to use the available funds during this time to support the theatrical profession he loved so much. It's not just actors but everyone connected to the theatre from the creative teams to back stage and front of house workers who needs help and we are therefore pleased to support Acting for Others which has been doing so much to help the many individuals and families in our profession most financially affected by Covid-19."*

Noël's connection with Acting for Others goes back a considerable way and the Noël Coward Foundation looks forward to further collaborations in the future."

Stephen Waley-Cohen, co-Chair of Acting for Others added, *"We are delighted that through the Noël Coward Foundation, Acting for Others has generously been awarded £50,000. Noël Coward was one of our Founders, and 55 years later, recognising this connection, we are deeply grateful for this support which will be of great benefit to those in need who are supported by our Member Charities."*

NOTES TO EDITORS

Acting for Others provides financial and emotional support to all theatre workers in times of need through the 14 member charities.

The Acting for Others charities are Actor's Children's Trust, Dancers' Career Development, Denville Hall, Drury Lane Theatrical Fund, Equity Charitable Trust, Evelyn Norris Trust, SafetyCurtain, King George V Fund for Actors and Actresses, Ralph and Meriel Richardson

Foundation, Dance Professionals Fund, The Royal Opera House Benevolent Fund, The Royal Theatrical Fund, Theatre Chaplaincy UK and The Theatrical Guild.

www.actingforothers.co.uk

Twitter: @ActingForOthers

Sir Noël Coward (1899 – 1973) was an internationally acclaimed English playwright, composer, director, actor and singer. www.noelcoward.com

I'll Leave It To You premiered on Monday 3 May, 1920 at Manchester's Gaiety Theatre prior to transferring to London's New Theatre, the first West End production of one of his plays. The theatre was renamed the Noël Coward Theatre in 2006.

Noël Coward Foundation was set up as a charitable Trust in 2000 by Graham Payn and Dany Dasto. Its aim is to award grants to educational and development projects across the Arts and to continue the keen interest Coward himself took in charitable work during his lifetime. The Foundation is proud to support a diverse range of outstanding organisations working in theatre, music, dance, playwriting, technical training, academic research and many other areas.

www.noelcoward.org

Twitter: @FoundationNoel

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