



PIRATE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

TOO DARN HOT!



THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF COLE PORTER

November 24th, 25th, 26th at 19:30 and 26th, 27th at 15:00

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Luxembourg



I am pleased to write the foreword for what I am sure will be a successful Pirate production.

With such an international population in Luxembourg, there are many cultural offers here. The Government offers fantastic support for the arts, and since arriving in April 2021 I have had the opportunity to attend numerous cultural events. As you might imagine, I am always particularly pleased to see British or UK-based talent here in Luxembourg. Whether world-leading British orchestras, choral ensembles or pop stars – I have been spoiled in recent months - meeting Sir Simon Rattle, Boy George and the Kings Singers, to mention just a few. We have also been fortunate to watch British dance and theatre productions across the country as well as the showcasing the works of British artists (dead and alive!) at Villa Vauban, Mudam and in other galleries.

As well as enjoying visiting international performers in Luxembourg I know there is a great deal of local talent here too, including English-speaking performers and artists. Pirate Productions are one such excellent example of this, with their regular pre-Christmas shows. I know that many people look forward to these shows, with many members of the audience returning year after year due to the quality of the productions. I am sure that this year's show will be no exception.

British Ambassador
Fleur Thomas

A word from the Co-Chairs



We are delighted about our new show – it was the brainchild of Neil Johnson who had the idea several years ago and now it has finally come to fruition. It is full of lovely music by Cole Porter – many of the tunes we're sure you'll recognise. We are also delighted to see so much new talent in the cast along with longer-standing members.

This year, instead of staging a major show in our regular Autumn slot in Kinneksbond, we're absolutely thrilled to be staging a smaller, original show in a new venue for us - the Centre Culturel in Hollerich. Although we have been incorporated in Luxembourg City for many, many years this is only the second time we have used one of the venues available for hire from the VdL, but the intimate atmosphere of the space is well-suited to a cabaret-style show like *Too Darn Hot!*

However, we do plan to return to Kinneksbond in 2023 once the pandemic backlog has finally been cleared - keep an eye on our website or sign up for regular updates.

We hope you enjoy it!

Valerie Scott & Philip Dutton
Co-Chairs Pirate Productions a.s.b.l.

Thanks to...

Actors Rep, Altrimenti, ARA City Radio, British Embassy
Chronicle.lu, Delano, Harmonie Municipale de Schiffange
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St. George's International School
Staff at Centre Culturel Hollerich
Waldorf School, Wendy Winn



A word from the Director

It has passed into theater folklore, but it's said that in some fancy New York eatery, someone challenged Cole Porter to write a lyric using the next sentence uttered at the table, just as the maitre d' announced '*Miss Otis regrets she's unable to lunch today*' and *voila!* Such was Porter's prestigious talent that he could turn his hand to almost anything. From bawdy vaudeville to high-brow – he even wrote an opera! And as if to match his artistic talent, his personal life was as just as varied, as happy to hang about '*Down in the Depths (on the 90th floor)*' or to hobnob with the perceived higher social classes – '*Who Wants to be a Millionaire? I Don't!*' (Although he most certainly did like money and all it could bring in life.)

So, with such an amazingly diverse back catalogue of songs, and such a colourful personal life (to say the least) Cole Porter was an easy choice as a subject for a show. There have been a few attempts at film biographies, but no stage plays that I could find, so the only option was to pen one myself. I mean, how difficult could it be? Well, as it happens, it was bloody difficult at times! I started with the lyrics of the 20 songs chosen for *Too Darn Hot!* and tried to plot a script around them, loosely based on Porter's life from his late teens at Yale University until late middle age. The songs are therefore not performed in chronological order, and I've played fast and loose with timelines. The aim was to give a flavour of his life, rather than a history lesson. For good measure, I've thrown in actual historical figures (such as Josephine Baker in 1920's Paris, and Dorothy Parker in 1930's NY) who were most definitely contemporaries, although I've no proof they ever met. It just seemed like fun to have them meet in my version of his life.

I suppose the over-arching themes of my script are love and friendship. Porter was devoted to his wife Linda but did not hide from her his numerous infidelities with both men and women. She was accepting, up to a point. When he became indiscreet, she left him, returning only after he suffered a crippling accident. However, I think you'll find that the final scenes of the show will illustrate the immense love they had for one another.

I've been blessed with a wonderfully diverse cast for this show (no actors were hurt during production) and a fantastic backstage crew. Special thanks to Katie Bull (Props) and Hilary Brown (Costumes) who've had to deal with my indecision and constant script revisions. They are both recovering nicely at a special clinic in Switzerland!

All that's left to say is, I hope you enjoy the show and remember '*It was Just One of Those Things!*'

Neil Johnson

Synopsis

ACT 1

A 20 year old Cole Porter prepares to leave his family home for Yale University. Reluctantly, he has agreed to study Law, although his real passion is music. He longs to meet interesting, bohemian types. He meets Gerald and they immediately strike up a friendship. Along with Sara, Gerald's fiancée, Cole dives into student life and soon embraces the decadence of the times. Eventually he drops Law and studies Musical Composition, neglecting to inform his father of this. After graduating, Cole informs Gerald & Sara that he will move to Paris to seek inspiration for his composing. Once there, he starts writing songs and musical comedies. He has some small success and is thrilled when Gerald visits. The pair plunge into the hedonism of 1920's Paris, where their paths cross with those of a young Josephine Baker, exiled Russian nobility and various young ladies and gentlemen of ill repute along the way. Meanwhile, Sara is travelling to Europe on the liner *Le Normandie* with her good friend Linda. She intends to play Cupid and thinks Linda and Cole will be an instant love match. Sometimes unlikely plans do work out and Cole and Linda marry after a whirlwind romance.

ACT 2

Several years have passed. Our two couples have moved back to New York. Cole has had several of his shows produced on Broadway to great acclaim. Several have attracted the attention of Hollywood. However, Cole is frustrated by the demands of the movie business and he and Linda have drifted apart. He has frequent one-night affairs with both men and women. And then he meets Armando, a handsome and mercurial young actor in one of his shows. Cole is besotted, and Linda becomes withdrawn. Gerald and Sara are concerned for them both. Tragedy strikes – Cole is badly injured in a horse-riding accident, although he and Linda do eventually reconcile. Linda, however, has one more card to play.....

Cast List

Cole Porter

Victor Bonanno

Linda Lee Thomas

Catriona Gilham

Gerald Murphy

Dustin Andersen

Sarah Murphy

Samantha Huffman

Armando Smith

Joe Canning

Ensemble

Alexandrovich Boris Obelensky,
Count Dimitri

Florin Purice

Bar Owner

Tara Klassen

Barman, Waiter, Theatre Director

Jan Thoemel

Daughter

Zoe Amador Martinez

Doctor

Marina Tomasic

Dorothy Parker

Ciara Barker

Ethel Merman

Maiken Thamdrup

Ginger Rogers

Lise Gyssels

Irving Berlin, Louis B Meyer

David Mittel

Josephine Baker

Marcelle Fankam

Linda's Friend 1

Gulzhan Nurakhmet

Linda's Friend 2

Natacha Wagner

Mario Lanza, Tito Schipa

Matteo Morroi

Mitzi

Regina Chumkova

Act 1

Scene 1 - Porter household in Peru, Indiana (1914)

De-Lovely – Cole Porter

Scene 2 - The Freshman's Ball, Yale

You Do Something to Me – Gerald Murphy and Ensemble

Be a Clown – Ensemble

Scene 3 - Tales from the Riverbank, Yale

In the Still of the Night – Whiffenpoofs

Scene 4 - Sara and Gerald's Wedding Party

Let's Misbehave – Gerald and Sara Murphy

Scene 5 - Le Cabaret de l'Enfer, Paris (1920)

Begin the Beguine – Chanteuse 1

Love for Sale - Chanteuse 2

Scene 6 - Deck of the ship Normandie

Anything Goes – Linda Lee Thomas

Scene 7 - Restaurant in Paris

What is This Thing Called Love – Chanteuse 1

Scene 8 - Hotel George V

Scene 9 - Linda and Cole's Wedding Party, Paris

Let's Do It – Cole Porter, Linda Lee Thomas and Ensemble

Act 2

Scene 1 - Broadway, New York, 1930

Too Darn Hot! – Ensemble

Night and Day - Cole Porter and Armando

Scene 2 - The Waldorf Astoria, later that night

Scene 3 - Sara and Gerald's Murphy's Manhattan apartment

True Love – Sara and Gerald Murphy

Scene 4 - The Back bar

Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye – Veronica Lake

Scene 5 - Broadway theatre

I've Got You Under My Skin – Ginger Rogers

Scene 6 - Irving Berlin's Upper East Side apartment

You're the Top – Ethel Merman and Irving Berlin

Scene 7 - Sara and Gerald Murphy's apartment (6 months later)

Scene 8 - Long Island Hospital

So in Love with You – Cole Porter and Linda Lee Thomas

Scene 9 - Broadway theatre (2 months later)

Finale

Miss Otis Regrets – Maiken Thamdrup and Ciara Barker

Just One of Those Things – David Mittel and

Maiken Thamdrup





The Cast



Catriona Gilham

Not long after moving to Luxembourg in 2015, I auditioned to take part in *Oliver!*, in which I performed in the chorus. I enjoyed myself so much that I've taken part in nearly a dozen Pirates shows since then – either on stage or behind the scenes doing the lights, to see it all from a different perspective!



Ciara Barker

I was sucked into the alternative universe that is Pirates over 30 years ago, long before some of the current cast were even born! It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know these new people who have each found their circuitous route to Luxembourg. Making new friends has always been one of the joys of Pirates and I hope to continue until they push me firmly into the wings!



David Mittel

I was first infected with the theatre bug in 2003 and haven't shaken it since. I have acted, sung, danced and pranced about on stage in a wide range of roles as a nuclear physicist and a gay night-club owner. Behind the scenes, I have produced, helped with set and props, and been on the Pirates committee. Always reinvigorated to see new talent emerge with each new production.



Dustin Andersen

I am an American who has always loved music and dance. During my graduate studies, I danced ballroom competitively, and performed in my first musical, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. In 2021, I moved to Luxembourg with my wife Samantha (Sarah) and work as a researcher in Materials Science. I am excited about my first show with Pirates, *Too Darn Hot!*



Florin Purice

I was 20 when I discovered my passion for theatre and was able to perform in classical plays such as *Molière*. Years later, I joined Pirates and found myself surrounded by the warm, smiling faces of the Pirates 'family'. I've played a not-very-handy handyman and a Monster – both of which were lots of fun! I've had a great time rehearsing for *Too Darn Hot!* and hope you enjoy watching it.



Gulzhan Nurakhmet

I am thrilled to be performing in this year's Pirates production of *Too Darn Hot!* I enjoy acting, dancing and twirling and to constantly learn something new about myself through the roles I play. Lots of love to the cast, the crew and all the creative team who made this show possible.



Jan Thoemel

I joined Pirates in 2021 to push me out of my comfort zone. I used to be a barman, but being in *Too Darn Hot!* has taught me what that really means. I hope that you enjoy the show.



Joe Canning

I joined Pirates this year, by chance, thanks to a musical colleague of mine. It has proved to be a great way to meet other like-minded creatives in this small city. This is my first show since I was a young lad. I normally take to the stage with my band Afrodytease, so this acting and dancing malarky is quite new to me. I hope you enjoy the show.



Lise Gyssels

In March I said Bon Voyage to Belgium and moved. Then I thought, Let's Do It: let's join a musical! Rehearsals were often *Too Darn Hot*, because with Pirates Anything Goes. The show's songs Do Something To Me and the story has gotten Under My Skin. If you don't mind some Misbehaving, you'll find this show De-Lovely too!



Maiken Thamdrup

I've been involved in musical theatre since I was a teenager and love the combination of singing, dancing and acting. I joined Pirates almost 20 years ago in *Stepping Out* and am delighted to be in *Too Darn Hot!* It has great songs and hope you enjoy watching it as much as I've enjoyed being in it.

**Marcelle Fankam**

I joined Pirates for the *Too Darn Hot!* show in 2022 this year, thanks to my boyfriend who registered me for the casting. It was my secret dream to perform on stage one day. Off stage, I have been giving salsa classes to beginners and dancing in my free time. I hope you enjoy the show as much as I do.

**Marina Tomasic**

I became a Pirate almost 20 years ago when a friend suggested auditioning for a show. Since then I have merrily danced and sung in many bigger and smaller productions. I am very happy that I got the opportunity to join old and new friends in this lovely production. I hope you will enjoy watching it as much as we have enjoyed preparing for it.

**Matteo Moroi**

I started singing around the age of 18 and have sung in choirs in Italy and abroad - first as a bass and then as a tenor. This is my first experience with Pirates and in a musical; I have been frequently pushed out of my comfort zone, especially in the dancing, but it's been lots of fun; I hope it is also fun for you as members of the audiences!

**Natacha Wagner**

I joined Pirates in 2017 and performed in the show *Oliver!* Since then, I have been on stage a couple of times as a chorus member. *Too Darn Hot!* is the first show where I also get to say some lines - I can tell you I'm a bit nervous! Being part of the cast is real a pleasure and I'm thrilled to share the stage with so many talented people! I hope you enjoy this fabulous show!

**Regina Chumkova**

I'm new in Luxembourg, I arrived mid-2021, and new to Pirates. But the theater and acting is my dream since childhood. I'm so happy that chance has brought me here. I'm HR PM and mom of two by day and actress by night. This show has given me the opportunity and pleasure to try different roles and I hope you like them all and that you enjoy the evening.

**Samantha Huffman**

I was born in the U.S. and began singing and acting from a young age there. As I got older, I chose a career in chemistry, but kept music as a passion and hobby. I married Dustin Andersen (Gerald) and moved to Luxembourg in 2021 and found Pirates for my first musical with them, *Too Darn Hot!*



Tara Klassen

I was lucky to find an amazing community with Pirates shortly after moving to Luxembourg in 2012, and have enjoyed playing various roles from an amnesiac nun to a lady of the night as well as being part of ensembles. I also assisted in directing *Oliver!* as well as serving on the committee. I simply love being part of Pirates!



Victor Bonanno

When I first started taking singing lessons, one of the very first songs that I learnt was a little ditty by the name of 'I Love Paris', written by a certain Cole Porter. Today I am truly honoured to be playing him and learning much more about this intriguing and complex character who has delighted audiences for decades with his timeless music. I hope you are just as delighted with our show! Have a great evening!



Zoe Amador Martinez

I picked up musical theatre as a hobby at university, performing in shows like *In the Heights* or *Made in Dagenham*. Over the years, I have been on and off the stage, also producing two shows for the Bath Fringe Festival 2019 (UK). Now, the theatre bug has bitten me again and I look forward to making my Pirates debut!

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Production Team

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Director & Author | Neil Johnson |
| Musical Director | Philip Dutton |
| Choreographer | Dominique Vitali |
| Producer | Valerie Scott |
| Stage Manager | Ida Kuresevic |
| Costumes | Hilary Brown, Jo De Santis, Katie Bull, Ciara Barker |
| Props | Katie Bull |
| Hair | Tekla Skowronski |
| Lighting | Ant Mc Carthy |
| Sound | Alex Teligadas |
| Projections design | Dominique Zelter Russell |
| Encore Backing Track | Maxwell George & Gus Gouldsbrough (Riverside Studios) |
| Projections operator | Zeta Field |
| Microphones | Claire Haigh |
| Backstage crew | Jeremy Bull, Mike West |
| Bar Manager | Beverley Atkinson |
| Deputy Bar Manager | Simon Critchlow |
| Box Office | Pam Carlisle |
| Programme | Phil Taylor, Valerie Scott |
| Video cameraman | Mike Lochtchinine |
| Dance captains | Marina Tomasic, Dustin Andersen |

Musicians

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Piano | Mick Swithinbank |
| Keyboard & trumpet | Philip Dutton |
| Saxophones | Julien Farlin |
| Bass guitar | Daniela Kryougar |
| Percussion | Eric Gherardi |

A word from the Musical Director



The MD's task for a 'put-together' show is a lot bigger than for a published show because there are no band parts or choral arrangements. However, I have found the extra work thoroughly rewarding: Cole Porter's songs are so good.

It is a tribute to his mastery in both music and lyrics that they have survived so long and through many different interpretations. Indeed, versions of his songs made famous by great singers like Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald are often thought to be definitive or even 'what the composer wrote', such that when we hear the original, people say well that bit isn't quite right! We have used many of those classic interpretations in our show tonight but also a few less well-known versions from singers such as Carly Simon and Kirsty McColl.

A word from the Choreographer



I have danced both as an amateur and a professional with a focus on ballroom and Latin-American dancing. Having also trained in ballet, historical dances, tap dance and flamenco, I have that general knowledge that comes in handy when it gets to staging choreography for musicals set in various periods of history and with casts of mixed dancing skills. After *Cinderella*, *Stepping Out*, *Showtime*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Nunsense*, *Scrooge!-The Musical*, *Young Frankenstein* and *Melusina*, *Too Darn Hot!* is my 11th show with Pirate Productions as a choreographer.

Join our backstage team....

....I really enjoy the people.... K

...I have always loved sewing and seeing my costumes on stage is great... H



Valerie
(Producer)

Katie
(Props)

Hilary
(Costumes)

Jo
(Costumes)

Ant
(Lighting)

When you come to see one of our shows, you won't see any of these people because they are either buried backstage or sitting in the dark.... but, they are vital!

We are looking for new people to join our back-stage team to do costumes, props, lights, sound, projections, design, posters, fliers and the programme. Want to know more? Contact backstage@pirates.lu

..I love seeing all the components of a show come together.... V

....I have no particular skills but I like a challenge.... K

...I get help with ideas and lots of interaction with the director... K

..I always enjoy the camaraderie of working together on a production... H

...to make or find the right costume is a wonderful experience.... H

..being in the backstage team is like being in a fun parallel universe... V

...I enjoy the creative aspect of painting with light... A

....I am excited to see my costumes on stage ... J

...I have way too much fun creating spaces for characters to inhabit... A

...we laugh a lot - doing what we do... V

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