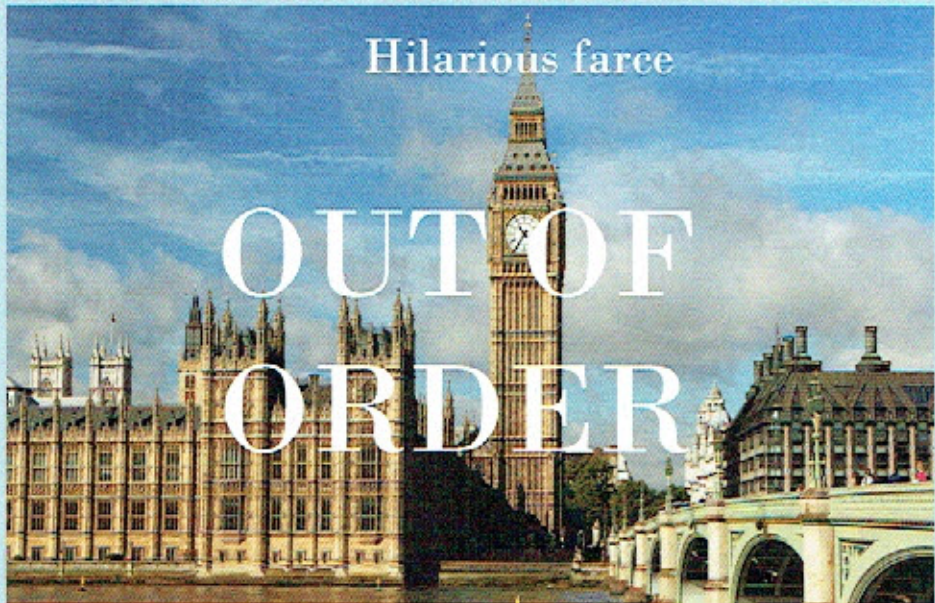




# Ray Cooney's

Hilarious farce



# OUT OF ORDER



Directed by Reg Williams



Welcome from  
Stephen Hood—



PRESIDENT OF COMPANY THEATRE

Thank you for coming along to see “Out of Order”, the first play of Company Theatre’s 2025 season at the Rose Centre! With it revolving around the strangely familiar subject of a philandering, dishonest politician, our cast of ten turns this into comedy gold – backed up by the clear vision & purpose of director Reg Williams, and a hotel-room window which clearly has ideas of its own.

For August, we welcome back director Anthony Whitehouse: Helming comedic spy thriller “The 39 Steps” after a 23-year gap since directing Company Theatre’s “The Sex Fiend”. On mention of that title, our current production’s lying, cheating government minister Richard (‘Dick’) Willey – acted expertly by Matt Smith – wouldn’t get far without his long-suffering secretary George Pigden: Who often appears on the verge of a nervous breakdown, for which we’re all relieved Zac Russell doesn’t rely on method acting. The rest of the cast have also mastered this play’s comedy, and the crew have been invaluable as always.

Please keep an eye out for the play that Kathy Gent will be directing in our November slot: I hope to see you there so that we can maybe talk about “The 39 Steps” and possibly also “Out of Order”!



RAY COONEY'S OUT OF ORDER

## YOUR CAST

Richard Willey	♣	<b>Matt Smith</b>
Jane Worthington	♣	<b>Chloe Smith</b>
George Pigden	♣	<b>Zac Russell</b>
Pamela Willey	♣	<b>Shaylee Edwards</b>
Ronnie Worthington	♣	<b>Kieran Maskell</b>
The Hotel Manager	♣	<b>Paul Thompson</b>
The Concierge	♣	<b>Chris Smith</b>
Nurse Glenda Foster	♣	<b>Terri Mellender</b>
Hotel Maid—Maria	♣	<b>Rebecca Liu</b>
Detective Jack Baker	♣	<b>Grant Zent</b>

### ACT ONE

#### Interval

### ACT TWO

During the 15 MINUTE INTERVAL Refreshments, Ice Creams, and a variety of drinks will be available.

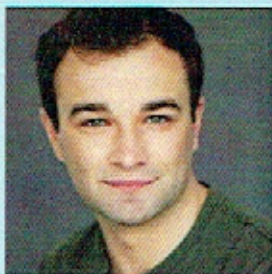
The action takes place in, and around Suite 648 of the Westminster Hotel. The Hotel is conveniently located for Members of Parliament, especially when there are all night sittings, or for other urgent business

they may need to conduct from time o time. By contrast, the Reading Rooms at the British Museum are a long way from the Houses of Parliament.

Do not be confused by the language which may be unfam-

iliar. For example, when the concierge refers to Mr Willey's "dog", he is actually talking in cockney rhyming slang. "Dog and bone" equals phone. So please don't be alarmed, no dogs were harmed during this production!

# Meet the Players



**Matt Smith:**

Matthew J Smith is happy to be back with Company Theatre at the Rose Centre playing Richard Willey.

He previously appeared with Company Theatre in **Death of a Salesman** ( Biff) and **Arms and The Man** for which he won an Award.

He has appeared on **Shortland Street** and played Stanley in **A Streetcar Named Desire** at Centrestage. He now brings his talent and experience to this comedy role.



**Chloe Smith:**

Chloe is a Performing Arts teacher for an Intermediate School in Auckland on the North Shore where she is able to integrate her passion for drama into the curriculum.

Prior to being a teacher, she worked behind the scenes at TVNZ for a morning current events show called 'Breakfast.' Her passion in drama has seen her land roles with Company Theatre, Theatreworks and Centrestage.



**Zac Russell**

Zac has been involved in theatre in Auckland for over 20 years.

From school shows at Orewa College to many years with Centrestage Theatre to his recent appearance in **Spiders Web** at The Pumphouse, he looks forward to having you rolling in the aisles in this incredibly funny and irreverent production.



Shaylee Edwards

I have been doing theatre for nearly a decade and performing my whole life.

First starting with roles like Ursula in **The Little Mermaid** to more recent roles like Mrs Chevely in **An Ideal Husband**.

I want to learn so much more from the people I work with and the experiences I have yet to have. I'm thrilled to be a part of **Out of Order** and can't wait to see what I learn and how I grow from this experience.

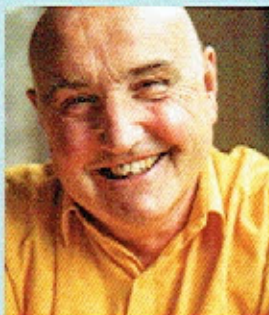


Kieran Maskell

Kieran is thrilled to be a part of this wonderful cast and crew.

Kieran has been performing around Auckland for longer than he wants to admit - he has performed in several plays, musicals and Shakespeare productions. Some favourites include: **A Streetcar Named Desire** at Centrestage, **Rent** at Manukau Performing Arts, **Some Enchanted Evening** at Auckland Music Theatre and **12 Angry Men** at Centrestage.

He is also delighted to be working with some old friends and excited to make new ones on the way.



Paul Thompson

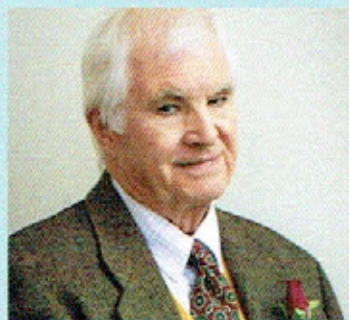
Paul began acting in 1984, appearing as Lt Rooney in **Arsenic and Old Lace** (St Albans UK).

In NZ in 2002 he appeared in **My Fair Lady** and **Beauty & The Beast** (2004/06) before turning to more spoken roles including at the Pumphouse Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park between 2006 and 2023.

In 2020, Paul appeared in the Classic Theatre Production of **Alice in Wonderland** playing *inter alia* The French Mouse.

His love for Greek Drama, led to his appearance as Menelaus in the CVT Production of **Women of Troy**, earning a nomination for the best-supporting actor. He followed this with playing Mr. Birtwhistle, in the Toitoti Collective production of **The Way of the Raukura**.

Last year Paul played Don John in the Dolphin Theatre production of **Much Ado About Nothing**. Paul has also appeared on **Shortland Street** and in the feature film **The Red Admiral**.



Chris Smith

I started acting in 2020 taking small extras roles in film and tv. After some very intense acting lessons, I graduated to stage acting initially in small parts in *Merchant of Venice* then to being the Professor in *Jerusalem*, Headmaster in *History Boys* and various other roles the most recent being Elgin, the Butler in *Agatha Christie's Spiders Web* last August.

Prior to acting, I spent 52 years in Marine Engineering working for, mostly, the terminally ungrateful. This is better!

Terri is thrilled to be in her first show with Company Theatre!



Terri Mellender

Since 2019, she's performed in many shows with Shoreside Theatre, including five Summer Shakespeare productions - the highlight: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; and three Agatha Christies - the highlight: *Spider's Web*.

When not in theatre, Terri's probably reading about theatre (avid bookworm), travelling to see theatres (28 countries and counting), or teaching theatre (English and Drama as a secondary teacher).

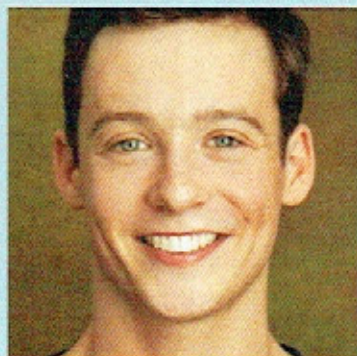
A thousand thanks to the lovely cast, crew, and committee, and huge hugs to the Stuart, best partner, co-conspirator, and cast mate a gal could have!



Rebecca Liu

This is Rebecca's first time on stage. She came along to audition and was delighted to get a part.

By day she is a business analyst, and she also likes playing the piano and dancing.



Grant Zent

An acting graduate from South Seas Film School, Grant has starred in numerous productions including Tim Bray Theatre Company's *The Great Piratical Rumbustification*, *Mrs Wishy Washy*, and *The Santa Claus Show*, Ken Duncum's *Cherish*, Lousi Nowra's *Cosi*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* at Company Theatre, and Puck in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for which he won the critic's choice award at The Sheila Winn Shakespeare Festival. Grant is also a New Zealand representative in Karate, having competed at the World Championships and winning gold at Oceania.

Grant is excited to return to the Company Theatre stage in *Out of Order!*

## Meet our Director



Reg Williams

Reg first came to Company Theatre as an actor, in our production of *All My Sons* (playing Joe Keller, 2016) then in *Deathtrap* (playing Sydney, 2017) and *Death of a Salesman* (playing Willy Loman, 2023). He first directed for Company with Shaw's *Arms and the Man* (2019). Recent work as a director elsewhere includes *The Crucible*, *12 Angry Men*, *Evita* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, all for Centrestage Theatre. Favourite roles elsewhere include Frank in *Educating Rita*, Kipps in *A Woman in Black*, George in *Same Time Next Year* and Freddie in *Noises Off*. Classical roles for Cliveden Festival Company include Petruchio and Mercutio, and he toured with Ubiquitous Theatre Company appearing in *Jeffrey Bernard is Unwell* and *The Killing Game*.

He teaches drama preparing students for Trinity College (London) qualifications to diploma level.

# CREW FOR OUT OF ORDER

Director	Reg Williams
Production Managers	Kathy Gent, Stephen Hood
Stage Manager	Lucy Stuart
Assistant Stage Manager	Vettinia Ross
Stage Crew	Josie Simmonds
Set Design/Construction Manager	Brendon Cannan
Set Construction Team	Belinda Cannan, Scott Thomas
	Stephen Hood, Anne Rimmer,
	Tony Sandy
Lighting & Sound Design/Operation	Stephen Hood
Intimacy Coordinator	Suzy Sampson
Props	Vettinia Ross, Sarah Dettwiler
Costumes	Cathy Sandy
Advertising	Kathy Gent
Poster Design	Stephen Hood, Reg Williams
Photography	Kieran Maskell
Social Media	Stephen Hood
Programme	Paul Thompson
Website	Sherry Ede
Front of House Manager	Lesley Hawkey
Bar Manager	Alastair Fletcher
Box Office	Kathy Gent, Sarah Dettwiler

## Acknowledgements

### Thanks to:

**To our sponsors Ian Cunliffe of Bayleys  
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**For support from Rose Centre, Devonport  
Drycleaning, Centrestage Theatre.**





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**Ian Cunliffe**

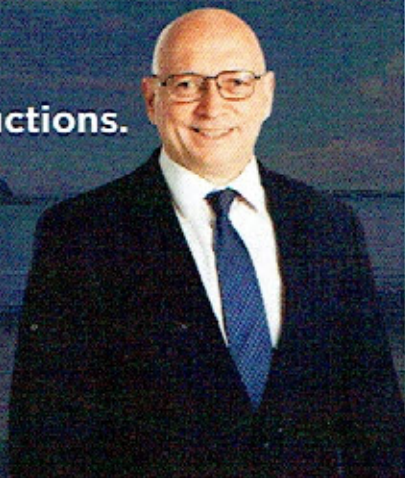
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# Introducing Ray Cooney

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Ray Cooney is today recognised theatrically and publicly as '*The Master of Farce*' and a most worthy successor as an author to the great Ben Travers, and as a director/actor to Brian Rix. A most prolific writer of stage farces/comedies of high standards which have not only graced the stages of English speaking countries for more than 40 years. Ray Cooney earned an international reputation as the finest living writer of this form of theatre, and professional and amateur artists have benefited from his writing genius and influence as well as an actor/director. Charles Spencer – the doyen of theatre critics – wrote of *Funny Money*, 'Ray Cooney is a National Treasure'.

Ray began his theatrical career in 1946 at the age of 14 in *SONG OF NORWAY* at the Palace Theatre. Between 1946 and 1950, he appeared in "Calcutta in the Morning", and "The Hidden Years" plus "Treasure Island", "Peace comes to Peckham", "The Winslow Boy" and "The Guinea Pig" in tours and repertory Companies around

the UK. Following National Service (50-52), he had many acting roles in weekly *Rep and Tours* until joining the Brian Rix Company at the Whitehall Theatre in 1956. He began his writing career by writing "*One for the Pot*" with Tony Hilton that premiered at the Whitehall Theatre in 1961. While this ran until 1965, Ray wrote "*Chase me Comrade*", which also premiered at the Whitehall Theatre in 1964 and ran for 3 years. He co-wrote "*Charlie Girl*" (1964) with John Chapman along with five other plays over the following decade. He then devised the musical "Elvis" in 1977 which won the Evening Standard best musical award, followed by the play "Her Royal Highness" (1981). Then came Ray's biggest hit, "Run For Your Wife" in 1982. This was then followed by two further plays until he wrote his award winning "Out of Order" in 1990, which won the Laurence Olivier award for best comedy. Between 1990 and 2011, he wrote or collaborated on a further six productions including with his son, Michael. It's estimated that over 100 million tickets have been sold throughout the world for Ray Cooney comedies!

In 1992, Ray bought the Playhouse Theatre in London. That year he staged the West End premiere of his latest farce "*It Runs In The Family*" at the Playhouse. This was followed by "*Jane Eyre*" (1993) adapted by Fay Weldon and starring Tim Pigott-Smith, Frederick Lonsdale's "*On Approval*" (1994) starring Simon Ward, Martin Jarvis and Anna Carteret, and Ray's "*Funny Money*" in 1995.

Ray says he keeps fit, partly by swimming, playing tennis and gardening but mainly, by appearing in his own hectic plays!

He was awarded the O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire) in the 2005 Queen's New Years Honours List for his services to drama.

Ray has been married to his lovely wife, Linda, since 1962 and they have two sons, Danni, who lives in Australia, where he looks after Ray's business interests in Australasia, the Far East and Russia and Michael, who lives in Los Angeles and is a successful play and screenwriter in his own right.

Danni has two children, Jess and Ashlea (recently married). Michael (married to actress Jessica Collins) has three kids, Oliver, Spencer and Jemma. Ray and Linda make sure they see their two sons and the five grandchildren by doing the round-the-world trip at least once a year. Ray usually manages to combine these trips with directing and Acting in both Adelaide and Los Angeles!

Ray' and Linda's extended family also includes most of the feline population of Essex as well as everything else that strays into his garden from nearby Epping Forest. The pet shops of Epping would go out of business if Ray moved from the area!

Paul Thompson

Adapted and Edited from Ray's on-line Biography  
<https://www.raycooney.co.uk/ray-cooney-biography>



## **The Director's View** **Reg Williams**

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Playgoers, I bid you welcome." The theatre is a temple and we are here to worship the gods of comedy and tragedy. Tonight it is my pleasure to announce a comedy. We shall employ every device we know in order to divert you."

Often as a director I am drawn to stories with important messages to tell, or weighty tales of high emotion. As important as these are, it is also as vital to remember to amuse and entertain.

Farce is a great comedic medium, and Ray Cooney is a master of the genre. You are in the hands of a great cast who work with pace and precision, and who have made me marvel at their talent, and most importantly, teamwork.

Enjoy!

Thanks.

Reg

### **NEXT WITH COMPANY THEATRE**

**THE 39 STEPS** August 2-16

Fast-paced comedic spy thriller, paying homage to Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 film

Directed by Anthony Whitehouse  
Adapted by Patrick Barlow

Auditions: April 13

**COMPANY THEATRE**

RAY COONEY'S OUT OF ORDER