

Memorable ballads in Coward & Cole

 By [Michael Britton](#)

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It was with a measure of trepidation that I went to Coward & Cole, the new show at the Kalk Bay Theatre. Not a Noël Coward fan, I was concerned that the show might consist of Godfrey Johnson and Roland Perold, taking it in turns to play, maybe each one playing the songs of one composer. I have heard Godfrey Johnson perform Coward's music and, on the strength of that show, thought that Coward was overrated. Don't misunderstand me - I think that Johnson is a wonderful performer, talented and versatile - but Noël Coward? My parents might have been Noël Coward fans, and I'm no *laitjie*.



Kalk Bay Theatre is one of my favourite theatres and I'm an admirer of Godfrey Johnson, so with my trepidation wrapped and folded into my wallet, I went to see who this Roland Perold fellow might be and how the songs of Cole Porter would be handled. It was not long before I stopped caring whether it was a Cole or a Noël song, or who was singing it, and allowed myself to be swept up by the passion and joy of what was developing into a riveting show.

Infectious energy

Godfrey Johnson and Roland Perold work well together on stage and their energy is infectious, which makes it difficult to remain detached and critical. My pre-show concerns had no foundation as Johnson and Perold played and sang their way through memorable ballads, poignant love songs, and rollicking satire, sending up a who's who of Cape Town theatre in the process.

Godfrey Johnson just goes from strength to strength. In every context in which I have previously seen him perform, he sits at his piano and plays and sings - masterfully. In this show he steps away from the piano to stand behind Perold as they harmonise, or off to one side to deliver an almost tearful apology in *Miss Otis Regrets*. His mobile face conveys a range of expressions with ease, while his comic timing had me wondering if there was anything he couldn't do.

Charming quips and scathing witticisms

Both Johnson and Perold are award-winning performers and in this show it is easy to see why. They sparked off each other and carried the opening night audience with them on a wonderful journey of charming quips and scathing witticisms. I'll happily see this show again and suggest that you see it at least once.

Coward & Cole will be performed Wednesday to Saturdays until 24 March at 8.30pm, with a matinee performance on Sunday, 18 March at 2.30pm. Tickets cost R95. Seating is unreserved and doors open at 6.30pm.

Guests can also enjoy a delicious two-course meal for R150 or three courses for R200. For all bookings and further information, go to www.kbt.co.za

ABOUT MICHAEL BRITTON

Confortably curious writer and editor and project manager. Constantly creative thought processes and habitually questioning attitudes are my guide.

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