



Media Release **Singapore, September 2017**

TEA WITH THE OLD QUEEN

**What the Queen Mother wouldn't like you to know –
the fictional secret diaries of Backstairs Billy!**

TEA WITH THE OLD QUEEN is a witty and poignant theatrical comedy revolving around the eccentricities of the UK's Monarchy as recorded in the fictional, secret diaries of Willam Tallon. For more than 40 years he worked as 'Steward and Page' at Clarence House, the Queen Mother's residence, and became known as Backstairs Billy. He passed away a few years after the Queen Mother, taking with him all his secrets, or so everyone thought!

Tea with the Old Queen is a one man theatrical comedy written and directed by the award winning writer Graham Woolnough and stars its current protagonist Ian Starks. The play has entertained many audiences over the years in the UK, in such venues as Jermyn Street Theatre in London's West End (2016), Newcastle Theatre (2014), Bridlington Spa (2012), Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre (2012), Edinburgh Fringe (2012) King's Head Theatre London (2010) and many more.

Some of the press quotes include:

British Theatre Guide: ★★★★★

Director Graham Woolnough has created a touching and delightful production and Ian Stark should become a national treasure. This is one invitation to tea you should certainly accept.

Remote Goat Theatre Guide: ★★★★★

The script is superb, the acting faultless and a very happy audience rolled along lovingly as Billy spilled the beans.

Broadway Baby Theatrical Review: ★★★★★

A theatrical treat for those with any political disposition... Ian Stark's Backstage Billy pinpoints the highs and lows of a career serving the Queen Mother. Tea with the old Queen is compellingly outrageous and significant.

Three Weeks Edinburgh Show Guide: ★★★★★

A clever and well-structured script, professionally performed... an opulently furnished set... a noble piece of tittle-tattle. Cheers.

London Evening Standard: ★★★

Ian Stark's performance is constantly engaging... the writing is lively... Woolnough, who also directed the show, provides plenty of wit and Stark's energetic flare ensures it is never a chore to sit through... amusing and well delivered.

Bio of the actor Ian Stark:



Ian Stark first appeared on stage at the very early age five, when he played one of the Snow children in *Carousel*, opposite Bonnie Langford who was four years old at that time. Later in his adult life, Ian's stage career included roles such as Professor Henry Higgins (*My Fair Lady*), Bill Sikes and Fagin (*Oliver*), Nathan Detroit (*Guys & Dolls*), Horace Vandergelder (*Hello Dolly*), Pirate King (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Tevye (*Fiddler on the Roof*), P.T. Barnum (*Barnum*), Ali Hakim and Judd Fry (*Oklahoma*), Vice Principal Panch (*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*), and Samuel Byck in the five star reviewed production of Stephen Sondheim's comic musical *Assassins*. Ian opened *Tea with the Old Queen* at the 2012 Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This was to great critical acclaim, as for example *The Times* selected it from among 2,500 productions as one of their Top Ten Must See shows, and subsequently it has toured the length and breadth of the UK. Through his long and celebrated career, Ian has been honoured with a wide range of awards, such as five Swan Awards for Best Actor.

Bio of the writer and director Graham Woolnough:



Graham Woolnough started his stage work with sketches and gags for Les Dennis Laughter Show, News Huddlines, BBC Scotland, and BBC TV's Student Choice which won the Royal Television Society Award three times. Subsequently, his sitcom *One Night Up Front* was commissioned by Carlton as well as *Sadly and Daughter*. Also, Cine TV Paris optioned his political satire *Brussels Bound* for Canal Plus in France, after which he worked on *The Tale of Tzar Saltan* for stage and video in Dublin, Munich and St. Petersburg. In 2004, Graham received the Comedy Writer of the Year Award for his comedy-drama *Matt & Cindy* (presented at the British Academy for Film, Television and Arts, BAFTA), which was later developed at BBC Scotland. Graham wrote and directed the short film *Bench* (screened at

the Notting Hill Film Festival and BAFTA), Reunion (shown at the Cannes Film Festival), and the feature film project Flaith (for BBC's Tony Doyle Bursary). His play Tea with the Old Queen, which he wrote, directed and produced back then, toured throughout the UK and received many enthusiastic reviews. Graham is a member of BAFTA, the Concert Artists Association, and the Writers Guild of Great Britain.

British Theatre Playhouse:

The British Theatre Playhouse is a theatre production company based in Singapore with a branch office in London. The Patron of the British Theatre Playhouse in Singapore is the British High Commissioner H.E. Scott Wightman, and in Malaysia is the British High Commissioner H.E. Victoria Treadell. The company has produced many highly successful plays and musicals in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the UK, such as Agatha Christie's THE MOUSETRAP and YES, PRIME MINISTER, as well as it has presented music performances such as SALUTE TO SINATRA and lately LET'S DANCE – PAUL ROBERTS SINGS DAVID BOWIE and STARS OF THE WEST END. Building on these successful plays, this is what the British Theatre Playhouse's Founder and Managing Director Ms Cecilia Leong-Faulkner had to say regarding the upcoming play:

“Our upcoming play TEA WITH THE OLD QUEEN testify to two themes: On the one hand, it testifies to the single-minded objective of the British Theatre Playhouse to build on the success of the previous plays and its commitment to continue bringing to Singapore and the rest of South-East Asia the best live entertainment from the UK. On the other hand, it testifies to the recognition of this quality and the subsequent continued collaboration with the British Club of Singapore – an unparalleled venue with first-class facilities which will be honouring us with staging this play for the first time in Singapore, as well as with introducing a special menu for our theatre-goers, which will guarantee a great night out at the theatre for corporate entertainment, families and friends.”

Performance & tickets info:

Dates: Thursday 5, Friday 6, Saturday 7 October 2017

Time: 8.00 pm

Venue: The British Club, Singapore

Phone: +65 6410 1100

Email: activities@britishclub.org.sg

Members: \$ 30+ (side seating) & \$ 40+ (centre seating)

Non-members: \$ 38+ (side seating) & \$ 48+ (centre seating)

Avail of a 20% discount* off on food at the Windsor Arms restaurant on the chosen show date when booking is made. Amazing happy hour prices on beverages from 10pm onwards paired with complimentary bar snacks.*

*Terms and conditions apply.

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Additional info:

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Facebook: facebook.com/BritishTheatrePlayhouse