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The Noël Coward Trilogy: A Celebration of an Extraordinary Life. color & b/w. 149 min. letterboxed. Adam Low, BBC, NVC Arts, Thirteen/WNET, dist. by Kultur, 2008. DVD

Long thought a pleasant bonbon of Broadway's Golden Age, actor/playwright/author/composer Noël Coward (1899–1973) has within the last ten years regained deserved recognition. This trilogy contains three previously broadcast programs—*The Boy Actor*, *Captain Coward*, and *Sail Away*—with distinguished theater critics and authors Sheridan Morley, John Lahr, and Philip Hoare lending their considerable commentary. An incredibly effective section of *The Boy Actor* has John Gielgud, Coward's original understudy for his controversial first success, *The Vortex*, reading dialog from the play. *Captain Coward* portrays Coward as the patriot he was, especially during World War II. The many clips of his films define an era and, though dated, are still the best of their time. *Sail Away* offers charming and revealing interviews with his longtime partner and with his last accompanist and secretary. Coward admits in a telling 1969 *Omnibus* interview that he never really wanted to be significant, just contemporary and bright. That is a star, no matter the stage. Highly recommended for viewers interested in theater and its history.

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