

Cast announced for a major new production of the multi award nominated

The Tailor-Made Man

By Claudio Macor

Director Robert McWhir

Stage Door Theatre

Wednesday 9 May to 3 August

New Press Night: Thursday May 16 at 7.30pm



Gwithian Evans, Hugo Pilcher, Peter Rae, Shelley Rivers, Olivia Ruggerio, Dereck Walker

Gwithian Evans, Hugo Pilcher, Peter Rae, Shelley Rivers, Olivia Ruggerio and Dereck Walker will star in *The Tailor-Made Man*, the inaugural play at the new Stage Door Theatre in Drury Lane, the first pub theatre in the West End.

The Tailor-Made Man will run on selected dates at the Stage Door Theatre from Thursday 9 May to Saturday 3 August.

The Press Night is Thursday 16 May at 7.30pm.

The Tailor-Made Man, by Claudio Macor, is the powerful true story of the Hollywood studio system in its heyday, its hypocrisy and the star who gave up everything for the man he loved.

William “Billy” Haines was a popular MGM movie star in the 1920’s who was fired by studio boss Louis B. Mayer because he was gay and refused to give up his lifelong partner, Jimmie Shields, and marry the silent screen vamp Pola Negri in a sham lavender marriage.

As punishment, his films were pulled from release and sealed in the MGM vaults never to be seen again, and his official studio photographs were destroyed. It was an attempt to erase him completely from movie history. But Billy and Jimmy’s turbulent, passionate love affair was to survive and lasted over 50 years. This is their story.

Gwithian Evans (Jimmie Shields) was recently in *The Mousetrap* in the West End and *The Elephant Song* at Park Theatre.

Hugo Pilcher (William ‘Billy’ Haines) is a recent graduate of The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Peter Rae (Howard Strickling) recently appeared in the No. 1 national tour of *Dead Lies* and is about to star in *Don’t Take The Pith!*, a sequel to his *An Absolute Farce of a Murder Mystery* (Best Comedy Finalist in the London Pub Theatres Magazine Awards) at Drayton Arms Theatre.

Shelley Rivers (Marion Davies) is currently playing *Woman in Marry Me A Little* at The Stage Door Theatre Drury Lane and has been OFFIE-nominated Lead performance in a musical 2024.

Olivia Ruggerio (Carole Lompard / Pola Negri) has spent the last two years touring and performing in her one-woman show *Puppets* (winner of the BroadwayWorld Award Sydney for Best New Performer and Best New Musical/Play) and the sell-out, 5 star hit *Broadway Diva* (Edinburgh Fringe, 2023).

Dereck Walker (Louis B. Mayer) was in *Grindr the Opera* (Union Theatre) and *Twinkle* (Drayton Arms).

Creative team:

Writer Claudio Macor
Director Robert McWhir
Designer David Shields
Producer LAMBCO Productions

Claudio Macor’s *The Tailor-Made Man* play premiered in London at the Hen and Chickens in 1992, it quickly got a transfer to the Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) to be followed by a TV showcase by Thames Television, who were planning to bring back *Masterpiece Theatre*. *The Tailor-Made Man* was chosen to be one of the six initial episodes but then Thames lost their ITV franchise. The play was performed on Freedom Radio with Broadway star Robert Bogue as Billy and Oscar-nominated Judd Hirsch as Louis B Mayer, and then had successful runs in San Diego and West Hollywood. It received another London run at the Cockpit Theatre before its Off-Broadway run at Centre Stage. It was turned into a musical in 2013 at London’s Arts Theatre.

William “Billy” Haines

Charles William “Billy” Haines (January 2, 1900 – December 26, 1973), known professionally as William Haines, was discovered by a talent scout and signed with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) in 1922. His career gained momentum when he was loaned out to Columbia Pictures where he received favourable reviews for his role in *The Midnight Express*. Haines returned to MGM and was cast in the 1926 film *Brown of Harvard*. The role solidified his screen persona as a wisecracking, arrogant leading man. By the end of the 1920s, Haines had appeared in a string of successful films and was a popular box office draw. But his career was cut short by the 1930s due to his refusal to deny his homosexuality. Billy’s fate has played a huge part in preventing movie stars from coming out to this very day. Box Office is routinely used as the excuse but the real reason is the fear of annihilation that Billy suffered. With Jimmie’s help Billy then forged a spectacular career as an interior designer to the stars, Presidents and ambassadors. His interior design career eclipsed his film career. Billy and Jimmie were together for over 50 years and lived like a modern-day gay couple, from the 20’s to the 70’s. This was achievable only in Hollywood and the pair were often quoted as the “happiest married couple in Hollywood” What makes this story stand out from other Hollywood stories is the sheer determination Billy had in succeeding in his design business. A business that is still active today and his shop is still open in the same location in West Hollywood. Oh, and of course the love story... after all it is Hollywood greatest love story. He died of lung cancer in December 1973 at the age of 73.

Claudio Macor - playwright

Claudio Macor was born in South Africa to Italian parents. His career as an actor began at the Library Theatre in Johannesburg. He moved to London in 1983 where he found his true love in writing and directing. Writing and directing credits: *Savage* (Arts Theatre), *The Tailor-Made Man – The Musical* (Arts Theatre), *The End of Innocence* (Hen and Chickens), *Santa Cruz* (Westminster Theatre), *The Other Man* (Barons Court), the first stage adaptation of Gabrielle D’Annunzio classic novel *L’Innocente* (Barons Court), *Venetian Heat 1999* (Barons Court), *In The Dead of Night* (Barons Court, Landor Theatre), *The Man Inside* (Hen and Chickens), *The Love of An Angel* (Mermaid), 1993 BAC (Cockpit), *The Tailor-Made Man* original play” (Hen and Chickens, BAC, San Diego, West Hollywood, Cockpit, Off- Broadway), *Casanova* (Hen and Chickens), *Burning Rhythm* (Etcetera Theatre), *Venetian Heat* (Etcetera Theatre). Writing credits: *Venetian Heat Steam Industry* (Finborough), *Summer Madness the Musical* (Hen and Chickens), *Open Secret* (Etcetera) and the adaptation of Somerset Maugham’s *The Letter* (Etcetera Theatre). Awards and Nominations: *The Tailor-Made Man* nominated Best New Play 1995 and nominated writer of the year, *Casanova* runner up for Best New Play. Screenplay credits: *The Tailor-Made Man*, *Burning Rhythm* and *Out of The Night*. In 2002 he shot a short film *Night of the Clowns*. Claudio is Artistic Director of Torchlight Theatre Company and founder of Torchlight Pictures LTD.

Robert McWhir - director

Robert McWhir is Artistic Director of the Stage Door Theatre. Robert was previously Artistic Director of the Landor Theatre in Clapham for 16 years, where his many productions included critically acclaimed versions of *The Clockmaker’s Daughter*, *She Loves Me*, *The Man Inside*, *Meet Me In St Louis*, *A Class Act*, *Curtains*, *Ragtime*, *Tomorrow Morning*, *Into The Woods*, *I Love You Because* and *Follies*.

LISTINGS INFO

The Tailor-Made Man
by Claudio Macor

Directed by Robert McWhir

Stage Door Theatre
The Prince of Wales pub
150-151 Drury Lane
London
WC2B 5TD

9 May - 3 August
(on selective dates)

17/18 May - previews
14/15 May - previews

**New Press night is
Thursday 16 May at 7.30pm**

17/18 May
7/8 June
16 - 20 July
23- 27 July
30 July - 3 August

Tuesday - Friday at 19:30
Saturdays at 20.30pm

Dinner Tickets: £41,
Show only: £24 (plus booking fee)

Box Office: 07917 221639

stagedoortheatre.co.uk

Show length 1 hour 55 minutes (inc interval)

