



In the Grand Cunard Tradition, Entertainment Aboard Queen Victoria Strikes a Visual High Note

***The highest calibre theatrical productions and the only private boxes at sea
make ocean liner a natural choice for theatre aficionados***

As Queen Victoria prepared to enter service in December 2007, a team of 16 classically trained singers and dancers were already rehearsing four major theatrical productions that formed the core of the ocean liner's inaugural entertainment schedule. From concept to curtain, Cunard spent nearly two years crafting sophisticated shows that engage guests with a striking balance of opulence and innovation.

"What Cunard presents is on a par with the highest calibre of world class productions," said Peter Shanks, president of Cunard Line, referencing the line's legacy of premium onboard entertainment. "From the set décor and talent to the beautiful costumes by renowned theatrical designers, the work reflects a deep understanding of our guests' cultural intellect. Our investment in entertainment is considerable and includes every aspect of the experience, from the sight lines in the theatre to the hand-selected creative team."

To ensure that the theatre venue is as extravagant as the shows themselves, painstaking detail went into designing the Royal Court Theatre, a three-tiered venue unsurpassed in form and function. "We looked at several theatres and were inspired by the spectacular spaces designed by noted English theatrical architect Frank Matcham, whose dramatic multi-tiered spaces made him one of the most prolific theatrical architects of all time," said Coordinating Architect Giacomo Mortola. "In every sense, the Royal Court Theatre captures that same feeling of grandeur and luxury."

Among the theatre's most distinguishing features is the collection of sixteen private boxes – the first-ever at sea – that frame the stage and afford 48 lucky guests exclusive seating from which to enjoy the performances. Seating from two to eight guests each depending on the size, the boxes are furnished with graceful armchairs and cocktail tables. Individual-sized Veuve Clicquot bottles and sweet or savory treats (depending on the show time) are served by white-gloved theatre ushers. Following the performance, guests have an opportunity to meet the cast backstage.

The Royal Court Theatre is a visual tribute to Matcham's turn-of-the-century theatrical design works. Known as the foremost theatre designer in the early 20th century, his vast output comprised more than 80 theatres and influenced theatre design throughout several decades. His notable London landmarks include *The Coliseum* built in 1904 and now the home of the English National Opera, the *London Palladium*, *Victoria Palace* and *Alhambra Theatre* in Leicester Square. "From the moment of arrival, guests will be awed by the sheer magnificence of the space," says Martin Lilly, Cunard's director of creative entertainment. "The ambience is very much that of a 19th century theatre, with rich brocade fabric dressing the walls, a deep red velvet curtain, private boxes featuring an ornate frieze of gold leaf, and murals framing the walls above the stage. It is everything the Cunard guest would expect."

According to Lilly, that expectation naturally extends to what's on stage. "Because our guests are among the most sophisticated and well-traveled in the world, we are able to be bolder with our show concepts."

Shows as Spectacular as the Setting

Nowhere does the ship's Victorian era sensibility come more brilliantly to life than in ***Victoriana***, a spectacular show that takes guests back in time to the apex of the British Empire, paying tribute to milestones of the era. *Victoriana* captures Music Hall memories with splendid character performances, a touch of Victorian Gothic featuring contemporary choreography and period costumes. After each *Victoriana* performance, guests carry the mood into the Queens Room for a jubilant Royal Victoriana themed ball.

Dance Passion celebrates the exuberant world of dance. Outstanding international dancers execute superb and diverse choreography, capturing the magic of Gene Kelly - the sensual Argentine Tango, Salsa and Samba. The show delivers the grace and elegance of classic dance to the vibrant energy of Swing and Jump Jive.

Cunard tapped Dmitri Iliukhin, choreographer and former *Riverdance* performer, to give ***Celtic Heartbeat*** an authentic resonance. Featuring a mix of original and traditional Irish music, song and dance, it tells the story of a young Irishman and his search for fortune, capturing all the joy, conflict, humor, heartbreak and romance of his journey. It features two principle dancers, four singers who take the role of the narrators, and a full dance ensemble.

The final production, ***A Stroke of Genius***, pairs world-famous works of art with popular music. This fresh and eclectic show features a blend of Andy Warhol and the Rolling Stones, Edward Hopper's American Realism and the music of Hoagy Carmichael, and ballerinas coming to life against a backdrop of Edgar Degas' French Impressionist paintings.

The productions are the work of the same team who produce acclaimed shows for sister ship Queen Mary 2 and the retired Queen Elizabeth 2. UK-based Belinda King Creative Productions works in tandem with Cunard to create "a voyage of light and sound, music and dance, with passion and soul, elegance and style," says King.

In addition to the production shows, ***Singers in Concert*** brings the combined orchestras of the Queens Room and Royal Court Theatre together for a concert-style show combining classic standards, contemporary songs and original musical arrangements. An amusing and poignant musical presentation that light-heartedly explores the intriguing dynamics between men and women, the show features songs by Burt Bacharach, Billy Joel, James Taylor, Gilbert O'Sullivan and others.

About Queen Victoria

The 90,000-ton Queen Victoria offers the very best of the heritage and traditions of Cunard Line, along with all modern day luxuries including some exciting innovations. These include the first traditional West End-style private boxes at sea in the Royal Court Theatre, the first *Cunardia* museum exhibit at sea, housing Cunard artifacts and memorabilia along with the first two-storey library at sea featuring an elegant spiral staircase. The ship also features the Line's celebrated Queens Grill and Princess Grill accommodation and dining, further enhanced on Queen Victoria with an exclusive deck terrace and an al fresco dining option.

From the outside, her distinctive black and red livery will hint at the sophistication that differentiates a Cunard liner. This will be most evident in the ship's adherence to liner traditions of the past, with elegant public rooms, many on a grand scale, featuring rich wood paneling, intricate mosaics and gleaming chandeliers. There will also be a grand, colonial-style conservatory complete with a retractable glass roof.

For more information about Cunard or Queen Victoria, contact your travel professional, call 1-800-7-CUNARD or go to www.cunard.com.

About Cunard Line

Cunard Line, operator of the luxury ocean liners **Queen Mary 2** and **Queen Victoria**, has long been synonymous with the quest for new discoveries and the epitome of British refinement since the company's first paddle-wheeled steamer, Britannia, crossed the Atlantic in 1840. Cunard voyages bring together like-minded travellers who seek a civilised adventure and relish the Cunard hallmarks of impeccable White Star Service™, gourmet dining and world-class entertainment. Today, Cunard offers the only regularly scheduled Transatlantic liner service and continues the legacy of world cruising which it began in 1922. **Queen Elizabeth** joins the fleet in October 2010.

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