



# The Guide to Musical Theatre

## CLEVELAND STREET - the MUSICAL

Musical in 2 Acts by book and lyrics by Glenn Chandler, music by Matt Devereaux

Above The Stag, London - 28 April - 29 May, 2011

### SYNOPSIS

Cleveland Street The Musical tells the story of the scandal in 1889 when Telegraph Messenger boys were discovered selling sexual services to members of the aristocracy at a house in Cleveland Street, London.

One of the clients who regularly visited the male brothel at 19 Cleveland Street was Lord Arthur Somerset, Private Equerry to the then Prince of Wales. Another - reputedly, though it was never proved - was Queen Victoria's grandson, Prince Albert Victor Edward, known more popularly as Prince Eddy.

The whiff of Royal connections was enough to set the machinery of the law in motion, and the brothel was shut down, with numerous people escaping across the Channel to France.

### Story

Charles Hammond and his French wife, Caroline, are the two "Madams" who join with Irishman John Saul, a former rent-boy, now too old to be in demand, and together they run an elegant and high-class male brothel at 19 Cleveland Street, discreetly servicing members of the English aristocracy.

Their most popular attractions are three telegraph boys, Ernest Thickbroom, Henry Newlove, and Thomas Swinscow - who are willing and eager to supplement their meagre earnings from their day-jobs at the Post Office. Regular clients include Lord Arthur Somerset, Private Equerry to the Prince of Wales and Lord Euston. When Thomas indiscreetly boasts that the customers include Prince Eddy, Queen Victoria's grandson, a scandal ensues.

Inspector Abberline heads an investigation: the brothel is shut down, its owners flee to France and three people are jailed - two of the boys, and the editor of a newspaper who dared to print the truth. None of the clients of the brothel were ever charged, despite homosexual acts being illegal at the time. At its heart, it is a story of Victorian hypocrisy, and how the establishment always looks after its own.

Notes: Based on a true scandal, the story is narrated by John Saul and told in flashback. The songs are presented in a music-hall and vaudeville style and accompanied by an onstage three-piece band, with a cast of just seven doubling several roles.

### PRINCIPAL MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. Companionship
2. There ought to be a law Against It
3. Two madams
4. Nothing like a lad



5. Mr White
6. Rum, buggery and the lash
7. Climbing the Ladder
8. Passing the Buck
9. Read all about It

**CAST:**

- Henry Newlove
- Thomas Swinscow
- Charles Hammond
- Inspector Abberline
- John Saul
- Lord Euston
- Lord Arthur Somerset
- "Mr White"
- Madame Caroline
- Ernest Thickbroom