

Blithe Spirit

by
Noël Coward

*A ghostly comedy
that is to die for.*



Department of Communication

Chair Note

Dr. Troy Comeau



Welcome to the 2023–2024 season of the Pitt State Theatre. We hope you find yourself immersed in a world of drama as our productions come to life in the beautiful Dotty and Bill Miller Theater and the PSU Studio Theatre. Our students have worked very hard to bring theatre to life and we hope you find the stage a canvas for their wonderful work. We extend our deepest appreciation to you for being here and supporting our students.

The Department of Communication also extends our gratitude to the actors, crew members, directors, and faculty who have made each performance possible. Dr. Megan Westhoff is in her fourth year leading our program and will direct our season opening production. Mr. Linden Little will not only showcase his directing talents this year, but also continues as Technical Director and Designer of each performance. Finally, we are always

thankful to have Ms. Lisa Quinteros lending her expertise as our Costume Designer/Wardrobe Supervisor.

This year's season opens on October 19–22 with *Blithe Spirit* directed by Dr. Megan Westhoff. Successful novelist Charles Condomine needs inspiration for his latest book, so he and his wife Ruth invite the eccentric medium Madame Arcati to their house for dinner with friends. The evening quickly takes a supernatural turn when the ghost of Charles' dead first wife, Elvira, is unwittingly summoned...and she has no plans to leave. Join us for this high-spirited comedy to see if they can exorcize the troublesome spook.

On December 1–2, we invite you to enjoy our COMM 544 Stage Direction class's "public final exam" as they present *Theatre Unplugged*. Always fascinating, always popular and always FREE of charge!!

Mr. Linden Little directs our third production on February 22–25, *Mrs. Dalloway*. In this 2017 adaptation of Woolf's modernist masterpiece, we follow Clarissa Dalloway as she prepares for a party on a London day in June. The play shifts perspectives from the characters' internal feelings to external observations in an attempt to translate Virginia Woolf's famous stream of consciousness writing style into staged action. A small ensemble portrays over twenty characters in this bittersweet taste of summer exploring if time or love are ever really lost.

The last production of the season, April 18–21, will be announced soon.

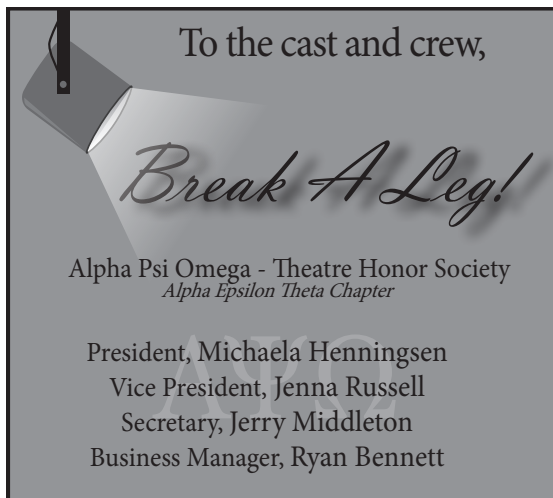
Once again, thank you for your support of Pitt State Theatre and we hope you enjoy

Director Note

Megan Westhoff

In high school, I was first introduced to Noël Coward when I saw a production of *Blithe Spirit*. I was captivated by his witty wordplay, intellectual jabs, and his crafting of fully developed characters and well-structured scenes. As many times as I have seen the play throughout my life, I never read the script until last year and uncovered so much I never knew about Coward and his play.

Coward wrote the play in six days in 1941 during the height of World War II while Londoners were enduring the Blitz. There is no mention in the play of what was happening at the time because it was intended as a happy diversion from the terrors of war and the harsh realities of life. The title comes from the poem "To a Skylark" by Percy Bysshe Shelley, which begins "Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!" The word "blithe" means happily lighthearted or without worry. So who is the blithe spirit Coward is referring to? Is it one of the characters in the play, or could it be us, the audience? Should all of us take a little time to relax and share a laugh with those around us even in the most challenging of times? I'll let you figure out the answer to those questions as I hope you sit back, relax, escape for a moment, and enjoy the show!



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Mrs. Bradman (Charlee Shrader), Charles (Stirling Luckey), Dr. Bradman (Jerry Middleton) and Madame Bradman (Natalie Rigdon) hard at work.

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Natalie Rigdon channeling her inner Madame Arcati.



Elvira (Annabella Beachner) and Charles (Stirling Luckey) reminiscing in the living room.



Charles (Stirling Luckey), Madame Arcati (Natalie Rigdon), Dr. Bradman (Jerry Middleton), and Mrs. Bradman (Charlee Shrader) rehearsing a dramatic scene.

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1034 South Broadway Street
(620)-231-5030

Blithe Spirit

By Noël Coward

Directed by.....Megan Westhoff*

Scenic and Lighting Design by.....Linden Little

Costume Design by.....Lisa Quinteros

Cast

Edith.....Melissa Sollner

Ruth.....Mia Garrett

Charles.....Stirling Luckey

Dr. Bradman.....Jerry Middleton*

Mrs. Bradman.....Charlee Shrader

Madame Arcati.....Natalie Rigdon

Daphne.....Naomi Quinteros

Elvira.....Annabella Beachner

Setting - The living room of the Condomine's house in Kent, England

Act I

Scene 1: Before dinner on a summer evening.

Scene 2: After dinner.

Act II

Scene 1: The next morning.

10 minute intermission

Scene 2: Late the following afternoon.

Scene 3: Early evening. A few days later.

Act III

Scene 1: After dinner. A few days later.

Scene 2: Several hours later.

"Blithe Spirit" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

Production Crew

Stage Manager.....Korah Calvin
Assistant Stage Manager.....Ryan Bennett*
Props, Special Effects, Running Crew.....Ali Cobler,
Xander Denton, Hailey Goodrich, Jarod Sheko
Light Board Technician.....Chantel Shaw*
Sound Board Technician.....Cadence Gaines
Makeup and Hair.....Xzandria Avina
Scene Shop Carpenters.....Jude Dammerson,
Paul Pommier, Jenna Russell*
Set Construction.....Stirling Luckey,
Jayden Malin, Melissa Sollner
Costume Design.....Ryan Bennett*,
Barb Davis, Hailey Goodrich, Natalie Rigdon, Melissa Sollner

Pitt State Theatre Staff

Production Assistant.....Milo Black
Artwork Designer.....Brianna Tureaud
Advertising Manager.....Korah Calvin
Production Photographer.....Azaria Pishny

*Denotes membership in Alpha Psi Omega, national theatre honor society.

No photography or video recording is permitted during the performance.
Please make sure cell phones are silenced.



Madame Arcati (Natalie Rigdon) getting into character.



Mrs. Bradman (Charlee Shrader) and Madame Arcati (Natalie Rigdon) sharing a friendly handshake.

Scenic Designer Note

Linden Little

Designing this spooky season comedy has been an exercise in opulence and exaggeration. The imported British wall paper gives us that late 1930s Art Deco feel without being overbearing. The various pieces of furniture all feature unique carvings or tufted upholstery. The aim of all of these details is to give the impression of a real place slightly off kilter. Add a strong dash of phantasmagoria and we hope you enjoy this British comedy confection. Happy Halloween!



Charles (Stirling Luckey) putting on his serious face during rehearsal.

Costume Designer Note

Lisa Quinteros

The costume design and style for *Blithe Spirit* is a slice out of the late 1930's, and an almost realistic view of clothing of the time. What is notable about *Blithe Spirit* is perhaps what you don't see. There aren't any wartime mentionables: soldier outfits, or overly patriotic icons parading across the stage. It was an escape into a world that could be, not the world that was.

Britain had only just recently emerged from the endless cascade of bombing known as the Blitz, and were figuring how to recover and rally. Rationing became a necessity.

This escape into the stage world let people relax and laugh, and forget about what was beyond the theatre doors.

So the style of *Blithe Spirit* is a mash-up of 20's and 30's and a touch of 40's, but only what they would have had available to them at the time. The notable exception is perhaps Madame A.... (she's just a strange lady..... just a bit into the bizarre!)

We dove into a rich array of tasks, including period sets and fabric styles and props, new make-up looks, and newly created special effects, so this was a challenging but educational time working with crew!

Please enjoy our Spirited efforts!

Serving Our Community

This season, Pitt State Theatre is partnering with affiliated organizations of Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas. For *Blithe Spirit*, we will be collecting donations for Baby4Baby, which provides clothing to children 0-5 years old. Items of greatest need are socks (birth to 5 years), underwear (3-5 years), bibs, and burp cloths. Donations may be dropped off during the run of the show at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts. Please help us serve this important community resource.



Elvira (Annabella Beachner) showing off her sassy side.

Special Thanks

Diann and John Mazurek

Alan Ross

Mimi Little

The Bicknell Family Center for the Arts Staff

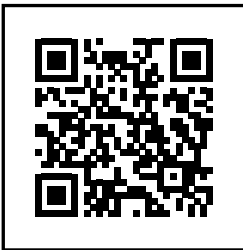
Chelle Rae

We would also like to thank everyone who provided services, materials, and support to this production.

Our apologies if anyone is inadvertently omitted.

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