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## Noel Coward's 'Blithe Spirit' Opens Syracuse Stage Season

FEATURED

By Patrick Finlon // Tuesday, September 10, 2013

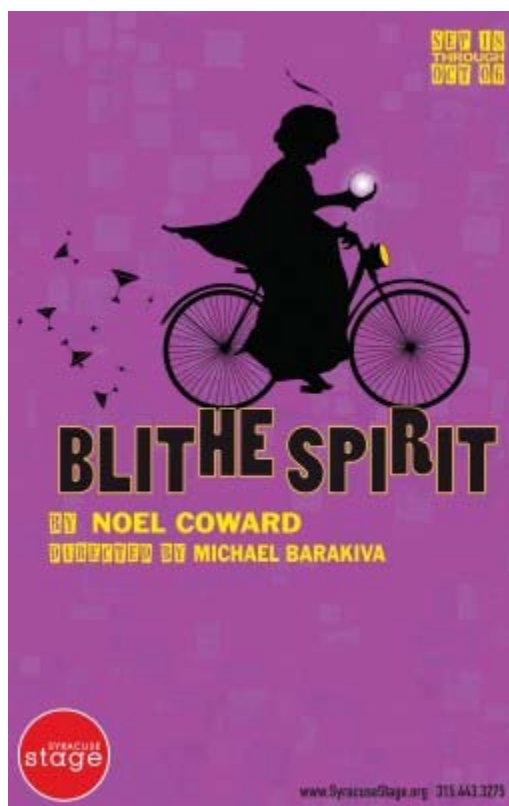
### *Séance Wreaks Havoc in Smash Comedy Hit of London and Broadway Stages*

In the 1941 hilariously haunting tale "Blithe Spirit," novelist Charles Condomine enlists the delightfully eccentric Madame Arcati to hold a séance at his home, hoping to raise some ideas for a new book. Instead, she raises the ghost of his late wife, Elvira, who is determined to wreak havoc on Charles' current marriage to Ruth.

Recently revived on Broadway, "Blithe Spirit" is one of Coward's most sparkling comedies. Directing the Syracuse Stage production is Michael Barakiva, who previously directed "The Clean House" and "The Turn of the Screw" at Syracuse Stage.

"Blithe Spirit" will run Sept. 18-Oct. 6 in the Archbold Theatre at the Syracuse Stage/SU Drama Theatre Complex. The show is appropriate for general audiences. Tickets can be purchased several ways:

- online at [www.SyracuseStage.org](http://www.SyracuseStage.org);
- by phone at 315-443-3275;
- in person at the Syracuse Stage Box Office, 820 E. Genesee St.; or
- for groups of 10 or more, by calling 315-443-9844.



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On select performance dates, Syracuse Stage will host a number of pre- and post-show events, including the Opening Night Party (Sept. 20, with live music by Brian Alexander), Happy Hour (Sept. 26, with wine tasting from Owera Vineyard and snacks from Dolce Vita), an Actor Talkback (following the 7 p.m. show on Sept. 29), Wednesday @ 1 Lecture (Sept. 25, with SU Professor Alan Allport), and Prologues (moderated discussions with actors from the

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stories, including the spooky spirit of Cedarvale Road's 13 Curves, the apparitions in the corridors of the Landmark Theatre, the mysterious happenings in Elbridge's Wayside Inn, the legend of a haunted bridge in Jamesville and Syracuse Stage's own resident ghost, the "Lady in Red," among others.

After his London office and home were destroyed in the Blitz in 1941, English playwright Coward wrote "Blithe Spirit" in just six days. During rehearsals, only two lines from the play were dropped and none were altered in what Coward called "An Improbable Farce in Three Acts." Six weeks later, it opened in London's Piccadilly Theatre on July 2, 1941, and premiered on Broadway at the Morosco Theatre on Nov. 5, 1941 (<http://broadway.com>). Coward sensed that a comedy about death would resonate well with an audience who were, in real life, attempting to create a life in a city under constant attack and the threat of death ([Stratford Festival](#)).

[CBS Radio](#) describes "Blithe Spirit" as "loaded with fast-talking, intelligent humor, intrigue, mystery, cool staging and fun special effects." The dialogue is "a hilarious cardiovascular exercise in proper 'King's English' vernacular," with a fast moving script that never lets you rest and gets funnier as the show goes on.

The Associated Press calls "Blithe Spirit" "champagne bubbles of witty conversation" and Bloomberg describes it as "a scintillating comedy."

The Syracuse Stage production of "Blithe Spirit" will feature a cast of seven: Jeremiah Wiggins (as Charles Condomine); Jody Parsons (as Ruth); Patricia Hodges (as Madame Arcati); Gisela Chipe (as Elvira), Curzon Dobell (as Dr. Bradman); Elizabeth Ingram (as Mrs. Bradman) and Antonieta Pereira (as Edith).

Designers of the production are John Iacovelli (scenic design), Suzanne Chesney (costume design), Dawn Chiang (lighting design), and Jonathan R. Herter (sound designer). Celia Madeoy is the voice coach. Stuart Plymessenger is the production stage manager.

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