

UW SCHOOL OF DRAMA UPCOMING SHOWS

Our Town by Thornton Wilder
March 1 - 15
Jones Playhouse

A 21st Century exploration of the Pulitzer Prize winning masterpiece on life and its simple beauty, ordinary lives and human connections.

Two Orphans by Adolphe D'Ennery & Eugene Cormon
April 26 - May 10
Meany Studio

Bring your handkerchiefs and weep for the fallen heroine, curse the blows of misfortune and cheer the triumph of good in this melodramatic spectacle of a bygone era.

One Act Showcase
American Century by Murphy Guyer
Apollo of Bellac by Jean Giradoux
May 24 - June 7
Penthouse Theatre

Enjoy two charming one act plays as we introduce you to our talented MFA directing students with their first year showcase.

For ticket information and season brochures,
call The UW Arts Ticket Office at 206-543-4880.
On the web: drama.washington.edu

BLITHE SPIRIT

BY NOËL COWARD
DIRECTED BY SCOTT HAFSO



Penthouse Theatre | 69th Season | 447th Production | February 15 - March 1, 2009

JOIN THE ADOPT-AN-ACTOR PROGRAM



Photo: Jay Lurie

Help a rising star launch a career in the theatre!

A critical step in launching our actors' professional careers is presenting them to artistic and casting directors, agents, and other VIPs in the theatre, film and television industries, in Los Angeles and New York, as well as Seattle. This is our Showcase Audition Tour.

The Adopt-an-Actor program provides a major portion of the funding needed to bring the Showcase to a successful conclusion.

Donors become part of the UW Drama family and are matched with individual actors.

Donations become part of a continuing fund which sends the entire graduating class on the Showcase Tour each year. Please visit our website, drama.washington.edu to join Adopt-An-Actor.

SUPPORT THE SCHOOL OF DRAMA!

To donate to the School of Drama, please make your check payable to UW Foundation/Drama and mail to:

UW School of Drama, Box 353950, Seattle, WA 98195-3950

To give online, go to drama.washington.edu/support/

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BLITHE SPIRIT

by Noël Coward
directed by Scott Hafso

Scenic Design
Song-Yi Chun

Lighting Design
Amiya Brown

Costume Design
Candace Frank

Technical Director
Alex Danilchik

Sound Design
Darcy Phillips & Scott Hafso

Stage Manager
Kaitlin Dresdner

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Show Master Electrician
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Master Carpenter
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Loryn Lestz
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Molly Gasperini

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Alex Schmidt

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Robert Mark Morgan

Poster Photo
Mike Jones

Acknowledgements: Seattle Repertory Theatre, INTIMAN Theatre, Darcy Phillips, Charlie Pennebaker, all UW Lighting Grads, Kristyne Hughes, Matt Starritt, and Ella Shahn.

CAST

This cast features members of the MFA Professional Actor Training Program.

Edith	Camille Thornton-Alson
Ruth	Samantha Cole
Charles	Aaron Blakely
Dr. Bradman	Barry Cogswell
Mrs. Bradman	Amy Frear
Madame Arcati	TaLena Bennett
Elvira	Jennefer Ludwigsen

Setting: The living-room of Charles and Ruth
Condomine’s house in Kent, England.

The play is performed in three acts
with two ten-minute intermissions.

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Shortly after his London office and apartment had been destroyed by German bombs, Noël Coward journeyed to Portmeirion, North Wales, where he set about writing a new play – a romantic comedy he would name *Blithe Spirit* in a nod to P. B. Shelley’s poem, “To a Skylark” (“Hail to thee, blithe spirit! Bird thou never wert...”).

No stranger to the realities of World War II (the playwright/composer/singer/actor frequently toured, entertaining British troops, in addition to his work for the British Secret Service), Coward intended his play to be a gift of laughter to a beleaguered, war-weary London. Making no reference to the turmoil around them, Coward’s “improbable farce” offered the theatre-going public a night off from the troubles of their daily lives.

Begun on May 2, 1941 and completed in a whirlwind of writing by the end of the week, the playwright would later reflect:

“I shall ever be grateful for the almost psychic gift that enabled me to write *Blithe Spirit* in five days during one of the darkest years of the war... it fell into my mind and on to the manuscript. Six weeks later it was produced and ran for four and a half years, and I am still wondering whether or not it was ‘Important’. Only Time will tell.”*

Blithe Spirit ran for 1,997 performances, and remains one of the longest-running comedies in the history of British theatre.

Enjoy your own “night off,” and a chance to escape into what Noël Coward called “a house of strange enchantment, a temple of illusion.”

*Noël Coward, from his 1958 preface to *Blithe Spirit*.

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SUGGESTED READING

Morely, Sheridan. *A Talent To Amuse: A Biography of Noël Coward*. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1985.

Coward, Noël. *Plays: Four*. Eyre Methuen, London, 2001.