

NOËL COWARD'S

# Blithe Spirit

DIRECTED BY PAIGE RATTRAY

## CURRICULUM LINKS

### Drama Stage 5 & 6

- Dramatic Forms and Performance Styles: Scripted Drama, Improvisation, Playbuilding and Acting
- Elements of Production in Performance
- Theatrical Traditions and Performance Styles: Comedy, Heightened Realism, Camp and Drag

### Themes and ideas

- Love and Loyalty
- Marriage and Domesticity
- Challenging Gender Stereotypes
- The Confines of Class

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

Charles and Ruth Condomine live in genteel isolation in the English countryside with the latest in a long line of long-suffering maids, Edith. Charles, a famous novelist, is working on his next triumph: a story that delves into the shadowy world of the occult.

In the interest of research and a bit of a laugh, Ruth and Charles invite the nearby village's self-described clairvoyant and medium, Madame Arcati, to conduct a séance in their tastefully-appointed drawing room. The Condomines' friends Doctor and Mrs Bradman join for an evening they all expect to be full of tacky parlour tricks, smoke and mirrors.

But, as the haunting strains of Irving Berlin's *Always* fill the house and Madame Arcati slips into an eerily convincing trance, something more vampy and sinister is unleashed: Charles' long-dead first wife Elvira. And Elvira isn't returning to the underworld until she sorts out some unfinished business.

## CAST AND CHARACTERS

<b>Matt Day</b>	Charles Condomine
<b>Nancy Denis</b>	Mrs Bradman
<b>Bessie Holland</b>	Ruth Condomine
<b>Shane Jenek</b>	
<b>AKA Courtney Act</b>	Elvira Condomine
<b>Tracy Mann</b>	Dr Bradman
<b>Megan Wilding</b>	Edith
<b>Brigid Zengeni</b>	Madame Arcati
<b>Glenn Hazeldine</b>	Understudy
<b>Stephanie Somerville</b>	Understudy

## STYLE

Heightened Realism  
Farce  
Comedy of Manners  
Drag  
Camp

## RUNNING TIME

2 hours 40 minutes, including interval

## THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- What is Coward saying about middle class marriage, monogamy and domesticity in *Blithe Spirit*?
- How does the Director, Paige Rattray, develop Coward's critique of middle class marriage, monogamy and domesticity?
- How does Coward explore class in *Blithe Spirit*?
- How is the Director's Vision of *Blithe Spirit* supported visually by the set and costume design?