2011

Direction of the Play: Blithe Spirit

Richard Shultz
Central Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/thesis_projects

Part of the Theatre and Performance Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

This Graduate Project is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU.
Direction of the Play: Blithe Spirit

A Project Report
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

by
Richard Lee Shultz
July, 2010
We hereby approve the project report of

Richard Lee Shultz

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts:

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Date of Signature

Date of Signature

Date of Signature

Professor Michael J. Smith
Committee Chair

Professor Scott Robinson

Professor Elise Forier

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, vocal coaching, and post-production analysis of Derby High School's production of Blithe Spirit. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play, its music, and an evaluation of the play as a production vehicle for the Department of Theatre Arts at Derby High School.
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Graduate Studies

Final Examination of
Richard Lee Shultz
for the Degree of
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

Committee in Charge
Professor Michael J. Smith
Professor Scott Robinson
Professor Elise Forier

McConnell Hall
Black 138
July 29, 2010
10:00 AM
Richard Lee Shultz

Courses presented for the Master’s degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course No.</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Number Of Credits</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Quarter Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TH 501</td>
<td>Intro to Grad Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bellah</td>
<td>Summer 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 531</td>
<td>Mime &amp; Movement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bellah</td>
<td>Summer 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 521</td>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Program Development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Forier</td>
<td>Summer 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 571</td>
<td>Design Methodology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>Summer 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 542</td>
<td>Musical Theatre Directing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Summer 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 560</td>
<td>Stage &amp; TV Makeup</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td>Summer 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 584</td>
<td>Puppetry In The Classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hawkins</td>
<td>Summer 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 544</td>
<td>Acting Styles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>Summer 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 568</td>
<td>Lighting Techniques</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Panttaja</td>
<td>Summer 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 510</td>
<td>Studies in Dramatic Literature</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Forier</td>
<td>Summer 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 540</td>
<td>Graduate Directing I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Summer 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 546</td>
<td>Teaching Shakespeare Performance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Edie/</td>
<td>Summer 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 539</td>
<td>Directing and Teaching Young Actors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Luedtke</td>
<td>Summer 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 511</td>
<td>Analysis &amp; Criticism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>Summer 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 541</td>
<td>Graduate Directing II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Imouru</td>
<td>Summer 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 700</td>
<td>Master’s Thesis Project</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Summer 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH 700.039</td>
<td>Master’s Thesis Project</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credit Requirements - 53
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Richard Lee Shultz

Undergraduate Study:
  Wichita State University, 1986-1989
  BS Friends University, 1993

Graduate Study:
  Central Washington University, 2006-2010

Professional Experience:
  High School Teacher: 1989-2010
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Section I: Primary Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Committee and Option Approval Form</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Playscript Approval Form</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Parameters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission of Hiring Authority at the producing Venue</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the Play as a Production Vehicle</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept Statement</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Schedule</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Section: Pre-Production Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given Circumstances</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Dialogue</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Dramatic Action with One Act Text Example</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Analysis</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polar Attitudes</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas of the Play, Identification of the Main Ideas</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Previous Reviews</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on the Playwright</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A List of Learning Goals and/or Student Outcomes</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources Cited</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Section 3: Post Production Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Journal</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Evaluations of Project Committee</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Self-Evaluation</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Works Consulted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Appendices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Supporting Materials</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. Submit the original and three copies to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Student Name: Richard Shultz
Mailing Address: [Redacted]
City, State, Zipcode: [Redacted]
Birth Date: 06/25/2008
Student ID: [Redacted]

Check option:
- [ ] Written Exam*
- [ ] Non-Thesis Project
- [ ] Creative Project
- [ ] Studio Project
- [ ] Portfolio Review
- [ ] Thesis

Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TH 700</td>
<td>Master's Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLA 6th Ed.</td>
<td>Style Manual for Thesis or Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title:

   Direction of the Production of Blithe Spirit.

2. Purpose of Study:

   The direction of the production of Blithe Spirit serves as the culminating experience in theatre arts graduate studies.

3. Scope of Study:

   Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research, the direction of the production (including casting, rehearsal of actors, and preparation of the director's production book), post-production evaluation and oral examination shall benefit the student and Theatre Arts department.

4. Procedure to be used:

   Three phases of study shall be included: 1) Pre-Production Research and Thesis Documentation, 2) Rehearsal and direction of production, 3) Post-Production evaluation and documentation.

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from
   - Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? ............................................................ Yes** [ ] No [x]
   - Use of Animals? ............................................................ Yes** [ ] No [x]

** If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

Michael Smith
Committee Chair (typed or printed)

Elise Forier Edie
Committee Member (typed or printed)

Scott Robinson
Committee Member (typed or printed)

Approved by:

Dept Chair/Designee (signature) Date

Committee Chair (signature) Date

Committee Member (signature) Date

Committee Member (signature) Date

Approved by:

Associate VP of Graduate Studies Date

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
MASTER'S THESIS PROJECT
PLAYSCRIPT APPROVAL FORM

(PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE READ THE PLAY SELECTION CRITERIA SECTION IN YOUR GRADUATE HANDBOOK)

SCRIPT TITLE Blithe Spirit

PLAYWRIGHT(S) [If musical, list lyricist/composer] Noel Coward

NUMBER OF ACTS 3 APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING TIME 2 HOURS 30 MIN.

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers)
MEN 2 WOMEN 5 CHILDREN OVER 40

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR ROLES COULD DOUBLE

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST 7

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS:

ARTISTIC STAFF (check those needed for this play or production idea)
MUSICAL DIRECTOR DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER DIALECT COACH SPECIALTY HIRE (specify what kind)
ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size)

Will you be fulfilling any of the above? yes If so, which?
Dialect Coach with assistance from Michael Smith

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? If so, which?

SCENERY/PROPS (check those needed for this play or your concept of the play)
UNIT SET? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) NUMBER OF SETTINGS 1
HISTORICAL PERIOD Late 1930's GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION Kent, England

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:
This show requires a number of special effects, including a Victrola that begins playing by itself and various small set pieces that are sent flying at the end. Care will have to be taken to secure the items to be broken before the production dates and to design and fabricate the means of knocking them off the shelves where they will reside. The phonograph will require a speaker in the cabinet and a means of opening the lid invisibly. There are three sets of doors, two of which require a magical opening and closing. Lighting will need to be especially fleet to move light levels as needed to create the "mood" that Madame Arcati requires.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS 25 PERIOD late 1930's

DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) DESCRIBE:
The above-mentioned consumables will be the most difficult. I will need 5 copies of each item to cover two dress rehearsals and three shows.

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? HOW MANY DESCRIBE:

COSTUMES (CHECK THOSE NEEDED FOR THIS PLAY OR YOUR CONCEPT OF THE PLAY)
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER 2
HISTORICAL PERIOD late 1930's SEASON English Summer Evening

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE)
Wichita Community Theatre produced Blithe Spirit several years ago.
HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION:
built the set for WCT's production, including most of the special effects of items flying from shelves and getting knocked over and the doors opening and closing. I was not involved in other aspects of the production.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?
I believe that one of the major concepts of school theatre programs is to stretch the students. The characters in this play are from a completely different era, geography and class of people. The stretch for the actors will be to find these characters. The technicians will be stretched to create a unit set that portrays the characters accurately and that helps move the story forward, to design costumes appropriate to the characters and to find the music and props appropriate to the show.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL?
This is a small show, with only seven actors total, and there are 75 students heavily involved in the theatre program at Derby. If I choose to set this play in the late 1930's, I will have some difficulty in costuming this show.

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH.

PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) Richard Shultz ____________________________ Date Submitted: July 1, 2008
(Signature) ____________________________

Thesis Chair Approval: ____________________________ Date Approved: __________

Thesis Committee Members Approval: ____________________________ Date Approved: __________

Graduate Coordinator Approval: ____________________________ Date Approved: __________

Please note:
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
Play: Blithe Spirit
Production Dates: Nov, 2009
Facility: DHS Black Box
Seating: 120

Ticketing
$5 All Seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripts</th>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scripts</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$7.50</td>
<td>$180.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S F/X CD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royalties</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$75.00</td>
<td>$450.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costumes</th>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Budgeted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elvira</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Bradman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Bradman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madame Arcati</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Costume Total $1,300.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings &amp; Properties</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$350.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenware</th>
<th>Runs</th>
<th>Pieces</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenware</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Pieces 180

Grand Total $3,640.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ticketing</th>
<th>Performed</th>
<th>Tickets</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>$3,600.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To Whom It May Concern:

Richard Shultz has administrative approval to continue with his planned production of Blithe Spirit on October 15 – 24, 2009. I am aware that this production is part of his Master's Thesis Project for Central Washington University, and he has permission to use the facilities at Derby High School to complete this project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kris Sherwood
Principal
Derby High School.

Please note:
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
(620) 232-3610, Fax (620) 232-8300
Evaluation of *Blithe Spirit* as a Production Vehicle

The audience for the Derby High School Repertory Theatre class production of *Blithe Spirit* will consist primarily of student and adult supporters of Derby High School Theatre. The students will be mostly senior high and college age, either current students at Derby High School or recent graduates. The adults will consist mostly of the family of the cast and crew augmented by teachers and community members. *Blithe Spirit*, with its colorful characters, witty repartee and interesting subject matter will both captivate and entertain audiences. This comedy uses humor to explore its themes and slyly prods the audience members to examine – or reexamine – their place in the world.

The foremost idea in this play is that of the afterlife: where does one go and what happens when one dies? Some of the current ideology in America avers that there is no afterlife. We live, we die. In *Blithe Spirit* the spirit of Charles’ first wife, Elvira, is called back from “the other side” (Coward 30) and takes up residence with Charles and Ruth, his second wife. Death and life-after-death is explored through humor, hijinks, and sophisticated wordplay. It is a subject that is timeless; in fact, it is just as current and appropriate now as when it was first performed in Manchester in June of 1941.

When *Blithe Spirit* was written, England was in the middle of the London Blitz of World War II. German rockets were falling daily in and around London, and the death toll was severe. Everyone in the country was losing relatives and friends and neighbors to these bombs. *Blithe Spirit* gave its audiences a chance to make light of death. Today America is embroiled in a war in Iraq and Afghanistan. America’s death toll is mounting and audiences are desperate for a diversion. McConnell Air Force Base, located in Wichita, is barely seven miles from Derby High School. Base Housing is part of the Derby school district. This particular audience will all
have known someone who is either currently fighting in this war or has recently returned from an overseas deployment. Derby High School has had several former students killed in the current war. To say this war has directly impacted this community is an understatement. The catharsis of viewing Blithe Spirit and the thinking that the show provides will be welcome.

This production of Blithe Spirit will present several interesting challenges. Dialect, set design, audience proximity and costuming will all combine to push the student/actors and student/crew to their limits.

Blithe Spirit is set in Kent, England. While the year is not specified, it can be inferred from the text as pre World War II. No mention of this war is found in the text but references to music of the late 1930’s occur at several places. Therefore, the actors need to develop a believable upper-crust British dialect. The director must function as a dialect coach for the actors prior to and during rehearsals. This process will be aided by the fact that the Repertory Theatre class will be performing this play, and the director (as the teacher of record) will have time during class to teach the dialect. While the entire class will not be acting in Blithe Spirit, all will be involved in producing the play, and all will learn the dialect.

Production of the play will be in the Derby High School Black Box Theatre. The room is approximately thirty six feet deep by fifty feet wide. Audience seating will occupy approximately fourteen feet of this depth by the entire fifty foot width of the room. The backstage area will need to measure at least six feet deep to allow the crew to perform their duties in terms of special effects. This allows sixteen feet for the actors and set pieces: a couch, two chairs, a piano, a table, and a Victorola. This will force the actors to play right up to the audience, frequently within two or three feet. This proximity will challenge the actors to truthfully execute their actions. On the main stage at Derby High School, the audience is at least
fifteen feet from the actors and frequently more. From this distance, the actors’ attention has some latitude to wander. This sometimes can lead to stage whispering and small-scale fakery that the actors think slips by the audience. When the audience can literally reach out and touch the actors, this is not an option. The director is excited to challenge the actors, and to reap the benefits of both the immediate and long-term effects it will have on the actors.

At several places in *Blithe Spirit*, the two sets of double doors will magically open and close. This opening and closing must be done invisibly, to indicate that a spirit has entered or exited the room. Several options exist to make this a reality. A dowel rod attached to the door will serve to initiate the opening of the door. If the door is not set plumb, but rather leans into the room just a bit, gravity will do the rest. Fishing line attached to the door is excellent for pulling the door closed. Another option is to rig a curved armature that will open and close the door from offstage. Further investigation by the director and technical director will be needed to solve this problem.

Another challenge of this play is the finale. Charles tells the two spirits that he is leaving in the last scene, and the two spirits respond by destroying the room. Vases are thrown, books tossed, and every kind of mayhem available occurs. The set will need to have a large number of poke holes built into it, so that the cast and crew can, from backstage, knock things off the shelves and send things flying. The fireplace will hopefully have the capability of shooting sparks, as if someone had kicked the logs. The design will also include a large painting, preferably two feet by three feet, hanging over the fireplace that will spin during the finale.

Costuming the cast will create a new set of challenges. The director and student costumer will be researching 1940’s-era English attire. At the beginning of the school year, the student costumer for this show has a class period as an intern, which will allow her to research
the time period under the tutelage of the director. The director’s vision for this play also includes
costuming the house, box office and concession crewmembers in 1940’s-era garb appropriate for
their positions.

Set construction for Blithe Spirit will also present numerous challenges. The Black Box
Theatre is a classroom. Therefore, the set must allow for classes to continue meeting from the
commencement of construction to the conclusion of the play. This will probably mean
dismantling the audience seating platforms from the beginning of construction until the week
that the play is presented. This will allow enough space for the classes to meet without students
sitting on the set during their class.

Meeting the challenges presented by Blithe Spirit will serve to elevate the Theatre Arts
Department at Derby High School to a higher level of excellence than previously seen and will
leave the department stronger.

Blithe Spirit Concept Statement

Blithe Spirit presents a number of challenges to a director. The usual challenges, which
include costuming, set design, lighting design and sound design, will tax any production team.
Blithe Spirit adds the elements of sound and lighting special effects, doors opening on their own,
books and various items flying off of shelves, accents, music playing and the appearance of the
shade of Elvira.

The set design for Blithe Spirit will be the drawing room of a comfortable English
country home, circa 1930. A large fireplace dominates one side of the set and its large mantel
will offer a launching pad for some flying items. Other set pieces include a set of bookshelves
for knickknacks, a sofa, a side table with four chairs, a small piano, a Victrola, and two sets of
French-style doors, one upstage and one opposite the fireplace. One set of doors leads to the rest
of the house and the other leads to the garden.

Sound design will include thirty minutes of music (recorded from Michael Smith’s Victrola), giving the show an authentic 1930’s and 1940’s soundscape for pre-show and in-show music. All blackouts and scene changes will include Victrola music, including the song “Always,” which is a key to Elvira’s appearance. This will need to be practical, utilizing a speaker in the Victrola rather than the general reinforcement speakers for the room.

The lighting design for Blithe Spirit will require a general lighting plot, as well as a number of special effects. During the séance, the lights need to dim, as if Madame Arcati has willed it so. Red and blue filters will be used to heighten the otherworldly aspects of the séance. A tightly focused red light will be aimed on the table to further elevate tension. When Elvira first appears, the entire set will be flooded with an abundance of blue light, which will serve to give Elvira’s already light beige makeup a look from beyond the grave. Scenes featuring Charles and Madame Arcati trying to return the spirits to the other side will require more red and orange lighting, further emphasizing the feverish mood. The final scene will take on more of a blue-tinged look, showing the despair that Charles has faced, fading to a clean white as Charles delivers his parting speech, showing the lightness and happiness he has finally found.

The appearance of Elvira presents another challenge. I want to give Elvira a spectral aura without the gray makeup often favored by low-budget zombie movies. Elvira should be a live, viable character. This will be accomplished by costuming the actress in dull but pale colors, so that the character seems to absorb light rather than reflect it. The makeup will have a bleached appearance, unlike the “living” characters, whose makeup will be vibrant.

The special effects will provide a fun creative challenge. The double doors to the garden will swing open seemingly by their own volition on two separate occasions. This will be done
through the use of two actuators and two curved push rods, connected through relays to the light board. This will allow the light board operator to control these doors, and open and close them as needed. The soundboard operator, feeding the various speakers as needed, will control the music from the Victrola. The last scene, when Charles leaves, is one of chaos. Books and knickknacks will be flung off shelves through the use of carefully placed and camouflaged poke holes. I envision a large painting above the fireplace. It will hang on a pin through the center of the painting, thus enabling it to spin on its axis. A vase of flowers will fly across the room, smashing into a wall. This will be done with monofilament line through the set, so that someone backstage simply gives a great tug and away it flies. I want the fireplace to explode, as if kicked. This will be accomplished by the use of several red- and orange-gelled lights in the fireplace, along with silk streamers and a fan blowing “ash” out of the fireplace.

Costuming is probably the most straightforward of the designs. Charles and Dr. Condomine will each wear suits and ties. Charles will need four different suits: two dark, and two light. Dr. Condomine will need two suits: one dark and one black. The maid will need a gray and white servant’s uniform and a large housecoat. Mrs. Condomine will be dressed in the fashion of the 1940’s, the time frame of the play. Ruth will also need 1940’s-era costuming. In addition, she will need a copy of one of her dresses in gray and white, for her reappearance as a ghost. Elvira is going to be dressed is a light-colored dress, cream colored rather than white or gray. This will be a sheath-type dress, with a wrap that prevents her from reaching out and physically touching anyone else.

The driving image of this production will be the Victrola. Through this set piece, the scenes will be linked together with music. Every scene change will include music from the Victrola. Ambient music will be used to set the mood for some scenes, but will not be used
during the action, only during scene changes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>08-Sep-09</td>
<td>Read Act 1, focus on seeing the lines flow</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>09-Sep-09</td>
<td>Read Act 2, focus on seeing the lines flow</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>10-Sep-09</td>
<td>Read Act 3, focus on seeing the lines flow</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>11-Sep-09</td>
<td>Dialect work, specific line readings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>14-Sep-09</td>
<td>Act 1, Table work, character building</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>15-Sep-09</td>
<td>Act 2, table work, character building</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>16-Sep-09</td>
<td>Act 3, table work, character building</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>17-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 1 blocking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>18-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 2 blocking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>21-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 3 blocking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>22-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 1 rehearse and improvise blocking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>23-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 2 rehearse and improvise blocking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>24-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 3 rehearse and improvise blocking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>25-Sep-09</td>
<td>Review Trouble Spots of blocking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>28-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 1 rehearse and improvise blocking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>29-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 2 rehearse and improvise blocking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>30-Sep-09</td>
<td>A 3 rehearse and improvise blocking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>01-Oct-09</td>
<td>Rehearse and improvise blocking A 1 &amp; A 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>02-Oct-09</td>
<td>Rehearse and improvise blocking A 2 &amp; A 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>05-Oct-09</td>
<td>Solidfy Blocking - Final Blocking - A 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>06-Oct-09</td>
<td>Solidfy Blocking - Final Blocking - A 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>07-Oct-09</td>
<td>Solidfy Blocking - Final Blocking - A 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>08-Oct-09</td>
<td>Solidfy Blocking - Final Blocking - Review A 1 &amp; A 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>09-Oct-09</td>
<td>Solidfy Blocking - Final Blocking - Review A 2 &amp; A 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>12-Oct-09</td>
<td>Lock in blocking - Act 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>13-Oct-09</td>
<td>Lock in blocking - Act 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>14-Oct-09</td>
<td>Lock in blocking - Act 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>15-Oct-09</td>
<td>Touch up work on blocking - All Acts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>16-Oct-09</td>
<td>Touch up work on blocking - All Acts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>17-Oct-09</td>
<td>Cue to Cue - Full Show</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>19-Oct-09</td>
<td>Full Run (All runs include notes and touchup work)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>20-Oct-09</td>
<td>Full Run</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>21-Oct-09</td>
<td>Trouble Spots Run</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>22-Oct-09</td>
<td>Full Run</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>23-Oct-09</td>
<td>Full Run</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>26-Oct-09</td>
<td>Full Run</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>27-Oct-09</td>
<td>Full Run</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>28-Oct-09</td>
<td>Trouble Spots Run</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>29-Oct-09</td>
<td>Full Run</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>30-Oct-09</td>
<td>Full Run</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>31-Oct-09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>02-Nov-09</td>
<td>Dress</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>03-Nov-09</td>
<td>Dress</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>04-Nov-09</td>
<td>Dress</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>05-Nov-09</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>06-Nov-09</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>07-Nov-09</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>08-Nov-09</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>09-Nov-09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>10-Nov-09</td>
<td>PickUp Rehearsal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>11-Nov-09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>12-Nov-09</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>13-Nov-09</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>14-Nov-09</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>15-Nov-09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Hours 109.0

Total Rehearsal Hours 109.0
Given Circumstances for the play *Blithe Spirit*

- **Geographical Location**
  - Kent, England. (Coward 1) Noel Coward directed the first production of *Blithe Spirit*, thus all production notes are his. Further support of the location is given when Dr. Bradman mentions operating on a patient in Canterbury (25).

- **Date: year, season, time of day**
  - 8 o’clock on a summer evening. (1) July 29, 1941. Tuesday.

- **Economic environment**
  - Upper Class. Two live-in servants.
    - A maid:
      - Ruth: “Now go and get the ice.”
      - Edith: “Yes’m.” (2)
    - And a Cook:
      - Ruth: “…waiting for cook to open the kitchen door.” (7)

- **Social environment**
  - Charles and Ruth Condomine are part of the British upper-class. The play opens at “8 o’clock” (1), and dinner is yet to be served. Edith, the maid, is being instructed on how to serve (1-2), while Charles makes a “dry Martini” (2) for himself and Ruth. The Bradmans are coming to dinner and have yet to arrive. When the party moves to dinner, a seating arrangement has been made – “Madame Arcati - you’re on Charles’s right…” (12) – showing that all details must be carefully considered.
• Religious Environment
  o Charles, Ruth and the Bradmans, being upper-class British Gentry, will be members of the Church of England. Charles is not particularly fond of the vicar and his wife, saying “... (a) they’re dreary, and (b) they probably wouldn’t have approved” [of the séance] (3).

• Previous Action
  o P. 2 Agnes (former housekeeper of Charles and Ruth) leaves their employ to get married.
  o P. 3 Charles gathers ideas for books from people he encounters.
  o P. 5 Ruth was married previously.
  o P. 6, 37 Charles and Elvira were married for five years.
  o P. 6, 45, 46 Elvira died seven years before the play begins.
  o Pp. 7, 9, 10, 11 Arcati rides a bicycle everywhere.
  o P. 7 Mrs. Bradman has seen Madame Arcati in the village.
  o P. 8 Madame Arcati was seen on a knoll on MidSummer’s Eve in Indian clothing.
  o P. 8 Madame Arcati was a professional psychic in London.
  o P. 8 Charles has been to séances before.
  o Pp. 9, 10 Dr. Bradman attended Madame Arcati for influenza the previous winter.
  o P. 9 Arcati writes children stories and biographies
  o P. 10 Arcati is wary of concoctions before “work”
Arcati lived in London. She did not care for London.

Arcati had her first trance at age four.

As a girl, Arcati would get sick going into a trance.

Daphne was “rising seven” in 1884 when she died.

“Always” had special meaning to Charles and Elvira.

Charles and Ruth were married five years prior to the seance.

Charles is and was irascible. Charles was frequently unkind to Elvira, even hitting her with a billiard cue while in Cornwall.

Charles and Elvira loved each other, rather disfunctionally.

Charles has always been dominated by the women in his life.

Charles view of his marriage to Elvira is that it was “charming.”

Charles has been a rather heavy drinker for most of his life.

Ruth’s first husband died.

Madame Arcati has not had huge success previously, especially in materializations.

Elvira behaved badly while married to Charles.

Charles was passive-aggressive when married to Elvira.
When married to Elvira, Charles would hedge his way out of activities he did not wish to perform.

Elvira: “The silliest thing I ever did in my whole life was to love you [Charles]”

Charles was unfaithful to Elvira during their marriage.

Elvira was unfaithful to Charles during their marriage.

Significance of the Facts in the Total Meaning of the Play

Charles Condomine wants to be seen as a gentlemen and a creative author. The previous action reveals he is neither. For example, he treated Elvira poorly and was frequently unkind to her, once even hitting her with a billard cue (30). When Elvira confronts him with this, he responds that the blow was “very, very gently” (30) dealt. Charles admits to multiple affairs, and in Act III brings them out as an attack on Elvira.

When Ruth and Charles are discussing the coming evening’s entertainment early in the play, the talk turns to Charles’s writing. When asked about the idea for an earlier book, Ruth responds that “(s)uddenly seeing that haggard, raddled woman.” (3) inspired Charles. Charles uses the people around him for his story ideas. He will be using the séance of Madame Arcati as a research opportunity. Charles hoped to use Madam Arcati for “(j)argon, principally [and] a few tricks of the trade,” (8) because he had not been to a séance for years and wanted to refresh his memory. (8) Throughout his life, Charles has used the people around him and their stories for his books, rather than inventing his own characters and stories.

Elvira was also not faithful during her marriage to Charles. She was willing to lie to Charles about her whereabouts to spend time with a lover. (69) She abused Charles
during her life, and resumed the emotional abuse when she returned from the other side, even going so far as to say the "silliest thing I ever did in my whole life was love you." (67)

Madame Arcati has been a psychic since she was a little girl, experiencing her first trance at age four. (13) She is devoutly convinced of her ability to speak with those who have passed on. This leads to the two biggest missteps, that of bringing Elvira from the other side, and the inability to send the two women back to the other side. Without the first mistake, the cases of mistaken identity in Act I Scene 2 and in Act II would not be possible. Madam Arcati’s inability to send the two women back to the other side results in Charles gaining a semblance of a backbone and walking out on both women at the play’s end.

Analysis of the Dialogue in the Play Blithe Spirit

Choice of Words

The words are proper English as spoken by cultured and cultivated members of British upper-class society. When Charles and Ruth are speaking in Act I Scene 1, Charles says “(i)f this evening’s a success, I shall start on the first draft tomorrow.” (3) “Shall demonstrates a more sophisticated knowledge of the language. Less refined English speakers might have used the word “will” in this instance. Madame Arcati uses the verb “leant” to describe how she has left her bicycle (9), which is a word chiefly used by the British.

The characters use multi-syllabic words on a regular basis. Ruth is “dreadfully ignorant.” (11) Madame Arcati speaks of the “beckoning finger of adventure.” (12) Charles speaks of Ruth being a woman of “perception and understanding.” (32) Elvira
uses “thoroughly worsted” and “seedy grandeur” to describe Charles. (69) These characters do not speak in the simple terms of the uneducated, but rather is the heightened tone that makes Blithe Spirit a comedy of manners as well as a spirited drawing-room farce.

Choice of Phrases and Sentence Structures

Ruth speaks to Edith as if her underling was a slow-witted child. While it becomes apparent that Edith has not been working long for the Condomines, Ruth asks her “did you get the ice out of the trays” and “you filled the little trays up again with water?” (1) Most adults do not need this level of management; therefore showcasing Ruth’s controlling nature. Ruth continues with directions about who will go where after dinner, concluding with the instruction to serve dinner “calmly and methodically.” (1)

After dinner, when the séance is about to begin, Ruth instructs Edith to not disturb them, concluding with “Is that clear?” (14) Ruth’s sentences to Edith tend to be short, while she uses much longer sentences with others. She tells Charles that she “resent(s) that air of patronage,…I have behaved well, as you call it, because there was nothing else to do, but I think it only fair to warn you that I offer no guarantee for the future.” (57)

When told that Ruth and Elvira are in a duel for him, Charles’s response is that the women’s behavior is “melodramatic hysteria.” (58) Charles speaks like a poet, with every word carefully chosen for its meaning and sound. Later he tells Ruth that “(j)ealousy causes people to have the most curious delusions.”(58) Ever the lexophile, Charles ends the play by quoting the Bard, “(p)arting is such sweet sorrow.”(86) This is ironic because both plays, Blithe Spirit and Romeo and Juliet, end with two dead lovers.

Madame Arcati tends to begin a line of comment before losing her train of
thought and veering away. This shows a natural vapidity that reveals her to be a
dillatante, and is necessary to show both the misconception and misapplication of her
psychic powers. An example of Madam Arcati's scattered thinking occurs when the
guests are going in to dinner and she asks about the meat:

MADAME ARCATI. No red meat I hope?
RUTH. There's meat, but I don't think it will be very red. Would you
rather have an egg or something?
MADAME ARCATI. No, thank you. It's just that I make it a rule never
to eat red meat before I work. It sometimes has an odd effect...
CHARLES. What sort of effect?
MADAME ARCATI. Oh, nothing of the least importance. If it isn't very
red, it won't matter much. Anyhow, we'll risk it.” (12)

This particular line of comment foreshadows Elvira's being called from the other
side back to this plane. The risk is realized, the consequence shown, and the importance
could not be greater.

Choice of Images

Perhaps the most interesting of the characters is Madame Arcati. When she and
Charles are attempting to send the women back to the other side, she says “I might be
able to materialize a trumpet if I tried hard enough.” (77) What use a trumpet would be
during a séance to send a spirit back to the other side is never expounded upon, but rather
left as a question for the audience members. She also speaks of riding her bicycle and
being “deafend by birdsong.” (10) Arcati tells everyone about riding the hills: “just
knack again. Down with your head, up with your heart, and your over the top like a flash
and skimming down the other side like a dragon-fly.” (11) These images indicate the fantastical mind of one of the plays most eccentric characters.

Charles tells of an aunt who would “go off into the most elaborate trances after dinner.” (8) He relates the:

occasion when we were all sitting around in the pitch dark with my mother groping her way through Chaminade at the piano, my aunt suddenly gave a shrill scream and said that she saw a small black dog by my chair. Then someone switched on the lights and sure enough there it was (8).

They were not in the dark, but in the pitch dark. Mother was groping through a song, not just playing. Coward uses specific and exacting words to convey his exact concepts, akin to the difference between calling an object blue or royal blue. A scream can have many varieties, but a “shrill scream” is very precise.

Choice of Peculiar Characteristics

Charles is the embodiment of a completely and utterly dominated man. His women control his every move, usually through a mix of passive-aggressive behavior and open abuse. They demand that he follow their every whim, and he complies. The first time that he actually stands up for himself, and does not back down, is when he leaves the house at the end of the play.

Ruth is a thoroughly modern woman who also wants all of the perks of the old system. She wants complete control of the household and it’s the staff. She wants her husband to treat her as the weaker member of the marriage, but follow her desires in everything he does. She completely dominates Charles from the beginning of their marriage until he leaves the house at the close of the play. When Charles tries to assert
his independence in seeing Elvira, Ruth asserts that he was drunk, and reels off exactly how much he had to drink the night before. (33) Elvira is also the epitome of the “modern woman.” When Charles would not give her the attention she demanded, she had an affair, going with Captain Bracegirdle to the races. (83) Both women dominated Charles throughout their marriages.

Madame Arcati is the crazy aunt that seems to be present in every family. She is humored, but not respected, tolerated but not particularly welcomed. One never knows what she will say next or what odd, offbeat or silly concept will pop into her head and explode from her mouth. For this reason, every family tries to keep this kind of crazy aunt at a distance. Arcati is proud of her ability to talk to the spirits who have “crossed over” to the other side, and of the manifestations she has conjured. The scientific world is quite at odds with the spirit world, since the former can’t prove or disprove the latter. Thus, the educated Condomines and Bradmans feel free to ridicule Madame Arcati, even going so far as to mock her books as “(t)wo sorts... whimsical children’s stories... and enthusiastic biographies of minor royalties, very sentimental, reverent and extremely funny.”(9)

The Sound of the Dialogue

The dialogue sounds very natural. The sentences tend to be longer, because the main characters are upper class. The individual lines mimic everyday conversation, with most of the dialogue using lines of one or two sentences. Charles and Ruth discuss the apparition of Elvira in the following dialogue from Act II Scene 1:

CHARLES. I was not in the least drunk, Ruth. Something happened to me last night; something very peculiar happened to me.
RUTH. Nonsense.

CHARLES. It isn’t nonsense. I know it looks like nonsense now in the clear remorseless light of day, but last night it was far from being nonsense. I honestly had some sort of hallucination.

RUTH. I would really rather not discuss it any further.

CHARLES. But you must discuss it. It’s very disturbing.

RUTH. There I agree with you. It showed you up in a most unpleasant light. I find that extremely disturbing.

CHARLES. I swear to you that during the séance I was convinced that I heard Elvira’s voice.

RUTH. Nobody else did.

CHARLES. I can’t help that. I did.

RUTH. You couldn’t have. (34)

This example shows how the dialogue in this play mirrors realistic everyday conversation. In reality, most conversations between two or more people use short lines of dialogue. Many conversations are built around each line of dialogue containing a single thought, or a thought and a supporting comment. When a line of dialogue contains too many thoughts, the audience members must focus on the dialogue just to hear all the lines. Coward set his dialogue to sound very natural to the audience, so that the audience members could focus on the images and concepts inherent in the play rather than just trying to hear all the lines.

Structure of Lines and Speeches

The speeches in Blithe Spirit reflect everyday conversation. The long speeches
tend to be built around a significant amount to stage business. In Act I Scene 2, Madame Arcati starts the séance, and then spends most of page 19 being the only speaker. She is asking questions, seeking to discover if there is someone from the other side who wants to speak to those at the seance. While this seems a long monologue, it is broken up by significant stage business. The other long speech is the conclusion, starting on page 85. Charles informs the women he is leaving, and why he is leaving. Once again, his speech is interrupted by action, as the two spirits begin wrecking the house. In both cases, the speech is broken by the significant action.
BLITHE SPIRIT

ACT I

SCENE 1

The Scene is the living-room of the Condomines' house in Kent. The room is light, attractive and comfortably furnished. On the L there are French windows opening on to the garden. On the R there is an open fireplace. At the back there are double doors leading to the hall, the dining-room, the stairs, and the servants' quarters.

A Ground Plan will be found on page 93.

Light Cue No. 1, Act I, Scene 1.

When the Curtain rises it is about eight o'clock on a summer evening. There is a wood fire burning because it is an English summer evening. The doors are open, the windows are closed. The curtains are partially closed.

Edith comes in from the hall carrying, rather uneasily, a large tray of cocktail things. She comes to the C table with the tray of drinks. She sees there is no room, so puts it on the drinks table up stage R with a sigh of relief.

Ruth enters briskly. She is a smart-looking woman in the middle thirties. She is dressed for dinner, but not elaborately.

Ruth. That's right, Edith.

Edith. Yes'm.

Ruth. Now you'd better fetch the ice-bucket.

Edith. Yes'm.

Ruth (arranging the ornaments on the piano) Did you manage to get the ice out of those little tin trays?

Edith. Yes'm—I 'ad a bit of a struggle though—but it's all right.

Ruth. And you filled the little trays up again with water?

Edith. Yes'm.

Ruth (moving to the window and arranging the curtains) Very good, Edith—you're making giant strides.

Edith. Yes'm.

Ruth. Madame Arcati, Mrs Bradman and I will have our coffee here after dinner, and Mr Condomine and Doctor Bradman will have theirs in the dining-room—is that quite clear?

Edith. Yes'm.

Ruth. And when you're serving dinner, Edith, try to remember to do it calmly and methodically.

Edith. Yes'm.

Ruth. As you are not in the Navy, it is unnecessary to do everything at the double.
BLITHE SPIRIT

Act I

EDITH. Very good, 'm.
RUTH. Now go and get the ice.
EDITH (straining at the leash) Yes'm. (She starts off at full speed)
RUTH. Not at a run, Edith.
EDITH (slowing down) Yes'm.

(RUTH goes)

EDITH crosses to the fireplace and then gives a comprehensive glance round the room.

CHARLES comes in and moves to the back of the sofa. He is a nice-looking man of about forty, wearing a loose-fitting velvet smoking-jacket

CHARLES. No sign of the advancing hordes?
RUTH. Not yet.

CHARLES (moving to the drinks table; going to the cocktail tray) No ice.
RUTH. It's coming. I've been trying to discourage Edith from being quite so fleet of foot. You mustn't mind if everything is a little slow motion to-night.

CHARLES (coming to l. of RUTH, above the sofa) I shall welcome it. The last few days have been extremely agitating. What do you suppose induced Agnes to leave us and go and get married?
RUTH. The reason was becoming increasingly obvious, dear.
CHARLES. Yes, but in these days nobody thinks anything of that sort of thing. She could have popped into the cottage hospital, had it, and popped out again.
RUTH. Her social life would have been seriously undermined.
CHARLES (moving to the drinks table again) We must keep Edith in the house more.

(RUTH comes in slowly with the ice-bucket)

RUTH. That's right, Edith. Put it down on the table.
EDITH (putting the ice-bucket on the drinks table—up stage R) Yes'm.
CHARLES. I left my cigarette-case on my dressing-table, Edith. Would you get it for me?
EDITH. Yes, sir.

(RUTH runs out of the room)

EDITH runs out of the room

CHARLES. There now!
RUTH. You took her by surprise.

CHARLES (at the cocktail table) A dry Martini, I think, don't you?

(RUTH takes a cigarette from the box on the mantelpiece and lights it, then she crosses and sits in the armchair. CHARLES is mixing cocktails)

RUTH. Yes, darling. I expect Madame Arcati will want something sweeter.
CHARLES. We'll have this one for ourselves, anyhow.
Scene 1  BLITHE SPIRIT

Ruth. Oh dear!
Charles. What's the matter?
Ruth. I have a feeling that this evening's going to be awful.
Charles. It'll probably be funny, but not awful.
Ruth. You must promise not to catch my eye. If I giggle—and I'm very likely to—it will ruin everything.
Charles. You mustn't. You must be dead serious and if possible a little intense. We can't hurt the old girl's feelings, however funny she is.

Ruth. But why the Bradmans, darling? He's as sceptical as we are. He'll probably say the most dreadful things.
Charles. I've warned him. There must be more than three people and we couldn't have the Vicar and his wife because (a) they're dreary, and (b) they probably wouldn't have approved at all. It had to be the Bradmans.

(Edith rushes into the room with Charles's cigarette-case)

(Taking it) Thank you, Edith. Steady does it.

(Edith, with an obvious effort, goes out slowly)

Charles. We might make her walk about with a book on her head like they do in deportment lessons.

(Charles comes to R of Ruth and gives her a cocktail. Then he moves to the fireplace)

Here, try this.

Ruth (sipping it) Lovely—dry as a bone.
Charles (raising his glass to her) To 'The Unseen'!
Ruth. I must say that's a wonderful title.
Charles. If this evening's a success, I shall start on the first draft tomorrow.
Ruth. How extraordinary it is.
Charles. What?
Ruth. Oh, I don't know—being right at the beginning of something. It gives one an odd feeling.
Charles (at the fireplace, facing Ruth) Do you remember how I got the idea for The Light Goes Out?
Ruth. Suddenly seeing that haggard, raddled woman in the hotel at Biarritz. Of course I remember. We sat up half the night talking about it.
Charles. She certainly came in very handy. I wonder who she was.
Ruth. And if she ever knew, I mean ever recognized, that description of herself. Poor thing... here's to her, anyhow. (She finishes her drink)
Charles (going to her, taking her glass and moving up to the drinks table) Have another.
RUTH. Darling—it's most awfully strong.

CHARLES (pouring it). Never mind.

RUTH. Used Elvira to be a help to you—when you were thinking something out, I mean?

CHARLES (pouring out another cocktail for himself). Every now and then—when she concentrated—but she didn't concentrate very often.

RUTH. I do wish I'd known her.

CHARLES. I wonder if you'd have liked her.

RUTH. I'm sure I should. As you talk of her she sounds enchanting.

Yes, I'm sure I should have liked her because you know I have never for an instant felt in the least jealous of her. That's a good sign.

CHARLES. Poor Elvira.

(Ruth and give her a cocktail)

RUTH. Does it still hurt? When you think of her?

CHARLES. No, not really. Sometimes I almost wish it did. I feel rather guilty ...

RUTH. I wonder if I died before you'd grown tired of me if you'd forget me so soon?

CHARLES. What a horrible thing to say.

RUTH. No, I think it's interesting.

CHARLES (crossing below Ruth and sitting on the left end of the sofa). Well, to begin with, I haven't forgotten Elvira. I remember her very distinctly indeed. I remember how fascinating she was, and how maddening. I remember how badly she played all games and how cross she got when she didn't win. I remember her gay charm when she had achieved her own way over something and her extreme acidity when she didn't. I remember her physical attractiveness, which was tremendous, and her spiritual integrity, which was nil.

RUTH. You can't remember something that was nil.

CHARLES. I remember how morally untidy she was.

RUTH. Was she more physically attractive than I am?

CHARLES. That was a very tiresome question, dear, and fully deserves the wrong answer.

RUTH. You really are very sweet.

CHARLES. Thank you.

RUTH. And a little naive, too.

CHARLES. Why?

RUTH. Because you imagine that I mind about Elvira being more physically attractive than I am.

CHARLES. I should have thought any woman would mind—if it were true. Or perhaps I'm old-fashioned in my view of female psychology.

RUTH. Not exactly old-fashioned, darling, just a bit didactic.

CHARLES. How do you mean?

RUTH. It's didactic to attribute to one type the defects of
another type. For instance, because you know perfectly well that Elvira would mind terribly if you found another woman more attractive physically than she was, it doesn't necessarily follow that I should. Elvira was a more physical person than I. I'm certain of that. It's all a question of degree.

Charles (smiling) I love you, my love.

Ruth. I know you do; but not the wildest stretch of imagination could describe it as the first fine careless rapture.

Charles. Would you like it to be?

Ruth. Good God, no!

Charles. Wasn't that a shade too vehement?

Ruth. We're neither of us adolescent, Charles; we've neither of us led exactly prim lives, have we? And we've both been married before. Careless rapture at this stage would be incongruous and embarrassing.

Charles. I hope I haven't been in any way a disappointment, dear.

Ruth. Don't be so idiotic.

Charles. After all, your first husband was a great deal older than you, wasn't he? I shouldn't like you to think that you'd missed out all along the line.

Ruth. There are moments, Charles, when you go too far.

Charles. Sorry, darling.

Ruth. As far as waspish female psychology goes, there's a rather strong vein of it in you.

Charles. I've heard that said about Julius Caesar.

Ruth. Julius Caesar is neither here nor there.

Charles. He may be for all we know. We'll ask Madame Arcati.

Ruth (rising and crossing to L) You're awfully irritating when you're determined to be witty at all costs, almost supercilious.

Charles. That's exactly what Elvira used to say.

Ruth. I'm not at all surprised. I never imagined, physically triumphant as she was, that she was entirely lacking in perception.

(Charles rises and goes to the R of Ruth)

Charles. Darling Ruth!

Ruth. There you go again!

Charles (kissing her lightly) As I think I mentioned before, I love you, my love.

Ruth. Poor Elvira!

Charles. Didn't that light, comradely kiss mollify you at all?

Ruth. You're very annoying, you know you are. When I said 'Poor Elvira' it came from the heart. You must have bewildered her so horribly.

Charles. Don't I ever bewilder you at all?

Ruth. Never for an instant. I know every trick.
CHARLES. Well, all I can say is that we'd better get a divorce immediately.
RUTH. Put my glass down, there's a darling.
CHARLES (taking it) She certainly had a great talent for living. It was a pity that she died so young.
RUTH. Poor Elvira!
CHARLES (crossing to and putting the glasses on the drinks table) That remark is getting monotonous.
RUTH (moving up stage a pace) Poor Charles, then.
CHARLES. That's better.
RUTH. And later on, poor Ruth, I expect.
CHARLES (coming to above the c table) You have no faith, Ruth. I really do think you should try to have a little faith.
RUTH (moving to the L arm of the armchair) I shall strain every nerve.
CHARLES. Life without faith is an arid business.
RUTH. How beautifully you put it, dear.
CHARLES. I aim to please.
RUTH. If I died, I wonder how long it would be before you married again?
CHARLES. You won't die. You're not the dying sort.
RUTH. Neither was Elvira.
CHARLES. Oh yes, she was, now that I look back on it. She had a certain ethereal, not-quite-of-this-world quality. Nobody could call you, even remotely, ethereal.

(RUTH crosses below the sofa to the fire. CHARLES moves to the armchair)

RUTH. Nonsense! She was of the earth, earthy.
CHARLES. Well, she is now, anyhow.
RUTH. You know that's the kind of observation that shocks people.
CHARLES. It's discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit.
RUTH. Write that down; you might forget it.
CHARLES. You underrate me.
RUTH. Anyhow, it was a question of bad taste more than honesty.
CHARLES (moving to below the sofa) I was devoted to Elvira. We were married for five years. She died. I missed her very much.
(He comes to Ruth, puts her cheek, and then goes back to the armchair) That was seven years ago. I have now—with your help, my love—risen above the whole thing.
RUTH. Admirable. But if tragedy should darken our lives, I still say—with prophetic foreboding—poor Ruth!

(A bell is heard)
CHARLES. That's probably the Bradmans.
ScENE 1  BLITHE SPIRIT

RUTH. It might be Madame Arcati.
CHARLES. No, she'll come on her bicycle. She always goes everywhere on her bicycle.
RUTH. It really is very spirited of the old girl.
CHARLES. Shall I go, or shall we let Edith have her fling? (He moves l. to below the piano)
RUTH. Wait a minute and see what happens.

(There is a slight pause)

CHARLES. Perhaps she didn't hear.
RUTH. She's probably on one knee in a pre-sprinting position, waiting for cook to open the kitchen door.

There is the sound of a door banging and Edith is seen scampering across the hall.

CHARLES. Steady, Edith.

EDITH (dropping to a walk) Yes, sir.

After a moment, Dr and Mrs Bradman come into the room. Dr Bradman is a pleasant-looking middle-aged man. Mrs Bradman is fair and rather faded.

Mrs Bradman comes to Ruth, who meets her above the sofa and shakes hands. Dr Bradman shakes hands with Charles.

Doctor and Mrs Bradman.

Dr Bradman. We're not late, are we? I only got back from the hospital about half an hour ago.

CHARLES. Of course not. Madame Arcati isn't here yet.

Mrs Bradman. That must have been her we passed coming down the hill. I said I thought it was.
RUTH. Then she won't be long. I'm so glad you were able to come.

(Ruth comes down on the r. of the sofa and sits on the pouffe. Mrs Bradman sits on the r. end of the sofa)

Mrs Bradman. We've been looking forward to it. I feel really quite excited.

Dr Bradman (moving to above the sofa and standing behind Mrs Bradman) I guarantee that Violet will be good. I made her promise.

Mrs Bradman. There wasn't any need. I'm absolutely thrilled. I've only seen Madame Arcati two or three times in the village. I mean I've never seen her do anything at all peculiar, if you know what I mean?

CHARLES. Dry Martini?

Dr Bradman. By all means.

(CHARLES goes up to the drinks table and starts mixing fresh cocktails. Dr Bradman goes up and stands by Charles)
BLITHE SPIRIT

Act I

Charles (mixing) She certainly is a strange woman. It was only a chance remark of the Vicar’s about seeing her up on the Knoll on Midsummer Eve dressed in sort of Indian robes that made me realize that she was psychic at all. Then I began to make enquiries. Apparently she’s been a professional in London for years.

Mrs Bradman. It is funny, isn’t it? I mean anybody doing it as a profession.

Dr Bradman (sitting on the back of the sofa) I believe it’s very lucrative.

Mrs Bradman. Do you believe in it, Mrs Condomine? Do you think there’s anything really genuine about it at all?

Ruth. I’m afraid not; but I do think it’s interesting how easily people allow themselves to be deceived.

Mrs Bradman. But she must believe it herself, mustn’t she? Or is the whole business a fake?

Charles. I suspect the worst. A real professional charlatan. That’s what I am hoping for, anyhow. The character I am planning for my book must be a complete impostor. That’s one of the most important factors of the whole story.

Dr Bradman. What exactly are you hoping to get from her?

Charles. Jargon, principally; a few of the tricks of the trade. I haven’t been to a séance for years. I want to refresh my memory.

Dr Bradman (rising) Then it’s not entirely new to you?

Charles (handing drinks to Dr and Mrs Bradman; above the sofa) Oh, no. When I was a little boy an aunt of mine used to come and stay with us. She imagined that she was a medium and used to go off into the most elaborate trances after dinner. My mother was fascinated by it.

Mrs Bradman. Was she convinced?

Charles. Good heavens, no. She just naturally disliked my aunt and loved making a fool of her. (He gets a cocktail for himself and then comes to above the table)

Dr Bradman (laughing) I gather that there were never any tangible results?

Charles. Oh, sometimes she didn’t do so badly. On one occasion when we were all sitting round in the pitch dark with my mother groping her way through Chaminade at the piano, my aunt suddenly gave a shrill scream and said that she saw a small black dog by my chair. Then someone switched on the lights and sure enough there it was.

Mrs Bradman. But how extraordinary.

Charles. It was obviously a stray that had come in from the street. But I must say I took off my hat to Auntie for producing it, or rather for utilizing it. Even Mother was a bit shaken.

Mrs Bradman. What happened to it?

Charles. It lived with us for years; ....

Ruth. I sincerely hope Madame Arcati won’t produce any livestock. We have so very little room in this house.
Mrs Bradman. Do you think she tells fortunes? I love having
my fortune told.

Charles. I expect so.

Ruth. I was told once on the pier at Southsea that I was sur-
rounded by lilies and a golden seven. It worried me for days.

(They all laugh)

Charles. We really must all be serious, you know, and pretend
that we believe implicitly. Otherwise she won't play.

Ruth. Also, she might really mind. It would be cruel to upset
her.

Dr Bradman. I shall be as good as gold.

Ruth. Have you ever attended her, Doctor—professionally, I
mean.

Dr Bradman. Yes. She had influenza in January. She's only
been back here just over a year, you know. I must say she was singularly
unpsychic then. I always understood that she was an authoress.

Charles. Oh yes. We originally met as colleagues at one of
Mrs Wilmot's Sunday evenings in Sandgate.

Mrs Bradman. What sort of books does she write?

Charles. Two sorts. Rather whimsical children's stories about
enchanted woods filled with highly conventional flora and fauna;
and enthusiastic biographies of minor royalty, very sentimental,
reverent and extremely funny.

(Ruth is seen sedately going towards the door)

Dr Bradman. She knows, doesn't she, about tonight? You're
not going to spring it on her.

Charles. Of course. It was all arranged last week. I told her
how profoundly interested I was in anything to do with the
occult, and she blossomed like a rose.

Ruth. I really feel quite nervous; as though I were going to
make a speech.

(Edith is seen sedately going towards the door)

Charles. You go and meet her, darling.

(Edith crosses up stage to the R side of the door. Charles to the L
side of the door by the piano. Dr Bradman moves to above the sofa.
Meanwhile Edith has opened the door, and Madame Arcati's voice,
very high and clear, is heard)

Madame Arcati (off) I've leant my bike up against that little
bush; it will be perfectly all right if no one touches it.

Edith (appearing) Madame Arcati.

Ruth. How nice of you to have come all this way.

(Madame Arcati enters. She is a striking woman, dressed not too
extravagantly but with a decided bias towards the barbaric. She might
be my age between forty-five and sixty-five. Ruth ushers her in. Ruth and Charles greet her simultaneously.

Charles. My dear Madame Arcati!

Madame Arcati. I'm afraid I'm rather late; but I had a sudden presentiment that I was going to have a puncture so I went back to fetch my pump.

(Madame Arcati takes off her cloak and hands it to Ruth, who puts it on the chair n. of the door)

And then, of course, I didn't have a puncture at all.

Charles. Perhaps you will on the way home.

Madame Arcati. Moving below Ruth to n. to shake hands with Dr Bradman. Greeting him) Doctor Bradman—the man with the gentle hands!

Dr Bradman. I'm delighted to see you looking so well. This is my wife.

(Madame Arcati shakes hands with Mrs Bradman over the back of the sofa. Dr Bradman moves to the fireplace)

Madame Arcati. We are old friends—we meet coming out of shops.

Charles. Would you like a cocktail?

Madame Arcati. (peeling off some rather strange-looking gloves) If it's a dry Martini, yes—if it's a concoction, no. Experience has taught me to be very wary of concoctions.

Charles (up to the drinks table) It is a dry Martini.

(Madame Arcati moves to Ruth, c)

Madame Arcati. How delicious. It was wonderful cycling through the woods this evening. I was deafened with bird song.

Ruth. It's been lovely all day.

Madame Arcati. But the evening's the time—mark my words.

(Ruth takes the cocktail Charles gives her; she having come down in her b)

Thank you. Cheers! Cheers!

(Ruth and Madame Arcati down stage to the l. and of the sofa, where she sits. Ruth sits on the right arm of the armchair. Dr Bradman is at the fireplace. Charles is above the c table)

Ruth. Don't you find it very tiring bicycling everywhere?

Madame Arcati. On the contrary, it stimulates me. I was getting far too sedentary in London. That horrid little flat with dim lights! They had to be dim, you know; the clients expect it.

Mrs Bradman. I must say I find bicycling very exhausting.

Madame Arcati. Steady rhythm, that's what counts. Once you get the knack of it you need never look back. On you get and away you go.

Mrs Bradman. But the hills, Madame Arcati; pushing up those awful hills.
SCENE 1

BLITHE SPIRIT

MADAME ARC ATI. Just knock again. Down with your head, up with your heart, and you're over the top like a flash and skimming down the other side like a dragon-fly. This is the best dry Martini I've ever had for years.

CHARLES. Will you have another?

MADAME ARC ATI (holding out her glass) Certainly.

(Charles takes her glass and refills it at the drinks table)

You're a very clever man. Anybody can write books, but it takes an artist to make a dry Martini that's dry enough.

RUTH. Are you writing anything nowadays, Madame Arcati?

MADAME ARC ATI. Every morning regular as clockwork, seven till one.

CHARLES (giving MADAME ARC ATI a cocktail) Is it a novel or a memoir?

MADAME ARC ATI. It's a children's book. I have to finish it by the end of October to catch the Christmas sales. It's mostly about very small animals; the hero is a moss beetle.

(MRS BRADMAN laughs nervously)

I had to give up my memoir of Princess Palliatani because she died in April. I talked to her about it the other day and she implored me to go on with it. But I really hadn't the heart.

MRS BRADMAN (incredulously) You talked to her about it the other day?

MADAME ARC ATI. Yes, through my control, of course. She sounded very irritable.

MRS BRADMAN. It's funny to think of people in the spirit world being irritable, isn't it? I mean, one can hardly imagine it, can one?

CHARLES (coming down on the left of Ruth) We have no reliable guarantee that the after life will be any less exasperating than this one, have we?

MRS BRADMAN (laughing) Oh, Mr Condi mine, how can you?

RUTH. I expect it's dreadfully ignorant of me not to know—but who was Princess Palliatani?

MADAME ARC ATI. She was originally a Jewess from Odessa of quite remarkable beauty. It was an accepted fact that people used to stand on the seats of railway stations to watch her whizz by.

CHARLES. She was a keen traveller?

MADAME ARC ATI. In her younger days, yes. Later on she married a Mr Clarke in the Consular Service and settled down for a while.

RUTH. How did she become Princess Palliatani?

MADAME ARC ATI. That was years later. Mr Clarke passed over and left her penniless with two strapping girls.

RUTH. How unpleasant.

MADAME ARC ATI. And so there was nothing for it but to obey
the beckoning finger of adventure and take to the road again. So off she went, bag and baggage, to Vladivostock.

Charles. What an extraordinary place to go!

Madame Arcati. She had cousins there. Some years later she met old Palliatani, who was returning from a secret mission in Japan. He was immediately staggered by her beauty and very shortly afterwards married her. From then on her life became really interesting.

Dr. Bradman. I should hardly have described it as dull before.

Ruth. What happened to the girls?

Madame Arcati. She neither saw them nor spoke to them for twenty-three years.

Mrs. Bradman. How extraordinary.

Madame Arcati. Not at all. She was always very erratic emotionally.

(The door of the dining-room opens and Edith comes in)

Edith (nervously). Dinner is served, mum.

Ruth. Thank you, Edith. Shall we—?

(Edith rises backwards into the dining-room. They all rise)

Madame Arcati. No red meat, I hope?

Ruth. There's meat, but I don't think it will be very red. Would you rather have an egg or something?

Madame Arcati. No, thank you. It's just that I make it a rule never to eat red meat before I work. It sometimes has an odd effect.

Charles. What sort of effect?

Madame Arcati. Oh, nothing of the least importance. If it isn't very red, it won't matter much. Anyhow, we'll risk it.

(Madame Arcati goes out first with Ruth, followed by Mrs. Bradman, Dr. Bradman and Charles)

Ruth. Come along, then. Mrs. Bradman—Madame Arcati—you're on Charles's right...

(They all move into the dining-room as the lights fade on the scene)

(Light Cue No. 2. Act I, Scene 1)

Curtain

Scene 2

(Light Cue No. 1. Act I, Scene 2)

When the lights go up, dinner is over, and Ruth, Mrs. Bradman and Madame Arcati are sitting having their coffee; Mrs. Bradman on the pouffe down stage r. Madame Arcati on the r. end of the sofa,
SCENE 2  BLITHE SPIRIT

RUTH on the left end of the sofa. All have coffee-cups. The doors are open, the windows are closed and the curtains are half closed.

MADAME ARCATI . . . on her mother's side she went right back to the Borgias, which I think accounted for a lot one way or another. Even as a child she was given to the most violent destructive tempers. Very inbred, you know.

MRS. BRADMAN. Yes; she must have been.

MADAME ARCATI. My control was quite seared the other day when we were talking. I could hear it in her voice. After all, she's only a child.

RUTH. Do you always have a child as a control?

MADAME ARCATI. Yes, they're generally the best. Some mediums prefer Indians, of course, but personally I've always found them unreliable.

RUTH. In what way unreliable?

MADAME ARCATI. Well, for one thing, they're frightfully lazy, and also, when faced with any sort of difficulty, they're rather apt to go off into their own tribal language, which is naturally unintelligible. That generally spoils everything and wastes a great deal of time. No, children are undoubtedly more satisfactory, particularly when they get to know you and understand your way. Daphne has worked with me for years.

MRS. BRADMAN. And she still goes on being a child? I mean, she doesn't show signs of growing any older?

MADAME ARCATI (patiently) Time values on the Other Side are utterly different from ours.

MRS. BRADMAN. Do you feel funny when you go off into a trance?

MADAME ARCATI. In what way funny?

RUTH (hesitaly) Mrs. Bradman doesn't mean funny in its comic implication; I think she meant odd or strange.

MADAME ARCATI. The word was an unfortunate choice.

MRS. BRADMAN. I'm sure I'm very sorry.

MADAME ARCATI. It doesn't matter in the least. Please don't apologize.

RUTH. When did you first discover that you had these extraordinary powers?

MADAME ARCATI. When I was quite tiny. My mother was a medium before me, you know, and so I had every opportunity of starting on the ground floor, as you might say. I had my first trance when I was four years old and my first ectoplasmic manifestation when I was five and a half. What an exciting day that was! I shall never forget it. Of course the manifestation itself was quite small and of very short duration, but, for a child of my tender years, it was most gratifying.

MRS. BRADMAN. Your mother must have been so pleased.

MADAME ARCATI (modestly) She was.
MRS BRADMAN. Can you foretell the future?
MADAME ARCARI. Certainly not. I disapprove of fortune tellers most strongly.
MRS BRADMAN (disappointed) Oh, really? Why?
MADAME ARCARI. Too much guesswork and fake mixed up with it, even when the gift is genuine. And it only very occasionally is. You can't count on it.
RUTH. Why not?
MADAME ARCARI. Time again. Time is the reef upon which all our frail mystic ships are wrecked.
RUTH. You mean because it has never yet been proved that the past and the present and the future are not one and the same thing.
MADAME ARCARI. Long ago came to the conclusion that nothing has ever been definitely proved about anything.
RUTH. How very wise.

(MADAME ARCARI hands her cup to RUTH. MRS BRADMAN puts her cup behind her on the small table down stage R. EDITH comes in with a tray of drinks. She puts the tray down on the c table by RUTH. RUTH moves a coffee-cup and a vase to make room for it. She takes the cigarette-box and the ash tray from the table and gives them to EDITH, who puts them on the drinks table)

I want you to leave the dining-room just as it is for tonight, Edith. You can clear the table in the morning.
EDITH. Yes'm.
RUTH. And we don't want to be disturbed for the next hour or so for any reason whatsoever. Is that clear?
EDITH. Yes'm.
RUTH. And if anyone should telephone, just say we are out and take a message.
MRS BRADMAN. Unless it's a urgent call for George.
RUTH. Unless it's an urgent call for Doctor Bradman.
EDITH. Yes'm.

(EDITH goes out swiftly)
RUTH. There's not likely to be one, is there?
MRS BRADMAN. No, I don't think so.
MADAME ARCARI. Once I am off it won't matter, but an interruption during the preliminary stages might be disastrous.
MRS BRADMAN. I wish the men would hurry up. I'm terribly excited.
MADAME ARCARI. Please don't be. It makes everything much, much more difficult.

(CHARLES and DR BRADMAN come out of the dining-room. They are smoking cigars. DR BRADMAN comes to the fireplace and CHARLES to the l arm of the armchair)
CHARLES (cheerfully) Well, Madame Arcati—the time is drawing near.

MADAME ARCATI. Who knows? It may be receding!

CHARLES. How very true.

DR. BRADMAN. I hope you feel in the mood, Madame Arcati.

MADAME ARCATI. It isn't a question of mood. It's a question of concentration.

RUTH. You must forgive us being impatient. We can perfectly easily wait though, if you're not quite ready to start.

MADAME ARCATI. Nonsense, my dear, I'm absolutely ready.

(She rises) Heigho, heigho, to work we go!

CHARLES. Is there anything you'd like us to do?

MADAME ARCATI. Do?

CHARLES. Yes—hold hands or anything?

MADAME ARCATI. All that will come later. (She goes to the window)

(The others all rise)

First a few deep, deep breaths of fresh air—-(Over her shoulder)
You may talk if you wish, it will not disturb me in the least. (She flings the window wide open and inhales deeply and a trifle noisily)

RUTH (with a quizzical glance at CHARLES) Oh dear!

CHARLES (putting his finger to his lips warningly) An excellent dinner, darling. I congratulate you.

RUTH. The mousse wasn't quite right.

CHARLES. It looked a bit hysterical, but it tasted delicious.

MADAME ARCATI. That cuckoo is very angry.

CHARLES. I beg your pardon?

MADAME ARCATI. I said that cuckoo is very angry. Listen.

(They all listen obediently)

CHARLES. How can you tell?

MADAME ARCATI. Timbre. No moon; that's as well, I think.

There's mist rising from the marshes. (A thought strikes her) There's no need for me to light my bicycle lamp, is there? I mean, nobody is likely to fall over it.

RUTH. No, we're not expecting anybody else.

MADAME ARCATI. Good night, you foolish bird. (She closes the window)

CHARLES. You have a table?

CHARLES. Yes, we thought that one would do.

MADAME ARCATI (putting her hands on the small table below the piano and then pointing to the c table) I think the one that has the drinks on it would be better.

(DR. BRADMAN comes to the c table and takes the tray from it and puts it up stage r on the drinks table, closes the doors and brings the chair from w of the door to down stage l. CHARLES brings the c table over to l between the armchair and the gramophone)
BLITHE SPIRIT

Act I

Dr. Bradman. Change over.

Charles (to Ruth). You told Edith we didn't want to be disturbed.

Ruth. Yes, darling.

Madame Arcati. (sitting below the scene table, over in the mantelpiece. Then she walks about the room—twisting and untwisting her hands.) This is a moment I always hate.

Ruth. Are you nervous?

Madame Arcati. Yes. When I was a girl I always used to be sick.

Dr. Bradman. How fortunate that you grew out of it.

(Madame Arcati is now walking BC above the sofa. Mrs. Bradman brings the puffs over to B of the scene table)

Madame Arcati (still walking) 'Little Tommy Tucker sings for his supper. What shall he have but brown bread and butter?' I despise that because it doesn't rhyme at all; but Daphne loves it.

(Madame Arcati has now arrived below the sofa. The others are grouped round the scene table, Dr. Bradman down R, Ruth on his R, then Charles and Mrs. Bradman by the puffs)

Dr. Bradman. Who's Daphne?

Ruth. Daphne is Madame Arcati's control. She's a little girl.

Dr. Bradman. Oh, I see—yes, of course.

Charles. How old is she?

Madame Arcati. Rising seven when she died.

Mrs. Bradman. And when was that?

Madame Arcati. February the sixth, eighteen eighty-four.

Mrs. Bradman. Poor little thing.

(Dr. Bradman brings the chair about the gramophone to the table)

Dr. Bradman. She must be a bit long in the tooth by now. I should think.

Madame Arcati (at the fire-place. She stops walking and addresses Dr. Bradman across the stage.) You should think, Doctor Bradman, but I fear you don't; at least, not profoundly enough.

Mrs. Bradman. Do be quiet, George. You'll put Madame Arcati off.

Madame Arcati. Don't worry, my dear. I am quite used to sceptics. They generally turn out to be the most vulnerable and receptive in the long run.
RUTH. You'd better take that warning to heart, Doctor Bradman.

DR. BRADMAN. Please forgive me, Madame Arcati. I can assure you I am most deeply interested.

MADAME ARCATTI. It is of no consequence. Will you all sit round the table, please, and place your hands downwards on it?

RUTH. Come, Mrs Bradman—

CHARLES. What about the lights?

MADAME ARCATTI. All in good time, Mr Condomine. Sit down, please.

(The four sit down at each side of the séance table. RUTH is up stage facing Mrs Bradman. CHARLES on Ruth’s R. DR BRADMAN on Ruth’s L. MADAME ARCATTI comes to above the table between Ruth and Dr Bradman and surveys them critically, her head on one side. She is whistling a little tune. Then she sings)

The fingers should be touching... that’s right. I presume that that is the gramophone, Mr Condomine?

CHARLES (half rising) Yes. Would you like me to start it? It’s an electric one.

MADAME ARCATTI. Please stay where you are. I can manage.

(She moves to the gramophone L. and picks up the record album from the rack below it. Now let me see—what have we here? Brahms—oh dear me, no; Rachmaninoff—too florid. Where is the dance music?)

RUTH. They’re the loose ones on the left.

MADAME ARCATTI. I see. (She stoops down and produces a pile of dance records)

CHARLES. I’m afraid they’re none of them very new.

MADAME ARCATTI. Daphne is really more attached to Irving Berlin than anybody else. She likes a tune she can hum. Ah, here’s one—‘Always’.

CHARLES (half jumping up again) ‘Always’!

RUTH. Do sit down, Charles. What is the matter?

CHARLES (sitting) Nothing—nothing at all.

MADAME ARCATTI. The light switch is by the door?

RUTH. Yes, all except the small one on the desk, and the gramophone.

MADAME ARCATTI (moving above them to converse with Ruth) Very well, I understand.

RUTH. Charles, do keep still.

MRS. BRADMAN. Fingers touching, George. Remember what Madame Arcati said.

MADAME ARCATTI. Now there are one or two things that I should like to explain; so will you all listen attentively?

RUTH. Of course.

MADAME ARCATTI. Presently, when the music begins, I am going to switch out the lights. I may then either walk about the
room for a little or lie down flat. In due course I shall draw up this dear little stool and join you at the table. I shall place myself between you and your wife, Mr Condomine, and rest my hands lightly upon yours. I must ask you not to address me or move or do anything in the least distracting. Is that quite, quite clear?

CHARLES. Perfectly.

MADAME ARCATI. Of course, I cannot guarantee that anything will happen at all. Daphne may be unavailable. She had a head cold very recently, and was rather under the weather, poor child. On the other hand, a great many things might occur. One of you might have an emanation, for instance; or we might contact a poltergeist, which would be extremely destructive and noisy.

RUTH (annoyedly) In what way destructive?

MADAME ARCATI. They throw things, you know.

RUTH. No, I didn't know.

MADAME ARCATI. But we must cross that bridge when we come to it, mustn't we?

CHARLES. Certainly—by all means.

MADAME ARCATI. Fortunately an Elemental at this time of the year is most unlikely.

RUTH. What do Elementals do?

MADAME ARCATI. Oh, my dear, one can never tell. They're dreadfully unpredictable. Usually they take the form of a very cold wind.

MRS BRADMAN. I don't think I shall like that.

MADAME ARCATI. Occasionally reaching almost hurricane velocity.

RUTH. You don't think it would be a good idea to take the more breakable ornaments off the mantelpiece before we start?

MADAME ARCATI (indulgently) That really is not necessary, Mrs Condomine. I assure you I have my own methods of dealing with Elementals.

RUTH. I'm so glad.

MADAME ARCATI. Now, then; are you ready to empty your minds?

DR BRADMAN. Do you mean we're to try to think of nothing?

MADAME ARCATI. Absolutely nothing, Doctor Bradman. Concentrate on a space or a nondescript colour. That's really the best way.

DR BRADMAN. I'll do my damnedest.

MADAME ARCATI. Good work!—I will now start the music.

(She goes to the gramophone, puts on the record of 'Always', and begins to walk about the room; occasionally she moves into an abortive little dance step. Then with sudden speed, she runs across the room and switches off the lights.)

Lights!

(Light Cue No. 2, Act I, Scene 2)
SCENE 2  BLITHE SPIRIT

MRS. BRADMAN. Oh dear!
MADAME ARCATI. Quiet—please!

(In the gloom MADAME ARCATI, after wondering about a little, brings the stool from under the piano to between Ruth and Charles and sits at the table. The gramophone record comes to an end. There is dead silence)

Is there anyone there? ... (A long pause) ... Is there anyone there? ... (Another long pause) ... One rap for yes ... two taps for no. Now then ... is there anyone there?

(After a shorter pause, the table gives a little bump)

MRS. BRADMAN (involuntarily) Oh!
MADAME ARCATI. Sshhh! ... Is that you, Daphne? (The table gives a louder bump) Is your cold better, dear? (The table gives two loud bumps, very quickly) Oh, I'm so sorry. Are you doing anything for it? (The table bumps several times) I'm afraid she's rather fretful ... (There is a silence) Is there anyone there who wishes to speak to anyone here? (After a pause the table gives one bump) Ah! Now we're getting somewhere ... No, Daphne, don't do that, dear, you're hurting me ... Daphne, dear, please ... Oh, oh, oh! ... be good, there's a dear child ... You say there is someone there who wishes to speak to someone here? (One bump) Is it me? (Two sharp bumps) Is it Doctor Bradman? (Two bumps) Is it Mrs Bradman? (Two bumps) Is it Mrs Condomine? (Several very loud bumps, which continue until MADAME ARCATI shuts it down) Stop it! Behave yourself! Is it Mr Condomine? (There is dead silence for a moment, and then a very loud single bump) There's someone who wishes to speak to you, Mr Condomine.

CHARLES. Tell them to leave a message.

(The table bumps about loudly)

MADAME ARCATI. I really must ask you not to be flippant, Mr Condomine.
RUTH. Charles, how can you be so idiotic? You'll spoil everything.
CHARLES. I'm sorry; it slipped out.
MADAME ARCATI. Do you know anybody who has passed over recently?
CHARLES. Not recently, except my cousin in the Civil Service, and he wouldn't be likely to want to communicate with me. We haven't spoken for years.
MADAME ARCATI (hysterically) Are you Mr Condomine's cousin in the Civil Service? (The table bumps violently several times) I'm afraid we've drawn a blank. Can't you think of anyone else? Rack your brains.
RUTH (helpfully) It might be old Mrs Plummett, you know. She died on Whit-Monday.
CHARLES. I can’t imagine why old Mrs Plummett should wish to talk to me. We had very little in common.

RUTH. It’s worth trying, anyhow.

MADAME ARCATI. Are you old Mrs Plummett?

(The table remains still)

RUTH. She was very deaf. Perhaps you’d better shout.

MADAME ARCATI (shouting) Are you old Mrs Plummett? (Nothing happens) There’s nobody there at all.

MRS BRADMAN. How disappointing; just as we were getting on so nicely.

DR BRADMAN. Violet, be quiet.

MADAME ARCATI (rising) Well, I’m afraid there’s nothing for it but for me to go into a trance. I had hoped to avoid it because it’s so exhausting—however, what must be must be. Excuse me a moment while I start the gramophone again. (She comes to the gramophone)

CHARLES (in a strained voice) Not ‘Always’. Don’t play ‘Always’—

RUTH. Why ever not, Charles? Don’t be absurd.

MADAME ARCATI (gently) I’m afraid I must. It would be imprudent to change horses in midstream, if you know what I mean.

(She restarts the gramophone)

CHARLES. Have it your own way.

(MADAME ARCATI starts to moan and comes back slowly to the stool and sits. Then in the darkness a child’s voice is heard reciting rather breathlessly: ‘Little Tommy Tucker’)

DR BRADMAN. That would be Daphne. She ought to have had her adenoids out.

MRS BRADMAN. George—please.

(MADAME ARCATI suddenly gives a loud scream and falls off the stool on to the floor)

CHARLES. Good God!

RUTH. Keep still, Charles...

(CHARLES subsides. Everyone sits in silence for a moment, then the table starts bouncing about)

MRS BRADMAN. It’s trying to get away. I can’t hold it.

RUTH. Press down hard.

(The table falls over with a crash)

There now!

MRS BRADMAN. Ought we to pick it up or leave it where it is?

DR BRADMAN. How the hell do I know?

MRS BRADMAN. There’s no need to snap at me.
SCENE 2  BLITHE SPIRIT

ELVIRA (behind the fireplace opening, on the other side, a perfectly strange and very charming voice) Leave it where it is.

CHARLES. Who said that?
RUTH. Who said what?
CHARLES. Somebody said 'Leave it where it is.'
RUTH. Nonsense, dear.
CHARLES. I heard it distinctly.
RUTH. Well, nobody else did—did they?
MRS BRADMAN. I never heard a sound.
CHARLES. It was you, Ruth. You're playing tricks.
RUTH. I'm not doing anything of the sort. I haven't uttered.

(There is another pause, and then the voice says)

ELVIRA (behind the doorway c) Good evening, Charles.
CHARLES (nervously) Ventriloquism—that's what it is—
RUTH (irritably) What is the matter with you?
CHARLES. You must have heard that. One of you must have heard that!
RUTH. Heard what?
CHARLES. You mean to sit there solemnly and tell me that you none of you heard anything at all?
DR BRADMAN. I certainly didn't.
MRS BRADMAN. Neither did I. I wish I had. I should love to hear something.
RUTH. It's you who are playing the tricks, Charles. You're acting to try to frighten us.
CHARLES (breathlessly) I'm not. I swear I'm not.
ELVIRA (behind the window) It's difficult to think of what to say after seven years, but I suppose good evening is as good as anything else.
CHARLES (intensely) Who are you?
ELVIRA (as before) Elvira, of course—don't be so silly.
CHARLES. I can't bear this for another minute... (He rises violently) Get up, everybody—the entertainment's over.

(Light Cue No. 3. Act I, Scene 2)

(He rushes across the room and switches on the lights. Then he moves to the fireplace. All the others rise. MADAME ARCAT is on the floor, her head towards the audience and her feet on the stool)

RUTH. Oh, Charles, how tiresome of you. Just as we were beginning to enjoy ourselves.
CHARLES. Never again—that's all I can say. Never, never again as long as I live.
RUTH. What on earth's the matter with you?
CHARLES. Nothing's the matter with me. I'm just sick of the whole business, that's all.
BLITHE SPIRIT

ACT I

DR. BRADMAN. Did you hear anything that we didn't hear really?
CHARLES (with a forced laugh) Of course not—I was only pretending.
RUTH, I know you were.

MRS. BRADMAN. Oh dear—look at Madame Arcati!

(MADAME ARCADI is still lying on the floor with her feet upon the stool from which she fell. She is obviously quite unconscious)
RUTH. What are we to do with her?
CHARLES. Bring her round—bring her round as soon as possible.
DR. BRADMAN (going over and kneeling down beside her) I think we'd better leave her alone.
RUTH. But she might stay like that for hours.

(DR. BRADMAN is kneeling L of Madame Arcati, RUTH is above her. MRS. BRADMAN to the L of Dr. Bradman. CHARLES goes to the R of Madame Arcati below the sofa)

DR. BRADMAN (after feeling her pulse and examining her eye) She's out all right.
CHARLES (almost hysterically) Bring her round! It's dangerous to leave her like that.
RUTH. Really, Charles, you are behaving most peculiarly.

(Charles kneeling R of Madame Arcati, shaking her violently)

Wake up, Madame Arcati! Wake up! It's time to go home!
DR. BRADMAN. Here—go easy, old man!
CHARLES. Get some brandy—give her some brandy, lift her into the chair—help me, Bradman!

(Ruth goes to the drinks table L and pours out some brandy.
CHARLES and DR. BRADMAN lift MADAME ARCADI and put her in the armchair. MRS. BRADMAN takes the stool from her feet and puts it back under the piano)

(Leaning over her) Wake up, Madame Arcati! Little Tommy Tucker, Madame Arcati!

(Ruth brings the brandy to about the armchair. Charles takes it and gives some to MADAME ARCADI on her R. DR. BRADMAN puts her hand on her L. MRS. BRADMAN is above Dr. Bradman)

RUTH. Here's the brandy.

(MADAME ARCADI gives a slight moan and a shiver)
CHARLES (forcing some brandy between her lips) Wake up!

(MADAME ARCADI gives a prolonged shiver and chokes slightly over the brandy)

MRS. BRADMAN. She's coming round.
Scene 2

**BLITHE SPIRIT**

RUTH. Be careful, Charles, you're spilling it all down her dress.

MADAME ARCATI (opening her eyes) Well, that's that.

RUTH (soliciting) Are you all right?

MADAME ARCATI. Certainly I am. Never felt better in my life.

CHARLES. Would you like some more brandy?

MADAME ARCATI. So that's the funny taste in my mouth. Well, really! Fancy allowing them to give me brandy, Doctor Bradman.

You ought to have known better—brandy on top of a trance might have been catastrophic. Take it away, please. I probably shan't sleep a wink tonight, as it is.

CHARLES. I know I shan't.

RUTH. Why on earth not?

(Charles moves away to the fireplace and takes a cigarette)

CHARLES. The whole experience has unhinged me.

MADAME ARCATI. Well, what happened? Was it satisfactory?

RUTH. Nothing much happened, Madame Arcati, after you went off.

MADAME ARCATI. Something happened all right, I can feel it—(She rises, crosses to the fireplace, above Charles, and sniffs) No poltergeist, at any rate—that's a good thing. Any apparitions?

DR. BRADMAN. Not a thing.

MADAME ARCATI. No ectoplasm?

RUTH. I'm not quite sure what it is, but I don't think so.

MADAME ARCATI. Very curious. I feel as though something tremendous has taken place.

RUTH. Charles pretended he heard a voice in order to frighten us.

CHARLES (lighting a cigarette) It was only a joke.

MADAME ARCATI. A very poor one, if I may say so (She goes round above the sofa to rc) Nevertheless, I am prepared to swear that there is someone else psychic in this room apart from myself.

RUTH. I don't see how there can be really, Madame Arcati.

MADAME ARCATI. I do hope I haven't gone and released something. However, we are bound to find out within a day or two. If any manifestation should occur or you hear any unexpected noises, you might let me know at once.

RUTH. Of course we will. We'll telephone immediately.

MADAME ARCATI. I think I really must be on my way now.

RUTH. Wouldn't you like anything before you go?

MADAME ARCATI. No, thank you. I have some Ovalune all ready in a saucepan at home; it only needs boiling up.

DR. BRADMAN. Wouldn't you like to leave your bicycle here and let us drive you?

Mrs. BRADMAN. I honestly do think you should, Madame Arcati. After that trance and everything you can't be feeling quite yourself.

MADAME ARCATI. Nonsense, my dear, I'm as fit as a fiddle.
BLITHE SPIRIT
Act I

Always feel capital after a trance—rejuvenates me. Good night, Mrs Condomine.

Ruth. It was awfully sweet of you to take so much trouble.
Madame Arcati. I'm so sorry so little occurred. It's that cold of Daphne's, I expect. You know what children are when they have anything wrong with them. We must try again some other evening.

(Madame Arcati crosses above Ruth to R of Mrs Bradman)

Ruth. That would be lovely.
Madame Arcati (shaking hands with Mrs Bradman) Good night, Mrs Bradman.

Mrs Bradman. It was thrilling, it really was. I felt the table absolutely shaking under my hands.

(Madame Arcati crosses to Dr Bradman and shakes hands)

Madame Arcati. Good night, Doctor.

Dr Bradman. Congratulations, Madame Arcati.

Madame Arcati. I am fully aware of the irony in your voice, Doctor Bradman. As a matter of fact you'd be an admirable subject for telepathic hypnosis. A great churn of mine is an expert. I should like her to look you over.

Dr Bradman. I'm sure I should be charmed.

Madame Arcati. Good night, everyone. Next time we must really put our backs into it!

(With a comprehensive smile and a wave of the hand, she goes out, followed by Charles.)

Ruth sinks down into the sofa, laughing helplessly. Mrs Bradman comes and sits L of the armchair. Dr Bradman picks up the séance table and puts the desk-chair back up stage R, then comes back and puts the pouffe back in position down stage R. He then returns to L C)

Ruth. Oh dear! ... oh dear!

Mrs Bradman (beginning to laugh too) Be careful, Mrs Condomine; she might hear you.

Ruth. I can't help it. I really can't. I've been holding this in for ages.

Mrs Bradman. She certainly put you in your place, George, and serve you right.

Ruth. She's raving mad, of course; mad as a hatter.

Mrs Bradman. But do you really think she believes?

Dr Bradman. Of course not. The whole thing's a put-up job. I must say, though, she shoots a more original line than they generally do.

Ruth. I should think that she's probably half convinced herself by now.

Dr Bradman. Possibly. The trance was genuine enough; but that, of course, is easily accounted for.
I, a patient just now, the. I am afraid. I have got to get up the whole business; just for the fun of the thing. I must hypnotism? We had a bit of trouble. I may I spher e he wanted everything by showing off... I'm really very cross with him.

(Light Cue No. 4. Act I, Scene 2)

(At this moment ELVIRA comes in through the French window. She is charmingly dressed in a sort of negligée. Everything about her is grey; hair, skin, dress, hands, so we must accept the fact that she is not quite of this world. She passes between Dr and Mrs Bradman and Ruth while they are talking. None of them see her. She moves to the fireplace, then comes round the sofa to below the piano, where she leans. She regards them with interest, a slight smile on her face)

I suddenly felt a draught—there must be a window open.

DR BRADMAN (looking) No—they're shut.

MRS BRADMAN (laughing) Perhaps it was one of those what you may call 'emis that Madame Arcati was talking about.

DR BRADMAN. Elementals.

RUTH (also laughing again) Oh no, it couldn't be. She distinctly said that it was the wrong time of the year for Elementals.

(Charles comes in and moves to the armchair c)

CHARLES. Well, the old girl's gone pedalling off down the drive at the hell of a speed. We had a bit of trouble lighting her lamp.

MRS BRADMAN. Poor thing.

CHARLES. I've got a theory about her, you know. I believe she is completely sincere.

RUTH. Charles! How could she be?

CHARLES. Wouldn't it be possible, Doctor? Some form of self-hypnotism?

DR BRADMAN. It might be. As I was explaining to your wife just now, there are certain types of hysterical subjects...

MRS BRADMAN. George, dear, it's getting terribly late, we really must go home. You have to get up so early in the morning.

DR BRADMAN. You see? The moment I begin to talk about anything that really interests me, my wife interrupts me.

MRS BRADMAN. You know I'm right, darling—it's past eleven.

DR BRADMAN (moves to Charles c) I'll do a little reading up on the whole business; just for the fun of it.

CHARLES. You must have a drink before you go.

DR BRADMAN. No, really, thank you. Violet's quite right, I'm afraid. I have got to get up abominably early tomorrow. I have a patient being operated on in Canterbury.

(Mrs Bradman goes to Ruth, below the sofa. Ruth rises)
Mrs. Bradman. It has been a thrilling evening. I shall never forget it. It was sweet of you to include us.

Dr. Bradman. Good night, Mrs. Condomine. Thank you so much.

Charles. You’re sure about the drink?

Dr. Bradman. Quite sure, thanks.

Ruth. We’ll let you know if we find any poltergeists whirling about.

Dr. Bradman. I should never forgive you if you didn’t.

Mrs. Bradman. Come along, darling.

(The Bradmans exit; followed by Charles.)

Ruth crosses to the piano, leans over Elvira and gets a cigarette and lights it, then crosses back to the fireplace as Charles comes back into the room)

Ruth. Well, darling?

Charles (at end of the sofa. Absently) Well?

Ruth. Would you say the evening had been profitable?

Charles. Yes—I suppose so.

Ruth. I must say it was extremely funny at moments.

Charles. Yes—it certainly was.

Ruth. What’s the matter?

Charles. The matter?

Ruth. Yes. You seem old, somehow. Do you feel quite well?

Charles. Perfectly. I think I’ll have a drink. Do you want one?

Ruth. No, thank you, dear.

Charles (moving to the drinks table and pouring out a whisky and soda)

It’s rather chilly in this room.

Ruth. Come over by the fire.

Charles. I don’t think I’ll make any notes tonight. I’ll start fresh in the morning.

(Charles turns, the glass in his hand. He sees Elvira and drops the glass on the floor)

My God!
Ruth. Charles!

Elvira. That was very clumsy, Charles dear.

Charles. Elvira!—then it’s true—it was you!

Elvira. Of course it was.

Ruth (starts to go to Charles) Charles—darling Charles—what arc you talking about?

Charles (to Elvira) Are you a ghost?

Elvira (crossing below the sofa to the fire) I suppose I must be. It’s all very confusing.

Ruth (moving to a of Charles and becoming agitated) Charles—what do you keep looking over there for? Look at me. What’s happened?
**SCENE 2**  
**BLITHE SPIRIT**

**CHARLES.** Don't you see?  
**Ruth.** See what?  
**Charles.** Elvira.  
**Ruth.** (Staring at him inerudely) Elvira!!  
**Charles (with an effort at social grace).** Yes, Elvira dear, this is Ruth. Ruth, this is Elvira.  
(Ruth tries to take his arm. Charles retreats down stage.)  
**Ruth (with forced calmness).** Come and sit down, darling.  
**Charles.** Do you mean to say you can't see her?  
**Ruth.** Listen, Charles—you just sit down quietly by the fire and I'll mix you another drink. Don't worry about the mess on the carpet, Edith can clean it up in the morning.  
**Charles (clutching his head).** But you must be able to see her—she's there—look—right in front of you—there!  
**Ruth.** Are you mad! What's happened to you?  
**Charles.** You can't see her?  
**Ruth.** If this is a joke, dear, it's gone quite far enough. Sit down, for God's sake, and don't be idiotic.  
**Charles (dutching his head).** What am I to do! What the hell am I to do!  
**Elvira.** I think you might at least be a little more pleased to see me. After all, you conjured me up.  
**Charles.** I didn't do any such thing.  
**Elvira.** Nonsense; of course you did. That awful child with the cold came and told me you wanted to see me urgently.  
**Charles.** It was all a mistake, a horrible mistake.  
**Ruth.** Stop talking like that, Charles. As I told you before the joke's gone far enough.  
**Charles.** I've gone mad, that's what it is, I've just gone raving mad.  
**Ruth.** I don't happen to be an African native.  
**Charles.** How can I relax? I shall never be able to relax again as long as I live.  
**Ruth.** Drink some brandy.  
**Charles.** (drinking it at a gulp) There! Now are you satisfied?  
**Ruth.** Now sit down.  
**Charles.** Why are you so anxious for me to sit down? What good will that do?  
**Ruth.** I want you to relax. You can't relax standing up.  
**Elvira.** African natives can. They can stand on one leg for hours.  
**Charles.** I don't happen to be an African native.  
**Ruth.** You don't happen to be a what?
BLITHE SPIRIT

Act 1

CHARLES (savage) An African native!
RUTH. What's that got to do with it?
CHARLES. It doesn't matter, Ruth; really it doesn't matter.

(Charles sits in the armchair. Ruth moves about him)

We'll say no more about it. See, I've sat down.
RUTH. Would you like some more brandy?
CHARLES. Yes, please.

Elvira. Very unwise. You always had a weak head.
CHARLES. I could drink you under the table.
RUTH. There's no need to be aggressive, Charles. I'm doing my best to help you.
CHARLES. I'm sorry.
RUTH (coming to Charles with the brandy) Here, drink this; and then we'll go to bed.
Elvira. Get rid of her, Charles; then we can talk in peace.
CHARLES. That's a thoroughly immoral suggestion. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.
RUTH. What is there immoral in that?
CHARLES. I wasn't talking to you.
RUTH. Who were you talking to, then?
CHARLES. Elvira, of course.
RUTH. To hell with Elvira!
Elvira. There now—she's getting cross.
CHARLES. I don't blame her.
RUTH. What don't you blame her for?
CHARLES (rising and backing downstage i.e. a pace) Oh, God!
RUTH (sarcastically) Yes, dear, I can see her distinctly—under the piano with a zebra!
CHARLES. But Ruth—
RUTH. I am not going to stay here arguing any longer.
ELVIRA. Hurray!
CHARLES. Shut up!
RUTH (sneering) How dare you speak to me like that?
CHARLES. Listen, Ruth. Please listen—
Ruth. I will not listen to any more of this nonsense. I am going up to bed now; I'll leave you to turn out the lights. I shan't be asleep. I'm too upset. So you can come in and say good night to me if you feel like it.

Elvira. That's big of her, I must say.

Charles. Be quiet. You're behaving like a guttersnipe.

Ruth (softly) That is all I have to say. Good night, Charles.

(Ruth walks swiftly out of the room without looking at him again)

Charles (following Ruth to the door) Ruth-

Elvira. That was one of the most enjoyable half-hours I have ever spent.

Charles (putting down his glass on the drinks table) Oh, Elvira—how could you!

Elvira. Poor Ruth!...

Charles. (sitting) This is obviously an hallucination, isn't it?

Elvira. I'm afraid I don't know the technical term for it.


Elvira. Where have you come from?

Elvira. Do you know, it's very peculiar, but I've sort of forgotten.

Charles. Are you to be here indefinitely?

Elvira. I don't know that either.

Charles. Oh, my God!

Elvira. Why? Would you hate it so much if I was?

Charles. Well, you must admit it would be embarrassing?

Elvira. I don't see why, really. It's all a question of adjusting yourself. Anything, I think it's horrid of you to be so unwelcoming and disagreeable.

Charles. Now look here, Elvira—

Elvira (near tears) I do. I think you're mean.

Charles. Try to see my point, dear. I've been married to Ruth for five years, and you've been dead for seven...

Elvira. Not dead, Charles. 'Passed over.' It's considered vulgar to say 'dead' where I come from.

Charles. Passed over, then.

Elvira. At any rate, now that I'm here, the least you can do is to make a pretence of being amiable about it.

Charles. Of course, my dear, I'm delighted in one way.

Elvira. I don't believe you love me any more.

Charles. I shall always love the memory of you.

Elvira (crooning slowly above the sofa by the armchair downstage) You mustn't think me unreasonable, but I really am a little hurt. You called me back; and at great inconvenience I came—and you've been thoroughly churlish ever since I arrived.
BLITHE SPIRIT

Act I

CHARLES (gently) Believe me, Elvira, I most emphatically did not send for you. There's been some mistake.

ELVIRA (irritably) Well, somebody did—and that child said it was you. I remember I was playing backgammon with a very sweet old Oriental gentleman, I think his name was Genghis Khan, and I'd just thrown double sixes, and then the child paged me and the next thing I knew I was in this room. Perhaps it was your subconscious...

CHARLES. You must find out whether you are going to stay or not, and we can make arrangements accordingly.

ELVIRA. I don't see how I can.

CHARLES. Well, try to think. Isn't there anyone that you know, that you can get in touch with over there—on the other side, or whatever it's called—who could advise you?

ELVIRA. I can't think—it seems so far away—as though I'd dreamed it...

CHARLES. You must know somebody else besides Genghis Khan...

ELVIRA. Oh, Charles...

CHARLES. What is it?

ELVIRA. I want to cry, but I don't think I'm able to.

CHARLES. What do you want to cry for?

ELVIRA. It's seeing you again—and you being so irascible, like you always used to be.

CHARLES. I don't mean to be irascible, Elvira.

ELVIRA. Darling—I don't mind really—I never did.

CHARLES. Is it cold—being a ghost?

ELVIRA. No—I don't think so.

CHARLES. What happens if I touch you?

ELVIRA. I doubt if you can. Do you want to?

CHARLES (sitting at the end of the sofa) Oh, Elvira... (He buries his face in his hands)

ELVIRA (moving to the armchair) Oh, Charles...

CHARLES (looking up) What's better?

ELVIRA. Your voice was kinder.

CHARLES. Was I ever unkind to you when you were alive?

ELVIRA. Often.

CHARLES. Oh, how can you! I'm sure that's an exaggeration.

ELVIRA. Not at all. You were an absolute pig that time we went to Cornwall and stayed in that awful hotel. You hit me with a billiard cue.

(Light Cue No. 5. Act I, Scene 2)

CHARLES. Only very, very gently.

ELVIRA. I loved you very much.
SCENE 2

BLITHE SPIRIT

CHARLES. I loved you too . . . (He puts out his hand to her and then draws it away) No, I can't touch you. Isn't that horrible?

ELVIRA. Perhaps it's as well if I'm going to stay for any length of time. (She sits on the arm of the sofa)

CHARLES. I suppose I shall wake up eventually . . . but I feel strangely peaceful now.

---

(Exit Cue No. 6, Act I, Scene 2)

ELVIRA. That's right. Put your head back

CHARLES (doing so) Like that?

ELVIRA (stroking his hair) Can you feel anything?

CHARLES. Only a very little breeze through my hair . . .

ELVIRA. Well, that's better than nothing.

CHARLES (drowsily) I suppose if I'm really out of my mind they'll put me in an asylum.

ELVIRA. Don't worry about that—just relax.

CHARLES (very drowsily indeed) Poor Ruth.

ELVIRA (gently and sweetly) To hell with Ruth.

By now the blackout is complete

---

The Curtain Falls
Analysis of the Major Characters in the Play *Blithe Spirit*

Charles

- Desire
  - Charles’s desire is to be best-selling author.
- Will
  - Weak.
- Moral stance
  - Charles has no morals. If it feels good to him, he does it.
- Decorum
  - *We must look proper. We must never be seen to be anything but proper.*
- Summary list of adjectives
  - Weak, whipped, dominated, unwillingly compliant
- Initial Character Mood Intensity at the scene opening expressed as:
  - docile
- Heartbeat
  - Slow, lethargic
- Perspiration: heavy, light etc
  - Act I Scene 1: Light
  - A I S 2: Light, until “My God!” (27): Heavy
  - A II S 1 – A III S 2: Heavy
- Stomach condition
  - Charles becomes uncomfortable at the “My God!” on page 27, and is increasingly more uncomfortable through the rest of the show.
• Muscle tension
  o Initially relaxed; however, once Madame Arcati chooses the song “Always.” Charles does not relax for the rest of the play.

• Breathing, rate, depth
  o Relaxed and normal, until he is under stress. During the séance, Madame Arcati chooses the record “Always” causing his breathing to become much deeper and much faster. When Elvira appears, his breathing becomes very shallow and erratic.

Ruth

• Desire
  o Be a good wife, and preside over a smooth running home.

• Will
  o Passively forceful and domineering

• Moral stance
  o Ruth will get her way regardless of Charles’s wishes or needs.

• Decorum
  o Prim and proper with everyone, including her husband. She is the epitome of appropriate behavior as befits one of her social status.

• Summary list of adjectives
  o Headstrong, willful, controlling

• Initial Character Mood Intensity at the scene opening expressed as:
  o In complete control, both of Edith and of Charles

• Heartbeat
• Smooth and slow. Very intense stress, such as Charles’s behavior at the end of
  Act I, may cause a slight increase in temple.

• Perspiration: heavy, light etc
  o Ruth does not perspire. She will glisten, but only while horseback riding or
    playing lawn tennis.

• Stomach condition
  o Controlled

• Muscle tension
  o Calm and relaxed veneer, belied by tense muscles of she-who-must-be-obeyed.

• Breathing, rate, depth
  o Shallow and quick, always ready to make demands or deliver commands.

Elvira

• Desire
  o Be with her former husband.

• Will
  o Intensely strong, unbending, unyielding.

• Moral stance
  o What morals? *If I want to do it, I will.*

• Decorum
  o When alive, she appeared proper. Now that she is not, she doesn’t care what
    others think of her.

• Summary list of adjectives
  o Deceitful, demanding, forward, pushy
• Initial Character Mood Intensity at the scene opening expressed as:
  o Strong willed, haughty, aggressive, assertive, smug

• Heartbeat
  o Slow and controlled

• Perspiration: heavy, light etc
  o She is a lady. She does not perspire. Ever.

• Stomach condition
• Muscle tension
  o Tense, worried

• Breathing, rate, depth
  o Slow and shallow

Madame Arcati
• Desire
  o To bridge the gap between the living and the “other side.”

• Will
  o Strong, flexible, willowy

• Moral stance
  o Superior to most, because of her ability to communicate with “the other side.”

• Decorum
  o Extremely proper, polite to a fault, eccentric

• Summary list of adjectives
  o Eccentric, odd, peculiar, deluded

• Initial Character Mood Intensity at the scene opening expressed as:
o Happy to be of service

• Heartbeat
  o Slow and pronounced

• Perspiration: heavy, light etc
  o Heavy, with the knowledge of the “other side”

• Stomach condition
  o Flat and empty, until a trance

• Muscle tension
  o Relaxed, but very tense as a séance approaches

• Breathing, rate, depth
  o Slow, deep, controlled

Edith

• Desire
  o To please Sir and Madam

• Will
  o Weak, malleable

• Moral stance
  o The Madam and Sir are always correct. Do exactly as they say.

• Decorum
  o Pleasant to everyone, obsequious to the Sir and Madam

• Summary list of adjectives
  o Quiet, servile, pliable, obedient, stressed

• Initial Character Mood Intensity at the scene opening expressed as:
• Subservient

• Heartbeat
  o Rapid!

• Perspiration: heavy, light etc
  o Heavy, due to intense rushing about

• Stomach condition
  o Tense, queasy

• Muscle tension
  o Tense, always ready to jump into action when Madame calls

• Breathing, rate, depth
  o Rapid, deep breaths, needed to maintain the breakneck pace she sets for herself

**Polar Attitudes of the Major Characters**

**Charles:**
I must submit to the women to get my way. (Beginning)

I can stand on my own. (End)

**Ruth:**
Elvira was a poor lost soul who clung to Charles. (Beginning)

Charles is a fiend who treats all women badly. (End)

**Elvira:**
I am finally reunited with my love, Charles. (Beginning)

The brute mistreated me throughout our marriage. (End)

**Madame Arcati:**
I see the metaphysical world clearly. (Beginning)

I have no real clue how the metaphysical world works. (End)

**Edith:**
I want to please Mistress and Master. (Beginning)

I am confused. What have I done to displease Master? (End)

---

**Ideas of the Play and Main Idea of *Blithe Spirit***
For centuries, mankind has asked numerous questions about death. What happens when we die? Can we return to this plane from whatever astral plane to which we have been transported? If a wife dies, the husband remarries, and the wife returns in spirit form, how is she to be addressed? Husband and ex-wife? Widower and former wife? Would this man not be guilty of bigamy? *Blithe Spirit* seeks to actively ponder these questions in a comedic manner.

The play centers on Charles Condomine, a writer, and his second wife Ruth. When the slightly off-kilter medium Madame Arcati performs a séance at the Condomine home, the shade of Elvira, Charles’s first (and dead) wife appears. Unfortunately, Elvira can’t provide many details about the “other side.” She remembers playing backgammon with Genghis Khan, and remembers a child informing her that Charles wanted her. The next thing she knows, is that she is back in the house she and Charles shared, and which Charles now shares with Ruth.

In 1941 England, people were dying daily. Germany was trying to bomb England into submission, and it wasn’t working. Churchill had said that the English people would fight, on the beaches and in the streets, and that surrender was not an option. The death toll was rising, and with it the question, where do we go when we die?

Coward’s play prods the audience to ponder this question and then offers them a silly answer. Elvira describes what she was doing in the hereafter as playing backgammon. So, when we die, we go play board games for eternity? Church teaching does not include a celestial gaming parlor. The subtitle of the play, “an improbable farce in three acts,” alludes to Coward’s attitude towards this question.

Coward answers the second question, can we return to this plane, with the appearance of Elvira. However, she can’t remember how this was accomplished. One moment she is at the backgammon board, and the next she is back in the living-room of her former house. This
crossing-back cannot be scientifically proven, since the event cannot be replicated. Hence, the audience is forced to ponder whether a crossing could happen, but aren’t given any real answer.

How would one refer to Charles and Elvira? Since Elvira came back, is Charles still a widower? Since widower refers to the wife dying, does that change when the wife returns from the other side? Are they still married? Traditional wedding vows contain the phrase “till death do us part.” This would seem to indicate that once Elvira died, her marriage to Charles was dissolved. Coward seems to ask: What if the marriage was not dissolved? Would Charles not be married to two women at the same time? Comedy is often born from the absurd, and this is certainly absurd.

Charles suddenly finds himself with two women, one who was married to him and one who is married to him. How does one deal with one visible wife and one invisible ex-wife? The combination of the two women, one visible to all and one visible only to Charles, presents great comic possibilities. Ruth misinterprets Charles, thinking his answers to Elvira are directed at her. The audience is left laughing at the irritation of Ruth and the complete discomfort of Charles.

Coward actually does provide possible answers regarding the afterlife, unlikely though there are. The audience members have the chance to ponder these answers while laughing at the chaos and confusion of the characters and the confusion. This would have been a welcome respite for audiences in 1941 England, at the height of the London Blitz, and can be just as pertinent to today’s audience.

Summary of Previous Reviews of Blithe Spirit

Blithe Spirit has been played many times through the years, including four runs on Broadway. The Oak Park Festival Theatre, in Oak Park, Illinois, produced the show as part of
their 2008 season. The Festival website included several reviews from area critics. Catey Sullivan, writing for Oak Leaves, says the production ranges from “fizzy to flat.” She denounces some overacting, but she praises the play itself, calling it “brilliant,” and says that “Coward’s genius for sardonic, subversive turns of phrase gleam throughout.” When Elvira shows up “in all her ghostly glory, the moment is a terrific merger of just the right lighting, sound, costuming, makeup and most importantly – actor.” (Sullivan) Ms. Sullivan apparently enjoyed the show.

Ed Vincent, of the Oak Park Journal, also wrote of his experience with this production. His first sentence is “Highly recommended for all.” He writes of Edith, the maid, evolving in her movements from “new born impala” to “stilt walking hominid.” Madame Arcati reminded Mr. Vincent of a “wildly expressive art student from college bound for the unknown reaches of reality.” Mr. Vincent also writes that the “intimacy and settings are ideal for this small gathered audience, reminiscent of a rich Count entertaining his guests at the chateau.” (Vincent) This is the atmosphere that Derby High School is attempting to create, by playing Blithe Spirit in its Black Box Theatre.

The recent run of Blithe Spirit on Broadway, at the Shubert Theatre (IMDB) was reviewed by Harry Huan. Mr. Huan praised the show, the producers, the director, and the designers. Nowhere in his review is a negative brought forth. That honor was left to Scott Brown, writing the theatre review for New York Magazine. Mr. Brown asks if Blithe Spirit has “an urgent reason to rouse its ectoplasm and haunt again? . . . Blakemore’s answer is a resounding ‘kind of’. “ (Brown) He is particularly unhappy with the performance of Rupert Everett, who plays Charles Condomine. Charles, Brown writes, has “chemistry only with himself, and it’s hard to see why anyone, living or dead, would fight for him.” Mr. Brown ends
his review with this gem: "This production has the same problem. Only the ladies keep the night alive." This is ironic since the actresses were playing dead women.

Noel Pierce Coward

(16 December 1899 – 26 March 1973)

Noel Coward was born just before Christmas in 1899. The date of his birth inspired his name. His parents considered him a gift, as they had lost their first son the previous year. Noel was the child of a piano tuner and the family lived just above the poverty line. This was to be pivotal throughout Noel’s life.

At the age of ten, Coward auditioned and won a part in a play called The Goldfish. While his mother played “Nearer My God To Thee” on a piano, Coward tap-danced violently and won the part. By fifteen, Coward had made his stage debut, and at twenty was a produced playwright. By the time of his death, he had written: sixty produced plays, more than three hundred songs, and a long list of short stories and screenplays. Coward’s writing career rarely faltered, in part because he wrote plays with the leading man perfectly suited to his favorite actor: himself. Leading parts in Blithe Spirit (Charles), Design for Living (Leo), and Private Lives (Elyot) were all masterfully played by the playwright. His characters lacked any internal filter: what they thought came straight out of their mouths. The characters in Coward’s plays were the upper class, rich and definitely sophisticated. His plays involved their foibles and the public ate it up. The combination made Coward a wealthy man.

Coward freely admitted he was a gifted actor. He is quoted as saying “I’m an enormously talented man, and there’s no use pretending that I’m not.” When Dick Cavett interviewed him in 1970, Cavett asked “You’re, you… what is the word when one has such terrific, prolific qualities?” Coward replied “Talent.” (Kenrick) Coward made his first stage
appearances at age seven. He loved to sing and dance, and "threw frightful tantrums if he was not summoned to perform for guests." (Kenrick) From I Leave It To You in 1920 through a role in the 1968 movie The Italian Job Coward played parts large and small, but most of his roles were larger than life.

Coward's parents struggled to support the family. His father was a failure at selling pianos, and eventually gave up trying, preferring to allow his wife to support them. She turned their home into a boarding house in 1918, and worked tirelessly to support a husband and a struggling-artist son. Coward sold short stories to help with finances. England was a very class-conscious society during this time, and the elite would snub any actor born poor. Coward rose above this through determination and charm. During World War I, Coward became friends with artist Philip Streatfield, who asked wealthy socialite Astley Cooper to help Coward. Coward became a frequent guest at her estate, and thrived in the atmosphere of servants and formal meals. He immortalized this first taste of elegance in many of his comedies. His early financial struggles pushed him to work harder to earn more. As a result, he owned homes in England and Jamaica. (Kenrick)

Coward maintained a workaholic pace throughout his life. During the run of The Constant Nymph in 1926, he collapsed on stage from overwork. His doctors insisted on an extended vacation, which took Coward to Hawaii. He spent the rest of his life traveling between Jamaica, New York and London, where he wrote and performed. Early in the morning of March 26, 1973, Coward suffered a stroke at his home in Jamaica. He was found by a servant on the bathroom floor and helped into bed. Coward insisted that his friends not be awoken, and he slipped away to the Other Side just before dawn.

Coward did not listen to the critics, and frequently verbally abused them. Two quotes
come readily to mind: “I have always been fond of them . . . I think it is so frightfully clever of them to go night after night to the theatre and know so little about it.” And this comparison: “Criticism and Bolshevism have one thing in common. They both seek to pull down that which they could never build.” (Kenrick)

The information for this section came from two sources. The website Musicals101.com featured a wonderful section titled “Noel Coward 101” that contained his life, his work and his quotes. The website Broadway.com contained a review of Blithe Spirit on Broadway that included a wonderful history of the playwright. I am indebted to both for their insights.

**Learning Goals and Student Outcomes**

Theatre, by its very nature, is creative and exploratory. Modern theatre is also collaborative, with each participant adding his or her own expertise and creativity to the troupe. This structure allows, and even forces the participants, to learn about themselves and the world around them in ways that would not otherwise be seen. My desire for my students, both cast and crew of Blithe Spirit, is to expand their skill set in both their craft and their life. Upon referencing the CWU website thesis examples, I concluded that the student will:

- Understand the history of the world at the time the play was written and the time the play was set.
- Gain greater insight into black comedy and its cathartic effect on audience members during difficult times.
- Build upon existing skills in both acting and technical areas.
- Effectively use voice and body to create realistic and believable characters. This will include: identifying, understanding, and pursuing the characters objectives.
- Study and understand the script to create dynamic stage pictures that further the
• Understand the need and the process of taking risks and making choices in character and performance.

• Further the students understanding of the power of movement. This will include: focal points, gestures, levels, and the disparity between staged and organic movement.

• Understand the place of characters in the overall mosaic of the play and the through-line of the play.

• Explore and enhance technical skills necessary to produce a play.

• Use lighting, sound, and physical effects to affect the atmosphere in the performance space.

• Identify and explore metaphors and images from the script that further the director’s concept.

• Learn to formulate, provide and receive positive, constructive feedback on personal and ensemble performance.

• Extend their ability to work in small, collaborative groups.

• Extend personal and professional relationships with fellow cast and crew members.

• Extend leadership skills within the ensemble.

• Rediscover the joy, satisfaction, and excitement that arise when creating a new product.

• Learn to continually strive for excellence in rehearsal and in performance.

• Understand the challenges of truthful and honest character movement in a small story.
venue.
Works Cited


Production Journal for *Blithe Spirit*

August 31, 2009

We discussed the casting in Repertory Theatre class today. The class was overall pleased with their parts. The cast is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Cast A</th>
<th>Cast B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edith</td>
<td>Kimmy Deaver</td>
<td>Sarah Packard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Jami Mumma</td>
<td>Ashley Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Grady Hartman</td>
<td>Evan Jewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Bradman</td>
<td>Jacob Ponte</td>
<td>Jordan Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Bradman</td>
<td>Ciera Dockter</td>
<td>Misba Khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madam Arcati</td>
<td>Myriah Smith</td>
<td>Miranda Gibfried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elvira</td>
<td>Lisa Prater</td>
<td>Lea Herdler</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The double casting is not my idea of fun. I am going to have a hard enough time getting this show together due to a bit of a restriction on rehearsal time, and I am not looking forward to working with two casts. On the other hand, and we discussed this in class, I want the pairs of actors on a particular part to work together to research and prepare the part. They can help each other learn the part. If they do this, we should have a great show.

After school, cast A read through Act I. I am making a list of words they are mis-pronouncing. Amazing how long a cold read can take.

September 1, 2009

Cast A read Act II and Act III Scene 1 with Cast B following along. We will finish the Act III tomorrow with Cast A, and then read the entire thing with Cast B.

September 2, 2009

Cast A finished Act II, and Cast B started Act I. Managed to get through Act I Scene 2 today. I definitely have some non-readers in this cast. Lots of tripping on words and lines. Can’t listen for flow and tempo yet.

September 3, 2009

Cast B read from Act II to the end. I was not there due to a conflict. My assistant, Tom Sherow, sat with them.

September 8, 2009

More table work. We started through the play listening to the lines and words. We were looking for the flow, tempo and rhythm. Managed to get through Act I, which surprised me. This was not a long rehearsal, and I thought the kids did a great job of listening and commenting. They are understanding the concept of tempo from class, and applying it here. Can’t wait to see
tomorrow.

September 9, 2009

Act II, with the same listening to the tempo and the flow.

September 10, 2009

Wrap up the script listening for tempo and flow. When we finished, we spent a few minutes talking about music and its relationship to the tempo and rhythm of the words. They were to begin looking for a song for their character.

September 14, 2009

This was an interesting day. We discussed the characters in more depth, with everyone sharing how they saw different characters, not just their own. Most of them had their song, so we listened. Great songs, and I think they have grasped how the character needs to move. We will see.

September 15, 2009

We spent a bunch of time today on two main concepts: interruptions and pronunciations. We worked on finishing the sentences that were to be interrupted. When Ruth is telling everyone the dinner seating arrangements on p. 12, she really must continue talking until the lights are fading out or the entire group has left the stage. So we figured out the rest of the seating chart, so she would know what she had to say.

Pronouncing words correctly is a must for Coward. We had a rather long list, with everything from grandeur to jargon that was being butchered. I have kept this list for future reference. By the end of the day, I think we had all the words figured out and pronounced correctly.

September 16, 2009

Jordan quit the show today. I knew he was struggling, trying to balance school, the show and a job. OK, maybe I am glad I double cast this thing. Jake has committed to both weekends, so we have a Dr. Bradman all six nights.

We spent today wrapping the discussion on characters, and even got up and started moving. The set is not finished, but enough is there to give them the idea, and they need to start moving. I haven’t really seen any memorization yet, so maybe movement will help. We improvised today, and just tried to find something that felt ok.

September 17, 2009

Worked our way through Act I today, playing with movement. Michael and Nike really showed me the importance of “playing” when you are on stage with a character, and we did just that.
to 3 and a half. Right where is has to be.

October 27, 2009

Hey, they took my notes and put them into the show! That’s nice to see! This thing is going to work!

October 28, 2009

Cast B just ran the show in 3 hours. Cool! Myriah and Miranda have managed to make one character appear two completely different ways. Unfortunately, the other actors have not taken advantage of the opportunity to work together.

October 29, 2009

Cast B ran the full show from 12:30 to 3:30, and then Cast A came in and ran the full show from 5:00 to 8:30. My stage manager ran both rehearsals, since I had to be out in the commons at Parent Teacher Conferences. I would have prefered to be in rehearsal. Cheyenne (my stage manager) told me both rehearsals went very well, effects and all.

November 2, 2009

Dress Rehearsal! How can effects that have worked great for two weeks, and techies who have made them work great, suddenly malfunction? I have a big list of notes for everyone, and I think I will have my lab aide type them. Hope she can read my writing.

November 3, 2009

Ok, that I am proud of! I am willing to let the public see this show. The kids did a great job. Touchups should be fast.

November 4, 2009

We spent about 90 minutes touching up some minor stuff. We are ready!

November 9, 2009

Cast B Dress Rehearsal. When half you main characters stay the same, this is easy. Charles and Ruth behaved as if this was simply an extension of last weekend. They are a bit more comfortable with each other and with their roles, and it carries over to the rest of the cast.

November 10, 2009

This is the last rehearsal for Blithe Spirit. The entire cast and crew was a bit down at the beginning, but picked up when the show started.
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
THEATRE ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM

THESIS PROJECT/ PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

STUDENT- Richard Schultz ID#

UNDER CONSIDERATION IS DIRECTION OF: Blythe Spirit

EVALUATOR’S NAME: Scott Robinson TITLE: Professor

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Derby High School

DATE OF VIEWING: Nov 13, 2009

DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE VENUE:

DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPT:

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTUAL PRODUCTION DIRECTION AND/OR REALIZED DESIGN OF SETS, PROPS, COSTUMES, LIGHTING, SOUND:

Over all the design elements worked for the production but several were very strange choices for the period. It was interesting that Charles used a cell phone. Equally out of place we the 1970’s looking record albums. Another small issue were the linking-in of the book cases. Real bookcases had wood texture behind the painted books they did not. This accentuated the artificialness of the painted books and did not lend to the production’s concept nor did it allow the audience to understand the social status of the home owner. This is a heavy prop show and it seemed the actors were not comfortable with using the props. If your script says they have snapdragons they should hold snapdragons not some other kind of flower.

Lighting had some harsh choices. Several times the light intensity was brought up to abruptly that it “burn my retinas.” In the second act they had some issues a light continued to flash on the garden door—Elvira?... Or a new spirit in the theatrical light fixture? It is unclear.

Costumes were appropriate yet you must remember that this is a well-to-do respected citizen. In the second act he appeared to have been sleeping in his suit. Small details should be considered. Hats for men coming from outside, not using white socks on Charles with a dark suit.

Music was very appropriate and in sync with the established period. I was expecting “Always” to come back as a book end to the production but missed that.

HOW DID THE PRODUCTION DIRECTION OR DESIGN IMPLEMENT THE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THE CONCEPT STATEMENT?

The concept state focuses primarily on scenic elements of the play. The elements addressed in the concept did reflect in the production.

APPROPRIATENESS OF CHOICE OF SCRIPT FOR ABILITIES OF PERFORMERS, AUDIENCE, VENUE, ND/OR ACADEMIC SETTING?

I believe this was an excellent production for the space, community, and talent level of the performers. I had expected more technically simple because of the focus and expertise demonstrated in classroom environment by the director.
ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING IF APPLICABLE: CLEAR DELINEATION OF UNITS OF ACTION, MOTIVATED BLOCKING, VISUALLY INTERESTING COMPOSITION, VISUAL EXPRESSION OF METAPHOR, USE OF PICTURIZATION IN STORYTELLING, CLEAR AND BELIEVABLE CHARACTERIZATION, ADEQUATE USE OF BODY AND VOICE, UNITY OF PRODUCTION ELEMENTS, CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.

Over all blocking was difficult. Semicircle pictures appeared on a regular basis in the first act. Much of this was caused by a lack of anything pinning the corners of the set. There really was nowhere to actors to go to create any picturization opportunities. This complicated the plot as it is difficult to believe Charles does not actually see Elvira.

Third act blocking was better.

Ruth and Charles had a hard time connecting even looking at each other. They also needed to use the obstacles in the home to help build the argument and conflict of the plot. In Act II a significant amount of action happened so far up stage the audience felt alienated which causes us to loss interest in what Charles is facing.

Motivated action is often lost. Charles at one point states: “We must be going,” and neglects to even move toward the door. Does he want to go or not? Actions need to have something to do with the dialogue; that is missing.

Diction was a problem that needed addressing throughout.

Pacing was an issue throughout which was accentuated in Act III change with every actor checking every prop over and over while we sat to watch.

WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THIS PARTICULAR PERFORMANCE VENUE, WAS THIS PRODUCTION SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY?

Satisfactory
Final Evaluation of Blithe Spirit

The production of Blithe Spirit at Derby High School brought several challenges to the cast and crew. The students at Derby High School had never performed in such a small venue, nor had they focused so much on the text of a play. The students at DHS had also never focused on the historical period.

Setting a play in 1941 England posed several challenges. The students needed to understand the time period. England was in the middle of the London Blitz, and almost everyone in the first audiences would have lost someone they knew to the bombing. Most of the cast and crew have seen this during the current conflicts overseas. The cast relished the style of comedy of Blithe Spirit, and enjoyed playing the characters. They understood that black comedy can have a very cathartic effect of the audience, and held back to allow the comedy to show. The actors did an excellent job of seeing that the comedy came not from funny lines or silly movements but from the situation and the approach the character has to that situation. The actors played the characters honestly, and the situation truthfully, and allowed the laughs to come naturally. A local high school performed Blithe Spirit at the same time as Derby High School, and several of my cast members went to see a performance. This school chose to play the lines for laughs instead of for honesty, and the laughter was much less than ours. My students were very happy with our choice of approach.

Performing in the Black Box at Derby High School puts the actors virtually in the lap of the audience. When the actors realized how close the audience would be great consternation showed on their faces. Having an audience literally close enough to touch the actors is forced the actors to play every motion and emotion truthfully. The actors responded to this challenge, and cut the fakery from their work. I wanted this challenge for this group of actors, not only
because I thought they could rise to the challenge but because the acting corps at Derby High School needed to see actors that played a part honestly and fully. The actors found the characters objectives through the script, and brought those objectives to light through the movement they chose for the character. I was very pleased with the complete characters that each actor developed.

I wanted the actors that were portraying a particular character to work together to develop that character. This is exactly how Myriah and Miranda developed Madam Arcati. These two young ladies spent countless hours throughout the rehearsal process collaborating on the character. Each would carefully observe how the other was playing a particular section of the script, and give notes about the choices that were made. This lead to the two women each developing their own unique character, but the two portrayals each were based in the script. I am very proud of the work these two women put into their character. Unfortunately, the other actors did not collaborate this closely. The two women playing Elvira did not talk to each other about the character, nor did the two women playing Mrs. Bradman. Grady and Jake, Charles and Dr. Bradman, respectively, worked closely with each other to produce movement that was believable as two upper class members of society. With the exception of the blasted white socks Grady wore, I was pleased with his work.

The set was designed to put the audience inside the drawing room at the Condomine’s home. The colors were chosen to be neutral, rather than bright, reflecting the Condomine’s place in society. I was pleased with the work our student artists did in creating a fireplace, bookshelves (and books) and other parts of the set. Unfortunately time was fleeting, and we were unable to texture the walls. While discussing the show with Scott Robinson, he asked why the space behind the books was painted as wall, not wood grained. I had not even seen that
feature until Scott mentioned it. I would have liked to have wooden chairs around the table, and even a real pouf, but finances prevented it. A significant budget cut this school year has made it necessary to keep expenditures as low a possible, and the chairs was an obvious cut.

The special effect proved a big challenge for one of the parents. Steve, the father of a cast member, took on the task of special effects. The candle flying, the pictures and the fireplace were his design and construction. The pictures were all in our stock at Derby High School, and minor modifications allowed them to be used for this show. The flying candle was an especially ingenious rig, using two small fishing poles to control the flying.

Lighting was challenging in this space. The grid is hung at 13 feet, which makes a 45-degree angle on lights difficult to achieve. I was not particularly happy with the backlighting, since I really could not keep it out of the eyes of the audience. I believe that barn doors for the Fresnels would have made this possible, and I have made obtaining some a priority for next school year. Mr. Robinson commented on the speed of the up fade from blackout after his visit. After the first weekend, I wanted a faster up fade time than the five seconds that is default time on the light board. I instructed the light board operator in how to change this, and asked her to change the times following a blackout. I thought I communicated a three second time but I apparently did not. This was fixed for the following night. I was very happy with the lighting effects on the fadeout at the end of Act I when Charles is lying on the couch and Elvira is playing with his hair. The audience was given only that picture by using a single instrument on that corner of the couch with the rest of the stage in darkness. I am also pleased with the effect achieved for the séance. Using a single ellipsoidal with a very dark blue gel aimed straight down upon the table and no other lights on stage gave a very ethereal look to the scene while still allowing the audience to see the action.
The cast and crew of *Blithe Spirit* enjoyed the process of creating this show. The students saw how with risks come rewards both internally and externally. Early in the rehearsal period Grady was struggling with the number of lines he had to learn. By the performance, he had learned them all, and had moved past the lines into the character. He received praise from audience members and cast members alike for his portrayal and characterization of Charles. Each night of performance the excitement backstage was palpable. The entire group was happy with the show, and looked forward to going out and performing again.

I was pleased with the performance of *Blithe Spirit*. The cast and crew did an excellent job, and I consider the show a great success. There are some changes I will make in future productions. First and foremost is rehearsal time. I scheduled our rehearsals, and then saw conflicts cut time from that schedule. Everything from Homecoming to Parent Teacher Conferences cuts into the time available to rehearse. It amazes me the amount of time that gets lost to outside interruptions. At the same time, eight weeks of rehearsal is about all you can realistically expect to get at Derby High School. I would also like to improve the costuming for our shows. I need to improve my work designing costumes, so that the costumer can focus on producing and procuring the needed costumes.
Works Consulted


<http://nymag.com/arts/theater/reviews/55478/>.


Appendix A

The Derby High School Production of *Blithe Spirit* took place over two weekends, November 5-7 and November 12 - 14, 2010. Six different tickets were required, and are attached to this page. I did not reserve seats, because the Derby High School Black Box Theatre only seats 90, and every seat is very close to the action.
The following pages contain pictures from the Derby High School production of Blithe Spirit, November 5th, 6th, 7th, 12th, 13th, and 14th, 2009.
Upcoming Events

RENNASAINCE FEAST
December 11th - Advance Tickets Only

WIZARD OF OZ
March 4th, 5th & 6th

NIGHT OF THEATRE
A Night of Student-Directed One Acts
April 15th

ACT WELL YOUR PART, THERE ALL HONOR LIES.

(C) 2009 DERBY HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS

Derby High School Performing Arts
Produced by special arrangement with
Samuel French Inc.
Proudly Presents

By Noel Coward
Directed by
Richard Shultz

November 12th, 13th & 14th
Derby High School Black Box Theatre
Derby High School Performing Arts
produced with special arrangements by
Samuel French Inc.
Proudly Presents

Director
Richard Shultz

Technical Director
Tom Sherow

November 12th, 13th & 14th
Derby High School Black Box Theatre
The Cast

Edith.................................Sarah Packard
Ruth.................................Jami Mumma
Charles..............................Grady Hartman
Dr. Bradman......................Jacob Ponte
Mrs. Bradman......................Misba Khan
Madame Arcati...............Miranda Gibfried
Elvira...............................Lea Herdler

Synopsis of Scenes
Act I
Scene 1 - Before dinner on a summer evening
Scene 2 - After Dinner

Act II
Scene 1 - The next morning.
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.

Technical Crews

Director
Mr. Richard Shultz
Technical Director
Mr. Tom Sherow
Production Stage Managers
Cheyenne Queen
DeLynn Camp

Stage Crew
Michael Hammond
Avery Yoos
James Kovaleski
Alison Byrne
Michelle Ngo
Chauncey Fuller

Lights Crewhead
Keide Eller
Sound Crewhead
James Dillard
Publicity Crewhead
Ciera Dockter
Publicity Crew
Jami Mumma
Kimberley Deaver

T-Shirt Design
Lisa Prater

Props Crewhead
Jami Mumma
Props Crew
Kimberley Deaver
Jordan Hill

Costume Crewhead
Myriah Smith
Hair Design
Kimberley Deaver

Makeup Crewheads
Lisa Prater & Lea Herdler

House Crewheads
Julie Ngo & Naci Peters
House Crew
Zach Zuber
Sara Toney
Abbey Cox

Program
Lisa Prater & Kimberley Deaver
As many of you know, this show is the Thesis for the Master of Arts in Theatre Production that I have been working on at Central Washington University. I have been researching and planning this show over the last two years, and am proud of what has been created here at DHS. Mr. Scott Robinson, Theatre Department chair at CWU, will be here to observe my show. I will be defending my Thesis this spring.

As with any production, there are many thanks that need to be made. To the cast and crew: Thank you for putting your time and heart and soul into creating this living organism called theatre. Seniors Grady, Jami, Lisa, Myriah, Jake, Miranda and Misba: I have enjoyed the time we have worked together, and I look forward to the rest of this year. You have all grown tremendously, and worked diligently. To the rest of the cast: Lea, Sarah, Kimmy and Ciera, thank you for the work and time you have given. Cheyenne: every time I turn around, you have production questions. Thank you for keeping the details straight. I know when I answer a question from you that it will be taken care of. The cast members have worked for many weeks, putting in long hours to become these characters, and I thank them for it.

Numerous parents have helped bring this show to fruition. Steve Deaver: your fireplace, mantle and effects are amazing. Thank you for giving to our kids. Doris Vigil: Wow. A dress in a weekend! You (and the dress) are wonderful. To the parents who fed us: Yum!!! Michael, Regina, Cyndi, Randy, Sharon: you worked behind the scenes in lots of ways, and I appreciate. To all you you, Thanks just doesn't seem enough.

Tom Sherow has been my right hand. Friend, assistant, Technical Director. Amazing is way to soft a word. Fantastic. Unbelievable. Thanks.

I have probably missed someone. For that I am truly sorry. A show does not happen without huge effort from a ton of people. If you are that someone, know that I appreciate your help and work, even if I haven't managed to remember to write it down.

These students have done an amazing job, and I consider myself to be incredibly lucky to be called their Director. Thank you for coming tonight. Sit back and enjoy the show.

Cast Biographies

Grady Hartman, a Senior, is absolutely delighted to be playing Charles Condomine. Grady has been involved in Derby drama since second semester Freshman year. He was Hodgkins in Get Smart, Private Boone in MASH, a hobo in Paper Chase and was in various one-acts.

Miranda Gibfried, a Senior, will be playing the part of Madame Arcati. She has been involved in Drama all 4 years of high school, with roles in MASH, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and various one act shows.

Lea Herdler, a Junior, is delighted to be playing the role of Elvira. Drama has controlled her entire high school life, and she wouldn't wanted it any other way. She has been given roles in MASH, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Get Smart, multiple one acts, and had been given the opportunity to write and direct her first one act this year. She would like to send out a word of encouragement to everyone who has helped her to follow her dream of performing. Hang in there, daddy!!

Jami Mumma, a Senior, is excited to be playing the part of Ruth. Over the last four years here at the high school she has played a law student in The Paper Chase, a Korean in MASH, Professor Zalinka in Get Smart and has been in countless one-act plays as well as directing a few. She is also the Props Crewhead and is on Publicity crew. She would like to thank her family for supporting her and Skip for helping her grow as an actress.
Cast Biographies

Jacob Ponte, a Senior, is happy to be a member of the planet known as Earth. His home planet, Krypton, was destroyed. Luckily, he was put in a space pod and flew to earth. He was then raised by his Aunt & Uncle. When he was 17, he went on a visit to a spider lab, where he got bit by a radio-active spider. He now spends his days fighting crime at night, often seen wearing a black cape and bat-like mask.

Sarah Packard, a Junior, will be playing the role of Edith. She has been involved in drama since freshman year, with roles in MASH, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Get Smart, and various one acts.

Misha Khan, a Senior, will be playing the role of Mrs. Bradman. She enjoys hanging out in the craft room, penguin wars, and listening to music. She would like to thank her parents for being amazing, her family for being the best.

Crew Biographies

DeLynn Camp, a Sophomore, is happy to be a Production Stage Manager for Blithe Spirit. She also recently had a role in the one-act Dinner with the MacGuffins.

Cheyenne Queen, a Junior, is thrilled to be a Production Stage Manager. She was also the Student Technical Director for Tintypes and PSM for Get Smart.

Kimberley Deaver, a Junior, is ecstatic to be a BIG part of Blithe Spirit. She is part of the Props crew, Publicity crew and is co-head of Costuming and Program Design. She is also the Hair Designer, & will also be back stage during the show.

Lisa Prater, is also happy to be a BIG part of Blithe Spirit. She is the co-crewhead for Makeup Design & is the Program & Shirt designer.

Myriah Smith, finally a Senior, (or is it a Sophomore?) is happy to be the Costuming Crewhead for Blithe Spirit.

James Dillard, an aspiring trapeze artist, who lost his ability to hear at a young age, is happy to be the Sound Crewhead. He wishes he were Wonder Woman. Oh well. P.S- We beat him up! Again!

Keide Eller, a Junior, is getting involved in drama for the first time, as Lights crewhead for Blithe Spirit. She wishes she had the ability to fly. RAWR.
Thunderbird Bowl of Wichita

Thanks you for your support of the Derby Drama Department and cast of Blithe Spirit.
We hope you enjoy the play!

Bring in this program to Thunderbird Bowl and receive half price admission for Friday night X-treme Bowling. (limit two persons per coupon; offer expires December 18th, 2009).

To all the Techies:

You’ve done an awesome job!
Thank you for putting up with my “CDO Status”.

Love,

Chey-Chey

Live Well, Love Much, Laugh Often.
WE LOVE YOU!!!
-Mom, Dad, & Tim
To Jami Mumma
and the Cast and Crew
of Blithe Spirit ~

We predict a great
performance in
your future!

From Joel, Jodi, PJ &
Harley

To Lisa:

We knew all
those years of
practicing
being a drama
queen at home
would pay off
eventually!

Break a leg!

Love,

Mom, Dad, "Studly" Amos &
"Squinky" Andy.

---

What's with this "good luck" business?

Theatre people do NOT say "good luck" to each other. Ever! We say "Break A Leg!" Why? Well, blame the Greeks. They believed that the gods walked among them, and that if they wished an actor "good luck" a god was sure to hear, and being the nasties they were, would visit misfortune on the poor actor during the show. So the Greeks wished actors "bad luck", so that the god, upon hearing, would do the opposite to the actor. So. Do it right. Say "Break A leg." or, as we at DHS say:

Bust A Bone!!!
Jami ~

As you follow your dreams, remember you are not alone.

Because...

“You can do all things through Christ, who strengthens you.”

Phillipians 4:13

Lots of love,
Mom & Michael
Upcoming Events

RENNASAINCE FEAST
December 11th - Advance Tickets Only
316-788-8500 or rshultz@usd260.com

WIZARD OF OZ
March 4th, 5th & 6th

NIGHT OF THEATRE
A Night of Student-Directed One Acts
April 15th

ACT WELL YOUR PART, THERE ALL HONOR LIES.
(C) 2009 DERBY HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS

Derby High School Performing Arts
produced by special arrangement with
Samuel French Inc.
Proudly Presents

By Noel Coward
Directed By
Richard Shultz

November 5th, 6th & 7th
Derby High School Black Box Theatre
As many of you know, this show is the Thesis for the Master of Arts in Theatre Production that I have been working on at Central Washington University. I have been researching and planning this show over the last two years, and am proud of what has been created here at DHS. Mr. Scott Robinson, Theatre Department chair at CWU, will be here to observe my show. I will be defending my Thesis this spring.

As with any production, there are many thanks that need to be made.

To the cast and crew: Thank you for putting your time and heart and soul into creating this living organism called theatre. Seniors Grady, Jami, Lisa, Myriah, Jake, Miranda and Misba: I have enjoyed the time we have worked together, and I look forward to the rest of this year. You have all grown tremendously, and worked diligently. To the rest of the cast: Lea, Sarah, Kimmy and Ciera, thank you for the work and time you have given. Cheyenne: every time I turn around, you have production questions. Thank you for keeping the details straight. I know when I answer a question from you that it will be taken care of. The cast members have worked for many weeks, putting in long hours to become these characters, and I thank them for it.

Numerous parents have helped bring this show to fruition. Steve Deaver: your fireplace, mantle and effects are amazing. Thank you for giving to our kids. Doris Vigil: Wow. A dress in a weekend! You (and the dress) are wonderful. To the parents who fed us: Yum!!! Michael, Regina, Cyndi, Randy. Sharon: you worked behind the scenes in lots of ways, and I appreciate. To all you you, Thanks just doesn't seem enough.

Tom Sherow has been my right hand. Friend, assistant, Technical Director. Amazing is way to soft a word. Fantastic. Unbelievable. Thanks.

I have probably missed someone. For that I am truly sorry. A show does not happen without huge effort from a ton of people. If you are that someone, know that I appreciate your help and work, even if I haven't managed to remember to write it down.

These students have done an amazing job, and I consider myself to be incredibly lucky to be called their Director. Thank you for coming tonight. Sit back and enjoy the show.

A note from our Director...

Skip
The Cast

Edith..........................Kimberley Deaver
Ruth.............................Jami Mumma
Charles.........................Grady Hartman
Dr. Bradman...................Jacob Ponte
Mrs. Bradman..................Ciera Dockter
Madame Arcati..................Myriah Smith
Elvira.............................Lisa Prater

Technical Crews

Director                      Mr. Richard Shultz
Technical Director            Mr. Tom Sherow
Production Stage Managers     Cheyenne Queen DeLynn Camp
Stage Crew                    Michael Hammond
                                 James Kovaleski
                                 Chauncey Fuller
Lights Crewhead               Avery Yoos
Sound Crewhead                Alison Byrne
Publicity Crewhead            Michelle Ngo
Publicity Crew                James Dillard
                                 Keide Eller
T-Shirt Design                Ciera Dockter
                                 Jami Mumma
                                 Kimberley Deaver
Props Crewhead                Lisa Prater
Props Crew                    Jami Mumma
                                 Kimberley Deaver
                                 Jordan Hill
Costume Crewhead              Myriah Smith
Hair Design                   Kimberley Deaver
Makeup Crewheads             Lisa Prater
                                 Lea Herdler
House Crewhead                Julie Ngo
House Crew                    Naci Peters
                                 Zach Zuber
                                 Sara Toney
                                 Abbey Cox
                                 Lisa Prater
                                 Kimberley Deaver
                                 Program
Cast Biographies

Grady Hartman, a Senior, is delighted to be playing Charles Condomine. Grady has been involved in Derby drama since second semester Freshman year. He was Hodgkins in Get Smart, Private Boone in MASH and a hobo in Paper Chase. He has also been involved in multiple one-acts.

Lisa Prater, a Senior, is happy to be playing the part of Elvira. She is also Makeup Crewhead, so she can make everyone look b-e-a-utiful, and the Program & T-Shirt designer. Lisa has been in a billion shows and is President of the drama club. She would like to thank Skip, for giving her the role of a dead person. Happy birthday Fabio!

Jami Mumma, a Senior, is excited to be playing the part of Ruth. Over the last 4 years, she has played a law student in Paper Chase, a Korean in MASH, Professor Zalinka in Get Smart and has been in countless one-acts as well as directing a few. She is also the Props Crewhead and is on Publicity crew. She would like to thank her family for supporting her and Skip for helping her grow as an actress.

Myriah Smith, finally a Senior, (or is it a Sophomore?) is proud to be doubling as Costume crewhead and Madame Arcati.

Jacob Ponte, a Senior, is happy to be a member of the planet known as Earth. His home planet, Krypton, was destroyed. Luckily, he was put in a space pod and flew to earth. When he was 17, he went on a visit to a spider lab, where he got bit by a radio-active spider. He now spends his days fighting crime at night, often seen wearing a black cape and bat-like mask.

Kimberley Deaver, a Junior, is excited to be playing the role of Edith. She has been involved in theatre all 3 years of high school with roles in Get Smart and several one act shows, as well as doing tech for all shows. She is currently co-head of the Costume Crew, Program Design, on Props Crew and is the Hair Designer. Kimberley is also the Historian of the drama club. She would like to thank everybody who supported her and continues to support her. :)

Ciera Dockter, a Junior, will be playing the role of Mrs. Bradman. She is Vice President of the drama club and has been involved in theatre since middle school. She directed Oprah Made Me Do It this fall and some of her other high school acting roles were in MASH, Get Smart & many one-act shows.
To Jami Mumma and the Cast and Crew of Blithe Spirit ~

We predict a great performance in your future!

From Joel, Jodi, PJ & Harley

破浪一enny 金my and Ciera and the rest of the cast. You guys are awesome!

-Mamma San

To Lisa:

We knew all those years of practicing being a drama queen at home would pay off eventually!

Break a leg!

Love,


To Lisa:

We knew all those years of practicing being a drama queen at home would pay off eventually!

Break a leg!

Love,


Crew Biographies

Cheyenne Queen, a Junior, is thrilled to be a Production Stage Manager. She was also the Student Technical Director for Tintypes and PSM for Get Smart.

DeLynn Camp, a Sophomore, is happy to be a Production Stage Manager for Blithe Spirit. She also recently had a role in the one-act Dinner with the MacGuffins.

James Dillard, an aspiring trapeze artist who lost his ability to hear at a young age, is happy to be the Sound Crewhead. He would like to say that Matt Bradley is the shiz-nizzle.

Keide Eller, a Junior, is getting involved in drama for the first time, as Lights crewhead for Blithe Spirit. She wishes she had the ability to fly.

To all the Techies:

You've done an awesome job! Thank you for putting up with my "CDO Status".

Love,

Chey-Chey
Jami ~

As you follow your dreams, remember you are not alone.

Because...

“...You can do all things through Christ, who strengthens you.”

Philippians 4:13

Lots of love,
Mom & Michael

Thunderbird Bowl of Wichita

Thanks you for your support of the Derby Drama Department and cast of Blithe Spirit. We hope you enjoy the play!

Bring in this program to Thunderbird Bowl and receive half price admission for Friday night X-treme Bowling. (limit two persons per coupon; offer expires December 18th, 2009).

Thunderbird Bowl
2440 S. Oliver
Wichita, KS
684-5291

We see great success in your future!

We love you, Myriah!
Mom, Dad, Kane and Teddy
BLITHE SPIRIT EXTENSION CABLES

Dimmer - Two-Fer - Length - End

\[ \begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\# & \text{Yes/No} & \text{Length} & \text{Description} \\
\hline
3 & Yes & .25' & Pin, Pin \\
6 & No & .8', 16' & Pin, Pin, Pin (make a 2fer) \\
10 & Yes & .14' & Edison F \\
12 & Yes & .16' & Pin \\
13 & No & .9', 21' & Make a 2fer, Pin \\
22 & No & .10' & Pin F \\
23 & No & .12' & Pin F \\
25 & No & .12' & Edison Pin \\
26 & No & No & Taper Pin to Edison F \\
29 & No & .16' & Edison F \\
30 & No & .9' & Edison F \\
31 & No & No & Edison male to Edison F \\
32 & No & No & Edison male to Edison F \\
37 & No & .15' & Edison male \\
38 & No & .15' & Edison male \\
39 & No & .35' (25') & Edison male \\
40 & No & .35' (25') & Edison male \\
\hline
\end{array} \]
**BLITHE SPIRIT EXTENSION CABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimmer</th>
<th>Two Fer</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>.25'</td>
<td>Pin, Pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.8', 16'</td>
<td>Pin, Pin, Pin (make a 2fer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>.14'</td>
<td>Pin Edison F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>.16'</td>
<td>Pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.9', 21'</td>
<td>make a 2fer, Pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.10'</td>
<td>Pin F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2320</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.12'</td>
<td>Pin F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.12'</td>
<td>Edison Pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.75'</td>
<td>Edison Pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.16'</td>
<td>Edison F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.9'</td>
<td>Edison F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.75'</td>
<td>Edison Male to Edison F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.75'</td>
<td>Edison Male to Edison F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.15'</td>
<td>Edison Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.15'</td>
<td>Edison Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.35' (25')</td>
<td>Edison Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>.35' (25')</td>
<td>Edison Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

- 35' = 25' future use
- 12 pin
# Blithe Spirit Dimmer List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Oudience Seating Right &amp; Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>French Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Couch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Seance Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>F back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>F back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>F back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23 25 - O back
24 26 - H back
27
28
19 29 - D back
20 30 - C back
21 31 - B back
22 32 - A back

- 33 - Garden Surprise
- 34 - Garden
- 35 - Holloway Lights
- 36 - Red Safety Lights
- 37 - I Back
- 38 - J Back
- 39 - Blue Work Lights
- 40 - Blue Work Lights Fire place

41 - Red by J back stage
Blltte Spint
Nov 5-7, 12-14, 2009