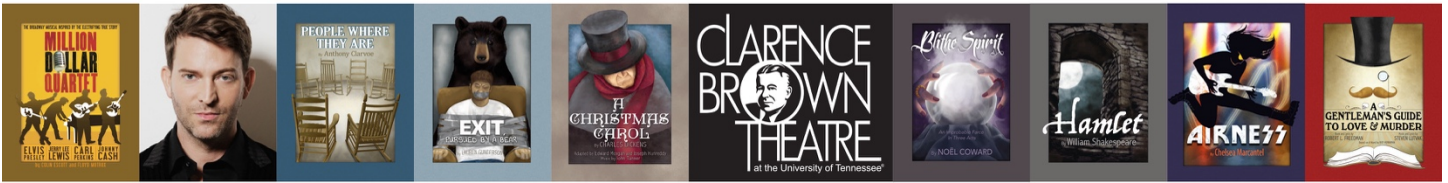


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For Immediate Release:
Contact: Robin Conklin
Rconkli1@utk.edu

Noël Coward's Comedy "Blithe Spirit" Starts the Spring Offerings on the Clarence Brown Theatre Mainstage

With psychic mediums, séances gone awry and celestial visitors, Noël Coward's comedy "Blithe Spirit" will run on the Clarence Brown mainstage February 5-23, 2020. UT Faculty/Staff receive 20% off ticket prices. UT Students see the previews for FREE and the rest of the performances for \$5, excluding Opening Night. The production is sponsored by Schaad Companies with support from the Marian Brown Circle for hair and makeup. Media sponsors are WUOT, WUTK, the Daily Beacon, and the Knoxville News Sentinel. Free and convenient parking is available in the McClung Tower Garage on Volunteer Boulevard.

The Pay What You Wish Preview performance, where patrons can name their own price, will be held Wednesday, February 5th. Behind the Scenes Sunday will take place following the Sunday, February 9th matinee with Prop Master, Christy Fogarty, and Technical Director, Jason Fogarty, discussing some of the special effects in the production. A Talk Back with the actors will take place Sunday, February 16th following the matinee. The Open Captioned performance is Sunday, February 23rd at 2:00 pm.

Hoping to gather material for his novel, writer Charles Condomine invites psychic Madame Arcati to his home to conduct a séance and gets far more than he bargains for in Coward's Tony Award winning comedy.

An English playwright, actor, and composer Coward was known for his likable sophistication and sharp sense of humor. Although he wrote some of the most popular plays of his time, he was also known for his entertaining personality and his abilities as a witty storyteller. It is interesting to note that "Blithe Spirit" was first performed in 1941 at the end of the London Blitz (1940-1941). It was the final play in what is now considered Coward's great comic trilogy about marriage and infidelity which included "Private Lives" and "Hay Fever."

Sharon Ott (Director) makes her debut at the Clarence Brown Theatre with this production. She has directed both the classics and new plays at such regional theaters as American Shakespeare Center, Utah Shakespeare Festival, and Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights Horizons, the Public Theater, Manhattan Theater Club, Arena Stage, Roundhouse Theater, Milwaukee Repertory, Missouri Repertory, the Huntington Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, Ford's Theatre and many others. She was the Artistic Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theater (for 13 years), and the Seattle Repertory Theater (for 8 years) and has won many awards for her directing and producing, including 3 Bay Area Theater Critics' Awards, several Hollywood Dramalogue awards, and an Obie Award (with Theatre X, Milwaukee). During her final season as Artistic Director at Berkeley Rep, the company received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater. Ott currently serves as the Chair of the Dept. of Theatre at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, where she is an Associate Professor. Prior to VCU, she was a Professor at the Savannah College of Art and Design, and served as the Artistic Director for the Performing Arts Dept.

UT faculty, visiting guests and community actors include: **Katie Cunningham** (Elvira); **Jed Diamond** (Dr. Bradman); **Brian Gligor** (Charles); **Carol Mayo Jenkins** (Madame Arcati); and **Laura Beth Wells** (Mrs. Bradman).

Graduate and undergraduate students include: **Madeline Rowe** (Edith); **Christine Sage** (Ruth); and **Celeste Pelletier** (Cook).

The creative team for this production includes: **Ron Keller** (Scenic Designer), **Margo Birdwhistell** (Costume Designer); **Maranda DeBusk** (Lighting Designer); **Katherine Stepanek** (Projection Designer); **Chandler Oppenheimer** (Sound Designer); **Katie Cunningham** (Voice/Dialect Coach), and **Caleb Cook** (Stage Manager).

Previews for “Blithe Spirit” are Wednesday, February 5th and Thursday, February 6th followed by Opening Night Friday, February 7th. The production runs through February 23rd.

With a dual mission to train the next generation of theatre artists and to provide top quality professional theatre, the Clarence Brown Theatre at the University of Tennessee Knoxville is one of only 12 academic LORT (League of Resident Theatre) institutions in the nation with a professional theater on campus. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Calvin MacLean and Managing Director Thomas Cervone, the CBT season runs from August through May and features eight productions ranging from musicals to drama.

The CBT provides a cultural resource for both the university and the larger East Tennessee community and affirms diversity and inclusivity in all their forms.

For more information or tickets, call the CBT Box Office at 865-974-5161 or visit us online at <http://clarencetheatre.com/>. Stay connected to the Clarence Brown Theatre on Facebook (Clarence Brown Theatre), follow us on Twitter (@ClarenceBrown) and view Clarence Brown videos on YouTube (Clarence Bro).

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