

Theatre Aurora's Blithe Spirit: A Review

Theatre Aurora seems to have known when it set up this year's schedule that around now we would all be in need of a good laugh, and they came through with Noel Coward's wonderful *?Blithe Spirit?*.

The play tells the story of married couple Charles and Ruth. For a bit of fun, and to obtain material for a book he's writing, Charles invites eccentric clairvoyant Madame Arcati to his house to conduct a séance. Unfortunately, her skills are better than he imagined, and to everyone's surprise she conjures up Elvira, his beautiful and mischievous late wife.

Charles's confusion at dealing with two wives at once, and Ruth's reaction to this new and invisible competition for her husband's affections cause no end of amusing complications.

Director Judi Cragg has a wonderful cast for this production, including supporting players Reg Kenny and Andrea Pape as friends the Bradmans, and Riley Nepean as the always frantic maid.

Theatre Aurora veteran Kay Valentine is delightful as the slightly offbeat, but always professional Madame Arcati.

Shannon Kenny plays the ghostly Elvira, and nicely portrays the contrasts of her character's playful nature and her frustration at being stuck between two worlds.

As the husband caught in the middle, Clive Lacey brings a lot of the humour to the play, as he struggles to communicate and deal with both wives at once, and at the same time reconcile his love for them both.

But the true standout here is Angela Gaitta as Ruth. The way she delivers her lines, as well as her reactions, body language and facial expressions all combine to bring real heart to a strong woman caught in a bewildering situation.

The technical team has done a terrific job with the set, which not only looks great, but allows for quick scene changes to keep things moving.

Theatre Aurora has given us a late winter present of one of Noel Coward's most popular plays. With wonderful staging, terrific acting, and a script that provides both heart and humour, it would be a shame to miss it.

Evening performances of *?Blithe Spirit?* continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, February 29, March 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, with matinees March 2 & 3. Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.

By Scott Johnston