

18 MARCH-13 APRIL, 2025





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## WELCOME



oël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* is a sparkling comedy of love, loss, and the unexpected ties that bind us—sometimes even beyond the grave. With his signature wit and razor-sharp dialogue, Coward crafts a world where the past refuses to stay buried, and the afterlife proves to be just as complicated as the one left behind.

At the center of the story is Charles Condomine, a novelist whose curiosity about the supernatural leads to far more than he bargained for. What begins as an innocent séance turns into delightful chaos when the

ghost of his first wife, Elvira, materializes—much to the dismay of his current wife, Ruth. As Charles finds himself caught between the two formidable women, the stage is set for an uproarious battle of wills, where love, jealousy, and mischief collide in the most unexpected ways.

Last seen on our stage in 1989, the return of *Blithe Spirit* to Theatre Calgary is a moment of celebration, made even more special with director Nikki Loach helming the piece. Her vision breathes new life into the play's timeless humour while honouring the irresistible charm that has made *Blithe Spirit* an enduring classic.

There is a certain poetic symmetry in this production's return to the Max Bell stage, mirroring the play's own themes of reunion and lingering connections. Just as Elvira's ghost reappears to remind Charles that the past is never truly gone, this revival invites audiences to rediscover a beloved comedy that continues to enchant, provoke laughter, and perhaps even stir a few ghosts of their own.

With its irresistible blend of wit and whimsy, *Blithe Spirit* remains a compelling exploration of love's enduring presence—even in the most unexpected of circumstances.

- STAFFORD ARIMA

#### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of reconciliation, Theatre Calgary acknowledges that we live, work and create on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta, Districts 5 & 6, and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta. They were the original occupants of this land and continue to be here to this day. Theatre Calgary is grateful to have the opportunity to present in this territory.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Cameras and audio/visual recording devices are not permitted in the theatre.
- Video and audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.
- We ask that you please refrain from using your cell phone, smart watch, or any other digital device, in any capacity, during the performance.
- Good theatre etiquette benefits everyone. Please do not talk or unwrap candies during the
  performance, remain in your seat until the curtain call is finished and the house lights have
  been turned on.
- Babies are not permitted in the theatre.
- We also offer relaxed performances. For more information, visit our website.
- Assisted listening devices for the hard of hearing are available at the coat check.
- For first aid assistance, see the house manager, or nearest usher.

### SAFETY AND COMFORT

 At Theatre Calgary, we recognize our responsibility to have practical guidelines in place to ensure our performances are safe and enjoyable for everyone. To learn more about our current Safety and Comfort protocols go to theatrecalgary.com/comfort-and-safety or scan here:





## **DIRECTOR'S NOTES**



hen Scott Reid, our set designer, and I discussed the physical world of *Blithe Spirit* we identified three distinct layers that can be realized across all aspects of the play: the unnatural layer, the natural layer and the supernatural layer.

What is unnatural about *Blithe Spirit*? Typically, a couple in Britain in the 1940s married for life. A traditional ceremonial vow such as "till death do us part" presents an inflexible binding lifelong contract. Humans, however, are impossibly flawed, and throughout history we have always lost the battle between what we ought to do and what we actually do.

We have set the main action of the play in a conservatory. This grand, imposing, unyielding, cage-like structure symbolizes the unnatural: the way we ought to behave, the institution of marriage, and the conventions of the day.

This brings us to the natural layer, expressed as a lush and inviting garden outside the barrier of the conservatory windows. Teeming with life, this represents the unrestrained, wild, natural desires of all living things. Madame Arcati is deemed eccentric in the world of the play because she arrives on a bicycle, is unmarried, has two professions, is in tune with nature, and says what she thinks. She is free from much of the convention of the day. It could be argued that she is entirely herself.

Beyond the conservatory and beyond the garden is the supernatural world. A place where spirits play cards, where they have their own parties, suffer from colds, and look down on their loved ones still on earth. This supernatural layer (invited in by Madame Arcati) subsequently brings an upheaval of consequences to the inner world of the play, where secrets are revealed, control is lost, and characters begin to wonder how does "till death do us part" apply to their situation. Watching the rules being set up, broken, and come off the rails is our framework for realizing what Coward calls his 'improbable farce'.

I love what director Maria Aitken once said about the play. She praises Coward's ability "to seduce an audience into a sort of moral holiday, where what they normally disapprove of, they actually find funny for the evening."

I hope you are all thoroughly seduced!

## - NIKKI LOACH

Theatre Calgary gratefully acknowledges the support provided by the City of Calgary through Calgary Arts Development, the Government of Alberta through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Government of Canada through the Canada Council, Canadian Heritage, and all corporate and private contributors.

















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theatre: CALGARY

Stafford Arima, Artistic Director

#### Max Bell Theatre at Arts Commons March 18 - April 13, 2025



presents

## NOËL COWARD'S BLITHE SPIRIT

Director
Set Design
Costume Design
Lighting Design
Sound Design & Composition
Voice & Dialect Coach
Fight Director

NIKKI LOACH SCOTT REID RALAMY KNEESHAW NARDA MCCARROLL\* ALIXANDRA COWMAN JANE MACFARLANE BRIANNA JOHNSTON

Stage Manager Assistant Stage Manager Apprentice Stage Manager NAOMI ESAU JENNIFER YEUNG ALLISON WENINGER

## TC MENTORS PROGRAM Directing JENNIE ESDALE\*\*

\* Indicated designers on this production are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, IATSE Local ADC659.

\*\* TC Mentors participants are generously supported by RBC Foundation.

First presented by HM Tennent Ltd and John C Wilson at the Opera House, Manchester on 16 June 1941 (The following week the company played at Leeds)

Subsequently presented at the Piccadilly Theatre, London on 2 July 1941, transferred to the St James's Theatre on 23 March 1942 and then to the Duchess Theatre on 6 October 1942 (1,997 performances)

BLITHE SPIRIT © NC Aventales AG 1941

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## theatre:

**SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT MARCH 26** THEATRECALGARY.COM



## **BLITHE SPIRIT**

**CAST** (in alphabetical order)

Charles TYRELL CREWS

Edith ALI DEREGT
Ruth LOUISE DUFF

Mrs. Bradman MEG FARHALL

Elvira **EMILY HOWARD** 

Dr. Bradman CHRISTOPHER HUNT

Madame Arcati CORRINE KOSLO

#### Understudies

Ruth ALI DEREGT

Charles, Dr. Bradman CHRISTOPHER DUTHIE

Madame Arcati MEG FARHALL

Edith, Elvira, Mrs. Bradman BRIANNA JOHNSTON

#### **SETTING**

The conservatory of Charles Condomine's house in Kent.

#### ACT I

Scene I: Before dinner on a summer evening.

Scene II: After dinner.

Scene III: The next morning.

#### **ACT II**

Scene I: Late the following afternoon.
Scene II: Early evening. A few days later.
Scene III: After dinner. A few days later.

Scene IV: Several hours later.

Blithe Spirit has one 20-minute intermission.

#### **CREW**

Head of Sound BRONWYN BOWLBY
Head of Lighting CATHARINE CRUMB

Head Stage Carpenter TESS COWIE

Head Dresser RACHEL MICHELLE SHERIDAN

Head of Wigs CHRISTA HOEFLING

Assistant Head of Sound MICHAEL GESY

Assistant Head Dresser CHELSEA BREWER

Assistant Head Stage Carpenter JOSHUA SEMOS

Sound Technician TRAVIS MCKINNON

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## **CAST**



TYRELL CREWS Charles

(he/him) For Theatre Calgary (selected): The Mousetrap, Blow Wind High Water, King Lear, Major Barbara, Pride and Prejudice, Enron, A Christmas Carol (2011), Much Ado About Nothing, Our Town. Based in Calgary, Tyrell has also collaborated with Alberta Theatre Projects, Vertigo Theatre, Downstage, Lunchbox, Sage Theatre, Black Radish Theatre, Ground Zero, Hit & Myth, The Shakespeare Company. Elsewhere: The Stratford Festival, The

National Arts Centre, Drayton Entertainment, American Conservatory Theater, Bard On The Beach, among others. Tyrell is an established voice and radio actor who occasionally dabbles in film and television.



ALI DEREGT Edith; Understudy: Ruth

(she/her/they) Theatre Calgary debut. Ali is a multi-disciplinary theatre artist focused on devising, puppetry, and clown. They hold an MFA from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, where they co-founded HOT TRASH! Theatre, a devised theatre company that focuses on DIY aesthetics, physical storytelling, and general nonsense. She also is the new Artistic Director for live programming at the

Festival of Animated Objects here in Calgary. Recent credits: All I Want for Christmas, Go For Gold Audrey Pham (Lunchbox); INISKIM (Canadian Academy of Mask and Puppetry); Peter and the Wolf (The Old Trout Puppet Workshop); Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley (Persephone Theatre); and seasons 1 & 2 of Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock (The Jim Henson Company and Apple TV+). Ali is a recipient of the Duval Lang Emerging Leader Award and an Elizabeth Sterling Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement in Theatre for Young Audiences.



LOUISE DUFF Ruth

(she/her) Theatre Calgary debut. Elsewhere: *Grease* (Mayfield Dinner Theatre); Canadian premiere of *May We All* (42nd Street Productions); *Adele* (Legends, Live!); *London Road* (UK Production). Louise is a British born actor from the South-west of England, and is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She is a passionate vocal coach and teacher and has worked with such companies as Storybook Theatre and Youth

Theatre Canada. Louise is excited to be making her first appearance at Theatre Calgary, and would like to thank her supportive family, friends, creative team and crew and her ever-patient fiancé who has spent many nights hearing these lines over, and over again. @louiseduff\_vocals

## **COMING NEXT**

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## CAST



MEG FARHALL Mrs. Bradman; Understudy: Madame Arcati

(she/her) Theatre Calgary debut. Elsewhere: Murder on the Links (Vertigo); Beautiful Man (Downstage, Verb and Handsome Alice); The Replacement (SAL); Parts and Labour (Field Work); Between Us, in VISIBLE (Handsome Alice); Hamlet: A Ghost Story, Much Ado About Nothing, Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth (The Shakespeare Company); A Streetcar Named Desire (Spirit Fire Theatre); The Club (Theatre Yes/High Performance Rodeo).

Film & TV: Dickens of a Christmas (Polyscope), This Too Shall Pass (Telefilm), Faultline (Independent), Operation: Clean Slate, Word of Mouth (Green Productions), Lucky Star, Second Hand Luxury, Circle of Steel (KinoSum), TinStar (Prime), Jann (CTV), Heartland (CBC), Wynona Earp (SciFi). Much love to my family.



EMILY HOWARD Elvira

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: A Streetcar Named Desire (2025), The Importance of Being Earnest (2022, Betty Mitchell Award for Lead Performance in a Comedy). Select theatre credits: The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon, Teenage Dick (Alberta Theatre Projects); The Extractionist (Vertigo Theatre); Chariots of Fire (Rosebud Theatre). Film credits: My Life with the Walter Boys (Netflix), Joe Pickett (Paramount+), and A Cowboy

Against Thunder (Numera Films) where she won the AMPIA Award for Best Female Performance. She would like to thank her friends and family for their unending support, and Nicole and Mom, for carrying her always. For her own darling, Sam. @emilyjaynehoward



CHRISTOPHER HUNT Dr. Bradman

For Theatre Calgary: Over 40 productions, including Selma Burke, The Scarlet Letter, Twelfth Night (2018), The Audience, 7 Stories, Glorious, Humble Boy, Copenhagen, True West, Private Lives, Memoir, The Importance of Being Earnest (1995), Charley's Aunt, Amadeus, Tartuffe. Elsewhere: The Seafarer (ATP); Sleuth (Vertigo Theatre); Resident Aliens (Theatre New Brunswick); Driving Miss Daisy (Stage West); Gilgamesh Lazyboy (One Yellow

Rabbit); Waiting For Godot (Black Radish Theatre); 1979 (Alberta Theatre Projects); Flight Risk (Lunchbox Theatre); Our Town (Caravan Farm Theatre). Film & TV: Things I Know To Be True, Heartland, Caitlin's Way, Shanghai Noon, You Know My Name. Awards: Christopher recently received the King Charles III Coronation Medal for his contribution to Canadian theatre. He's also the recipient of eight of Calgary's Betty Mitchell Awards and the 2018 Harry & Martha Cohen Award.

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• MUSICAL THEATRE: July 21-August 1 Grades 4-6 and 7-12

PLAYMAKING: July 21-August 1 Grades 6-10

To learn more or to register:

## theatrecalgary.com/creativelearning

Have questions? Contact Jennie Esdale - jesdale@theatrecalgary.com

## CAST



#### CORRINE KOSLO Madame Arcati

(she/her) Theatre Calgary debut. An award winning stage performer for over 40 years, Corrine is a 12-year member of the Shaw Festival, starring in favourite productions as Sweeney Todd, Cabaret, The Seagull, Lady Windemere's Fan, Faith Healer, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and Come Back Little Sheba. Other favourites include: Withrow Park (Tarragon Theatre); Middletown (Shaw/Crowe's Theatre); The Penelopiad (RSC-UK / NAC); Mamma Mia, Memory of Water (Mirvish); The Wrong Son (NAC); Shirley Valentine (ATP/ The Globe); Love and Anger (ATP/ Citadel/ Vancouver

Playhouse); El Crocodor (Touchstone Theatre). TV: Rachel Lynde on Anne With An E (Netflix/CBC), The voice of Emma on Corner Gas Animated, Schitts Creek and Moonshine (CBC). Corrine would like to dedicate her performance as Madame Arcati to Christopher Newton.



#### CHRISTOPHER DUTHIE Understudy: Charles, Dr.Bradman

(he/him) For Theatre Calgary: A Christmas Carol (2007-09, 2019, 2023-24), As You Like It (Swing), The Importance of Being Earnest (2022, Betty Mitchell nom). Select Credits: Struck, Reverie (Ghost River Theatre); Hamlet Frequency, Henry VI Part III (Shakespeare Company); The Thin Man, n00b (Vertigo Theatre); 52 Pick-Up (Lunchbox Theatre); Journey of Lifetime, Snow Angel, Night Light, Shoes of Sand (Quest Theatre); Smash Cut Freeze, Radioheaded II (One Yellow Rabbit); The Goat (ATP). Select Film & TV credits: Upper Class Crimes (JB

Paramount), *The Abandons* (Netflix), *Under the Banner of Heaven* (FX), *The Ties That Bind* (Road West Pictures/Reckseidler Films). Christopher is also a playwright (*A Dinner Party, n00b*), emerging screenwriter (*Bladder Shy, Self-Tape*) and arts educator with Theatre Calgary, Calgary Young People's Theatre, Quest Theatre, Evergreen Theatre, Think Fast/Pense Vite and JUBE School. He is eternally grateful for his wife, Alexandra, and their son, Harrison.



## BRIANNA JOHNSTON Understudy: Elvira, Edith, Mrs. Bradman; Fight Director, Fight Captain

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Actor - The Crucible, Romeo and Juliet (SITP 2013); Fight and Intimacy Director - The Mousetrap, A Midsummer Night's Dream (SBTB 2023); Fight Director - A Streetcar Named Desire (2025); Assistant Fight Director - Forgiveness, A Christmas Carol (2017). Favourite recent credits: Actor - The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (ATP); The Tempest, Julius Caesar, The Three Musketeers (Shakespeare Co); The Money Shot (Ground Zero - Betty Mitchell nom). Fight and

Intimacy Director - Jekyll and Hyde, The Extractionist (Vertigo); The Ministry of Grace (MT7); Teenage Dick (ATP). Fight Director - A Midsummer Night's Dream (Betty Mitchell Award), Richard III (2023) (Shakespeare Co); The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (ATP); All I Want for Christmas (Lunchbox - Betty Mitchell nom.); GIANT (Ghost River - Betty Mitchell nom.). Intimacy Director - Kisapmata (Lunchbox). Brianna is thrilled to be working with this amazing team. Thanks and love to Logan for all his support! @bricmae



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## **CREATIVE TEAM**



NIKKI LOACH Director

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Director - The Miracle Worker, Crimes of the Heart, A Christmas Carol (2001-03), Gaslight, All My Sons, Memoir. Actor - Mom's The Word for Crying Out Loud, A Christmas Carol (1990), Tartuffe. Elsewhere: The Antyssey, Snow White, Snow Angel, Shoes of Sand (Quest Theatre); King Henry IV Part I, The Edible Woman, London Cuckolds, The Constant Wife, Much Ado About Nothing (Theatre Junction); Billy Bishop Goes to War

(Alberta Theatre Projects); Village Wooing (Shaw Festival). Nikki is the Artistic Director of Quest Theatre, and loves the process of creating theatre through exploration, imaginative play, and collaboration with exceptional artists. She gives a big thank you to the board and team at Quest. Christopher and Charlie are her favourite playmates.



SCOTT REID Set Design

(he/him) For Theatre Calgary (selected): The Mousetrap, Million Dollar Quartet, TC Returns, A Christmas Carol (lighting – 1999, set & projections – 2019, 2023-24, production design – 2020, 2021), Billy Elliot the Musical, Mom's The Word: For Crying Out Loud, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, A Raisin in the Sun. Elsewhere: Pride and Prejudice, Clue (Citadel); Alberta Kitchen Party, Stealing Sam, Disgraced, The New Canadian Curling Club (ATP);

Misery, Clue, Murder on the Orient Express, Strangers on a Train, Dracula: The Bloody Truth (Vertigo); Don Pasquale, Macbeth, Eugene Onegin, South Pacific (Calgary Opera); Our Canada, Class Acts (Alberta Ballet); Better Get Hit in Your Soul, Modern Vaudevillians, Juliet and Romeo (DJD). Scott has also designed for such companies as Quest Theatre, Lunchbox, and The Shakespeare Company. scottreiddesign.com



#### RALAMY KNEESHAW Costume Design

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: The Importance of Being Earnest (2022). This is a bucket list show and Ralamy is thrilled to return to Theatre Calgary to create with these ghostly, creative souls. Select credits: Charlotte's Web, The Seafarer, Teenage Dick (ATP); A Midsummer Night's Dream (Shakespeare Company); The Ballad of Georges Boivin (Lunchbox); The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Vertigo); Fresh Hell (Fire Exit); Screwball Comedy, Elvis

Has Left the Building (StageWest); The Importance of Being Earnest, Much Ado About Nothing (CYPT); Hair, Sweet Charity (Brown Cow Collective); Annie, The Neverending Story (Storybook); Waiting for Godot (Black Radish Theatre). These beautiful costumes are the work of the immensely talented Theatre Calgary Costume Team, and Ralamy is deeply grateful for their brilliance, wisdom and support. We had so much fun! Love always to Hugh, Avalon, Aidan, Maya and Juno.



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## **CREATIVE TEAM**



#### NARDA MCCARROLL Lighting Design

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Blow Wind High Water. Elsewhere: A Killing at la Cucina, The Woman in Black, The Girl on the Train, The Extractionist, Cipher, Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (Vertigo Theatre); The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon, To the Light, Red, Cockroach, The Circle (ATP); Beauty and the Beast, The Wizard of Oz, Vimy (Western Canada Theatre); Peter and the Starcatcher, The Penelopiad, Julius Caesar (Citadel Theatre); Vigilante

(Catalyst Theatre); Bronte: The World Without (Stratford Festival); Cinderella, The Wizard of Oz (Rainbow Stage); Glory (WCT/ATP/National Tour); The Drowning Girls (National Tour). Film & TV: Costume design for the feature film Cut Bank. Narda performed in a production of Evita here at TC many years ago. Go to narda.ca to see images of her work.



## ALIXANDRA COWMAN Sound Design & Composition

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: The Importance Of Being Earnest in (2022). Alixandra is thrilled to be back at Theatre Calgary. Other sound design/composition credits include: Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson of #2B, Gaslight (Vertigo Theatre); The Dark Lady, Home For The Holidays, All I Want For Christmas (Lunchbox Theatre); Magic Lies: An Evening with WO Mitchell, Grace & Glorie, Lilia! (Rosebud Theatre); and Assistant Sound Design for Grand Magic, Richard II,

and Wedding Band (Stratford Festival). Alixandra's compositions have also been featured in Alberta Kitchen Party (Alberta Theatre Projects) and Parts & Labour (Fieldwork). Home For The Holidays, her original musical co-written with Cayley Wreggitt, received two Betty Mitchell Awards, for both Outstanding Sound Design/Composition and Outstanding Musical. Thanks to Conrad and Clarence for the never-ending love and support.



## JANE MACFARLANE Voice & Dialect Coach

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Associate Director - A Christmas Carol (2023-24), Resident Voice Coach - More than 80 productions since 2000 including: A Streetcar Named Desire, The Lehman Trilogy, Beaches the Musical, Selma Burke, Meteor Shower, The Mousetrap, Forgiveness, The Importance of Being Earnest, Million Dollar Quartet, 12 seasons of Shakespeare by the Bow and 18 years of A Christmas Carol (incl. playing Mrs. Cratchit from 2001-02). Additionally, Jane adapted and directed the 2022 ShakesGo production of The Merry

Wives of Windsor. She has also worked for ATP, Vertigo, and The Shakespeare Company, and coaches Voice and Presence through her business Voice Activated. She has taught Voice for the Actor and Acting at such institutions as York University, Harvard University, Southern Methodist University, MRU, UAlberta, and is currently on faculty in the Drama Division in the School of Creative & Performing Arts at UCalgary.





## **CREATIVE TEAM**



NAOMI ESAU Stage Manager

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Beaches (Script Supervisor), Meteor Shower (Assistant SM), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Shakespeare on the Go), The Importance of Being Earnest (Apprentice SM). Past Stage Management credits include: Go For Gold Audrey Pham, Heaven (APSM) (Lunchbox); The Orange Dot (Sage); Beautiful Man, The F Word, Men Express Their Feelings (Downstage); For The Pleasure of Seeing Her Again, Magic Lies:

An Evening with W.O. Mitchell, A Christmas Story, Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol, The Christians, An Inspector Calls (Rosebud Theatre); Gaslight (ASM-Vertigo Theatre); Makambe Speaks (Ghost River Theatre); Much Ado About Nothing (CYPT). She is also an actor, musician, seamstress, and baker of many cupcakes. Naomi is delighted to be back at Theatre Calgary this season!



#### JENNIFER YEUNG Assistant Stage Manager

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Selma Burke, Jimmy Buffet's Escape to Margaritaville, Steel Magnolias. Jennifer is ecstatic to come back to Theatre Calgary for Blithe Spirit! Elsewhere: Don Pasquale, The Marriage of Figaro (Calgary Opera); Murder on the Links, Sherlock Holmes and the Raven's Curse (Vertigo Theatre), Static (Chromatic Theatre Co.Pro Inside Out Theatre); Naughty But Nice 8 & 9 (Forte); Hookman (SCPA & Chromatic Theatre); Undressed (ATP), 我的名是张欣恩 (Chromatic Theatre). In her free time, you will

see her spending time at local events, exploring new restaurants, or playing video games. She is grateful for her parents, her fur baby, Max, and her partner, Lowell, for their immense love and continued support.



ALLISON WENINGER
Apprentice Stage Manager

(she/her) Theatre Calgary debut. Allison is a Treaty 6 & 7 based stage manager, production manager, director, and performer. Recent credits include: Murder on the Links, Misery (Vertigo Theatre); Henry IV Part 2, Henry IV Part 1, Richard II, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Comedy of Errors, Much Ado About Nothing (Prime Stock Theatre); Celexia (Citizen Theatre); Date Night (Sunflower Collective Theatre); Home for the Holidays, Countries Shaped Like Stars, Cottagers and Indians, Stage One Festival 2023

(Associate Artist Company PM, Lunchbox Theatre). Thank you to her friends and family for their enthusiastic support. If Allison ever starts to haunt you, she may be appeased by giving her chocolate, a beach day, and a good laugh.



## ORIES. JUST

























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## **CREATIVE TEAM**



## JENNIE ESDALE Assistant Director - TC Mentors Program\*

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Actor - A Christmas Carol (2004-05), Henceforward. Jennie is thrilled to be part of the TC Mentors program! Jennie is a theatre artist with over 25 years experience and has been recognized through Betty Mitchell, Elizabeth Sterling Haynes, Hamilton Arts Awards: Outstanding Actress, Outstanding Achievement/ Performance in TYA, Outstanding New Play, Outstanding Production of a Musical. Jennie has

worked with the National Arts Centre, Banff Centre for the Arts, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Citadel Theatre, ATP, The Cultch, Ghost River, The Only Animal/ Vancouver Olympics, and children's, arts, folk, puppet festivals. Jennie served as Theatre Aquarius (Ontario) Education Director for 8 seasons, and previous co-Artistic Director of Green Fools Theatre. Her original works and collaborations have toured Canada and internationally. She recently returned to Alberta with her family and is Education & Outreach Associate at Theatre Calgary.

\* TC Mentors participants are generously supported by RBC Foundation.

## SPECIAL THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The Costume Collective John Glanville Cecilia and Shep Currie



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## **NOËL COWARD**



Noël Coward, 1930.

Noël Peirce Coward was born in 1899 and made his professional stage debut as Prince Mussel in *The Goldfish* at the age of 11, leading to many child actor appearances over the next few years. His breakthrough in playwriting was the controversial *The Vortex* (1924) which featured themes of drugs and adultery and made his name as both actor and playwright in the West End and on Broadway. During the 1920s and 1930s, Coward wrote a string of successful plays, musicals and intimate revues including *Fallen Angels* (1925), *Hay Fever* (1925), *Easy Virtue* (1926), *This Year of Grace* (1928) and *Bitter Sweet* (1929). His professional partnership with childhood friend, Gertrude Lawrence

started with the musical Revue, *London Calling* (1923) and was followed by *Private Lives* (1931) and *Tonight at 8:30* (1936).

During World War II, he remained a successful playwright, screenwriter and director, as well as entertaining the troops and even acting as a spy for the Foreign Office. His plays during these years included *Blithe Spirit* (1941), which ran for 1997 performances, outlasting the War (a West End record until *The Mousetrap* overtook it), *This Happy Breed* and *Present Laughter* (both 1942). His two wartime screenplays, *In Which We Serve*, which he co-directed with the young David Lean as well as starring in, and *Brief Encounter* quickly became classics of British cinema.

However, the post-war years were more difficult. Austerity Britain – the London critics determined – was out of tune with the brittle Coward wit. In response, Coward re-invented himself as a cabaret and TV star, particularly in America, and in 1955 he played a sell-out season in Las Vegas featuring many of his most famous songs, including Mad About the Boy, I'll See You Again and Mad Dogs and Englishmen. This was followed by 3 live television specials on CBS including *Together With Music* with Mary Martin. In the mid-1950s he settled in Jamaica and Switzerland, and enjoyed a renaissance in the early 1960s becoming the first living playwright to be performed by the National Theatre, when he directed *Hay Fever* there. Late in his career he was lauded for his roles in a number of films including *Our Man in Havana* (1959) and his role as the iconic Mr. Bridger alongside Michael Caine in *The Italian Job* (1968).

Writer, actor, director, film producer, painter, songwriter, cabaret artist as well as an author of verse, essays, autobiographies and a novel, he was called by close friends 'The Master'. His final West End appearance was A Song at Twilight in 1966, which he wrote and starred in. He was knighted in 1970 and died peacefully in 1973 in his beloved Jamaica.

For further information on Noël Coward's life and work, visit noelcoward.com.



Noël Coward, 1972.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism is the belief that humans can communicate with the spirits of the dead. Its peak popularity was from the nineteenth century to the 1930s, originating in America. Spiritualism offered comfort to the living and consolation that their beloved family members were still with them and able to be reached.

Spiritualism centered around a medium, usually female, who acts as a go-between between the living and the dead. They were typically "sensitive women" who were in touch with the next world, and while in a trance, they could pass along messages from the other side. Some could also produce physical phenomena (like lights, unearthly music, levitation of objects, etc.) that were said to be the work of the spirits.

Many women were followers of this faith as well as leaders of it. Because the majority of mediums were female, and they were in the rare position of communicating meaningful messages to large groups of people, Spiritualism was deeply intertwined with social justice movements from abolitionism to children's rights to feminism. Ann Braude, author of *Radical Spirits*, said that "while not all feminists were Spiritualists, all Spiritualists advocated women's rights."

- ALIZA SARIAN

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## **BLITHE SPIRIT**

September 22 - October 7, 1989



Domini Blythe, Alan Jordan in Blithe Spirit, 1989. (Photo: Chris Thomas)

## **PRIVATE LIVES**

February 12 - 22, 1969



Calgary Herald ad for Private Lives at Theatre Calgary in 1969.

### HAY FEVER

September 16 - October 5, 2003



Marianne Copithorne, Renee Amber in Hay Fever, 2003. (Photo: Trudie Lee)

## **PRIVATE LIVES**

September 22 - October 10, 1998



Christopher Hunt in Private Lives, 1998. (Photo: Trudie Lee)



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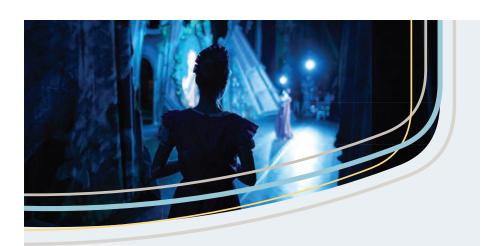
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