Blithe Spirit Audition Pack

Director – Lesley Reid

'Blithe Spirit' by Noel Coward is an engaging tale of wit and supernatural chaos, centered around a dinner party, a séance, and the ensuing ghostly complications. The narrative deals with themes of love, jealousy, and the unexpected consequences of summoning the otherworldly. As Charles Condomine grapples with the spectral presence of his former wife, unwittingly summoned by eccentric medium, Madame Arcati, the Condomines' maid and their friends, Dr and Mrs Bradman are all drawn into the tensions between the living and the dead in a comedic and poignant manner.

AUDITIONS – ZPAC Theatre, Saturday 27 June 9.45am for 10am start.

You will need to be a current ZPAC member and are required to complete a registration form on arrival. Please ensure that you arrive at ZPAC at 9.45 to allow time to complete the registration before auditions start.

Anyone who cannot attend at this time, please contact Lesley Reid at lreid1531@gmail.com.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals will be held on Tuesday evening and Saturday afternoon commencing on 4 July 2026. If you will be absent for any part of the rehearsal period please advise the Director immediately.

PERFORMANCES

Shows will run from 2 October to 18 October over nine performances, Friday and Saturday night and Sunday matinee.

Cast –

The pronouns and ages listed are descriptions of the characters. Actors are welcome to express interest for any roles, regardless of gender or age.

Charles Condomine (He/Him, 30 - 50, any ethnicity) - a novelist. Charles is bright, sophisticated, articulate, and debonair but somewhat at the mercy of his wives, past and present. His interest in spiritualism as a subject for a novel leads Charles to ask Madame Arcati to dinner and a séance. He is sceptical but becomes a believer when the ghost of his first wife appears and stays. British RP Accent.

Ruth Condomine (She/Her, 30– 45, any ethnicity) - Charles's second wife. Like her husband, Ruth is witty and sophisticated, and she is quite the society matron. Ruth is a bit stuffy and a little predictable. She is convinced that Charles has lost his mind when Elvira appears. Ruth

acts as a concerned wife, trying to restore Charles to normalcy. British RP Accent.

Elvira Condomine (She/Her, 25 – 35, any ethnicity) - the ghost of Charles's first wife. Only Charles can see or hear her. In life, Elvira was spirited, outgoing, wild, and carefree. In death, she is no different; she socializes with Genghis Khan. She does love Charles, if somewhat casually, and is jealous of Ruth. British RP Accent.

Madame Arcati (She/Her 40 – 70, any ethnicity) - Madame Arcati, the local spiritualist and medium. She truly is in contact with the other world and inadvertently is the "medium" through which Elvira is called back to this one. She is eccentric, effusive, and boisterous. Dramatic but genuine. British accent, RP or any region.

Dr. George Bradman (He/Him, 30 - 60, any ethnicity) - a good friend of the Condomines who is invited to dinner and the séance. He is entirely sceptical of anything to do with the occult but tries his utmost to go along with the proceedings for the sake of Charles' research. British.

Violet Bradman (She/Her, 30 – 55, any ethnicity) - Dr. Bradman's wife. Simple and naïve, she is quite excited about being in the presence of the medium, whom she finds fascinating. British.

Edith (She/Her, 18 +, any ethnicity) - the Condomines' new maid. She is nervous and tears around at breakneck speed trying to do things right and make a good impression. Good physical agility and comedic timing. Could possibly have a non-British accent.

Audition Pieces

Charles.

Once and for all, Ruth, I would like you to understand that what happened last night was nothing whatever to do with alcohol. You've very adroitly rationalised the whole affair to your own satisfaction, but your deductions are based on complete fallacy. I am willing to grant you that it was an aberration, some sort of odd psychic delusion brought on by suggestions or hypnosis. I was stone cold sober from first to last and extremely upset into the bargain.

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. (*Furiously.)* I've been doing my level best to control myself ever since yesterday morning, and I'm damned if I'm going to try anymore, the strain is too much. She has the advantage of being able to say whatever she pleases without me being able to hear her, but she can hear me alright, can't she, without any modified interpreting?

Ruth. I've done everything I can to help. I've controlled myself admirably. And I should like to say here and now that I don't believe a word about your damned hallucination. You're up to something, Charles - there's been a certain furtiveness in your manner for weeks. Why don't you be honest and tell me what it is?

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.

Madame Arcati. 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.

Elvira. I sat there, on the other side, just longing for you day after day. I really did. All through your affair with that brassy-looking woman in the South of France I went on loving you and thinking truly of you. Then you married Ruth and even then I forgave you and tried to understand because all the time I believe deep inside that you really loved me best... That's why I put myself down for a return visit and had to fill in all those forms and wait about in draughty passages for hours. If only you died before you met Ruth, everything might have been all right. She's absolutely ruined you. I hadn't been in the house a day before I realised that. Your books aren't as quarter as good as they used to

be, either.

Additional Audition Pieces

1.

Charles. 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 sort of Indian robes that made me realise 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 is anything really genuine about it at all?

Ruth. I'm afraid not; but I 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 fake?

Charles. I suspect the worst. A real professional charlatan. That's what I'm hoping for, anyhow. The character I am planning from my book must be a complete imposter. 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.

2.

Charles. You'd better wake her up, hadn't you? She might bring them back again.

Madame Arcati. (*Going to the left of Edith; Clapping her hands in Edith's face.)* Wake up, child!

Edith. (*Jumping up from the chair*.) Good 'eavens! Where am I?

Charles. It's all right, Edith. You can go back to bed now.

Edith. Why, it's morning.

Charles. Yes, I know it is.

Edith. But I *was* in bed! How did I get down 'ere?

Charles. I rang, Edith. I rang the bell and you answered it; Didn't I, Madame Arcati?

Edith. Did I drop off? Do you think it's my concussion again? Oh dear!

Charles. Off you go, Edith, and thank you very much.

3.

Madame Arcati. Poppycock, Mrs Condomine! It was quite effective in the old days of genuine religious belief, but that's all changed now. I believe the decline of faith in the Spirit World has been causing grave concern.

Ruth. (*Impatiently*.) Has it indeed?

Madame Arcati. There was a time of course when a drop of holy water could send even a poltergeist scampering for cover but not anymore. ‘Ou sont les neiges d’Antan?’

Ruth. Be that as it may, Madame Arcati, I must beg of you to do your utmost to dematerialize my husband's first wife as soon as possible.

Madame Arcati. The time has come for me to admit to you frankly, Mrs Condomine, that I haven't the faintest idea how to set about it.

Ruth. (*Rising*.)Do you mean to sit there and tell me that having mischievously conjured up this ghost or spirit, or whatever she is, and placed me in a hideous position, you are unable to do anything about it at all?

Madame Arcati. Honesty is the best policy.