



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

UWinnipeg's Theatre Season Concludes With Noel Coward's Comic Classic

WINNIPEG—The University of Winnipeg concludes its 2005/06 theatre season with Noel Coward's timeless play *Blithe Spirit* running March 28 - April 1, 2006 at the Gas Station Theatre. The play will be performed by the Fourth-Year Honours Acting class with technical support from senior production students.

First presented in 1941, *Blithe Spirit* remains to this day a delightfully droll comedy, and continues to be produced all over the world. The play tells the story of Charles, a remarried widower who engages the assistance of an eccentric medium in order to research a character for an upcoming novel he is writing. Unbeknownst to Charles, the innocuous séance not only provides him with the jargon and story ideas he was looking for, but also revives the ghost of his deceased first wife – which causes no end of consternation to his current, living wife!

Coward's brilliant wit and charm are evident throughout all of his work, and the verbal jabs and sparkling dialogue of the characters in *Blithe Spirit* are no exception. The play was a smash hit when it was produced in London's West End at the height of World War II – becoming the longest-running play of its time.

Blithe Spirit is directed by Ann Hodges who is well-known to Winnipeg audiences. A graduate of The University of Winnipeg and the National Theatre School, Hodges just completed directing *Marion Bridge* at Prairie Theatre Exchange. Last May, she helmed Danny Schur's *Strike, The Musical!* Her work has been seen on many Winnipeg stages, as well as at the Shaw Festival, Neptune Theatre, Manitoba Opera, and Vancouver Opera. At the Vancouver Opera, Hodges directed the world premiere of the opera *Naomi's Road*, for which she also wrote the libretto. Sets and costumes for *Blithe Spirit* were designed by Abigail Myers; Larisa Strain and Kim Donald-Haverty designed the lights.

Performances take place Tuesday, March 28 through Saturday, April 1, 2006 at 8:00 p.m. nightly at the Gas Station Theatre, 445 River Avenue. Admission is free but reservations are recommended. Please call the 24-hour Reservation and Information Line at 204.786.9152, or visit The University of Winnipeg Theatre and Film Department website at: <http://theatre.uwinnipeg.ca>

The Department of Theatre and Film at The University of Winnipeg offers programs in Acting, Design, Drama in Education, Filmmaking, Playwriting, and Production/Stage Management. Our classes are small and our programs practical. Our faculty is comprised of highly respected and award-winning

professionals who are experienced teachers and remain active in their disciplines, bringing relevant and up-to-date instruction to our students.

Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Home to more than 9,200 full- and part-time students, UWinnipeg has been ranked by our graduates in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their “Entire Educational Experience” (Maclean’s Graduate Survey, November 2004). The Globe & Mail 2005 Report Card gives The University of Winnipeg an overall ‘A’ grade in the areas of teaching quality, class sizes, faculty-student interaction, and the availability of faculty outside classroom hours. Find out why. Visit www.uwinnipeg.ca

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