

Noël Coward's
Blithe Spirit

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For Immediate Release

STYLISH BLITHE SPIRIT TO CHARM CANBERRA AUDIENCES

The Sydney production of Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* that played to a sell-out season at the Sydney Opera House will appear in Canberra for a short season this month at the Canberra Theatre from May 26-30.

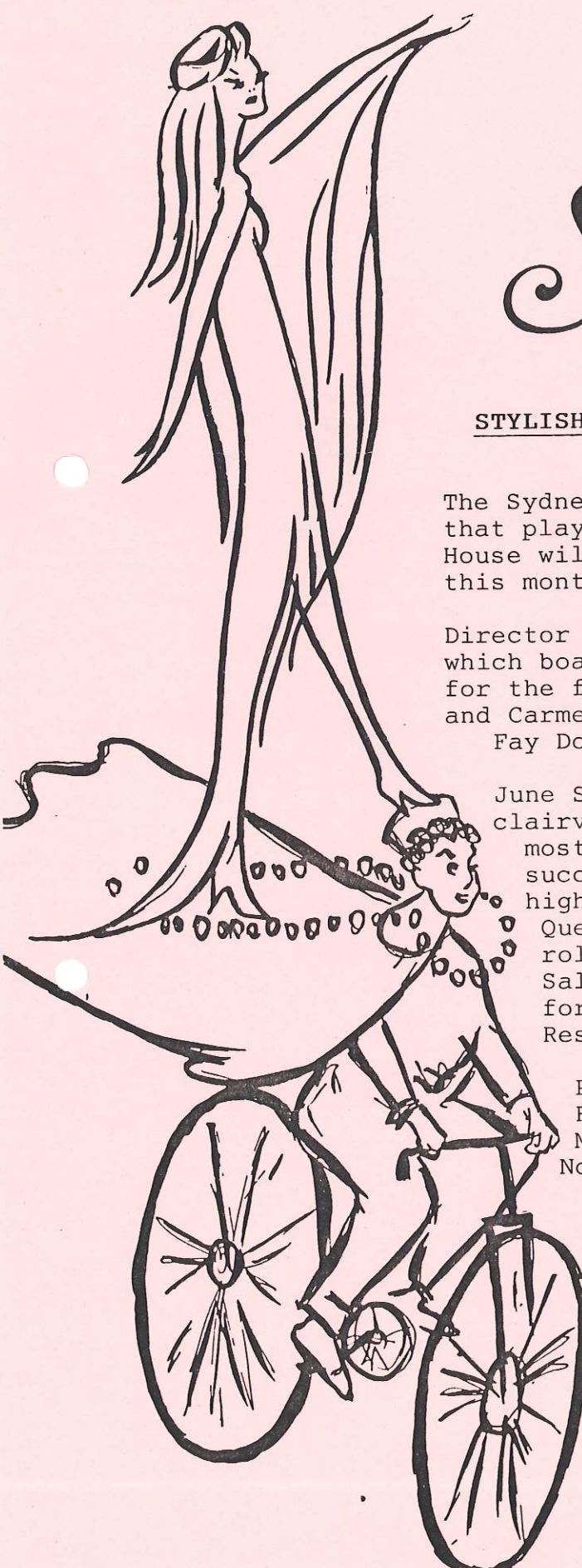
Director Peter Williams has assembled a top-line cast which boasts June Salter, John Hamblin and together for the first time on stage, showbiz sisters Paula and Carmen Duncan. The cast also includes Reg Gillam, Fay Donaldson and May Turner.

June Salter plays the prize role of the eccentric clairvoyant Madame Arcati, one of the Coward's most endearing characters. Miss Salter's success in entertainment has been outstanding, highlighted by such triumphant performances as Queen Mary in *Crown Matrimonial* and her starring role in *Night Mother* with Jill Perryman. Miss Salter is well known to television audiences for her appearances in *Certain Women*, *The Restless Years* and currently *A Country Practice*.

Paula Duncan plays the domineering second wife Ruth. Best known for her television roles, Miss Duncan has appeared in *Certain Women*, *No96*, *Prisoner* and for five years in the highly successful *Cop Shop*. Her stage credits include *Salad Days* and *Half in Ernest*. Paula has six Logie Award to her credit, including three Best Actress Awards.

Carmen Duncan, acknowledged as one of the most successful actresses in the country plays the illuring and ghostly Elvira. Among her many stage roles are Maggie in *After The Fall*, Toni in *Cactus Flower* for J.C Williamson's, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Maggie in *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*.

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Carmen's television successes go back to the days at Homicide, Division 4, Matlock Police and No.96 and the series You Can't See Around Corners. More recently she has starred in Skyways, Cop Shop, Special Squad and The Flying Doctors.

The role of the battered husband Charles is played by John Hamblin. Originally from England, John's British stage credits include Henry IV and All Things Bright and Beautiful, with TV appearances in Z Case, Dr Finlay's Casebook and The Prisoner. In Australia he appeared in the original production of Crown Matrimonial, The Anniversary with June Salter and the Circle with George Withers. His TV appearances have included The Restless Years, The Last Bastion, the ABC's Tusitala, Sons and Daughters and as Michael Chamberlain in The Disappearance Of Azaria Chamberlain. John has become well known for his continuing roles in the ABC's Playschool.

Blithe Spirit is one of a handfull of Coward play's that have become classics. Coward called it "an improbable farce". It opened in the Piccadilly Theatre in London in 1941, when England had been at war for two years. The play was Coward's brightest contribution to British morale. It remains today a brilliant comedy.

Director Peter Williams has painstakingly re-created the charm, and feel of the era. As Coward chose the "hottest" couturier of his time to design costumes, so to has Williams with spectacular costuming by couturier Christopher Essex. Set designs are by Doug Kingsman.

Blithe Spirit is presented by The Canberra Theatre Trust, by arrangement with Stage By Stage Productions.

Blithe Spirit will appear at The Canberra Theatre from May 26 to 30 at 8.00pm, Saturday matinee 2.30pm. Bookings at The Canberra Theatre Box Office or Phone-Charge (062) 57 1077.
Prices - Adults \$21.90, Parties & Concessions \$16.90.

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