



The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival Newsletter • Summer 2016

A High-Spirited Comedy by the Masterful Noël Coward

By Victoria Marchesani

man dubbed "The Master" by his friends because of his seemingly bottomless pool of talents, Noël Coward lived a life of such legendary renown that it seems more like fiction than fact. Knighted by Queen Elizabeth II and elected into the elite Royal Society of Literature, Coward was a celebrated songwriter, playwright, actor, director, singer, and composer who rose to great prominence in Britain and the U.S. in the years between the two world wars.

Born in London on December 16, 1899, Coward was raised in a working-class family, not too far from poverty. Nonetheless, from a young age, Coward's mother encouraged him to take tap dance classes and audition for local productions. At ten years old, he tapped his way into his first role. In his memoir, *Coward*, Sheridan Morley states: "By fifteen, he had acted with silent film sensations, sisters Lillian and Dorothy Gish in *Hearts of the World*. At twenty, he was a produced playwright, and at age 30, he had written the play *The Vortex*, the epic 400-cast *Cavalcade*, the everlasting *Private Lives* and the lyrical operetta *Bitter Sweet*."

Compelled both by his yearning to escape poverty and by his natural talents, Coward wrote more than 60 plays and 300 songs, as well as short stories and screenplays. When he wrote plays, he often wrote parts for himself, and *Blithe Spirit* was no exception: he played the role of Charles Condomine, a husband torn between two wives, one living and one, a ghost.

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Kay Hammond as Elvira and Noël Coward as Charles in the London production. Cecil Parker originated the role of Charles; Coward went in as a replacement. Photo courtesy of Syracuse Stage.

Notes from the Producing Artistic Director

Need a laugh? Comedy heals and has the capacity to keep us closer to sanity and balance. Tragedy reminds us of who we could become if we aspire to our highest and transform ourselves



Patrick Mulcahy

accordingly. Comedy humbles us and reminds us that we are not there yet. It taps us on the shoulder and shows the gap between here and there, the space between our perceptions of ourselves and that which others can see so clearly in us, which induces laughter.

As we wrap up the two tragedies that launched our 25th Anniversary season, now it's time for laughter. All five of our remaining productions are in the comic vein, including our two plays for kids.

Shakespeare wrote 38 plays that have survived. Only seven of them are designed to be laff-riot funny from start to finish, and *The Taming of the Shrew* is in the vanguard of that group as Shakespeare's most popular comedy.

Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* elicits joy and smiles as well as some hearty laughs, and delivers some of the Bard's most effervescent wordplay, all on the theme of what love makes of us.

Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* finds the humor not only in ghosts vs. marriage, but in the gap between our expectations for our own behaviors and that which we actually find ourselves doing.

Know anyone else who needs a laugh? Bring them along. It's good for you, and it's good for the world.

Patrick Muleury

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Festival Host





Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival's summer productions of Julius Caesar, The Taming of the Shrew and Love's Labour's Lost, as well as the 2015 fall WillPower tour of Julius Caesar, are part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.



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Blithe Spirit "fell into my mind and onto the manuscript" Coward once said. He wrote it in a week. He referred to it as "An Improbable Farce in Three Acts" and took the name from the first line of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem, To a Skylark. The play opened at London's Piccadilly Theatre on July 2, 1941—just six weeks after it was written. On November 5, 1941, it premiered on Broadway.

Charles Condomine is a novelist who prepares a séance as a joke in order to gain information for his new novel. The medium, Madame Arcati, turns out to be quite powerful, summoning Charles's first wife, Elvira, who has been dead for several years. But only Charles can see Elvira, who begins to enchant him as she always had. Tensions rise when Elvira makes increasingly desperate attempts to be seen, including tossing furniture and creating chaos.

Coward chose to write a comedy about death in order to distract his au-

dience from the harsh reality of living in a city that was under constant threat of attack by the Germans. The public had an overwhelmingly positive reaction to *Blithe Spirit* with a record-setting run of 1,997 performances in London. "Coward wanted something silly and funny that everyone could laugh at because life was grim during the war," says Anne Lewis, who is directing the play. "People were sending their children away and losing their relatives. Coward wanted to write a fun play, and he did."

In 1945, Blithe Spirit was adapted into a movie, and in 1956 a TV version was produced, with Coward playing Charles. In 1964, a musical version came to Broadway under the name High Spirits and received eight Tony nominations, including one for Coward's direction. It ran for just over a year. Revived once more in 1987, Blithe Spirit ran for three months. Last produced by the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival in 1999, Blithe Spirit is entertainment that elevates. As

director Anne Lewis says, "Audiences can expect to have a good time."

Towards the end of his life, Coward continued to perform in and direct his own shows. In 1966, he made his last London stage appearance in his own *Suite in Three Keys*. Coward retired to Jamaica, where he died on March 26, 1973, at the age of 74.

On Coward's 70th birthday, Lord Louis Mountbatten said: "There are probably greater painters than Noël, greater novelists than Noël, greater librettists, greater composers of music, greater singers, greater dancers, greater comedians, greater tragedians, greater stage producers, greater film directors, greater cabaret stars, greater TV stars. If there are, they are 14 different people. Only one man combined all 14 labels—'The Master."

When asked by an interviewer what he would like to be remembered for, he responded: "By my charm." ■

Who's Who in Rep

on the Main Stage

The Taming of the Shrew By William Shakespeare July 13 - August 7

Blithe Spirit
By Noël Coward
July 21 - August 7



lan Merrill Peakes Blithe, Charles Shrew, Petruchio



Ally Borgstrom Blithe, Edith Shrew, Bianca



Karen Peakes Blithe, Ruth Shrew, Nathaniel, Tailor, Widow



Joyce Cohen
Blithe, Mrs. Bradman
Shrew, Pedant



Linda Thorson *Blithe*, Madame Arcati *Shrew*, Baptista Minola



Eleanor Handley Blithe, Elvira Shrew, Katherina



Carl N. Wallnau Blithe, Dr. Bradman Shrew, Gremio

The Folly of Oaths and the Wisdom from Lost Love



By Heather Helinsky, dramaturg

In Love's Labour's Lost, the men have returned successful from wars and are retreating from the world to conquer peace. The King of Navarre turns his court into a "little Academy" in hope of finding philosophical wisdom, yet wisdom only comes in the form he has renounced: women. In this play—a comic war of words between men, women, servants, and foreigners—the lesson learned comes when they all recognize how ridiculous their strict oaths actually were: denying their hearts' desires.

In Shakespeare's inventive way, he puts love at the center stage of intellectual life and wisdom comes from fools. Yet, witty language serves none of the characters well: they wait too long to act upon their passions and their courtships suffer from bad timing.

The King of Navarre and his lords are hunting after immortal fame. By swearing oaths to three years of study, they are searching for answers to the ultimate question: what will I be remembered for? Their earnest efforts to fast, sleep only three hours a night, and avoid the sight of women is the sacrifice they will make to secure their legacy. Will they be found worthy? Like the pageant of the Nine Worthies at the end of the play (which is performed by fools), how will their lives stack up against the classical figures of Hector, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Boullion? Yet what makes the King of Navarre and

his followers ridiculous is that they underestimate their own hearts, believing that cold reason alone will be the key to understanding life's mysteries.

When the men take their oaths, they ignored the possibility that women might challenge them. Chosen by her father the King to be his envoy and negotiate with the men, the Princess of France arrives in Navarre. Three equally strong ladies accompany her and they are supportive confidants. The Princess is also accompanied by Boyet, whose advice she accepts, even as she reprimands him for flattering her. This Princess insists on honesty and directness, and rejects flowery language. When the King meets her outside the court, she proves perfectly capable of negotiating a delicate political situation.

The men eventually give in to their passions, break their oaths and make a new vow to pursue the ladies of France. Shakespeare mocks the male tradition of oath-taking, and denies them the opportunity to marry. No matter how clever, witty, and poetic the men try to be, they are at a loss for winning long-lasting love.

Love's Labour's Lost first appeared on the stage sometime in the 1590s, and by 1598, the published Quarto lists that it was performed for Queen Elizabeth at court during the

Christmas season. A play where the women have the upper hand in the battle of the sexes may have appealed to the Queen. With courtly inside jokes, the premise of the play could have referenced a recent event. In 1592, Queen Elizabeth visited Oxford University in violation of her own proclamation: women were forbidden from lodging on the premises of a college. Perhaps she was amused with the mocking reminder that she, like the Princess in the play, must be refused admittance to the Academy, or break her own oath.

Rev. Francis Meres in his 1598 essay on English poets gives Shakespeare his first rave review. "...so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in the mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare... As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines, so Shakespeare among ye English is most excellent in both kinds for the stage." In this essay, Meres lists Love's Labour's Lost among of Shakespeare's best comedies to date.

There are a few historical sources of the play. In 1586, a French book by

Peter de la Primaudaye was translated into English, describing four fictional young gentleman of Anjou. Set during the religious wars in France, the young men withdraw from the stress of war to a country house. The book is a series of discussions between the men concerning "the good and happy life": a sixteenth-century combination of classical Stoicism and Christian theology. At the end of the first day, they decide that happiness can be found by "purgeth pride, presumption, ambition, choler, revenge, covetousness, injustice...philosophy teaches us not to be carried away by lust."

The historical King Henri (not Ferdinand) of Navarre was a potential ally for Queen Elizabeth, as he began his reign of Navarre as a Protestant King. However, in 1593, the King of Navarre converted to Catholicism and took the French throne. The names of Shakespeare's four young men were all well known from England's participation in the French religious wars. Biron, or Berowne, was the name of Navarre's marshal, who had fought in the siege of Rouen alongside the Earl of Essex and English troops. Longaville was a supporter of Navarre, and the Duke de Mayenne (Dumaine) was a former opponent who became an ally following a truce in 1595.

Yet earlier, on October 2nd, 1578, another incident involving Henri of Navarre mirrors the play in a tantalizing way, but not certain. Henri of Navarre was married to Marguerite de Valois,

who was Catholic and the daughter of Catherine de Medici and sister to King Henry III of France. Navarre and Marguerite, both of whom had taken many lovers, had been separated for two years. Religious tensions were so intense that when Marguerite de Valois traveled to the south of France for reconciliation, the Protestant husband and his Catholic wife could not safely reside in the same city. Despite these problems, the encounter was celebrated in a lovely outdoor park of the chateau de Nerac.

uring their stay, in her memoirs, Marguerite records that she was there to settle a matter of her unpaid dowry, against which he was holding parts of Aquitaine, which parallels the business matter debated by the King and Princess in Shakespeare's play. French court records from the event also mention that two large sets of tapestries which depicted the images of the Nine Worthies were hung in Nerac, for the enjoyment of Marguerite, her mother, and her maids of honor. In France in that same year, the Duc d'Alencon gave an elaborate entertainment which included soldiers masquerading as Russians.

While Elizabethan England knew French politics and culture well, it is worth noting that Russia had been "discovered" by the English only in 1553, when a ship commanded by Richard Chancellor left an Artic expedition to the White Sea and visited Moscow. England charted a company the following year to exploit trade between the

two realms. By the 1590s, reports from these expeditions portrayed Russians as rude, cruel, hard-drinking, and liars. "As for the truth of his word the Russe for the most part maketh small regard of it so he may gain by a lie and breach of his promise," Giles Fletcher reported in 1591 in Of the Russe Commonwealth. The perception of Russians as liars reflects the play's themes and the lords who forswear their oaths to woo with flattering words. A merry, ridiculous moment in the play, as the men try to court the ladies disguised as Russians, the ladies see through and catch the lords in their lies.

Love's Labour's Lost, though, is much more than an imitation of French politics. Shakespeare's plays have a completely different thrust to reveal human nature and its flaws. His extravagant language is on full display in this play, with the longest word in all of Shakespeare's plays: honorificabilitudinitatibus.

The courtly language acts as a verbal mask as the men show off their skills. They try to communicate their emotions, but in doing so, they get lost in a labyrinth of words. It's the lower class characters who see the folly in this, sometimes stating simply their confusion. The play ends with a reminder of the ordinary realities of country life in opposition to the play's courtly setting. This play of linguistic acrobatic moves, surface lightness, and frivolity, ends with simple, deep, and profound truths and feelings of love lost.

Love's Labour's LostBy William Shakespeare

July 27 - August 7
Schubert Theatre



Spencer Plachy, King Ferdinand



Akeem Davis, Longaville



Zack Robidas, Berowne



Mattie Hawkinson,Rosaline



Peter Schmitz, Holofernes



Anthony Lawton,Don Adriano de Armado



Marnie Schulenburg, Princess of France



Christopher Patrick Mullen, Costard



Wayne S. Turney,Boyet

PSF Welcomes New Members to Board

omposed of volunteers from around the region, PSF Board of Directors serve as community representatives that support the company's mission and administration. PSF is proud to welcome seven new board members: Kristine B. Burfeind, H. Lloyd Carbaugh, Dr. James Pantano, Judy Morrison, Dr. Auriele Thiele, Elaine Trigiano, and Kerry Wrobel.

"We couldn't be happier with the addition of these seven to our board of directors," says Patrick Mulcahy, producing artistic director, noting the board now totals 29. "With their knowledge and enthusiasm for the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, they will help the Festival continue to grow."



Kristine B. Burfeind believes it is important to support the arts and has a particular passion for arts education, given the decreased amount of

time today's schools are able to devote to the arts in the classroom. Her work experience includes United Airlines, Remay Real Estate, and Lehigh County Mental Health. Her community leadership roles include 16 years as a member of the Allentown Symphony Orchestra (ASO) board and past president. She currently chairs ASO's education and outreach programs, which include the nationally recognized El Sistema school program and the Schadt String Competition. Burfeind also serves on the National Alumni Board at Charleston University, her alma mater, and was past president of the Dental Auxiliary.



H. Lloyd Carbaugh is the Director of Materials Management for Health Network Laboratories, a subsidiary of Lehigh Valley Health Network.

He oversees the inventory and capital needs of 60-plus business locations. His professional life began in a very different vein—as a professional (Equity) Stage Manager, after graduating from Allentown College and The Yale School of Drama. He also taught the stage management curriculum at Yale for three years. He held stage managing residencies at the Yale Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage, and Indiana Repertory Theatre among others, as well as moonlighting for several seasons with the PSF. In between, he spent many years in management positions with several successful start-up software companies. A dedicated advocate for the arts,

he was recently elected to the Board of the Allentown Symphony.



Dr. James Pantano recently retired from private practice with The Heart Care Group, after 38 years as attending cardiologist at Lehigh Valley Hospital,

where he was Director of the Noninvasive Cardiovascular Laboratory for 30 years and the Cardiac Rehabilitation Center for 35 years. His special interests were in the fields of congestive heart failure, angina, myocardial infarction and atrial fibrillation. He has published research in several journals as well as a patient-oriented book on angina. His undergraduate degree is from Rutgers University, medical degree from University of Pittsburgh, medical internship and residency at Ohio State University, and Cardiology Fellowship at University of Maryland. Dr. Pantano is married to Penny Pantano and has 3 children, Jim, Dave and Sue. Jim enjoys helping in his wife's business at Swim-in Zone.



Judy Morrison is a retired administrator after 30 years at a hematology/oncology medical practice. Early on, Judy was a licensed math teacher in New

York. When the first of her three sons was born, she started volunteering. She ran an arts council in New York, moved to Pennsylvania, helped found the Parkland Community Library, and served on the board of the Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra. Currently she is delivering Meals on Wheels and tutoring while serving on the board of The Literacy Center. In 2011, she was recognized by the Lehigh County Aging and Adult Services as one of its "Unsung Heroes."



Dr. Auriéle Thiele is an Associate Professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Lehigh University. In 2014-15 she was a Vis-

iting Associate Professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management. Her research focuses on decision-making under high uncertainty, and has been funded in part by several grants from the National Science Foundation. She is the recipient of an IBM Faculty Award and was awarded the first prize in the George Nicholson Paper Competition organized by the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest society in the world for profes-

sionals in the field of operations research, management science, and analytics. She recently completed her term as chairperson of the INFORMS Undergraduate Operations Research Student Paper Competition and currently serves as the co-chairperson of the Decision and Risk Analysis track for the 2016 INFORMS Analytics conference. She holds a SM and a PhD in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a "diplôme d'ingénieur" from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Paris in France.



Elaine Trigiano is President of The Trigiano Foundation, founded by her late husband, Lucien L. Trigiano, M.D., F.A.C.P. The Foundation's

mission is furthering education at all levels. It has sent teachers from all over the United States to Colonial Williamsburg for a weeklong learning experience. The Foundation also contributes to Washington Crossing, ArtsQuest, Cybersonics Technology Team 103, Palisades High School, East Central Pennsylvania Scholastic Art Awards and Easton High School's music department. Elaine is a retired rehabilitation case manager. She has given presentations to Lloyds of London and the French Insurance Institute. Prior to case managing she was a multi-line insurance adjuster.



Kerry Wrobel is the president of Lehigh Valley Industrial Park Inc. (LVIP), a private non-profit economic development corporation. Wrobel

oversees LVIP's 2,500-acre industrial park system, which includes managing the redevelopment of 1,000 acres of the former Bethlehem Steel plant—considered the largest privately-owned brownfield site in the U.S. Prior to joining LVIP in 2001, Wrobel held several management positions with Crayola. He served as the first executive vice president of the Bethlehem Economic Development Corporation and began his career as an economic development specialist in the Office of Community and Economic Development with the City of Reading, Pa. He is a graduate of Swarthmore College and The Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania. Wrobel is married to Anastasia M. Wrobel, and they have two children, Sean and Maggie.

PRE-SHOW PROLOGUES

Become a Shakespearean Scholar in 30 minutes or less

By Jill Arington

Education Director

ou don't need to be a Shakespearean scholar to enjoy an evening at PSF. In fact, you don't even need to read the plays-although we definitely recommend that you do! But if it's been a few years since you've cracked open Julius Caesar or you just haven't gotten around to reading Love's Labour's Lost yet, don't let it stop you from checking them out on the PSF boards. And if you've been sticking to our non-Shakespearean offerings thinking that the Bard is too difficult (I'm looking at you, Dad), then this is my personal invitation to you!

Around here, the term "Prologue" refers to both the lines spoken by the chorus at the beginning of a play and our free and informal pre-show discussions. Sponsored by Drs. Paul and June Schlueter, these "Prologues" are led by me or a member of the PSF artistic staff, start about 45 minutes prior to every Shakespeare play, and are designed to introduce you, the audience, to the play you are about to see.

We'll start with the essentials—the who, what, when, where and why of the play- and establish the basic storyline. We'll talk about where the play falls in the canon, and how it compares to Shakespeare's other plays or reflects what was happening in his life when he wrote it. We'll also talk a little bit about what was going on in the world at the time the play was written. Shakespeare's first audience didn't need anyone to explain the cultural significance of the events or characters in his plays, but most of us in the 21st century could use a refresher course in English history. Shakespeare and his audience knew exactly why Shakespeare might have decided to take a closer look at the politics of ancient Rome, and talking about what such an event meant to an

Elizabethan Englishman can help us tap into the political and emotional undercurrents of the play.

I'll also come prepared to discuss fresh insights into the artistic process and clue you into some of the directorial and design choices that guide the look and feel of our production. We'll discuss why we decided to do these plays in the summer of 2016, and maybe link them to the headlines of the evening news.

After that, we might discuss anything that makes the specific play at hand so special. Maybe we'll delve into Mark Antony's "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" speech, which is a veritable masterclass in rhetoric. I can help you keep track of the lovers whose labours are lost. Maybe we'll chat about famous productions or reminisce about the last time The Taming of the Shrew was performed on the PSF stage. Perhaps something will be of particular interest to you, and that evening's discussion will focus on the aspects of the play you find most exciting. By the end of the discussion, my hope is that you can appreciate why we, the artists, are so passionate about these stories and think they are worth telling 400-some years after they were first written. We love these plays, and want to make it easier for you, the modern audience member, to enjoy everything Shakespeare has to offer-without worrying about whether you'll be able to remember the characters' names or follow the plot.

So come on in! Give it a try! There will NOT be a quiz and you can leave your No. 2 pencils at home! I'll do all the research for you, so you can appreciate the play like a Shakespearean insider—without logging hours at the library.

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