



Mayslake Peabody Estate
31st St. & Rt. 83, Oak Brook, IL

www.firstfolio.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, February 3, 2011

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BLITHE SPIRIT by Noël Coward

Previews: Feb. 3, 4 @ 8:00

Opening Night: February 5 @ 8:00

Runs: Feb. 3 ~ March 6

Performance Times: Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays @ 8:00;

Sundays @ 3:00

Tickets: \$29-35 adults, \$25-30 Students/Seniors (Previews \$20)

COMEDY CURES THE WINTER BLUES

Stellar Cast Brings Coward's Classic to Life

OAK BROOK: Sixteen-time Jeff Nominee Paula Scrofano is currently delighting audiences as the flamboyant medium Madame Arcati in First Folio's production of *Blithe Spirit*. She comes to First Folio directly from Northlight Theater's production of *A Civil War Christmas*, where she played Mary Todd Lincoln. One of Chicago's most versatile leading ladies, Paula has won two Jeff Awards for her performances in *On the Twentieth Century* at Drury Lane Oakbrook and *Putting It Together* at Court Theater. She has also been twice honored with the Sarah Siddons Award for her performances in the Goodman Theatre's *Sunday in the Park with George* and as Eva Peron in *Evita* at the Marriott Theatre. Paula has been seen at major theaters throughout Chicago including Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, and the Ravinia Festival, as well as appearances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Leading the male side of the cast as Charles Condomine will be Nick Sandys, who returns to the Chicago stage following a tour of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. Prior to that, Chicago audiences enjoyed his performances as Malvolio in First Folio's production of *Twelfth Night* and Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* at Remy Bumppo, both roles earning him 2010 Jeff Nominations. First Folio favorite Melanie Keller will be portraying his first wife, Elvira, whose ghost returns to stir up trouble after one of Madame Arcati's séances takes a strange turn. Melanie, who appeared as Olivia in last summer's *Twelfth Night*, was the 2007-2008 Chicago Associates Fellow at the Stratford Festival of Canada, where she appeared in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet* and was the winner of a Tyrone Guthrie award. She is also a company member of the award winning Signal Ensemble.

Taking on the role of Charles' current wife, the very much alive Ruth, is Erin Noel Grennan, who returns to First Folio where she was last seen as the tragic Josie in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Locally, she has appeared at Drury Lane Oakbrook and Chicago Shakespeare, but her work has also taken her around the country and as far away as the Gaiety Theater in Dublin, Ireland.

Noël Coward was the ultimate British raconteur of the 20th Century, the perfect successor to Oscar Wilde as the arbiter and exemplar of taste, style and wit. In addition to being one of the greatest playwrights of the century, he was also renowned as an actor, composer, and lyricist, writing the songs for many of his productions. For over half a century, Coward's classic bon mots have been quoted by writers and politicians in need of a clever response: "It's discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit."

All performances take place in Mayslake Hall, a 30-room Tudor Revival style mansion originally built by coal baron Francis S. Peabody. Completed in 1922, the mansion is on the National Register of

Historic Places. Mayslake Hall is located on the grounds of the Mayslake Peabody Estate, which is owned and operated by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. Located at 31st St. and Rt. 83 in Oak Brook, First Folio is easy to get to from either the East-West Tollway (I-88) or the Stevenson Expressway (I-55). Free parking is available on the grounds. First Folio Theatre is supported in part by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a State Agency, and the DuPage Community Foundation.

Full cast and staff list is included below.

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Cast

Madame Arcati	Paula Scrofano*
Charles Condomine	Nick Sandys*°
Elvira Condomine	Melanie Keller*°
Ruth Condomine	Erin Noel Grennan*
Edith	Hayley L. Rice°
Dr. Bradman	Rene Ruelas
Mrs. Bradman	Ellen Cribbs

Production Staff

Director	<i>Alison C. Vesely°</i>
Scenic Design	<i>Angie Miller°</i>
Lighting Design	<i>Camden Peterson</i>
Costume Design	<i>Vicky Strei°</i>
Dialect Coach	<i>Barbara Zahora</i>
Stage Manager & Sound Designer	<i>David Rice*°</i>

* = Member Actor's Equity Association ° = Artistic Associate of First Folio Theatre