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**GUTHRIE THEATER ANNOUNCES CASTING FOR
NOËL COWARD'S EFFERVESCENT COMEDY, *BLITHE SPIRIT*
DIRECTED BY DAVID IVERS**

**Previews begin Saturday, November 25; Opening on Friday, December 1;
Playing through Sunday, January 14, 2018
on the McGuire Proscenium Stage at the Guthrie Theater**

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) today announced casting for its production of Noël Coward's lively comedy *Blithe Spirit*. Under the direction of David Ivers, who directed *The Cocoanuts* at the Guthrie in the fall of 2015, *Blithe Spirit* will play November 25, 2017 through January 14, 2018 on the McGuire Proscenium Stage. Single tickets start at \$29 (\$15 for previews, November 25-30), and are on sale now through the Box Office at 612.377.2224, toll-free 877.44.STAGE, 612.225.6244 (Group Sales) and online at guthrietheater.org.

"The curation of Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* following our just-closed *Watch on the Rhine* by Lillian Hellman is exciting to me," said the Guthrie's artistic director Joseph Haj. "These two artists were writing at the same moment in time [both shows premiered in 1941], responding to the same world and the same crisis. Hellman wrote directly to war and its pains while Coward's comedy was created as a diversion for his countrymen from the terrors of the times." He continued, "It strikes me that these are two very good uses of the theater: one that helps us to remember, and the other that allows us to forget, if only for a couple of hours, the challenges of our world."

Director David Ivers concurred, noting "It's a really important time to laugh." He added, "This is Noël Coward's love letter to his England and to the theater. It's an astonishingly well-built play; masterfully witty, deliciously irreverent, and decades later reminds us all that it is a really good time in our world to share a laugh. I'm excited to be building *Blithe Spirit* here with this terrific group of artists and staff at one of the great theaters in our country." Since July 2017 Ivers has been the artistic director for Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) following a seven-year tenure as artistic director for the Utah Shakespeare Festival, where he directed and performed in more than 50 productions over the course of 20 years.

Lighthearted and endearing, *Blithe Spirit* is a classic comedy for the ages. Set in summertime in Kent, England, the play follows writer Charles Condomine who is working on his latest novel, *The Unseen*. As part of his research, he and his wife Ruth host a séance with an eccentric medium known as Madame

Arcati and invite their friends to play along. But the evening takes a supernatural turn when Arcati conjures Charles' deceased first wife, who doesn't have plans to leave.

The cast features **Heidi Armbruster** (Guthrie: *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Great Gatsby*) as Ruth, **Bob Davis** (Guthrie: *To Kill a Mockingbird*; *The Crucible*; *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice*) as Dr. Bradman, **Quinn Mattfeld** (Guthrie: debut) as Charles Condomine, **Elia Monte-Brown** (Guthrie: debut) as Elvira, **Suzanne Warmanen** (Guthrie: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *Pride and Prejudice*) as Edith, **Amy Warner** (Guthrie: debut) as Mrs. Bradman, and **Sally Wingert** (Guthrie: *Native Gardens*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Harvey*) as Madame Arcati.

The creative team for *Blithe Spirit* includes **David Ivers** (Director), **Jo Winiarski** (Scenic Designer), **Meg Neville** (Costume Designer), **Xavier Pierce** (Lighting Designer), **Scott W. Edwards** (Sound Designer), **Carla Steen** (Dramaturg), **Jill Walmsley Zager** (Vocal Coach), **Tree O'Halloran** (Stage Manager), **Justin Hossle** (Assistant Stage Manager) and **Flordelino Lagundino** (Assistant Director).

THE GUTHRIE THEATER (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and to cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj's leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. The Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance, serving nearly 400,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies.

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