

## Previous Semi-Circle Productions

May 1975	Wilde: LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME (reading)
December 1976	Shaw: HEARTBREAK HOUSE (reading)
May 1977	JUBILEE REVUE (jointly)
January 1978	Melville: DEAR CHARLES
September 1978	OLD TIME MUSIC HALL (jointly)
January 1980	Coward: HAY FEVER
October 1980	A SEASIDE SHOW (jointly)
February 1982	Wilde: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST
February 1983	Coward: PRESENT LAUGHTER

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Reisebüro

## The Semi-Circle

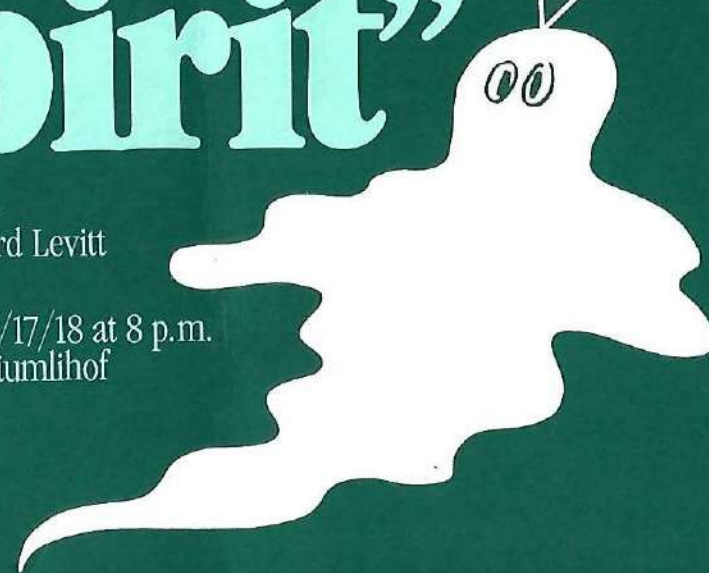
**proudly presents  
the best of  
Noël Coward's comedies**

# "Blithe Spirit"

witty, weird  
and  
worthwhile  
seeing!

Director: Richard Levitt

February 15/16/17/18 at 8 p.m.  
Gymnasium Bäumlhof



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# Rethink?



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## Blithe Spirit

cast of characters

*(in order of appearance)*

EDITH (a Maid)	Joan Kuster
RUTH	Cynthia Baer
CHARLES	Tony James
DOCTOR BRADMAN	Graham Simons
MRS BRADMAN	Ruth Meier
MADAME ARCATI	Barbara Clark
ELVIRA	Lesley Stockreisser

Directed by Richard Levitt

The action of the play takes place in the living-room of Charles Condomine's house in Kent

### SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

#### ACT I

SCENE 1	Before dinner on a summer evening
SCENE 2	After dinner

#### ACT II

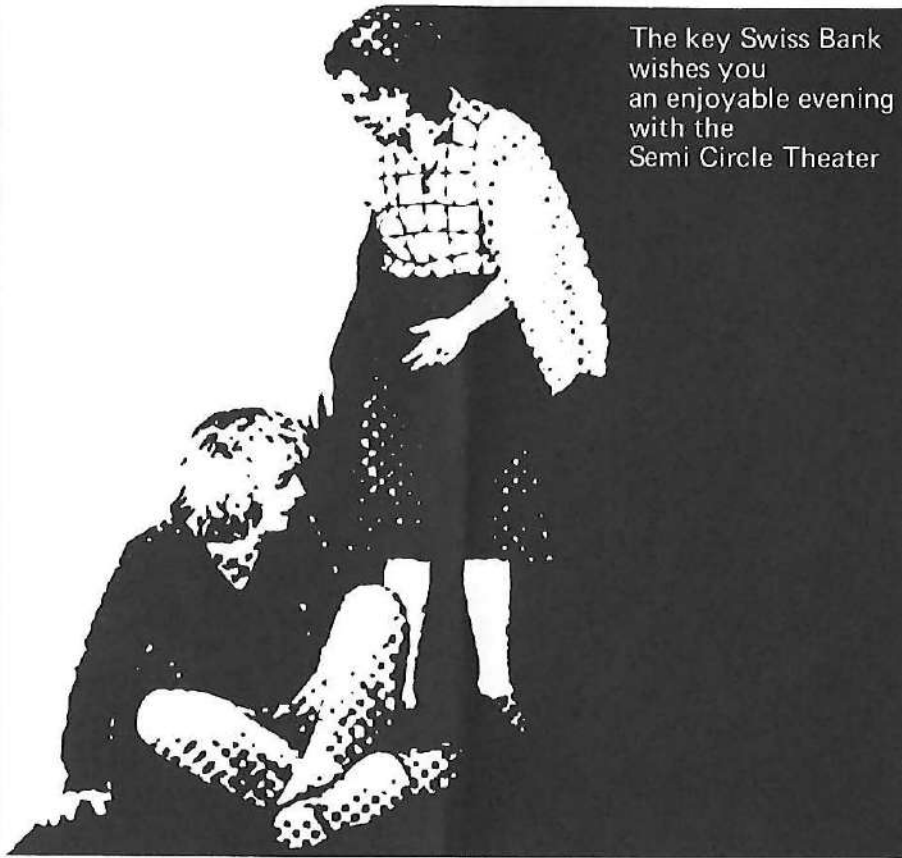
SCENE 1	The next morning
SCENE 2	Late the following afternoon
SCENE 3	Early evening. A few days later

#### ACT III

SCENE 1	After dinner. A few days later
SCENE 2	Several hours later



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## What tonight's play is all about

Charles Condomine, a successful novelist, is gathering material for a new book whose plot involves spiritualism. He therefore invites Madame Arcati, the eccentric local medium, to conduct a seance at his home for himself and his second wife, Ruth - with Dr. Bradman (the village G.P.) and his wife to add scientific weight. Charles intends to ferret out the disreputable tricks of a bogus medium; but unfortunately Madame Arcati is not as bogus as she seems, and Charles has overlooked the fact that Elvira, his first wife, "passed over" (mediums never say "die") some years previously and is consequently waiting on the Other Side. There are, furthermore, powerful forces unconsciously at work under his own roof. As a result, some hectic hours are passed at the Condomines' and a profound but not altogether unwelcome change takes place in Charles' life.

Blithe Spirit was written "between one Saturday and the next" in the Watch House, a cottage forming part of the Italianate Welsh village of Portmeirion.

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### Indische Genüsse

Es ist längst zum Anziehungspunkt für Liebhaber exotisch-kulinarischer Genüsse geworden: Jeffery's Indian Restaurant am Bahnhof SBB. Auch Stammkunden bietet Jeffery's Speisekarte voller fernöstlicher Spezialitäten immer wieder neue köstliche Kombinationen in den verschiedensten Geschmacksrichtungen.

Wer vor der Bestellung hinter die Geheimnisse der indisch-englischen Menu-Bezeichnungen kommen will, lässt sich von Jeffery persönlich beraten. Der Malaysier empfiehlt «Anfängern» meist sein Lieblingsmenu: Tandoori Mixed Grill (Best.-Nr. 15, Fr. 20.-), dazu Bhuna King Prawn (31, Fr. 22.50), als Beilage Pulao Rice (42, Fr. 3.50) und natürlich das indische Fladenbrot Tandoori Chappati (37, Fr. 2.50).

Wer nach diesem Genuss der indischen Kochkunst des Küchenchefs Jit Singh noch Hunger verspürt, sollte unbedingt Jeffery's Golden Chicken (25, Fr. 15.-) nachbestellen.

Jeffery's «Kuchi» bietet aber neben all den Lamb- und Chicken-Menüs einen interessanten Einblick in die vegetarische Küche aus Fernost. Wer es fleischlos mag, findet eine grosse, scharf-würzige Auswahl.

Jeffery hat am Sonntag geschlossen, abends sollte man (Tel. 23 10 40) reservieren.

## A Word from the Director...

For my first directorial assignment for the Semi-Circle, I have chosen one of Noel Coward's most brilliant and successful comedies. It is a masterpiece of wit and style, which Coward tossed off in six days and brought directly to the stage, having to alter only a handful of dialogue.

This year our work began with a series of exercises and improvisations, which were aimed at bringing our actors closer together in a tight-knit ensemble. For me, ensemble is a key-word in any production.

It is my hope that through our hard work, our actors, technical assistants and myself have been able to present this Improbable Farce in a contemporary and light-hearted fashion.

We will have to let your applause tell us whether we have attained our goal or not..... so ..... on with the show .....





**Richard Levitt**  
directs tonight's  
play

**Joan Kuster**  
as Edith, the  
maid

**Ruth Meier**  
as Mrs. Bradman  
the good doctor's  
wife

**Tony James**  
as Charles –  
has he one or  
two wives ?

**Leslie Stockreisser**  
as Elvira, the first  
wife of Charles

**Barbara Clark**  
portrays Madame  
Arcati

**Cynthia Baer**  
plays Ruth, Charles'  
second wife

**Graham Simons**  
plays Dr. Bradman  
the local doctor



**The Players  
and the Director**



### Lesley Stockreisser

A newcomer to the Semi-Circle, Lesley began acting in mystery plays in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral. Later, at drama school she became an associate of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and now teaches English in Basle and looks after her two young sons.

### Tony James

Tony, who describes himself as "young-and-a-half", has appeared in two previous plays for the Semi-Circle. He has always been interested in amateur theatre and belonged to a small company in the United Kingdom for several years. He now works in Basle as a computer programmer.

### Richard Levitt

Richard hails from Los Angeles, California. He teaches at the Schola Cantorum and is familiar to the British community in Basle through his staging of "The Seaside Show" and "Old Time Music Hall". This is first assignment for the Semi-Circle.

### Cynthia Baer

An American in the Semi-Circle's circle, Cynthia made her first public appearance in 1948! Now an editorial assistant with a publishing house in Basle, most of her acting experience comes from having taught English in the United States, Germany and Japan. She finds the prospect of "life after death" encouraging: "After all, it got me into Act III!"

### Ruth Meier

Born in Birmingham, England, Ruth is third of a family of ten children and has three of her own. Her travels have taken her to Egypt, Australia and New Zealand, where she met and married her Swiss husband. This is her second appearance in a Semi-Circle production.

### Joan Kuster

A Lancashire lass from Liverpool, Joan came to Basle in 1967, married a Swiss in 1969 and then spent four years in Australia. She played Miss Erikson in "Present Laughter" last year and assisted behind the scenes with many previous Semi-Circle productions.

### Graham Simons

Graham has been a member of the Semi-Circle since it was founded and has appeared in all its full-scale productions to date ("Dear Charles", "Hay Fever", "The Importance of being Earnest" and "Present Laughter"). Before coming to Basle he had also been involved in amateur theatre in England, both on stage and as director.

### Barbara Clark

One of the founder members of the Semi-Circle, Barbara made her stage debut at the age of five and has danced, sung and acted on and off the stage ever since. She has been engaged in pharmacological research in Basle for the past 15 years, but finds time to garden, collect and dress antique dolls and perform in all the Semi-Circle productions - as the mistress, mother, nurse and secretary of Graham Simons.



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## Behind the Scenes

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR/  
PROMPTER

Muriel Taylor

STAGE MANAGER

Peter Nixon

WARDROBE

Liz Baur  
Penny Ehram

MAKE-UP

Rudi and Vreneli Ortlieb

PROPERTIES

Diana Zuger  
Molly Arnold

LIGHTING AND SOUND

Peter Degen  
Grayson Richards

PUBLICITY/PROGRAMME

Jürg Chresta  
Penny Ehram

FRONT OF HOUSE

Jean-Pierre Zuger  
"Volunteers"

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Ruedi Kuster

\* \* \* \* \*

The Semi-Circle would like to thank all those members and non-members not mentioned by name whose generous help has made this production possible.

We should specially like to thank the Zurich Comedy Club for their help and assistance with the scenery.

\* \* \* \* \*



# The Semi-Circle

Our theatre group really dates back to 1967 when a few members of the British Circle in Basle got together regularly to read English plays.

The play-reading evenings were very informal and intended for our own entertainment but we did give one public presentation for the British Circle, reading scenes from "Pygmalion", "The Importance of Being Earnest" (produced in full in 1982) and "Blithe Spirit", which is our choice for this year's production.

When the leader of our group, Mrs. Esme Chesner, left Basle to return to England, the group broke up for some time but a chance suggestion by Ron Hill to revive the play-readings coincided with the "discovery" of Peter Broberg, who had trained in acting and production at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. He agreed to help us form a drama group and so "The Semi-Circle" was born. The name stems from the British Circle, who first sponsored us and the semi-circle of chairs used in public play-readings. We are now a fully independent society.

Theatre being very much a part of the British way of life - most towns and even many small villages in Great Britain have amateur societies - most of our members had had some previous experience, while others were absolute beginners. We rehearsed in private homes, in a Fasnacht cellar and in a room at the Rialto, the scene of our first play-reading evenings in 1967.

Our first public play-reading in 1975 under Peter Broberg's direction was Oscar Wilde's "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime" followed by George Bernard Shaw's "Heartbreak House".

Then came the first full stage production in 1978 at the Borromäum Theatre - Alan Melville's "Dear Charles" - which was performed on two evenings. It was such a great success that in 1980 we extended the next play, Noel Coward's "Hay Fever", for a further performance.

Between plays, in collaboration with "The Flowing Bowl", an enthusiastic group of male vocalists from the British Circle, we presented a "Jubilee Revue", to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, an "Old Time Music Hall" in 1978 and "A Seaside Show" in 1980.

In 1982, in order to satisfy the increased demand for seats, we moved our venue to the Bäumlhof Gymnasium for the production of Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" followed in 1983 by Noel Coward's "Present Laughter".

This year Peter Broberg is taking a well-earned rest and we are pleased to welcome Richard Levitt, director of tonight's play, into our group.

Ron Hill, apart from taking part in some of the productions, was largely responsible for building up the business and behind-the-scenes sides of the Semi-Circle. He and his wife Anne, also a very active member, returned to England last year and we were sorry to lose them.

Amateur theatre productions mean a great deal of hard work but they also give us a lot of fun and, we hope, a great deal of pleasure to our audiences.

New members (with or without experience) are always welcome; on stage, back-stage or front-of-house. If you would like to join us, telephone our Secretary, Joan Kuster, on 72 62 73 or fill in the form in this programme.

M.T.