

New MLT play starts Wednesday

Markham Little Theatre (MLT) opens its twenty-first season on Wednesday with Noel Coward's much-loved classic, *Blihe Spirit*.

A post-performance wine and cheese reception, given by individual sales agents of the Markham and Unionville offices of Family Trust, celebrates the opening.

Directed by Lillian Sievanen, this is the second MLT production of Coward's self-styled "improbable farce." The first, in 1969, was a hit with Markham audiences.

It is the playwright's witty comment on the craze for spiritualism that was sweeping England in the 30's and 40's. He had witnessed some of his own friends, in both royal and theatrical circles, in the thrall of the fashionable mediums of the day.

A writer, Charles Condomine, played by Steve Turl, invites to dinner an eccentric medium (Bunty Webb), in order to expose the tricks of the trade for a mystery he is writing.

But his plan backfires. To his consternation the ghost of his first wife, Elvira (Michele Browne), is conjured up at Madame Arcati's seance. Charles alone can see and hear her.

Elvira makes the most of the situation, mischievously inciting misunderstandings and comic complications between her former husband and her successor, Ruth (Anne Robinson). Madame Arcati adds to the hilarity with her bumbling attempts to exorcise the ghost.

Guests at the seance are played by Eric Newton and Iris Sanderson. Dana Clarfield makes her debut with MLT in the small but amusing role of the maid.

Set in the early 40's, in the elegant drawing room of the Condomines' house in Kent, *Blihe Spirit* tickles the eye, as well as the funny bone.

MLT's production will be adjudicated on Friday night for the 1987 drama festival of the Association of Community Theatres, Central Ontario.

Blihe Spirit runs until Saturday, November 8 at the Markham Theatre. Tickets are \$10, subscriptions for MLT's three-play season are \$24. Both are available at the theatre box office, 479-0201. Major credit cards accepted.

The Sheraton Parkway Hotel offers a special dinner/theatre package for \$25.95 for the four performances. For reservations, call 881-2121.



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Performance 8:30 p.m.

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&

Sat., Nov. 22nd

Doors open 6:30 p.m.

Dinner 7:00 p.m.

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Raising the Roof

Canadian performers Dinah Christie and Tom Kneebone are set to sing and dance for all they're worth to help raise money for Participation House's new roof. A musical happening called *Raise the Roof* is slated for Sunday, Nov. 9 at the Markham Theatre. Co-sponsored by the Economist and Sun and Theatre 48, the event will also feature the Mike Darow, the Norm Amadio Quintet, Beyond the Fringe, Studio 4, Scott Smith and Lesley Ballantyne. Tickets at \$50 each are available by calling 479-0201.

— Steve Houston

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