

Final weekend of 'Blithe Spirit' plays this weekend at Very Little Theatre

The Very Little Theatre continues to celebrate its 90th season in 2019 with "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward, directed by Karen Scheeland.

Coward's "Blithe Spirit" is an audacious comedy about marriage, love, and death, in which the memory of a lost

love becomes material for a punch line. At his best, Coward's work is able to weave little symphonies out of bursts of jaded lust or malicious wit.

"Blithe Spirit" is a very British drawing room play, encouraging resistance to encroaching catastrophe by blithely ignoring it.

Set in England in 1941, we meet Charles Condomine, a well to do novelist, who has invited guests to be a part of a séance in order to get material for his next book.

He invites Madame Arcati, a medium, to lead the séance.

Unfortunately an unfore-

seen materialization occurs which leads to comic misunderstandings, other séances, and an unexpected ending.

The VLT cast features: Daniel Squire as "Charles," Janna Slack as "Ruth," Aimee Hamilton as "Elvira," Kali Kardas as "Edith," Bill Siedler as "Dr. Bradman," Lisa Roth

as "Mrs. Bradman" and Kathy LaMontagne as "Madame Arcati."

The final performances are Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 7-9. Curtain time is 7:30 p.m. (except for the Sunday matinée.)

Adult tickets are \$21; seniors and students are \$17;

Thursday performances are \$17 for everyone.

Tickets are available by phone through the Box Office from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday at 541-344-7751 or online at TheVLT.com.

Cycle from AI

hospitality," the route is expected to attract some 2,400 cyclists.

For organizations and businesses in Cottage Grove, the event is a potential economic boon as the end-of-

summer slump sets in.

"We hope that the locals will embrace these folks," said Travis Palmer, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce. "And especially the business owners will recognize the demographic that they're dealing with and that the potential for business for

them is really, really good."

While the prospect of bicycle-packed roads may not be inviting to all, Palmer emphasized that the relative rarity of the event spells out a unique opportunity for the community and should be embraced.

"It means a lot to us because this is actually the third time that they'll have come to Cottage Grove," he said.

Since Cycle Oregon's inception in 1988, the organization has plotted different courses around Oregon each year. Cottage Grove found itself hosting the riders' overnight stays in 2007 and again in 2011.

Though the city made the list for Cycle Oregon's 2017 route, wildfires caused the first-ever cancellation of the group's event.

"We were really excited to

have them two years ago and we were disappointed that it got cancelled," said Palmer.

In ramping up for the event, numerous local organizations and businesses expressed an interest in participating. Palmer kept the list and intends on reusing it.

"For us, it means another chance to put Cottage Grove in front of 2,000 people," he said. "We know we've got a lot to promote."

Though the riders are scheduled to stop by Dorena Lake for only one night, support teams make up a significant part of their preparation at destination points.

"We know we're not going to get a lot of economic stimulus that day," Palmer said. "But it's the before and after with these guys."

In the lead up to Sept. 13, Palmer is expecting an uptick in business as partic-

ipants train for the event. "Now that they know the route, we'll see a lot of cyclists come through between now and the actual event," he said. "We'll get people visiting Cottage Grove well ahead of time."

For the days surrounding the riders' arrival, Palmer is intent on finding ways to improve economic flow into the community.

"For those that aren't coming to town, we're going to try to bring Cottage Grove to them," he said.

Setting up information booths and goodie bags in Schwarz Park advertising Cottage Grove businesses are among possible plans. Shuttles may even be provided to give riders in-town options.

"We're going to try to come up with some creative ways to drag people out of Schwarz Park and into town," Palmer said.

On top of supplying an influx of consumers, Cycle Oregon awards grants to local organizations who

participate in volunteerism. The grants extend to community needs which fall under categories such as environmental conservation, historic preservation and bicycle-related projects.

Despite cancelling the event in 2017, Cycle Oregon honored grants for Cottage Grove to build two bicycle "fixit" stations and donated \$650 to Bohemia Mining Days.

With a stated dedication toward "transforming individuals and communities through bicycling," the nonprofit boasted awarding \$214,150 in grants toward the communities they touched during their 2016 event.

In addition to the grants, Palmer sees this small window as a big moment for a city that can benefit from return customers.

"You know, we love Cottage Grove. We like showing it off," he said. "And to get a chance to do that with another 2,500 people is pretty cool."



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