

PLANCHETTE: WHEN THE DEAD SPEAK

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WITH HALLOWEEN COMING UP, I recently decided to embark on an occult adventure, a journey into the mystical, a theatrical diversion I thought would be entertaining.

I didn't know what to expect. Actually, that's not true. I did have expectations, based on what little I found out in advance. But those expectations would be obliterated in an hour.

I can't disclose what actually happened. Maybe I've even blocked the bizarre and traumatic experience from my memory. But let me just admit, I have now seen spirits cross over, and I have heard the dead speak.

The event takes place on the second floor of the [Carroll Mansion](#) at 800 East Lombard Street, Baltimore. You're likely to feel dazed and shaken after this experience. Seek solace across the street in Little Italy, find a bar and order a second glass of red wine.

You'll need it.



Because when the dead speak, they enter this world accompanied by loud noises, and sometimes things get broken.

Restore your sanity, and reassure yourself that you are still in the world of the living.

Planchette is a collaborative production by magician and actor Brian M. Kehoe, writer and actress Annelise Montone, director Deirdre McAllister and aesthetics designer Kel Millionie.

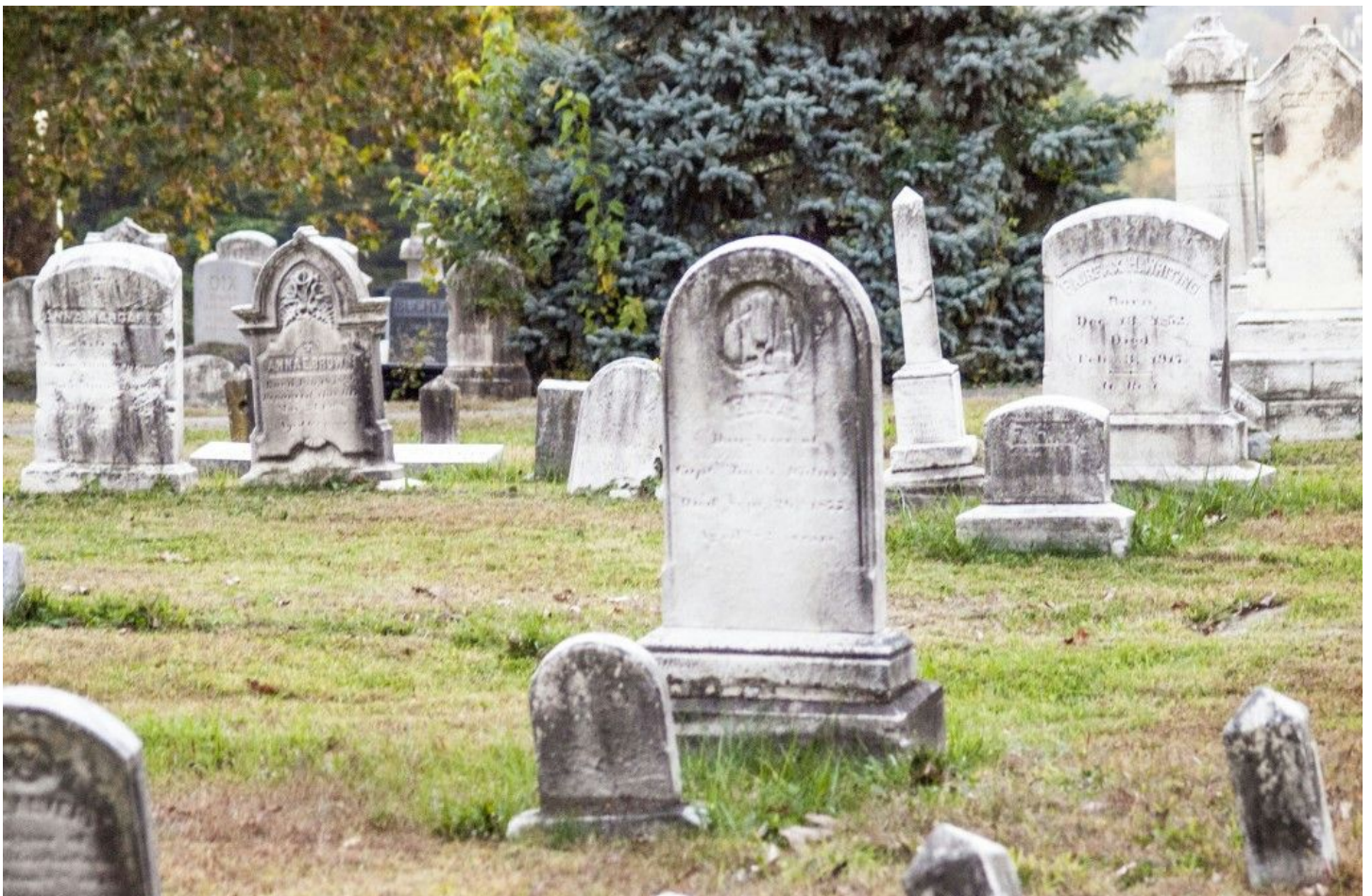
Scheduled performances run through November 7; to view the details and purchase tickets you will find more information [here](#) and on [Facebook](#).

Just know that the smiling faces and intriguing introduction will in no way prepare you for the confrontation that awaits.

You might think you're in for a fictional séance of sorts, but the obscure power of the Ouija board cannot be constrained or reduced to entertainment; it has always been most dangerous to skeptics.

Indeed, in the history of the mysterious "game" there have been several accidental deaths related to the manufacture and use of the device.

But don't let that scare you too much.



I arrive in a contemplative humor, I'm escorted upstairs by the doorman. The air is clear, the mansion quiet.

I hear footsteps, the tick-tock of heels on aged wooden floorboards, a creaking chair, the rustle of skirts and coats, a group of people, reluctant to speak in the presence of hovering spirits; my fellow visitors have arrived.

We wait in an anteroom, admiring the historic décor and trying not to think too much on the audacity of intervening in the spirit world, the things we've heard can happen to those who go too far.

We drink wine, and whisper about art, and destiny.

Dr. Sarah Swanson, assistant to Professor Maxwell Fink, shows us into a beautiful, elegantly-furnished chamber of Victorian artifacts, with the odd scientific apparatus and a few pieces of modern technology.

We are seated comfortably, but the Professor seems nervous.

The doors are closed.

“When a Door opens, there's no telling what will come through,” says Professor Fink.

Is he speaking metaphorically? I hope so.

We hear music, somber and enticing.

He shares the tenets of The Fink Method for Contacting the Dead: Trust, Cohesion and Transmission. He stresses the importance of incorporating the locus of the Ouija board to facilitate the connection with those beyond.

We participate in a number of tense and complex experiments involving mentalism and magic. The connection is made.

There is apprehension and fear in the hearts of the living, and a dangerous likelihood of serious bloody injury on the part of the Professor.

The lights dim.



At the end of the 19th century, rumors emerged of a device used to contact the other side, a board embellished with letters and numbers, accompanied by a triangular ‘planchette’ moved by the gentle unguided pressure of compliant fingertips to reveal clairvoyant messages from the spirit world; “the talking board.”

Was it a toy or a curse?

Professor Fink wants to contact the Fuld brothers, who invented, marketed and manufactured the Ouija board. The powerful forces that were awakened when the board was created may have ruined their lives. Is this a wise idea?

The Professor is frenetic, passionate about his obsession. His assistant, Dr. Swanson, is cautious, as a scientist should be, but she reluctantly goes along with his increasingly manic and unscripted experiments, within a short time we are riding the edge and receive indications that in fact the spirits are responding to his entreaties, a phantasmagorical ritual is already out of control in this cabinet of curiosities.

Using his telepathic powers, the Professor convinces us to let him into our minds, this is simultaneously comforting and haunting.

The evening has escalated to become a rollercoaster of occult investigation and scientific adventure, astounding telepathic resonance and deep, riveting terror.

You may welcome the experience, if you seek to communicate directly with the spirits of the dead through potentially dangerous psychic phenomena.

Just be prepared. Once the dead have spoken to you, there is no way to politely turn off the conversation. They will follow you wherever you go.

