

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

By Oscar Wilde

Directed by Nicholas Thoroughgood
and Rylee O'Rourke

Assisted by Gabrielle Johns

PROGRAM

Maitland Repertory Theatre

24 Nov - 12 Dec, 2021



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REPERTORY
THEATRE





The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

The Importance of being Earnest, Oscar Wilde's most famous comedy, is a trivial comedy for serious people.

Ernest Worthing, who lives at the Albany, has a striking reputation for being unfortunate. Everyone knows him, but somehow no one has ever met him.

Ernest's well intentioned, and somehow more tangible, brother Jack has used Ernest for his own devices.

Denying his life in the country with his ward Cecily Cardew, Jack seeks thrills in the city with his impulsive friend Algernon Moncrieff, constantly attempting to delay his burgeoning adulthood. When love appears in his life and an ordinary leather handbag stands in his way, he knows this can't last...

With marriage on the cards, his responsibility to protect Cecily threatened and his mysterious past barrelling into him like a locomotive, Jack must once and for all emancipate unfortunate Ernest and live the earnest life he's always been destined for.

Run Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Production Team

Co-Director:
Nicholas Thoroughgood



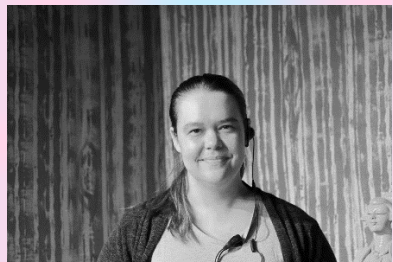
Co-Director:
Rylee O'Rourke



Assistant Director:
Gabrielle Johns



Stage Manager:
Alexandra Comber



Director's Note - Nicholas Thoroughgood

Not to draw any falsely grandiose comparisons, but when Noel Coward wrote *Blithe Spirit*, he spoke to the fact that a “light comedy”, thoroughly heartless, about Ghosts was exactly what the British public needed after the London Blitz. I feel this sentiment couldn't be more relevant for this production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*; a trivial comedy for serious people, after we've all been through two of the most emotionally taxing years of our age.

Earnest is a comedy of its time, of our time and of all times in between. Now, when the Upper Classes (newly christened the '1%') have all eyes on them, either critically or not, we may see that conventionality or Moralism hasn't changed as much as we had hoped. In these past years we've seen Meghan Markle try to make her way into one of the greatest families in the entire British establishment, only to be jettisoned out the other side. A more era accurate comparison could be Diana, only that story is, at this time, infinitely more tragic. Families like the Bracknells still exist, Seriousness still plagues us all. The best way to fight it, as Wilde has so expertly found here, is with comedy.

When reading the play, I was struck by the youthfulness of it. The incredible childish wit of Algy, the adolescent boredom of Jack and even the infantile superiority of Lady Bracknell. After some research I found that the setting of the play in “the Present” was taken quite literally by many productions right up until the 1920s. This opened a wide avenue of exploration, leading inevitable decision to set our production in the 1980s, which is currently throttling media by its

nostalgic throat as the picture of youthful bliss. Once rehearsal came around the actors took this contemporary idea and ran with it. There wasn't any fear that they were being too modern, nothing was off limits, and the comedy thrives for it.

This production's main goal is to be playful, messy and incredibly unserious. To be back in the room with other people, laughing at what could be the woes of our society is an incredible gift.

This is one of the secrets of life - to cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul" – Oscar Wilde

Director's Note - Rylee O'Rourke

What a year it has been, so to finally be granted the opportunity to do theatre again has been a breath of fresh air. Plus, to come back and direct a classic comedy like Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* is something I think we all needed. Even before COVID when Nicholas Thoroughgood pitched the idea of a 1980s themed bright coloured, neon lights, rock music redo of a classic I knew I had to be a part of it. To be finally directing a play after so long that is fun and bold reignites my passion and love for creating theatre. Overall, *Earnest* has been a gift to us all. To be able to collaborate with a phenomenal team, both cast and crew, who have gone above and beyond to bring this show to the stage has been a blessing. It also shows just how much love and dedication goes into creating theatre. Finally, a shoutout to my directing team Nick and Gabby whom I could not have done this production without, you are both incredible!

“The aim of love is to love. No more, no less” – Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde is not only an incredible playwright but he has a big heart and a love for life that echoes through all his writing and I know that we have done that justice with this production.

Cast

Carl Gregory as
John Worthing



Anna Lambert as
Algernon Moncrieff

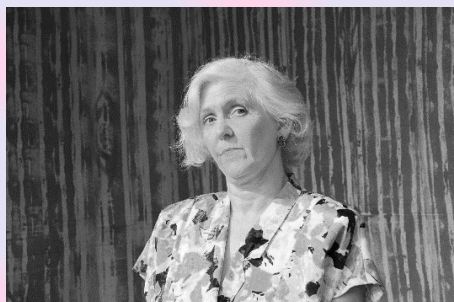


Campbell Knox as
Gwendolen Fairfax



Maddison Lamb as
Cecily Cardew





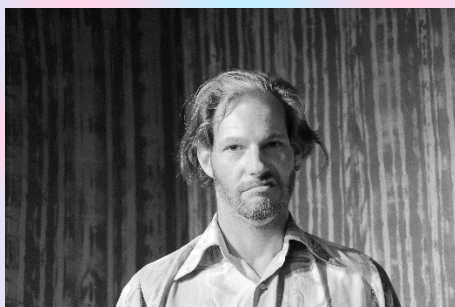
Dimity Eveleens as Lady Bracknell



Rebecca Skinner as Miss Prism



Roger Wood as Dr Chasuble



Stuart Ussher as Merriman



Richard Rae as Lane

Production Credits

Set Designer:	Nicholas Thoroughgood
Set Construction/Realisation:	Danny Shaunessy, Anne Robinson, Ian Robinson, Dimity Eveleens, Alexandra Comber, Robert Comber
Costume Designers:	Nicholas Thoroughgood and Rylee O'Rourke
Costume Supervisor:	Anne Robinson
Properties Manager:	Dimity Eveleens
Lighting Designer:	Nic Simpson
Composer:	Bill Parry
Sound Engineer/Videographer:	Wesley Edgerton
Lighting/Sound Operators:	Nic Simpson and Leanne Hines
Photographers:	Anne Robinson and Jo Roberts
Poster Design:	Nicholas Thoroughgood, Rylee O'Rourke, Anne Robinson
Program:	Rylee O'Rourke

Thank You

Our volunteer members who make this show possible.

The CONDA Judges - Natalie Alexopoulos, Philip Aughey,
Karen Birrell, Khalil Khay, Jason King, Jo Roberts.

Our Patrons - Jenny Aitchison MP, Meryl Swanson MP,
Mayor Loretta Baker, Keith Cockburn and
Margaret Sivyer OAM.

Newcastle Live Radio, Sony Australia, Scion Audio,
ABC Radio 1233, The Sign Shop, Scott Deamer (Jim's Test and
Tag) and also to our audiences for their continued patronage.

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