



LITTLE THEATRE

A
SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB
PRODUCTION

Oscar Wilde's

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The Importance of Being Earnest

Directed by Robin Hirsch

31st March -
8th April 2006

at 7.45pm


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SOUTHPORT
HOME OF
THE SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB

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Director's Notes



Where to begin? When trying to encompass the world, the wit and the wickedness of Oscar Wilde's writing, I feel it would be easier to attempt a book rather than a paragraph – there is so much that could be said!

Braham Murray, Director of *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre in the Summer of 2004, wrote in his Director's Notes that... "*Earnest*" is a master work and it has been a re-vitalising experience to work on it and marvel at the genius of the author." I feel this expresses everything that my cast and I have discovered during rehearsals and hope that we are able to pass this on to you, our audiences this evening.

My grateful thanks go to everybody in any way involved in this production, who have put in so many hours of work on line-learning, costume-creating, set-building and even re-upholstering at my bequest!

Sit back, allow yourself to be transported back to the seriously, frivolous and colourful world of 'High Society' in the 1890s and enjoy the fun!

Robin Hirsch
Director

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Oscar Wilde

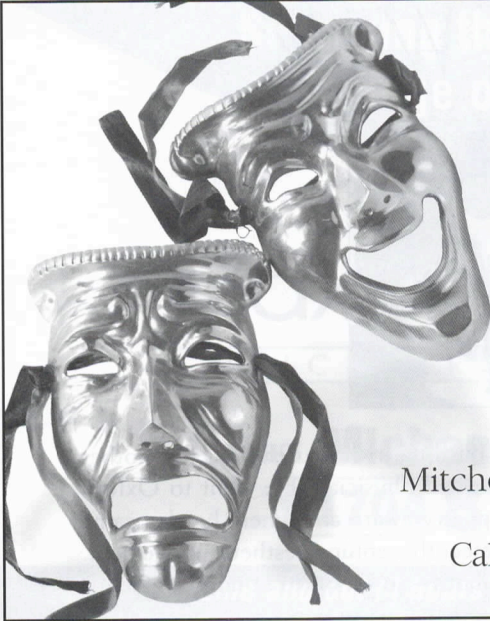


Oscar Wilde was born in 1854 into a bustling Irish household, - his mother was a poet and his father was a renowned physician. He went to Oxford University, where he won a coveted poetry award and where he also came under the influence of the late nineteenth century aesthetic movement. Oscar had a desire to make himself famous – so set off to London to do just that, and become a much desired and popular party guest.

In 1882 he arrived in New York, and when a custom's inspector asked him if he had anything to declare, he replied "only my genius". At 28 he lectured in American cities, on arts and literature. When he returned from America, he married and fathered two sons, and continued to write. He took a position as editor of *Women's World*, a monthly magazine. Two years later he tired of journalism and returned to sparkling at parties, spending much of his time with friends and lovers.

In 1890 - 1895 he reached the peak of his career as a poet-playwright with *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The House of Pomegranates*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. His private life was unfortunately considered morally and socially improper - he paid the price, when in 1895 a libel suit filed by Wilde against the Marquissé of Queensbury backfired. The Marquissé had accused Wilde of having an on/off homosexual affair with his son, Lord Alfred Douglas and Oscar was sent to prison for two years.

When released from prison, he wandered around Europe, where his health became frail, and he died in Paris in 1900, of cerebral meningitis. He was a brilliant writer, whose writing forced Victorian society to re-examine its hypocritical views, with humour.



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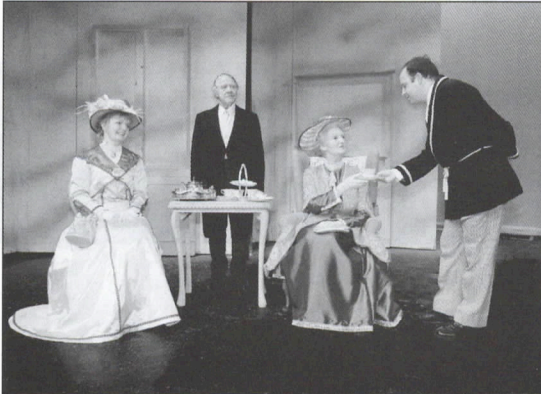
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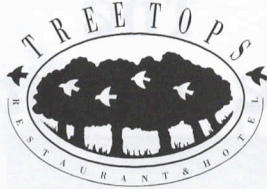
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The Importance of Being Earnest





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The Importance of Being Earnest



The Importance of Being Earnest

*by Oscar Wilde,
directed by Robin Hirsch*

Cast

Lady Bracknell ANN RICHARDS
Algernon Moncrieff ADRIAN ROBERTS
John Worthing, J.P. MATTHEW WOODHAMS
Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax TRUDI HIRSCH
Cecily Cardew CERI WATKINS
Miss Prism JAN JAMES
Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D. ARNOLD GORSE
Merriman DAVID CHARTERS
Lane NORMAN HOPE

Act i Algernon Moncrieff's flat in Half-Moon Street, W.

Act ii The garden at the Manor House, Woolton

Act iii The morning-room at the Manor House, Woolton

Music

The theme music for our play is taken from Mendelssohn's *Song Without Words*,
Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* was played on the organ at
Emmanuel Church, Southport by Brian Hodge.

There will be an interval of 20 minutes between acts 1 and 2.

Staging

Stage Manager	Chris Appleton
Assistant Stage Manager (Book)	Jenny Parker
Props	Barbara Beardsell June Hunter Laura Gorse
Wardrobe	Sherel Coley Margaret Horne
Lighting	Tony Berry Andrew Connard
Sound	Brian Hodge Pete Beswick
Set Design	Syd Coley
Set Constructed by	SDC Production Team
Scenic Artist	Bob Jessamine
Photography by	Neil Hickson

Acknowledgements

The Director would like to thank:

Phil Horner Design Ltd. (Inc. Plant Creations) for the supply of the palm fronds.
Moss Bros. for certain items of costumes.

We are extremely grateful to all members who have helped to provide furnishings for this production.

The management reserves the right to refuse admission to the auditorium after curtain up until a suitable opportunity occurs. First aid facilities are provided at this theatre by St John Ambulance Brigade, whose members give their services voluntarily.

Why not beat the rush and pre-order your interval drinks in the bar?

A new induction loop has been installed in this theatre for the benefit of hearing impaired patrons. Please turn your hearing aid to 'T'.

Please ensure that all mobile telephones are switched off

At the end of tonight's performance you may leave by any of the exits, all of which will be open. In an emergency, this theatre can be emptied in three minutes or less if everyone leaves in an orderly manner.

Smoking is prohibited in the auditorium.

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The Importance of Being Earnest Cast

Ann Richards *Lady Bracknell*

Ann appeared as Miss Prism in the SDC's previous production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 1987, a role she enjoyed enormously. She has since "risen through the ranks of the aristocracy" and now takes on the part of Lady Bracknell.

Ann says she acquired a taste for the high life during *Lady Windermere's Fan* – playing the Duchess of Beswick, another of Oscar Wilde's Managing Mamas! (see photograph on page 18) Ed.



Adrian Roberts *Algernon Moncrieff*

This is Adrian's first play with the SDC, although he has worked back stage on several occasions. This is a completely new venture for Adrian as he is so used to performing in musical theatre, having played many roles in several shows.

Algernon is a dream part for Adrian as it enables him to partake in three of his favourite vices. We'll let you work them out, after seeing the play.

(Welcome to the SDC, Adrian) Ed.

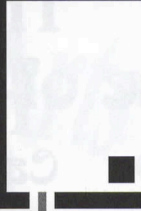


Matthew Woodhams *Jack Worthing*

Matthew's first play with the SDC was *Lady Windermere's Fan*, playing a pleasant enough, if frivolous, young man being interrogated by a particularly vicious Mother-in-Law, brilliantly portrayed by Ann Richards.

Nine years later he is playing a frivolous, if pleasant enough, young man being interrogated by the most vicious of Mother-in-Laws, brilliantly portrayed by Ann Richards. Has anything changed in the intervening years (apart from grey hair and his waist size)? The answer is yes, as last time he only had to learn 20 lines!





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The Importance of Being Earnest Cast

Trudi Hirsch *Gwendolen Fairfax*

Trudi is delighted to be playing another of Oscar Wilde's characters (her last one being Lady Windermere in *Lady Windermere's Fan*) although she has found Gwendolen's flirtatious and spoilt nature a considerable challenge!

If, as Oscar Wilde believes, it is a daughter's tragedy to become like her mother, Trudi is consoled by the fact that at least she will be creative, fun and nothing like lady B!



Ceri Watkins *Cecily Cardew*

Being a vertically challenged thirty something, Ceri hopes she will rise to the challenge of playing Cecily who is eighteen years old and more than usually tall for her age..!

She is delighted to be a part of this classic play, one she has wanted to appear in for a very long time, not least because she finally gets to wear pretty frocks instead of tweed suits and twinsets!



Jan James *Miss Prism*

Jan is a long standing member of the SDC. In her youth she loved to tread the boards pretty regularly - however it has been some years since she had a named role - but she is just delighted to be involved in this wonderfully trivial play with its friendly but serious cast.





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The Importance of Being Earnest

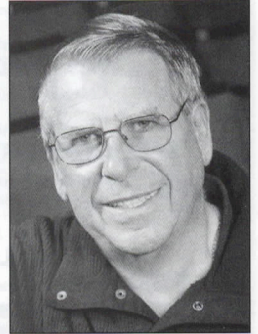
Cast

Arnold Gorse *Rev. Canon Chasuble*

Arnold played Chasuble in our last production of this play in 1987, and is delighted to be playing him again.

Arnold has just finished staging the Youth Production of *Daisy Pulls It Off*, and after last appearing on stage in *Dick Whittington* as Dame Sarah Suet, he is looking forward to playing a man in a frock for a change.

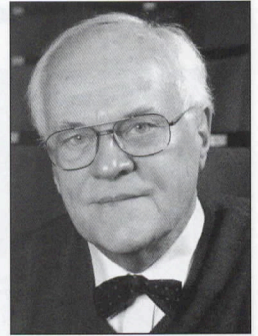
(see photograph on page 18) Ed.



David Charters *Merriman*

David is delighted to be directed once again by Robin. He has fond memories of her direction of Royce Ryton's *The Royal Baccarat Scandal* in May 1991, when she cast David in the role of the Prince of Wales, Later Edward VII. Two years ago you will remember Robin's excellent production of *Crown Matrimonial*, (Also by Royce Ryton) with Matthew Woodhams as Edward VIII. David would like to point out than in *The Importance of Being Earnest* it appears that the Grandfather from the first mentioned play is playing the role of Merriman the butler to Jack, his Grandson of second mentioned play in the last mentioned play.

(And they say there is no sanity clause) Ed.



Norman Hope *Lane*

Norman is pleased to join this very talented cast, as a late replacement, with fortunately not too many lines to learn. He is especially pleased to be directed by Robin, once again. Usually these days they only meet on the Publicity Committee where they try to ensure all the Club's productions are well publicised in the press, and via these programmes. David Charters also designs all our artwork for the posters, so in this play publicity is well represented.

Ed. / Norman Hope.




LITTLE THEATRE
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DRAMATIC CLUB

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SDC's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in May 1987.

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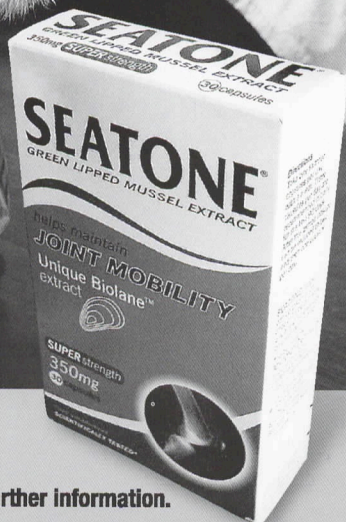


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