

UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS AT THE SCHOOL OF DRAMA

The King Stag

by Carlo Gozzi
May 4-14

The Studio Theatre

The Sisterhood

by Moliere
Translated and Adapted by R.R. Bolt
May 25-June 4
The Penthouse Theatre

In Special Recognition of Contributors to the School of Drama Endowed Scholarship Campaign

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Executive Director, Barry Witham
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Design, Robert A. Dahlstrom
Design, William Forrester
Design, Sarah Nash Gates
Design, M. L. Geiger
Acting, Corey Hansen
Acting, Robyn Hunt
Master Electrician, George Johnson

Technical Director, Charles Leslie
Theatre History, Richard Lorenzen
Acting, Steve Pearson
Theory, Michael Quinn
Acting, Judith Shahn
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The Penthouse Theatre
55th Season
School of
404th Production
DRAMA
April 20-30, 1994

A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

BY OSCAR WILDE

Director
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Sound Designer
Technical Director
Stage Manager
Dramaturg
Dialect Coach
Propmasters

DAVID IRA GOLDSTEIN
ROBERT A. DAHLSTROM
SEAN SULLIVAN
MARY LOUISE GEIGER
TOBY BASILIKO
ALAN WELDIN
SUSAN E. BREWER
DAVID SCHULZ
JUDITH SHAHN
ALEX DANILCHIK
CRAIG WOLLAM

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Assistant Set Designer Bob Sweetnam
Assistant Lighting Designer Emmet Kaiser
Assistant Costume Designer Sara Jaecks
Assistant Stage Manager Kirstin Olsen
Electricians Amy Kues, Michael J. Miller, Drama 212 students
Production Electrician Jennifer Krc
Assistant Propmaster Melinda Stearns

Running Crew Star Aiken, Justin Alley, Claro Austria, La Campbell, Jon Edmonston, Casey Smith
Stephanie Tada, Rebecca Tipper,
Anita Werran, Shea Van Horn

Set Construction Crew John McDermott, Laura Hibbs, Ben Graham, Tanya Hardney, Brent Meyers, Mia Roozen, Leilah Stewart,
Craig Wollam, Michael Yingling

Costume Construction Crew Monique Kleinhans, Margaret Meyer,
Mary Ellen Walters, Drama 211 & 291 students

Wigs & Make-Up Elizabeth D. Lentz
House Management Justin Deguire, Heath Kelts,
Veronica Lavenz, Kelli Summers

Production Office Staff Rebecca Brown, Carys Kresny

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Lord Alfred Rufford
M Allonby
Lady Stutfield
Francis Farquhar
Nellie
Archdeacon Daubeny, D.D.
Lady Caroline Pontefract
Sir John Pontefract
Hester Worsley
Lady Hunstanton
Gerald Arbuthnot
Mr. Kelvil, M.P
Lord Illingworth
Mrs. Arbuthnot
Alice

CRAIG MYERS*
LEYLA MODIRZADEH*
KELLY GOING*
MICHAEL J. MILLER*
NELLIE, AS HERSELF
JIM ANZIDE*
ERIN MCGAUGHAN*
BRUCE M. HOLMES*
JO ELLEN CONSTINE*
JUNE CHRISTY BURCH*
DOUG SCHOLZ-CARLSON*
ROCK REISER*
JAMES HASKINS*
JOHANNA NEMETH*
KIRSTIN OLSEN

*Member of The Professional Actor Training Program

SETTING

PLACE: The Shires

TIME: The last decade of the 19th Century

The action of the play takes place within twenty-four hours.

ACT I -- The lawn in front of the terrace at Hunstanton Chase

Ten Minute Intermission

ACT II -- The drawing room at Hunstanton Chase

ACT III -- The same

Ten Minute Intermission

ACT IV -- The sitting room in Mrs. Arbuthnot's house, Wrockley

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Arizona Theatre Company, Seattle Opera, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Jeff Caldwell, Intiman Theatre Company, Mr. Peeper's House of Miniatures, A Contemporary Theatre, Christine Sienkiewicz

FROM THE DRAMATURG

"People love a wicked aristocrat who seduces a virtuous maid, and they love a virtuous maiden for being seduced by a wicked aristocrat. I have given them what they like, so that they may learn to appreciate what I like to give them." Oscar Wilde to Herbert Beerbohm Tree

English audiences of the 1890s enjoyed nothing more than a good melodramatic plot. And when that melodramatic plot was filled with characters who mirrored themselves--and were witty and clever as well--they enjoyed it even more. In fact, the society dramas of the late Victorians are a curious mix of old fashioned melodrama, fashionable people, and the latest new fashion from the continent: the social dramas of Ibsen. Critics like William Archer (who translated Ibsen) and Bernard Shaw (who proselytized for him) encouraged dramatists to write plays that tackled serious issues and fostered debate. The result, however, was often melodramatic conflicts that were only marginally less clear-cut.

Wilde, a celebrity aesthete and society darling, took part in this craze for Ibsen, and his early plays demonstrate attempts to write social debates focusing on its most popular topic: The Woman Question. Wilde's first works are well within the typical structure of Victorian society drama and, in fact, are among the best of the class. But Wilde was still developing his unique style at the time he wrote *A Woman of No Importance* during the summer of 1892. Brilliantly crafted characters serving as mouthpieces for Wilde's sharp wit and rapid fire paradox define this style, and while it is an important part of this play it is not until he writes *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 1894 that he effectively integrates it completely in an entire work. Parody, rather than melodrama, proves for Wilde a more effective forum for social critique.

The first performance of *A Woman of No Importance* was April 19th, 1892 at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket under the direction of actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree who was the first Lord Illingworth. Tree had, in fact, commissioned Wilde to do the play so the part was written for him. In the audience that night were the most fashionable of fashionable society including two future prime ministers. The Prince of Wales attended on the second night. This production, 101 years later, draws on the 1893 promptbook for corrections and amendments to the published script.

-David Schulz

FOR FURTHER READING:

Ellman, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1988
Gagnier, Regina. *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public*. Stanford UP: Stanford, 1986.
Powell, Kerry. *Oscar Wilde and the Theatre of the 1890s..* Cambridge UP: Cambridge, 1990.