

FAITH PRESENTS
OSCAR WILDE'S

the
IMPORTANCE
of being
EARNEST



APRIL
26 & 27
2024



faith baptist bible college
and theological seminary



Directing Team

(from left to right)

Alyssa Rodgers

Assistant Director

Lexi Taylor

Stage Manager

Lexi Huggins

Assistant Director

Alyssa Hathcock

Director

CAST

<i>Lane</i>	Marcus Baltich
<i>Algernon Moncrieff</i>	Paul Farlow
<i>Jack Worthing</i>	Cody Schulz
<i>Lady Bracknell</i>	Jennifer Wilcox
<i>Gwendolen Fairfax</i>	Abby Gleiter
<i>Cecily Cardew</i>	Hannah Knutson
<i>Miss Prism</i>	Rachel Franklin
<i>Dr. Chasuble</i>	David Giegerich
<i>Merriman</i>	Andy Hackley

CREW

<i>Stage</i>	Lexi Taylor
<i>Tech</i>	Sarah Swailes
<i>Costumes</i>	CD DeBoer
<i>Hair & Makeup</i>	Makayla Brown
<i>Props</i>	Krista Brown
<i>House & Hospitality</i>	Audrey Glandon

Sam Cole
Claire Godshall
Emily Holzerland
Juliana Kamberger
Aleyna Kelly
Myles Peterson
Jillian Reed

Journeying into the World of *“The Importance of Being Earnest”*

By Lexi Huggins

As Bible college and seminary students, those of us involved in this production have been learning that a gap of time, language, and culture stands between us and clearly understanding God’s Word. While there is less time and culture and technically no language gap between us and understanding *The Importance of Being Earnest*, there nevertheless must be a bridge built to clearly understand. *Earnest* was first performed in 1895 in England, to an audience that was part of the same late Victorian culture and time frame as the setting of the play. Nearly 130 years later, we have a bit more work to do than that original audience. I have taken on the task of doing a chunk of that work, and I have condensed much of it down to make it easier to share with our cast and audience. Most of the following information was taken from Sally Mitchell’s *Daily Life in Victorian England*. I hope it will enhance your enjoyment of tonight’s production.

The world into which *The Importance of Being Earnest* was born was a world marked by incredible class differences, not so much marked by how much money one had as by one’s occupation. If you worked a “dirty” job (think miner or factory worker), you would be a member of the lower class. If you worked a “clean” job (such as a shopkeeper or a banker), you would be middle class. If you had no need to work at all due to familial wealth, you were part of the upper class. Even those middle-class people with enormous wealth could not buy their way into the upper class. As most of the characters in *Earnest* are members of the upper class, that is where we shall focus for most of this summary.

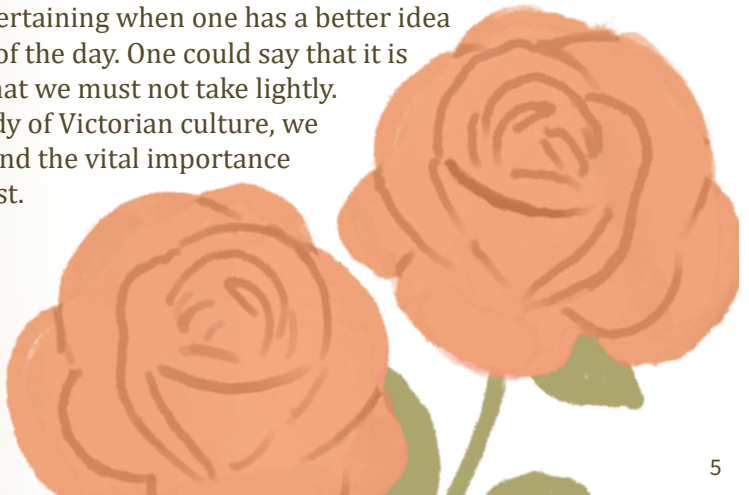
Marriage and romance were entirely different spectacles in the Victorian era. For the upper class, though marriages were no longer truly “arranged,” mothers, grandmothers, and aunts would make sure that their girls knew eligible men they could appropriately marry. A man only needed to ask a father’s permission to marry his daughter if there was a large fortune involved. As women could not go anywhere

alone, it was often difficult for couples to feel truly at liberty to speak to one another. As cousins were given more freedom to spend time together, this led to many marriages between first cousins.

Propriety was multifaceted, carrying more implications than merely those for people involved in romantic relationships. Outside of one's family, it was rare to call another person by their first name. Men typically called one another by their last name or addressed each other by title, and women would use "miss" unless invited to use something else. It was inappropriate to call your significant other by his or her first name until you were engaged.

Finally, we cannot talk about Victorian society without a brief discussion of Victorian morality, or better said, Victorian values. Most of our ideas of Victorian values come from things valued by the middle class. People of the Victorian era had a newfound pride in coming from humble roots. Both the middle and lower classes prided themselves on hard work and resented the "idle rich" in the upper class. Hard work was valued, as was honesty, to the point that to ask someone to put something in writing was considered an insult. Though "gentleman" was an inherited title, one could lose it through subpar manners. Gentlemen were to be courteous, considerate, and honest, and they were to pay their debts. People were expected to be serious, or earnest, rather than lighthearted or vain.

As you can see, there are many steps on the bridge over the gap between ourselves and the world of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Though the play is easily enjoyed by the most casual of viewers, it is even more entertaining when one has a better idea of the context of the day. One could say that it is an endeavor that we must not take lightly. Yes, in our study of Victorian culture, we must understand the vital importance of being earnest.



Lane



Marcus Baltich

Freshman // Biblical Studies

This is some of my first interaction in depth with anything by Oscar Wilde, and it has been an adventure. Last semester I acted in "Pilgrim's Progress" which was my first play. I am thoroughly enjoying both the difficulties and challenges of producing a play. I am thankful for this opportunity and hope to have more opportunities in the future. Special thanks to the directors and I hope to make more fun memories with the cast members. Enjoy!

Algernon Moncrieff



Paul Farlow

Junior // Biblical Studies

I had never heard of this play but a friend walked up to me while auditions were happening, pointed at me and said "You should try out for the play! You won't even need to act if you play this character!" I'm still trying to decide if that was an insult. I have really enjoyed being a part of this play and look forward to performing this incredibly funny play. Enjoy the show!

Miss Prism



Rachel Franklin

Senior // Secondary English Education

My first experience acting was when I shouted dramatic Shakespeare lines from the second story of our house, until my sister told me to be quiet. I hope you enjoy this performance more than she enjoyed that one.

Dr. Chasuble



David Giegerich

Senior // Organizational Leadership

Thanks for coming out! This is my fifth show, and I am still incredibly grateful to perform for my friends. I love performing for you guys and for the Lord.

Gwendolen Fairfax



Abby Gleiter

Sophomore // Organizational Leadership; Office Administration

I have participated in plays and musicals since childhood, and I'm so excited to be adding "The Importance of Being Earnest" to my repertoire! Please enjoy the show! "Peace to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 6:23

Merriman



Andy Hackley

Sophomore // Organizational Leadership

I intend to act my role as a butler in the most formal manner... mostly. I am slightly nerdy and quick witted, so if there's any improv on stage you can expect it from me. So, let's talk about cheese.

Cecily Cardeu



Hannah Knutson

Freshman // Women's Ministry

I've always enjoyed the theatre and although I've had previous opportunities to act, this is my first major production. Although German is absolutely horrid, I do enjoy piano and embroidery. I'm so grateful for this opportunity and have been blessed to work with such a fun cast and amazing directors.

Jack Worthing



Cody Schulz

Freshman // Pastoral Studies

Now I know what you're thinking: who is this kid? Well, my name is Cody Schulz and I'm a freshman here at Faith in the pastoral program. I am grateful to yet again have the opportunity to be involved in the drama program here. The cast and directors create an atmosphere that is unlike any other and without fail, thus far, I can say that play practice has been a highlight of my time here. Anyway I haven't much else to say so you should read about the other people now, they're pretty cool too.

Lady Bracknell



Jennifer Wilcox

Freshman // Office Administration

This is my first theatrical performance and I'm so grateful for this experience. The Lord has been stretching me in many ways through it. I am so blessed to have had these amazing directors and cast encouraging and guiding me along the way. Although I do not enjoy cucumber sandwiches, I do love cucumbers, and you can find me chopping them in Benson on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"The Earnest Ukulele Song" is used by permission of the Bethany Lutheran College Theatre Department. The music is by Peter Bloedel and the lyrics are by Peter Bloedel and Andrew Schuler.



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am thrilled to welcome you to our production of “The Importance of Being Earnest” by Oscar Wilde. This show has held a special place in my heart since I performed in it as a senior in high school and I am honored by the opportunity to return to this piece on the other side of the curtain.

Throughout the rehearsal process, we enjoyed exploring the power dynamics and social intrigue that Wilde’s comedy portrays. He brilliantly builds on the idea that someone is constantly trying to gain the upper hand in each exchange. I challenged the cast to discover who is holding the cards at any given moment, and I’m excited for you to see the back-and-forth that has emerged as a result.

As our wonderful team and cast collaborated to bring this classic comedy to life, we explored various themes and concepts, with honesty and kindness coming to the forefront. In a world that prioritizes self-interest over consideration of others, the characters in “The Importance of Being Earnest” offer us a humorous yet valuable lens into the consequences of such behavior and prompt us to step back and look at our own lives. For believers, we have been called to mirror the compassionate and selfless example set forth by Jesus Christ. As you enjoy the production this evening, I challenge you to not only find joy in the clever wit and humor of Wilde’s play, but to also reflect on the deeper truths being presented.

Lexi and Alyssa, thank you for your tireless work and collaboration on this project. This show would not be what it is without the two of you and I am incredibly grateful to call you both dear friends. Lexi, our wonderful crew, and student life, we cannot have a show without you - thank you for all that you do! To my cast, you took what I gave you and absolutely blew me away. I could not think of anyone better to portray these characters and am so proud of each of you. Finally, thank YOU our audience. We could not continue to do these shows without your support. Thank you for attending and enjoy the show!

— *Alyssa Hathcock*