

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE
2000-2001 SEASON

ASSASSINS

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by John Weidman

Based on an original idea by Charles Gilbert
Sirote Theatre, October 25 through 29, 2000

THE HOT L BALTIMORE

By Lanford Wilson
Odess Theatre, November 7 through 12, 2000

**THE IMPORTANCE
OF BEING EARNEST**

By Oscar Wilde
Sirote Theatre, February 21 through 25, 2001

FLYIN' WEST

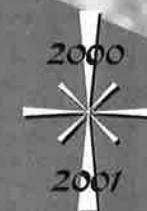
By Pearl Cleage
Odess Theatre, May 1 through 6, 2001

A MAN'S A MAN

By Bertolt Brecht
Sirote Theatre, May 16 through 20, 2001

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Department of Theatre
at the Morris K. Sirote Theatre
in the Alys Robinson Stephens Performing Arts Center

*The Importance of
Being Earnest*
by Oscar Wilde



A Note from the Department Chair

As you sit in this wonderful space awaiting the start of the play, I ask you to consider four principles which are at the foundation of a university theatre:

- This theatre is our laboratory in which students explore and refine the many skills involved in our craft and strive to create a work of art. It is the place for them to test the limits of their skills and to take artistic risks.
- The play you are about to see was selected first and foremost for its educational opportunities. It is our goal to expose our students to great works from throughout theatre history.
- The actors you will see will be predominantly students. They will frequently be cast in roles in which their race, gender or age might at first seem inappropriate, but which provide an appropriate artistic challenge.
- Whenever we have a student ready to be tested by a full production, you will see student design work.

And with these principles fully embraced, we strive to create work of high quality and integrity; work which shall be deserving of your attention and praise.

Marc Powers ♦

KENNEDY CENTER AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATER FESTIVAL™

Presented and Produced by the
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Supported in Part by
**The Kennedy Center Corporate Fund
The US Department of Education
Delta Airlines**

The National Committee for the Performing Arts

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC/ACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KC/ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KC/ACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KC/ACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2001.

Last year more than 1000 productions and 19,000 students participated in the American College Theater Festival nationwide. By entering this production, our department is sharing in the KC/ACTF goals to help college theater grow and to focus attention on the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

Department of Theatre Supporters

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Thank You For Your Help On This Production

Janet Tatum for her many donations and her expertise in Victorian Etiquette.

Estate of Lelia Mae Waldrop

Barron Melton

“The Arbor”

Hairstyles by
NO LIMITS HAIR AND STYLE SALON
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UAB THEATRE'S HAIR SALON OF CHOICE

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Department of Theatre
Presents

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

By
OSCAR WILDE

Set Design
John Wiese♦

Light Design
Ed Zuckerman♦

Costume Design
Kimberly Schnormeier

Stage Manager
Lydia Milman♦

Directed by

Karma Ibsen♦

Opening Night, Wednesday, February 21, 7:30 p.m.

This production is funded in part by The UAB Cultural Activities Committee.

CAST (In Order Of Appearance)

Algernon Moncrieff Michael Hicks
Lane, Manservant..... Lee Turner
John Worthing, J. P. Jared Rausch
Lady Bracknell..... Jon Hennington♦
Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax..... Rachel Burttram♦
Cecily Cardew ... Lucie Irene McLemore
Miss Prism, Governess..... Debbie Smith
Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D..... Russell S. Drummond
Merriman, Butler..... Adam Lisk

ACT I

Algernon Moncrieff's flat in London, 1895.

ACT II

The garden of John Worthing's home in the country.

ACT III

The conservatory of John Worthing's home in the country.

There will be two fifteen-minute intermissions.

UNDERSTUDIES

Lauren Lippeatt for Cecily, Meredith Murphy♦ for Gwendolen, Jessica Holbert♦ for Lady Bracknell, Adam Lisk for Algernon and Lee Turner for Jack

♦Member of Alpha Psi Omega National Theatre Honorary

Dramaturg's Notes

"What's in a name?"

That question was most famously asked by Shakespeare's Juliet about a certain young Montague--but the most famous answer to it in all of modern drama is surely Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Since its first performance in London in 1895, audiences have enjoyed its ingenious plot and polished dialogue. As an example of a "comedy of manners," it is unsurpassed: its humor depends on the elaborate code of propriety, etiquette, and decorum that defines "civilized life." Yet beneath even the ornate civility and rituals of an afternoon tea for two ladies in the English countryside, rivalries and resentments can be elegantly and wittily expressed.

"We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces," Lady Bracknell observes--in a comment that was remarkably ahead of its time. Symbols of status (designer labels, logos) and arbitrary codes of conduct are now quite different from those that were current in Wilde's day, of course, but even today many believe that "image is all."

According to Wilde himself, the philosophy of the play is that "we should treat all trivial things very seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality." Yet beneath the epigrammatic wit for which it is famous, serious themes can in fact be found: the way in which a person's identity can be a mask, and civility itself just a veneer. Repentance can take the form of eating muffins if only one wants to believe so, and religious zeal is parodied in the Jack and Algernon's desire to be rechristened in order to satisfy the ideals of love.

Just three months after this play's premiere, Oscar Wilde was convicted in the third of his notorious trials over his relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas. Bankruptcy, public disgrace, and a two-year prison sentence brought to an end his career as a playwright. His literary reputation now shines brighter than ever. But even while we enjoy this masterpiece of his dramatic career, the pleasure is tinged with regret over the never-written works that could have followed, had not the most brilliantly witty voice of its time been silenced through malicious and senseless persecution.

--William Hutchings
Department of English

Technical Staff for This Production

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|---|---|
| Production Manager..... | Kelly Allison |
| Technical Director..... | Ed Zuckerman♦ |
| Master Electrician/ElectronicsTechnologist..... | Russ Friedrikis♦ |
| Props Master..... | Phillip Anderson♦ |
| Shop Foreman/Master Carpenter..... | C. David Loggins♦ |
| Production Electrician..... | Michael Rawlins♦ |
| Assistant Director..... | Jessica Holbert♦ |
| Assistant Stage Manager..... | Jonida Beqo♦ |
| Light Board Operator..... | Rachel Ladd |
| Sound Board Operator..... | Tritano Evans |
| Scene Shop Assistants..... | James Ball, Jessica Holbert♦, Michael Rawlins♦, Mike Vickers |
| Electrics Crew..... | Tritano Evans, Blakely Holland♦, Kyle Johnson, James McCarty, Adrienne Reid♦, Marcus Wehby, Jimmie Whitson, Summer Williams, Paula York |
| Stage Crew..... | Jamie Cottle♦, Royce G. Garrison♦, Bridget Hennessy, Adrienne Reid♦, Kent Skates |
| Construction Crew..... | James Ball, Jonida Beqo♦, Daniel C. Bowlen, Jamie Cottle♦, Royce G. Garrison♦, Bridget Hennessy, Michael E. Hicks, Jessica Holbert♦, Adrienne Reid♦, Channing Rodriguez, Kent Skates, Karla Tompkins |
| Props Crew/Running Crew..... | De'Neka Edwards, Kyle Johnson, Scott Littleton |

Costume Staff for This Production

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| Costume Studio Supervisor..... | Russell S. Drummond |
| Assistant Costume Studio Supervisor..... | Lisa Forrest♦ |
| Costume Assistants..... | Jonida Beqo♦ |
| Costume Crew..... | Nadia Caesar and Mary Elizabeth McCown |
| Dressers..... | Meredith Murphy♦ and Lauren Lippeatt |

Production Staff

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|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Graphic Design/Cover Design..... | Walter Allen |
| House Manager..... | Jerry Sims |
| Associate House Manager..... | Ed Rosendahl |
| Media Relations..... | Shannon Thomason |