

# The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde  
directed by Paul Norell

18-29  
NOVEMBER 2025

 TITIRANGI  
THEATRE

**Director's notes:**

Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) is perhaps the most quoted author after Shakespeare; his witticisms, like the Bard's, have become part of the English lexicon and his plays are some of the most popular theatre classics performed today.

*The Importance of Being Earnest*, first performed in 1895, is described by the author as a 'Trivial Comedy for Serious People.' In marked contrast to *An Ideal Husband*, the play contains no serious comment on social and political issues and is precisely what Wilde intended it to be: a light-hearted comment on the foibles of the young as they deal with the idea of 'being in love.'

Ironically, the immediate success of the play which marked the highpoint of Wilde's career, was followed almost immediately by his downfall as a result of his conviction and imprisonment for homosexual acts.

Critical reviews at the time were mixed, some regretting the lack of serious substance; but others, like author H. G. Wells, praising its "humorous dealing with theatrical conventions".

It has been a privilege to be involved with Titrangi Theatre's current production, a culmination of the combined efforts of a fabulous cast and production team.

I am particularly indebted to my dear friend and Production Manager Kerynn Walsh, who has been a pillar of support throughout.

I hope this production entertains and amuses and, if I can be permitted to alter Wilde's own aphorism, the only thing worse than it being talked about, is it not being talked about!



Paul Norell

# The Importance of Being Earnest

*A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*

By Oscar Wilde

Directed by Paul Norell

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**Act I:** Algernon Moncrief's London Flat

**Act II - Part 1:** Garden of Mr Worthing's Manor House in the Country

**INTERVAL**

**Act II - Part 2:** Garden of Mr Worthing's Manor House in the Country

**Act III:** The Morning Room of Mr Worthing's Manor House

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## **Paul Norell - Director**

Paul's involvement with Titirangi Theatre goes back to the eighties, not long after he first came to New Zealand. Primarily an actor, London-born Paul's first directing experience at Titirangi was *Under Milk Wood*. Since then, he has performed in numerous productions, including *Educating Rita*, *I Hate Hamlet*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Paul returned to directing last year with *It's Never Too Late* and was delighted to be asked to direct the current production, particularly as he has recently finished performing in Dolphin Theatre's production of *An Ideal Husband*.

Paul has also been a teacher of Drama, tutor of TV/Film audition technique; and has written and directed for schools and adult theatre. He also played the ongoing featured role of Falafel in the nineties series *Hercules – The Legendary Journeys* and the King of the Dead in *The Lord of the Rings – Return of the King*.

Paul has always regarded himself as an 'actor's director,' and uses his performing/teaching experience to focus on the relationships between the characters onstage. He is gratefully indebted to all those other professionals who have contributed to bringing this production to life. In his own words: "They all know far more about their areas of expertise than I ever will."





**Marcelo Rodriguez Ferrere - *John (Jack / Ernest) Worthington***

This is Marcelo's first production with Titirangi Theatre. He has previously performed at Wellington's Stagecraft Theatre in *Foreskin's Lament*. Marcelo is an associate professor at the University of Auckland Law School, where he has learned first-hand that the truth is rarely pure, and never simple – to quote Mr. Wilde.

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**George Maunsell - *Algernon Moncrieff***

This is George's first performance with Titirangi Theatre. George has been acting since the age of 13, when he was offered a lead role in a community theatre production of *Lost in Yonkers*, where he caught a violent strain of the acting bug.

More recently George has toured a production of *Waiting for Godot*, directed by Michael Hurst, around the North Island and performed in the debut production of *Five Go On An Adventure* with the Tim Bray Theatre Company.



**Lara Brownie - *Gwendolen Fairfax***

Lara Brownie is an artist and teacher hailing from Northland. This is her first time taking the stage at Titirangi Theatre, and she is more than thrilled to return to performing after a few years away. Lara first stepped onto the stage at just eight years old, and since then has gained a wealth of experience across award-winning plays, screen acting, and published writing.

In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Lara has enjoyed delving into the character of Gwendolen, exploring her wit, confidence, and steadfast devotion to the ideals of romance... and names. Bringing Gwendolen to life has been both a challenge and joyful opportunity to play with Wilde's sharp and satirical dialogue. Lara is grateful to be part of such a vibrant cast and production team, and is excited to share this timeless comedy with audiences.

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**Megan Leuty - *Cecily Cardew***

Megan's love of acting began during High School theatre productions. After gaining a Bachelor of Nursing, she returned to acting in 2023 at Actors Lab Studio.

She has a dance background and regularly performs in Ballet showcases. In her spare time, you can find her trying out a new dance style, including, more recently, Lindy Hop and pole dancing.

Megan has a particular obsession with classic literature and is now thrilled to be taking on Wilde's quick-witted Cecily Cardew, whilst performing at Titirangi Theatre for the first time.



### **Karen Soulje - Lady Bracknell**

Karen has been involved with all things Titirangi Theatre for most of her life. In addition to treading the boards in numerous productions she can also be found some Saturdays working at our Costume Hire, backstage as a stage-manager, or helping out during a production, not to mention running our regular Open Stage Nights.

On stage she has most recently been seen here as Shirley in *Jack & the Giant Kauri Tree* and in the acclaimed *The Laramie Project* for which she won an ACTT Best Actor Award.

Karen has loved working with the cast and crew of *Earnest*. They have made this show a most enjoyable experience and with so much laughter it is going to be a challenge for her to keep up appearances as Lady Bracknell!! She is a woman who brooks no nonsense. Karen hopes you enjoy the world of Wilde brought to life.

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### **Sue Golding - Miss Prism**

Sue has worked in theatres across Auckland for many years. Her most recent roles include Peggy in *The Secret Lives of Extremely Old People* at Dolphin Theatre earlier this year, Trish in *Last Legs* at Dolphin Theatre in 2020, and Juror 9 in Playhouse Theatre's production of *Twelve Angry Jurors*.

She has appeared on the Titirangi Theatre stage twice before, playing Margaret in *Birthrights* in 2017 and Judy in *Four Flat Whites in Italy*.

After many years she is delighted finally to appear in an Oscar Wilde play and is relishing the delicious language.

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### **Max Golding - Rev. Canon Chasuable**

Max is a familiar face on the Titirangi stage, last appearing in 2015 as the vicar in *Life and Beth*.

Since then, he has taken on a variety of roles across Auckland theatres, including Dr Spivey in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and Juror 8 in *Twelve Angry Jurors* at Playhouse Theatre, and the elderly farmer Ken Taylor in *Homeland* at Company Theatre.



### **Richard McFadgen - Lane / Merriman**

Richard is no stranger to the Titirangi stage over the years, as our regular theatre-goers will testify. Over the last few years Richard has performed for us in *Father Ted*, *The Laramie Project*, *Romeo & Juliet* and in last year's panto *Jack & The Giant Kauri Tree* as an Aussie / Westie surfer dude. This is the second time Richard has played an Oscar Wilde butler at Titirangi Theatre. This time in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and the last time, seven years ago in *An Ideal Husband*. Time flies when you are having fun!

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# Creative Team

Director	Paul Norell
Production Manager	Kerynn Walsh
Stage Manager	Melandie Oberholzer
Assistant Stage Manager	Ian Printy
Rehearsal Assistant/Prompt	Edward Newborn
Set Design	Malcolm Dale
Set Building	Malcolm Dale, Ross Brannigan, Graeme Heap, Richard McFadgen
Lighting and Sound Design	Romain Perin
Lighting & Sound Operators	Dale Leyland, Sasha Mathewman, Romain Perin
Wardrobe	Lynn Cottingham, Larrie Millet
Hair Design	Dana Cashmore, Hari Leys
Props	John McGowan, Sally McGowan, Kerynn Walsh
Front of House Co-ordinator	Melandie Oberholzer
Marketing and Publicity	Rachel Watkinson, Jade Bull
Poster Design	Lucia Badidová
Billboards	Ross Brannigan
Booking	Rachel Watkinson
Photography	Mac Mclver
Programme	Mac Mclver

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## Special thanks to:

Stephen Dallow and Emma Bishop at Kick Arts, Annie Franklin.

**Committee:** Duncan Milne, Alsa Kemeys, Graeme Heap, Jade Bull, Karen Soulje, Kerynn Walsh, Melandie Oberholzer, Rachel Bock, Rachel Watkinson, Ross Brannigan.

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## Our next play

will be in production soon- we are always looking for both experienced and novice volunteers to help with backstage, production, marketing and technical tasks.

If you are interested visit the volunteer section on our website  
[www.titirangitheatre.co.nz](http://www.titirangitheatre.co.nz)

## **Please switch off cell phones during the performance**

The use of cameras, video equipment or tape recorders  
is not permitted in the auditorium.

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### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION:**

#### **Bookings:**

bookings can be made online through our Website.

#### **Accessibility:**

We are committed to offering our patrons with accessibility needs the best experience possible. If you have accessibility requirements, please let us know when you make your booking by sending us an email at: [bookings@titirangitheatre.co.nz](mailto:bookings@titirangitheatre.co.nz)

#### **Theatre Hire:**

The Theatre Auditorium is available for hire.

For further information email [theatrehire@titirangitheatre.co.nz](mailto:theatrehire@titirangitheatre.co.nz)

Please note that this link goes to Lopdell House Development Trust, who manage the Theatre Hire.

#### **For any further information:**

Write to Titirangi Theatre Inc. P O Box 60 092, Titirangi.

email: [contact@titirangitheatre.co.nz](mailto:contact@titirangitheatre.co.nz),

or visit our website: [www.titirangitheatre.co.nz](http://www.titirangitheatre.co.nz)

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### **FIRE REGULATIONS**

Fire Exits are situated at the sides of the auditorium.

Please keep all stairways, gangways and corridors that afford entry  
and exit entirely free from obstruction.

The evacuation point is outside the Treasure House in the lower  
carpark behind Lopdell House.

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# **Titirangi Theatre Inc.**

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Our 2026 programme has been announced:

***Seed***

by Elisabeth Easterher  
Directed by Fiona Mogridge  
17 - 28 March 2026

***A Man for All Seasons***

By Robert Bolt  
Directed by Paul Norell  
2 - 13 June 2026

***Dinner With The Family***

by Jean Anouilh  
Directed by Edward Newborn  
18 - 29 August 2026

***Burn Her***

by Sam Brooks  
Directed by Catherine Falstie-Jensen  
17 - 28 November 2026

**Audition Notice - *Seed*** Sunday 7th December from 10am. At the theatre. Visit our website for audition details for our first play next year, darkly funny and emotionally rich, *Seed* by Elisabeth Easterher. Four women, one man. Rehearsals from mid January.

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## **Become a member**

Membership includes free tickets to all our performances.  
Email: [membership@titirangitheatre.co.nz](mailto:membership@titirangitheatre.co.nz) for information  
Learn more and apply online at [titirangitheatre.co.nz](http://titirangitheatre.co.nz)

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## **Costume Hire Service**

The theatre has an extensive, exciting wardrobe for hire at very reasonable rates.

Wardrobe hours: Fridays 5-7 p.m. Saturdays 10-12 p.m.

Situated at The Treasure House (Lopdell Hall),  
just behind Lopdell House

For further information contact Lynn, Ph 818 6645

Or email [beverleylynn@icloud.com](mailto:beverleylynn@icloud.com)

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**Titirangi Theatre Inc.** is a charitable not for profit society, dependent on community support.

**Sponsorship** can take many forms... money, goods and services: please think about how you could sponsor our popular and historic organisation!

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