

**THE IMPORTANCE OF  
BEING**

**EARNEST**

A PLAY BY

**OSCAR WILDE**

DIRECTED BY **JONATHAN PRICE**

 **CIRCA**  
THEATRE

7 October – 4 November 2023



**Circa Theatre** has been operating since 1976 and has gained a reputation as one of New Zealand's liveliest and most innovative theatres.

In 1987, Circa Theatre established the **Theatre Artists Charitable Trust** (TACT) to provide financial support to the creative artists (actors, playwrights, directors, etc) and help them achieve a viable income and career as professional artists. The support the artists receive from TACT through founding sponsor **Chapman Tripp**, as well as **Creative New Zealand**, and **individual donors** such as yourself, is vital to ensure we can continue to bring world-class theatre to Wellington.

**MAKE YOUR DONATION TODAY**

Any donation, big or small, is greatly appreciated. Simply visit [circa.co.nz/support](http://circa.co.nz/support) to donate by credit or debit card.

Otherwise, make a payment through Internet Banking.

Account name: Theatre Artists Charitable Trust  
Account number: 01-0505-0636362-00  
Particulars: [Your name]  
Payee code: [Your phone number]  
Reference: Donation

Theatre Artists Charitable Trust is a charitable trust registered under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957 (registration number CC28898).

*Thank you for your support*

**PRINCIPAL SPONSORS**



**Chapman Tripp** is proud to support New Zealand's vibrant and diverse arts community. Founding sponsor since 1987.



**Creative New Zealand** is the national arts development agency developing, investing in and advocating for the arts.



Circa Theatre staged its first production in April 1976 and in the succeeding years gained a reputation as one of New Zealand's liveliest and most innovative theatres. Circa also pioneered a collaborative system supporting creative artists who are the life-blood of our theatre. They emphasise the qualities of commitment and self-help which we greatly admire and which contribute to bringing our audiences professional theatre which is diverse and of the highest professional standard.

**Circa Theatre is administered by a working council comprising:**

Neville Carson, Debbie Fish, Andrew Foster, Carrie Green, Carolyn Henwood, Ross Jolly, Simon Leary, Salesi Le'ota, Jamie McCaskill, Gavin Rutherford, Linda Wilson, Susan Wilson.

In November 1994 Circa moved to its new premises at 1 Taranaki Street, Wellington, and in 2018 Circa completed its cafe/bar and foyer renovations for all patrons to enjoy.

**Theatre concept and design:** Grant Tilly

**Circa Theatre offers sincere thanks to the generous philanthropists and organisations who make it possible for us to continue to bring world class theatre to Wellington.**

**CORE FUNDERS**



**MAJOR PARTNER**



**MAJOR GRANTS**



**Become a Circa Theatre Supporter**

All supporters play an important role at Circa Theatre and each gift makes a difference. For more information about becoming a Partner, donor or sponsoring a show at Circa Theatre, please contact our Philanthropy and Partnerships Manager at [partnership@circa.co.nz](mailto:partnership@circa.co.nz) or visit [circa.co.nz/support](http://circa.co.nz/support)

**Toi Uru Kahikatea (Arts Development) Investment Programme**

Circa Theatre is supported by Creative New Zealand's Toi Uru Kahikatea (Arts Development) Investment Programme. The programme provides annual or multi-year funding (up to three years) to established New Zealand artists, arts practitioners and arts groups and organisations, to support regular or continuous programmes of activity.

Circa Theatre proudly presents

7 October – 4 November 2023

# THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

By Oscar Wilde

## CAST

John "Jack" Worthing, J.P.	<b>Andrew Paterson</b>
Algernon Moncrieff	<b>Isobel Mackinnon</b>
Gwendolen Fairfax	<b>Ryan Carter</b>
Cecily Cardew	<b>Dawn Cheong</b>
Lady Bracknell	<b>Irene Wood</b>
Miss Prism	<b>Anne Chamberlain</b>
Reverend Chasuble, D.D.	<b>Peter Hambleton</b>
Lane / Merriman / Understudy	<b>Rebecca Parker</b>

## CREATIVES

Director	<b>Jonathan Price</b>
Production Design (Set/Costume)	<b>Meg Rollandi</b>
Lighting Design	<b>Isadora Lao</b>
Sound Design	<b>Matt Asunder</b>

**Running time: 2 hours 10 minutes plus a 15 minute interval**

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Producer	<b>Nathan Mudge</b>
Production & Stage Manager	<b>Anna Barker</b>
Asst. Stage Manager	<b>Kathy Keane</b>
Technical Operator	<b>Esteban Jaramillo</b>
Costume Construction	<b>Anne de Geus</b>
Set Construction	<b>Joshua Bourdeau</b>
Makeup Consultant	<b>Susie Berry</b>
Graphic Designer	<b>High Town Studio</b>
Promotional Photographer	<b>Lewis Ferris</b>
Rehearsals & Prod. Photographer	<b>Charlotte Bruin</b>
Videographer	<b>Michiel van Echten</b>

Crew: **John Hopkins, Scott Maxim, Wren Glover, Alexander Dickinson, Madyson King**

## CIRCA TEAM

Accessibility Manager	<b>Kate Anderson</b>
Box Office Manager	<b>Lani Swann</b>
Front of House Manager	<b>Harish Purohit</b>
General Manager	<b>Caroline Armstrong</b>
Marketing Manager	<b>Jane Carruthers</b>
Philanthropy and Partnerships Mgmt	<b>Chrissy Boulton</b>
Social Media Manager & Marketing Assistant	<b>Anna Barker</b>
Technical Manager	<b>Deb McGuire</b>

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Born in Dublin in 1854, Oscar Wilde was an emblem of wit and flamboyance in the 19th century. A brilliant classicist, he studied at Trinity College and Magdalen College, Oxford, where the aesthetic movement's principle of "art for art's sake" deeply influenced him.

While acclaimed for his literary prowess and groundbreaking comedy of manners, Wilde faced public scrutiny, notably for his open homosexual relationships. This scrutiny led to his 1895 imprisonment for "gross indecency." Upon release, he lived in exile in France, passing away in 1900. His legacy includes the novel 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', plays 'The Importance of Being Earnest' and 'Salomé', and the poignant 'De Profundis' written during his incarceration.

**Discover more about Oscar Wilde and *The Importance of Being Earnest* in our Theatre Education Pack at [circa.co.nz](http://circa.co.nz).**



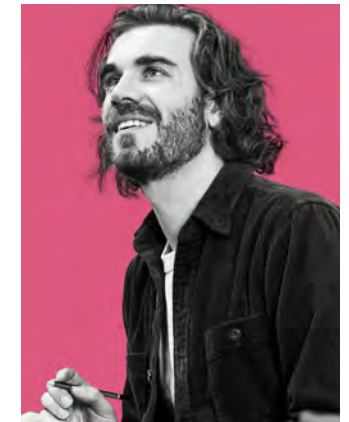
## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I have always been uncomfortable with the imperative to "be yourself". I would greatly like to know from anyone who could tell me who, or what, I am, let alone what it might look like to "be" that. Perhaps that explains my affinity for the theatre and for *The Importance of Being Earnest* in particular, which is peopled with actors, hypocrites and fantasists.

We all know Wilde's wit, but what was revelatory for me is his warmth. Wilde does not punish his characters for their duplicity: it gives them pleasure, love and, eventually, an identity. Maybe this is reflective of a writer so practiced at playing the part. Game sees game. Certainly, I saw myself and many friends and dear ones in "Algernon's Flat in Half-moon Street, Westminster."

We can learn from Wilde that Truth, Beauty and Artifice are really different facets of the same jewel. It seems to me that you would need to adopt a kaleidoscopic view of the world if you are to have any hope of seeing all three at once. Perhaps this goes some way towards explaining the choices I have made, along with the brilliant cast and design team, in bringing *The Importance of Being Earnest* to Circa Theatre.

My deepest heartfelt thanks to the silly, beautiful artists I have had the pleasure of spending the last four weeks making alongside; to Andrew for slipping the script under my nose years ago; and to the friends and family who have cheered us on. And to you, for coming out tonight.



## NGĀ MIHI

Circa Council, Theatre Artists Charitable Trust, Carolyn Henwood, Linda Wilson, Salesi Le'ota, Phantom Billstickers, The Big Picture, Prestige Print, TVNZ, APRA AMCOS NZ, Ben Kelly, Josh Tucker, WITCH Music Theatre, Heartbreaker Productions, Paul Tozer and Te Herenga Waka Theatre Department, Cipher Sound

## REMINDER

**Please turn off or silence all mobile devices. Though vanity is encouraged, flash photography and recording are prohibited.**

## WHAT'S ON AT CIRCA

### *The Bicycle & The Butcher's Daughter*

25 Oct - 11 Nov | Circa Two | \$30 - \$45

By Helen Moulder & Sue Rider

Directed by Sue Rider

Presented by Willow Productions



A family, food and five surprising characters! Olivia Paterson has taken over as CEO of the family meat exporting company. Her daughter is a vegan. Her sister wants to open an art gallery. Her father wants things to stay as they are. Olivia wants to feed the world, but when the media get hold of a fake story, what is more important - her plans for the company's survival or her relationship with her family? As Olivia strives to keep her balance, 11-year-old Grace might just provide an answer. A new solo comedy-drama featuring a tour de force performance from actor Helen Moulder.

### *Treasure Island - The Pantomime*

15 Nov - 17 Dec | Circa One | \$15 - \$55

By Gavin Rutherford & Simon Leary

Directed by Gavin Rutherford

Music Arranged and Directed by Michael Nicholas Williams



X marks the spot, me hearties! Batten down your hatches. Circa's celebrated summer pantomime returns and this year it's for the gold. Our playful Panto team maroon themselves on the rocky shore of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale. Set sail with Orphan Jim, his dog Patches and Aunt Peggy Legg to find the pirate treasure.

### *The Secret Lives of Extremely Old People*

25 Nov - 17 Dec | Circa Two | \$30 - \$55

By Rachel McAlpine

Directed by Robin Payne

Presented by The 90 Plus Group



Is life worth living after 90? Ask the experts! Writer Rachel McAlpine was shocked to the core when her GP predicted she would live to 99. Like most people, she had opinions about very old age but no experience. So she asked local people in their 90s about their lives, and their revelations broke all the stereotypes. She also trod the footpaths of Wellington asking, "How do you picture your life at 95?" *The Secret Lives of Extremely Old People* erupted from those conversations.

[www.circa.co.nz](http://www.circa.co.nz)



### CREATIVE NEIGHBOURS

*It is an exciting time for Circa Theatre and Te Papa as we build our cultural partnership on the Wellington waterfront.*

"We have much in common and, with our mutual talents, we can work together to make many opportunities for people to



come to the waterfront and enjoy exhibitions and live performances."

CAROLYN HENWOOD,  
CIRCA CO-FOUNDER  
& CIRCA COUNCIL MEMBER

### A TRUE ARTISTIC TREASURE

"Circa has become one of our true artistic treasures and is now a platform for artists from across the country to engage with audiences. A place for Wellingtonians to see the best theatre our country has to offer."



ANDREW FOSTER,  
CIRCA COUNCIL  
CO-ORDINATOR

### A NIGHT OUT TO REMEMBER

"Circa's vision is to present our audiences with the best work from New Zealand and the world. This year we've got an incredible breadth of programme and a range of voices that will entertain, challenge and inspire audiences."



SALESI LE'OTA,  
CIRCA COUNCIL



### WE LOVE WELLINGTON

"In our first 10 years, Circa staged over 20 plays by Wellington writers set in Wellington or relating to its people and places. We have continued this pattern and now in our programme you will always find a play by a Wellington writer with a story about Wellington and its people - their triumphs and tribulations."

SUSAN WILSON, DIRECTOR/CIRCA COUNCIL



#### FUNCTION VENUE HIRE AT CIRCA THEATRE

For information about hosting your next function at Circa, please contact [circaadmin@circa.co.nz](mailto:circaadmin@circa.co.nz).



#### BECOME A FRIEND OF CIRCA AND GET GREAT BENEFITS!

Express your love of the theatre by taking out a \$75 annual membership to our Friend of Circa programme. To join, simply visit [circa.co.nz](http://circa.co.nz) or phone our Box Office on 04 801 7992.



#### CIRCA THEATRE RESTAURANT & BAR

Enjoy a fresh and seasonal blackboard menu with a selection of outstanding New Zealand wines at our fully licensed Café & Bar before or after any theatre show.

Race to the  
curtain-raiser on

# THE GREAT CIRCA REBUILD



On the **waterfront**  
Circa Theatre takes centre stage

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Donate now: [www.circa.co.nz/on-the-waterfront/](http://www.circa.co.nz/on-the-waterfront/)

Concept art: Inside Design



**CIRCA THEATRE**

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