DalTheatre 2011-12 presents



Directed by Marti Maraden Written by Oscar Wilde



MARCH 27TH ~31ST, 2012 AT 8PM MARCH 31ST AT 2PM

Sir James Dunn Theatre

Costumes designed by John Pennoyer, Set and Props designed by John C. Dinning, Lighting designed by Bruce MacLennan.

Tickets: The Dalhousie Arts Centre Box office for \$14 Regular and for \$7 Students/Seniors 494-3820 • www.artscentre.dal.ca



DalTheatre Season 2011-12

The Marriage of True Minds



While We're Houng October 12-15, 2011 David MacK. Murray Studio

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Note

Who is the Good Woman? The answer to that is at the heart of Oscar Wilde's remarkably modern *Lady Windermere's Fan: A Play About a Good Woman*. In it Wilde asks us to contemplate how we, along with the characters, can navigate the cloudy waters of marriage, motherhood, and manners. To sit in rehearsal and have the opportunity to examine the true humanity that exists behind the fine words and eloquent witticisms, even of those characters not possessed of great feeling or intelligence, has been an absolute joy. Though *Lady Windermere* has undoubted earmarks of nineteenth-century drama, the scintillating, epigrammatic wit of the dialogue and its risqué content are as refreshingly innovative today as they were in its time.

Wilde has a well-deserved reputation as a great comedic playwright, most notably, of course, because of The Importance of Being Earnest. Yet that reputation has been developed primarily because *Earnest* is his most famous work, and it is safe to say that its comedic purity is an anomaly in Wilde's overall oeuvre. Wilde's other plays, An Ideal Husband, A Woman of No Importance, and Lady Windermere to name a few, are more often described as serio-comedies because the social conventions challenged in them have serious, dramatic consequences for the leading characters. Lady Windermere is an honest critique both of the pitfalls of keeping too strictly to a moral code, and the hypocrisy of those who revel in their own indiscretions while condemning the indiscretions of others. In Lady Windermere, Wilde asks us to become aware of our own preconceptions along with the central characters in order to learn and grow. As Wilde said of the play, "If there is one particular doctrine in it, it is that of sheer individualism. It is not for anyone to censure what anyone else does, and everyone should go his own way, to whatever place he chooses, in exactly the way he chooses."

It is the contradictions and ambiguities of life that give the play its dimension, and Wilde's honesty and skill in putting these contradictions on the stage that make *Lady Windermere's Fan* relevant a hundred and twenty years after it was written. The intensity and depth of the subject develop the characters into fully-realized men and women, and in the end, "goodness turns out to be a subtler commodity than it had appeared¹."

Bryn McLeod, Assistant Director

¹ Richard Ellmann, Oscar Wilde (New York: Vintage, 1988) 346.

Oscar Wilde



Oscar Wilde, one of the great wits of the nineteenth century, was born on October 16, 1854. Famous for his wit, infamous for his decadence, he attended Trinity College and Oxford University before unleashing himself in an epigrammatic fury upon his unprepared Victorian contemporaries. Wilde was a multitalented writer whose body of work includes fairy tales, poetry, novels and plays: he is perhaps best known for *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), *The Importance of Being*

Earnest (1895), and The Ballad of Reading Gaol (1898).

Wilde lived up to his name, and in his lifetime was celebrated and reviled -sometimes simultaneously -- for scandals both witnessed and rumoured. An affair with a young nobleman, Lord Alfred Douglas, was brought into the public eye when the Marquess of Queensberry (Douglas's father) left Wilde a card addressed to "Oscar Wilde posing sodomite": Wilde sued Queensberry for libel, and was himself instead convicted of "indecency" and sentenced to two years' hard labour. His career and health ruined by his incarceration, Wilde died in 1900.

Lady Windermere's Fan (or, as it was once titled, A Good Woman) was first staged on February 20, 1892, at St. James' Theatre in London: the sale of the play earned Wilde seven thousand pounds. Its premiere was attended, on Wilde's insistence, by a number of young men wearing green carnations. Audiences response was divided, and literary greats such as Henry James and George Bernard Shaw were at odds over the play's merit (or lack thereof). At the first performance, Wilde addressed his audience: "Ladies and gentlemen: I have enjoyed this evening immensely. The actors have given a charming rendering of a delightful play, and your appreciation has been most intelligent. I congratualate you on the great success of your performance, which persuades me that you think almost as highly of the play as I do myself." He wore a green carnation in his buttonhole.

Just as *Lady Windermere's Fan* is a play "about a Good Woman", Oscar Wilde's life might be described as that of a Good Man – one unrecognized as such, in his own time, until it was too late.

Synopsis

It is Lady Windermere's birthday, and she is holding a ball. Before the guests can arrive, however, she hears a rumor that spoils the party mood – her husband has been associating with a mysterious (and rather suspicious) woman lately arrived to London. Investigating his bankbook, Lady Windermere finds that exorbitant sums have indeed been granted to a "Mrs. Erlynne". When she confronts her husband, however, he is not only unapologetic; he demands that Lady Windermere invite Mrs. Erlynne to her birthday party – and, when she refuses, Lord Windermere writes the invitation himself. Lady Windermere vows that if Mrs. Erlynne dares cross her threshold, she will strike the interloper across the face with her fan. When Mrs. Erlynne makes her appearance that evening, however, Lady Windermere's courage fails her, and she finds herself unable to make such a scene. Instead, she flees to the chambers of Lord Darlington, who has recently professed his love for her. Believing herself trapped in a sham marriage to an unfaithful husband, Lady Windermere is determined to escape.

She is intercepted in Lord Darlington's quarters by Mrs. Erlynne, who swears to Lord Windermere's fidelity and reminds Lady Windermere of her duties as wife and mother. The already-repentant Lady Windermere agrees to return home. Suddenly, Lord Darlington arrives in the company of several friends, including Lord Windermere. Lady Windermere and Mrs. Erlynne, mindful of the possibility of scandal, hide – but Lord Windermere spots his wife's forgotten fan on Lord Darlington's table and vows to search Darlington's rooms from top to bottom. Before he can make good on this threat, Mrs. Erlynne reveals herself: she greets the men, claims she brought the fan to Lord Darlington's rooms accidentally, and excuses herself, having implicitly confirmed all the worst slanders ascribed to her name. In the ensuing confusion, Lady Windermere slips out undetected.

The next morning, Mrs. Erlynne calls on the Windermeres say good-bye – she is leaving England again – and to return the fan she "accidentally borrowed". In return she asks only one thing: Lady Windermere's photograph. While Lady Windermere is absent, Mrs. Erlynne and Lord Windermere quarrel over her "monstrous" presence in Lord Darlington's rooms, and whether to reveal to Lady Windermere the reason for Mrs. Erlynne's selfless behavior and Lord Windermere's large payments: this "fallen woman" is, unknown to society, Lady Windermere's mother. Lady Windermere returns with the photograph. Mrs. Erlynne thanks her and leaves without making any mention of a family connection... and so ends the story of a "good woman".

A Guide to Victorian Etiquette

On Afternoon Tea.

-- When pouring the tea, a hostess may remain seated (at small gatherings) or rise and serve her guests from their right (faced with larger groups). The teacup ought not to be filled above the three-quarter mark.

-- When not in use, the teapot's spout ought to face the hostess.

-- If one desires sugar, one may take it with sugar tongs or a teaspoon. One does not touch the sugar with one's fingers, and one does not dip one's tongs into one's tea.

-- If one is seated at a table, one lifts only one's teacup, not one's saucer. If, however, one is drinking tea while standing, one may lift one's saucer to chest height, but no higher. One never gestures wildly with one's teacup as one may slosh one's tea onto one's neighbour.

-- Once one has imbibed of sufficient quantities of tea, one places one's teaspoon across the top of one's saucer (or, if saucer size prohibits this, across the top of one's teacup). One does not stain one's hostess' tablecloth with a dirty teaspoon.

-- A lady always removes her gloves before shaking hands or eating.

-- One eats one's scone with one's fingers, not a fork.

-- If one has a moustache, one may consider utilizing a "moustache cup", constructed especially to allow the tea-drinking gentleman's moustache to remain dry.

-- One's napkin ought to be laid flat in one's lap, then placed to the side of one's place when one has finished.

-- Under no circumstances should one lift one's pinky finger into the air while drinking one's tea. Such "fashionable" behavior, if imprudently applied at close quarters, may result in one accidentally poking one's companion in the eye.



On Love and Courtship.

-- Young ladies ought to consider the use of a dance card at balls, and to remember it is not proper to dance more than twice with the same young man. -- At a private ball, a young lady ought never to refuse the request for a dance. -- If, however, a young lady is at a public ball, she ought not to accept a dance with a stranger under any circumstances.

-- After a dance, a gentleman may make evident his favor for a certain young lady by escorting her to her carriage.

On Being Sociable.

-- One may check the at-home cards of one's acquaintances for appropriate days on which to visit. One may pay a visit between 12 PM and 5 PM on these days. Only intimate acquaintances ought to visit before 12 or after 5, even if one has been invited to make a "morning" call. If one must wonder whether one is an intimate acquaintance, one is not.

-- If one is invited for dinner, one ought to arrive at 6:30 PM sharp. Any competent hostess will serve dinner at 7:00 PM.

-- One should announce one's arrival via card, and not via bellowing "yoohoo!" up the stairs in order to ascertain whether anyone is at home. One may also announce one's daughters and husband via card.

-- One ought to print one's "at home" days on one's own card so that one's friends may visit on occasion.

-- One ought not to receive or make calls while in mourning – a thing which may be used to great advantage by the socially scrupulous mourner!

-- One ought not to linger at a ball beyond 2:00 AM at the very latest.

-- One refers only to dukes and duchesses as "your Grace". Knights, ladies, barons, baronesses, viscounts, viscountesses, earls, countesses, marquesses, and marchionesses may be referred to as "lord" and "lady". Servants are referred to by their names, or simply with "you there".

On Travel and Exotic Places.

-- If one has seldom travelled, a spa town such as Homburg or Aix makes for an excellent first destination. These happy spots are the site of both physical rejuvenation and wonderfully amusing gambling parlours.

-- If one seeks to visit Paris, one might consider the Club Train, a charming conveyance which can spirit one from Dover to Paris in only six hours. -- A ride in Hyde Park is always agreeable; married ladies may even consider driving without an escort!

Other General Advice to the Polite Young Gentleman or Lady.

-- One does not address a person of the opposite sex by their Christian name unless one is on the most intimate terms with that person!

-- Some young men have followed the Prince of Wales in adopting the custom of "smoking", a most deplorable habit. If, however, one sees the need to engage in this odious and odorous activity, one ought to smoke cigars and cigarettes, never the crude and oafish "pipe".

-- A young man seeking to advance himself in society might consider club membership: clubs are an excellent means by which gentlemen may become acquainted without wearisome distractions from the weaker sex.

-- Young ladies who have been permitted to learn French ought to be steered away from certain novels with yellow covers – particularly if they have been banned from translation into English!

-- One ought always to seek every means to improve oneself, except when it might cause inconvenience to others; or embarrassment to oneself; or in any other ways upset the general, natural, and right order of things.

Sources and/or Further Reading for the Etiquette-Impaired.

- Briggs, Asa. "An Overview of The Victorian Period: Thoughts, Politics, Lifestyle." *Social History of England.*
- Easton, Ellen C. "Tea Travels: FAQ About Afternoon Tea." 2004, All Rights Reserved.
- Cave, Richard Allen. "Introduction."/"Notes." *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Other Plays. ed. Richard Allen Cave. London: Penguin Books, 2000.



Afternoon Tea Party. Mary Cassatt, 1891.

Creative Team

Director	
Assistant Director	Bryn McLeod
Set Design	John C. Dinning
Costume Design	John Pennoyer
Lighting Design	Bruce MacLennan
Voice, Speech and Dialect Coach	Susan Stackhouse
Sound Design.	Edward Cortejos
Dramaturge	Rebecca Schneidereit

Cast

Lady Windermere	Ellen Denny
Duchess of Berwick	Erin Quigley (Tues., Wed. night, Fri., Sat. matinee)
	Sarah Vanasse (Mon., Wed. matinee, Thurs., Sat. night)
Lady Agatha	Sarah-Jean Jones
	Hannah Myers
	Alianne Rozon
	Rosemary Reid
	Hanna Bebb
	Robin Hebb (Tues., Wed. night, Fri., Sat. matinee)
	Kari Bell (Mon., Wed. matinee, Thurs., Sat. night)
	Ashley Alberg
	Jeremy Parkin
Lord Darlington	Michael Gaty
Lord Augustus	Ryan Kennedy
Mr. Cecil Graham	Michael Curry
Mr. Cecil Graham	
Mr. Cecil Graham Mr. Dumby	Michael Curry



Marti Maraden appears with the permission of Canadian Actors Equity Association.

Production Team

Producer	Jure Gantar
Publicity	Gini Cornell
Stage Manager	Olivia McGinn
Assistant Stage Managers	Gilann Lafreniere
	Kayla Miller
Assistant Designer/Scenic Painter	Sacha Parkin
Head of Scenic Painting	
Head of Scenic Carpentry	
Scenic Carpentry Crew	
Diame Kristoff esivel any. I Senior Instra	Samuel Paton
	Jack Welsh
Scenic Painters	Valeska Meyer
Head of Props	Heather Orr
Props Crew	Kathryn Bridgland
	Nathaniel Bassett
	Kennisha Adderley
	Jordan Tait
	- Ellen Gibling
Head of Lighting	Megan MacIntosh
Lighting Crew	
	Veronica Blinkhorn
	Amy Forsey
Sound	Edward Cortejos
Co-Head Dressers	Jeska Grue
	Ashlev Perry



For Lady Windermere For Lady Windermere (Act IV) For Duchess of Berwick (Acted by Sarah Vanasse) For Duchess of Berwick (Acted by Sarah Vanasse, Act II) For Duchess of Berwick (Acted by Erin Quigley) For Lady Agatha For Lady Plymdale For Lady Jedburgh For Lady Stutfield For Mrs. Cowper-Cowper For Mrs. Erlynne (Acted by Robin Hebb) For Mrs. Erlynne (Acted by Kari Bell) For Mrs. Erlynne (Acted by Kari Bell, Act II) For Parker For Lord Windermere (Acts I, IV) For Lord Windermere (Act II) For Lord Darlington (Act I) For Lord Darlington (Act II) For Lord Augustus Lorton For Mr. Cecil Graham For Mr. Dumby For Mr. Hopper

Cutters

Nicole Dowdall Heather Freeman

Kiah Munn

Cathleen McCormack

Marlee Bygate Emily Haig Mulu Grebreyesus Lynn Davies Nikki Kravshik K. MacDonald

Nicole Mair

Sinead O'Rafferty-Swain

Rosalie Ferris Allison Freeburn Stephanie Revoy Tessa Higney Grace Kessel Karen Bennett Victoria Bruer Cathleen Gasca Mandy Dawe Desiree Morin

Stitchers

Holly Anderson Lillian Glidden-Gaudet Kelsey MacDonald Anna Skanes Kelsey Stanger Victoria Burrell Jeska Grue Emlyn Murray Perin Westerhof Nyman Eliza West Arwen Falvey Marissa Hoodikoff Ashley Perry Julia Stott

Dressers

Victoria Burrell Julia Stott Anna Skanes Eliza West Kelsey Stranger

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Special Thanks

Neptune Theatre Props Department Peter McBoyle Dante Di Mattia (Casa Dante Hair Studio)



The "Language of the Fan"

There is a modern myth of a Victorian "fan language", but no proof such a language existed. Why has this unlikely tale of a language spoken in fan sticks and lace caught the fancy of modern minds? Does it confirm our suspicions that the Victorians were repressed hypocrites who had to express their true feelings through the clever use of accessories? Or are we seduced by the romanticism of a language spoken only by young lovers and conveniently forgotten by chaperones and dowagers? Whatever the reason, here are a few "key phrases" in the accepted vocabulary of the so-called "Language of the Fan".

Fan against left cheek - "No." Fan against right cheek - "Yes." Fan, closed, opened slowly - "Wait for me." Fan, closed, presented to lover - "Do you love me?" Fan, closed, touching right eve - "When may I be allowed to see you?" Fan drawn across eyes - "I am sorry." Fan drawn across cheek - "I love you." Fan drawn across forehead - "You have changed." Fan drawn through clenched fist - "I hate you." Fan dropped on the ground – "We will be friends."/"I belong to you." Fan held in clasped hands - "Forgive me." Fan on or near the heart - "You have won my love." Fan, open, covering left ear - "Do not betray my secret." Fan, open, shut slowly - "I will marry you." Fan opened and closed repeatedly - "You are cruel." Fan passed from hand to hand – "I see you looking at another woman." Fan placed behind head - "Do not forget me." Fan touched by tip of finger - "I wish to speak with you." Fan rested on lips - "I don't trust you."/"Kiss me." Fan in right hand before face - "Follow me." Fan shielding eyes from sunlight - "You're ugly." Fan twirled in left hand - "We are being watched." Fan twirled in right hand – "I love another." Fanning vigorously with left hand - "Don't flirt with that woman."

Sources

"Language of the Fan." Victorian. Fortunecity.com. n.d. Web.

"The Language of the Fan." Ideco.com. Ideco S. L. n. d.

"The Language of the Victorian Fan." *Teacakesandteddybears.com*. Tea Cakes and Teddy Bears (TM). n.d. Web.

"Victorian Fan Language." Sharlot.org. Sharlot Hall Museum. 21 Aug 2009. Web.

Bravo to the stars of 2011/12!



Good luck and bonne voyage!