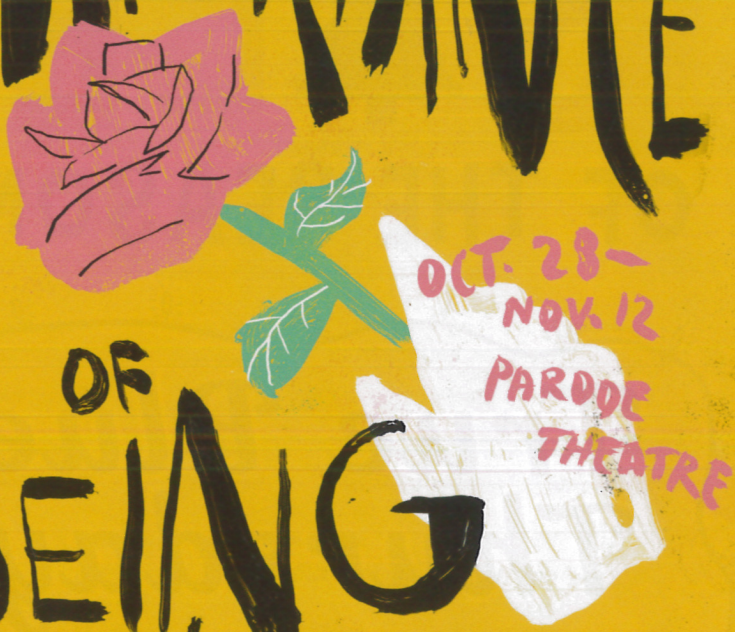
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST



A Trivial Comedy for Serious People

BYU DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS

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The Importance of Being Earnest

A Trivial Comedy for Serious People

Written By
Oscar Wilde

Producer
Wade Hollingshaus

Artistic Director
Megan Sanborn Jones

Lighting Designers
Bradlee Hagar
Michael Kraczek

Costume Designer
Sarah Stewart

Makeup & Hair Designer
Sarah Bult

Sound Designer
Christopher Bowles

Properties Designer
Aubrianna Hockett

Scenic Designer
Travis Coyne

Dramaturg
Jessa Cunningham

Production Stage Manager
Susan Kupferer

Production Manager
Jennifer Reed

Dramaturg Supervisor
Janine Sobeck Knighton

Technical Director
Travis Coyne

Asst. Scenic Designers
Timothy Elliott
Kayla Boyle

Asst. Sound Designer
Matthew Kupferer

Asst. Makeup Designer
Shelby Ré Renshaw

Asst. Stage Managers
Daniel Fifield
Jana Wilhite

Dialects and Acting Coach
Assistant Director
Adam Houghton

Arts Manager
Jeff Martin

Directed By
Rodger D. Sorensen

October 28-29, November 2-5, 8-12, 7:30 p.m.
October 29, November 5, 2:00 p.m.
Pardoe Theatre

Public Domain.

Please silence all mobile phones and electronic devices. Photography, video and/or audio recording, and texting are forbidden during the performance.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

One day Megan Sanborn Jones (director of *Travesties*) and I were talking about our respective productions and especially about the relationship between the two scripts. As a result of that conversation we decided to invite our dramaturgs to interview us and use the resulting transcript as material for our program notes. Below is the note for *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Please take the opportunity to see *Travesties* (November 11-December 3, 2016 in the Margetts Theatre) and compare not only the two program notes, but more importantly the productions themselves.

—Rodger Sorensen, director of *The Importance of Being Earnest*

JC is Jessa Cunningham, dramaturg for *The Importance of Being Earnest*
RDS is Rodger Sorensen, director of *The Importance of Being Earnest*
RC is Rick Curtiss, dramaturg for *Travesties*
MSJ is Megan Sanborn Jones, director of *Travesties*

RC: What was the seed of this idea, this *Travesties/Earnest* experience?

RDS: Megan planted the seed a decade ago, and she's been cultivating it ever since.

MSJ: Really it's tied up to curriculum, because I've used *Travesties* in a lot of different classes. I can't think of a better play that teaches the time period 1875-1915. It's a delight, but for me it's hard to access if you don't know *Earnest*, and so it always made sense to me that you should do the two together.

RDS: And the opportunity of doing that finally came up this year. Megan was able to get the rights to do them both. Her dream came true.

RC: I think it's easy to see *Travesties* as being inspired by *Earnest*.

RDS: Of course.

RC: But I'd be interested, Rodger, how has *Earnest* been inspired by what Megan has been doing on *Travesties*?

RDS: There are many resonances between the two. *Earnest* came before and in many ways inspired *Travesties*. However, our production of *Earnest* is now being influenced by our production *Travesties*. And visa versa. Even though the initial inspiration was linear in time, the influence now goes both ways. So, some of what I'm doing in *Earnest* is now being informed by what Professor Jones is doing in *Travesties*. We have conversations about what the other is doing with sets, lights, props and staging. I get ideas from her and she from me. This creative collaboration between productions makes for a kind of cross-pollination that is delightful in its application. It is especially noticeable in the sets and costumes. But it is also subtly evident in some of the staging.

JC: So what rewarding opportunities did you two face while you were trying to tie these shows together?

RDS: Initially we held auditions together. Later, in an *Earnest* rehearsal, Professor Jones brought her cast in to look at some of the staging, which she then modeled in *Travesties*. We also had multiple conversations about sharing images and props ideas between productions. Professor Jones often came into our production meetings where together we explored the reflections between the scripts. Sharing the physical structures of the set was one of the most informative collaborations we had. Because Travis Coyne designed both sets, he devised a way to use the same structural format for both shows. The set for *Earnest* is lightweight and transparent while the set of *Travesties* is heavy and dense. Yet hidden within and behind the set of *Travesties* is the set of *Earnest*. And submerged within the set of *Earnest* are ideas and images from the set of *Travesties*.

MSJ: They echo very clearly.

LIST OF SCENES

Act 1
Algernon Moncrieff's Flat on Half Moon Street
W. London, England

Intermission

Act 2
The Garden at the Manor House
Woolton, Hertfordshire, England

Act 3
The Drawing-room of the Manor House
Woolton, Hertfordshire, England

CHARACTER LIST

Algernon Moncrieff
Spencer Hunsicker

Lane (Manservant)
Stephen Moore

John Worthing, J.P. (Jack)
Sean Worsley

Lady Bracknell
Alana Jeffery

Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax
Emma Widtfeldt

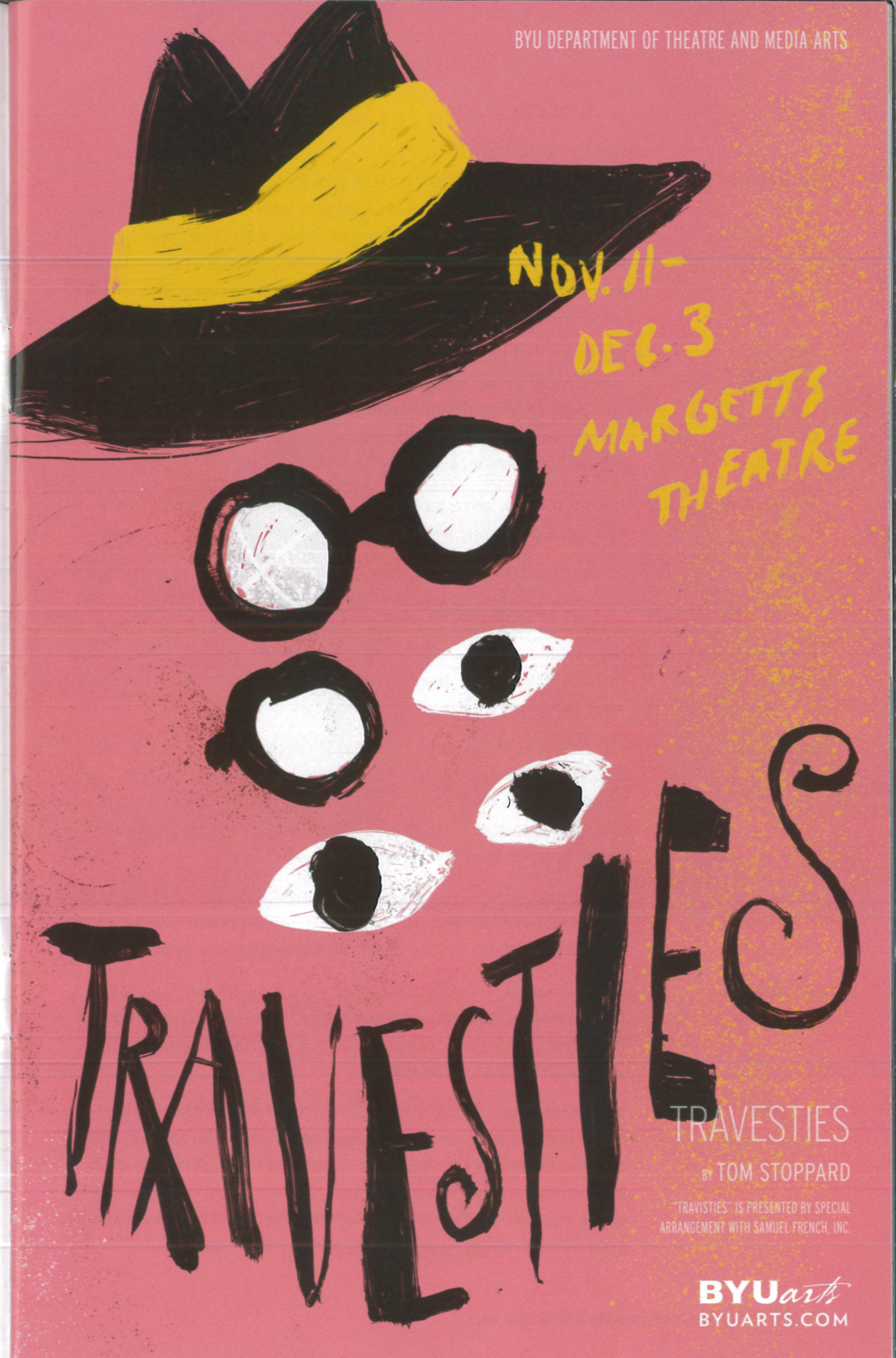
Miss Prism (Governess)
Madison Dennis

Cecily Cardew
Meg Flinders

Rev. Canon Chasuble, D. D.
Bradley MacKay

Merriman (Butler)
Stephen Moore

"Spring Song" by Felix Mendelssohn, "Le Coucou" by Louis-Claude Daquin, "The Musical Snuffbox" by Anatoly Lyadov
Performed by Robert Silverman from the album The Parlour Grand



MEET THE CAST

Madison Dennis
Miss Prism (Governess)

From Florissant, Missouri, Madison is a senior in the acting program. Recent credits include Ethel Toffelmier in *The Music Man* at Sundance, Judith Bliss in *Hay Fever* at BYU, and ensemble/fight choreographer for *Beauty and the Beast* at BYU. When not performing, Madison enjoys composing music and planning her next Disney vacation. She sends love and gratitude to this dedicated cast and crew, her Will, and her loving support system of friends. She would like to dedicate this performance to her beloved Aunt LeeAnn.

Meg Flinders
Cecily Cardew

From Denver, Colorado, Meg is a junior studying music dance theatre. Recent credits include Katar in *Princess Academy*, ensemble in *Beauty and the Beast*, and Charlotte in *Charlotte's Web*—all at BYU. She has been nominated twice for the Irene Ryan Acting Award. She will very gladly answer to Megara (as in Hercules) and Emmie G, she'll never get tired of Billy Joel, and she is ecstatic to be part of this classic, hilarious show.

Spencer Hunsicker
Algernon Moncrieff

From Tampa, Florida, Spencer is a junior studying acting. He was most recently seen as Truffaldino in *The Servant of Two Masters* at BYU.

Alana Jeffery
Lady Bracknell

From Boca Raton, Florida, Alana is a senior in the music dance theatre program at BYU. Past credits include Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Diana in *Next to Normal*, Mrs. Gibbs in *Our Town*, Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, stepsister Grace in *Cinderella*, Mrs. Potts in *Beauty and the Beast*, Yvette Pottier in *Mother Courage*, and Miss Andrew in BYU's upcoming production of *Mary Poppins*. She and her husband, Jared Jeffery, celebrate their third wedding anniversary this year.

Bradley Mackay
Rev. Canon Chasuble, D. D.

From West Jordan, Utah, Bradley is a sophomore studying acting. Recent credits include Bentley in *Misalliance* at BYU and Thisby in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Castle Amphitheater. He received an award for best actor in an ensemble scene at the UHS Shakespeare Competition for playing Talbot in *King Henry VI, Part 1*. He and his wife, Malia Mackay, earnestly live happily ever after every day.

Stephen Moore
Lane (Manservant)/ Merriman (Butler)

From Beaumont, California, Stephen is a junior studying acting. Recent credits include Reverend Parris in *The Crucible* at the Echo Theatre in Provo, Suetonius in *Conversations with Caligula* at the Great Salt Lake Fringe Festival, and Mikhail Gorbachev in *Reykjavik* at BYU.

Emma Widtfeldt
Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax

From Peachtree City, Georgia, Emma is a junior studying acting. She recently played Sorel Bliss in *Hay Fever* at BYU, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Summer Creekside Theater Festival, female swing in *Cymbeline* with BYU's Young Company, and multiple roles in the Microburst Theatre Festival at BYU.

Sean Worsley
John Worthing, J.P. (Jack)

Sean was born in Mesa, Arizona, on April 15, 1994. Many will recognize this as "Tax Day," which is fortuitous because his father is an accountant for the IRS. After attending ASU for a few years and participating in their theatre program, Sean transferred to BYU in 2015 to prepare to serve as a Young Performing Missionary in Nauvoo, Illinois. While there he met his wife Megan, who was also born on "Tax Day" and whose father is also an accountant. He is very excited to have this opportunity alongside old and new friends.

The Importance of Being Earnest

Punch Cartoon, Punch Publications, 1841, Public Domain.

Study Guide

Jessa Cunningham, Dramaturg

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