

## PRESS RELEASE

# THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

by Oscar Wilde

LOGOS THEATRE COMPANY LTD

presents a rare production of the

## ORIGINAL FOUR ACT VERSION

We know *The Importance* so well. But what of the story behind the story?

On the first night, Alfred Douglas's father Lord Queensberry was denied admission, and forced to content himself with leaving a derisive bouquet of vegetables instead of making the public denunciation which he had planned. "I don't know a single chap at the club who speaks to his father" Jack Worthing remarks in Act One. And his friend Algy replies "Yes! Fathers are certainly not popular just at present."

But the highly personal words are not spoken on the stage. This is one of the more obviously motivated cuts made before the opening in 1895. But the main reason for the shortening was to make time for a 'curtain raiser', as was the custom. Wilde's son Vivyan Holland, whose introduction to the longer script is fascinating, remarks "Perhaps the real object of a curtain-raiser was to persuade the audience that the play that followed was brilliant, which in this case it certainly was."

The fuller script explains why Miss Prism was waiting for Dr Chasuble in the vestry, and makes clear how he missed her at the church. This is one of many illuminating details - as well as very funny lines that are well worth recovering. We have carefully collated and edited our script, to keep the best of the Four Act version.

There is no 'new' act. There is a good deal more material, and it is differently distributed. There is an extra scene, and very glad we are to restore it (as in the more recent film). There are two characters who may be new to playgoers. We are including these, and selecting whatever seems to us to be a shame to lose. We do not forget that it is the shorter version which has made the play immortal, and some of the cutting which produced it is very good cutting. But a selective use of the longer script is helpful in two ways. It gives elbow-room to the plot, in its farcical solemnity. And it confirms what the great critic James Agate said long ago - that there is more fun in what Wilde deleted than any living playwright could produce.

The production is directed by Bryan Hands and Kenneth Michaels.

Logos is delighted to have secured for the famous character of Lady Bracknell the distinguished and delightful actress Frances Cuka, who played a wonderful Mrs Alving for us in *Ghosts*. Frances is well known on stage and screen, having first made her name in London theatre as the lead in *A Taste of Honey*. Her work has included singing roles such as Becky Sharp in a West End musical version of *Vanity Fair*, and Lucy Lockit in Prospect's *Beggar's Opera*. Her film parts range from Mrs Bedwin in Polanski's *Oliver Twist* to Katherine of Aragon to Keith Michell's big screen *Henry VIII*.

UPSTAIRS AT THE GATEHOUSE,  
HIGHGATE VILLAGE, N6 4BD

9th February to 6th March 2010

Tuesday to Saturday 7.30 pm - Sunday 4.00 pm

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Logos Theatre Company Ltd is Registered Charity no. 1043039.

The company was established in 1989 by Kenneth McClellan, to bring classic plays to life while remaining true to the text.

[www.logostheatre.co.uk](http://www.logostheatre.co.uk)

