

Q&A with the cast of



'The Importance of Being Earnest'

The Cottage Theater's newest show, "The Importance of Being Earnest" kicked-off on June 9 and will run until June 25. The cast and crew have taken on the task of telling one of Oscar Wilde's most famous works full of comedy and the classic case of fumbled identity. Director Alan Beck, costume designer Rhonda Turnquist and actor Kory Weimer took time off the stage to answer questions about the show and their involvement.

"The Importance of Being Earnest" is showing at the Cottage Theatre until June 25. Tickets cost \$25 Adult / \$15 Youth (6-18 yrs) and curtain

times are as follows: Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Q: Talk a bit about the story of "Earnest."

Beck: It's a classic farce with some of the wittiest dialogue I've ever come across in theatre. It's about a young man, Jack, who was adopted and given a name but he really doesn't know who his parents are or how he got into this world and he's fallen in love but she'll only marry him if his name is Earnest. In the end, we find out he has always been named Earnest. So he realizes the importance of being Earnest.

Weimer: It starts off with basically a classic mistaken identity story. It's a difficult show to explain but the whole premise is my character pretending he's this character called Earnest and everything falls apart to the romantic interests because they had a desire to fall in love with a man named Earnest.

Q: How did you get involved in the production?

Beck: I submitted a request to direct and design this play to the committee last year and they made it part of the season.

Turnquist: Alan asked me to costume it last year when the

plays were picked and that's when I started doing the research in the era, the 1890s, long before it was even cast.

Weimer: I worked with Alan on a number of other shows. One of my first shows was Charlie's Aunt. I absolutely adored working with him, He was just full of knowledge so when he said he was doing this show I was really excited to audition because it's a classic piece of theatre that never goes out of style.

Q: What is your favorite part of (working on) this play?

Turnquist: The costumes. My favorite part is doing historically accurate costumes and making the people feel that they're really there.

Beck: The fabulous cast. There are scenes from every one of them that make me laugh every night. If I had to choose, I'd guess my favorite scene is when Ms. Prism who lost Jack when he was an infant by placing him in a handbag and leaving him at a station in London, and Jack realizes he's had this handbag all of his life in the attic, and he brings it to her and she recognizes it as the bag she left the infant in.

Weimer: The really quick wit exchanges between Josh and I. Wilde has such a fantastic way with words and somehow, they haven't gone out of style. So many shows from that era can be so out of touch with a modern audience but somehow this show transcends time. The jokes are still funny.

Q: What are the challenges to putting on a show like this?

Beck: Comedy is tough. Tragedy is easy. The biggest challenge is just to command the language, the English accents and keep the pace pretty quick with the banter and dialogue.

Turnquist: The time. Each dress took about three days and we didn't have any suits or pants or vests from that era so all the men's looks were totally built. We used one tuxedo we had. Everything else in this play was made new for this play.

Weimer: Whenever you do a show with an accent, any kind of accent, you have to know that it's going to take the audience a little bit of time to warm up to that. You have to make sure you're speaking clearly. I've seen productions that can drag out the language and make it slow paced and it makes it difficult to watch versus how we've done it where we keep the flow of the words and speed of the show quicker than how it's usually done and it keeps the audience engaged.

Q: Why should people come see "Earnest?"

Weimer: It's a fantastic piece of theatre. I've been performing for 29 years but it's always important to support the arts and artists around you. Get out there and support the community and show love to the people who are doing what they love.

Beck: This is probably the best cast I have worked with at the Cottage Theatre.

*Photos provided by Cottage Theatre photographer Matt Emrich.

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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT
ACS STAFF - KRISTEN SALLADAY KRISTEN.SALLADAY@CANCER.ORG 541.434.3101
EVENT CHAIR - SABINA JOHNSON SABINAMJOHNSON88@GMAIL.COM

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