

Hale-Turner Theatre presents 'The Importance of Being Earnest'



Grant Turner/Contributed image
Sam Shown, left, and Liberty O'Dell star in the Hale-Turner Theatre's production of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest." Producer Grant Turner said he chose the play "because it's charming and romantic, and it's quite laugh-out-loud funny, even 130 years later."

By **Trish Yerges**
Go! Magazine

ELGIN — Producer Grant Turner of the Hale-Turner Theatre in Elgin welcomes all to an evening of satirical Victorian humor as an eight-member cast performs the ever popular 1895 comedy of manners by playwright Oscar Wilde.

"In it, actress Grace Tanner makes another stage appearance, this time as Lady Augusta Bracknell," Turner said. The other cast members are Sam Shown as Jack, Liberty O'Dell as Algernon, Abbie Shown as Gwendolen, Cassandra Johnson as Cecily, Beth Wiseman as Miss Prism, Michael Cooper as Reverend Chasuble and Victoria Ingram as the butler.

"The Importance of Being Earnest" is directed by Cody Wyld Flower.

"The reason I chose this play is because it's charming and ro-

mantic, and it's quite laugh-out-loud funny, even 130 years later," Turner said.

Set in London, the plot focuses on some socially well-to-do people, including two young men, Algernon and Jack, who want to marry Gwendolen and Cecily.

"However," Turner said, "these two women have made it very plain to these young men that they each want to marry someone named Earnest."

How Algernon and Jack try to jump through this hoop is at the heart of this farcical comedy. Being sincere and being Earnest are not going to be easy tasks for these young men when they realize they must pass the scrutiny of Lady Bracknell. She is the embodiment of Victorian respectability and an impediment to romance and happiness — never lacking for opinions and always looking out for her own interests as well as the young ladies.

IF YOU GO

Comedy: "The Importance of Being Earnest"

Where: Hale-Turner Theatre, 831 Alder St., Elgin

Dates: Feb. 11-12, 18-19 and 25-26

Times: Fridays, 7:30 p.m.;

Saturdays, 2:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$20; available at elginoperahouse.com or by calling 541-663-6324

"A young woman," Lady Bracknell declares, "doesn't get to decide if she gets to be married. Her parents decide. It should be a surprise to her, pleasant or unpleasant as it may be."

"The Importance of Being Earnest" is full of crazy and funny satire, yet it's delivered with some semblance of reality, Turner said. You are "earnestly" invited to the Hale-Turner Theatre to enjoy Oscar Wilde's satirical poke at the upper Victorian class and their society rules.

Turner joined the Elgin Opera House in 2018 as associate artistic director. His wife, Dr. Nicole Turner, works at Grande Ronde Hospital.



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