



Geneva English Drama Society (GEDS)

Audition Notes

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

directed by Jenny Buffle

Auditions will be held **Monday 11 December, 19h00 - 22h00** in the basement of the **English Church Hall**, 14b rue du Mont Blanc, Geneva

Performance dates are **27th February to 3rd March** and we will once again be using the **Théâtre de l'Espérance in Eaux Vives**.

Arguably Oscar Wilde's most popular, and most frequently performed play, *The Importance of Being Earnest* needs very little introduction. It is a light-hearted comedy that unashamedly pokes fun at the leisured English society of the late 1800s and revolves around the pre-conceived ideas of the day. As this is a satire, Wilde's characters are almost caricatures, somewhat two-dimensional figures whose main purpose is to act as the mouthpiece for Wilde's wit and there will be very little need to delve into their psychology or to have recourse to any profound 'method' acting! However, since the play is set very firmly in English society of a specific period, the ability to speak in a good British accent will be essential. The characters are as follows:

- Algernon Moncrieff:** Something of a dandy, very much the man-about-town whose sole aim in life is the pursuit of pleasure. He is charming, beautifully mannered and totally self-absorbed.
- Jack (Ernest) Worthing:** A gentleman of leisure, he is rather more serious than Algernon as he has the care of his pretty, teenage ward but is equally capable of a little subterfuge in order to enjoy the lighter side of life.
- Lady Bracknell:** Algernon's formidable aunt, described by Algernon as Wagnerian, she is the butt of much of Wilde's satire, voicing the prejudiced and deeply conservative views of the day in no uncertain terms.
- Gwendolen Fairfax:** Lady Bracknell's daughter, is a pretty young woman who has sufficient strength of character to evade her mother's domination to some degree but her own inflexible attitude is at the heart of the plot.

- Cecily Cardew:** Jack Worthing's ward, is also a pretty young woman whose existence arouses Algernon's interest. Bright and self-assured she is more than capable of standing up for herself but is also incurably romantic.
- Miss Prism:** Cecily's governess is a rather more serious character with a firmly held sense of duty, which may well stem from her need to compensate for a guilty secret. Almost entirely without a sense of humour, she is nonetheless attracted to -
- Canon Chasuble:** The vicar who presides over the parish where Jack and Cecily live. He is the archetypal country clergyman, erudite and slightly solemn but with a soft spot for the fairer sex.
- Lane:** Algernon's butler – the perfect gentleman's gentleman, discreet and impeccable.
- Merriman:** Jack Worthing's manservant, the country version of Lane.

I hope to cast the play fairly quickly so that we can begin rehearsal in early January. Rehearsals will follow the usual GEDS pattern . i.e. Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and a commitment to availability will be essential.

For any further information do not hesitate to contact Jenny Buffle – email jjbuffle@gmail.com