

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Stages Oscar Wilde's Classic Comedy "The Importance of Being Earnest," from Oct. 28 – Nov. 15

Full of razor-sharp wit and larger-than-life characters, this sparkling satire gleefully skewers love, marriage, and high society.

Westport Country Playhouse will stage Oscar Wilde's classic comedy romp through Victorian society, "The Importance of Being Earnest," from October 28 through November 15, the second in the Playhouse's 2025-26 Season of six works, running from September through July.

"At long last, 'The Importance of Being Earnest' comes to the Playhouse stage, and we couldn't be more excited!," said Mark Shanahan, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director. "Wilde's comedic masterpiece is as clever, mischievous, and downright outrageous as ever, and this production - led by Melissa Rain Anderson's expert hand alongside her extraordinary cast and design team - is exactly the kind of laugh-out-loud, sharp-witted fun we need right now.

"It's a chance to revel in some of the most famous wordplay ever written, and delight in Wilde's most iconic characters," Shanahan added. "A titanic achievement of writing, the play remains as fresh, playful, and meaningful in 2025 as it was the day it first premiered, exposing human absurdities and contradictions with irresistible wit and wicked charm."

In "The Importance of Being Earnest," two eligible bachelors bend the truth in their pursuit of love, only to land in a web of hilarious complications, including mistaken identities, secret engagements, a lost handbag, and one very formidable aunt. Full of larger-than-life characters, along with Wilde's gift for language and outrageous humor, this sparkling satire gleefully skewers love, marriage, and high society.

The eight-member cast includes **Kristen Hahn** as Cecily Cardew (Westport Country Playhouse: "The 39 Steps," "They Made It a Musical!," "Our Town," starring Paul Newman, four Script In Hand playreadings, Laurence Maslon's "I'll Drink To That!"; Broadway and National Tour: "Floyd Collins," "A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder," "Hello, Dolly!," "Our Town"; BFA Carnegie Mellon University); **Anthony Michael Martinez** as Algernon Moncrieff (Westport Country Playhouse: "Native Gardens"; Off-Broadway and regional work; Film/TV: "After Forever" Amazon Prime series; resident teaching artist for Red Bull Theater, Classic Stage Co., New York Theatre Workshop; MFA: Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy for Classical Acting in DC; www.anthonymichaelmartinez.net; IG [anthony.m.martinez](https://www.instagram.com/anthony.m.martinez)); **Jan Neuberger** as Miss Prism (Westport Country Playhouse: "My One and Only," Script in Hand playreading of "Ripcord"; original Broadway casts of "Wicked," "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," "Big," "A Change in the Heir," 1974 revival of "Gypsy," starring Angela Lansbury; abundant Off-Broadway, regional, and stock productions, national tours, and concerts at Royal Albert and Carnegie Halls).

Christine Pedi as Lady Bracknell (Broadway: Mama Morton in "Chicago," "Talk Radio" with Liev Schrieber, "Little Me" with Martin Short; Off-Broadway: "Forbidden Broadway" - Drama Desk nomination; Cincinnati Shakespeare Company: Lady Bracknell in "The Importance of Being Earnest"; TV: "The Sopranos" as Mrs.

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Bobby Baccala; host of Sirius XM Radio's "On Broadway"; award-winning cabaret performer); **Michael Raver** as Jack Worthing, J.P. (Off-Broadway: "Vieux Carre," "The Seagull," "The Persians," "Death Comes for the War Poets," "Fire on Babylon," "Romeo & Juliet," "Julius Caesar," "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; Regional: Music Theatre of Connecticut: "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" - CT Critic's Circle Best Actor nomination; Film/TV: "TURN," "Murder Castle," "How We Built The Bomb," "Star Night," "Else/Where"); **Triney Sandoval** as Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D. (Westport Country Playhouse: "A Merry Little Christmas Carol"; Broadway: "Bernhardt/Hamlet," "Marvin's Room," "Macbeth," "A Free Man of Color," "A Man for All Seasons," "Frost/Nixon"; Other New York theater: "72 Miles to Go..." - Drama Desk nomination; six seasons with The Oregon Shakespeare Festival; TV: recurring roles on "Law & Order" and "Law & Order: SVU"); **Mark Silence** as Merriman, Lane (Westport Country Playhouse: Fight Director and Choreographer for "Dinner with Friends," "Sing for Your Shakespeare," "Lips Together, Teeth Apart," "Happy Days"; Regional acting credits include "Love's Labour's Lost," Moises Kaufman's "Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde," "The Three Musketeers"; teaches acting and voice-over at Norwalk Conservatory of the Arts); and **Katy Tang** as Gwendolyn Fairfax (Regional: "A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder," "Don't Dress for Dinner," "Pippin," "The Cherry Orchard," "Sweeney Todd," "She Loves Me," "Marry Me A Little," "Candide," "A Little Night Music," "Spring Awakening," "The Turn of the Screw," "The Mikado"; International: "Le Nozze di Figaro," "Werther, Orphée et Eurydice"; Training: UCLA, Ecole Normale de Musique, Paris).

Director **Melissa Rain Anderson** is a New York-based director, actor, and acting coach. She directs in New York City and regionally, specializing in contemporary plays, Shakespeare, and musicals. Her acting credits include network TV, national tours, Off-Broadway, regional, and voiceover work, as well as several cast recordings.

Playwright **Oscar Wilde** (1854-1900) was an Irish author, poet, and playwright. Wilde is best known for his Gothic novel "The Picture of Dorian Gray," and his comedies of society, "Lady Windermere's Fan," "A Woman of No Importance," and "An Ideal Husband."

Creative team includes **James J. Fenton**, set designer; **Annie J. Le**, costume design; **Alexander Fetchko**, lighting design; **John Gromada**, sound designer and original music. **Frank Lombardi** is stage manager; **Kelley Lynne Moncrief**, assistant stage manager.

Performance schedule is Tuesday at 7 p.m., Wednesday at 2 and 7 p.m., Thursday at 7 p.m., Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 3 and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 3 p.m. (No Wed. or Sat. matinees during preview week). Special series include Taste of Tuesdays (Oct. 28), Together at the Table (Oct. 29), Pride Night (Oct. 30), Opening Night (Nov. 1), Sunday Symposium (Nov. 2), Backstage Pass (Nov. 5), Open Captions (Nov. 9), and Thursday TalkBack (Nov. 13).

Single tickets start at \$50 and are subject to change based upon availability. Buy early for best prices. For information on special offers, including discounts for students, senior citizens, educators, military and first responders, Indigenous peoples, professional playwrights, and groups, as well as options for pay-what-you-will and library passes, visit www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/box-office/. Appropriate for age 12 and up.

Production Sponsors are Athena and Daniel Adamson, and Sunny and Jim Neff. Corporate Production Sponsor is Cohen and Wolf, P.C. Corporate Production Patron is RBC Wealth Management. Corporate Production Supporter is 3030 Park as Senior Living Hospitality Group. 2025 Opening Night Post-Show Reception Sponsor is RDM Financial Group at Hightower. 2025 Together at the Table Sponsors are Paige and Jodi Couture. 2025 Programming and Season Sponsor is Barbara Streicker. 2025 Media sponsors are Mofly Media and WSHU Public Radio.

For full details on "The Importance of Being Earnest," visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/the-importance-of-being-earnest/>

Upcoming theater productions in the Playhouse's 2025-26 Season are "**A Sherlock Carol**," a Playhouse holiday tradition, returning by popular demand for its third consecutive year, December 13 – 21; "**Big Band Broadway**," part of the Broadway Scores at the Playhouse series, featuring Tony Award winner Debbie

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Gravite, January 29 – February 1; **“Primary Trust,”** Eboni Booth’s 2024 Pulitzer Prize-winning breakout play, an uplifting, gentle, and powerful exploration of change, friendship, and quiet courage, April 14 – May 2; and **“Agatha Christie’s The Murder of Roger Ackroyd,”** newly adapted for the stage by Mark Shanahan in association with Agatha Christie Ltd., from the novel by Agatha Christie, July 14 – August 1.

A complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at westportplayhouse.org. All play titles, artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

For Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit westportplayhouse.org or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Instagram ([wcplayhouse](https://www.instagram.com/wcplayhouse)), and YouTube ([WestportPlayhouse](https://www.youtube.com/WestportPlayhouse)). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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