

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 27, 2025

Westport Country Playhouse Features Two Out Gay Men in Staging of “The Importance of Being Earnest” by Gay Literary Icon Oscar Wilde

Openly gay actors Michael Raver and Anthony Michael Martinez are cast in the comedy classic, playing October 28 – November 15

Westport, CT –Westport Country Playhouse will stage the witty, timeless classic, “The Importance of Being Earnest,” by the gay literary icon Oscar Wilde, from October 28 through November 15. Two openly gay actors are cast in leading roles: Michael Raver as Jack Worthing, the respectable bachelor leading a double life; and Anthony Michael Martinez as Algernon Moncrieff, the witty idler whose “Bunburying” sets the farcical machinations in motion. The Westport production reunites Wilde’s sparkling satire of Victorian society with a modern-minded cast and a fresh, spirited staging by director Melissa Rain Anderson.

“Oscar Wilde—his brilliant epigrams, his daring life, his identity as an out gay man in the late 19th century—stands as a major figure in literary and LGBTQ+ history,” said Raver. “In choosing Wilde’s work, and by centering his legacy through inclusive casting, the Playhouse honors both his artistry and his courage.

“With two out gay men headlining this production of a play by one of the great gay literary icons, the Playhouse affirms the enduring relevance of Wilde’s satirical voice, challenging conventions of gender, class, and identity with delightfully caustic wit,” said Raver. “The casting invites us to recognize that farce, society, and self-invention are intertwined, and enriches the text, not by rewriting it, but by honoring its subtext and legacy.”

The eight-actor ensemble brings crisp comedic timing and elegant style to Wilde’s razor-sharp dialogue. In addition to Raver and Martinez, the cast includes Kristen Hahn as Cecily Cardew, Jan Neuberger as Miss Prism, Christine Pedi as Lady Bracknell, Triney Sandoval as Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D., Mark Silence as Merriman, Lane, and Katy Tang as Gwendolyn Fairfax.

Wilde’s beloved comedy—mistaken identities, secret engagements, a lost handbag, and one very formidable aunt—wears its Victorian trappings with gleeful irreverence. “This staging elevates the visual world into a more relaxed Edwardian-era palette, allowing the language and the performances to fly,” added Raver.

Playwright Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) remains one of the most brilliant and defiant voices of the late Victorian age. As a playwright, essayist and poet, he armed himself with a razor-sharp wit and a penchant for social critique. As an out gay man in an era of legal and cultural hostility, his life and work resonate deeply in the LGBTQ+ community and beyond.

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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.

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 Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio.

For full details, including performance schedule and pricing, visit:
<https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/the-importance-of-being-earnest/>

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

Founded nearly a century ago, Westport Country Playhouse has long been a pillar of American regional theater. With this season's six-show slate, the Playhouse continues to expand access, bring celebrated artists to its stage, and open doors for diverse stories and interpretations.

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). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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