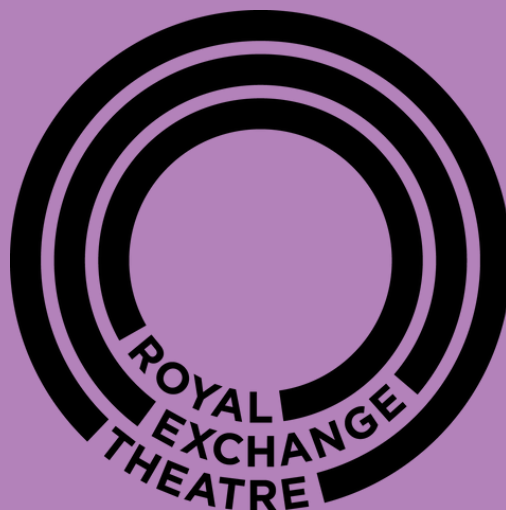


The Importance Of Being Earnest

1.

BY OSCAR WILDE
DIRECTED BY JOSH ROCHE
FRI 14 JUN – SAT 20 JUL 2024

Resources, Content Warnings & Self Care Pack



Resource Pack - The Importance Of Being Earnest

This document has been designed to support schools and college student audiences attending performances of The Importance Of Being Earnest

We've created this document for those who would be comfortable with more information and to give you a little insight into the show. We hope the information and resources in this document will help audiences experiencing the show, and support planning for anyone who may be concerned about their visit.

Contents

- Content Warnings
- About the show
- Meet The Cast
- Meet The Director
- Rehearsal Snaps
- Trailer Time
- Cast Interviews
- Oscar Wilde Facts
- Career In The Spotlight - Design
- Additional Resources
- Mental Health & Wellbeing Guide
- New Tours and Workshops



Show Information

Content Warnings

- For ages 12+
- Contains loud noises, bright lights, darkness, and flashing lights.

Running Time

Approximately 2.5 Hours with interval.

Travel Recommendations

Trams

If your school or college is near a tram stop you can get your students to us for just £1 each and £2 per teacher. A great way to save money on coaches and also give students the life experience of how a lot of our audiences use public transport to access our theatre. More information [here](#).

[Fares and passes for young people | Transport for Greater Manchester \(tfgm.com\)](#)

Coaches

For all information about coach drops offs and parking please click [here](#)

A bit about the show

This timeless tale of identity, opulence and sharp-tongued wit follows the lives of the rich and ridiculous, all looking for something to do, someone to love and somewhere to belong.

For Jack and Algernon, being young and rich isn't easy. In fact, being swathed in luxury is, well...depressing. Tired of the never-ending soirees and penthouse shindigs, they escape their anxious existence (and Lady Bracknell) in the pursuit of love, real love, like, proper adult, IRL love, all under the guise of the ever-enigmatic Ernest.

But love isn't as easy as it seems. After all, Cecily and Gwendolen have standards, not to mention a peculiar passion for the name of Ernest...

Oscar Wilde's legendary, quintessential comedy, directed by Josh Roche, receives a dazzling makeover.

Bringing any of Oscar Wilde's plays to the Royal Exchange in 2024 is a privilege. He is a writer who constantly balances empathy with satire, reminding us how ridiculous we are, while also understanding our need to feel profound. I also think his plays are finding relevance at the moment. Wilde's society of 1895 is disturbingly similar to our own.

However, what's particularly exciting about bringing Earnest into the Royal Exchange is how well this modern space suits this classic play – a uniquely social, free and dynamic theatre for a timeless comedy of profound triviality. Josh Roche, Director



Art direction: By Feast Creative

Meet The Cast



Creative Team

Chasuble

Ian Bartholomew

Lady Bracknell

Abigail Cruttenden

Miss Prism

Emma Cunniffe

Jack

Robin Morrissey

Gwendolen

Phoebe Pryce

Lane/Merriman

James Quinn

Cecily

Rumi Sutton

Algernon

Parth Thakerar

Creative Team

7.

Director
Josh Roche

Designer
Eleanor Bull

Lighting Designer
Johanna Town

Sound Design
Sam Glossop

Movement Director
Sundeeep Saini

Casting Director
Amy Blair

2024 Hodgkiss Assistant Director
Oliver Hurst



Scan Me

Check out our meet the cast Instagram Reel

Meet The Director

We would like to introduce you to our wonderful director
Josh Roche

Below you can listen to him talk about the show

Josh covers different topics about the play, from how Oscar Wilde may love social media to Gen z, Millennials and Boomers

Scan Me



Interview With - Josh Roche

9.

For Josh Roche, directing this new production of THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST fulfils a long-held ambition – and presents the opportunity to take a fresh, modern look at the play and its celebrated writer.

What's your personal relationship with the play? When did you first read it or see it?

Josh Roche: I read it first, either late in school or early in university. I saw the films, like most people, before I saw a stage production. I've only seen one stage version of it. A bit like Shakespeare, I have enjoyed reading it almost more than seeing it, because the verbal dexterity of it is just so gorgeous.

Also, it kicked off a passion for Wilde in me. I love almost all of the plays. I adore DORIAN GRAY, his children's stories and the essays, which are extraordinary: THE TRUTH OF MASKS, THE DECAY OF LYING... The way that he thinks about aesthetics, these brilliant ideas about the fact that the artificial things you do to invent yourself are actually more honest than the natural self – all of these ideas which now we see playing through in social media in exactly the same way.

How did you come to be directing this production?

Josh: It was amazing. I've been directing for 14 years and it was the very first time in my career that somebody has called me up and said 'would you like to do this play?' In 2021, I directed HOME by David Storey, a brilliant, under-produced Wakefield playwright, in a production down in Chichester. Suzanne Bell, who is the dramaturg here at the Royal Exchange Theatre, saw that, and then when this opportunity to do EARNEST came up, she thought of me.

Was that an instant 'yes' for you?

Josh: Oh my God, it was the quickest 'yes' ever! I was actually on a train down from the Edinburgh Festival to get married. I'd had to be up there to open a show and the very next day was the wedding. On the train back, almost like this incredible wedding present, my agent rang me and said 'you won't believe it, the Royal Exchange would love you to do this!'



What's amazing is that, by that time, I hadn't thought that anybody would let me do EARNEST, so I'd been pitching around a different Wilde play with the idea of this modern twist, because lots of the themes are still there. So when I got that call, I was like, 'not only is it a yes, but I've already spent a year thinking about how to do this show.'

EARNEST is play that everyone tends to think they know, even if they've never actually seen it. Is this production likely to surprise people who think they've got it pinned?

Josh: I think so, yes. EARNEST is one of those plays that, maybe a little like HAMLET or some of these ones that have been over-produced in the past, has become, 'I'm going to go and see something that I feel I know, something I know how to digest – I know moment. It's for good reason, but we're in a time where morals and moral codes and choices are taken very seriously. There's a famous scene in the play where Gwendolen says she doesn't take sugar in her tea: 'No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more.' Now, that originates from abolitionism. You don't have sugar in your tea because sugar comes from the plantations. She's making a political statement, but it's now been codified into being a fashion thing.

Now we have the same relationship with milk. You don't have milk in your coffee because it's a little statement that you're trying to save the world, and then you get into that stupid thing where something very profound becomes incredibly trivial. If you do have milk in your coffee, are people actually suggesting that you are for climate change and the destruction of the world? I mean, obviously not. It's those little games that Wilde is playing around with.

And in terms of the Exchange itself, it's just the most radically communal space. The only one I think that comes close is the Globe, but here the audience surround the performers, not only horizontally but also vertically. It's almost like if you could blow a bubble and put the performer in the middle. You're all in here together – and this is a social satire, so the two things just match, really.



Do people tend to have preconceptions – even slight misunderstandings – about Wilde and what he was trying to do as a writer?

Josh: 'As a writer' is the key part of that sentence. Yes. I think so. Basically, the problem with Wilde is that his life is so extraordinary, partly by his own invention. He famously said that 'to become a work of art is the object of living'. The problem is, his life is such an extraordinary story: the genius brought down by a perceived flaw at the time. It's got all the Byronic hero aspects that we love in a story.

However, I think what that's done is it's obscured how good the plays are. Right now I couldn't tell you many facts about Ibsen's life, or Strindberg's. I could tell you all of the plot of their plays. Famously, we don't know much about Shakespeare. But with Wilde, you know so much about the person that it overshadows the plays. So it was actually a bit of a choice to try and keep his life story out of the production, to allow the play to live on its own exactly what it's going to be'. As a result, what you lose is the ability of that play to meet you on first principles – the thing that it was originally trying to do. We can't hear 'To be or not to be' any more without going 'Ah, that's the line!'. It's very hard to actually get into meaning of that when you hear it. Similarly, the 'handbag?' line from this – it's just very difficult to negotiate that stuff.

When Wilde wrote the play originally, it was a satire. He lived in a time that took itself very, very seriously, with its late Victorian moralism. As a result, there's a generation that came up around the Decadent movement, of which Wilde was a part. There was a real desire to kick back against that moralism, that idea that you learn how to live your life in a book and you follow it. So, it was a satire about those things – what is profound and what is trivial? We're trying to dig the satire back out, rather than the farce that it's maybe become.

I think Wilde is always about, how ridiculously small does your life feel, and how large would you like it to feel? As soon as you begin to feel profound, you seem ridiculous, and as soon as you become ridiculous, it slips over into profundity again



'You've said that you think the play is particularly pertinent to these times, and indeed this building.

Josh: To the times – I mean, we live in the same battle between profound and trivial. We're so in that

Are there any aspects of his life that you've chosen to allude to?

Josh: There is one that I think is important. This is his last play and it gets closed down because of the trials. He wrote it in about a six-week period, at home with his kids and his wife. He would play with the kids in the mornings and write in the afternoons. Bosie, his slightly manipulative psychopathic lover, was away in Europe, so he was free of Bosey. He was obviously in love with him, but their relationship was toxic, beyond toxic.

Now, all of his other plays have a sin in them. Somebody does something wrong, and then there is a way of atoning and the wit spins out of that. EARNEST has no sin in it, because the anxiety and terror in Wilde is all underneath it, because he knows the trial is coming. He has filed a libel claim, it's all coming down the track.

Richard Ellmann, who wrote a brilliant biography of Wilde, describes the play as like a sort of Parapet that he puts over his own anxiety and depression. That's where all the energy for the talking comes from. That's why it's so much faster-paced than the other plays. That's why everyone thinks it's a farce, even though it doesn't obey any of the structures of farce. It's because the language is so rapid-fire that it feels like farce. I think the bed of anxiety that all of the energy sits on is important, and we're interested in that

Ideally, then, what would you want audiences to take away from this?

Josh: I want them to laugh.

And that's a huge thing, isn't it? To say that a play from 1895 that's almost over-familiar can still get laughs?

Josh: It's still so funny. His wit is still just extraordinary. There's a line – Jack has just proposed to Gwendolen and Gwendolen says, 'What wonderfully blue eyes you have, Ernest! They are quite, quite, blue. I hope you will always look at me just like that, especially when there are other people present.' And that just transposes over into today bang on: 'you may be beautiful, but if nobody can see you, what's the point?'

That's Instagram.

Josh: Right, exactly. And I think Instagram itself is just a brilliant microcosm of that profound / trivial relationship.

So is there anything else you would like audiences to take from this, beyond having a good time?

Josh: That's 90% of it. The greatest thing you can give to somebody is two hours of fun and enjoyment, and I think theatre sometimes loses track of the fact that that's its main function. But then, in the interval or on the way home, if people go 'bloody hell, how little we've changed' – that's the thought that I would love them to have.

I think part of the problem with Wilde's plays being done as period productions so often is that we look at them and go, 'oh, this is about that time'. They're so fixed in that time, but I think they're timeless. We're just as ridiculous as Lady Bracknell, unfortunately.

Andy Murray



Rehearsal Snaps



Joel Fildes



Joel Fildes



Joel Fildes

Trailer & Teaser Time



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See our official trailer here to get a
feel of the show



Cast Interviews

Here are some clips to get to know some of our cast.

Actor Exchange

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST CAST are already enjoying themselves in our building



Scan Me



A HANDBAG!

Some of our cast and staff having fun with 1 of the most famous lines from the show.

Scan Me



Exclusive Actors Interview

Over the course of her career, actress Abigail Cruttenden has appeared in several productions of THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST playing various different roles. Now, she's come to the Royal Exchange to take on Lady Bracknell. During rehearsals, she discussed her approach to the part.



This is your first time appearing here at the Exchange...

Abigail Cruttenden: It is! I've always wanted to work here, actually. I used to work quite a lot at Theatr Clwyd, so when I was in rehearsals there, I always used to come across, because I just love this theatre so much.

So I'm very excited. It's not your first time playing one of the female roles in the play, though. Have you collected the full set now?

Abigail: Nearly! I haven't done Miss Prism. But I've done Cecily – at Theatr Clwyd, actually, and then on tour, when I was 22, so a very long time ago. I think that I was about 26 or 27 when I did Gwendolen, at the Birmingham Rep and then onto the Old Vic.

Does it give you an interesting perspective on the play, having played those other roles?

Abigail: I mean, I absolutely love the play, and whichever character I've played, I've just thought 'oh, this is the character to play'. It's just brilliant. And I wanted the challenge of Bracknell. I'd always thought I'd really like to play the character one day, and it's great to have the opportunity to do it. I feel massively lucky.

How would you describe the character and where is she at as the play begins

Abigail: I suppose I would say she is very confident of her position in society – well, apparently very confident, but actually it's an earned place. She is keeping up a facade, because there's always fragility. It's that thing when you're very arrogant, but it actually comes from a place of real insecurity. I think that's where I'm coming from with her, to make her work. She is that bold and that opinionated because she is holding on, to her position, to her family's position. She wants the best for her children. She wants to keep her place in society, and that is everything. The perception of her is everything.

Is she a character who's easy to inhabit? Do you understand her? Like her, even?

Abigail: Well, whichever character you play – even characters that I've played in the past where I've thought 'oh God, she's such a b*tch!' – I feel like they've got reasons for being the way they are.

She has that line: 'When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way'. From my point of view, she is fighting incredibly hard. She has risen up and she is not going to let her daughter go back down. I think she's quite afraid of what that would mean for them. She fought very hard to get to the place she's at, so it's very much protected.

That's not particularly endearing, probably! – but whatever part you play, you feel like you have to have an understanding and an empathy with the character you're playing. It does kind of seep into your life, but hopefully not too much!

Gearing up to play this part must involve a lot of time spent practising just how to throw away the famous 'handbag' line.

Abigail: Before I came up here to Manchester, I had a few ideas about what I was going to do with it. But actually, because we're playing it very straight, it's not a line that is anything other than something you're reacting to.

I mean, there have been some brilliant takes on it. When I did Gwendolen at the Old Vic, Barbara Leigh-Hunt [playing Bracknell] didn't say it, she just mouthed it. So I thought 'well, I can't do that'. But actually, I think we're just trying to play the scene for the reality of it as much as possible. You have to really concentrate to knock that stuff away. You do have the echoes of the history in your head, but actually, that's really not very helpful.

Is there a particular aspect of the character that you're trying to bring out here?

Abigail: I'm not going down a line – that I've seen done so brilliantly – of being completely ridiculous. I'm trying to make her very real, very dynamic, a very controlling parent of the present day. She does think she knows better than all these people. It is a real kind of trope, isn't it? – that you think you know better than the generation below you and you think they're all rather trivial and silly.

I mean, I've got two daughters in their 20s, and they're really not silly. I mean, I think that generation is incredible, actually, them and their friends, I'm just kind of bowled over by how brilliant they are.

It's incredibly difficult for that generation, I think, and that's what we're exploring a bit in the play. We're all using phones and looking into how we curate our lives, and that's so right for these girls with their diaries. It is the same: 'okay, I'm making what my life is'. But it isn't what our lives are. It's creative, and it can be an amazing tool, but also it can be really depressing and dangerous and anxiety inducing.

As director, what is Josh Roche bringing to this production?

Abigail: Definitely a fresh look. I feel like he's just got a natural instinct for a Wilde. He just knows what works. It's really interesting watching him work, and working with him is just totally fun. He's got lots of ideas. He's really open to interpretations. I'm really loving working with him.

Josh has updated it, so it's different and kind of more... it feels incredibly specific. I think. When he first talked to me about updating it, I did think 'hmmm, you can't do that, that's sacrilege!'. But actually, I think this feels more like it would have been for an audience watching Wilde at the time. It can very easily feel a bit like 'oh God, this is very Victorian', and actually the stuff Wilde's saying is so pertinent to now.

I mean, it's all about image and triviality. It's perfect to update, actually, and Josh has updated it really wonderfully. He's really observing Wilde, it's very respectful, I think.

I was slightly worried, and then at the read-through I just thought 'oh my God, this is absolutely brilliant – yeah, this is going to work'. Actually, I really wish I was coming to see this! There's something about what Josh is doing that is really, really exciting and feels very relevant.

Is it tricky to hit, and then maintain, that slightly frantic, almost farce-like pace?

Abigail: Well, no – I think if you get it right, it is such a joy to do. It is so much fun and I think it actually gives you energy, that sort of thing. It needs a lot of energy behind it – I mean, every play does. But actually, if you're hitting it right it is just the most brilliant, fun play to do.

To say that you've always thought each part you've played in EARNEST previously felt like 'the one' at the time, does Lady Bracknell feel like the one to you now?

Abigail: I don't know. I'm not quite there yet. I actually think all the parts are fantastic. Coming on at the beginning and coming on again at the end, that has its own difficulties, really. There's something really lovely about going through a whole play and having a journey, so I probably slightly miss that at the moment. It's a really, really fun thing to rehearse but I think I'm quite intimidated by the part, to be honest. Hopefully I won't be by the time I get there!

So can you imagine this production appealing to audiences of all ages and from all walks of life?

Abigail: Definitely, yeah. And I think there might be some trepidation – certainly there would have been from me, coming to see a really modern take on it, knowing it so well. But I really hope and believe that people will be won round by it.

It's properly funny, and the way everyone's doing it... I mean, I suppose I'm just thinking of the girls, because I know those parts so well. Both Rumi [playing Cecily] and Phoebe [playing Gwendolen] are so modern and so funny and so brilliant with these old lines. It's extraordinary what they're doing, really properly exciting. God, they're better than I was already!

Andy Murray

As some students may be studying Oscar Wilde as a writer here are some fun facts.

- Born October 16, 1854, (Dublin, Ireland—died November 30, 1900, Paris, France)
- He was a spokesman for the late 19th-century Aesthetic movement in England, which advocated art for art's sake, and he was the object of celebrated civil and criminal suits involving homosexuality and ending in his imprisonment (1895–97). He Was Imprisoned For His Sexuality. Oscar Wilde was tried for sodomy by the father of his lover Sir Alfred Douglas at the age of forty-five. After attempting to sue John Douglas for libel. Wilde was sent to Pentonville Prison and forced to do hard labour. Here, Wilde contracted meningitis, which ultimately led to his demise.
- Wilde was born of professional and literary parents. His father, Sir William Wilde, was Ireland's leading ear and eye surgeon, who also published books on archaeology, folklore, and the satirist Jonathan Swift. His mother, who wrote under the name Speranza, was a revolutionary poet and an authority on Celtic myth and folklore.



- Although born Irish and in Dublin, Oscar Wilde skillfully entered high society with his popular wit and playwriting skills. He was considered an early Victorian celebrity, and became well known throughout Europe and the British Isles. He was deemed a larger than life character, and his outrageous outfits were often the subjects of cartoon satire.
- Oscar Wilde spoke sharply and ingeniously and wrote many clever and amusing sayings. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde says, 'The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.' In *The Importance of Being Earnest* he writes, 'I never travel without my diary, one must always have something sensational to read on the train.'

Career In The Spotlight - Design

We sat down with the incredible designer Eleanor Bull to give us some insight into his beautiful design of the show.

When I first read Josh's updated treatment of the original script, I was struck by how effectively Wilde's commentary on Victorian Society could be transposed into a contemporary context. I was interested in the mirroring of the generational divides and the anxiety of the younger generations; caught in a trap of play-acting as adults by the standards of their parents generation, whilst also being the Idle Rich: full of ennui and studious-ineffectiveness that meant their daily routines amounted to little or no consequence. It seemed such a natural fit that Lady Bracknell became this austere and judgmental Baby Boomer, that Jack and Gwendolen became these painfully self-conscious and mildly vapid Millennials, whilst Cecily embodied the disruptive, catalytic spirit of a chaotic yet self-assured Gen-Zer.

The set felt like it needed to create an environment in which these 'Internet Age' characters inhabit: speaking of algorithms and A.I, of Instagram and TikTok, and of this hollow desire towards aesthetics above all else. It had to reflect that intense sense of fun and frivolity and silliness that comes with every production of Earnest, but had to underscore it with a slight sense of stasis and 'deadness', like the sensation of being trapped inside a perfume bottle; characters unable to breathe amidst the cloying stillness of fake floral scents.

Early in the process, we decided against creating a realistic, traditional 'Drawing Room' Set for this production. Often with The Importance of Being Earnest, heightened and exaggerated costumes are used to elevate the sense of ridiculousness which the characters create for themselves- you think of the play and it conjures images of those enormous Victorian leg-of-mutton sleeves, and elaborate picture-hats covered in pheasants,



but we thought it would be interesting to flip this dynamic, making the environment the element that was ridiculous and populating it with recognisable and real-feeling characters. The aim was to try and create a greater sense of relatability when thinking about the text in a modern context: yes, these are very privileged characters with trivial problems, but actually we're all trying to find a sense of purpose in the increasingly absurd landscape of modern living, lives dominated by fakeness and facsimile: an environment often defined by what ad- execs think will sell product, and the rise of virtual reality and the Instagram-able 'Immersive Experience'.

Our starting point was *Earnest* through the lens of Huysman's 'A Rebours'- this idea that the play opens with a pervasive air of melancholy, that Algernon, like the protagonist Des Esseintes, has reached the 'October of his sensations', and is on a constant quest for some sort of diversion. In a section of 'A Rebours', Des Esseintes initially seeks out beautiful flowers, but as he becomes more world-weary and more discerning, he begins to seek out outstandingly crafted fake flowers—capturing the pinnacle of Nature's beauty without any of its unruliness, eventually he shifts one step further and seeks out real flowers that are so contrived that they look like fake flowers. This empty pursuit spoke to me of our generation's relationship with Instagram, but also called to mind a trend that seems to be infecting every high-street establishment hoping to tempt image-conscious Gen-Zers and Millennials through their doors. The whole exterior of shop facades have become covered in headily contrived fake flower displays—spreading over every surface. As soon as you notice one, you'll notice them everywhere, and it feels very targeted towards a specific demographic and their associated social media feeds. Even florists have begun doing this: creating floral installations of their real flowers to mimic the perfectness of the fake ones adorning the coffee shops down the road.

The very first images I gathered were of these 'instagram-able' coffee shops, establishments that were infested with pastel flower installations, and that were, by-and-large, entirely painted pink. I was fixated with pink from the very beginning of this project and couldn't see it any other way. It was always a very specific shade of pink- that kind of dusty salmon: a pink that somehow manages to be quite sad, and a bit brown at the edges, and apologetically subtle, a pink that every mobile phone cover, scatter cushion and coffee keep-cup was suddenly being manufactured in... a quick goggle of the term 'Millennial Pink' will demonstrate that it's an actual definable shade. There was something about that pink that perfectly reflected the sense of fun and frivolity that's so charming about the text, but that also spoke to that sense of stagnation that we were drawing from 'A Rebours', and furthermore felt intrinsically linked to the identity of the younger generations today.

I wanted to explore the idea of what would happen if you exploded these pink floral displays, adding a sense of excitement and movement and chaos to something that had previously felt so airless and still.

I continued to gather a bank of images that spoke to the digitally-generated, highly-curated, substance-less aesthetic of online spaces, exploring different textures for the appearance of Jack's country garden. This led me to the work of Digital Artist: Andrés Reisinger, whose work encapsulated both the textural environments that we'd been looking at and also the idea of exploding them. Eventually the neat topiary of the stately garden became transformed into fluffy, Millennial Pink hedgerows, creating a space within the Royal Exchange that I wanted to audience to feel compelled to interact with.

We wanted the play to start in a place that felt untouched by fun, and sat isolated: Algy's flat, a wealthy black-marble island unsullied by the struggles of the real world. The pink fluffy hedges visually insulate this environment and its inhabitants from the less aesthetic reality of the outside world, coddling the wealthy characters, creating a space in which their trivial problems are allowed to feel significant. We begin in a stagnant space, but as the play finds its mission, and the excitement of a quest begins to build, I wanted the set to feel as if it was growing out into the audience, making the space inclusive of humanity in all its fun and ridiculousness. As the momentum builds, the space explodes to fill the module and the outside of it, ultimately including all of us in the characters' very human desires to find meaning amidst modern life's silly chaos. Fundamentally, watching *The Importance of Being Earnest* should be a joyful, riotous experience, and I wanted the design to help promote that feeling



Self Care Suggestions

If you're concerned about attending the show, there are a few things we'd suggest that might help.

Before the show

Read the content warnings before deciding to see the show.

Sit with a friend

The show can tackle some tough themes so maybe sit with a friend or someone you trust.

After the performance

If you've found something in the show triggering we'd suggest talk to someone you trust or one of the organisations we've listed above. You can also talk to a member of our staff who will be able to signpost you organisations around the area

New Schools and College Tours and Workshops



We are excited to be launching brand new tours of the Royal Exchange Theatre exclusive to Schools and Colleges.

You will explore our wardrobe, wigs, hair and make-up departments, where you may see costumes or prosthetics being made for an upcoming show. You will hear incredible facts about the rich history of not only the theatre, which was opened in 1976, but also the life of the building before this. You may meet some interesting characters during the tour, including our mascot Borris the bear.

As well as being informative, this new tour has been designed to be interactive and accessible, including a range of activities and opportunities to get hands-on with some of the elements that bring our shows to the stage. This will result in your students coming away with their own stories to tell.

<https://www.royalexchange.co.uk/project/schools-colleges-tours/>

Careers Workshops



We have also launched new Careers Workshops for you and your students. In this we'll explain the different departments within theatre and tackle the 150 jobs and roles of the people who work there. Using practical exercises and tasks, students will work together to learn about the different career paths and form mini theatre companies to take on the various responsibilities of these roles.

<https://www.royalexchange.co.uk/project/careers-workshop-for-schools/>