ROBERTSON HALL, EDMONTON

Beginning Tuesday Evening, November 3, 2026

MATINÉES SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

TEST

presents

The Importance of Being Earnest

By Oscar Wilde



A TRIVIAL COMEDY FOR SERIOUS PEOPLE

DIRECTED BY HELENA MARSH

NOVEMBER 3 – 22, 2026

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Robertson Hall stands on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional lands of many First Nations, including the nêhiyaw (Cree), Dene, Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Isga (Nakota Sioux) and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) peoples, whose stories have been told on this land for thousands of years. Edmonton is also within the Métis homeland, and home to one of the largest Inuit communities south of the 60th parallel.

As storytellers, we honour the storytellers who came before us. We are grateful to share this land, and we commit to learning its histories, supporting Indigenous artists, and making our stage a place where every audience is welcome.

WELCOME

Good evening, and welcome to Robertson Hall for the second production of our thirty-eighth season.

Our name honours Robertson's Hall, the theatre Walter Scott Robertson built on Jasper Avenue in the 1890s after Edmonton's first professional touring company came through town. It burned in 1904. We like to think it would have enjoyed tonight.

Every season needs one evening of pure delight, and nobody builds delight like Oscar Wilde. *Earnest* opened in London on Valentine's Day, 1895, and it has hardly been off a stage since. Its jokes are about manners, money and marriage, which is to say they are about us.

This production brings back several artists you know well and introduces three we think you will be watching for years. My thanks to Helena Marsh and her company, to our production sponsor Riverbend Credit Union, and to you, for choosing to spend an evening with us.

Ruth Calloway-Ames, Artistic Director

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Wilde subtitled this play "a trivial comedy for serious people," and both halves of that phrase matter. On the surface it is a soufflé: two young men invent alter egos, two young women fall in love with a name, and a handbag decides everything. Underneath, it is a play about the stories we tell to get what we want, and the society that rewards the best liars.

"The truth is rarely pure and never simple."

We have kept the play in 1895, but we have not kept it under glass. Our design takes its cue from the bright, hard-edged world of Wilde's

London, where everything is polished and nothing is quite what it seems. Listen to how the characters repeat one another. Wilde built the play like a piece of music, and the repetitions are the jokes.

Enjoy the cucumber sandwiches. Algernon certainly will.

Helena Marsh

ABOUT THE PLAY

Jack Worthing is a respectable country gentleman with a ward, Cecily, and a scandalous younger brother named Ernest whom he invented so he can escape to London. In town, Jack *is* Ernest, and he hopes to marry Gwendolen Fairfax, who adores him chiefly for his name.

His friend Algernon Moncrieff has a fictional invalid of his own, the perpetually unwell Bunbury. When Algernon discovers Jack's secret, he heads to the country pretending to be Ernest to meet Cecily. Before long there are two Ernests, two engagements, one formidable aunt in Lady Bracknell, and a mystery that leads back to a handbag left at Victoria Station.

CAST

In order of appearance

Lane, manservant	**DESMOND ACHTERBERG**
Algernon Moncrieff	**JULIAN OKAFOR-REID**
John (Jack) Worthing, J.P.	**THEO MARCHETTI**
Lady Bracknell	**PHILIPPA VANE**
Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax	**ANJALI DESROSIERS**
Cecily Cardew	**ROSALIND TREMBLAY-KERR**
Miss Prism, governess	**MAUREEN HALLOWAY**
Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D.	**GORDON PIKE-ELLERY**
Merriman, butler	**SAMUEL ADEYEMI-BROOKS**

Understudies

Jack, Algernon	**CALLUM NAKASHIMA**
Gwendolen, Cecily	**BEA LINDQVIST**
Lady Bracknell, Miss Prism	**RUTH OKONJO**
Lane, Merriman, Chasuble	**PIERRE GAUTHIER-NG**

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless an announcement is made at the time of the performance.

TIME & PLACE

Act I	**ALGERNON'S FLAT, LONDON**
Act II	**THE MANOR HOUSE GARDEN**
Act III	**THE MANOR HOUSE MORNING-ROOM**

The action takes place in 1895. There will be one 20-minute intermission, between Acts II and III.

CREATIVE TEAM

Director	**HELENA MARSH**
Set Designer	**TOBIAS WREN**
Costume Designer	**GERALDINE DITTRICH**
Lighting Designer	**KWAME ASANTE-LYLE**
Composer & Sound Designer	**MIRA SOKOLOVA**
Wig & Makeup Designer	**LUCIEN DUFRESNE**
Voice & Dialect Coach	**ELEANOR PRATT-HABIB**
Movement Director	**JAE-WON FERREIRA**
Assistant Director	**NOOR HADDAD**

Noor Haddad appears through the Robertson Hall Emerging Directors Program.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager	**PATRICIA LINDGREN**
Assistant Stage Manager	**OWEN CASTELLANO**
Apprentice Stage Manager	**KIRI WATENE**
Production Manager	**GRAHAM ODUYA**
Technical Director	**SASHA KOWALCZYK**
Head Carpenter	**ROB TESSIER**
Head of Lighting & Sound	**MARCUS BÉLANGER**
Head of Wardrobe	**AGNES BARROW**
Cutter	**MEI FONTAINE**
Props Supervisor	**DEV RAMAN**
Scenic Charge Artist	**LILA MONTAGUE**
Wig Running Crew	**CELESTE AMARI**
Run Crew	**JORDAN PRYCE, TAMSIN HOLT**

WHO'S WHO



Philippa Vane

Lady Bracknell

Philippa returns to Robertson Hall for her eleventh season, after Arkadina in *The Seagull* and Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*. Other credits include twelve seasons at the Lakeshore Festival and the national tour of *Blithe Spirit*. She has wanted to say "A handbag?" in public since 1979.



Julian Okafor Reid

Algernon Moncrieff

Julian trained at the National Theatre School in Montréal and was last seen here as Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Recent work includes *Private Lives* (Granite Rep) and the web series *Night Shift*. He ate eleven cucumber sandwiches at the first rehearsal and regrets nothing.



Theo Marchetti

John (Jack) Worthing

Theo makes his Robertson Hall debut. Favourite roles include Orlando in *As You Like It* (River Valley Shakespeare) and Konstantin in *The Seagull* (Aurora Stage). He is a graduate of MacEwan University's theatre arts program.



Anjali Desrosiers

Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax

Anjali was Hermia in last season's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Elsewhere: *Hedda Gabler* (title role, Lantern Rep) and *The Wolves* (Factory Lane). She is a founding member of the Strathcona Shakespeare Collective.



Rosalind Tremblay-Kerr

Cecily Cardew

Rosalind makes her professional debut after graduating from the University of Alberta's BFA Acting program this spring, where she played Viola in *Twelfth Night*. She keeps a diary, but would not dream of letting you read it.



Maureen Halloway

Miss Prism

Maureen has appeared in more than forty productions across the Prairies, including nine at Robertson Hall. She also teaches voice to the Emerging Artists cohort. She has never lost a handbag, and she would like that noted.



Gordon Pike-Ellery

Rev. Canon Chasuble

Gordon was Polonius in our 2024 *Hamlet* and Doc in *Come Back, Little Sheba*. A former high-school chemistry teacher, he began acting professionally at fifty and has not looked back.



Desmond Achterberg

Lane

Desmond returns after *The Lion in Winter* and *Noises Off*. He is also a fight director and has staged combat for six Robertson Hall productions, though nobody fights in this one. Probably.



Samuel Adeyemi Brooks

Merriman

Samuel is a second-year member of the Robertson Hall Emerging Artists program. Recent credits include *Fences* (Studio 4) and *The Crucible* (Riverdale Players).



Helena Marsh

Director

Helena has directed over thirty productions, including *The Rivals*, *Hay Fever* and *She Stoops to Conquer* for Robertson Hall. She was Associate Artistic Director of the Lakeshore Festival for six seasons and teaches comic text at the University of Alberta.



Tobias Wren

Set Designer

Tobias has designed sets for theatre, opera and dance across Canada and the UK, including *The Magic Flute* for Prairie Opera. For *Earnest* he built a London flat and a country garden that trade places in under four minutes, with help from our crew.



Geraldine Dittrich

Costume Designer

Geraldine's costumes have appeared in more than sixty productions. For *Earnest*, the wardrobe team built twenty-two costumes, nine hats and one deeply serious pair of gloves.



Kwame Asante Lyle

Lighting Designer

Kwame designs lighting for theatre, dance and concerts. Recent work includes *Fences* (Studio 4) and *Giselle* (Coastline Ballet). This is his fifth production at Robertson Hall.



Mira Sokolova

Composer & Sound Designer

Mira writes for theatre, film and the occasional string quartet. Her score for *Earnest* was recorded by a string quartet of local musicians.

OUR PARTNERS

Season Sponsor Ferris & Lowe LLP

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Robertson Hall Theatre is supported by the North Saskatchewan Arts Fund and by more than 900 individual donors.

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FROM OUR PARTNERS

Please support the businesses that support Robertson Hall.

PRE-THEATRE AT THE LINDEN ROOM

Dinner before the curtain.

Three courses, served from 5:00 and out the door by 7:10. Show tonight's ticket for a glass of something sparkling, on us.

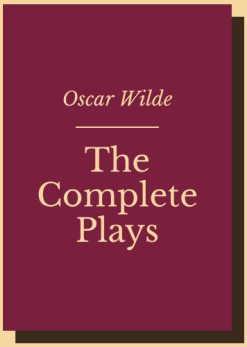
Around the corner on 97 Street · two minutes from Robertson Hall **lindenroom.example**

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Earnest about our community.

Riverbend members have kept the lights on at Robertson Hall for twelve seasons. Banking that stays in Edmonton.

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Rosalind, we have watched you on every stage since you were six. Tonight is the big one. Break a leg! — Mum, Dad and Grandma Jo	Thirty-eight seasons and still the best night out in Edmonton. Thank you, Robertson Hall. — The Robertson Hall Guild

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

This list recognizes gifts received between September 1, 2025 and October 15, 2026. Thank you.

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$10,000+

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Friends

$250 – $999

Thank you to the 412 Friends of Robertson Hall Theatre whose gifts this year paid for, among other things, every hat in this production.

ROBERTSON HALL THEATRE

Staff

Artistic Director	**RUTH CALLOWAY-AMES**
Executive Director	**DANIEL FERREIRA-HUNT**
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THANKS

Period furniture loaned by Rowan Antiques. Hats trimmed with help from the Edmonton Milliners' Guild. Cucumber sandwiches by The Linden Room. Rehearsal space generously provided by St. Brendan's Parish Hall, Old Strathcona.

Our thanks to the 63 volunteer ushers who greet you every night, and to the Robertson Hall Guild for keeping the lobby bar stocked.

AT ROBERTSON HALL

Bar The lobby bar opens one hour before curtain and during intermission.

Latecomers will be seated at a suitable break in the action.

Phones Please silence them now. Photography and recording are not permitted during the performance.

Lost something? Call the box office at 780-555-0147.

ACCESSIBILITY

Getting in Step-free entry is at the 97 Street doors, with an elevator to every level. Wheelchair spaces and companion seats are in rows D and K.

Hearing Assisted-listening headsets are free from the coat check. The captioned performance is marked under Performances.

Quiet room If you need a break, the Green Room off the north lobby is open throughout the show, with the performance relayed on a screen at low volume.

This program Tap *Display* at the top to enlarge the text, switch to high contrast or an easy-read font. Screen readers such as VoiceOver and TalkBack work throughout.

COMING NEXT

A Christmas Carol

Dec 16 – 31, 2026

Our holiday tradition returns for its twentieth year, with live music and a brand-new Scrooge.

Fences

Feb 3 – 21, 2027

August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama of a father, a family and a fence that won't stay finished.

The Comedy of Errors

Apr 14 – May 2, 2027

Two sets of twins, one very confused city, ninety minutes, no intermission.

Subscribers save 25% on every show. Ask at the box office during intermission.

PERFORMANCES

RUNNING TIME

About 2 hours 25 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission

PLEASE NOTE

Contains haze, a brief loud noise in Act Two, and an alarming quantity of cucumber sandwiches.

CONTENT DETAILS (MAY REVEAL PLOT POINTS)

Act Two: a gun is mentioned but never appears. A character is briefly (and loudly) declared dead; he is not. One cucumber sandwich is eaten in a manner some may find distressing.

NOVEMBER 2026

Tue	3	7:30 pm	PREVIEW
Wed	4	7:30 pm	OPENING NIGHT
Thu	5	7:30 pm	
Fri	6	7:30 pm	
Sat	7	2:00 pm	MATINÉE
Sat	7	7:30 pm	
Sun	8	2:00 pm	MATINÉE
Wed	11	7:30 pm	CAPTIONED · TALKBACK
Thu	12	7:30 pm	
Fri	13	7:30 pm	
Sat	14	2:00 pm	MATINÉE
Sat	14	7:30 pm	

Sun	15	2:00 pm	MATINÉE
Wed	18	7:30 pm	
Thu	19	7:30 pm	
Fri	20	7:30 pm	
Sat	21	2:00 pm	MATINÉE
Sat	21	7:30 pm	
Sun	22	2:00 pm	CLOSING NIGHT

The Importance of Being Earnest · Test

The living program, with tonight's curtain reminders, is online:

https://analytics.tooq.ca/handbill/earnest-demo

Please silence your phone before the performance.