

UMass Dartmouth Theatre Co. gets 'Earnest' on stage starting Thursday night

Based on Oscar Wilde's 1895 play, a tribute to the wit and words brought to life 120 years later.

By Jonathan Comey

"The Importance of Being Earnest," coming to the UMass Dartmouth Theatre Company stage beginning Thursday, April 6, has a lesser-known tagline in its title.

"A Trivial Comedy for Serious People," is how Oscar Wilde billed his play, first staged in 1895, but still as funny and universal as ever.

"Our productions are entertaining simply because we love what we do," said director Lyndon Davis, a junior biology major at UMass. "Our actors are some of the most dedicated people I have ever had the privilege of knowing."

A comedy of the absurd, "Earnest" relies on wordplay, humor and the confusion of young love. The show begins at 7 p.m. in UMass' main auditorium on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, \$10 at the door, \$5 for students (cash only).

The four main roles in this witty tale are Spencer Uguccione (as Jack Worthing) Lionel Lafleur (as best buddy Algernon Moncrief), Lisa Bontemps (as Cecily Cardew), and Madison Bailey (as Gwendolyn Fairfax).

It's a tricky play, with banter of a bygone age and so much relying on timing and delivery.

"They really understand every joke and clever easter egg hidden within the language, and have learned to use these to

their advantage,” Davis said. “They really get what Wilde meant. To watch the production for the first time without scripts was so special because the actors were so confident with their lines – it was no longer about the specific words they were saying but about what the language meant and how it felt.”

Davis and assistant director Tiffany Pinarreta credit the cast with mastering the difficult material and keeping the reading relevant 120 years after its first staging.

“All of our actors are simply people who are passionate enough about their art, and it definitely shows through their performances,” Davis said. “Most of the cast has been performing with our company for years. Not only are they seasoned actors with skills crafted throughout the years, they also know each other personally.”

He says the closeness of the cast shows on stage.

“We have been performing together for some time now, and throughout the years we’ve have grown comfortable and close with one and other. This is also the last TCO production for some of our senior actors which makes this show truly special. They are ending on a really high note and will be sorely missed by everyone in the company.”

Capturing the feel of Victorian life was the task of the tech crew, which used DIY ingenuity and creativity to design a beautiful set that sets the perfect mood.

“This is really like a family,” Davis said. “I think it shows on the stage.”

Next up for the UMD Theater Company is a variety show, hosted along with 20 Cent Fiction, featuring the talents of the UMass Dartmouth Community. While the show is free, they do accept donations for Relay for Life.

UMass Dartmouth's Theatre Company's production of "The Importance of Being Earnest"

Thursday, April 6, Friday, April 7 and Saturday, April 8, 7 p.m.

At the main auditorium at UMass Dartmouth.

Tickets can be purchased at the door with cash and are \$5 for UMASS students and \$10 for general admission.

Light concessions during intermission, cash only

UMD Theatre Company

Presents:

THE
IMPORTANCE
OF BEING
EARNEST

*\$5 UMD Students
\$10 General Admission*

April 6th @ 7pm

April 7th @ 7pm

April 8th @ 7pm

**Main
Auditorium**