

SPRING GROVE FRINGE – 2019

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN



BY OSCAR WILDE

Friday 17th May at 8.00 pm

Saturday 18th May at 7.30pm

St John's Parish Hall, Grove Lane, KT1 2SU

REG. CHARITY NO. 1150982

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

BY OSCAR WILDE
DIRECTED BY SANDY GAVSHON & NIGEL DUFFIN

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Parker	Scott Milligan
Lady Windermere	Karina Ramnarain
Lord Darlington	David Hamilton
Rosalie	Veronica Birley
Duchess of Berwick	Sarah Richardson
Lady Agatha	Olivia Boulton
Lord Windermere	John Hackett
Mr Dumby	Allan Lloyd
Lady Stutfield	Sandie Glenny
Lady Plymdale	Jo Need
Lady Jedburgh	Lynn Charlton
Mr Hopper	Nigel Bellwood
Lord Augustus	Laurie South
Cecil Graham	Matt Sexton
Mrs Erlynne	Daisy Jones
Musical Interlude	Janice Smith, Veronica Birley, Adrian Treloar

ACT I – Morning-room in Lord Windermere's, Carlton House Terrace

ACT II – Drawing-room in Lord Windermere's

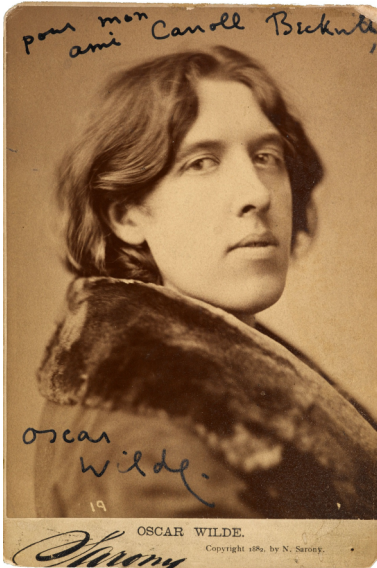
ACT III – Lord Darlington's rooms

ACT IV – Same as Act I

TIME – The 1890s

The action of the play takes place within twenty-four hours, beginning on a Tuesday afternoon at five o'clock, and ending the next day at 1.30 p.m.

'A PLAY ABOUT A GOOD WOMAN'



Oscar Wilde's first hit play, *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), is a hectic upper-class comedy, in which the tangled complexities of the plot are rivalled only by Wilde's sparkling and witty dialogue. Relating an enjoyably unlikely story of a wife who suspects her husband of having an affair, the drama was a hit on the London West End stage, and made Wilde rich. But despite its diamond-sharp one-liners, there is more to *Lady Windermere's Fan* than mere entertainment: it is above all a subtle social satire, particularly pointed about the hypocrisy of Victorian attitudes to women and sex. It has a meticulous construction and deft balance between comedy and seriousness.

By the early 1890s, it looked as if Wilde – then in his late 30s – might never have a successful career as a dramatist. Born in Dublin in 1854 and educated at the University of Oxford, Wilde spent his 20s as a freelance poet, lecturer, critic, and well-dressed man about town, yearning all the time to be taken seriously as a playwright. His first play, a tragedy called *Vera* (1881), failed when it was produced in New York; his second, a dour historical work in Shakespearian verse called *The Duchess of Padua*, was rejected by the actress who commissioned it. Despite receiving attention for his essays, and causing a scandalous success with his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) – there were calls for the work to be burnt because of its homosexual themes – it looked likely that theatrical success would elude him.



Lighting & Sound	Nigel Duffin
Stage Manager	Mark Springthorpe
Set Design	Gavin Dawson
Costumes	Sandy Gavshon
Props	Helen Dawson & Sandy Gavshon
Makeup	Suzanne Nail
Prompt	Janice Smith
Supper	Amanda Shaw, Jenny Robson, Mary Webb
Bar	Rod Gavshon

Eventually Wilde was persuaded to try his hand at comedy. He was interested by contemporary French drama, where plays full of social intrigues and unlikely plot twists were all the rage, and also read the wildly funny comedies of English dramatists of the late 1600s. Revealingly, he was also fascinated by the pioneering experiments in realist social drama being made by the contemporary Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen, and realised that – with a bit of work – some of Ibsen’s darkest themes could also work in a funnier key.

Wilde began work on the script during a summer visit in 1891 to the Lake District of northern England, which gave him many of the names in the play (Lake Windermere was nearby, while another character is named after the town of Darlington in County Durham). He continued refining the script through the rest of that year, sharpening its dialogue and polishing the plot.

Lady Windermere’s Fan seems at first glance like little more than a wonderfully enjoyable comedy, filled with characters who spend most of their time trading witty remarks. Yet the play is far more radical than it first appears. The Irish-born Wilde always had a sharp eye for the double standards of the English upper classes, particularly their attitudes to ‘respectability’ and virtue between the sexes, which permitted many men to behave exactly as they wanted (as long as their escapades took place behind closed doors), while condemning women as ‘fallen’ if they dared to step outside the bounds of conventional life or marriage.



Adapted from an article written by Andrew Dixon, at www.bl.com, under the Creative Commons licence.

OUR CHARITIES FOR THIS SHOW

Following this production, donations will be made to Kingston Food Bank and Shelter.



We don’t think anyone in our community should have to face going hungry. That’s why we provide three days’ nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to us in crisis. We are part of a nationwide network of foodbanks, supported by The Trussell Trust.



Shelter helps millions of people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through our advice, support and legal services. And we campaign to make sure that, one day, no one will have to turn to us for help.