



a n o n y m o u s t h e a t r e : t h e i m p o r t a n c e o f b e i n g e a r n e s t

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**Theatre Vertigo and The Cardboard Box Theatre Company Present
ANONYMOUS THEATRE: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**

Play: *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde
Directed by: Anonymous
Cast: Anonymous
Show Date: May 17
Show Time: 8:00PM
Ticket Info: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door
Reservations by Phone: 503.306.0870
Reservations by Internet: www.cardboardbox.org
Location: The Electric Company
2512 SE Gladstone

Description: On April 5, over 50 people auditioned for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a co-production of Theatre Vertigo and The Cardboard Box Theatre Company. However, this was no ordinary audition process, as **the outcome of the day's auditions will be kept secret...even from the cast itself. Cast members will know their role and their role only.** They will not be given the identity of their fellow cast members, and they will reveal their participation in the project to no one. Likewise, all those who auditioned will neither confirm nor deny their involvement in the project.

Cast members will rehearse individually with the director, meeting on the sly in basements and back alleys. On the night of the performance, the actors will arrive in street clothes and enter the theatre as if they are members of the audience. They will take seats in the house. They will read their programs, chat with their neighbors, and in all ways behave like normal audience members. The house lights will dim and the play will begin, each actor delivering their first line from their seat before entering the playing area. **All cast members will discover one another's identity for the first time on stage, in front of a live audience.**

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History of Anonymous Theatre

The Cardboard Box Theatre Company produced the first Anonymous Theatre project at Brown University with Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. The show excited and delighted the audience, and thrilled and terrified the actors. As one actress noted, "The time I spent on stage in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* was the most exciting experience I've ever had on stage. It was raw and horrifying and wonderful. It was the most alive I'd felt in a long time."

Soon after arriving in Portland, The Cardboard Box Theatre Company teamed up with Theatre Vertigo to plan a second Anonymous Theatre project, this time with Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

About Theatre Vertigo

Established in 1997, Theatre Vertigo is a not-for-profit, non-equity, ensemble theatre company presenting an annual season at The Electric Company, Portland's very own theatrical design laboratory. Under the artistic direction of Nanette Pettit, Theatre Vertigo continues to develop a challenging and diverse repertoire with a distinctly Northwest style, performing contemporary and premiere works that illuminate the human experience. Dedicated to attracting a new generation of theatergoers by presenting plays that are both timely and affordable, Theatre Vertigo accentuates the story's ability to speak through the performers, building an ever-close relationship with the audience.

For more information on Theatre Vertigo, please call 503.306.0870, or check us out on the web at <http://www.theatrevertigo.org>.

About The Cardboard Box Theatre Company

The Cardboard Box Theatre Company, founded at Brown University in the spring of 2000, is dedicated to the inclusion of the audience. The Company seeks to involve all audience members as active participants in a unique evening of theatre. Cardboard Box is also committed to a collaborative process. Artistic team members participate in all aspects of the production, including performance, direction, and design. Additionally, The Cardboard Box Theatre Company is totally excited about cake.

The Cardboard Box Theatre Company made Portland its home in September of 2002. For more information, please call 503.232.7667 or check out the website at <http://www.cardboardbox.org>.

About *The Importance of Being Earnest*

With *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), Irish-born Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) crafted his final and most lasting play – by all accounts, a masterpiece of modern comedy. A century later, it strikes a wonderful balance by remaining both a respected and studied piece of literature, as well as a favorite with audiences.

Filled with wit and wisdom, it tells the tale of Jack Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff. Both young men have taken to bending the truth in order to add a dash of excitement to their lives. Jack has invented an imaginary brother, Ernest, whom he uses as an excuse to escape from his dull home in the country and frolic in town. Algernon uses a similar technique, only in reverse; his imaginary friend, Bunbury, provides a convenient and frequent method of taking adventures in the country. Their deceptions eventually cross paths, however, resulting in a series of crises that threaten to spoil their romantic pursuits: Jack of his love Gwendolen Fairfax, and Algernon of his belle Cecily Cardew.

Wilde's other significant plays include *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *Salomé* (1894) and *An Ideal Husband* (1895). He also wrote poetry and short stories. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) was his only novel.