



**MEDIA ADVISORY  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT**  
Dayna Kalakau  
510.843.4042 x311  
dkalakau@auroratheatre.org

**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS  
OSCAR WILDE'S  
*THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*  
APRIL 12 - MAY 12 (OPENS: APRIL 18)**

**BERKELEY, CA (March XX, 2019)** Aurora Theatre Company continues its dynamic 27th season with an Aurora classic, Oscar Wilde's **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**. Newly announced incoming artistic director **Josh Costello** (*Eureka Day, The Heir Apparent, Detroit*) directs this uproarious farce about two young couples in the pursuit of love that upends social conventions with wildly subversive humor.

The cast features **Anna Ishida**, **Patrick Kelly Jones** (*The Heir Apparent, Detroit, Metamorphosis*), **Sharon Lockwood** (*Temple*), **Trish Mulholland** (*Salome, The Devil's Disciple, The Chairs*), **Gianna DiGregorio Rivera**, **Mohammad Shehata**, and **Michael Torres**.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST** runs April 12 - May 12 (**Opens: April 18**)

One of the funniest comedies ever scribed, Oscar Wilde's most popular play has entertained theatre-goers for over a century. Everyone is in love with Ernest, the irresistible bad boy of London society. The trouble is, Ernest doesn't exist. Oscar Wilde fills this uproarious farce with delicious bon mots, as two pairs of young lovers scramble to untangle their own web of lies and

win the approval of the imperious Lady Bracknell. Earnest is a wildly entertaining “trivial comedy for serious people,” that sparkles with dazzling wordplay and hilariously unlikely situations.

*The Telegraph* called **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST** “The most perfect comedy in the English language.”

Irish playwright **Oscar Wilde**, also known for his other works *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *An Ideal Husband*, was known for his portrayals of the human condition that made light of Britain’s wealthy and educated Victorian society.

**Josh Costello** directs this classic farce that that upends social conventions with wildly subversive humor. Literary manager and artistic associate at Aurora Theatre Company, where he previously directed *Eureka Day*, *Wittenberg*, *Detroit*, and *The Heir Apparent*. He received the Theatre Bay Area Award for Outstanding Direction for the world premiere of *Ideation* by Aaron Loeb at San Francisco Playhouse, which was named a New York Times Critics Pick when it transferred to 59E59 in New York. In January 2019 Costello was named Aurora’s next artistic director. He will assume the role in August.

Costello has assembled a talented cast for **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**.

**Anna Ishida** (Gwendolen) is thrilled to be making her Aurora debut. Her stage credits include The National Asian American Theatre Company and Leviathan Lab in New York City, and regionally, American Repertory Theater, Berkeley Rep, ACT, and TheatreWorks. Her film credits include “I Am a Ghost” and “Bitter Melon.”

**Patrick Kelly Jones** (Algernon) returns to Aurora (*The Heir Apparent*, *Detroit*, *Metamorphosis*). Other stage credits include TheatreWorks, Marin Theater Company, Cal Shakes, New York Classical Theatre, Denver Center, Great Lakes Theater, among others. He holds an MFA in Acting from Case Western Reserve University/Cleveland Playhouse.

**Sharon Lockwood** (Lady Bracknell) is happy to be back at Aurora (*Temple*). She has had a long association with Berkeley Rep and has performed extensively at ACT. Other Bay Area credits include Cal Shakes, TheatreWorks, Center REP, and many years with the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Other regional credits include La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, Seattle Rep, Milwaukee Rep, Arizona Theatre Company, Missouri Rep, and The Long Wharf. Last year Mulholland received the Theatre Bay Area Lifetime Achievement Award presented by Berkeley Rep's Artistic Director Tony Taccone.

**Trish Mulholland** (Miss Prism) is also happy to be back at Aurora (*Salome, The Devil's Disciple, The Chairs*). Other acting credits include ACT, SF Shakes, and Shotgun Players, where she is a core company member. A graduate of Australia's National Theatre Drama School, Mulholland was a top-rating, award-winning Melbourne radio host before settling in Berkeley

Bay Area actor and musician **Gianna DiGregorio Rivera** (Cecily) makes her Aurora debut this season. Her stage credits include Shotgun Players, California Shakes, Custom Made Theatre, UCSC Mainstage, Barnstorm, and Napa Valley College Theater.

**Mohammad Shehata** (Jack) also makes his Aurora debut. His recent credits include Seattle Rep, Capital Stage, SF Playhouse, Word for Word, Berkeley Rep, Magic Theater, Crowded Fire, and the SF Shakespeare Festival. He is a company member of the Ubuntu Theater Project, and 2017 he won Best Featured Actor at the Bay Area Critics' Circle Awards for his role as Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot*.

Also making his Aurora debut is **Michael Torres** (Chasuble). An award-winning actor, his acting credits include SF Playhouse, Shotgun Players, Crowded Fire, Word for Word, Berkeley Rep, Teatro Campesino, Cal Shakes, The Magic, TheatreFirst, among others. He is the co-founder of the Campo Santo Performance Ensemble and is the Chair of the Laney College Theatre Arts Department where he founded The Fusion Theatre Project. Michael holds a BA from San Francisco State and an MFA from the University of California at San Diego.

The creative team for **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST** includes **Nina Ball**--Set; **Maggie Whitaker**--Costumes; **Wen-Ling Liao**--Lighting; and **Chris Houston**--Sound.

### **CALENDAR EDITORS**

Aurora Theatre Company continues its dynamic 27th season with an Aurora classic, Oscar Wilde's **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**. Newly announced incoming artistic director **Josh Costello** (*Eureka Day, The Heir Apparent, Detroit*) directs this uproarious farce about two young couples in the pursuit of love that makes playful fun of Victorian traditions and customs.

The cast features **Anna Ishida**, **Patrick Kelly Jones** (*The Heir Apparent, Detroit, Metamorphosis*), **Sharon Lockwood** (Temple), **Trish Mulholland** (*Salome, The Devil's Disciple, The Chairs*), **Gianna DiGregorio Rivera**, **Mohammad Shehata**, and **Michael Torres**.

*The Telegraph* called **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST** “The most perfect comedy in the English language.”

**THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST** runs April 12 - May 12 (**Opens: April 18**)

**DATES**

**Previews:** Friday 4/12 and Saturday 4/13 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, 4/14 at 2 p.m. only.

Tuesday, 4/16 and Wednesday, 4/17 at 7 p.m.

**Open: April 18**

**Close: Sunday, May 12**

**Shows:** Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.

Sunday at 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

**WHERE** Aurora Theatre Company | 2081 Addison Street | Berkeley, CA

**TICKETS** For single tickets (\$35-\$70) or subscriptions (\$111-\$396), the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit **[www.auroratheatre.org](http://www.auroratheatre.org)**.

**PRE PRODUCTION IMAGES** <http://bit.ly/ActuallyEarnestPress>

**PRESS** **Please do not reply to this media advisory for review tickets. Press review invites will be sent to selected media.**

**ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY**

The Aurora Theatre Company is known for work that invigorates audiences and artists through a shared experience of professional, intimate theatre. Aurora challenges itself and the broader community to do better, think deeper, laugh louder and cast wider nets of empathy toward the world. Through its productions of both classic and new works, it supports the Bay Area community by hiring local artists and artisans. It has an operating budget of just over \$2 million.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Season Sponsors: Ed & Liliane Schneider. Sponsors: Ellen & Barry Levine, and Craig & Kathy Moody. Associate Sponsors: Anonymous, Dean Francis, Paul Templeton & Darrell

Louie, and Leah MacNeil.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the following foundations and government agencies for their support: Actors' Equity Foundation, Alameda County Arts Commission ARTSFUND, Berkeley Civic Arts Program & Civic Arts Commission, The Bernard Osher Foundation, Fleishhacker Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, MUFG Union Bank Foundation, Sam Mazza Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Theatre Bay Area, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Zellerbach Family Foundation.

###