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***The Importance of Being Earnest* takes the stage at  
The New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane  
*Oscar Wilde's comedic masterpiece opens July 11***

**NEW ORLEANS (June 26, 2015)** – Following a hit production of *Cymbeline*, the Festival will present Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, directed by Jessica Podewell and featuring some of New Orleans most well-known and talented actors.

Unequivocally one of the funniest satires ever written, *The Importance of Being Earnest* follows two bachelors leading double lives to court the attentions of the exquisitely desirable Gwendolyn Fairfax and Cecily Cardew. The gallants must grapple with the riotous consequences of their deceptions, and with the formidable Lady Bracknell.

Jessica Podewell, the show's director, is a New Orleans native and has directed and acted in theatres throughout Austin, Chicago, and New York. She recently starred in Southern Rep's hit *Detroit*, and appeared last year as *Quince* in the Festival's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ms. Podewell also directed the 2014 *All Things Shakespeare* Program for the Festival. She currently teaches in Tulane's Department of Theatre & Dance, and is the Literary Manager at Southern Rep. Jessica is a proud founding member of the children's theatre *The Patchwork Players*. A stellar actor and director in her own right, she also happens to be the daughter of Festival co-founder, the late Dr. Buzz Podewell.

The cast features veterans of the New Orleans theatre scene including James Bartelle, Associate Artistic Director of The NOLA Project, starring as Jack. Clare Moncrief will play Lady Bracknell. Ms. Moncrief has entertained audiences in New Orleans for more than 30 years, earning multiple awards and accolades for her work, including rave reviews for her recent Le Petit performance in the one-woman show *Golda's Balcony*. The entire cast can be found at <http://neworleansshakespeare.org/performers/>

*The Importance of Being Earnest* will run from July 11-25 in the Lupin Theater on the Tulane campus. 7:30 pm performances will be held on July 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, and 25. 1:30p matinees will be held on July 12, 19, and 25. General admission tickets are \$25. Discounts are available for students and seniors.

### **About The New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane**

The mission of the New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane is to produce professional, classical theatre with a primary focus upon the works of William Shakespeare. Our commitment is to utilize local, national, and international talent to create dynamic, visceral, text-based performances celebrating Shakespeare's brilliant insight into the human condition. With this programming we will provide to the people of the Gulf South, both entertainment and educational resources of the highest quality, honoring Shakespeare's legacy.

Founded in 1993 by several Tulane Faculty members, the Festival has become one of the most significant theatre companies in the Gulf South. Each season typically consists of two mainstage productions, an intern production, and various lagniappe events. Programming is also taken to schools in the greater New Orleans area to awaken new generations to the power of language and literacy through live, professional performances of Shakespeare's plays.

For more information, interviews, pictures and other graphics call Chaney Tullos at (504) 314-7788 or visit [neworleansshakespeare.org](http://neworleansshakespeare.org).

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