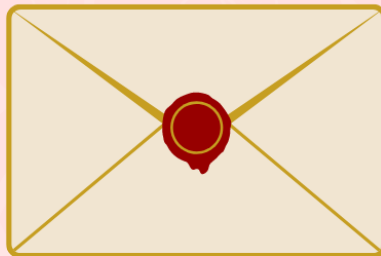


An Ideal Husband

By Oscar Wilde

Directed by Rosie Ward



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
KATHERINE G. MCGOVERN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
School of Theatre & Dance

Presents

AN IDEAL HUSBAND

Written by Oscar Wilde

Directed by Rosie Ward

October 23rd - October 25th at 8 p.m.

Costume Coordinator

JP Riddle

Sound Designer

Brandon Cho

Film Coordinator

Keith Houk

Dramaturg

Luke Evans

Stage Manager

Desiree Ruiloba

CAST

Mrs. Cheveley

Skye Bronfenbrenner

Gertrude Chiltern

Jordan Crow

Mabel Chiltern

Emma Bolduc

Lord Goring

Jack Gereski

Robert Chiltern

Spencer Dooley

Lord Caversly

Chandler Chastain

Phipps/Vicomte

Brandon Bravo

Mason

Lloyd Wayne Taylor

Lady Markby

Brenda Palestina

Countess Basildon

Rachel Bramlett

Mrs. Marchmont

Dominique Meyer

Reader

Graham Childers

Lady Markby/Mrs.

Karen Grentz

Marchmont/Countess Basildon US

Mason/Phipps/Vicomte US

Daniel Quintero

ARTISTIC STAFF

Production Stage Manager

Rachel Bush

Assistant Stage Manager

Emily Mordecai

Props Master

Lauren Davis

VALENTI SCHOOL COLLABORATORS

Emma Keller

Tiffany Smith

Summer Miller

Clarissa Zubia

ABOUT AN IDEAL HUSBAND

A marriage, a romance, a fortune and government policy all rest on one man's honor. This play examines blackmail and political corruption with wit and timeless sophistication that only Oscar Wilde can provide. Set in London, this scintillating drawing-room comedy will take you on a whirlwind of scandal, charm, ideals, and sparkling repartee.

DRAMATURGY NOTE

Living Up to an Ideal (Or Falling Into Ruin)

If you are a Twitter-user, you have probably, on occasion, had your day come to a temporary halt when you checked your phone, opened up Twitter and saw a hashtag concerning your favorite celebrity that said “#soandsoisover.” Even if the medium is unfamiliar, you have probably seen the same sentiment all over your timeline, your newsfeed, or from the lips of your gossiping peers. A celebrity says, posts, or tweets something wrong and they suddenly find themselves the subject of vicious news cycles and demeaning hashtags. Petitions are made to boycott their work. Sometimes we may think it is justified, but either way, it happens frequently, and has been happening long before the invention of Twitter - Jeremy Thorpe, Richard Nixon, Jordan Belfort, Oliver North, Monica Lewinsky, Martha Stewart, to name a few instances. The list goes on. Our society is well-acquainted with scandal. We build up celebrities to the point of idolatry, so that when they fall short of our expectations, we publicize, sensationalize, and demonize them. We #cancel them.

This would not have been an unfamiliar concept for Oscar Wilde. He may not have had the expediting power of social media and the nightly news, but word of mouth and the growing presence of newspapers were just as effective in taking private affairs and turning them into public sensations. Due to the harsh moral standards of Victorian Britain, these scandals had the power to decimate reputations and turn the most admired members of the aristocracy into persona non grata. In 1895, Wilde himself became the object of such ruin when he was arrested on charges of sodomy and gross indecency. The scandal took Britain by storm, taking a well-known and popular playwright and turning him into a pariah almost overnight. By the time Wilde was released from his two-year prison sentence, he was so unwelcome in London that he sailed for France and never looked back.

In light of these events, Wilde's penning of *An Ideal Husband* feels quite prophetic. The play depicts a man, renowned and honored in his field, whose entire life is upended when a mysterious interloper comes forward threatening to reveal damaging information about his past. The character in question is Sir Robert Chiltern, a baronet and successful politician well on his way to a seat in Parliament. Victorian Britain operated on a designated social hierarchy, and while a baronet did not rank as highly as an earl or duke, Sir Robert's status as a politician has allowed him to quickly climb the ladder and make a name for himself in London society. He is hailed as the picture of moral character, and is much beloved by his wife, sister, and friends. However, Wilde plays with the very notion of how Sir Robert's perceived morality clashes with his success when he introduces the character of Mrs. Cheveley, a twice-married opportunist who carries evidence of Sir Robert's illegal backroom dealings. As Mrs. Cheveley reveals, Sir Robert's entire career has been built off of a corrupt act, forcing Wilde's audience to contend with the idea that power and prestige cannot always be acquired legitimately, even with the best of intentions. Without the benefit of being born into the upper aristocracy, it is impossible for Sir Robert to make a life while remaining morally unblemished.

Wilde was in a similar position in early 1895 when the play premiered. His relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas was blooming, and it is this relationship that would ultimately lead to his outing and imprisonment. Douglas's father, the Marquess of Queensbury, was very opposed to the relationship, and argued with Wilde on several occasions. During one particularly fraught encounter in June 1894, Queensbury threatened to attack Wilde if he ever caught him and Douglas together in public again. Although Wilde, with straight spine and cocky smile, reported that his response was

equally hostile, later accounts suggest that the poet was more terrified than he let on. It was Queensbury's accusation that ultimately led to Wilde's arrest. Like Sir Robert, Wilde had worked his way up to become a paragon of his community (albeit they ran in very different circles), and like Sir Robert he lived with a sword hanging over his head, threatening to destroy all he had built.

All of these themes are set against the backdrop of London high society, where social class is paramount. Like most of Wilde's plays, *An Ideal Husband* explores how a setting with strict virtues and a shifting social landscape contributes to an undermining of morality - especially the morality that theatre of Wilde's time was expected to promote. He does it all with the trademark blend of sharp wit and biting satire that can only come from Oscar Wilde. Ultimately Wilde, with all his usual flair, asks: Is it possible to be forgiven for our past sins?

- Luke Evans, dramaturg
- Anthony Dalfonzo, associate dramaturg

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Rachel Bramlett (Countess Basildon) is excited to be a freshman theatre education major at the University of Houston. She is originally from Sulphur Springs, Texas where she was heavily involved in her high school theatre department and UIL. She has appeared in roles such as Nellie Bly in *Jules Verne Eats a Rhinoceros*, Morticia in *The Addams Family*, and Jean in *Emma's Child*.



Brandon Bravo (Phipps/Vicomte) is entering his senior year here at The University of Houston. His recent roles being Butt the Hoopoe in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Rode in *Three Sisters*, as well as Balthasar in *Romeo and Juliet* which unfortunately was interrupted by Covid-19. He is very excited to begin his last year here at UH and begin working towards his post-graduation goals. As always, he is very thankful for his family and friends for their tremendous support.



Skye Bronfenbrenner (Mrs. Cheveley) is happy to be back at UH for the second year of her MFA! She has a BFA in music theatre from UC Irvine and calls New York home in spite of being born in California. Professional work includes: *A Wonderful Life*, Fireside Theatre (Mary); *Shrek the Musical*, International Tour (Sugar Plum/US Fiona); *Guys and Dolls*, National Tour (Ensemble/US Sarah); and *Beauty and the Beast*, North American Tour (Ensemble/US Babette) as well as Theresa Rebeck's *The Nest* (Margo) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Lady Capulet) here at UH. Huge thanks to my friends, family, and Jesse for all of their incredible support!



Emma Bolduc (Mabel) is proud to be pursuing her acting BFA at UH School of Theatre and Dance. She is currently a sophomore and is absolutely thrilled to get to work alongside such amazing, talented people during these bizarre times! She gives her deepest thanks to her family, without whom she wouldn't have the privilege to participate in such lovely art.



Chandler Chastain (Lord Caversham) is a second-year student in The University of Houston's MFA Professional Actor Training Program. Chandler recently appeared in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* at UofH. His previous experience has been in regional musical theatre and as a musician/actor for amusement parks and entertainment groups. Chandler has a B.A. in theatrical studies from Ball State University and enjoys learning new instruments and playing scary video games. He has worked for The Grand Ole Opry, Sweetwater Sound, and is honored by your presence at this show!

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Graham Childers (Father/Wachtel) a freshman in the BFA acting program, is excited to debut in his first show at the University of Houston! Before attending UH, Graham has appeared as Schroeder in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, Tom Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie*, and Shrek in *SHREK the Musical*. Other credits include Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol* and Mal Beineke in *The Addams Family*. Graham has also worked professionally in the MATCH Theatre and in high school with various student-led projects. Great appreciation goes to the Childers family.



Jordan Crow (Lady Gertrude Chiltern) is a second-year graduate student in the Professional Actor Training Program. She is thrilled to be finding a way to keep theatre alive in this unprecedented time. Her previous roles include Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Irina in *Three Sisters*, and Cunningham in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*. Jordan received her BFA in acting from West Virginia University. She would like to thank her family and fellow second years for their love and support.



Spencer Dooley (Robert Chiltern) is a second Year MFA student in the UHPATP. As a first-year grad, he performed in *Ring Round the Moon* (Messerchmann) and *Spirits to Enforce* (Emory Lawson/Ariel). He has worked at numerous regional and local theatre companies in the Southwest since completing his BFA at the University of Arizona. His favorite roles include *Macbeth*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Algernon), *Opus* (Elliott), *Private Lives* (Elyot), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Benedick). He has also narrated for the Phoenix Symphony and is a founding company member of the Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival. Love and thanks go to his family and friends.



Jack Gereski (Lord Goring) is a second-year graduate student in the UH Professional Actor Training Program. Jack calls Lorton, Virginia home. Recent roles include Hugo/Frederic in *Ring Round the Moon*, The Bad Map in *Spirits to Enforce*, and Jamie in *The Last Five Years*. Jack received his B.A. from the University of Virginia. He would like to thank his friends and family for all of their love.



Karen Grentz (Lady Markby/Mrs. Marchmont/Countess Basildon US) is a senior Theatre Education major at The University of Houston. She spent this past summer staying busy teaching and directing Improv and Musical Theatre camps via Zoom for The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center (The JCC) in Houston. Karen was mostly recently seen in Circle Mirror Transformation (Theresa), a student directed show at the University of Houston. Her directing experience includes *Honk! Jr.* (The Rose Theatre) and *Peter Pan Jr.* (The JCC). She has interned as a Teaching Artist with The Omaha Theater Company at The Rose Theater (Omaha, Nebraska) and The Alley Theatre (Houston, Texas).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Dominique Meyer (Mrs. Marchmont) is a junior in the UH acting program. She has appeared virtually in the UH 10 Minute Play Festival as Marge, Amanda, and Megan. She has also appeared in *The Polar Express*, *Marie Aniontette*, and *Art of Dining*. She would like to thank her friends and family for all the love and support! Dominique is extremely excited to be a part of the UH family and can't wait to see where it takes her!



Brenda Palestina (Lady Markby) is a junior acting major at the University of Houston. She was most recently seen in Encore Theatre's production of *Anne and Emmett* (Anne). Before that, she was seen on the UH stage in the world premiere of *Old Black and White Hollywood* and *Three Sisters* (Anfisa). In her free time, Brenda likes to travel, eat lots of ice cream, and is really good at puzzles.



Daniel Quintero (Mason/Phipps/Vicomte US) is a freshman undergraduate student currently achieving his B.F.A. at UH. This is his first show at UH and he is very excited to finally be part of the program. Recently, Daniel has appeared in *Defying Gravity* as C.B., *Over the River and Through the Woods* as Frank, and *Tom Jones* as Fitzpatrick.



Lloyd Wayne Taylor (Mason) is a first-year graduate student in the UH Professional Actor Training Program. Originally from the Philippines, Lloyd moved to Texas to receive his B.A. from the University of Houston-Downtown. He has appeared in productions of *Hellcab*, *Almost, Maine*, *Lone Star*, and *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*. He is eternally grateful for his family, friends, and dog.



Rosie Ward (Director) is an Assistant Professor of Voice and Shakespeare at the University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance. Rosie has trained actors in voice and text at international conservatories, as well as American actor training programs. She holds a MA in Voice Studies from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London, an MFA from the Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Houston, and a BFA in Musical Theatre from Weber State University. Teaching credits include: The Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA), Northampton University (London), University of Houston, Brigham Young University; workshops and vocal coaching for American Players Theatre.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Keith Houk (Film Coordinator) has been making movies and visually telling stories since he was twelve. He has a Bachelor of Science in radio/television/film from Texas Christian University. Keith co-owned a film and video production company in Fort Worth and served as writer, director, editor and producer. Later, Keith left Fort Worth and returned to Houston where he earned a Master of Fine Arts in Photography from the University of Houston and began teaching in the Valenti School of Communication following graduation. Keith teaches courses in film history, screenwriting, editing, television production and film production. Keith is also on the board of the One Step Closer Foundation, a charity for people with Cerebral Palsy. He's very passionate about music and shoots a pretty mean game of pool.

JP Riddle (Costume Designer) is excited to be designing his first Zoom production and his first show at UH. Originally from Panama City Beach, Florida, JP is loving being in Texas and is ecstatic to be continue his education. Previous shows he has designed are *Urinetown the Musical*, *First Date*, and *The School for Scandal*. He received his BA in Theatre with an emphasis in Costume, Hair and Makeup at the University of West Florida.

Brandon Cho (Sound Designer) born and raised in Houston, is a transfer student at UH currently achieving his B.F.A in stage design. In recent years, Brandon was lucky to have the opportunity to work at The Ensemble Theater in shows such as *'Da Kink In My Hair*, *Too Heavy for Your Pocket*, *Pipeline*, *Josephine Tonight*, and *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*. While at Houston Community College, Brandon was able to create the sound design for The Corely Blackbox Theater's *Cell Phones and Other Distractions*.

Luke Evans (Dramaturg) is a first-year graduate student in the UH Theatre Studies program. A Georgia native, he received his B.A. in English and Theatre from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta. Luke got his start as a dramaturg as an intern at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre. He then served as a dramaturg for collegiate productions of *Spring Awakening*, *The Normal Heart*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Eurydice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Cabaret*. Luke is also a writer whose one-act play, *Pray On It*, was recently read at Atlanta's own Actor's Express. His novel, *The Earth Bound*, releases its second edition on October 13.

Desiree Ruiloba (Stage Manager) is a senior stage manager and is very excited to participating in developing forms of theatre this year. Previous works include *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, *Three Sisters*, *Small Mouth Sounds* and the Ten Minute Play Festival at the University of Houston. She has also stage managed with Stages Theatre on *The Ultimate Christmas Show: Abridged* and *Even Flowers Bloom in Hell* featured in the annual Sin Muros Play Festival.

Emily Mordecai (Assistant Stage Manager) is a sophomore in the B.F.A. stage management program in the UH School of Theatre & Dance. Her most recent credits include assistant stage managing both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Old Black and White Hollywood*. Emily would like to thank her dear family and friends for their constant support.

Anthony Dalfonzo (Associate Dramaturg) is a freshman playwrighting student.

PRODUCING TEAM

SCENE SHOP

Helayna Barber
Samantha Hernandez
Jaurius Norman
Sarah Specksgoor
Jami Aguirre

LIGHT AND SOUND CREW

Matthew DeBerardinis
Andrew Archer
Brandon Cho

COSTUME SHOP

Carlos Cantu
Chloe Sue Baker
Samuel Gonzalez

Construction Crew

Rachel Bramlett
Kyra Hamilton
Rory Lamberson
Kari Leija
Cortney Rogers

Electrics Crew

Madeline Moore
Brandon Sanders

Construction Crew

Paige Popovec
Audra Tackett

FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Robert Shimko Director of the School of Theatre & Dance

PRODUCTION AND DESIGN AREA

Kevin Rigdon (Head of Graduate Design)
Moore's Professor, Scenic and Lighting Design

Rachel R. Bush (Head of Stage Management)
Associate Professor, Stage Management

Casey Kearns (Head of Undergraduate
Production and Design)
Assistant Professor, Production and Design

Charles Gary Cooper
Assistant Professor, Theatre Education

Nicholas Jackson
Assistant Professor, Technical Direction

PLAYWRITING / DRAMATURGY

Dr. Robert Shimko (Program Head)
Associate Professor, Playwriting/Dramaturgy

Theresa Rebeck Lyndall Finley Wortham Chair in the
Performing Arts

Barbara Niederer
Associate Professor, Costume Technology

Claremarie Verheyen
Associate Professor, Makeup and Costume History

Steven W. Wallace
Professor, Production and Design

Paige A. Willson
Professor, Costume Design and Technology

Alison Christy
Instructor, Performance Studies

FACULTY AND STAFF

DANCE PROGRAM

Karen Stokes (Director of Dance Program)
Professor, Dance

John Beasant III
Assistant Professor, Dance

Theresa Lynn Chapman
Associate Professor, Dance

PERFORMANCE AREA

Adam Noble (Head of Performance Area)
Associate Professor, Acting and Movement

Jack Young (Head of M.F.A. Acting)
Professor, Acting

Jessica Ferrarone (Head of Summer M.A. Program)
Assistant Professor, Acting

ADJUNCT FACULTY, DANCE

Jacqueline Bobet
Adjunct Faculty, Dance

Riolama Lorenzo-Lasa
Adjunct Faculty, Dance

Firat Kazbek Özsoy
Adjunct Faculty, Dance

ADJUNCT FACULTY, THEATRE

Alan Brincks
Adjunct Faculty, theatre

Shelley Calene-Black
Adjunct Faculty, Theatre

Jon L. Egging
Adjunct Faculty, Theatre

Courtney Young
Adjunct Faculty, Theatre

FACULTY EMERITUS

Joanna Friesen
Professor Emeritus Dance

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Isaac Davis
Department Business Administrator

Lauren Davis
Scenic Artist/Properties Supervisor

Rebecca B. Valls
Associate Professor, Dance

Toni Valle
Professor of Practice, Dance

Jim Johnson
Professor, Voice, Speech and Dialects

Stuart Ostrow
Distinguished Professor of Musical Theatre

Rosie Ward
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Leslie Scates
Adjunct Faculty, Dance

Sophia L. Torres
Adjunct Faculty, Dance

Heidi Hinkel
Adjunct Faculty, Theatre

Sophia Watt
Adjunct Faculty, Theatre

Philip Kershaw
Adjunct Faculty, Theatre

Julian Waneck
Administrative Coordinator

Laura Whittenton
Costume Shop Supervisor

