

Running to Places Productions
presents

Oscar Wilde's

The Importance *of Being* Earnest

A Trivial Comedy for Serious People

February 22-24, 2008

Bevelery J Martin Elementary

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And the families and friends of the cast and crew for their support!

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I created Running to Places Productions to fill a vacant niche in this area – there are not enough opportunities for middle and high school kids to do theatre. My goal was to establish a means for young artists to get experience and training as performers, designers, technicians, stage managers, etc. without any barriers to entry – participation is free. Beyond any theatrical ambitions, Running to Places is also meant to be a way for kids from across the county to get to know each other, to build community and friendships that they might not have otherwise gotten the chance to. Our company currently consists of over 120 kids from every corner of Tompkins County and beyond. It's been amazing to see new connections form right in front of our eyes. The name "Running to Places" also alludes to this decentralized focus – *Importance of Being Earnest* being performed at BJM Elementary in downtown Ithaca; our next production, *Pirates of Penzance* – featuring middle schoolers from across the entire county, will be performed at Newfield High School.

Earnest is the only non-musical in our season. Beyond its undeniable theatrical and literary significance, brilliant writing, and timeless humor, we selected it to be a bit of a deviation from the normal high school show – small casts and non-musicals are not the typical offerings at schools. (Especially when school arts programs have dwindling budgets, thus the need to make room for as many roles as possible in a once-per-year production.) We want Running to Places to provide more opportunities and a wider range of them.

The Importance of Being Earnest is widely regarded as Oscar Wilde's best-loved comedy. It premiered in England in 1895 and is a story of love, mistaken identity, and honesty in high society. Wilde wrote this "comedy of manners" partly as a reaction against the "realistic" theatrical movement of the time; the concept of our production juxtaposes realistic and stylized elements. Here are some things to look for in the production: the beautifully designed costumes by Ithaca High School student Tigan Woolson are mostly period-accurate, but with slightly exaggerated details in color and accessories. The set, designed by Running to Places Productions Associate Artistic Director Gail Belokur integrates two-dimensional painted flats with three-dimensional elements that pop out of the walls. The acting, like the writing, has a self-aware quality at times – Wilde allows his "writer's voice" to come through, as if he was having too much fun to not join in the party onstage.

I'm also thrilled to be mounting this production in the theatre/library at Beverly J. Martin Elementary School. I think it's one of the best-kept secrets in the area. How many elementary schools do you know of that have theatre spaces with a gorgeous balcony? It is the perfect environment for this 100+ year old play as it instantly transports you to an elegant and literary setting. Take a moment to notice the detailed ornamentation around the proscenium arch (the frame over the stage) as well as around the windows. If you're seeing the show at the matinee, consider also how the daylight also brings you back to a time before theatre audiences became spoiled by the absolute control that modern electrical lighting instruments afford us.

The process of working on this particular show has been remarkable and unique. We took a gamble by super-compressing the production schedule relative to the typical high school show routine. *Earnest* was rehearsed in a little more than one week! This is not a simple show either – we didn't cut or change a single word. The remarkably talented, professional, and committed cast and crew have worked tirelessly to memorize and rehearse, build sets, and prepare costumes in record time. I'm incredibly impressed and proud of their work.



Joey Steinhagen
Founder and Artistic Director
Running to Places Productions



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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

ALGERNON MONCRIEFF'S FLAT IN HALF-MOON STREET

15-minute intermission: Refreshments and raffle tickets will be available.

ACT II

THE GARDEN AT THE MANOR HOUSE, WOOLTON.

5-minute intermission: Raffle tickets will be drawn for prizes.

ACT III

DRAWING-ROOM AT THE MANOR HOUSE, WOOLTON.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

John "Jack" Worthing Nathan Hilgartner
Algy Moncrieff Travis Jones
Lady Bracknell Eliza Vann
Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax Anya Gibian
Cecily Cardew Jennifer Kenkel
Miss Prism Lily Cedarbaum
Rev. Dr. Frederick Chasuble R. Dawson Baker
Lane Christopher Archer
Merriman Zak Seeley

ARTISTIC TEAM

Director Joey Steinhagen
Production Design Manager and Set Designer Gail Belokur
Costume Design Tigan Woolson
Sound Design Amy Fegely
Lighting Design William Sanders

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager Jessamyn Perlus
Assistant Director Rorie Dean
Technical Director Andrea Stewart
Run Crew Willem Weinstein, Rosa Bronthis
Assistant Scenic Paint Charge Alyssa Glaser
Paint Crew Gail Belokur, George Belokur, Kendra Wells,
Jenny Kenkel, Travis Jones, Theresa Gibian
Costumes Mentor Sarah Levine
Lighting and Sound Mentor Eric Yaple
Stage Management Mentor Molly Hennighausen
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Fame: Jan 18-27

Importance of Being Earnest: Feb 22-24

Pirates of Penzance: April 18-27

Spring Showcase: June 13-15

Sweet Charity: July 25-Aug 3

Damn Yankees: Aug 29-Sept 7



*Info & Subscriptions at
www.runningtoplaces.org*

DONORS

On behalf of the entire Running to Places Productions company, thank you to our donors. It's part of our mission to have no barriers to entry for all participants. We depend on donations from generous members of our community to keep participation free.

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In Memory of Gunther Grieshaber

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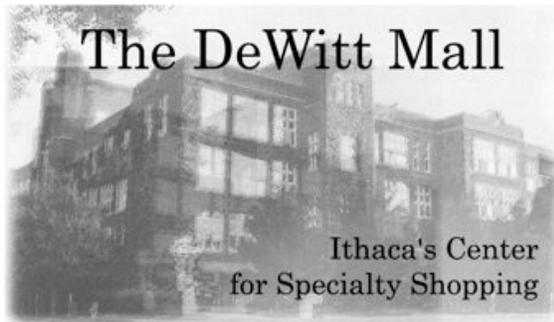
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RUNNING TO PLACES PRODUCTIONS ARTISTIC STAFF

Joey Steinhagen, Artistic Director and Director, has been teaching, acting in, and directing theatre for young people throughout Tompkins County since 1993. Joey has taught acting at Ithaca College, Cornell, SUNY Cortland, the Ithaca Youth Bureau, the Northern Lights Learning Center, and Hangar Theatre's Next Generation program. He is frequently seen at area elementary schools as an Artist in Residence or leading afterschool enrichment theatre programs. As an actor, Joey has appeared at the Kitchen Theatre (*The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow, Tony & the Soprano, Precious Nonsense, We Won't Pay!*) and Hangar Theatre (*Goldilocks: The Director's Cut*). His work as a director for young people includes Ithaca High School (*Titanic, My Favorite Year*), Dryden Middle School (*Jungle Book, Joseph...Dreamcoat, Pirates of Penzance, Fiddler on the Roof, Jr.*), Dryden High School (*Romeo & Juliet*), Dewitt Middle School (*Twelfth Night*), Boynton Middle School (*Once Upon a Mattress, Alice in Wonderland, Wind in the Willows*), and the Northern Lights Learning Center (*Grimm's Fairy Tales, Wind in the Willows*). Joey received his BFA in Acting from Ithaca College, and he lives in Newfield with his lovely and talented wife Erica, their dogs Jake and Harvey, and the littlest Steinhagen, Aram.

Gail Belokur, Associate Artistic Director and Production Manager, has worked with young people in the performing arts for over 20 years in Tioga, Broome, Delaware and Tompkins Counties. She has directed over 15 plays and musicals at the middle and high school level and served on the artistic staff for Binghamton University's Summer Youth Theatre Program. As founder and artistic/ managing director of the New Vine School of the Arts in Tioga County, Gail taught acting workshops, directed, and developed arts programs for theatre, dance, music and the visual arts. She has also designed and stage managed for dance studios and community theatre, as well as directed/toured with handbell choirs throughout New York, Pennsylvania, and Canada. An alum of Ithaca College's Theatre Arts program (BA Drama), she recently served as Assistant Director for their premier production of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and will serve as Production Stage Manager for their mainstage production, "Dance: No Translation Needed." Besides coordinating the four areas of design for Running to Places, she is also mentoring for stage management, tech, and design. Gail works full-time for Ithaca College and raises three teenage children in Candor with her husband, George. Her design work on this show is dedicated to her grandmother, Betty King, who taught her to always challenge herself artistically and have the courage to constantly try something new.

Ross Mizrahi, Musical Director, has been active in music in the Ithaca area for over 10 years. He has taught general music and chorus at Lansing and Dryden Middle Schools, and acted as Music Director for over 10 musicals at the middle and high school level. He was a founding member of the a cappella group Sons of Pitches, performing at sold-out venues, including three capacity crowds at Ithaca's Historic State Theatre. Ross wrote and arranged much of the Sons of Pitches music, and the group sold over 35,000 albums. They enjoyed years of performing in the greater Northeast, opening for groups like The Temptations, The Four Tops, Little Richard, and Orleans. He was also the Educational Coordinator for the group and led hundreds of workshops and assemblies in over 150 schools. Ross currently resides in Ithaca with his wife and frequent accompanist, Kerry, and teaches music at Parker Elementary School in Cortland.

Todd Peterson, Choreographer, has been performing and instructing professionally for over 20 years. A former Broadway performer, Todd was trained locally and in New York City. His instructional and choreographic genre include ballet, jazz, tap, modern, lyrical, and acrobatic forms of dance. While training and performing in NYC Todd attended the Henry Le Tang and Broadway Center for performing arts. Among his list of accomplishments, Todd is a previous Dance Educators of America Performing Arts Champion, featured dancer for the Miss Black America Pageant, Showcase performer for the Frank Hatchett, Gregory/Maurice Hines Dance Center in Springfield Massachusetts, director/choreographer for The Peace Child Foundation's production of "City of Peace under the mentorship of Shakespeare in the Park creator Arthur Lithgow. Todd was ranked 5th nationally in men's solo baton twirling at Americas Youth on Parade in South Bend Indiana. While attending America's Youth on Parade he also was ranked #2 in the international Drum Major Contest. Todd is an inductee in the Twirlers Hall of Fame. He also opened for the Bob Hope thanks for the Memories tour in Utica New York. Locally he was the co-founder/director of Ithaca's Thunderbolt Parade and Show Corp, co-founder of the Boynton Theatre Project, Dance instructor for CSMA, and SUNY Cortland. Todd has choreographed for SUNY Cortland, Cornell University, Boynton and Dewitt Middle Schools, and Ithaca High School. Currently, Todd is an Educator with the Ithaca City School District as well as the proud director of the Ithaca Youth Bureau's Stewart Park Day Camp.



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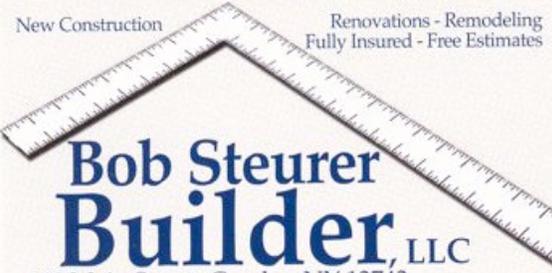
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CAST BIOS

Christopher Archer (Lane) is a sophomore at Ithaca High School, and has previously been in the Boyton Middle School productions of *The Canterbury Tales* (Geoffery Chaucer), and *The Wizard of Oz* (Prof. Marvel/The Wizard). Chris also swims for IHS and loves math and science. He also enjoys debating, or arguing as the case may be, about forms of government and current events.

R. Dawson Baker (Rev. Chasuble) is a junior at Ithaca High School. He enjoys composing all sorts of music, especially fusions of various genres. He is absolutely galvanized at the prospect of performing in a 7th theater production. His previous credits include Gryphon in *Alice in Wonderland*, Borachio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Fleance in *Macbeth*, Mr. Scheinkopf in *Fame*, and Dull/Nathaniel in *Love's Labours Lost*. His second album, *Laser Hare Removal*, contains 18 songs, which he composed between December of 2006 and December of 2007. If you are reading this and might want a sample, log onto the tubes and go to his artist website at <http://www.myspace.com/dawsonbaker>.

Lily Cedarbaum (Miss Prism) Lily is a senior at Ithaca High School and is looking forward to going to college at Barnard in New York City this autumn. She has performed in plays throughout the community, including at the Hangar Theatre, Kitchen Theatre, and at Riskey Theatre in Cornell. She is Artistic Director of Orange Tree Theatre Company and also stage managed and sound designed its most recent show *Literally Literary*. She'd like to thank her favorite parents Barbara and David; they're pretty special people. Lily would also like to thank the cast and crew for being awesome and Joey for choosing a show she has wanted to be a part of for a very long time.

Anya Gibian (Gwendolen Fairfax) Anya is a senior at LACS and does not know what she will be doing next year, but she hopes to get into college. She has been seen in *Fame* with Running To Places, in the ensemble, and as Mrs. Potts in *Beauty and the Beast* at Ithaca High School. Anya is currently rehearsing *Into The Woods* at IHS as the Witch, and will be in *Sweet Charity* this July with R2P. Anya would like to thank her family for being supportive, and Joey for understanding her odd sense of humor. She would also like to extend her love to all that merit it in the world; je vous aime, te quiero muchísimo!

Nathan Hilgartner (Jack Worthing) is a sophomore at Ithaca High School and is very happy to be making his Running to Places debut as Jack! Recent appearances include *Love's Labours Lost* (Berowne) and *Macbeth* (Macbeth) with Shakespeare in the Basement, *Beauty and the Beast* (Cogsworth) at Ithaca High School, and *The Odyssey: Part II* (Echolopolus) at the Kitchen Theatre. In April he will play Rapunzel's Prince in IHS's production of *Into the Woods*; and this spring he will appear as Mercutio in Shakespeare in the Basement's production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Nathan also writes plays; this past fall, *Adventure in Apartment G#*, a play he co-authored with Rachel Lampert, was produced at the Kitchen Theatre.

Travis Jones (Algernon) Travis B. Jones loves stuffing as many activities into a day as humanly possible, most of them involving theater. An IHS junior, he is a Michigan transplant who's performed in seventeen school, community, and professional productions since moving to upstate NY in the fall of 2003. He recently appeared as Lumière, in Ithaca High's *Beauty and the Beast*; The Prince in *The Frog Prince* with the Hangar Theatre; and as Harold Hill in *The Music Man* at Boynton. He is extremely proud to be a founding member of Shakespeare in the Basement, having performed with this youth-run troupe in all five previous productions, and will co-direct with Rorie Dean the upcoming production of *Romeo and Juliet* in June. He's known for jumping off of tables at great heights and dancing with the local belle femmes. When he's out of dance shoes and make-up you can find him swimming on the IHS Varsity team or singing with the Ithaca Young Men's ensemble. You might also hear him, alongside Anya Gibian, as a radio host on WICB's long running "Best of Broadway". Travis also likes to juggle things, particularly his impossible schedule. Travis is looking forward to turning sixteen soon so that he can relieve his family of their chauffeur duties. He would like to thank his family, friends, as well as Joey for providing him with more ways to fill up his life.

Jennifer Kenkel (Cecily Cardew) Jennifer Kenkel (Cecily) is a junior at Ithaca High School. Recent roles include the Princess in Shakespeare in the Basement's *Love's Labour's Lost*, Faith in *columbinus* at the Wedge, and Hero in Shakespeare in the Basement's *Much Ado About Nothing*. She would like to give many thanks to her fabulous and affable parents, and to her lovely friends, without whom she would be completely lost.

Zak Seeley (Merriman) is a junior at Candor High School, where he has appeared as "The Coroner" in *The Wizard of Oz*, "Buffalo Bill Cody" in *Annie Get Your Gun*, "Captain Jennings" in *The Lady Pirates of Captain Bree* and is currently in rehearsals for *Fiddler* as "Perchik." He has also appeared as "Charlie Brown" with New Vine Productions. Zak would like to say "Break a leg" and thanks to Gail and Joey for this amazing opportunity of being in a non-musical production!

Eliza Vann (Lady Bracknell) is a junior at Trumansburg High School. She has been in many shows, including "Ruth" in *Pirates of Penzance* at Trumansburg HS, "Detective" in *Clue: The Musical* for In Between the Lakes Community Service Players, and "ensemble" in *Fame* for Running to Places. Many thanks to her parents for allowing the madness to perpetuate and to Joey for trusting her last-minute. Oh, and a shout-out to Sally Bea in Brazil! Tchou!

PRODUCTION TEAM BIOS

Amy Fegely (Sound) is a junior at Ithaca High School. She is the stage manager at her school and has sound designed various shows at IHS and for RTP. Over the summer, she has been a production apprentice at the Hangar Theatre.

Will Sanders (Lighting) is in 8th grade at Dryden Middle School. He previously was the light board op for *Fame* as part of Running to places. He would like to thank his brother for getting him involved in theatre and his family for all their support.

Jessamyn Perlus (Stage Manager) is currently a senior at the Lehman Alternative Community School. She has been working in the theatre since 7th grade, doing various stage management, design, and coffee making jobs. She has assisted with 20 productions at the Kitchen Theatre, including *Tony and the Soprano*, *The Drunken City* and all the Playwriting Marathons. Jessamyn has also worked on over 20 other shows including *The Hobbit* at the Hangar Theatre, *A Chorus Line* at the State Theatre, various school musicals, and, most recently, *Fame* with Running to Places. She is excited to be a part of this great new theatre company again and says "Thanks" to all the people that made it happen.

Molly Hennighausen (Stage Management Mentor) is very eager to be working on Running To Places' premiere season with an amazing group of people! Her previous experience includes: Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, MA-*Island of Slaves*-Studio Festival 2007 (SM), *Scapin* 2007(ASM), *Shakespeare and the Language That Shaped A World* 2007(ASM), *Scenes From An Execution*- Studio Festival 2006 (SM), *Servant of Two Masters* 2006(ASM), *Preludes* 2006 (ASM); Kitchen Theatre in Ithaca, NY-*Odyssey Part Two* 2007 (SM), *My Darkest Secret*(SM); The Public Theatre in Lewiston, ME- *Bad Dates* 2006 (ASM), *A Month of Sundays* 2006(ASM), *Fiction* 2006 (ASM); Ithaca College Main Stage in Ithaca, NY- *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* 2007(SM), *The Seagull* 2006 (SM), *Dancing at Lughnasa* 2005 (ASM). Molly received her B.A. in Drama from Ithaca College. Thanks to everybody working on this production for all of their hard work!

Eric Yapple (Lighting and Sound Mentor) is a junior at Ithaca College working towards a BFA in Theatre Production Technology. He worked as an electrician for the Hangar Theatre for 5 years and still participates in local high school theatre. This is his second R2P production and he is looking forward to his third R2P production.

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Running to Places Productions Mission Statement

Running to Places Productions provides area youth with theatrical opportunities in which they are the primary artists and technicians, advancing knowledge in their respective crafts through the support of professional mentors. We are committed to making theatre more accessible to teens, and will do so by holding productions in a variety of locations with no mandatory fees.



SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION

Become a sponsor and make a big difference.

We're looking for businesses that would like to show their support for the work of Running to Places Productions by becoming sponsors. Not only will you help keep participation in the company free and open to all middle and high school students, but also you will let your community know what you believe in. Customers and clients will show their appreciation with their business, and we will show ours in our publicity and through sponsorship perks like season passes to use for yourself or as a gift.

The details:

Each of the big musicals runs for 6 performances – Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday matinee for two consecutive weekends. Earnest and the Showcase run for one weekend each. That makes a total of 30 performances from beginning to end. High school musicals typically sell 400-800 seats per show. If we sell 400 tickets per performance, we will have an audience of 12,000 over the season.

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Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

– from Lady Windermere's Fan

All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.

– from The Picture of Dorian Gray

As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.

– from The Critic as Artist

Men marry because they are tired; women because they are curious. Both are disappointed.

– from A Woman of No Importance

The only thing that sustains one through life is the consciousness of the immense inferiority of everybody else, and this is a feeling that I have always cultivated.

– from The Remarkable Rocket

All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy.

– from The Importance of Being Earnest

I can resist everything except temptation.

– from Lady Windermere's Fan

Pleasure is Nature's test, her sign of approval. When man is happy, he is in harmony with himself and his environment.

– from The Soul of Man Under Socialism

Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.

– from Aristotle at Afternoon Tea

When people agree with me I always feel that I must be wrong.

– from The Critic as Artist

To get back my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early, or be respectable.

– from The Picture of Dorian Gray

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing.
– from The Soul of Man Under Socialism

There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.
– from The Picture of Dorian Gray

The difference between literature and journalism is that journalism is unreadable and literature is not read.
– from The Critic as Artist

All charming people, I fancy, are spoiled. It is the secret of their attraction.
– from The Portrait of Mr. W.H.

A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.
– from The Critic as Artist

All great ideas are dangerous.
– from De Profundis

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