



# TAPROOT THEATRE

C O M P A N Y



## BETWEEN THE LINES

Taproot Theatre Company's  
Subscription Newsletter

Volume 26, Issue 3

## BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

Phone:  
206.781.9707

Email:  
box@taproottheatre.org

Box Office Hours:  
Tuesday - Saturday,  
Noon - 5 pm

On performance days,  
the box office phone  
is answered until  
30 minutes  
prior to show time.

Tickets always  
available online at  
taproottheatre.org

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## Oscar Wilde's classic comedy

### *Lady Windermere's Fan* plays at Taproot Theatre

*Lady Windermere's Fan*, Oscar Wilde's enduring comedy about a good woman and her fan, features **Maya Burton** (Taproot Theatre's *A Civil War Christmas*) in the title role of Lady Windermere, **Richard Nguyen Sloniker** (Seattle Shakespeare Company's *The Merchant of Venice*) as her counterpart, Lord Windermere and **Nikki Visel** (Taproot Theatre's *Room Service*) as Mrs. Erylne. The talented cast is directed by Taproot's Associate Artistic Director, **Karen Lund**.

The cast also features **Laura Lee Caudill** (Taproot's *Room Service*) as Lady Agatha Carlisle, **Rebecca M. Davis** (Seattle Public Theatre's *Vanishing Point*) as the Duchess of Berwick, **Melanie Hampton** (Taproot's *Room Service*) as Lady Plymdale/Rosalie, **Frank Lawler** (Taproot's *Busman's Honeymoon*) as Mr. Dumby, **Kim Morris** (Taproot's *Room Service*) as Lady Jedburgh, **Conner Neddersen** (Wooden O's *Much Ado About Nothing*) as Mr. Cecil Graham, **Nolan Palmer** (Taproot's *Busman's Honeymoon*) as Lord Augustus Lorton, **Tyler Trerise** (Taproot's *A Civil War Christmas*) as Lord Darlington and **Brad Walker** (Taproot's *Busman's Honeymoon*) as Mr. Hopper.

The production team includes **Marianne Savell** (Tidewater Stage's *The Christians*), assistant director; **Mark Lund** (Taproot's *Crowns*), scenic and sound design; **Jocelyne Fowler** (Taproot's *A Civil War Christmas*), costume design; **Kent Cabbage** (Taproot's *A Civil War Christmas*), lighting design; **Michelle Rodriguez** (Taproot's *Busman's Honeymoon*), stage manager; **Anthea Carns** (Taproot's *The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge*), dramaturg and **Ben Wippel** (Taproot's *Persuasion*), dialect coach.

Following *Lady Windermere's Fan* is the West Coast Premiere of *Sweet Land*, playing July 11 – August 18, 2018. Karen Lund will return to direct following her success with 2017's *Persuasion*.

## PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Previews: May 16 & 17 at 7:30pm | Opening: May 18 at 8:00pm

Running: May 16 - June 23 | PWYC: May 23 at 7:30pm

Show Times: Wed & Thur, 7:30 pm; Fri & Sat, 8:00 pm; Sat Matinee, 2:00 pm

Running Time: Approximately 2 hours  
including one 15-minute intermission

*Lady Windermere's Fan* is recommended for ages 12 and above.  
Children under 5 are never admitted.

## Actor Spotlight: Brad Walker



Brad Walker plays Mr. Hopper in *Lady Windermere's Fan* at Taproot Theatre.

### Should you show up early, on time, or late to a party?

I think showing up early can throw the host off. When I host, I'm often preparing right up until the start time, so I think anywhere from on time to about 20 minutes late is ideal; anything more than that and the host may think no one is coming.

### At a party, where can you be found?

Hovering around the food and trying to find the other nerds to talk to.

### Would you rather host a party or be the guest of honor?

I would much rather host the party. I hate to go to my own birthday party, for example, because I hate to be the center of attention. I'd rather host and just make sure everyone is having a great time.

### If you got to host a party, what would the theme be?

I often host Dungeons and Dragons parties, where we have drinks, snacks and goofy table top adventures – what more could you want?

### What's the fanciest party you've ever been to?

I work part time for an improv murder mystery company where we do interactive games for private parties and corporate events. I've gone to some pretty swanky holiday parties in my time, but as an actor, not an invited guest.

### What makes you laugh?

I like goofy banter, internet memes, silly voices and dad jokes.

### What dream roles are on your bucket list?

My ultimate dream role has always been Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors*, but I have already been lucky enough to play the role in three different productions. As far as roles I have yet to play, I would like to someday age into playing Felix Ungar in *The Odd Couple*, or take a shot at Finch in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.

### What makes you most excited about being in *Lady Windermere's Fan*?

Empathy and the concept that not everyone is as they seem on the surface are some of the major themes of the play; themes that are an important reminder to us nowadays, especially in these difficult, divided times. It is always fun to be in fancy old-timey outfits too, of course!

### What's the best piece of advice you've been given, theatrical or otherwise?

Never forget to stop and listen; really listen. This is both useful on stage and off for so many reasons.

### Why should people see this show?

This story is filled with many strong female characters, which is something we absolutely need more of in our current media. We have gathered together a very talented, diverse cast too, and it's also just plain funny!

### What are you *Wilde* about?

#### Book:

*Dracula* by Bram Stoker  
(Just read it for the first time!)

#### Video Game:

*Overwatch*

#### Podcast:

*The Adventure Zone*

#### TV Show:

*Bob's Burgers*

#### Go-to Karaoke Song:

*Crazy Little Thing Called Love*  
by Queen

#### Favorite Tea-Time Snack:

Parmesan flavored  
Goldfish crackers

## Oscar Wilde and the Comedy of Manners

**Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)** is most famous for his work as a comedic playwright in the early 1890s. His four most popular plays *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1891), *A Woman of No Importance* (1892), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) are all classic examples for a style of comedy known as Comedy of Manners. In plays of this style, the plot is often secondary and the action is primarily concerned with whether or not the characters live up to certain, and sometimes arbitrary, social standards. Wilde is considered by many to be the greatest Comedy of Manners playwright of his time.

In England, the roots for the Comedy of Manners style grew from a sense of rebellion against the extreme morality of Oliver Cromwell's Puritanical English Commonwealth government, which took control of England in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century. Cromwell (1599-1658) banned the monarchy, executed King Charles I, imposed strict religious moral laws, and frowned upon excessive recreational activities like the theatre; which he closed entirely during his rule.

With the restoration of the crown in 1660, the theatres were reopened, and the newly crowned King Charles II (1630-1685) encouraged a low, bawdy sense of humor, which, coupled with a sense of release from Cromwell's extreme morality, created a style of satirical comedy that mocked morality in general. Similar styles of comedy began to spring up in other parts of Europe around the same time. Notably, famed French playwright Molière (1622-1673; *Tartuffe*) shifted his focus from tragedy to satirical comedy.

Over time, as English society matured and became more sophisticated, the comedies, likewise, became more refined. By the time of Oscar Wilde, in the 1890s, Comedy of Manners had more to do with the silly hypocrisies of wealth and class. Wilde's light and witty comedies were an opportunity for the moneyed elites of London society (the people most likely to be able to afford a night at the theatre) to have a laugh at their own stuffy seriousness and dignified propriety.

Oscar Wilde became a celebrity and one of the most successful playwrights in London. However, at the height of his popularity, Wilde's life took a dark and tragic turn. The father of Lord Alfred Douglas publicly accused Wilde of having an illicit affair with his son. Wilde sued for libel and lost, thus legally proving that the accusations were true. He was arrested for gross indecency and sentenced to two years of hard labor. After his release, Wilde's health and morale quickly deteriorated and he died in 1900 at the age of 46.



Oscar Wilde (1854—1900)



Pam Nolte and Charity Parenzini in Taproot Theatre's 2007 production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



Anne Kennedy Brady and Aaron Lamb in Taproot Theatre's 2011 production of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*.

## Production Spotlight: Ben Wippel



Ben Wippel coached dialect for *Lady Windermere's Fan* at Taproot Theatre.

### How do you become a dialect coach?

First, you have to become familiar with the different parts of your mouth and throat and how it all works together. It's important to study IPA (the International Phonetic Alphabet) so you have a way to visualize sounds. Then you start listening to how people across the world speak, taking note of sound patterns, melodies, slang, and physical attributes, and try to imitate them. It takes a lot of in-depth research and practice.

### What dialects do you coach?

Anything really, though some of the most difficult have been Persian, Norse and French.

### Can you give us a rundown of what you do?

Researching a dialect involves a lot of studying people, listening to how they speak, reading about the history of an accent or dialect, and forming all of your research into a comprehensible lesson plan. When rehearsal starts, I usually teach a short class on how to speak a dialect: when to use certain sounds, what to do with your mouth, going over melodies, rhythms, and physical changes. Then I coach actors individually as rehearsal continues, giving notes when we run the show.

### You've coached dialect for *Cotton Patch Gospel*, *Big Fish* and more recently, the world premiere of *Persuasion* – are there other shows you've worked on around town?

Aside from performing, I've also coached for Village Kidstage on *Beauty and the Beast*, for the fantasy web series *Chaldea*, and I occasionally teach classes at Cornish College of the Arts. I'm also starting to vocal coach at Jack Straw Cultural Center.

### What dialects will we hear in *Lady Windermere's Fan*?

Standard British, with one Australian accent (one of my favorites).

### What will the dialects tell us about the characters in *Lady Windermere's Fan*?

Dialects can tell us a character's social status, where they're from, their personality, or their physical quirks. The Standard British accent (also known as RP, or Received Pronunciation) is a social accent, having been established by the British upper classes around the late 19th century as the proper way to speak, at least for anyone who wanted to climb the social ladder.

### Taproot audiences know you best as Charlie Brown, having played the role for three years in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. What about that show keeps you coming back year and year?

Many of my friends know that I have a self-deprecating sense of humor, so I feel comfortable being put down constantly in front of an audience, but it's a fun show that doesn't feel like work because all of the people involved are so close and supportive, like a family.

### Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Whenever you feel down or bored, go see theater. Even if it seems like nothing interests you, take a chance and see something new.

## What are you *Wilde* about?

**Song:**  
*Killing Time 2.0*  
by Duncan Sheik  
(from *American Psycho*)

**Musical:**  
*Follies* by Stephen Sondheim

**Play:**  
*Angels in America*  
by Tony Kushner

**Book:**  
*The Hound of the Baskervilles*  
by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

**TV Show:**  
*Bob's Burgers*

## Christmas is Coming Earlier This Year!

With the sun and fun of summer just around the corner, we know you have just one question on your mind:

### What's happening for Christmas?

We'll announce the show soon—and as a subscriber, you'll be the first to know! We're also changing when tickets go on sale.

For your planning, here are the pertinent dates for you to know:

- **JULY 2:** Christmas tickets available for pre-order for 2018 Subscribers.
- **JULY 30:** Group Pre-Sale Week begins.
- **AUG 6:** Christmas tickets on sale to the public.



The cast of Taproot Theatre's 2017 production of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Photo by Eric Stuhaug.

## Casting Change



**Faith Bennett Russell**, who had previously been announced in the role of Mrs. Erlynne, has had to leave to the show due to unforeseen circumstances. Don't worry, we're sure you'll see her back on our stage soon. In her place, veteran Taproot actor **Nikki Visel** will step into the role.

Visel previously played the role of Mrs. Chevely in our production of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* in 2011. More recently, you've seen her in Taproot's productions of *Room Service*, *The God Game*, *Silent Sky*, *The Odyssey*, *Enchanted April* and *Shadowlands*.

## Subscriber Rewards Spotlight: Spring into better health!



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## Save the Date: Subscriber Sneak Peek: July 30

# SAVE THE DATE

**Taproot Theatre's 2019 Jewell Mainstage Subscriber Sneak Peek event is**

**Monday, July 30!**

- Watch some of your favorite Taproot actors read excerpts from the 2019 Jewell Mainstage Season.
- Be among the first to renew your subscription.
- Receive 1 complimentary voucher for each 5-Play subscription you renew at the event.

**This exclusive preview event, only for 2018 Season Subscribers is popular and fills up quickly!**

**Keep a sharp eye out for your invitation, coming at the end of June!**