

AN OSCAR WILDE'S IDEAL HUSBAND



Education Mini-Pack

16 JULY – 18 AUGUST

Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse

About the Play

Successful politician Sir Robert Chiltern has it all – money, power and the love of his adoring wife. But when a mysterious character threatens to expose a dark secret from his past, he becomes hopelessly embroiled in a world of insider trading, blackmail and deception.

About the Playwright

Born in 1854 in Dublin, Wilde was the son of an ear surgeon and a poet. Wilde sailed for America in 1881 on a successful lecture tour celebrating art for art's sake. He married Constance Lloyd in 1884, and the couple raised two sons in London. Wilde wrote widely, including journalism, critical essays and short stories. Wilde's only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, was first published in 1890. The following decade saw Wilde's maturity and success as a playwright, with productions of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* mocking and delighting high society audiences. Wilde's private life became a public scandal in 1895 when he was arrested on charges of 'gross indecency' for his relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas, nicknamed Bosie. Wilde was sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour, and later died from meningitis in 1900.

Attendance Information

Contains sexual references. For detailed information, please visit www.mtc.com.au/production-content-guide



Turn the page for activities, and discussions.

Cast

Sir Robert Chiltern Simon Gleeson
Lord Goring Brent Hill
Nanjac / Butler / James Joseph Lai
Mrs Marchmont Jem Lai
Miss Mabel Chiltern Michelle Lim Davidson
The Earl of Caversham William McInnes
Lady Chiltern Zindzi Okenyo
Mason / Mr Montford / Phipps Josh Price
Lady Markby Gina Riley
Lady Basildon Greta Sherriff
Mrs Cheveley Christie Whelan Browne

Production

Director Dean Bryant
Set & Costume Designer Dale Ferguson
Lighting Designer Matt Scott
Composer & Sound Designer Mathew Frank
Voice & Dialect Coach Leith McPherson
Assistant Director Ellen Simpson
Assistant Costume Designer Sophie Woodward
Directorial Secondment Angelica Clunes
Stage Manager Christine Bennett
Deputy Stage Manager Whitney McNamara
Assistant Stage Manager Lisette Drew
Stage Management Secondment Rachel Nagy
Rehearsal Photographer Deryk McAlpin
Production Photographer Jeff Busby

Genre

Classic comedy

Running Time

Appx. 2hrs 20min including interval

Before the show



Read the About the Play section overleaf, and then watch the In Rehearsal video for *An Ideal Husband* at [youtube.com/melbtheatreco](https://www.youtube.com/melbtheatreco). Make a list of predictions about what you might see and hear on stage.



Download the show programme at mtc.com.au/backstage to read more about the playwright, Oscar Wilde. Research his other plays such as *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Discuss the context within which he wrote these plays, and what relevance they have to contemporary society.

Read the Q&A article at mtc.com.au/backstage where actor Zindzi Okenyo discusses playing Lady Chiltern. What insight does Okenyo provide about the themes of the play?



View the rehearsal gallery at mtc.com.au/backstage and make a list of props you can see. Read the Meet the Cast article to learn more about the actors featured in this production, and where you may have seen them before.

Post-show Activities



Many themes in *An Ideal Husband* relate to a woman's societal standing. Lord Goring claims, 'A man's life is of more value than a woman's.' What do you think Wilde is trying to say here?

Download the show programme at mtc.com.au/backstage to have a look at some of Dale Ferguson's costume designs for *An Ideal Husband*. How do the costumes communicate character?

Write an epilogue to the play in the same style as Wilde, and then perform it with your classmates. Alternatively, write an additional scene that describes some offstage action that could occur during the play.



Read the Q&A article at mtc.com.au/backstage where actor Michelle Lim Davidson discusses playing Miss Mabel Chiltern. Discuss Lim Davidson's comments about her character's line, which is also the title of the play.

Do you think the themes of blackmail and political corruption are still relevant in 2018? Identify some recent events to support your argument.

An Ideal Husband makes use of doubling and tripling (actors playing multiple characters). What stagecraft elements (e.g. costumes, wigs) were used to transform these actors?

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Peoples of the Boon Wurrung, the Traditional Owners of the land on which Southbank Theatre and MTC HQ stand, and we pay our respects to Melbourne's First Peoples, to their ancestors and Elders, and to our shared future.



@melbtheatreco #mtcIdealHusband



MTC Education

MTC is a department of the University of Melbourne



CREATIVE VICTORIA

MTC MELBOURNE
THEATRE
COMPANY