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### **Wilde's Searing Wit Skewers Social Conventions in TAM's *A Woman of No Importance***

**Monmouth, Maine** – Season 45 continues at Theater at Monmouth with Oscar Wilde's deliciously witty satire, *A Woman of No Importance*, opening Friday, July 18 at 7:30 p.m. Fraught with epigrams and pithy sentiments, *A Woman of No Importance* probes the societal hypocrisy of punishing women for the sin of passion while lauding men for their conquest. Surely the basis for *Downton Abbey*, Wilde's dark comedy lays bare the moral contradictions of Victorian England.

A flamboyant, well-known personality in his day, Oscar Wilde's "witticisms, liberally skewering late-Victorian society and innumerable unfortunate individuals, were his calling card," according to director Will Rhys. Rhys, a former Artistic Director at The Cleveland Playhouse, joins TAM for his third season. Rhys believes that Wilde's own words speak volumes about his character, "At a reception he reportedly greeted someone with the biting line: 'Oh I'm so glad you've come! There are a hundred things I want not to say to you.'"

An upper-class house party is in full swing at Lady Hunstanton's country estate when witty, seductive Lord Illingworth announces that he has hired Gerald Arbuthnot as his new secretary. Gerald's mother, Lady Arbuthnot, protests the arrangement, but cannot reveal why without confessing her secret past. When the truth is revealed, will Gerald choose social advancement or loyalty of the heart?

*A Woman of No Importance* features Wendy Way as Lady Pontefract; Anna Doyle as Hester Worsley; Mark S. Cartier as Sir Pontefract; Janis Stevens as Lady Hunstanton; Turner Frankosky as Francis/Farquhar; Leighton Samuels as Gerald Arbuthnot; Lisa Woods as Mrs. Allonby; Lindsay Tornquist as Lady Stutfield; Bill Van Horn as Mr. Kelvil; James Noel Hoban as Lord Illingworth; Will Harrell as Lord Alfred Rufford; Denise Cormier as Mrs. Arbuthnot; and Erica Murphy as Alice. Set design by Michael Reidy, costumes by Caitlin Cisek, lights by Cecilia Durbin, and sound by Rew Tippin.

Performance Calendar: PREVIEW 7/17 at 7:30 p.m.; OPENING 7/18 at 7:30 p.m.; additional performance dates 7/19, 7/23, 8/13, 8/23 at 7:30 p.m.; 8/3, 8/6, 8/16 at 1:00 p.m.; 7/27 at 7:00 p.m. with post-show talk-back. Ticket prices \$10-\$30. Discounts available for groups of 10 or more. For calendar and reservations, please contact the TAM Box Office at 207.933.9999 or visit [www.theateratmonmouth.org](http://www.theateratmonmouth.org).

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Theater at Monmouth, founded in 1970, was named the Shakespearean Theater of Maine by the State Legislature in 1975. The theatre's mission is to present innovative approaches to Shakespeare and other classic plays through professional productions that enrich the lives of people throughout Maine. Since its founding, TAM has produced expertly crafted, engaging productions in its three-month Summer Repertory Season entertaining audiences from 36 states and through Education Tours annually reaching more than 15,000 students statewide.

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