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An 'Ideal' Mix of Wit and Deceit at Town Hall Theatre

By Kara Navolio



Heather Kellogg, DC Scarpelli and Dana Lewenthal in "An Ideal Husband" by Oscar Wilde, June 1-June 24 at Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette. Photo Stu Selland

Political corruption, hypocrisy, secrets, and witty humor blend perfectly in Lafayette Town Hall Theatre's production of Oscar Wilde's "An Ideal Husband," running June 3-24, with previews June 1 and 2.

Although the play is set in 1895 London, the themes could not be more relevant today. Director Susan Hovey states, "The topic is timeless. There is political intrigue and scandal, but the show does not hit you over the head with it. It's scathingly witty and thoroughly entertaining at the same time. I've always been a fan of Wilde's pithy epigrams."

Wilde's most famous play is "The Importance of Being Earnest." However "An Ideal Husband" was chosen by Artistic Director Susan Evans for its social commentary which still seems so modern and its grit. Evans added, "Director Susan Hovey has added a modern element to the show by using contemporary music between the scenes as a nod to the very modern message from a play written in the late Victorian period."

The show, which premiered in 1895 and was revived many times, most notably on Broadway in 1996 and locally at CalShakes in 2008, poses the question: Is it possible to have an ideal husband? While scandal unfolds, each character learns that we all have flaws and secrets. In the end what really matters is love.

The show features well-known local performers: Dennis Markham as Sir Robert Chiltern, Heather Kellogg as Lady Chiltern, DC Scarpelli as Lord Goring, Dana Lewenthal as Mrs. Cheveley, and Amanda Leigh as Mabel Chiltern. The design team has created an authentic turn-of-the-century set and costumes.

Several special events are planned for the show's run. On June 3, "A Wilde Opening Night" celebration will take place. June 11 audience members are encouraged to wear costumes and come for "A Wilde Tea Party" following the show. On June 17, literary consultant Katie Zeigler has lined up local authors to discuss the topic of "sin" at "A Wilde Salon Night" before the evening performance (costumes encouraged). All special events will feature small culinary bites by R?ve Bistro. In addition, on June 9 and 23 there will be post-show Talk-Balk with the actors.

Tickets and more information are available at www.townhalltheatre.com or (925) 283-1557.

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