

**The Cayman Drama Society presents**



# **The Importance of Being Earnest**

**By Oscar Wilde**

**A classic Comedy reinvented**

**Dates: 10th-12th  
18th-19th  
24th-26th June 2010**

**Time: 7.30pm**

**Matinee: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at 3.30pm**

**Venue: Prospect Playhouse, Red Bay**

**Ticket: \$20 Box Office: 949-5054**

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# Chairman's Message



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Prospect Playhouse, and our production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

With *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde created one of the most delightful and memorable social comedies. It is a comedy of manners that satirized Victorian etiquette and customs, but with a light, witty style that was absolutely unforgettable. Our director, Nick Dereza, has reinvented this classic comedy and brought it into a more modern era, losing nothing of Wilde's original wit in the process.

The Cayman Drama Society presented its very first play at the Town Hall, George Town, in October 1970; today, forty years later and with over 130 plays under our collective belt, we are delighted to still be bringing dramatic entertainment to the Cayman Islands. We now have an active youth wing of the Society, to encourage young people to get involved with all aspects of theatre and to keep the Society alive as it enters its fifth decade.

I do hope you enjoy this evening's entertainment.

Penny Phillips, Chairman 2010

During a lazy summers evening last year, myself and Donna McCarthy fantasized about putting on this play. Being one of the funniest plays ever written, we thought that it would be great fun and the Cayman audience would enjoy its immense silliness. So I then put the idea forward to Trish Peart at CFP and asked if she would consider sponsoring the play. She was delighted as this is her favourite play! I then approached Nick Dereza and so it began...

Philippa Clark, Assistant Director

We would particularly like to thank Trish Peart and Brian Uzzel at Cayman Free Press for kindly sponsoring 'The Importance of Being Earnest'

# Director's Notes

Hello and welcome to our performance of 'The Importance of Being Earnest' at this little gem of a theatre. Oscar Wilde originally described his final and most enduring play as, "A Trivial Comedy for Serious People", which I still believe holds true. He fills the play's glass with cutting social observations, adds some satirical blows and shakes with quick witted putdowns. Just pour in some ice and a slice of vitamin C and you have a timeless play to quench your thirst. I really hope that you enjoy our flamboyant reinvention of this 19<sup>th</sup> century classic. We have doubled the original cast and hopefully made it more accessible to a contemporary audience rather than just sitting on our laurels and presenting a 'Comedy of Manners'.

I love the fact that we have a multi-cultural cast for this quintessentially English play. They have worked brilliantly as an ensemble especially considering the fact that for many this is their first time acting with the CDS. We have six butlers rather than just the one and their roles are no less important than the lovesick main characters.

The play is concerned with the necessity of being oneself in order to achieve your desires. It is a play of invention, imagination, deception, masquerade and revelation, brimming with jokes and farcical situations. Although the play makes fun of everyone and everything, it doesn't have a mean bone in its body.

Therefore, sit back, relax and we hope that you do not see too much of yourself in these wonderful stylized characters.

I would like to thank the cast and all those that have helped for their excitement about what we were trying to do and for all their efforts to make this into a slick and fast paced production.



*"The truth is rarely pure and never simple." Algernon Moncrieff*

# Production Ideas

I was inspired by a particular quote from Mr Wilde, "To get back my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early, or be respectable." This reminded me of how the two central characters Jack and Algernon behave. They are portrayed as two hopeless boys who have not grown up, living a life of deceit or in debt. However, love may just change their fortunes, or destroy them both.



The 'world of the play' is ostentatiously artificial and although much of the characters' actions are unbelievable, we have tried to give the play a timeless truth. Each scene has a

swagger to a cocktail lounge soundtrack to enhance the dynamism of the action. Take note when you see the afternoon scene between Gwendolen and Cecily.

The ladies in the show are the ones really pulling the strings. There were not many playwrights like Wilde giving the girls such meaty parts. It was rare to find a play where two women would hold six pages of a scene together. Lady Bracknell usurps the role of the father in interviewing Jack, since typically this was a patriarchal task, whilst Gwendolen and Cecily take charge of their own romantic lives as the men stand by watching in a relatively passive role.

*"It is terrible thing for a man to discover that he's been telling the truth all his life" Jack Worthing*

# The Playwright



Oscar Wilde, celebrated playwright and literary provocateur, was born in Dublin on October 16, 1854. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin and Magdalen College, Oxford before settling in London. During his university days, he developed a set of attitudes and postures for which he would eventually become famous. Chief among these were his flamboyant style of dress, his contempt for conventional values, and his belief in aestheticism—a movement that embraced the principle of art for the sake of beauty

and beauty alone. In 1884, he married Constance Lloyd; Wilde's writing career was still a work in progress.

During the late 1880s, Wilde wrote reviews, edited a women's magazine and published a volume of poetry and one of children's stories. In 1891, his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, was attacked as scandalous and immoral. *An Ideal Husband* opened in January 1895, but it was *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which opened a month later, that is regarded by many as Oscar Wilde's masterpiece.

When finally the darling of London society, Wilde was tried a second time, convicted, and sentenced to prison for two years. Wilde served his full sentence under conditions of utmost hardship and cruelty. Following his release from prison, his health and spirit broken, he sought exile in France, where he lived out the last two years of his life in poverty and obscurity under an assumed name. He died in Paris in 1900.

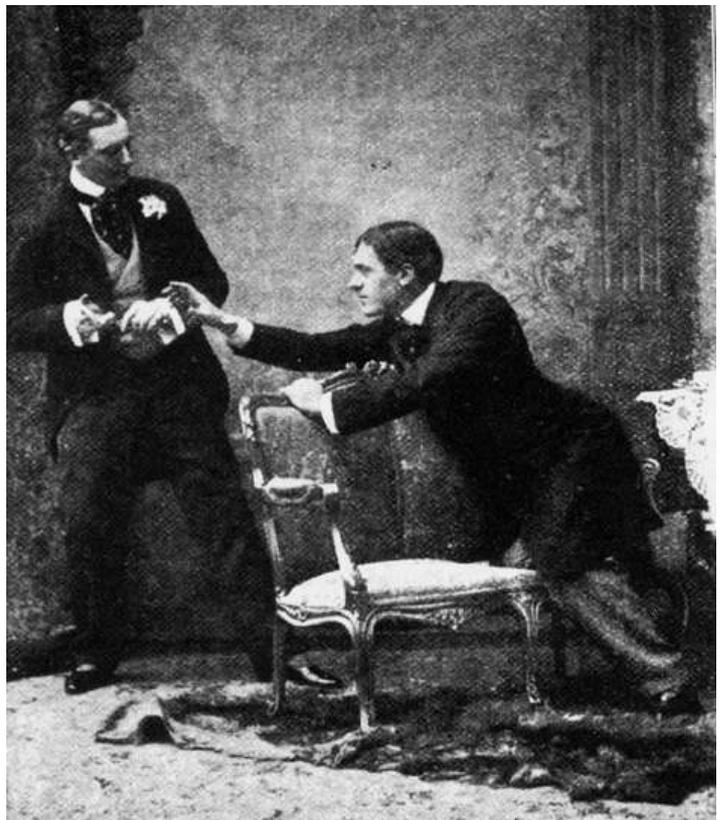
"An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, *as the case may be.*" Lady Bracknell

# The Play

*The Importance of Being Earnest* was written during the Summer of 1894 in Worthing, England. It premiered at St. James' Theatre, London, on St. Valentine's Day 1895. Allan Aynesworth, who played Algernon, recalled that, "In my fifty-three years of acting, I never remember a greater triumph than that first night."

Wilde's genre of choice was the Victorian melodrama, or 'sentimental comedy'. However, Wilde introduced a new character to this field, the figure of the 'dandy' (a man who pays excessive attention to his appearance). This figure added a moral texture the form had never before possessed. This self-styled philosopher ridicules the hypocrisy of society's moral arbiters, yet presents himself as trivial, shallow and ineffectual. Wilde's notoriety caused the play, despite its success, to be closed after only 83 performances. He never wrote another play.

Below the surface of this light, brittle comedy is a serious subtext that takes aim at Victorian society obsessed with a rigid body of rules. What Wilde envisages as truly moral, is really the opposite of earnestness: irreverence.



*"If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy."* Cecily Cardew

# The Design



Earnest presents the dilemma of three acts with no natural interval and two complicated scenes changes. Firstly, it starts in a lush drawing room in central London, then to the English countryside before returning inside a second time. So it seemed more magical to transform the set in front of the audience incorporating the cast. The Prospect Theatre has such a lovely depth to it which we wanted to emphasise on stage. Our design has a timeless feel rather than focusing on one particular period as Oscar Wilde was looking to bold future.

However, we do have Art Nouveau impulses throughout the play which were popular at the beginning of the

20th Century. We emulated the concept of having organic forms and nature spilling over into each scene. Influences include Gustav Klimt, Charles Rennie Macintosh and Aubrey Beardsley.

Walking into an Art Nouveau interior is like entering a fantasy; it elicits a smile, and a sense of escape from reality. Colours in the Art Nouveau interior seem luminescent; intense pastels like lilac,mauve and indigo enhance the effect of a room enveloped in pattern.



*"All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his." Algernon Moncrieff*

# Fashion...turn to the left...

For men, sharply tailored morning suits and silk cravats were in vogue, hats and gloves were worn at all times when outdoors. Light-coloured flannel suits became increasingly fashionable during the 1890s, worn especially during the summer months.

Female clothing of the 1890s tended to fall into two categories: tailored suits and ball dresses reflecting the way of life for the upper classes. For these women, the period was dominated by 'leg of mutton' sleeves and



"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."  
MISS IRENE VANBRUGH AS HON. GWENDOLEN FAIRFAX.  
ALFRED ELLIS  
20, UPPER BAKER STREET  
LONDON, N.W.

the growth of the flared skirt which grew to its widest extent in 1895 when they were known as 'the bell', 'the fan' and 'the umbrella skirt'. In an essay on costume of the period James Laver remarks, "It is impossible to put a photograph of a fashionable woman of 1895 beside a photograph of a lamp of the same period without being struck by their close resemblance in every detail. The unmistakable sweep of the Art Nouveau line was completely parallel in the dresses of the time, in particular by the fall and swirl of the skirt."

*"In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing."  
Gwendolen Fairfax*

# Synopsis

The play is about the friendship of two society bachelors: Jack Worthing and Algernon (Algy) Moncrieff. In order to play away from home the men have invented fictitious characters to explain their absences. Jack, away from the country, introduces himself as Ernest to Gwendolen Fairfax, daughter of the formidable Lady Bracknell. His subsequent proposal to Gwendolen is rejected by Lady Bracknell because he is of no social standing. Jack was an orphan, left as a baby in a handbag at Victoria Station. This hardly satisfies Lady Bracknell's requirements for a son-in-law of suitable parentage. Alternatively, Algy goes to the country, also pretending to be a fictitious Ernest, where he meets and woos Jack's ward, Cecily Cardew. Both Gwendolen and Cecily capriciously insist that they can only love someone called Ernest which leads to all kinds of difficulties.



## Scenes

### **Act 1 July in the City.**

It is Midday in the Morning Room of a flat owned by Algernon Moncrieff in Half-Moon Street, London.

### **Act 2 The next day out in the country.**

The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire.

### **Act 3 2 minutes 48 seconds later in the country.**

A Morning Room, Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire.

# The Cast

Algernon Moncrieff.....Adam Cockerill  
Jack Worthing.....Dan Twist  
Lady Bracknell.....Kate Bowing  
Gwendolyn Fairfax.....Julia Fazakerly  
Cecily Cardew.....Hannah Cook  
Miss Prism.....Gabrielle Wheaton  
Reverend Chasuble.....Neville Smith  
Lane / Merriman.....Philippa Clark  
Vijay Singhera  
Ranu Pande  
Stephanie Lewis  
Tamarra Bryan  
Hannah Cook

There will be a 20 minute interval. Refreshments are available in the bar.

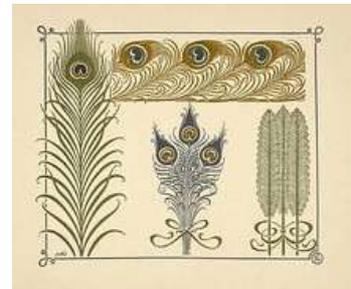
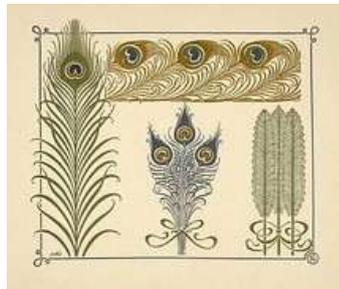


*"Whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid" Cecily Cardew*

# The Production Crew

Set Designer	Nick Dereza
Set Consultants	Chris Mann / Caroline Hamilton
Set Construction	Peter Pasold / Paul Defreitas / Hamish Hamilton
Set Decoration	Chris Mann / Caroline Hamilton / Martin Tedd / Kirsty Barber / Kelly Irmén / Emma Roberts / Alf Collovray / Donna McCarthy / Laura Greig / Paola Juarez / Craig Robinson / Susan Huxtable / Rachel Klein / Ranu Pande / Diane Bourgeois / Rhiannon Garland / Paul Wilcockson / Clare Lazenby / John O'Brien

Costume & Props	The Cast
Stage Manager	Donna McCarthy
Lighting	Helen Godfrey
Lighting Set Up	Doug Marnoch
Sound	Nick Dereza
Programme and Poster	Nick Dereza / Susan Huxtable / Craig Robinson
Bar	Phil Pace
Producer	Donna McCarthy
Assistant Director	Philippa Clark
Director	Nick Dereza



*"You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter -- a girl brought up with the utmost care-- to marry into a cloak-room and form an alliance with a parcel" Lady Bracknell*



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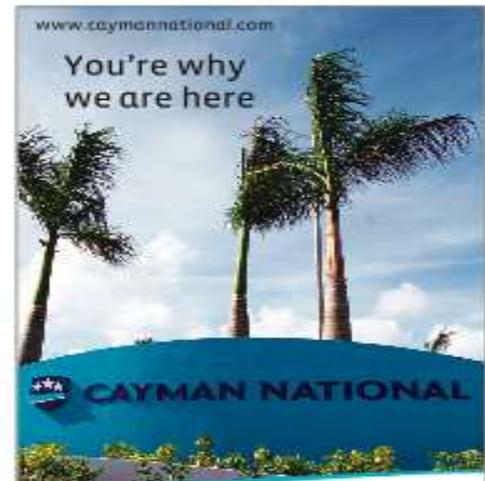
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# Cast Biographies

## **KATE BOWING (LADY BRACKNELL)**

My first performance with the Cayman Drama Society was as a village child in Jack in the Bean Stalk, however now I seem to be relegated to playing "old bats" of one sort or another. In between, I have been Polly in the 'Fawlty Towers' series, Angie in 'Abigail's Party' and part of the chorus in various musicals. My indulgence is warm chocolate croissants. Summer reminds me of rain at Wimbledon and sitting outside at the pub on the day(s) that it isn't raining.



## **TAMARRA BRYAN (BUTLER)**

I have been a member of the Cayman Drama Society since November 2009 however my role as a Butler in Nick Dereza's production "The Importance of Being Ernest" will be my first time on the big stage. My love for acting, dancing and singing will hopefully help me to acquire roles in future productions. Summer reminds me of warm days at the beach with friends.



## **PHILIPPA CLARK (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR / BUTLER)**

I trained in performing arts in the UK and recently attended a short course at RADA. When not at work as a busy recruiter for Personnel 2000, I am at home running around after two young kids. I am most happy being back on stage at CDS! My indulgence is chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate. Summer reminds me of Pimms and Strawberries.



### **ADAM COCKERILL (ALGERNON)**

I toured London Schools for 1 year in Romeo & Juliet (2000), performed for 3 months in Camden, performed in Grenada, Spain, and St. Petersburg, Russia. I showcased short film, Love Triangle, at the Co-op Film Festival in Manchester (2006) and have performed in numerous other plays and short films.

My indulgence is having fun.

Summer in England reminds me of spending lazy days in green fields with friends, the smell of freshly cut grass, and pints of cider in pub gardens.



### **HANNAH COOK (CECILY/ BUTLER)**

I am vocational dance trained and performed in various school performances, clubs and local opera companies. I performed at Derby playhouse in an original play touring local schools and festivals. I was a resident audio describer for Nottingham playhouse for two years. I am now a conceptual artist and designer in Grand Cayman.

My indulgence is flowing champagne and dark chocolate!

Summer in England for me is the countryside, green open fields, flowers and bees, distant tractors bailing hay, Wimbeldon and fresh raspberries picked straight from the vine at my parents home.



### **NICK DEREZA (DIRECTOR AND SET DESIGNER)**

I have directed close to a 100 plays in the UK including at the Drum Theatre, Plymouth, Egg Theatre Bath, Central Studio Basingstoke and Exeter Phoenix. This is my first involvement with the CDS having been shipwrecked here 9 months ago.

My indulgence is cloud busting and a very long breakfast with the papers.

Summer reminds me of picnics, melted ice cream and cycling between the flickering light of leaf laden woods.



### **JULIA FAZAKERLY (GWENDOLEN)**

I have worked as an actress in California, Arizona and Belfast. Theatre experience includes Emily Webb in *Our Town*, *The Wicked Step-mother* in *The Ash Girl*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. TV/Film experience includes Eve in the History Channel's '*Mysteries of the Garden of Eden*,' Kelly in '*Legend Has It*' and Liv in '*The Carpenter Part 1*'

My indulgence is a good pint of Guinness!

Summer in California reminds me of beach walks, the smell of barbecues, and eating too much sugar.



### **STEPHANIE LEWIS (BUTLER)**

I have been a member of CDS since 2004, '*The Importance of Being Earnest*' will be my 7th production with CDS. I will be going into my last year of A-Levels in September and after, wish to further study Theatre in the UK.

My indulgence is Sunday Family BBQs

Summers spent in Cayman remind me of relaxation and fun; English Summers remind me of daisy chains and walks through the forest.



### **RANU PANDE (BUTLER)**

Having made my stage debut in *W;t*, this is my second CDS play.

My indulgence is Dark Chocolate (the darker the better).

Summer reminds me of summer vacation trips.



### **VIJAY SINGHERA (HEAD BUTLER)**

I have reignited my passion for acting. I made a debut on stage, after many years, in the production of *Annie* with CDS. First a maid, now a head butler, we are making progress...albeit a little sloooooow.

My indulgence is chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate!!!

Summer reminds me of youth, flowing sundresses made of linen and cotton, meadows strewn with wild flowers mostly dandelions...freedom, no more rain!

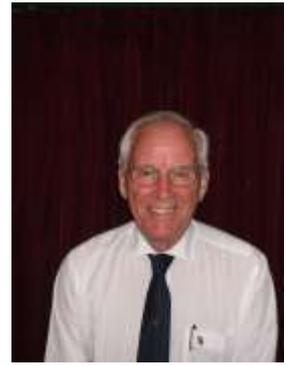


**NEVILLE SMITH (DR CHASUBLE)**

I am probably the oldest novice on the boards. I have no previous experience in a real play, unlike my daughter and granddaughter.

My indulgence? - I really do like shortbread biscuits.

English Summertime brings to mind the noise of lawnmowers, the smell of newly mown grass, reading a Sunday Newspaper with a pint of beer at my elbow.



**GABRIELLE WHEATON (MISS PRISM)**

After an almost 5-year hiatus, I am back on the stage at the Prospect Playhouse, and loving every minute of it. There's no business like show business... Now where did I put my handbag?

My indulgence is daydreaming, which would be useful if I could spin it into something that made money. Where's Rumpelstilzkin when you need him?

There is nothing like the feeling I get when I'm at the beach, mudslide in hand, with the sun baking into my bones to say that summer is really here.



**DAN TWIST (JACK WORTHING)**

Another opening, another show...! And what fun it has been...Oscar Wilde, best of British for my 4th show with the CDS. It's great to be here again after just a few weeks off after the success of WIT! It is just a joy to share with the Cayman community a passion for the stage and Arts!

My indulgence is music.

Summers are picnic lunch on the Cathedral lawn and long walks with the dogs.

# The Play's Central Characters

**Algernon** the play's secondary hero, is closer to the figure of the dandy than any other character in the play. A charming, idle, decorative bachelor, Algernon is brilliant, witty, selfish and amoral. He recognises no duty other than the responsibility to live beautifully.

**Jack** is a surprised and often naïve upper class fop who has his heart set on marrying Gwendolen. More than any other character in the play, he outwardly represents conventional Victorian values: duty, honor, and respectability. In reality he hypocritically flouts those very notions.

**Lady Bracknell** is a somewhat ruthless and overbearing mother to Gwendolen. She has an incredible presence sending fear to those that meet her. She sees herself as dignified, but really is a social snob.

**Gwendolen** is an elegant, capricious and vain city socialite. More than any other female character in the play, Gwendolen suggests the qualities of conventional Victorian womanhood. She is bent on self-improvement.

**Cecily** is a young, light headed, country girl who is used to having her own way. However, her vivid imagination sees her fascinated with wickedness. She is obsessed with the name Ernest and, like Algernon and Jack, she is a fantasist.



# Oscar Wilde Quotes



There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about

Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much.

Women love us for our defects. If we have enough of them, they will forgive us everything, even our intellects.

One should absorb the colour of life, but one should never remember its details. Details are always vulgar.

Simple pleasures are the last refuge of the complex.

She is a peacock in everything but beauty.

My wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to death. One or the other has to go.

The basis for optimism is sheer terror.

Romance should never begin with sentiment. It should begin with science and end with a settlement.

Seriousness is the only refuge of the shallow.

Pessimist: One who, when he has the choice of two evils, chooses both.

Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them; sometimes they forgive them

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.

# Play Definitions

**Earnestness** normally implies seriousness or sincerity. In Wilde's eyes, it refers to complacency, smugness and self-righteousness, all of which Wilde saw as hallmarks of the Victorian character. When characters in the play use the word *serious*, they tend to mean "trivial," and vice versa. Earnestness is a concept that can be best grasped by looking at its opposites.

"A **Bunburyist**" is someone who leads a double life. Bunburying is the practice of creating an elaborate deception that allows one to misbehave while seeming to uphold the very highest standards of duty and responsibility. Jack thinks that once he is married to Gwendolen he will no longer need the ruse of the irresponsible brother because he will be happy, and he won't want to disappear. Algernon counters with the suggestion that it is the married man who needs Bunbury most of all.

In stage comedy and domestic melodrama, **foreshadowing** often takes the form of objects, ideas, or plot points whose very existence in the play signals to the audience that they will come up again. The fact that Jack was adopted as a baby, for instance, predicates a recognition scene in which Jack's true identity is revealed and the plot is resolved by means of some incredible coincidence. Miss Prism's "three-volume novel" is another example: Her very mention of it ensures that it will be important later.

"A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it" Algernon Moncrieff

# Cayman Drama Society



## **2010 Executive Committee**

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[chairman@cds.ky](mailto:chairman@cds.ky)

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[theatremanager@cds.ky](mailto:theatremanager@cds.ky)

Niamh Johnson, Treasurer

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Richard Johnson, Secretary

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Committee members;

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Sheree Ebanks-membership@cds.ky

Regina Oliver

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## **2010 Student Executive Committee**

Stephanie Lewis, Chairman

Brian Watler, Secretary

Members:

Danielle Borden

Abigail Bush

Joel Lawson

## **Mission statement**

The Cayman Drama Society is committed to providing quality live theatre to educate, enrich and entertain, while offering lifelong learning opportunities and fostering creative expression. The future generosity of our Patrons, Friends and Members is essential if we are to continue to present quality productions and to maintain the Prospect Playhouse.



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## Thank you

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Peter Pasold, Paul Defreitas and Doug Marnoch for making our  
lives so much easier.

Cayman Free Press

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John Gray High School Drama Students

Mr Craig Robinson

Sheree Ebanks

A big thank you to all those that came along and gave up time  
either acting, set designing or helping backstage. It was  
wonderful to have so much enthusiasm for the show.

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A photograph of a stage with red curtains and spotlights illuminating the floor. The text is centered in the spotlights.

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## **Upcoming Productions and Events**

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NCVO Telethon	October 30th, 2010
Little Shop of Horrors	November 18th – December 11th, 2010

