National Theatre

FRIDAY 6 JUNE 2025

THE NATIONAL THEATRE'S SOLD-OUT PRODUCTION OF *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST* TO TRANSFER TO THE WEST END THIS AUTUMN IN A CO-PRODUCTION WITH SONIA FRIEDMAN PRODUCTIONS FEATURING OLLY ALEXANDER IN THE ROLE OF ALGERNON MONCRIEFF



Image © **Danny Kasirye**

The National Theatre announces today that its sold-out, critically acclaimed production of ***The Importance of Being Earnest*** will transfer to the West End this autumn in a co-production with Sonia Friedman Productions. This 'bold and brash Wilde reboot' (★★★★ The Times) will run for a limited season at the Noël Coward Theatre, a Delfont Mackintosh Theatre, from 18 September 2025 until 10 January 2026. Tickets will go on sale to the general public on Monday 16 June at 12pm with over 20,000 tickets available for under £30 across the run.

This ‘sparkling new production’ (★★★★★ Daily Mail) directed by **Max Webster,** is a joyful and flamboyant reimagining of Oscar Wilde’s most celebrated comedy.

Actor and singer-songwriter, **Olly Alexander** (*It’s a Sin*, Channel 4; *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit, @s*ohoplace) will play the role of Algernon Moncrieff in Webster’s ‘wildly exuberant, hot pink staging of ***The Importance of Being Earnest*** (★★★★ FT) with further casting to be announced.

Olly Alexander, singer, songwriter, actor, fashion icon and activist said:

“I’m over the moon to be returning to a West End stage to take on the fabulous role of Algernon Moncrieff in Oscar Wilde’s most fun and favoured play. I’ve always hugely admired Wilde - he’s a true icon, not only a hugely successful and influential 19th century writer but also a trailblazing queer artist who fearlessly pushed against the expectations of society. He was a pioneer of LGBTQ+ rights before such a thing existed and I’m so excited and proud to get the chance to inhabit his work.”

Max Webster, director said:

"I am ecstatic that The Importance of Being Earnest *is transferring to the West End starring the brilliant Olly Alexander this September for a winter run. The creative team and I really wanted to honour Oscar Wilde's life and work and celebrate his legendary wit, fabulousness and imaginative freedom with this production. We found that the play felt amazingly fresh and contemporary, and there was an incredible audience response night after night during its original run at the National Theatre. I can't wait to share this production again, with audiences in the West End, and am especially excited to work with Olly who I am certain will create a new and fabulous take on Wilde's iconic character Algenon Moncreiff.”*

Being sensible can be excessively boring. At least Jack thinks so.

While assuming the role of dutiful guardian in the country, he lets loose in town under a false identity. Meanwhile, his friend Algy takes on a similar facade.

Unfortunately, living a double life has its drawbacks, especially when it comes to love. Hoping to impress two eligible ladies, the gentlemen find themselves caught in a web of lies they must carefully navigate.

Olly Alexander is a singer, songwriter, actor and producer. Other screen work includes *The Riot Club* (Universal Pictures), *Bright Star* (Warner Bros) and *Skins* (E4). Other theatre work includes *Peter and Alice* (West End), *The Aliens* (Bush Theatre) and *Mercury Fur* (Old Red Lion/Trafalgar Studios). Between 2010–2023, Olly Alexander performed and recorded music under the name Years & Years. As Years & Years, he achieved two number one UK

albums, ten UK Top 40 singles, was nominated for six BRIT Awards, and awarded the BRIT Billion Award. Albums include *Communion*, *Palo Santo* and *Night Call* as Years & Years and *Polari*, under his own name. In 2024, Olly Alexander represented the United Kingdom in the Eurovision Song Contest with his song *Dizzy*.

Max Webster is an award-winning theatre director, specialising in spectacular new work, opera and live music events. Recent acclaimed productions include *Macbeth* (Donmar Warehouse/West End), *Life of Pi* (Sheffield Theatres/West End/Broadway), *Henry V* (Donmar Warehouse) and *The Lorax* (Old Vic). He was Associate Director at the Old Vic from 2015 until 2019 and at the Donmar Warehouse from 2020 until 2024.

'This exuberant production (★★★★ The i) also features set and costume designer **Rae Smith**, lighting designer **Jon Clark**, sound designer **Nicola T. Chang**, movement director **Carrie-Anne Ingrouille**, composer **DJ Walde**, physical comedy advisor **Joyce Henderson**, intimacy coordinator **Ingrid Mackinnon**, casting director **Alastair Coomer CDG**, dialect coach **Hazel Holder** and voice coach **Shereen Ibrahim** in the creative team.

Webster's 'Wilde party of irresistible anarchic charm' (★★★★ The Guardian) was first performed in the Lyttelton Theatre from 21 November 2024 until 25 January 2025. Following a sold-out run at the National Theatre, it was subsequently released to cinemas worldwide through National Theatre Live. Over 165,000 people in the UK have watched 'this joyous production' (★★★★ The i).

The Importance of Being Earnest in the West End is supported by American Express, the National Theatre's Official Payment Partner.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

For further information, please contact **Clare McCormack,** Head of Press and Communications via CMcCormack@nationaltheatre.org.uk and **Amy Johnson,** Press Officer via AJohnson@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Further press materials

- New Marketing Image available here
- Portraits of Olly Alexander as Algernon Moncrieff here
- Teaser video available here
- Headshots are available here and Bio are available here

Listings Information

Dates: Thursday 18 September 2025 – Saturday 10 January 2026

Press Night: Tuesday 30 September 2025 at 7pm

Website: www.EarnestOnStage.com

Address: Noël Coward Theatre, St Martin's Lane, London, WC2N 4AU

Performance Schedule: Mondays – Saturday, 7pm evening performance with 2pm matinee performances on Thursdays and Saturdays

*schedule may differ during previews and holidays, please see website for details

Assisted Performances:

Captioned Performances: Tuesday 18 November 2025 at 7pm & Saturday 3 January 2026 at 2pm

Audio Described Performances: Thursday 27 November 2025 at 7pm & Saturday 13 December 2025 at 2pm

BSL Performances: Saturday 22 November 2025 at 2pm & Thursday 11 December at 7pm

Tickets: from £25

Box Office: nationaltheatre.org.uk / 0203 989 5455

(lines open Monday to Friday 9:30am – 6pm, and Saturdays 10am – 6pm)

delfontmackintosh.co.uk / 0344 482 5151

Access booking on 0344 482 5137

(lines open Monday to Saturday 10am - 7.30pm)

Running Time: 2 hours 45mins

Social platforms: Facebook & Instagram @earnestonstage

With thanks

The original production of ***The Importance of Being Earnest*** at the National Theatre was supported by the Huo Family Foundation.

About the National Theatre

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. We tell big stories in bold ways, offering the widest access to high quality theatre to millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on our own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

We bring the world to the National Theatre and take the National Theatre to the world through reimagined classic stories meeting fresh, contemporary voices. As part of our mission to celebrate and platform bold voices in British theatre, the National Theatre proudly hosts a dynamic group of Resident Companies, offering a platform for collaboration, growth, and innovation.

Through touring our work to local theatres, schools and through our nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in every local authority in the UK. We invest in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously our role as the nation's theatre. We work with hundreds of schools and communities across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity. The National Theatre Skills Centre supports thousands of young people every year to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre.

For more information, please visit **nationaltheatre.org.uk**

@NationalTheatre

@NT_PressOffice

About Sonia Friedman Productions

Sonia Friedman Productions (SFP) is an international production company responsible for some of the most successful theatre productions around the world. Since it was established in 2002, SFP has developed, initiated and produced over 220 new productions and has won 67 Olivier Awards, 48 Tonys and 3 BAFTAs. Last year, Sonia Friedman CBE was featured in The Standard 100, a celebratory feature of the key power players shaping London in 2024. In 2019, Sonia was awarded 'Producer of the Year' at the Stage Awards for a record-breaking fourth time. In 2018, Friedman was also featured in TIME 100, a list of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World.

Current productions include: *The Book of Mormon* (West End, UK and International tour 2024); *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (West End, Broadway, Hamburg, Tokyo and North American tour); *Stranger Things: The First Shadow*, a co-production with Netflix (West End, Broadway); *Mean Girls* (West End); *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (West End); *Stereophonic* (West End); *Dead Outlaw* (Broadway); *Bust* (Goodman Theatre); *Sexual Misconduct of the Late Middle Classes* (Minetta Lane Theatre); *Creditors* (Minetta Lane Theatre) and *Millions* (Alliance Theatre).

Forthcoming productions include: *Paddington The Musical* (UK); *Stereophonic* (US tour); *Sunny Afternoon* (UK tour); *The Queen of Versailles* (Broadway); *Oedipus* (Broadway) and *42 Balloons* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre).