

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**American Repertory Theatre
in association with the Loeb Drama Center
presents Oscar Wilde's
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST
a trivial comedy performed by two serious people
performed by Ridiculusmus
directed by Jude Kelly
December 21 — January 14
Loeb Drama Center**

Cambridge, MA — Robert Woodruff, Artistic Director, Gideon Lester, Associate Artistic Director, and Robert J. Orchard, Executive Director of the American Repertory Theatre (A.R.T.) are pleased to welcome the “masters of comic invention” Ridiculusmus, bringing their unique brand of seriously funny theatre to Oscar Wilde’s immortal comedy of manners, **The Importance of Being Earnest**. *David Woods* and *Jon Haynes*’ virtuosic interpretation of Wilde’s irrepressible caper has been received with wild acclaim around the world and we are delighted to welcome it to the US for the first time. The production, directed by *Jude Kelly*, begins performances on Thursday, December 21 at the Loeb Drama Center, 64 Brattle Street, Harvard Square in Cambridge, and runs through Sunday, January 14. **The production will be available for press viewing beginning Wednesday, December 27 at 7:30pm.**

“All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That is his.”
— **The Importance of Being Earnest**

“The funniest thing to be seen in London.” — *The Times Literary Supplement*

“A delicious surprise...a brilliant clash of respectful and radical theatre.”
— *The Sydney Morning Herald*

“This is Wilde with a twist.... a comic masterstroke...” — *Courier Mail*, Brisbane

Jon Haynes and David Woods offer a jaw dropping portrayal of the entire cast. . . sheer mechanical brilliance... the logistics of the mise en scene are breathtaking...”
— *The Australian*

Oscar Wilde’s classic comedy of identity fraud receives a riotous new treatment from Ridiculusmus, the comedy duo of *David Woods* and *Jon Haynes*, who play all the parts — from Ernest to Lady Bracknell. Wilde’s play is suited to their style, but Ridiculusmus go further still: they toy with the ideas of performance that underlie Wilde’s play in which everyone has a role dictated by social hierarchy and status. They strip it down and reveal the social coding in all its glorious absurdity. Ridiculusmus’ **Importance of Being Earnest** showcases the wit, social commentary, and essentially captures and communicates to audiences the brilliance of Wilde’s play. With the immortal line “a handbag up for grabs,” this glorious subversion of Wilde’s masterpiece will delight both die-hard Wilde fans and those new to his work. Set and costume design is by *Zoe Atkinson*, lighting design by *Jo Currey*, music and sound design by *Jon*

Haynes, David Woods, Jude Kelly, and Lawrence English.

Founded in 1992, the much-awarded Ridiculusmus produces unconventional, innovative, and accessible theatre. Work is written, created and performed by David Woods & Jon Haynes. The company makes work that is 'seriously funny' and deadly serious, which has earned them a reputation as one of the most exciting theatre companies working in the UK. Their work has been called physical theatre, political theatre, avant-garde theatre, dadaist, realist, anarchic, comedy — the company's work is all of these things.

Since meeting at London's Poor School in 1992, Ridiculusmus artistic directors and performers **Jon Haynes** and **David Woods** have jointly devised, written and performed in all Ridiculusmus' shows and presented a substantial body of work in the UK and throughout the world. Previous shows include **Ideas Men, Say Nothing, Yes Yes Yes, The Third Policeman, Three Men in a Boat, Paranoid Household, How to be Funny, and The Exhibitionists.** The Company has performed throughout the UK, Germany, Malta, Finland, Italy, USA, Canada, Australia and Africa.

Ridiculusmus have won awards from Time Out, Total Theatre, Adelaide Festival, The Herald Angel, and have twice been nominated for a Melbourne Comedy Festival Barry Award. In addition, the Barbican Center won The Peter Brook Empty Space Award for a season of work with Ridiculusmus. **The Importance of Being Earnest** is their first production of a pre-scripted play and their first collaboration with a director and a designer.

Director **Jude Kelly** is the Artistic Director of the South Bank Centre in London, responsible for programming at The Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Rooms & Hayward Gallery. She founded Solent People's Theatre and then Battersea Arts Centre, establishing it as a national venue. In 1986 she joined the Royal Shakespeare Company before becoming the first Artistic Director of the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds, the country's largest regional theatre. She established the West Yorkshire Playhouse as an acknowledged centre of excellence on a local, national and international scale, developing an ever-expanding policy of access for all. Her production of '**Singin' in the Rain** transferred twice to the Royal National Theatre and was awarded the Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Musical Production in 2001. She directed Ian McKellen in **The Seagull** and **The Tempest**; Patrick Stewart in **Johnson over Jordon** and **Othello**; the English National Opera in **The Elixir of Love** (South Bank Award - Newcomer Opera); and over forty productions for stage and screen, including The York Festival (also Artistic Director 1985-88), Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Sydney Festival, and Channel Four. In 1997 Ms. Kelly was awarded the OBE for her services to the theatre.

Performances of **The Importance of Being Earnest** run December 21, 26, 27, 28, 31, January 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11 at 7:30pm; December 22, 23, 29,30, January 5, 6, 12, 13 at 8pm; December 23, 30, 31, January 6, 7, 13, 14 at 2pm. Single ticket prices for this production ranges from \$25 to \$50. Discounts are available to seniors. The A.R.T. continues its **Pay What You Can** program, making fifty tickets available for every Saturday matinee performance of the subscription season at the Loeb Drama Center for patrons to purchase at whatever amount they can afford (based on availability). In addition, the A.R.T. has launched a new program, **50@\$15@noon**, offering fifty tickets at \$15 for each performance during the 2006-07 Season. The tickets will become available at noon on each performance day, either by phone or in person. Purchases will be limited to two tickets per customer and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. The program does not apply to performances for which tickets are no longer available. Information about availability will also be on line at www.amrep.org. **Group rates** are also available, with extra savings for senior citizens and student groups.

The balance of the A.R.T. 2006-07 Season includes **Britannicus** by Jean Racine, directed by Robert Woodruff (January 20 — February 11 Loeb Stage); the US premiere of **Oliver Twist**, based on the novel by Charles Dickens, adapted and directed by Neil Bartlett (February 17 — March 25, Loeb Stage); the US Premiere of **Elections and Erections: A Memoir of Fear and Fun**, created and performed by Pieter-Dirk Uys (April 4 — May 6, Zero Arrow Theatre); and **No Man's Land** by Harold Pinter, directed by David Wheeler (May 12 — June 10, Loeb Stage). The 2006-07 Season is sponsored by TIAA-CREF.

The A.R.T. is again offering several subscription plans and a host of benefits, including

discounts on parking, fine dining, and tickets to other theatres; a *child-care series* (Saturday matinee), and *pre- and post-performance discussion series* (Saturday matinees).

To learn more about the A.R.T. season visit the A.R.T. website at www.amrep.org or call the **A.R.T. InfoLine** at (617) 547-8300 for directions to the theatre; to order brochures, calendars, and newsletters; and for direct access to the A.R.T. Box Office (hours are noon to curtain time on performance days, noon to 5 pm on non-performance days, closed on Mondays).

The American Repertory Theatre, located at the Loeb Drama Center in Harvard Square at 64 Brattle Street, Cambridge, is accessible to persons with special needs and to those requiring wheelchair seating or first-floor restrooms. Deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons can also reach the Theatre by calling the toll-free N.E. Telephone Relay Center at 1-800-439-2370.

Public transportation and discount parking are available nearby.

Production photos of THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST can be downloaded from www.amrep.org/media

In photo attached: David Woods and Jon Haynes. Photo credit by Tim Page

