



**A Trifecta of Oscar Wilde
August 3rd, 2010, 8 p.m.**

The Florentine Tragedy, by Oscar Wilde, directed by Robert Estes

With Stephen Pitcher as *Simone, a merchant*, Phaedra Starr as *Bianca, the merchant's wife*, and Robert Estes as *Guido Bardi, a Florentine Prince*

La Sainte Courtisane or The Woman Covered with Jewels by Oscar Wilde, directed by Robert Estes

With Stephen Pitcher as *First Man*, Robert Estes as *Second Man*, Phaedra Starr as *Myrrhina*, and Greg Estes as *Honorius*.

The Portrait of Mr. W. H. ~as recounted by Oscar Wilde

Adapted from Wilde's story & directed by Ken Bullock

With Howard Dillon as *Oscar*, David Kester as *Erskine*, and Max Chervin as *The Young Man*

A Little More Info:

The Florentine Tragedy, *La Sainte Courtisane* and *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* were all unpublished at the time of Wilde's arrest for gross indecency in April 1895. The manuscripts were presumed lost as Wilde's house was ransacked by his creditors and the effects auctioned off haphazardly. His associates were able to salvage the former two (unfinished) works from rescued manuscripts and publish them in 1908 – as Robbie Ross said at the time – “it was characteristic of the artist to finish a work he had never started”. *The Portrait* was presumed both lost and unfinished until a complete version was found and published in 1921. *Jerome Solberg*

The Art historian--& old friend--Marc Dachy (The Dada Movement) directed me to Richard Ellman's collection of Wilde, The Artist As Critic, where I read the longer version of *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.*, jibing with Oscar's theories of the Mask, of the very literal artificiality of Art--and the mutability of emotion, a Shakespearean theme. I was surprised at how modern it seemed, almost like a Borges story--& Borges wrote a good page or two about Oscar: "Like Gibbon, like Johnson, like Voltaire, he was a wit; a wit who was also right ... His name ... his glory, [linked] to condemnation and jail. Yet ... the fundamental flavor of his work is happiness ... [of] a man who retains, despite the habits of wickedness and misfortune, an invulnerable innocence." This adaptation is dedicated to the memory of Fabian Lloyd, lost at sea, aka Arthur Cravan, proto-Dadaist and Oscar's nephew by marriage, the model for Andre Gide's Lafcadio and a kind of literary forger (and forgery) himself, who published an interview with the uncle he never met, years after Oscar's death. Oscar, whose personality has often garnered more attention than his works, concluded his last meeting with Gide by saying, "Promise me you'll never again say I ... Because in Art there is no first person!" *Ken Bullock*

- **Robert Estes** recently directed *Curse of the Starving Class* at Actors Ensemble of Berkeley, and is directing *Other People's Money* for Masquer's in Point Richmond, opening August 27th. He will be directing Shaw's Heartbreak House for Actors Ensemble this coming January.
- **Ken Bullock** writes theater reviews for the Berkeley Daily Planet and the Commuter Times in Marin, as well as music reviews for the San Francisco Classical Voice. He's been affiliated with Theatre of Yugen for 30 years, & spent a decade behind the counter at Limelight Film & Theater Books.
- **Howard Dillon**, Dublin born in the same small genetic pool as Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw and Samuel Beckett, has long wanted to portray Oscar. Thanks to Wilde Irish, Berkeley's own Hibernian troupe, for keeping him visible onstage!
- **Max Chervin**, despite cross dressing twice over the last five months or so, is very comfortable in his heterosexual life style and plans onwearing pants as much as possible.
- A former minor league and semi-pro ballplayer, **David Kester** lives in Napa, & still plays in charity/exhibition games. Over the past 25 years, he's appeared in over 130 stage productions, notably as Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, Big Daddy in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and as Field Marshall Erwin Rommel-- while also working in TV, film, voiceover and print.

Many thanks to costumer extraordinaire Helen Slomowitz; Sharon Burns & the Stapleton School of Performing Arts, San Anselmo, for the hospitality; Kevin Brooks ("Big Julie"); Henry Bridges; Chris Daniels; Bob Gudmundsson, Rose Anne Raphael, Michael Koppy, and Jerome Solberg, Stanley Spenger, and the rest of the board of Actors Ensemble of Berkeley

Next up in our Staged Reading Series:

Tuesday, August 17th, 8 p.m. \$Pay-What-You-Can

The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat by Rudyard Kipling, directed by Vicki Siegel