



Escape the heat!

The Importance of Being Earnest

By Oscar Wilde • June 25-July 18

Jack lives a double life and Algernon wants a piece of the action: who is Cecily? Who is Ernest? Their problems catch up to them sooner or later and the result is perfectly witty and charming.

Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?

Book by John R. Powers; Music & Lyrics by James Quinn & Alaric Jans • June 26-July 19

First confessions, puppy love, patron saints, and the importance of wearing panties. Follow eight children in 1950s Catholic elementary school through their high school experiences of youthful growing pains and the trying moments of adolescence.

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from LETTER BOX
the editor

Different Is Good

You won't often find me quoting pop stars, but recently I heard Angelina Jolie say something that resonated with the middle-school kid inside of me. She gave an emotional speech at the Kids' Choice Awards, where she won in the category of best villain for *Maleficent*. Jolie said that as a child she was told that she was different, but that she learned to see that as a strength. "Different is good. So, don't fit in. Don't sit still. Don't ever try to do less than you are," she said. "When somebody tells you you're different, smile and hold your head up high and be proud."

I completely embrace the conversation about being yourself and encouraging others to do the same. I'm so fortunate to have a career that allows me to do just that and to speak with artists of all genres on a daily basis. They often tell me that they were bullied or not included in the "popular group" while growing up because they saw and experienced the world differently. Many of our classic, iconic artists would have been looked upon very differently in our current world, but we are so much richer for the breadth of talent and wisdom that they so graciously shared with us. We need to encourage our youth to be inclusive and to follow the path that fills their spirit. I spoke with a gentleman the other day who was very concerned that his son was majoring in theater. When I told him I thought that was amazing, he seemed shocked. He said he didn't always receive that feedback as many people wanted to know where his son might work one day. Although not an official career planner, I mentioned many paths he might take if center stage was not on the table. The man seemed relieved.

In this issue, we celebrate many cultural happenings, including the Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival and Snap! Orlando's monthlong *You Are Here* celebration of photography. I'm so grateful that the talented actors, dancers, artists and photographers participating in these events were brave enough to pursue their creative dreams. Our community is so much richer for the gift they give and the vision they offer. Let's continue the conversation for generations to come, so that everyone can feel empowered to follow the path that calls to them.

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