



Live, Online Theatre

**Friday, March 24 and
Saturday, March 25, 2023**

OSCAR & WALT

by Donald Steven Olson

directed by Ansley Valentine

**produced and livestreamed in conjunction with
Indiana University Bloomington**

www.playzoomers.org

Jan Carpman and Mary Ann Nichols Hubbard, Producers



PLOT SUMMARY

On his first American lecture tour in 1882, Irish poet & playwright Oscar Wilde calls on his literary hero, the venerable poet Walt Whitman. Cultures clash, egos flare, words fly and secrets emerge as these two geniuses face off in one unforgettable meeting of hearts, minds, and poetry.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

“Oscar & Walt” was completed in 2019, the bicentennial of Walt Whitman’s birth, and had its world premiere in Rome that same year. The play was inspired by my discovery of a little-known meeting between the 62-year-old Whitman and the 28-year-old Oscar Wilde that took place in Camden, New Jersey, in January 1882.

There is no detailed account of what happened but the inherent dramatic and comedic possibilities of their meeting proved irresistible to me and perfect for the stage. Who were the private men concealed beneath the giant egos and larger-than-life public personalities these literary titans projected to the world? What would two celebrated authors of such contrasting ages, backgrounds, writing styles, and temperaments reveal to one another when they were out of the limelight and alone in Walt’s messy den in Camden?

I started with the premise that they were bound together intellectually by a passionate love of language – of words – of art and new ideas. But as they discover during their afternoon conversation, they share other deeply felt emotions and vulnerabilities as well, secrets that threaten to undermine their lives and destroy their reputations.

Do these revelations emerge as a result of the homebrewed elderberry wine served to them by Walt’s sister-in-law, Louisa? Maybe so, for Louisa – fascinated and bewildered by poets and

poetry – plays an important role in that afternoon’s proceedings, and her plainspoken honesty serves as an astringent antidote to the rarefied world inhabited by the curmudgeonly Walt and his flamboyantly theatrical guest.

These three characters – Oscar, Walt, and Louisa – took hold of my imagination and had their say as I wrote “Oscar & Walt.” What they told me was that in the end, no matter how famous you may be, you are still a human being with a shared human need to connect by listening, laughing, and loving.

~ Donald Steven Olson

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

If you've felt like you've been missing out on live theatre, “Oscar & Walt” reminds you that it doesn't matter where you live – you can still see amazing performances!

In this delightful play, we take a look at the lives of Oscar Wilde and Walt Whitman. Donald Olson’s script, while part historical fact and part fiction, asks us to consider what life might have been like for these two writers. While they are quite universally honored today, when they lived, their reputations might have been different.

The play does a wonderful job of reminding us that these two literary lions had the same concerns many of us do today. In many ways, we are still grappling with the same issues of censorship and sexual orientation people did when Walt Whitman and Oscar Wilde lived 134 years ago. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Olson’s writing is not stuffy or distant. He creates these men, along with Whitman’s sister-in-law Louisa, as three-dimensional, real people you might find in your home. We see the contrast between Whitman’s earnest Americanism and Wilde’s flights of English witticism – but don’t let that scare you. In these 90 minutes, you get

a sense of the men behind the words that feel simultaneously respectful and revealing.

It's one thing to read about these historical figures; it's another thing entirely to watch them come alive right before your eyes.

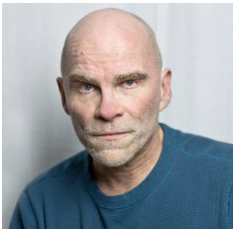
The work of *PlayZoomers* is important to me because it makes stories such as these, performed live, accessible to folks across the country. I am thrilled that in collaboration with Indiana University Bloomington, *PlayZoomers* is bringing “Oscar & Walt” to you – for the first time – via live-streaming.

~ *Ansley Valentine*

CAST

- Walt Whitman..... Steve Scott
- Oscar Wilde..... Devin May
- Louisa Whitman..... Greta Lind

CAST BIOS



Steve Scott (Walt Whitman) Since his 2012 acting debut, Steve has performed for a half dozen local production companies. In the last year, he played the Spider in *Bloomington Playwrights Project’s* “Fortunate Heist,” butlers Lane and Merriman in *Constellation Stage and Screen’s* “The Importance of Being Earnest,” and most recently Porter Milgram in *Constellation’s* “Deathtrap.” This is Steve’s first role with *PlayZoomers*.



Devin May (Oscar Wilde) is a proud Bloomington native and IU alum, with 75+ theatre credits in Indiana, Kentucky, Chicago, Boston, and DC. Most recently, Devin appeared in Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" (Jack Worthing) for *Constellation Stage & Screen*. He has also worked for *Constellation*

teaching acting fundamentals to Bloomington's talented young people! His favorite project to date was "Super Richard World III," a Shakespeare-Super Mario mashup by Chicago's *Otherworld Theatre* which landed on the Chicago Reader's "Best Plays of 2019" list. " This is his *PlayZoomers* debut.



Greta Lind (Louisa Whitman) was in "All My Children" and the film "Rudy." She loved raising her two wonderful boys and writing her debut novel, *Split Open* (audiobook coming soon). Greta's recent acting work includes "The Ernie Pyle Experiment!" (an

Audie Awards® finalist), "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," and *Constellation's* "The Importance of Being Earnest," and "Deathtrap." This is her first appearance with *PlayZoomers*.

<http://www.gretalind.com>

CREATIVE TEAM BIOS



Donald Steven Olson (Playwright) has an international career as a playwright, novelist, and travel and garden writer. His plays include the award-winning “Oscar & Walt” and have been seen in New York, London, Rome, Amsterdam, Portland, and Pittsburgh. Donald’s new musical “TRANSFORMATION: The Christine Jorgensen Show” will premiere in New York in April 2023.

<https://www.donaldstevenolson.com>



Ansley Valentine (Director) is a professional director for the theatre as well as an educator. Ansley heads the M.F.A. program in Directing at Indiana University. He loves contemporary plays, having directed or produced several. His credits include “Barbecue, Fallujah,” “The Near East,” “Les Misérables,” “The Colored Museum,” and “Twelfth Night.” He is glad to be directing for *PlayZoomers* again.

TECH TEAM



Doug MacDougall (Technical Director) is a former educator and school administrator from Hamilton (Canada). Not only is Doug a veteran actor with over 30+ years in regional theatre and TV/Film in the Toronto area but as a longtime Technical Director for

PlayZoomers, he has been involved with over 50 productions (and counting) over the past few years. A true multi-hyphenate (actor, director, screenwriter, and producer) Doug recently created a series of animated musical fairytale-based web series (Cinderella, Snow White) and now is hard at work creating a new series based on Robin Hood set in the Wild West, premiering this December in an online Christmas fundraiser.



Kathleen Marquess Murphy (Graphic Designer) is a transplanted Californian, settled now in Richmond, VA, who has provided graphic design for *PlayZoomers* since its inception. Kathleen holds a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She enjoys creating the graphics that set the tone for each production.

CREDITS

Board of Directors Jan Carpman, Duchess Dale, George Dougherty,
Gary Giurbino, Mary Ann Nichols Hubbard,
Tom Stephens

Producers Jan Carpman, Mary Ann Nichols Hubbard

Assistant Director. Adam Mohrs

Intimacy Direction Jenny McKnight

Scenic Design Spencer Donovan

Set Construction. Elliott Carnell, Jacob Spencer

Production Associate. Taiwo Aloba

Website Administrator Laura Hubbard

Social Media Manager. Pierce Stephan

Pre-show Slides, Video Jan Carpman, Doug MacDougall

Playbill Jan Carpman

Music & Sound

Preshow

Music by Lenny Williams (BMI) CAE/IPI#195221668
Publisher Harry L. Williams Music Publishing (BMI)
Load Bearing Music Library
Sweet Open HLW
Fountain HLW
In the Garden HLW
More Drinks Please HLW
Odd Jazz Piano HLW 2

“Oscar & Walt” – Intro, Outro, Transitions

"Home Sweet Home" by Pieter de Graaf
2020 Sony Music catalog

ABOUT PLAYZOOMERS

PlayZoomers is a live, online theatre company producing appealing, affordable monthly performances featuring plays of different genres, lengths, and cast sizes. We offer audiences a way to experience theatre and connect with diverse, professional theatre artists regardless of the weather, their location, finances, mobility, or other factors. *PlayZoomers* offers opportunities for actors to flex their creative muscles in new ways, for directors to rise to the challenge of online production, and for playwrights to adapt their work to a digital platform while reaching a new audience.

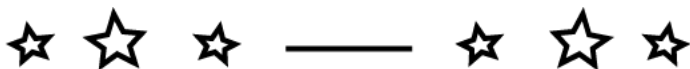
www.playzoomers.org playzoomers@gmail.com



PlayZoomers relies on audience members, along with playwrights, directors, designers, and actors to help keep the company financially healthy. We are delighted that ticket sales have been robust, but no theatre company can sustain itself through ticketing alone. We are committed to compensating everyone who works for *PlayZoomers* and everyone who participates in our productions.

PlayZoomers, Inc. is a nonprofit organization (public charity) under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501 (c) 3. Donors can deduct contributions under IRC Section 170. *PlayZoomers, Inc.* is qualified to receive tax-deductible bequests, devises, transfers, or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522.

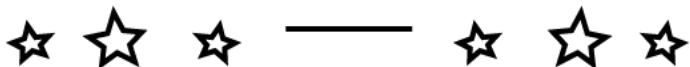
You can donate through: www.playzoomers.org Thank you!



Thanks to our Donors!

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★ ★ ★ — ★ ★ ★

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★ Aaron Stephens • Tom Stephens • Greg Strickland
★ Richard Tell • Norm & Kate Thibeault • Stephen Truglio
★ Erica Wachs • Illene Waitt • Blake Walton
★ Barry Weinberg • Polly Welch • Lisa White & Jeff Stoodt
★ Carolyn Wickwire • William Witt • Jeff Wolfson
Susan Yakutis • Steve Yakutis & Guy Pugh • Linda J. Young
Kathy & Jim Zingg

★ ★ ★ — ★ ★ ★



Live, Online Theatre

save the dates

**Friday, May 5 and
Saturday, May 6, 2023**

Friday at 7:30 PM ET, 6:30 PM CT, 5:30 PM MT, 4:30 PM PT
Saturday at 9:30 PM ET, 8:30 PM CT, 7:30 PM MT, 6:30 PM PT

HUNKER DOWN

**A romantic comedy about seniors
grappling with loneliness, quirky
friendship, and the "new normal"
during the pandemic**

**by Robert F. Benjamin
directed by Duchess Dale**

www.playzoomers.org

Jan Carpmann and Mary Ann Nichols Hubbard, Producers



Friday (May 5,
7:30 PM ET) &
Saturday (May 6,
9:30 PM ET)
evening
performances



Live, Online Theatre

save the dates



Sunday, May 7, 2023

**A special live, Zoom performance for Sage-ing International,
followed by a Talkback with the playwright**

3 PM ET, 2 CT, 1 MT, noon PT

HUNKER DOWN

**A romantic comedy about seniors grappling with
loneliness, quirky friendship, and the
"new normal" during the pandemic**

**by Robert F. Benjamin
directed by Duchess Dale**

Tickets: \$20, \$25, \$30 on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

www.playzoomers.org

Jan Carpmann and Mary Ann Nichols Hubbard, Producers



Sunday matinee
(May 7, 3 PM ET)