



Oscar Wilde
in America

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I WANT YOU



FAMOUS FOR BEING FAMOUS

On January 3, 1882, Oscar Wilde arrived in New York City aboard the British ocean liner, SS Arizona. The 27-year-old recent Oxford graduate, dressed in lavender pants, silk stockings and shiny black patten leather shoes, presented his baggage to the customs agent. When asked if he had anything to declare, Wilde flipped his purple calk-skin gloves and said: “*Nothing... Nothing but my genius!*”

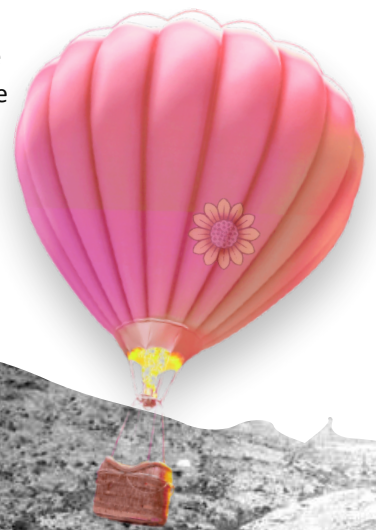
So began Wilde’s yearlong tour of North America. Over the next 300 days, the unpublished poet-writer saw more of North America than most modern day Presidential candidates. In his green wool coat trimmed at the collar and cuffs in seal fur, Wilde traipsed through the streets and fashionable salons of Eastern cities and crisscrossed the Western frontier across the Sierra Nevada to California’s Pacific shore. He traveled on horse back, by stage coach and covered wagon, by railroad, and by hot air balloon. Crowds who came to hear him lecture on *The Decorative Arts* or *The English Renaissance* gawked and stared (and sometimes ridiculed) the self-anointed high priest of Aestheticism.

Wilde hobnobbed with Whitman and Longfellow, Beecher, Holmes, and James, supped and slept with Colorado silver miners and society courtesans in Newport and New York, lunched with Ulysses S. Grant and Jefferson Davis, posed with P.T. Barnum’s latest craze, Jumbo the Elephant, schmoozed with the low and high born, and outdrank America’s burgeoning demimonde from coast to coast.

Wilde returned to London the following year a celebrity, but not just any celebrity: the very model for what we now call modern celebrity. Long before he had penned a single syllable of *Dorian Gray* or *The Importance of Being Earnest*, he was famous merely for *being famous*, with his humility-free approach to self-advertisement still employed today by several generations of social media aspirants.

Yet, despite his august literary achievements, Wilde’s life ended in disaster. The rules of self-promotion and manipulating the media he had pioneered in America did not make him invincible; they did the opposite. The culture of celebrity he brought to life rose up to take his—he believed his own hype.

“*Oscar Wilde In America*” explores where and how the tragic end of Oscar Wilde’s story began... in America.



THE 2022 COMEBACK TOUR

The premise is simple: *What if* Oscar Wilde made a comeback tour in 2022, playing many of the same towns he played 140 years ago? “**Oscar Wilde in America**” explores that *what if* as contemporary theatre.

It treats the historical record compiled in the website OscarWildeinAmerica.org as the primary source material for the work, which includes: the lectures themselves; the reviews of his lectures, which include varied and detailed descriptions of the compelling stage business of each lecture; the immense record of Wilde’s social engagements in America; and, of course, the endless quips and quotes attributed to Wilde, all of which will land as well with a modern audience as they did with his own.

The website suggests an additional conceptual element to the piece. OscarWildeinAmerica.org [OWIA] is at once a compendium of the names and places of Wilde’s 1882 America tour AND a repository of history itself; it conjures up the overall living, breathing impression Wilde made on the American public in 1882 and vice versa. “**Oscar Wilde In America**” could produce similar meta data, just greatly enhanced with media from many sources, printed and digital, journalistic and social—not just newspaper clippings, the analog world’s single source of daily information.

And that data is the basis for a related work of conceptual art: fodder for a new and analogous website to OscarWildeinAmerica.org that evolves as the show itself evolves; that conjures up the impression Oscar Wilde will make on America in 2022. How that impression compares and contrasts to the one he made in 1882 will tell us as much about Oscar Wilde as about ourselves as a society. How attitudes have changed, and how they have not—theatre as algorithm, the nightly performance processor of new information about the audience and the work itself, the mirror of art for the digital age.





✿ NOT ON THE PAGE ✿

Contemporary theatre storytelling has expanded from the written *word* to the written *record* as a primary source of inspiration. “*As Much As I Can*”, “*Dana H.*”, “*The Encounter*”, “*What The Constitution Means to Me*”, “*In and Of Itself*”, and “*Is This a Room*” are all recent examples of emergent work of this kind. The work is based on a non-traditional source: a manuscript; a transcript; an ethnographic study; a debate; the unfinished narrative awaiting the audience’s contribution. Each work blows past the boundaries of traditional stage craft, positioning its audience, literally and figuratively, within the world of the story being told. In the process, what came first, the page or the stage, is blurred. “*Not on the page, not on the stage*” has lost its time-honored chronology.

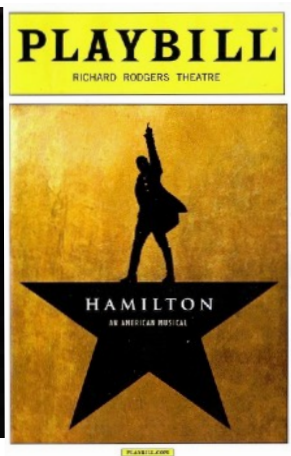
In that light, It’s not enough to present Wilde as an historical figure giving a lecture on his own age and time, his world depicted realistically through sets and costumes. For Wilde to truly make a comeback, his appearance on stage must be entirely in the present tense while simultaneously viewed and informed by the audience’s collective lens of the past. We know going into the theatre what happens to Wilde in the end of his life, but he doesn’t—the key concept in any effective time travel.

Sketching out a format, “**Oscar Wilde In America**” starts with Wilde’s booking agent, Civil War veteran Colonel CF Morse, the only other character in the piece, introducing Wilde. Wilde appears on stage and delivers his lecture. When he finishes, after roughly twenty-five minutes, Morse wheels out an enormous TV monitor and thus begins a Q&A with the live and virtual audience watching from home—one of the certain and necessary holdovers from the 2020 global pandemic. The Q&A is equal parts rehearsed and improvised, with the actor playing Wilde equipped with the author’s own words and what he improvises to answer any question, contemporary or historical, from Sarah Bernhardt’s bathing habits to home design advice to the latest celebrity gossip—imagine Wilde commenting on Kim and Khloe Kardashian.





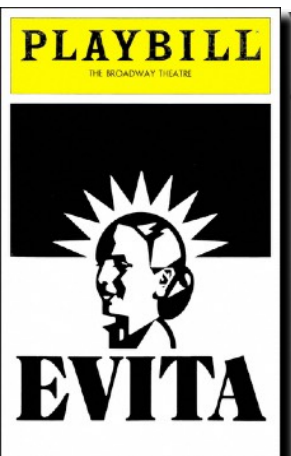
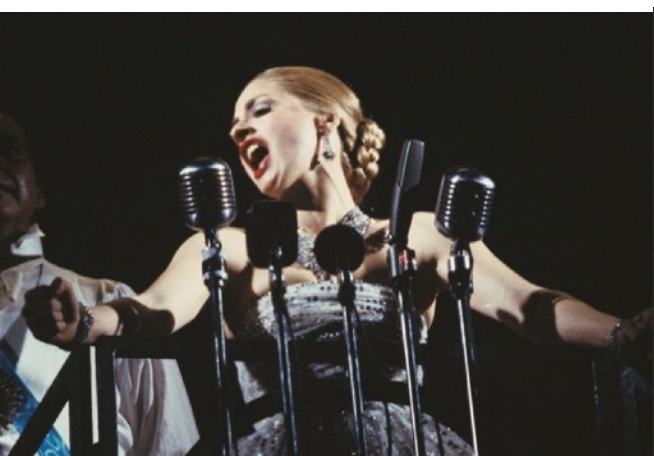
🌸 THE ACTOR IS THE HISTORY 🌸



Zoe Caldwell as Maria Callas, Lyn-Manuel Miranda as Alexander Hamilton, Patti LuPone as Eva Peron. Actors who played historical figures on stage and thus became those historical figures in the public imagination. Do Callas, Hamilton, and Peron exist without these performances—without Caldwell, Miranda, and LuPone, actors who embodied the rhetoric of their image?

What we know of Oscar Wilde we know through what *he* said and wrote and what *others* said and wrote about him. Conflicts and contradictions abound in both narratives. What we do know for sure, however: Oscar Wilde was funny, *wildly* funny. Wit was his true calling card to fame and fortune.

The role does not require someone to look like Oscar Wilde or to do a camped up imitation of him, whatever that is; most miss the mark in their over expression of his “gayness”, something he was unaware of at this time in his life. Above and beyond the talent and intelligence required, the Oscar Wilde of “**Oscar Wilde In America**” requires one thing: an actor committed and willing to take the journey into history to *become* the history, first on stage and then beyond.



CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Phase 1 - Initial Concept Development

Dates: Summer - Early Fall 2021; 8-10 weeks

Location: Newport, Rhode Island at the Casino Theatre where Wilde lectured in July 1882

Goal: Partner with actor/production company to develop, rehearse, design, and tech a new stage show, "Oscar Wilde in America", then preview and film (multi-camera) in front of a live and a virtual audience at the Casino Theatre (2-3 performances)

Phase 2 - Post Film Shot at Casino Theatre Performances

Dates: Fall 2021; 4-6 weeks

Location: Rhode Trip Pictures production offices

Goal: Post film shot at Casino Theatre performances.

Phase 3 - Use Film to Promote Stage Show for Possible USA Mini Tour

Dates: Winter 2021/22; 6-8 weeks

Location: Rhode Trip Pictures production offices

Goal: Use film to interest and engage regional theatres in the scheduling of a "mini tour" of appropriate cities to further workshop and preview stage show

Phase 4 - Regional Tour to Opening on Broadway and/or West End

Dates: Winter 2021 - Winter 2022

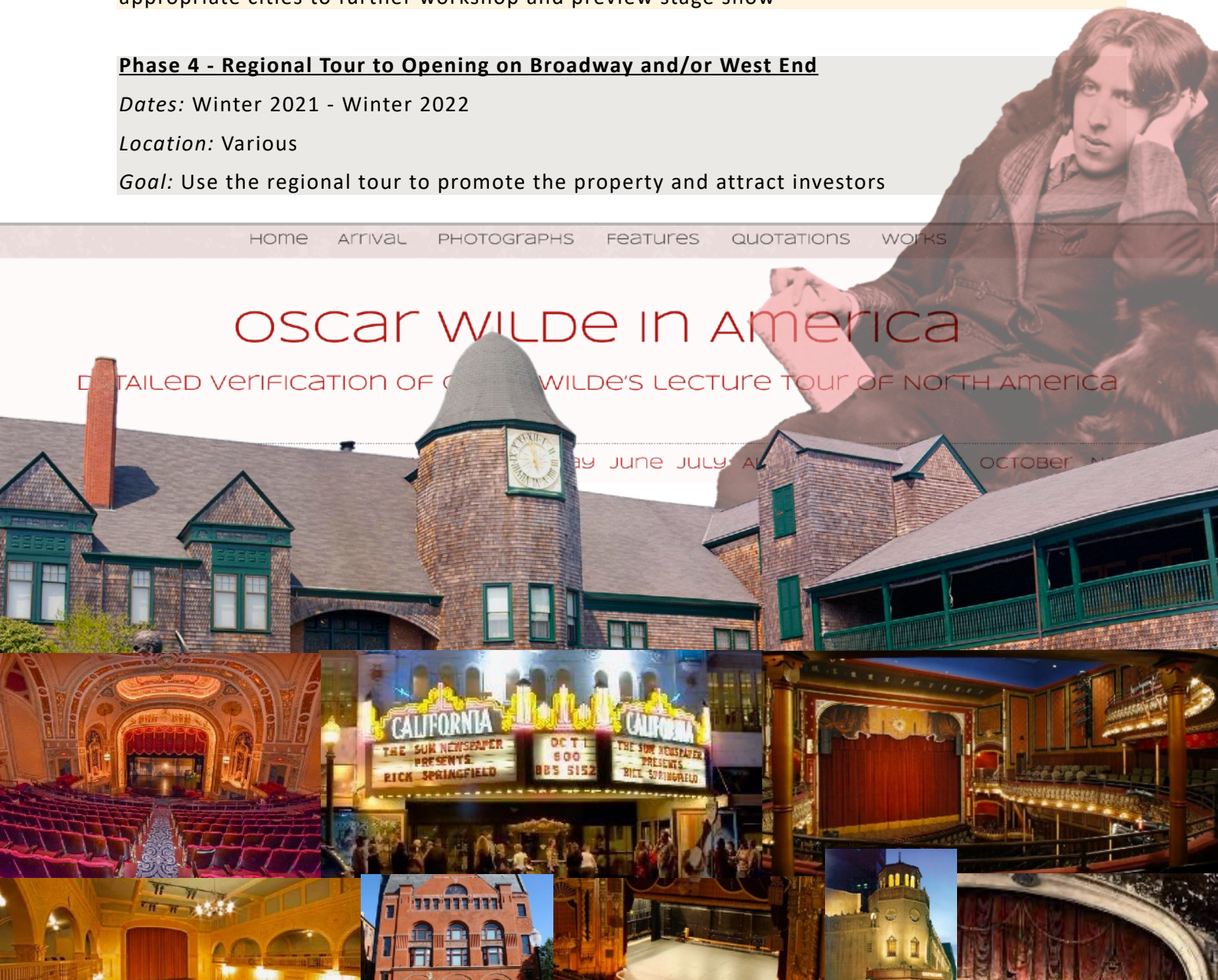
Location: Various

Goal: Use the regional tour to promote the property and attract investors

HOME ARRIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS FEATURES QUOTATIONS WORKS

oscar wilde in America

DETAILED VERIFICATION OF OSCAR WILDE'S LECTURE TOUR OF NORTH AMERICA



PRODUCTION AUSPICES

When All The World's A Stage is a subsidiary of Rhode Trip Pictures (RTP), dedicated to producing small screen adaptations of material written for the stage. The recently completed *"The Extinction of Fireflies"*, writer/director James Andrew Walsh's latest feature starring Michael Urie, Tracie Bennett, Drew Droege, and Kario Marcel, will premiere at OUTshine Miami in April 2021.

Rhode Trip Pictures' (RTP) slate of small screen projects includes: the upcoming doc series, *"Newport, The Artful City"*, now in post production; the Hallmark Mystery Channel series *"Gilded Age Mysteries"*, currently in pre-production; and *"Jimmy and Carolyn"*, the prequel to *"The Extinction of Fireflies"*, currently in pre-production with a mid-summer 2021 start date. RTP is the grand prize recipient at last year's Rhode Island Film Festival for Walsh's screenplay, *"The Gods of Newport"*, and a 2019 Cannes Lions recipient for Walsh's direction of *"As Much As I Can"* at New York's Public Theater. RTP is also developing *"The Last Magician"*, a new stage musical about the young life of Sir Isaac Newton.

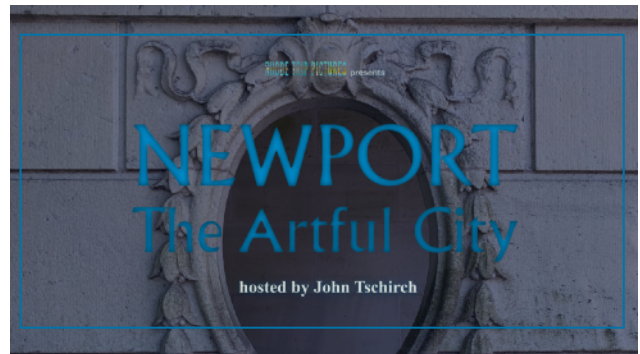
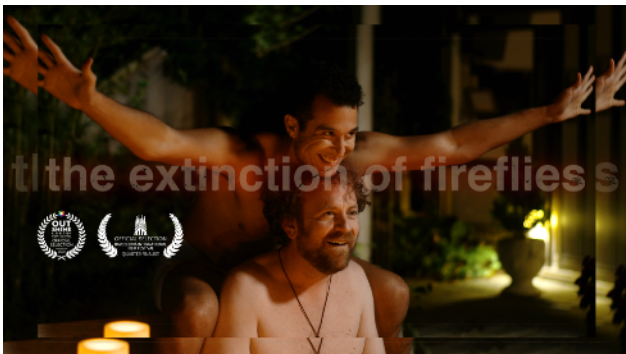
"Oscar Wilde In America" will be based on OscarWildeInAmerica.org, created by historical advisor John Cooper, directed by James Andrew Walsh, executive produced by RTP's Kimberly Chesser, with production design by Kristen Vallow.

RHODE TRIP PICTURES



Hallmark
MOVIES & MYSTERIES

The Last Magician
A musical about the boy Isaac Newton



1882 TOUR DATES

JANUARY				
1	9	New York	NY	Chickering Hall
2	17	Philadelphia	PA	Horticultural Hall
3	23	Washington	DC	Lincoln Hall
4	26	Baltimore	MD	Academy of Music
5	27	Albany	NY	Music Hall
6	31	Boston	MA	Music Hall
FEBRUARY				
7	1	New Haven	CT	Grand Opera House
8	2	Hartford	CT	Roberts' Opera House
9	3	Brooklyn	NY	Academy of Music
10	6	Utica	NY	City Opera House
11	7	Rochester	NY	Grand Opera House
12	8	Buffalo	NY	Academy of Music
13	13	Chicago	IL	Central Music-Hall
14	16	Fort Wayne	IN	Academy of Music
15	17	Detroit	MI	Detroit Music Hall
16	18	Cleveland	OH	Case Hall
17	21	Louisville	KY	Masonic Temple Theatre
18	22	Indianapolis	IN	English's Opera House
19	23	Cincinnati	OH	Grand Opera House
20	25	St Louis	MO	Mercantile Library Hall
21	27	Springfield	IL	Opera House
MARCH				
22	1	Dubuque	IA	Opera House
23	2	Rockford	IL	Grand Opera House
24	3	Aurora	IL	Coulter Opera House
25	4	Racine	WI	Belle City Hall
26	5	Milwaukee	WI	Grand Opera House
27	6	Joliet	IL	Opera House
28	7	Jacksonville	IL	TBA
29	8	Decatur	IL	Smith's Opera House
30	9	Peoria	IL	Rouse's Opera House
31	10	Bloomington	IL	Durley Hall
32	11	Chicago	IL	Central Music-Hall
33	15	Minneapolis	MN	Academy of Music
34	16	St. Paul	MN	Opera House
35	17	St. Paul	MN	Opera House
36	20	Sioux City	IA	Academy of Music
37	21	Omaha	NE	Boyd's Opera House
38	27	San Francisco	CA	Platt's Hall
39	28	Oakland	CA	Armory Hall (Oakland Light Cavalry)
40	29	San Francisco	CA	Platt's Hall
41	30	Oakland	CA	Armory Hall (Oakland Light Cavalry)
42	31	Sacramento	CA	Congregational Church
APRIL				
43	1	San Francisco	CA	Platt's Hall
44	3	San José	CA	California Theatre
45	4	Stockton	CA	Mozart Hall
46	5	San Francisco	CA	Platt's Hall
47	8	Sacramento	CA	Congregational Church

APRIL				
48	10	Salt Lake City	UT	Salt Lake Theatre
49	12	Denver	CO	Tabor Grand Opera House
50	13	Leadville	CO	Tabor Opera House
51	14	Colorado Springs	CO	Opera House
52	15	Denver	CO	Tabor Grand Opera House
53	17	Kansas City	MO	Coates Opera House
54	18	St Joseph	MO	Tootle's Opera House
55	19	Leavenworth	KS	New Opera House
56	20	Topeka	KS	Crawford's Opera House
57	21	Lawrence	KS	Liberty Hall
58	22	Atchison	KS	Corinthian Hall
59	24	Lincoln [AM]	NE	University Hall
60	24	Lincoln [PM]	NE	City Hall (a theatre)
61	25	Fremont	NE	(Shed's) Opera House
62	26	Des Moines	IA	(Moore's) Opera House
63	27	Iowa City	IA	Coldren Opera House
64	28	Cedar Rapids	IA	Greene's Opera House
65	29	Rock Island	IL	Harper's Theatre
MAY				
66	2	Dayton	OH	Music Hall
67	3	Columbus	OH	Comstock's Opera House
68	4	Harrisburg	PA	Grand Opera House
69	8	Freehold	NJ	Shinn's Hall
70	9	Newark	NJ	Park Theatre
71	10	Philadelphia	PA	Association Hall
72	11	New York	NY	Wallack's Theatre
73	12	Brooklyn	NY	Lee Avenue Baptist Church
74	15	Montreal	QC	Queen's Hall
75	16	Ottawa	ON	Grand Opera House
76	18	Quebec City	QC	Music Hall
77	20	Montreal	QC	Queen's Hall
78	22	Kingston	ON	Opera House
79	23	Belleville	ON	City Hall (theatre)
80	25	Toronto	ON	Grand Opera House
81	26	Brantford	ON	Stratford's Opera House
JUNE				
86	2	Boston	MA	Globe Theatre
87	11	Cincinnati	OH	Grand Opera House
88	12	Memphis	TN	Leubrie's Theater
89	14	Vicksburg	MS	Opera House
90	16	New Orleans	LA	Grand Opera House
91	19	Galveston	TX	The Pavilion
92	21	San Antonio	TX	Turner Opera Hall
93	23	Houston	TX	Gray's Opera House
94	26	New Orleans	LA	Spanish Fort Casino Pavilion
95	28	Mobile	AL	Frascati Theatre
96	29	Montgomery	AL	McDonald's Opera House
97	30	Columbus	GA	Springer Opera House
JULY				
98	3	Macon	GA	Ralston Hall
99	4	Atlanta	GA	DeGive's Opera House
100	5	Savannah	GA	The Savannah Theatre
101	6	Augusta	GA	Opera House
102	7	Charleston	SC	Academy of Music
103	8	Wilmington	NC	Opera House (Thalian Hall)
104	10	Norfolk	VA	Van Wyck's Academy of Music
105	11	Richmond	VA	Richmond Theatre
106	15	Newport	RI	The Casino (theatre)

AUGUST				
107	2	Babylon	NY	The Argyle Hotel
108	7	Narragansett Pie	NY	The Mathewson Hotel
109	9	Ballston Spa	NY	Gould Hall
110	10	Saratoga Springs	NY	Congress Hall
111	11	Sharon Springs	NY	Pavilion Hotel
112	12	Cooperstown	NY	Cooper House
113	14	Richfield Springs	NY	Spring House
114	15	Kaaterskill	NY	Hotel Kaaterskill
115	16	Long Beach	NY	Long Beach Hotel
116	17	Cornwall Heights	NY	Mountain House
117	18	Phoenicia	NY	Tremper House
118	19	Highmount	NY	Grand Hotel
119	21	Sea Bright	NJ	
120	22	Long Branch	NJ	
121	24	Asbury Park	NJ	
122	25	Atlantic City	NJ	
123	26	Cape May	NJ	
SEPTEMBER				
124	2	Saratoga Springs	NY	Congress Hall
125	25	Providence	RI	Low's Grand Opera House
126	26	Salem	MA	Mechanic Hall
127	27	Lynn	MA	Music Hall
128	29	Pawtucket	RI	Music Hall
129	30	North Attleborough	MA	Wamsutta Opera House
OCTOBER				
130	3	Bangor	ME	Opera House
131	4	Fredericton	NB	City Hall (Auditorium)
132	5	Saint John	NB	Mechanics' Institute
133	6	Amherst	NS	Academy of Music
134	7	Truro	NS	YMCA Hall
135	9	Halifax	NS	Academy of Music
136	10	Halifax	NS	Academy of Music
137	11	Charlottetown	PEI	Market Hall
138	12	Moncton	NB	Ruddick's Hall
139	13	Saint John	NB	Mechanics' Institute
140	26	Bridgeton	NJ	Moore's Music Hall
NOVEMBER				
141	27	New York	NY	Parepa Hall

