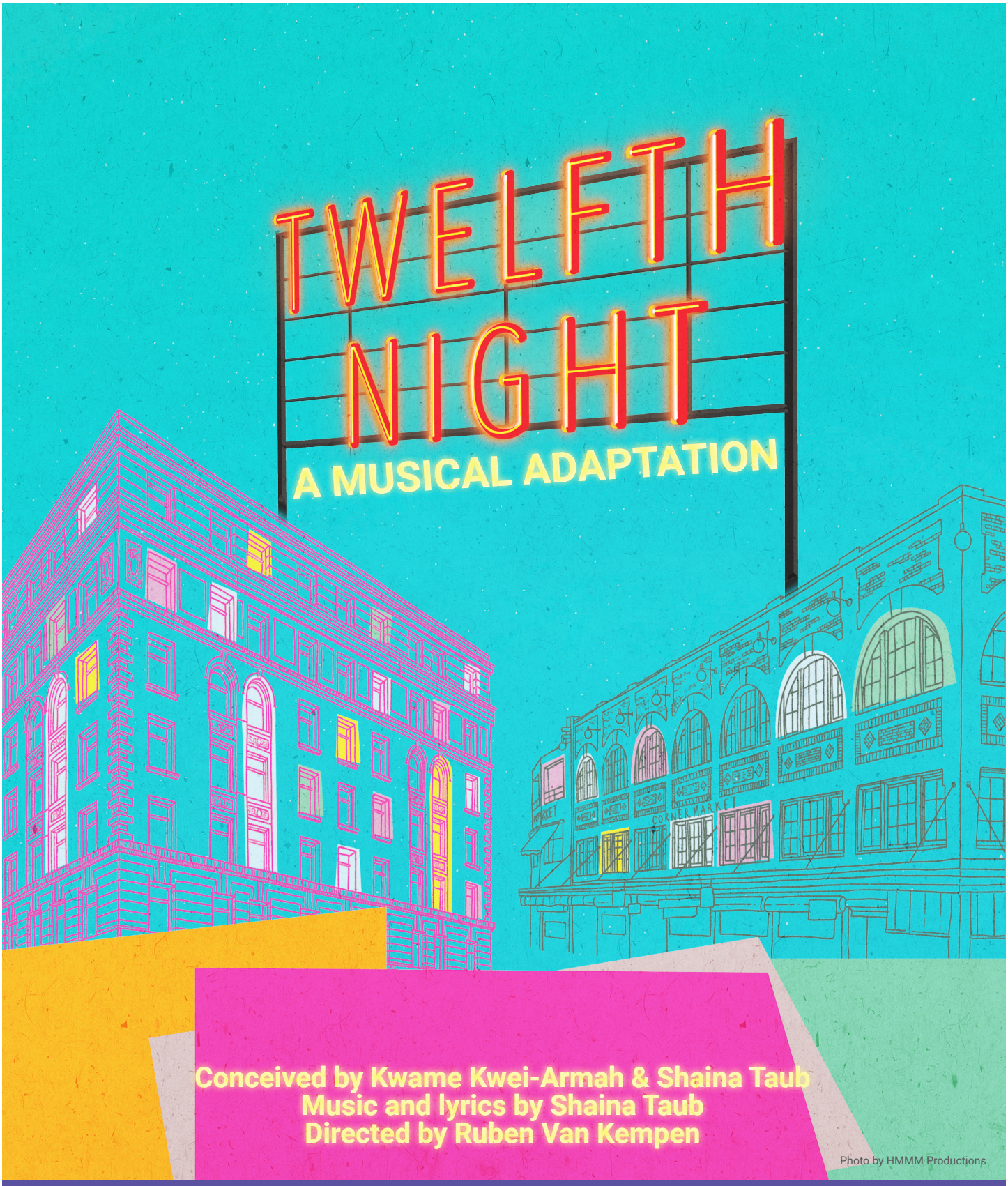


Conceived by Kwame Kwei-Armah & Shaina Taub
Music and lyrics by Shaina Taub
Directed by Ruben Van Kempen

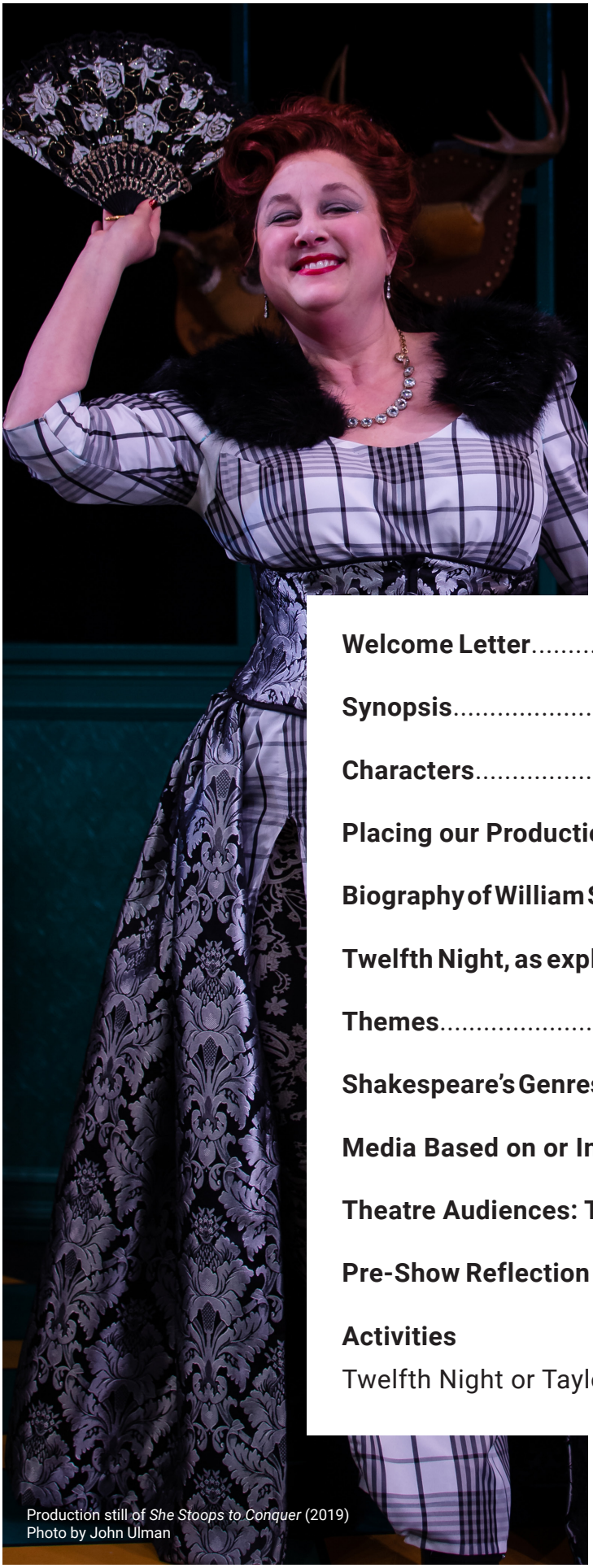
Photo by HMMM Productions

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

CONTENT

TWELFTH NIGHT Educator Resource Guide



Production still of *She Stoops to Conquer* (2019)
Photo by John Ulman

Welcome Letter.....1

Synopsis.....2

Characters.....4

Placing our Production.....8

Biography of William Shakespeare.....9

Twelfth Night, as explained by a Queer Highschooler.....10

Themes.....12

Shakespeare's Genres.....13

Media Based on or Inspired by Twelfth Night.....14

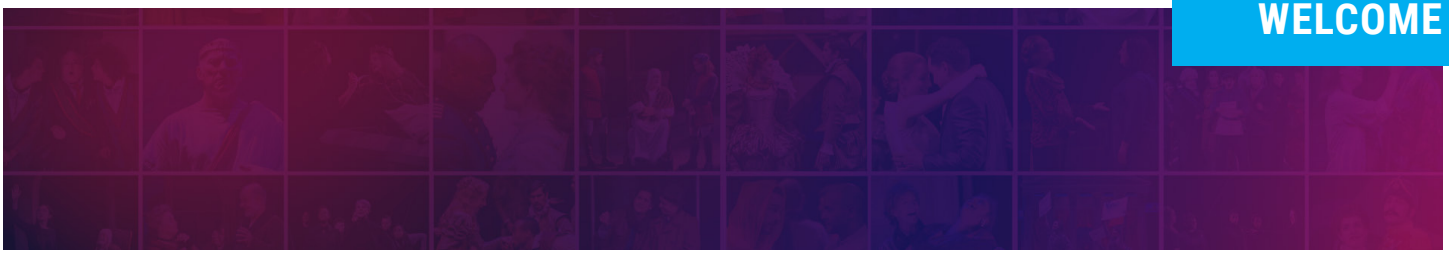
Theatre Audiences: Then & Now.....15

Pre-Show Reflection & Post-Show Discussion Questions.....16

Activities

Twelfth Night or Taylor Swift.....17

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company



Dear Educators,

Much of the beauty of Shakespeare's work is due to the themes that ring as true today as they did more than 400 years ago. *Twelfth Night* is no exception; Viola's decision to disguise herself in order to achieve personhood in Illyria examines the age-old struggle between authenticity and security. *Twelfth Night* is an honest reflection of the ways we have and continue to mask our appearance or behavior in order to find acceptance in unfamiliar environments.

Twelfth Night is a story we hear over and over again, and in this rendition, we follow Shakespeare's tradition of storytelling through music to find new avenues to engage with his work. This fast-paced musical interpretation exchanges much of Shakespeare's 17th-century English for modern musical styles and contemporary lyrics, taking to heart Orsino's famous line, "If music be the food of love, play on". In this production, set in the beating heart of Seattle, we witness characters interwoven into the tapestry of our community as they navigate their way to a true Shakespearean Happily Ever After without offsetting the important lessons of self-discovery that serve as such a resonant message in today's world.

The modern lyricism provides room outside the confines of Shakespearean verse for Viola to contemplate her gender identity. "Is it as simple as putting on a pair of pants?" she asks. "Am I more myself?" In the end, it doesn't boil down to Viola returning to her feminine-presenting look, but instead giving room for Viola to be the most authentic version of herself, and find love and acceptance not in spite of, but because of that.

In our Illyria, you are as much part of this story as anyone on the stage. We welcome you to the theatre, a place that relies on human connection and acceptance, to hear this story of authenticity. We hope its themes prove as meaningful as they do to us. Enjoy the show.

Best,
Anna Klein
Education Associate of Seattle Shakespeare Company

seattleshakespeare.org/education
206-733-8228 ext. 251 or education@seattleshakespeare.org

Twelfth Night
Student Matinees

Thurs, May 4th

Thurs, May 11th

Tues, May 16th

Thurs, May 18th

Starts at 10:30AM

Production Sponsors

ARTSFUND
The Norcliffe FOUNDATION
Smart flies Aer Lingus SEA to Ireland & Europe
TUXEDO SUNSHINE FOOD & FESTS A DSQUARED COMPANY

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Production still of *The School for Scandal* (2007)
Photo by John Ulman

The Plot of *Twelfth Night*

In the kingdom of Illyria, a nobleman named Orsino lies around listening to music, pining away for the love of Lady Olivia, who is in mourning for the loss of her brother. Despite his many attempts for her favor, Olivia insists her grief is too strong, so she will not marry for seven years.

Meanwhile, off the coast, a storm has caused a terrible shipwreck. A young, aristocratic-born woman named Viola is swept onto the Illyrian shore. Finding herself alone in a strange land, she assumes that her twin brother, Sebastian, has been drowned in the wreck, and tries to figure out what sort of work she can do. A friendly sea captain tells her about Orsino's courtship of Olivia, and Viola says that she wishes she could go to work in Olivia's home. But since Lady Olivia refuses to talk with any strangers, Viola decides that she cannot look for work with her. Instead, she decides to disguise herself as a man, taking on the name of Cesario, and goes to work in the household of Duke Orsino.

Viola (disguised as Cesario) quickly becomes a favorite of Orsino, who makes Cesario his page. Viola finds herself falling in love with Orsino—a difficult love to pursue, as Orsino believes her to be a man. However, when Orsino sends Cesario to deliver messages of affection to the disdainful Olivia, Olivia herself falls for the beautiful young page, believing Cesario to be a man.

The love triangle is complete: Viola (Cesario) loves Orsino, Orsino loves Olivia, and Olivia loves Cesario (Viola)—and everyone is miserable.
Meanwhile, we meet the other members of Olivia's household: her rowdy drunkard of an uncle, Sir Toby; his foolish friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who is trying in his hopeless way to court Olivia; Olivia's witty and pretty waiting-gentlewoman, Maria; Feste, the clever clown of the house; and Malvolio, the dour, prudish steward of Olivia's household.

When Sir Toby and the others take offense at Malvolio's constant efforts to spoil their fun, Maria engineers a practical joke to make Malvolio think that Olivia is in love with him. She forges a letter, supposedly from Olivia, addressed to her beloved (whose name is signified by the letters M.O.A.I.), telling him that if he wants to earn her favor, he should dress in yellow stockings and crossed garters, act haughtily, smile constantly, and refuse to explain himself to anyone. Malvolio finds the letter, assumes that it is addressed to him, and, filled with dreams of marrying Olivia and becoming noble himself, happily follows its commands. He behaves so strangely that Olivia comes to think that he is mad.

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

MJ Sieber, Lamar Legend, and Jocelyn Maher in Seattle Shakespeare's production of *She Stoops to Conquer* (2019). Photo by John Ulman

Meanwhile, Sebastian, who is still alive after all but believes his twin sister Viola to be dead, arrives in Illyria along with his friend and protector, Antonio. Antonio has cared for Sebastian since the shipwreck and is passionately attached to the young man—so much so that he follows him to Orsino's domain, in spite of the fact that he and Orsino are old enemies.

Sir Andrew, observing Olivia's attraction to Cesario (still Viola in disguise), challenges Cesario to a duel. Sir Toby, who sees the prospective duel as entertaining fun, eggs Sir Andrew on. However, when Sebastian—who looks just like the disguised Viola (Cesario)—appears on the scene, Sir Andrew and Sir Toby end up coming to blows with Sebastian, thinking that he is Cesario. Olivia enters amid the confusion. Encountering Sebastian and thinking that he is Cesario, she asks him to marry her. He is baffled, since he has never seen her before. He sees, however, that she is wealthy and beautiful, and he is therefore more than willing to go along with her.

Meanwhile, Antonio has been arrested by Orsino's officers and now begs Cesario (Viola) for help, mistaking him for Sebastian. Viola denies knowing Antonio, and Antonio is dragged off, crying out that Sebastian has betrayed him.

Elsewhere, Malvolio's supposed madness has allowed the gleeful Maria, Toby, and the rest to lock Malvolio into a small, dark room for his treatment, and they torment him at will. Feste dresses up as "Sir Topas," a priest, and pretends to examine Malvolio, declaring him definitely insane in spite of his protests. However, Sir Toby begins to think better of the joke, and they allow Malvolio to send a letter to Olivia, in which he asks to be released.

Eventually, Viola (still disguised as Cesario) and Orsino make their way to Olivia's house, where Olivia welcomes Cesario as her new husband, thinking him to be Sebastian, whom she has just married. Orsino is furious, but then Sebastian himself appears on the scene, and all is revealed. The siblings are joyfully reunited, and Orsino realizes that he loves Viola, now that he knows she is a woman, and asks her to marry him. We discover that Sir Toby and Maria have also been married privately. Finally, someone remembers Malvolio and lets him out of the dark room. The trick is revealed in full, and the embittered Malvolio storms off, leaving the happy couples to their celebration.

If music be the food of love, play on.

(Orsino, Act 1 Scene 1)

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Characters

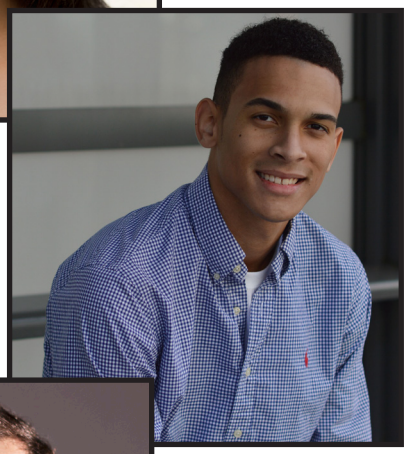
Viola
A young woman of aristocratic birth, who washed up on the shore of Illyria after her ship was wrecked in a storm. Believing she is the sole survivor, Viola decides to make her own way in the world. She disguises herself as a young man, calling herself "Cesario," and becomes a page to Duke Orsino.

Sebastian
Sebastian is Viola's twin brother, separated from her during the shipwreck. Sebastian was rescued by a sea captain called Antonio. After three months with Antonio, Sebastian decides to set out for Illyria, where he finds himself mistaken for 'Cesario'.

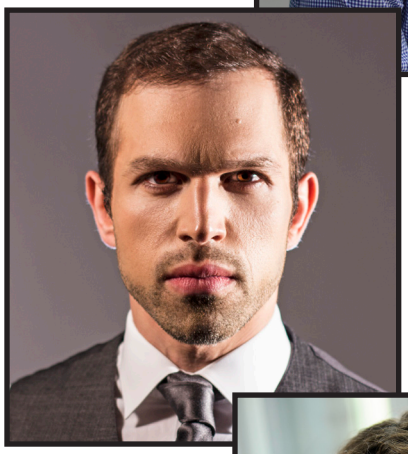
Duke Orsino
A wealthy man who governs the country of Illyria. He is in love with Olivia and sends messages of love to her, refusing to be put off by her answers that she is in mourning for the loss of her father and brother and is not interested in him.

Olivia
A wealthy, beautiful, and noble Illyrian lady. She is in mourning for her father and brother who have both died within the last year. Without any close family, she is in charge of her household and can decide for herself who she marries. Her only family is Sir Toby Belch, who is often drunk and she does not have much respect for him. Many characters desire Olivia's hand, including Orsino, Sir Andrew, and Malvolio.

Alexandria J. Henderson
as Viola



Donovan Mahannah
as Sebastian



Hisam Goueli
as Duke Orsino

Andi Alhadeff
as Olivia

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

CHARACTERS

Malvolio
The head servant in the household of Lady Olivia. Malvolio is very efficient but also very self-righteous. His priggishness and haughty attitude earn him the enmity of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Maria, and others. Malvolio secretly hopes to improve his social position and one day rule the household as Olivia's husband.

Sir Toby Belch
Olivia's uncle, and Maria's suitor. While Olivia lets Sir Toby Belch live with her, she does not approve of his rowdy behavior, practical jokes, heavy drinking, late-night carousing, or friends. Sir Toby has invited his friend Sir Andrew to stay and encourages Sir Andrew to think that Olivia wants to marry him. Sir Toby knows Olivia has no interest in Sir Andrew but the deception allows him to con money from Sir Andrew.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek
Sir Andrew is visiting his friend Sir Toby and staying in Olivia's house. Sir Andrew believes that Sir Toby is helping him in his bid to marry Olivia but Sir Toby is taking money from Sir Andrew and using him for entertainment.

Feste
A jester who used to work for Olivia's father. He has returned to Olivia's house after some time away. Feste makes a living as a musician and from his witty remarks for both of which he receives money from characters of a higher social position.

Jon Lutyens
as Malvolio

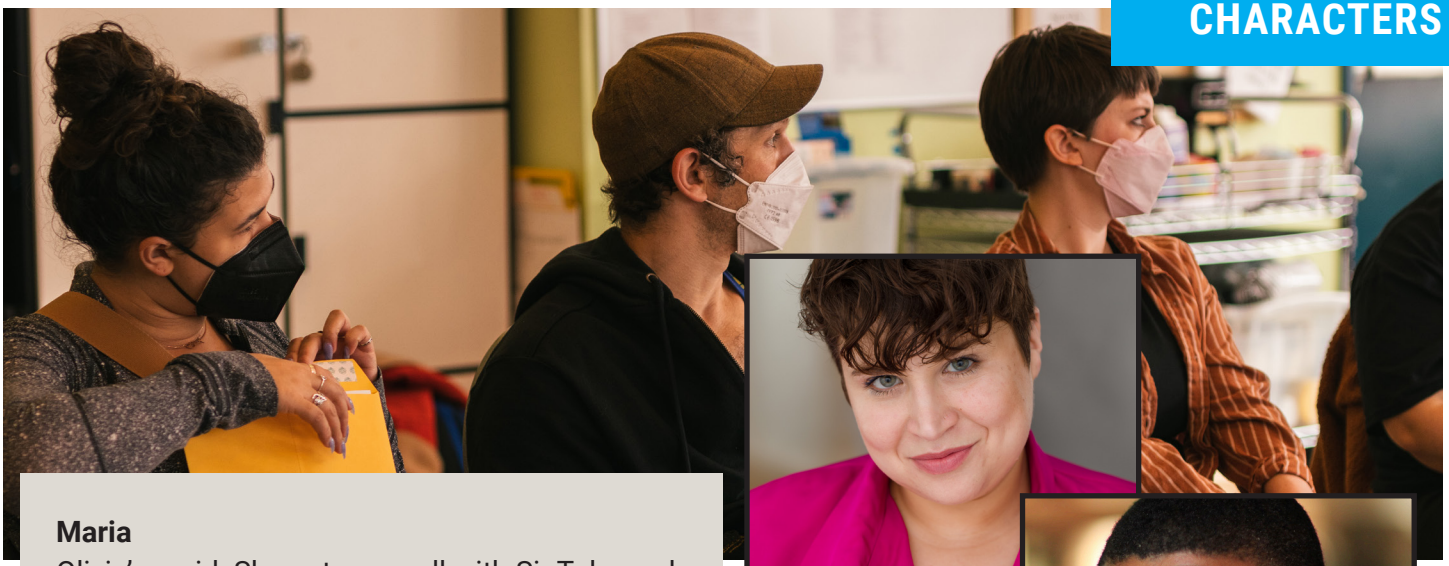
Danny Kam
as Sir Toby Belch

Jimmy Shields
as Sir Andrew Aguecheek

Karin Terry
as Feste

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

CHARACTERS



Maria
Olivia's maid. She gets on well with Sir Toby and uses her sharp wit to play a trick on the uppity Malvolio.

Antonio
A gentle Sea Captain who found Sebastian half drowned on the shore and rescued him. Antonio was once in a sea battle against Orsino's ships and knows he could be arrested for piracy if he is caught in Illyria.He quickly grows fond of Sebastian and stays with him, even following him to Illyria despite how dangerous this might be for him.

Fabian
A servant of some importance in Lady Olivia's house.

Valentine and Curio
Two gentlemen who attend Duke Orsino.

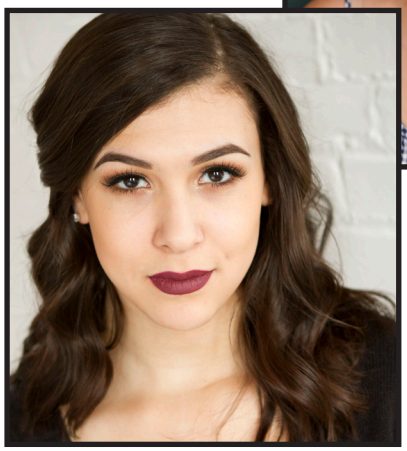
Illyrian
Citizens of Illyria.

Pilar O'Connell
as Maria

Jarron Williams
as Antonio

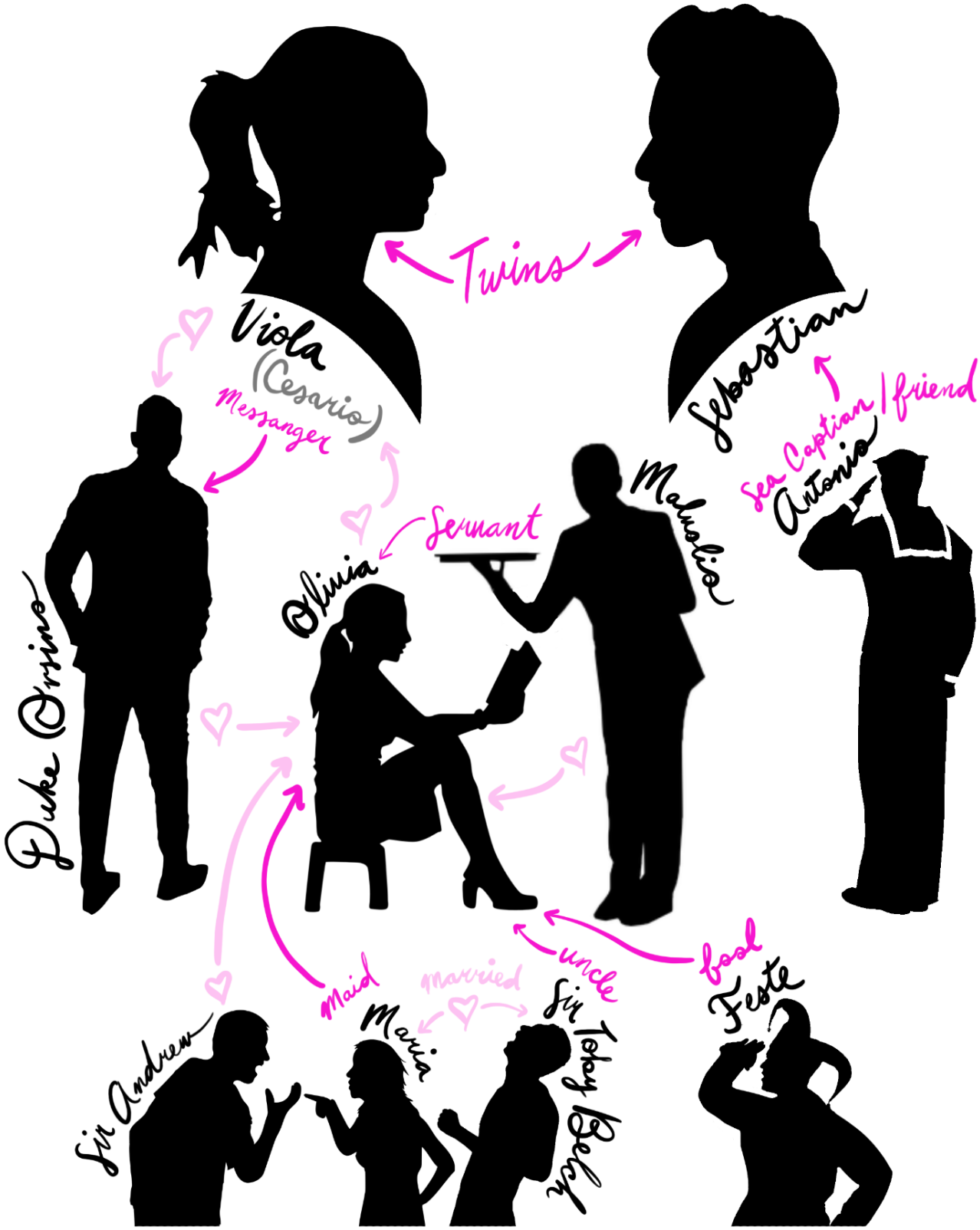
Ania Briggs
as Fabian

Natalya Czosnyka
as Illyrian



Simone Alene
as Illyrian

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company



All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Placing Our Production

This production of Twelfth Night is an adaptation of the play into a musical, and was first produced at The Public Theater in New York. You'll see familiar characters and hear some familiar scenes, but a lot of the script has been reimagined in musical form, with original songs replacing large chunks of text.

Our production of this musical is set in a present-day, spring feeling version of Seattle's own Pike Place Market! The director wants the play to feel like it is a well-known hub of the community, so he chose to set the play in our most visible central hub of activity. You will see flower vendors, fish signs, and of course the iconic "Public Market" sign!

Designed by Jocelyne Fowler, the costumes for this production will feel contemporary but heightened. There will be familiar outfits - dresses, pants, suit jackets, etc. - but they will be overly colorful and patterned with flowers and plaid. Our Illyrian market will be bursting with colors and life, and should feel like a fairy tale spring day in Seattle, Washington.

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Biography of William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, widely regarded as the greatest dramatist in the English language, was born in the month of April of 1564 to John Shakespeare, a city councilman and glove maker, and Mary Arden. He was the eldest son in a family of eight.

Not much is known about William's childhood or education. The local school in Stratford would have provided him with a foundation in classical Latin authors, as was standard in Elizabethan curriculum. In 1582, at eighteen years old, William was married to Anne Hathaway (not the same one from *The Princess Diaries*). The marriage was apparently a hasty one, as Anne gave birth to a daughter, Susanna, six months later. Two years later the couple had twins, a son Hamnet and a daughter Judith. After the birth of the twins, records of William cease for several years. These "lost years" have caused speculation among historians and suggestions about his vocation during this time vary greatly. Some say William began his theatrical career minding the horses at the theatre's stables. Regardless of what he was doing, William must have been honing his skills as a writer. No one knows when he began writing exactly, but we do know when people began to take notice.

In 1592, theatre records show that William Shakespeare's plays started being performed in London. William joined an acting company called Lord Chamberlain's Men. This company, co-owned by William and several other actors, became a favorite of Queen Elizabeth I and of her successor, James I. Records from the period show that William acted in his own plays, usually as minor characters, as well as in other productions. William Shakespeare's earliest plays were largely comedies and histories. In 1596, William's son, Hamnet, died of an unknown illness.

In 1599, the Lord Chamberlain's Men had gained enough success to fund the construction of their own theater venue, the Globe Theatre. As Shakespeare's career grew, the Lord Chamberlain's Men became one of the most popular theatre groups in London. William's writing also matured as he began writing his great tragedies.

In 1603, with James I's succession to the throne following the death of Elizabeth I, the new king became the official patron of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the group changed their name to the King's Men. In 1608, the King's Men expanded to purchase the indoor Blackfriars theatre. Shakespeare himself became quite wealthy due to his career success; he made numerous property purchases, including New Place, the second largest house in his hometown of Stratford. He divided his time between London and Stratford, eventually retiring to Stratford. Shakespeare died on April 23rd, 1616. The cause of his death is unknown.

"Richard Brinsley Sheridan" Encyclopædia Britannica. 03 July, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Brinsley-Sheridan>
Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition, Volume XXIV. John George Robertson. Cambridge: University Press, 1911. pp. 845-7.

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Twelfth Night, as Explained by a Queer High Schooler

The show begins with the introduction of Duke Orsino. Orsino is a major drama queen. He is a teenage boy who plays guitar, and thinks he's the only person to have ever felt anything before. He's insufferable, but, unfortunately, really hot. He's "in love" with the lady Olivia, who he's met like, once. Olivia wants nothing to do with his dramatic ass, because she has REAL problems, mainly that her WHOLE FAMILY just died, leaving her as the sole heir to her massive estate.

We are also introduced to Viola, a young girl who has just lost the last of her living family- her twin brother and best friend, Sebastian. She dresses up as a man, calls herself Cesario, and goes to work for Orsino, because girl's gotta eat. Or maybe for transgender reasons. You decide.

We then meet Olivia's insane family, consisting of her uncle Toby, a charming drunk, Maria, Olivia's maid and the sole brain cell in Illyria, and Andrew, Toby's stupid, chronically single friend. They are getting wasted. Andrew strikes out with Maria, so Toby points him in the direction of Olivia. We also meet Malvolio, an uptight servant of Olivia who HATES the drunkards he works with/ serves. This will be important later.

Back in the romance plot, Orsino sends Viola on a mission to woo Olivia on his behalf because boy cannot take no for an answer. Viola, attempting to suppress a crush on this stupid, stupid man, goes to Olivia.

We then see a long process of Olivia's security system, as various people in her court check out this weird guy who's just shown up. Viola, being very charming, gets up to Olivia, and tries to woo her, via poetry and bullying. Unfortunately, Viola's got CATASTROPHIC rizz, and Olivia falls head over heels for her.

Plot twist! SEBASTIAN'S ALIVE???? He was rescued by the friendly pirate, Antonio, who is down BAD bad.

As Viola is leaving Olivia's house, Malvolio gives her a ring from Olivia, which triggers a big old gender crisis, where we can see her lamenting at the insane situation she's found herself in. Viola is basically if you took a regular lady with some weird gender stuff going on and put her in a soap opera. It's a bad time.

Meanwhile, the clowns get wasted with the fool, Feste, who's also been around this whole time. Malvolio crashes the party because he hates fun, and the group plots revenge led by the devious Maria, once again proving her vast intelligence and utter lack of morals. Andrew whines about how he's not getting any.

Viola and Orsino are talking, and Orsino gets on some misogynistic BS, and Viola challenges him, saying she knows women's nature, because she had a sister who unrequitedly loved a man. She, through the story of this "sister" tells him about her life, and changes his mind. She leaves Orsino to presumably have a sexuality crisis for the next act and a half.

Toby and Andrew hide in some bushes while Malovlio reads a letter he thinks is from Olivia (but was actually forged by Maria) about how she's in love with him, and he should start being weird and dressing worse. It works wayyy better than it has any right to.

Olivia confesses her love to Viola, who struggles to reject her without explaining her whole deal. Viola tells her she doesn't like women, but Olivia might, and runs away. Andrew gets mad at Toby, because of course they were eavesdropping on this whole conversation, claiming Toby led him on about Olivia. Toby tells him

Lindsey Merino, Viviana Garzana, and Gretchen Hahn in Seattle Shakespeare's educational tour production of *Romeo and Juliet* (2023). Photo by Giao Nguyen.

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Rhys Daly as Prince Hal and Jesse Calixto as Falstaff in Seattle Shakespeare's production of *Drum and Colours: Henry IV* (2023). Photo by Robert Wade.

it's not too late, he just needs to fight Viola and win. Oh, violence. The way to any woman's heart!

Back the gay boys! Antonio follows Sebastin into Orsino's territory, despite the fact he will almost definitely be arrested for war crimes if caught, saying that he just can't be without him. Can you believe some people think they're straight? They agree to meet back at a hotel after the end of the day, and Antonio gives him money to spend in the town.

Olivia is losing her mind about Viola, when Malvolio walks in and hits on her in a really cringe way, also wearing a stupid outfit. Olivia sends an extremely delighted Toby to deal with him. The drunkards proceed to gaslight Malvolio, convincing him that he's possessed. He runs away and they laugh. Toby convinces the others to lock Malvolio in a dungeon and chain him up, which, in 2023 is considered to be committing several major felonies. Just then Andrew runs in with the written challenge for Viola. Toby reads it, and, realizing that it's dumb and not scary at all, comes up with a scheme. He convinces both Andrew and Viola that the other is going to kick their ass, so they're both too scared to fight. Just as the fight is beginning, though, Antonio jumps in to save Viola, mistaking her for Sebastian. He immediately gets arrested (for all the war crimes,) and asks Viola for bail. She's like "I'm so sorry, I don't have any money on me, also I don't know you." He's like "WTF Sebastian?" and she's like "SEBASTIAN'S ALIVE???" And runs away. Toby and Andrew chase after her to finish the fight.

Instead of finding Viola, Toby and Andrew find Sebastian and try to fight him, mistaking him for Viola. Sebastian is a wayy better fighter than Viola, and Toby and Andrew are getting their butts handed to them, when Olivia breaks up the fight and proposes to Sebastian, thinking he's Viola, who, confused, says yes. Meanwhile, Feste has been gaslighting and torturing Malovolio. Maria and Toby watch and mock him like the mean girls they are. When Maria and Toby get bored of and leave, the fool feels bad for what he's doing and gives Malvolio a chance to plead his case, via letter.

Sebastian tries to make sense of his last weird few hours, but is whisked off stage by Olivia and a priest she found for the weirdest (lavender) marriage ever.

Antonio is brought to Orsino and Viola for his judgment. He berates Viola, thinking she's Sebastian, for being a bad friend and leaving him hanging. Olivia walks in, dismisses Orsino and goes to Viola, who Olivia thinks she's married to. Viola fends her off and denies ever marrying her, but Olivia pulls up receipts, bridging in the priest to prove their marriage. Orsino is outraged and jealous. Suddenly, Andrew bursts in, calling for a doctor for Toby, who's gotten his butt kicked AGAIN by Sebastian. Toby also bursts in, whining that his head hurts. They leave, with Feste, to get some medical attention.

Sebastian comes in, profusely apologizing to Olivia for giving her uncle a concussion. He sees Antonio, and goes to him. Antonio, surely feeling like he's having a stroke, points him to Viola. The twins finally reunite! Viola confirms her identity to Sebastian by revealing herself as a woman. Olivia puts the pieces together, but figures the twin of the woman she's been pining after the whole show is good enough. Orsino proposes to Viola on the spot, and she accepts.

Olivia finally realizes Malvolio has been missing this whole time, and the fool gives her the letter he wrote. The fool explains everything, casually dropping that Maria and Toby got married off stage. Olivia demands that Malvolio be freed, and he bursts out, swearing revenge on all who wronged him.

Adrian Martin

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Themes in *Twelfth Night*

Love and Suffering

Twelfth Night is billed as a romantic comedy, however many of the characters seem to view love as an unpleasant affliction. Various characters claim to suffer painfully from being in love, or, rather, from the pangs of unrequited love. At the end of the play, as the happy lovers rejoice, both Malvolio and Antonio are prevented from having the objects of their desire. Love, thus, cannot conquer all obstacles, and those whose desires go unfulfilled remain no less in love but feel the sting of its absence all the more severely.

Gender and Sexuality

In *Twelfth Night*, gender and sexuality are portrayed as ambiguous, unstable, and sometimes fluid. In the play, Viola's disguise as a man fools Olivia into falling in love with her. Orsino and Viola (Spoilers!) end up together, which only makes sense if Orsino had feelings for Viola when he believed her to be a man. The play stresses the potential ambiguity of gender and sexuality.

Disguise and Deception

There are several characters in *Twelfth Night* that disguise themselves or deceive others. Some of the most notable examples: Viola disguising herself as Cesario; Maria and Sir Toby playing their prank on Malvolio; and Feste dressing up as the scholar, Sir Topas. Through the constant role-playing of his characters, Shakespeare reminds us that we, like the characters, may play roles in our own lives and be susceptible to the role playing of others.

Grief and Loss

Many characters are mourning the loss of family in *Twelfth Night*.

Actors in Seattle Shakespeare's production of Macbeth (2022). Photo by Robert Wade.

Darius Sakui and Jesse Calixto in Seattle Shakespeare's production of *Drum and Colours: Henry IV* (2023). Photo by Robert Wade.

Andy Walker and Gretchen Hahn in Seattle Shakespeare's educational tour production of *Julius Caesar* (2023). Photo by Giao Nguyen.

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Shakespeare's Genres

While occasionally dissected further, Shakespeare's plays are typically divided into three categories: **Comedy, Tragedy, and History.**

COMEDY: A Shakespearean comedy is not necessarily what a modern audience would expect when they hear "comedy". Whilst there may be some laugh-out-loud moments, the most commonly identifiable traits of a Shakespearean comedy are:

- Young lovers struggling to overcome problems (often thanks to their strict elders)
- Mistaken identities, often involving disguise
- Complex, interwoven plot-lines
- Frequent use of puns
- A happy ending (often involving a wedding)

Actors in Seattle Shakespeare's Wooden O production of *The Comedy of Errors* (2021). Photo by John Ullman.

Gretchen Hahn and Stephanie Roman as Friar Lawrence and Romeo in Seattle Shakespeare's educational tour production of *Romeo and Juliet* (2023). Photo by Giao Nguyen

TRAGEDY: While they may feature comedic moments, Shakespearean tragedies boast high-stakes storylines that often involve the death of main characters. The main features of a Shakespearean tragedy are that:

- Characters are impacted heavily by social or societal turmoil
- Themes of inescapable doom
- A noble, but flawed central character that suffers a terrible downfall
- Ends in death

HISTORY: Shakespeare's histories are focused on English monarchs, and were often used to perpetuate Elizabethan propaganda, and influence the perception of royalty. Many historians have suggested there are inaccuracies in the depictions, but the plays have proved influential for centuries in shaping how we view these historical figures.

Kathy Hsieh, Rhys Daly, and Rachel Guyer-Mafune as King Henry IV, Prince Hal, and Poins in Seattle Shakespeare's production of *Drum and Colours: Henry IV* (2023). Photo by Robert Wade

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

MEDIA BASED ON, OR INSPIRED BY, *TWELFTH NIGHT*

MOVIES & MUSICALS!

She's The Man (2006), **Malvolio** (2009), **Motocrossed** (2001),
Illyria (2002), **All Shook Up** (2004)

BOOKS:

The Last True Poets of the Sea by Julia Drake

The Academy by Emmaline Andrews

Butcher, Baker, Vampire Slayer by Juliann Whicker

The Madness of Love by Katharine Davies

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Theater Audiences: Then & Now

Audiences in Shakespeare's time behaved much differently than what we think of today when we go to the theater. In general, audiences were much more rowdy and directly involved in the show than modern audiences.

London theaters like the Globe could accommodate up to 3,000 people watching popular plays. With theaters running most afternoons, that could mean as many as 10,000–20,000 people could see a play every week! Shakespeare's audience included the very rich, the upper-middle class, and the lower-middle class. People sought entertainment just as we do today and could afford to spend money going to the theater. Royalty might attend the theater in a private gallery or summon the players to perform at their court, as Elizabeth I and James I did.

To get into the Globe Theatre cost a penny. In Elizabethan England, one penny would buy a loaf of bread, a pint of ale, or a ticket to the theater. Those who paid just one penny were known as "groundlings," because they stood on the ground in what was known as "the yard," which is the area closest to the stage. For another penny, they could sit on a bench just behind the yard. For a penny more, they could sit more comfortably on a cushion. To get into the upper galleries, which were covered and had seats, cost would start at 6 pence.

Since there was no electricity, both the stage and the audience were in broad daylight, allowing actors and audience members to see each other and interact. Shakespeare's soliloquies would be spoken directly to the audience, who could potentially answer back! The audience would move around, buy food and ale in the theater, clap for the hero, boo the villain, and cheer for the special effects. The audience might dance at the end of a comedy along with the characters onstage. If an audience didn't like a play, they might even throw furniture and damage the theater!

Shakespeare used several tricks to gain and hold his audience's attention. His plays rarely begin with main characters onstage; instead a minor character typically begins the first scene.Without lights to dim at beginning of a play, the play simply started when actors walked onstage and started to speak, usually over the audience's noise, as they settled in to watch. The first scene would usually set the mood of the play, but the opening dialogue wasn't vital because it might not be heard.

Another trick that Shakespeare used was to break up the main action of the play with clowning. In most of his plays, there is comic relief in the form of "clown" or "fool" characters sprinkled throughout the show, making jokes or clowning around onstage. This ensured that even during a 3-hour history play, there would be something that appealed to everyone.

A performance of *King Lear* at the new Globe Theatre in London.

Audiences today can learn from Elizabethan audiences about how to watch a Shakespeare play. Here are some tips:

- Remind yourself that the first scene mostly sets the mood of the play and rarely has vital dialogue, so if you miss some of the words at the beginning, that is okay. It can take a couple minutes to adjust to Shakespeare's unusual language. It's a little bit like listening to a friend with a heavy accent speak; at first it can be difficult to understand, but after a minute or two it's easy. Our actors are professionally trained to make sure that you understand the words, so you'll catch on quickly!
- Enjoy the play and feel free to express your enjoyment. Laugh at the clowns, clap for the heroes, gasp at important revelations, and applaud for the actors at the end to thank them for their work. This will keep you engaged in the show and help let the actors know that the audience is paying attention and enjoying the play.
- Remember that in a play, unlike in a movie, the actors can see and hear you too! Even with more sophisticated theater lighting that keeps the stage lit and the audience dim, the actors are often very close to the first few rows, and they can definitely hear the audience. That means please don't talk to your neighbor during the show, don't allow your phone to make noise, and don't text (it lights up your face!) — these can all be very distracting.
- And finally, remember that the theater is for everyone. In Shakespeare's day it was a very affordable form of entertainment that appealed to everyone. Theater is not meant to be only for the upper class, only for college graduates, or only for older people. Shakespeare's plays can speak to you whether you have seen lots of plays or no plays at all, if you're rich, poor, young, old, or if you enjoy cheap jokes, amazing speeches, or action sequences. Shakespeare wrote his plays to be for everyone and that still shows through today.

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Pre-Show Reflection Questions

These questions will help students to think about some of the big ideas behind the play before watching it. Have students discuss these questions in partners or small groups, or write journal entries based on these prompts.

- **Viola disguises herself as Cesario to protect herself in Illyria. Think of a time when you had to disguise your true intentions. Why did you do it? How did you accomplish it? In what ways did it either serve or not serve you?**
- **There are several types of love reflected in Twelfth Night. Brainstorm some types of love that you might see in your life. Are there types of love that are more powerful or valuable than others? Why or why not?**
- **How does music impact storytelling? Think of a song that you think conveys a message better than words alone.**
- **There are several characters who do things that aren't in their best interest because they are in love. How does love impact decision making? Can you think of a time where you behaved uncharacteristically because of love?**

Post-Show Discussion Questions

After the show, discuss these questions in small groups or as a class. For all of these, student responses may vary. Some possible responses are provided, but students may have additional answers based on their reactions to the play.

How do lies affect love in Twelfth Night? In what ways do they allow love to grow? In what ways do they harm the growth of love? How does the revelation of the truth affect love?

What does the play disclose about gender roles, desires, and identities? Does Orsino love Olivia or Cesario? Does Olivia love Cesario or Viola?

Do the modern lyrics change the narrative of Shakespeare's classical text? Why or why not?

In much of Twelfth Night, Shakespeare treads the boundary of comedy and tragedy, specifically with the subplot of Malvolio. Why do you think Shakespeare does this? How does it serve the story overall?

There are several characters in the play who are dealing with grief. What is the parallel between love and grief in Twelfth Night? In what ways do they compliment each other? (Answers will vary)

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

Activity: Twelfth Night or Taylor Swift?

While Shakespeare is regarded as the greatest dramatist in the English language, his reign will soon be taken by the world renowned singer-songwriter, Taylor Swift. Follow along below and guess which of these poetic lines are from *Twelfth Night* or from a popular Taylor Swift song!

1. “Your touch brought forth an incandescent glow, tarnished but so grand”
2. “The masquerade revelers drunk.”
3. “Do you miss the rogue who coaxed you into paradise and left you there?”
4. “But, if you were the devil, you are fair.”
5. “He looks up grinning like a devil”
6. “Good my mouse of virtue, answer me.”
7. “There is nothing I do better than revenge.”
8. “Two lips indifferent red”
9. “You should not rest between the elements of air and earth, but you should pity me.”
10. “He’s drunk nightly in your company.”
11. “You kiss my face and we’re both drunk.”
12. “I made you my temple, my mural, my sky”
13. “I once believed love would be burning red”
14. “I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether.”
15. “With adorations, fertile tears, with groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.”
16. “Love’s a fragile little flame. It can burn out.”
17. “They say all’s well that ends well.”
18. “Red lips and rosy cheeks.”
19. “Make me a willow cabin at your gate.”
20. “Life was a willow and it bent right to your wind.”
21. “I wish to know the fatal flaw that makes you long to be magnificently cursed.”
22. “And sing them loud even in the dead of night.”
23. “That old and antique song we heard last night.”
24. “Can’t not think of all the cost and the things that will be lost.”
25. “Past the blood and bruise. Past the curses and cries. Beyond the terror in the nightfall.”
26. “Take the words for what they are; a dwindling, mercurial high.”
27. “Let us satisfy our eyes with the memorials and the things of fame that do renown this city.”

ANSWER KEY: Twelfth Night - 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 19, 22, 23, 27 - Taylor Swift - 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company

MISSION STATEMENT

With the plays of William Shakespeare at our core, Seattle Shakespeare Company engages our audiences, our artists and our community in the universal human experience inherent in classic drama through the vitality, immediacy and intimacy of live performance and dynamic outreach programs.

ABOUT US

Seattle Shakespeare Company is the Puget Sound region's year-round, professional, classical theatre. The company's growing success stems from a deep belief in the power and vibrancy of the time-tested words and ideas of Shakespeare and other classical playwrights along with a commitment to artistic excellence on stage. The results have been provocative performances that both challenge and delight audiences while fostering an appreciation for great stage works. Our combined programs — which include indoor performances, free outdoor productions, regional tours, educator and youth programs — reach across barriers of income, geography, and education to bring classical theatre to Washington State.

EDUCATION STAFF CONTACTS

In-School Residencies and Camps

Michelle Burce, Education Director
206-733-8228 ext. 251
michelleb@seattleshakespeare.org

Anna Klein, Education Associate
206-733-8228 ext. 251
annak@seattleshakespeare.org

Student Matinees

Lorri McGinnis, Box Office Manager
206-733-8228 ext. 220
studentmat@seattleshakespeare.org

General

Ticket office: 206-733-8222
Administrative offices: 206-733-8228
Fax: 206-733-8202
Seattle Shakespeare Company
PO Box 19595
Seattle, WA 98109
seattleshakespeare.org

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In-School Residencies, Matinees, and Workshops

- In-School Residencies bring active, customized curriculum into schools across Washington State. Professional teaching artists plan with teachers to tailor each residency to fit the needs and objectives of the classroom. Seattle Shakespeare Company residencies inject vibrant, active exercises into lessons that unlock the text, themes, and actions of a Shakespeare play.
- Student Matinees bring over 3,000 students annually to our mainstage productions in the Seattle Center. Teachers are provided free study guides, and student groups are invited to stay after the show for a free Q&A session with the cast.
- Pre-show and post-show workshops can be booked to accompany mainstage matinees. These workshops include an introduction to the play itself, student activities, and insights into direction and design choices of our specific production.

Touring Productions

- Fresh and accessible 90-minute productions tour across Washington State each Spring, reaching more than 14,000 students and adults. These nimble productions perform as easily in school gymnasiums as professional theatre facilities. Teachers are provided free study guides and students enjoy free post-show Q&A sessions with the cast.
- Schools have the opportunity to book accompanying in-school residencies with touring productions, led by members of the touring cast and additional teaching artists.

Camps and Classes

- Our summer "Camp Bill" series in Seattle and Edmonds offers young actors a variety of camps to choose from or combine. Camps range from a One-Week Introduction to a Three-Week Production Intensive, with many options in between.
- In our Fall and Spring after-school "Short Shakes" programs, young actors develop their skills and gain hands-on performance and production experience.
- Seattle Shakespeare Company occasionally offers adult classes and workshops to our community featuring guest artists who work on our stage.

All original material copyright © 2023 Seattle Shakespeare Company