

twelfth night

chicago
shakespeare theater
on navy pier



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Teacher Handbook

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Cover illustrations: Original renderings by Designer Lucy Osborne for CST's 2009 production of *Twelfth Night*

Acknowledgments

This Teacher Handbook grew out of a team effort of teachers past and present, Chicago Shakespeare Theater artists and educators, and scholars, past and present. Chicago Shakespeare Theater gratefully acknowledges the work of Dr. Rex Gibson and the Cambridge School Shakespeare Series, and The Folger Shakespeare Institute, whose contributions to the field of teaching have helped shape our own ideas through the years.

Barbara Gaines
Artistic Director



Criss Henderson
Executive Director

Chicago Shakespeare Theater is Chicago's professional theater dedicated to the works of William Shakespeare. Founded as Shakespeare Repertory in 1986, the company moved to its seven-story home on Navy Pier in 1999. In its Elizabethan-style courtyard theater, 500 seats on three levels wrap around a deep thrust stage—with only nine rows separating the farthest seat from the actors. Chicago Shakespeare also features a flexible 180-seat black box studio theater, a Teacher Resource Center, and a Shakespeare specialty bookstall.

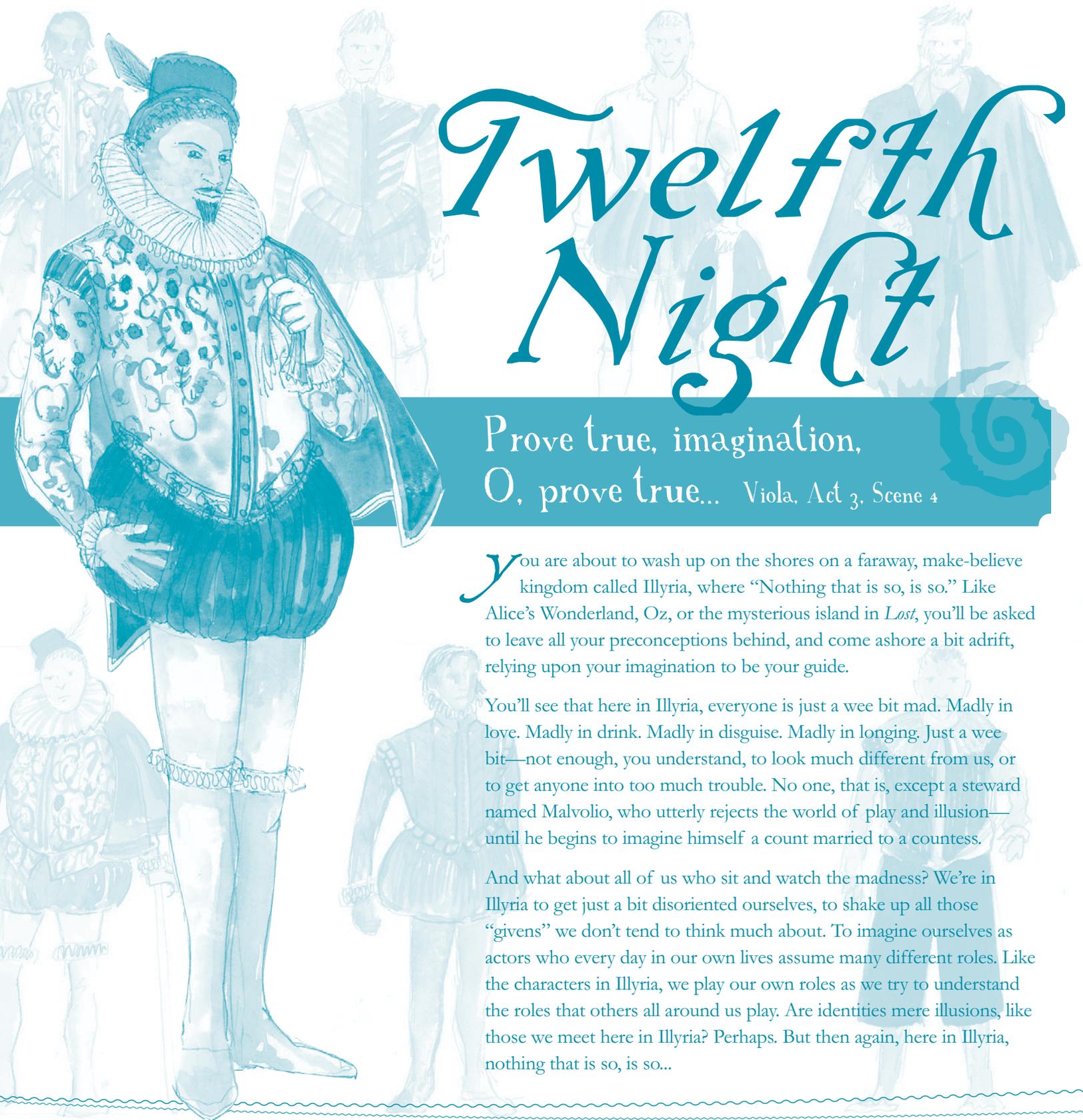
In its first 21 seasons, the Theater has produced nearly the entire Shakespeare canon: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Cymbeline*, *Hamlet*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Parts 1, 2 and 3*, *Julius Caesar*, *King John*, *King Lear*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *Pericles*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Winter's Tale*.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater was the 2008 recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award. Chicago's Jeff Awards year after year have honored the Theater, including repeated awards for Best Production and Best Director, the two highest honors in Chicago theater.

Since Chicago Shakespeare's founding, its programming for young audiences has been an essential element in the realization of its mission. Team Shakespeare supports education in our schools, where Shakespeare is part of every required curriculum. As a theater within a multicultural city, we are committed to bringing Shakespeare to a young and ethnically diverse audience of 50,000 students each year. Team Shakespeare's programming includes free teacher workshops, student matinees of mainstage shows, post-performance discussions, comprehensive teacher handbooks, and an abridged, original production each year for student and family audiences. Team Shakespeare offers a region-wide forum for new vision and enthusiasm for teaching Shakespeare in our schools.

The 2008–09 Season offers a student matinee series for Chicago Shakespeare Theater's productions of Peter Schaffer's *Amadeus* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*. This winter, Chicago Shakespeare presents especially for students a 75-minute abridged adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, at its theater on Navy Pier and on tour to schools and theaters across the region. We hope that you and your students will enjoy our work—and Shakespeare's creative genius brought to life on stage.

Marilyn J. Halperin, *Director of Education*
Beatrice Bosco, *Associate Director of Education*
Andie Thomalla, *Education Outreach Manager*
Rachel Hillmer, *Education Associate*



Twelfth Night

Prove true, imagination,
O, prove true... Viola, Act 3, Scene 4

You are about to wash up on the shores on a faraway, make-believe kingdom called Illyria, where “Nothing that is so, is so.” Like Alice’s Wonderland, Oz, or the mysterious island in *Lost*, you’ll be asked to leave all your preconceptions behind, and come ashore a bit adrift, relying upon your imagination to be your guide.

You’ll see that here in Illyria, everyone is just a wee bit mad. Madly in love. Madly in drink. Madly in disguise. Madly in longing. Just a wee bit—not enough, you understand, to look much different from us, or to get anyone into too much trouble. No one, that is, except a steward named Malvolio, who utterly rejects the world of play and illusion—until he begins to imagine himself a count married to a countess.

And what about all of us who sit and watch the madness? We’re in Illyria to get just a bit disoriented ourselves, to shake up all those “givens” we don’t tend to think much about. To imagine ourselves as actors who every day in our own lives assume many different roles. Like the characters in Illyria, we play our own roles as we try to understand the roles that others all around us play. Are identities mere illusions, like those we meet here in Illyria? Perhaps. But then again, here in Illyria, nothing that is so, is so...

KRAFT is the principal sponsor of Team Shakespeare, the Theater’s program for students and teachers.

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The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation is underwriter for the services of guest director Josie Rourke and guest designer Lucy Osborne on *Twelfth Night*.

Major annual support for Team Shakespeare is provided by: **The Brinson Foundation, Nellie and Sheldon Fink, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, Ann E. Kutak, Edward and Lucy R. Minor Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Sheila Penrose and Ernie Mahaffey, Polk Bros. Foundation, Tim Schwertfeger and Gail Waller, Carol and Gordon Segal and the Segal Family Foundation II, Walt and Judy Skowronski, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, and Anonymous donors.**

Additional funding courtesy of **Baxter International, Inc., Helen Brach Foundation, The Crown Family, The Field Foundation of Illinois, Harris Family Foundation, Grover Hermann Foundation, HSBC – North America, Illinois Tool Works, Mazza Foundation, The Col. Stanley R. McNeil Foundation, Peoples Gas, Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Foundation, Dr. Scholl Foundation, The Siragusa Foundation, Stefani’s Children’s Foundation, and Anonymous donors.**



Art That Lives

Drama is a living art. It is written to be performed live before a group of people who form an audience and together experience a play. Ancient cave paintings depict men disguised as animals. Since ancient times, impersonation and imitation have served man in his effort to express himself and to communicate his experience. The drama of Western civilization has its roots in the ancient Greeks' religious rituals and observances. Until the Renaissance, when Shakespeare wrote, drama was closely tied to religious beliefs and practice.

Drama not only depicts human communication, it *is* human communication. In theater, unlike television or film, there is a two-way communication that occurs between the actors and their audience. The audience hears and sees the actors, and the actors hear and see their audience. We are used to thinking about the actors' roles in a play, but may find it strange to imagine ourselves, the audience, playing an important role in this living art. Because the art lives, each performance is guaranteed to be different, depending in part upon an audience's response. Live drama is the sharing of human experience, intensely and immediately, in the theater, which momentarily becomes our world.

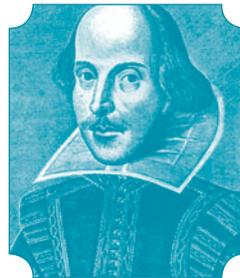
A live theater production depends upon its audience. The best performances depend upon the best actors—and the best audiences. When the actors sense a responsive, interested audience, their work is at its best—full of animation and energy. When the actors sense disinterest, they, too, are distracted, and the play they create is bound to be less interesting.

The experience of live performance is of a story told by the actors and audience together. In this sense, you are also a storyteller in the experience of live theater. We hope you'll enjoy your role—and help us give you a dramatic experience that you'll always remember.

[Theatrical performance] is essentially a sociable, communal affair. This is important. To resist this is, I think, to ruin one of the very important parts of the theatrical experience. Let the play and let the fact that temporarily you are not your private self, but a member of a closely-fused group, make it easy for the performance to 'take you out of yourself.' This, I suggest, is the object of going to a play...to be taken out of yourself, out of your ordinary life, away from the ordinary world of everyday. —Tyrone Guthrie, 1962

HOW CAN YOU HELP US GIVE YOU THE BEST PERFORMANCE WE CAN?

- ⑥ Emotions are part of drama. We hope that you'll laugh, cry and even gasp—as an honest, spontaneous response to the story, not in order to distract attention from the stage.
- ⑥ Please keep all “noisemakers”—food, gum, personal stereos, etc.—back at school or on the bus! In a quiet theater, wrappers and munching are heard by all, the actors included...
- ⑥ All electronics should be fully turned off. Flashes on cameras, the glow of an open cell phone, or a lone iPod going off under someone's seat can all make the actors lose their focus and can even be dangerous. Digital cameras, along with all other kinds of recording devices, are prohibited, as is text-messaging.



Bard's Bio

Some have raised doubts whether Shakespeare, with his average education and humble origins, possibly could have written what has long been considered the best verse drama composed in the English language. Was this man “Shakespeare” a mere decoy for the true author who, for his (or her) own reasons, could not reveal his (or her...) true identity—someone, at least, who could boast of a university education, a noble upbringing, and experience in the world outside England's borders? There are worldwide societies, eminent actors, as well as a few scholars who insist upon the existence of a “Shakespeare conspiracy.” But not until 1769, 150 years after Shakespeare's death, did these theories arise. To all appearances, Shakespeare's contemporaries and immediate successors never seemed to question whether William Shakespeare wrote the celebrated works attributed to him.

The exact day of William Shakespeare's birth is not known, but his baptism, traditionally conducted three days after a child's birth, was recorded on April 26, 1564 and consequently, his birthday is celebrated on April 23.

His father John Shakespeare was a tanner, glover, grain dealer and town official of the thriving market town of Stratford-upon-Avon. His mother Mary Arden was the

daughter of a prosperous, educated farmer. Though the records are lost, Shakespeare undoubtedly attended Stratford's grammar school, where he would have acquired some knowledge of Latin and Greek and the classical writers. There is no record that Shakespeare acquired a university education of any kind.

At 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. They had one daughter Susanna, followed by twins, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, died at age 11. From 1585, the year in which the twins were baptized, until 1592, when he is first referred to as a dramatist in London, we know nothing of Shakespeare's life. These seven so-called "lost" years are filled with legend and conjecture, and we do not know what brought Shakespeare to London or how he entered its world of theater. The first reference to Shakespeare as an actor and playwright appears in 1592 and was made by Robert Greene, a rival playwright and pamphleteer, who attacked Shakespeare as an "upstart crow" for presuming to write plays (when he was a mere actor) and copying the works of established dramatists.

Subsequent references to Shakespeare indicate that as early as 1594 he was not only an actor and playwright, but also a partner in a new theater company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which soon became one of London's two principal companies. The company's name changed to the King's Men in 1603 with the accession of James I, and it endured until the Puritans closed the theaters in 1642. From 1599 the company acted primarily at the Globe playhouse, in which Shakespeare held a one-tenth interest.

During his career of approximately 20 years, Shakespeare wrote or collaborated in what most scholars now agree upon as 38 plays. His earliest plays, including *Love's Labor's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III*, *King John* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, were written between 1589 and 1594. Between 1594 and 1599, Shakespeare wrote both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*, as well as other plays, including *Richard II*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*. His great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, were composed between 1599 and 1607, and were preceded by his last play traditionally categorized as a comedy, *Measure for Measure*. The earlier histories, comedies and tragedies made way for Shakespeare's final dramatic form—the so-called "Romances," which were written between 1606 and 1611 and include *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. These were the works of a playwright no longer bound in any way by the constraints of historical and tragic conventions.

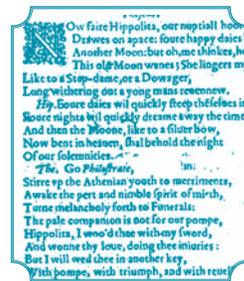
Although single volumes of approximately half his plays were published in Shakespeare's lifetime, there is no evidence that he oversaw their publication. It was not until 1623, seven years

after Shakespeare's death, that 36 of his plays were published in the first Folio. Dramatic scripts were only just beginning to be considered "literature" as we understand it today, and so it is not at all surprising that so little attention was given to Shakespeare's plays in published form until seven years after his death. However, we do know that Shakespeare oversaw the publication of three of his narrative poems and a collection of 154 sonnets.

By 1592, Shakespeare had emerged as a rising playwright in London, where he continued to enjoy fame and financial success as an actor, playwright and part-owner of London's leading theater company. After nearly 20 years in the theater, in 1611 he retired to live as a country gentleman in Stratford, his birthplace, until his death on April 23, 1616.

Shakespeare was the man, who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there.

—John Dryden, 1688



The First Folio

Chicago Shakespeare Theater utilizes the first Folio as its script and acting "blueprint." The first Folio serves as the most authentic and effective manual available to Shakespearean actors nearly 400

years after its publication. Its punctuation gives clues to our actors about what words to emphasize and about which ideas are important. In Shakespeare's own theater company, with only a few days at most to rehearse each new play, these built-in clues were essential. Today, they can still help actors make the language much easier to understand—even though you're hearing language that's 400 years younger than ours.

Shakespeare wrote his plays for the stage, not for publication. In Shakespeare's day, plays were not considered literature at all. When a play was published—if it was published at all—it was printed inexpensively in a small book, called a "quarto," the sixteenth-century equivalent of our paperbacks. It was not until 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, when a contemporary of his, dramatist Ben Jonson, published his own plays in an oversized book called a "folio," that plays were viewed as literature worthy of publication. Jonson was chided as bold and arrogant for his venture.

Shakespeare, unlike Jonson, showed absolutely no interest or involvement in the publication of his plays, and during Shakespeare's own lifetime, only half of his plays were ever printed—and those as quartos. It was only after the playwright's death when two of Shakespeare's close colleagues decided to ignore tradition and gather the plays for publication. In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, the first Folio, a book containing 36 of the 38 plays, was published. The first Folio was compiled from stage prompt books, from the playwright's handwritten manuscripts, from various versions of some of the plays already published—and from the memory of his actors. Its large format (much like a modern atlas) was traditionally reserved for the “authority” of religious and classical works.

Shakespeare's first Folio took five “compositors” two-and-one-half years to print. The compositors manually set each individual letter of type by first memorizing the text line by line. There was no editor overseeing the printing, and the compositors frequently altered punctuation and spelling. Errors caught in printing would be corrected but, due to the prohibitively high cost of paper, earlier copies remained intact. Of the 1,200 copies of the first Folio that were printed, approximately 230 survive today, each slightly different. Chicago's Newberry Library contains a first Folio in its rich collections (and it can be viewed in small groups by appointment).

A key to understanding Shakespeare's language is to appreciate the attitude toward speech accepted by him and his contemporaries. Speech was traditionally and piously regarded as God's final and consummate gift to man. Speech was thus to Elizabethans a source of enormous power for good or ill... Hence the struggle to excel in eloquent utterance.

—David Bevington, 1980



Shakespeare's England

Elizabeth I ruled England for 45 years from 1558 to 1603 in a time of relative prosperity and peace. “Few monarchs,” says Shakespeare scholar David Bevington, “have ever

influenced an age so pervasively and left their stamp on it so permanently.” The daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth was regarded by many Catholics as an illegitimate child—and an illegitimate monarch. The politics of religion constantly threatened Elizabeth's reign, even though it was one of the most secure that England

had known for hundreds of years. Religious conflict during the Tudors' reign pervaded every aspect of English life—particularly its politics.

Elizabeth had no heir, and throughout her reign the politics of succession posed a real threat to the nation's peace—and provided a recurrent subject of Shakespeare's plays. While Shakespeare was writing *Julius Caesar*, the Earl of Essex, one of the Queen's favorite courtiers, rebelled against her government. Shakespeare's portrayal of the forced abdication of a king in *Richard II* was censored in performance during Elizabeth's reign.

Elizabethan England was a smaller, more isolated country than it had been previously or would be subsequently. It had withdrawn from its extensive empire on the Continent, and its explorations of the New World had barely begun. There was a period of internal economic development as Elizabeth ignored the counsel of her advisors and kept out of war until the attempted invasion by Spain and the Great Armada in 1588. England's economy was still based in agriculture, and its farmers were poor and embittered by strife with rich landowners who “enclosed” what was once the farmers' cropland for pastures. Uprisings and food riots were commonplace in the rural area surrounding Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare grew up.

London, then the largest urban area in Europe, was a city of contrasts: the richest and the poorest of England lived there, side by side. While many bettered themselves in a developing urban economy, unemployment was a serious problem. It was a time of change and social mobility. A rising middle class for the first time in English history aspired to the wealth and status of the aristocracy.

Under Elizabeth, England returned to Protestantism. But in her masterful style of accommodation and compromise, she incorporated an essentially traditional and Catholic doctrine into an Episcopal form of church government that was ruled by the Crown and England's clergy rather than by Rome's Pope. Extremists on the religious right and left hated her rule and wanted to see Elizabeth overthrown. She was declared a heretic by Rome in 1569, and her life was endangered.

“Her combination of imperious will and femininity and her brilliant handling of her many contending male admirers have become legendary,” says David Bevington, and resulted in a monarchy that remained secure in the face of religious and political threats from many sides. In choosing not to marry, Elizabeth avoided allying herself and her throne with a foreign country or an English faction which might threaten her broad base of power and influence.

Throughout Early Modern Europe, governments were centralized, assuming the power that once belonged to city-states and feudal lords. The rule of monarchs like Queen Elizabeth I was absolute. She and her subjects viewed the monarch as God's deputy, and the divine right of kings was a cherished doctrine (and became a subject of Shakespeare's history plays). It was this doctrine that condemned rebellion as an act of disobedience against God, but could not protect Elizabeth from rebellion at home, even by her closest advisors, or from challenges from abroad.

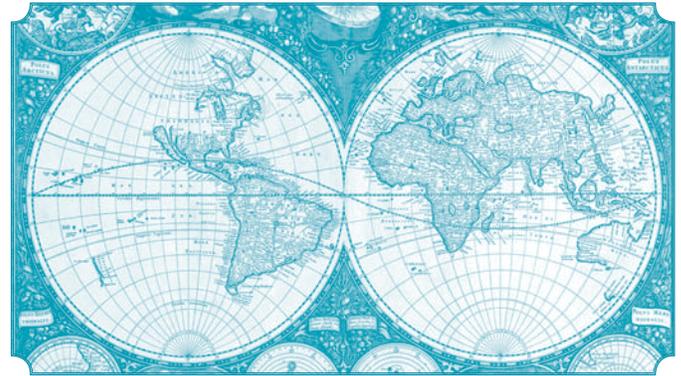
Childless, Elizabeth I died in 1603. The crown passed to her cousin James VI, King of Scotland, who became England's King James I. James, ruling from 1603 to 1625 (Shakespeare died in 1616), clearly lacked Elizabeth's political acumen and skill, and his reign was troubled with political and religious controversy. He antagonized the religious left, and his court became more aligned with the Catholic right. It would be James's son, Charles I, who would be beheaded in the English civil wars of the 1640s.



The Renaissance Theater

A man who would later become an associate of Shakespeare, James Burbage, built the first commercial theater in England in 1576, not much more than a decade before Shakespeare arrived on the London theater scene—a convergence of two events that would change history. Burbage skirted rigid restrictions governing entertainment in London by placing his theater just outside the city walls, in a community with the unglamorous name of “Shoreditch.” The name reflected the position of his theater, on the shore of the Thames River and just beyond the ditch created by the walls of London.

Burbage was not the only one to dodge the severe rules of the Common Council by setting up shop in Shoreditch. His neighbors were other businesses of marginal repute, including London's brothels and bear-baiting arenas. Actors in Shakespeare's day were legally given the status of “vagabond.” They were considered little better than common criminals—unless they could secure the patronage of a nobleman or, better still, the monarch.



Shakespeare and his fellow actors managed to secure both. They became popular entertainment at Queen Elizabeth's court as the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and continued to enjoy court patronage after King James came to the throne in 1603, when they became the King's Men. Their success at court gave Shakespeare and his fellow shareholders in the Lord Chamberlain's company the funds to build the Globe playhouse in 1599. The Globe joined a handful of other theaters located just out of the city's jurisdiction as the first public theaters in England.

Shakespeare may have developed his love for the theater by watching traveling acting troupes temporarily transform the courtyard of an inn or a town square into a theater. When he was a boy growing up in rural Stratford-upon-Avon, acting troupes traveled around the countryside in flatbed, horse-drawn carts, which did triple duty as transportation, storage for props and costumes, and a stage. Their horses pulled the cart into an inn yard or the courtyard of a country estate or college. People gathered around to watch, some leaning over the rails from the balconies above to view the action on the impromptu stage below.

Many of these traveling performances staged religious stories, enacting important scenes from the Bible—the form of theater that endured throughout the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, these enacted stories became more secular. Public officials scorned the theater as immoral and frivolous. The theaters just outside London's walls came to be feared as places where physical, moral and social corruption were spread. They were frequently shut down by the authorities during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries whenever the city was menaced by the plague or by political and social rioting. Even when the theaters were open, the Master of the Revels had to read and approve every word in a new play. The show could not go on until he gave his permission.

All kinds of people came to plays at the Globe, and they came in great numbers. A full house in the Globe numbered about 3,000 people. Though the same dimensions as the original structure, the reconstruction of the Globe holds 1,500 at maximum capacity—an indication of just how close those 3,000 people must have been to one another. They arrived well before the play to meet friends, drink ale and snack on the refreshments sold at the playhouse. An outing to the theater might take half the day. It was more like tailgating at a football game, or going with friends to a rock concert than our experience of attending theater today.

Affluent patrons paid two to three pence or more for gallery seats (like the two levels of balcony seating at Chicago Shakespeare Theater), while the “common folk”—shopkeepers and artisans—stood for a penny, about a day’s wages for a skilled worker. They were a diverse and demanding group, and Shakespeare depicted characters and situations to appeal to every level of this cross section of Renaissance society. The vitality and financial success of the Elizabethan theater is without equal in English history.

There was no electricity for lighting, so plays were performed in daylight. Sets and props were bare and basic. A throne, table or bed had to be brought on stage during the action since Elizabethan plays were written to be performed without scene breaks or intermissions. When the stage directions for *Macbeth* indicate that “a banquet is prepared,” the stage keepers prepared the banquet in full view of the audience. From what scholars can best reconstruct about performance conventions,



AN ELIZABETHAN TRAVELER’S SKETCH OF THE SWAN, ONE OF THE FIRST PUBLIC THEATERS IN ENGLAND

Shakespeare’s plays were performed in “modern” dress—that is, the clothes of Shakespeare’s time—regardless of their historical setting. The actors wore the same clothes on the stage as their contemporaries wore on the street. Hand-me-downs from the English aristocracy provided the elegant costumes for the play’s royalty.

Most new plays were short runs and seldom revived. The acting companies were always in rehearsal for the next

play but, due to the number of ongoing and upcoming productions, most plays were rehearsed for just a few days.

It was not until 1660 that women would be permitted to act on the English stage. Female roles were performed by boys or young men. Elaborate Elizabethan and Jacobean dresses disguised a man’s shape and the young actors were readily accepted as “women” by the audience.

In 1642, the Puritans succeeded in closing the theaters altogether. They did not reopen until the English monarchy was restored and Charles II came to the throne in 1660. A number of theaters, including the Globe, were not open long before the Great Fire of London destroyed them in 1666. During the eighteen years of Commonwealth rule, years when the English theaters were closed, many of the traditions of playing Shakespeare were lost. The new theater of the Restoration approached Shakespeare’s plays very differently, rewriting and adapting his original scripts to suit the audience’s contemporary tastes. It is left to scholars of Early Modern English drama to reconstruct the traditions of the Elizabethan theater from clues left behind.



Chicago Shakespeare’s Courtyard-style Theater

David Taylor of Theatre Projects Consultants has devoted a great deal of energy and imagination to the question of what kind of space is best suited to staging Shakespeare’s plays. Taylor, who worked as one of the primary consultants on the design of Chicago Shakespeare Theater, feels that this unique performance space reflects elements of both the Globe playhouse and the courtyards-turned-theaters, in which the young Shakespeare might first have acquired his love of the stage.

The interior of the Globe playhouse, opened in 1599, was simple and similar to that of Chicago Shakespeare Theater—a raised platform for the stage surrounded by an open, circular area with three galleries, one above the other. Both theaters use a thrust stage with an open performance area upstage; basically, the entire performance space is in the shape of a capital “T.” The audience sits on three sides

of the thrust stage, so the play is staged in the middle of the audience—much like the Elizabethan Swan Theatre’s design, for which a traveler’s careful sketch still remains. This immersion of the stage and the action performed on it creates a three-dimensional theater that demands three-dimensional directing, acting and design elements.

The people sitting in the side seats have the closest interaction with the performers, and the performers with them. The play unfolds between the audience members seated along the sides, and the actors draw upon the responses of the audience (laughter, gasps, nervous shifting in chairs when tension mounts) as they perform. “The backdrop and the scenery for Shakespeare is the human race,” Taylor notes, “so we’re putting Shakespeare into its proper context by making human faces the backdrop for those sitting in any seat in the theater.”

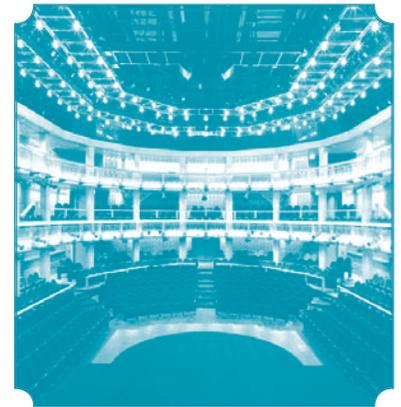
“This close, close relationship with the performers on stage is the very essence of the courtyard experience,” according to Taylor. “The courtyard experience was about leaning out of windows. It was about throwing open the windows in the courtyard when the stage was brought through on a cart and leaning out and interacting.” Audience members seated in the galleries at Chicago Shakespeare Theater are encouraged to use the “leaning rails” to watch the players below—like those watching from an inn’s balconies centuries ago when a traveling troupe set up its temporary stage.

The actors and the audience share the experience of seeing and interacting with one another. Taylor thinks that actors benefit tremendously from the courtyard design: “They’re not looking at people sitting in straight rows, disconnected from everybody around them in big seats. There’s a sense of community in the space, a sense of embracing the performer

⑥ ~~~~~
**It’s essential to understand
that every single face is a live
piece of scenery reflecting and
framing what’s going on.**
~~~~~ ⑥

on stage.” Actors are always “fed” by the energy generated from their audience. The design of Chicago Shakespeare Theater offers a feast of feedback to the actors on its stage.

As an audience member, your facial expressions and body language serve both as the focal point of the actors’ energy and the backdrop for the other audience members seated across from you. “It’s important that we don’t lose the performer among the faces, but it’s essential to understand that every single face is a live piece of scenery reflecting and framing what’s going on,” Taylor reflects. “That’s the reason why the courtyard theater shape is such a wonderful historical springboard for modern theater design.”



CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

Speaking of his experience directing on a similarly designed stage in Stratford, Ontario, Tyrone Guthrie once said: “Theatrical performance is a form of ritual; the audience is not asked to subscribe to an illusion but to participate in the ritual... The attraction for me of the ‘open stage’ as opposed to the proscenium is primarily this: that it stresses the ritual as opposed to the illusionary quality of performance.”

Other theaters have been modeled upon the Elizabethan experience of courtyard theater, perhaps most notably the Royal Shakespeare Company’s Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Swan served as a model for Chicago Shakespeare Theater. With their deep thrust stages, both were designed to create an intimate relationship between actors and audience. Prominent architectural elements in both theaters are the brick walls that surround the audience and natural wood that creates a feeling of warmth. Brick is an aesthetic choice, but, due to its particular design, it also serves as an acoustical choice. The angle of the bricks in the side walls helps diffuse sound, dispersing it throughout the theater. The sound, lighting and rigging systems are all state-of-the-art, and Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s design accommodates a wide array of possibilities for structuring and using the performance space.

Shakespearean theater is about people. As Taylor concludes, “You’re the scenery. You’re the special effects. And the people you see performing this play are performing it in front of, and out of, you.”

# Timelines

## 1300

- 1326 Founding of universities at Oxford and Cambridge
- 1348 Boccaccio's *Decameron*
- 1349 Bubonic Plague kills one-third of England's population
- 1387 Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*
- c.1440 Johannes Gutenberg invents printing press
- 1472 Dante's *Divine Comedy* first printed
- 1492 Christopher Columbus lands at Cuba
- 1497 Vasco da Gama sails around Cape of Good Hope

## 1500

- 1501-4 Michelangelo's *David* sculpture
- 1503 Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*
- 1512 Copernicus' *Commentariolus* published, theorizing that Earth and other planets revolve around sun
- 1518 License to import 4,000 African slaves to Spanish American colonies granted to Lorens de Gominzot
- 1519 Ferdinand Magellan's trip around the world
- 1519 Conquest of Mexico by Cortez
- 1522 Luther's translation of the New Testament

## 1525

- 1531 Henry VIII recognized as Supreme Head of the Church of England
- 1533 Henry VIII secretly marries Anne Boleyn, and is excommunicated by Pope
- 1539 Hernando de Soto explores Florida
- 1540 G.L. de Cardenas "discovers" Grand Canyon
- 1541 Hernando de Soto "discovers" the Mississippi

## 1550

- 1558 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth I
- 1562 John Hawkins begins slave trade between Guinea and West Indies
- 1564 Birth of William Shakespeare and Galileo
- 1565 Pencils first manufactured in England
- 1570 Pope Pius V excommunicates Queen Elizabeth
- 1573 Francis Drake sees the Pacific Ocean

## 1575

- 1576 Mayor of London forbids theatrical performances in the City
- Burbage erects first public theater in England (the "Theater" in Shoreditch)
- 1577 Drake's trip around the world
- 1580 Essays of Montaigne published
- 1582 Marriage license issued for William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway
- Daughter Susanna Shakespeare christened
- 1585 Christening of son Hamnet and twin Judith



## Shakespeare's Plays

### c.1592-1595

#### COMEDIES

- Love's Labor's Lost
- The Comedy of Errors
- The Two Gentlemen of Verona
- A Midsummer Night's Dream
- The Taming of the Shrew

#### HISTORIES

- 1, 2, 3 Henry VI
- Richard III
- King John

#### TRAGEDIES

- Titus Andronicus
- Romeo and Juliet

#### SONNETS

probably written in this period

- 1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed
- 1588 Destruction of the Spanish Armada
- 1592 Shakespeare listed with the Lord Chamberlain's Men
- 1593-4 Plague closes London playhouses for 20 months
- 1595 Coat of arms granted to Shakespeare's father, John
- 1596 Death of son Hamnet, age 11  
Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*
- 1597 Shakespeare, one of London's most successful playwrights, buys New Place, one of the grandest houses in Stratford-upon-Avon
- 1599 Globe Theatre opens, as home to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, with Shakespeare as part-owner

## 1600

- 1602 Oxford University's Bodleian Library opens
- 1603 Death of Queen Elizabeth, coronation of James I;  
Lord Chamberlain's Men become the King's Men upon endorsement of James I
- 1603-11 Plague closes London playhouses for at least 68 months (nearly 6 years)
- 1605 Cervantes' *Don Quixote Part 1* published
- 1607 Marriage of Susanna Shakespeare to Dr. John Hall;  
Founding of Jamestown, Virginia, first English settlement on American mainland
- 1608 A true relation of such Occurances and Accidents of Note as hath passed in Virginia by John Smith  
Galileo constructs astronomical telescope
- 1609 Blackfriars Theatre, London's first commercial indoor theater, becomes winter home of the King's Men
- 1611 The Authorized "King James Version" of the Bible published
- 1613 Globe Theatre destroyed by fire
- 1614 Globe Theatre rebuilt
- 1615 Galileo faces the Inquisition for the first time
- 1616 Judith Shakespeare marries Thomas Quinney  
Death of William Shakespeare, age 52
- 1618 Copernican system condemned by Roman Catholic Church
- 1619 First African slaves arrive in Virginia
- 1623 The first Folio, the first compiled text of Shakespeare's complete works published

## 1625

- 1625 James I dies, succeeded by Charles I
- 1632 Ai due massimi sistemi of Galileo
- 1633 Galileo recants before the Inquisition
- 1636 Harvard College founded at Cambridge, Massachusetts
- 1642 Civil War in England begins
- 1642 Puritans close theaters throughout England until following the Restoration of the Monarchy, 18 years later, with Charles II
- 1649 Charles I beheaded
- 1649 Commonwealth declared

## c.1596-1600

### COMEDIES

The Merchant of Venice  
 Much Ado About Nothing  
 The Merry Wives of Windsor  
 As You Like It  
**Twelfth Night** 

### HISTORIES

Richard II  
 1,2 Henry IV  
 Henry V

### TRAGEDIES

Julius Caesar

## c.1601-1609

### COMEDIES

Troilus and Cressida  
 All's Well That Ends Well

### TRAGEDIES

Hamlet  
 Othello  
 King Lear  
 Macbeth  
 Antony and Cleopatra  
 Timon of Athens  
 Coriolanus  
 Measure for Measure

## c.1609-1613

### ROMANCES

Pericles  
 Cymbeline  
 The Winter's Tale  
 The Tempest  
 The Two Noble Kinsmen

### HISTORIES

Henry VIII

# Twelfth Night

## Dramatis Personae

### THE DUKE'S COURT

**Orsino**, *Duke of Illyria*

**Valentine**, *a courtier*

**Curio**, *a courtier*

### THE COUNTESS'S HOUSEHOLD

**Olivia**, *the Countess*

**Sir Toby Belch**, *Olivia's uncle*

**Maria**, *Olivia's gentlewoman*

**Malvolio**, *the steward*

**Feste**, *a clown*

**Fabian**, *a servant*

### VISITORS TO ILLYRIA

**Viola**, *a shipwrecked maiden, later disguised as "Cesario"*

**Sebastian**, *Viola's twin brother*

**Antonio**, *Sebastian's rescuer and friend*

**Sir Andrew Aguecheek**, *a sidekick of Sir Toby and a suitor to Olivia*

**Sea Captain**, *friend to Viola*

SCENE: *Illyria, an imaginary land*

## The Story

In the imaginary land of Illyria, **Duke Orsino** is pining for the love of a countess. But the **Countess Olivia** has declared seven years of mourning for her dead brother and will see no one, and matters of love in Illyria are currently at a stalemate.

A young woman named **Viola** washes up on Illyria's shore, shipwrecked in a storm at sea. Alone in a strange land, fearing that her twin brother **Sebastian** is dead, she takes on a young page's disguise, and as "Cesario" seeks employment in Duke Orsino's household. Orsino, charmed by his new page, immediately takes "him" into his confidence, and sends Cesario as his ambassador of love to Olivia. Viola undertakes Orsino's embassy, though she herself has fallen in love with the Duke. Cesario urges the Countess to drop her veil of mourning, and as she does Olivia falls in love with the stranger before her.

Olivia's uncle **Sir Toby Belch** and his sidekick **Sir Andrew Aguecheek**—who also hopes to woo Olivia—drink late into the nights and the entire household is in an uproar. Olivia tries to maintain order through her steward **Malvolio**, hated by all as a self-righteous "puritan." Olivia's gentlewoman **Maria** plots their revenge upon Malvolio—a forged letter of love supposedly from the Countess. Toby, Aguecheek and Maria look on as Malvolio offers himself to his mistress as instructed in the letter—adorned in garters and yellow stockings. Dismayed by this strange behavior, Olivia entrusts her steward to the care of her uncle, who locks Malvolio up in a dark cell to cure him of "madness."

Viola's lost twin is, as it turns out, alive and well—and landing in Illyria, looking just like his sister in her male disguise. Mistaking the newcomer for Cesario, Olivia is overjoyed by his unexpected consent to her repeated proposal of marriage. Learning of Cesario's impending wedding to the Countess, Viola is no less stunned. Finally, the appearance of the real Sebastian sets all aright in Illyria. Almost.

## Act-by-Act Synopsis



photo: John Trammer

ORSINO (LIAM BRENNAN) AND CESARIO (MICHAEL BROWN) IN TIM CARROLL'S PRODUCTION FROM SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE (CST WORLD'S STAGE, 2003)

### ACT I

In the imaginary land of Illyria, Duke Orsino pines away for the beautiful Countess Olivia, who does not return his love. On the Illyrian coast, a shipwrecked Viola fears her twin brother Sebastian has drowned. Alone in a strange land, Viola disguises herself as a young man whom she calls “Cesario,” and seeks employment with the Duke Orsino.

At Countess Olivia's house, Sir Toby Belch, Olivia's uncle, encourages his wealthy friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek to woo Olivia. But Sir Andrew, discouraged by Olivia's coldness, plans to leave the next morning—until Sir Toby, looking to benefit further from Sir Andrew's wealth, flatters him into staying.

Meanwhile, at Duke Orsino's court “Cesario” has already become a favorite of Orsino, taken into the Duke's trust to persuade Olivia to marry him. Cesario reluctantly agrees to carry his message—because, as she reveals when she is alone, Viola herself has fallen in love with Orsino and wishes that she could be his wife.

Viola, as Cesario, delivers Orsino's message and charms Olivia with “his” speech. After sending Cesario back to the Duke with another refusal, Olivia finds to her surprise that she has fallen passionately in love with the page Cesario.

### ACT II

Sebastian, Viola's twin brother, has also survived the shipwreck, rescued by Antonio. Like Viola, Sebastian believes his twin is dead and resolves to visit Duke Orsino. Antonio determines to follow him even though he has enemies at Orsino's court.

Olivia's steward Malvolio delivers a ring to “Cesario”, and Viola realizes that Olivia has fallen in love with the page. Caught in the middle of a strange love triangle and powerless to reveal either her identity or her true desires, Viola hopes that time will untangle these problems.

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are carousing with Olivia's clown Feste, when Malvolio storms in and chastises them for their drunken escapades. The group mocks Malvolio, and as soon as he leaves, the assembled company plans its revenge. Maria, Olivia's chambermaid, devises a scheme in which, with the help of some forgery, Malvolio will think Olivia is in love with him. Their plan works: Malvolio spots Maria's forged letter on the garden path and believes it is, indeed, from Olivia. After reading over the letter very carefully, Malvolio vows to follow its absurd instructions on how to woo the Countess, leaving the conspirators to rejoice in their success.

### ACT III

Still disguised, Viola returns to Olivia's house to deliver another message from Orsino. Once alone with the unhappy messenger, Olivia begs “him” not to give her any more messages from Orsino and confesses that she is deeply in love with Cesario instead. Cesario responds that he cannot love Olivia, as he swears that no woman shall ever be mistress of “his” heart.

Antonio, a wanted man in Illyria, decides to stay at the inn while Sebastian roams the city.

Malvolio is convinced that Olivia is in love with him and attempts to woo her by following the letter's directives. When Sir Toby, Fabian and Maria come upon him, the three pretend that he is possessed by the devil and lock Malvolio up as a lunatic.

Noting Olivia's fawning over Cesario, Sir Andrew is resolved to leave. Sir Toby and Fabian encourage him instead to challenge Cesario to a duel in order to prove his love for Olivia. Antonio interrupts the two mutually reluctant combatants when he mistakes the disguised Viola for Sebastian—and is then himself interrupted by several Illyrian officers who recognize and arrest him as a wanted man. Antonio pleads with Viola, whom he still believes is Sebastian, to help him, but Viola has no idea who Antonio is.

### ACT IV

Now the real Sebastian is taken for his disguised twin by an overwrought Sir Andrew. Sir Toby intervenes, and Olivia arrives just as the two are about to duel. She begs the man

# Twelfth Night

whom she believes to be Cesario to come into the house with her. Sebastian is bewildered, but agrees to follow the Countess.

Inside Olivia's house, Maria, Sir Toby and the other servants have locked Malvolio into a small, dark chamber. Feste, disguised as the Puritan clergyman Sir Topas, visits Malvolio, deliberately misunderstanding the prisoner's pleas for help. Sir Toby and Maria send Feste back, this time undisguised, to Malvolio, who swears that he is not crazy, and begs for paper, ink and light in order to write a letter to Olivia.

Elsewhere in the house, Sebastian muses happily on the bewildering fact that he is loved by a beautiful countess. Olivia returns with a priest, asking Sebastian to marry her. Sebastian happily agrees.

## ACT V

Orsino calls on Olivia, accompanied by Cesario and his men. Illyrian officers enter dragging Antonio, who lashes out at Cesario, still believing him to be Sebastian, and asserts that the young man has been disloyal to him.

Olivia arrives, doting on Cesario and calling him husband. Orsino, angry at his page's apparent betrayal of him and Olivia's reasserted rejection, threatens to kill him. As Orsino berates Viola, Sir Andrew and Sir Toby enter injured, claiming they have just duelled with Cesario. The confused Viola claims no responsibility.

Finally Sebastian appears, apologizing to Olivia for beating up her guests, and is seemingly confronted with his own reflection. Amazed, the twins identify one another. Realizing Olivia has married Sebastian, Orsino reminds Viola that, disguised as a boy, she often vowed her love to him. Viola reaffirms her love and Orsino declares he will marry her. Malvolio then enters—only to have his love letters from Olivia revealed to be false. Malvolio vows to revenge his unhappy ending, and hastily departs the cheerful scene. Loved at last, Orsino proclaims that the happy couples will shortly celebrate their double wedding.

## Something Borrowed, Something New...

Shakespeare was nothing short of a master weaver: a storyteller who took a strand from this story, a strand from that, and wove them together into a creation entirely his own. In this respect, *Twelfth Night* is no exception among Shakespeare's works. It is a play that borrows extensively from his earlier works, including *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Comedy of Errors*, and from earlier English fiction and Italian drama.



## CLOWNS AND FOOLS

The character of Feste is rarely addressed by name in the play—he is simply the Countess's "Fool," and thereby joins a long line of archetypal Fools and Clowns in Shakespeare's plays. The Macbeths' Porter, Lear's Fool, Hamlet's Gravedigger and his beloved Yorick—even if the characters' names are unfamiliar, many of their lines are among the best remembered in the plays.

Shakespeare's Fools appear to occupy a place between character and Chorus. As a function of the Fool's office (think court jester, hired purely for entertainment of the upper classes), he is allowed to comment upon and often ridicule the actions and assumptions of his fellow characters, regardless of their elevated social status. His running commentary affords the Fool greater license to speak the truth—and if his comments hit too close to home, he can backpedal into teasing or the ravings of an "inferior" mind. But ultimately, the Fool's master requires this open, honest perspective. Olivia needs Feste's irreverence to be coaxed out of her life-stifling mourning. As the audience, we, too, make a particular connection with Shakespeare's fools, as we come to understand the world through their keen eyes.



Clearly love cloaked by disguise was a popular convention for theatrical productions of the time.

Shakespeare's principal source was likely a tale told by the Englishman Barnabe Riche of "Apolonius and Silla," published in his *Farewell to the Militaire Profession* in 1581 (about 20 years before Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night*). Silla is washed ashore where, disguised as the male page "Silvio," she enters into the service of Duke Apolonius. On his behalf, Silvio woos a wealthy widow named Julina, who falls in love with the young page. When Silla's twin brother (the real Silvio) arrives, he is mistaken by Julina for his twin. They become lovers and he abandons her pregnant, in search of his long-lost twin. Apolonius is furious at his page's "success," and throws "Silvio" into prison; Julina is upset when she finds out that the father of her child is a woman until Silvio's return straightens things out.

In 1537, an anonymous Italian comedy of disguise and mistaken identity was published, called *Gl'Ingannati (The Deceived)*. A brother and sister are parted by accident, eventually to be reunited. The heroine Lelia dresses as a boy and finds that she must court the lady Isabella in the name of the master that she herself loves. Isabella falls in love with the page "Fabio." Lelia's father discovers the disguise and resolves that his daughter will marry Isabella's old father. But instead, when Lelia's long-lost twin brother, Fabrizio, is arrested and locked up at Isabella's as a madman, the lady takes the opportunity to marry the person she takes for her "Fabio." *Gl'Ingannati's* prologue sets forth its moral:

*Two lessons above all you will extract from this play: how much chance and good fortune can do in matters of love; and how much long patience is worth in such cases, accompanied by good advice.*

Another play titled *Gl'Inganni*, published in 1547 by Niccolo Secchi, also tells a similar story of disguise and secret love, and a third play by Curio Ganzaga based on this retelling even features a heroine named "Cesare," perhaps inspiring Shakespeare's "Cesario." Clearly love cloaked by disguise was a popular convention for theatrical productions of the time.

Four central characters are common to Riche, *Gl'Ingannati/Ignanni* and to Shakespeare: a pining lover, a heroine disguised as a page who serves the pining lover, the heroine's twin brother who has disappeared, and a second heroine who

falls in love with the young page. Each story shares several basic elements: the heroine's secret love for her master; her employment as a go-between leading to complications; and a resolution with the reappearance of the missing twin.

Despite the quite obvious similarities with the stories that likely served as his sources, Shakespeare's own retelling introduces significant changes. It is only Shakespeare's heroine who falls in love after assuming disguise and entering into the service of her master: his sources all tell of a history between them that prompts the heroine to adopt her disguise as a solution to a problem in their past relationship. In all three sources, Olivia's counterpart is a widow and not truly viewed as a rival to Viola's character. In Shakespeare alone, Olivia is made a virgin who can sustain a comedy about awakening desires. In the Roman drama as told by Plautus, the widow becomes pregnant by the warm welcome she gives to the look-alike twin whom she confuses for her young page in disguise. Only in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* does the brother's marriage to his twin's admirer precede the heroine revealing herself—and, in fact, the threat posed by the perpetuation of this mistaken identity prompts the necessary righting of things at the end of *Twelfth Night*.

The subplot involving Malvolio, Maria, Aguecheek and Feste is Shakespeare's own original addition to a complicated mix of disguise and identity confusion, though the idea of these characters may have been pulled from the courtiers of Shakespeare's time. Sir Nicholas L'Estrange suggested in *Merry Passages and Jestes* (1650) that Olivia's steward was based on a certain Lord Knollys, a disapproving personage in Elizabeth's court.

According to Shakespearean scholar Anne Barton, the plot of *Twelfth Night* is "of the most ownerless and ancient kind: the very stuff of Comedy since Menander." And indeed it was the Roman dramatist Plautus who launched a long-held stage tradition of bringing lost twins to one place but, unknown to each other and to everyone else, their look-alike appearance causing endless confusion.

It's fun to look at the stories from which Shakespeare borrowed, and explore what he adopted, what he changed, and what he simply created anew. Why, for example, might he make his Olivia character not a widow, but a maid? Why might he have permitted his own plot to go so far as marriage before reintroducing brother and sister on the stage at the same time, forcing recognition? Why might he remove the authoritarian father that plays so prominently in Riche's tale? And why does he choose to complicate an already complicated plot further with the introduction of Malvolio, Sir Toby and his crew? Is

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there any connection between the main plot and this subplot, or do they remain separate story lines?

Shakespeare spun his stories from a fabric of old—and sometimes not-so-old—stories well known to his audience which, though largely illiterate, was far better versed in a narrative heritage than we are today. Why does Shakespeare use old stories—and then add, subtract and modify? Don't imagine that there's one "right" answer! When it comes to speculating why Shakespeare wrote what he wrote, the best any of us can be are informed imaginers. These are questions, like the clues of a good mystery, that are intriguing to explore. This exploration of possibilities is what makes some knowledge of Shakespeare's sources interesting—and not just the dry stuff of scholarship. It is in this zone of change where we can get glimpses into Shakespeare's creative process.

## 1601 and All That

“Art any more than a steward?” Sir Toby's question taunting Malvolio is one that succinctly summarizes many of *Twelfth Night's* tensions. More than any other comedy that came out of this period of British drama, *Twelfth Night* reveals its author's deep awareness of the shifting economic, social and political landscapes of his time. Three characters in the play—Sebastian, Viola and Maria—are successful in marrying “above their station”; two others, Aguecheek and Malvolio, though unsuccessful, attempt to do the same. Malvolio suffers ridicule for his misguided attempt, but he is by no means alone in his socially ambitious desires.

Elizabethan England was a society acutely aware of the possibility of upward mobility: the newly established bourgeoisie could for the first time permeate the rigid feudal class system of inherited wealth and status. Land, title and social status that for centuries could only be inherited, could now be bought. The commerce of an ever-growing mercantile and industrializing world created this “new money” and the new social class that went along with it—and the “old money” reacted with disdain and fear.

The monarchy and ruling class attempted to exert some control of their nouveau riche counterparts through legal and community measures. Queen Elizabeth introduced a sumptuary law, dictating specific clothing in accordance with social status, with the 1597 “Proclamation Against Inordinate Apparel.” For centuries, clothing was viewed as an outward sign of internal differences of rank considered to be determined by nature. Man's social status could thus, it was reasoned, be determined by his outward

appearance. Expensive clothing was accepted as evidence of an individual's personal wealth and rank, and Tudor law actually dictated that certain materials and garments be worn exclusively by people of rank.

A society enacts into law what it feels it must control, by the power of law if necessary. The laws defining clothing by social rank betray the time's anxiety about how easily a person could deceive others, or could aspire (like Malvolio) to become “more than he is.” The influential and somewhat fanatical pamphleteer Philip Stubbes championed this idea, especially as it related to the readily donned—and easily rearranged—costumes of the theater. Fearing the potential collapse of British society at the hands of these over-zealous tailors, he wrote in a 1583 pamphlet:

*...Such a confuse mingle mangle of apparell...that it is verie hard to know who is noble, who is worshipfull, who is a gentleman, who is not; for you shall have those...go daylie in silkes, satens, damasks, taffeties and suchlike, notwithstanding that they be both base by byrthe, mean by estate & servile by calling. This is a great confusion & a general disorder, God be merciful unto us.*

The theater constantly illustrated how readily identity could change, and was doubly threatening to the older, landed aristocracy in its presentation of stories that seemed to challenge the existing social order—and to a socially diverse audience, no less. It is no wonder that the theater in Elizabethan times was viewed by many, like Stubbes, as subversive and dangerous. It posed a threat—real or imagined—to a social order precariously held by an aristocratic society that now faced the growing strength of the bourgeoisie. The Sir Tobies and Sir Andrews of the world might be passed over and, in their place, an aspiring servant might get the upper hand.



As Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night*, an aging and reclusive Queen Elizabeth remained unmarried and childless on England's throne until her death in 1603.



If theater-going, with its wide array of spectators from pit to luxury box, represented a rare egalitarian activity for the newly defensive social classes of Shakespeare's day, other social outings were still considered the purview of the lower classes only. *Twelfth Night* was written when bull- and

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bear-baiting were common sports and when the pillory and public executions entertained crowds. The bear-baiting pits stood beside the theaters along the south bank of London's Thames River—and not by coincidence since these activities were viewed as marginal and suspect entertainment for the general populace. “I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you,” Malvolio hurls at his tormentors. “The whole pack of you”—as though we, too, by enjoying the scene of his humiliation, had moved our seats from the more legitimate theater to the bear-baiting arena next door.

*Twelfth Night* mirrors the social volatility of late Elizabethan England with its complex plot built upon deepening class conflicts and the archaic boundaries of a crumbling class system threatened by the new economic order of capitalism. “*Twelfth Night*,” writes critic Stevie Davies,

*...is a comic reflection and adaptation of conflicts and antipathies deep and stressfully bound into the society of late Elizabethan England; its laughter converts angry facts into the blessing of laughter.*

The existing social elite were further threatened by the open-ended political questions of the age. As Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night*, an aging and reclusive Queen Elizabeth remained unmarried and childless on England's throne until her death in 1603. Throughout her political life, the Queen had carefully avoided each marriage contract that, by aligning her with one faction or another, might cause her and her government to lose power. Now in her old age, she and England faced her death with no heir apparent—an unstable political situation that made England's future at the turn of the seventeenth century uncertain and dangerous. Here at the heart of Shakespeare's final romantic comedy lives the Countess Olivia who, having lost her father and brother, seems determined to share her power with no one, turning away all male suitors—and in particular Orsino, the most powerful man in Illyria.

“One extraordinary woman in the period provided a model for such a career, lived out to its fullest—the virgin queen,” comments Shakespearean scholar Stephen Greenblatt:

*...alone and heirless and very dangerous. The queen had at once mobilized, manipulated, and successfully resisted decades of anxious male attempts to see her married; but this was a career that Elizabeth herself, let alone her male subjects, could not tolerate in any woman of lesser station.*

The promise in *Twelfth Night*'s final scene of two well-matched marriages, of course, resolves this “dangerous situation” much more easily than England itself could. But Shakespeare in his Olivia seems to suggest the dangers of a woman who, rejecting

The uniquely Elizabethan entertainment of bear-baiting is referenced several times in *Twelfth Night*, leading many to draw an analogy between the cruel, goading sport of Shakespeare's contemporaries with his characters' malicious manipulation of Malvolio. In his final lines, aching with humiliation and vengeful shame, Malvolio shouts to his tormentors, “I'll be revenged upon the whole pack of you!”

“Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em.”

Malvolio's last words, like many of his adversaries' barbed lines, now insensible to our modern ears (“Sowter will cry upon't for all this, though it be as rank as a fox”—do you have any idea what that might mean?), would have resonated strongly with Shakespeare's Elizabethan audience.

Which is not to say that *Twelfth Night* is all dated and obscure. In fact, from the bear-baited Malvolio himself comes the line, “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em.” It's a descriptive turn of phrase often applied to inhabitants of our world today—political leaders, movie stars, athletes—and just as often tweaked to reflect a more modern sensibility. Daniel Boorstin, U.S. Librarian of Congress in the late 70s and 80s memorably wrote, “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some hire public relations assistants.”

all suitors, cloisters herself in a great household isolated from the rest of the world—and who then turns around and recklessly marries before she realizes the true identity of her suitor. Olivia, like Elizabeth, derives her power from her refusal of a powerful male. In letting her veil drop, falling in love with Cesario, and then suddenly marrying Sebastian, Olivia opens up not only herself, but her entire household—her “kingdom.”

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Scholar Donna Hamilton draws a close comparison between Elizabeth's nation and Olivia's household:

*Represented in the play is a social and political system in which all power is held symbolically by the person who heads the household, but in which all political action is controlled by people who, given the reclusivity of the head, operate with no check to their behaviour... The result is virtually a carte blanche situation for those at the top, one into which no change of policy can be interpolated, and thus one in which repression by way of any number of arbitrary tactics—including systems for controlling meaning and for demonising anyone who does not cooperate—becomes the taken-for-grantedness that characterizes daily life.*

⑥ **Three times in his career Shakespeare turned to comedies to tell the story of brother/sister twins lost to one another and subsequently reunited.**

Many critics and directors view the character of Malvolio as an ominous representative of the Puritan movement that 40 years later would behead the king, establish the Commonwealth, and close the theaters as dangerous grounds for sedition and depravity for a full 18 years. However, scholar Donna Hamilton questions whether the traditional view of Malvolio as a “typical Puritan” is, in fact, accurate. Instead, she suggests, Malvolio represents the caricature of the Puritan created by the anti-Puritan movement. Malvolio's break from society at the play's end is, according to Hamilton, analogous to the situation that the English church at the time most feared: that the Puritans would, in fact, separate, and perhaps even enact their “revenge.”

*No one had intended that the scapegoating would produce such a breach as this. Toby thought only to suppress and contain challenge, not make it more visible, permanent, and threatening... Representing scapegoating as a dysfunctional mechanism that fosters division, Shakespeare ends with a society whose ability to maintain its sense of itself as a unity has been seriously depleted.*

According to Hamilton, it is entirely possible to situate Shakespeare's plays within an ecclesiastical context that is primarily political rather than theological. The focus becomes less on doctrine and what Shakespeare might have believed, than upon how the church functioned as an influential institution and how it accepted, or did not

accept, the doctrine of obedience to the state. “*Twelfth Night*,” says Hamilton,

*...displays its connection to the issues of religious controversy with a disarming playfulness. The characters do not talk directly about religion, but religion and church politics often provide the language for what they do talk about...*

During the 1590s, the state strategy for containing opposition to its church was to extend tolerance to moderate puritans, while pursuing outspoken religious extremists with force. John Darrell was a Puritan minister who performed exorcisms, a practice allowed by the Catholic Church but forbidden in the English church. He came to trial before the court of High Commission in 1598. Found guilty, Darrell was imprisoned until his death in prison in 1602. While imprisoned, Darrell wrote six books in his defense, all printed on secret presses—and all ordered burned by the government.

The events surrounding Darrell's arrest, trial and imprisonment created quite a stir, due to the interest at the time in the oppressive tactics of church and government—and their concurrence with the Earl of Essex's rebellion against the Queen. The two mutinies were tied not only in time but in meaning and implication. At the time that books were being written in Darrell's defense, so were others for Essex—and all in opposition to the Crown.

The long struggle between the English monarchy and its aristocracy stretched back into the Middle Ages. This struggle's last gasp was played out with Essex's rebellion against Elizabeth, the last in a long line of aristocratic revolts against the Crown. *Twelfth Night* was first performed in February 1602, exactly one year after the rebellion and execution of the Earl of Essex—an event said to have more deeply affected England even than its victory over the Spanish Armada a few years earlier.

After the 1597 parliament, there was only one more Parliament called during Elizabeth's reign, ending with her death in 1603. The Parliament that met in 1601 (around the time that Shakespeare is thought to have written *Twelfth Night*) was characterized by an underlying mistrust between the Queen and the Commons.

The social and political climate in which Shakespeare lived was not the only factor influencing his writing, however. His own personal life is also seen as a source of inspiration at this time of his writing. Three times in his career Shakespeare turned to comedies to tell the story of brother/sister twins lost to one another and subsequently reunited. Perhaps in writing a story that begins tragically with the loss of a twin

## LOST TWINS

Viola and Sebastian are not the first long-lost twins to appear in one of Shakespeare's plays. He visited this theme a number of years earlier in one of his first plays, *The Comedy of Errors*. In *Comedy* there is not one, but two sets of twins searching for their other half. It is not always fruitful to look to an author's life when searching for his inspiration, but in this case, it would be foolish not to speculate that Shakespeare's own twin children, Hamnet and Judith, were on his mind when writing *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*.

When Shakespeare wrote *The Comedy of Errors* around 1592, Hamnet and Judith were seven years old.



FRATERNAL TWINS BY NICCOLÒ MUSSO FROM 1620

but ends happily in their reunion, Shakespeare dealt with his own grief of losing his only son Hamnet, who died at age 11, the brother of a surviving twin sister. Stories of lost and reunited children and parents would be important themes in Shakespeare's more serious works following *Twelfth Night*.

The turn of the seventeenth century was a time of repressed social unrest, unease about the future, and a deep suspicion of the religious nonconformists who threatened the stability not only of the state's church, but of the state itself. It is possible that these pervasive undercurrents of fear and unrest informed the pages of Shakespeare's final comedy—and us 400 years later—about a history yet to unfold in one of the most powerful seats of government in the Early Modern world.

Instead of showcasing the tragedy of twins separated at birth, Shakespeare chose to create his most outrageous farce arising out of multiple situations of mistaken identity when they reunite in one place. But in *Twelfth Night*, there is a noticeable change in tone, as the separation of Viola and Sebastian is taken more seriously and portends real heartbreak. *Twelfth Night's* poignancy is missing in his earlier work of exuberant chaos.

The reason for this shift may be found in the tragedy that took place in Shakespeare's own life—the death of his son Hamnet in 1596, at the age of 11. *Twelfth Night* was probably written as few as three years after this tragic event and certainly no later than 1602, when the first recorded performance took place.

Viola sees herself as a stand-in for Sebastian in his absence: “O prove true, / That I, dear brother, be now ta'en for you!” she exclaims when Antonio mistakes “Cesario” for Sebastian. Viola literally takes on Sebastian's role, becoming the male twin whom she believes to be dead. But Shakespeare chose to make *Twelfth Night* a comedy and not a tragedy, and so ends his play with Viola and Sebastian reunited and happily married off to Orsino and Olivia. Biography informs art? Possibly, in *Twelfth Night* as Shakespeare recalls his own twins and creates a joyous reunion they would never have.

## What's in a Genre?

### ALL KIDDING ASIDE... THE NATURE OF COMEDY

Comedy is something we all know something about. Mention the word “comedy” and it brings something specific to mind. Will Ferrell or Tina Fey's movies. Friends' jokes and pranks. Sitcoms on Thursday night TV. *Saturday Night Live*...on a good night. We all love to laugh—and look for opportunities to do just that. In this respect, Shakespeare's audience 400 years ago was no different from us. Comedy served them as it serves us—reminding us of

# Twelfth Night

the importance of laughing at ourselves and celebrating our capacity for play.

Humor in Shakespeare is not limited to his comedies. Shakespeare's darkest tragedies have scenes where humor produces welcome laughter, easing the dramatic tension. *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*—all of these troubling stories have clowns and fools to provide amusement and commentary.

And in the middle of a romantic comedy like *Twelfth Night*, you have a prank that goes too far and the comedy sours to the brink of tragedy. So what, then, makes a comedy a comedy?

A number of Shakespeare's comedies were written in the early part of his career, generally by the turn of the seventeenth century. *Twelfth Night*, written c.1601, is the last in a line of comedies before Shakespeare turned to the darker, more introspective dramas that followed. Comedies take dismal situations and set things right, paving the way for happy endings. Shakespearean comedy is not just a long sequence of jokes and stunts, but a story that as a whole reflects an optimistic, hopeful attitude toward life.

Scholars like Charles Barber and Northrop Frye have identified certain characteristics that Shakespeare's comedies have in common, and *Twelfth Night* is no exception. Barber writes, "the finest comedy is not a diversion from serious themes but an alternative mode of developing them." *Twelfth Night* approaches some of life's saddest experiences—unrequited love, death and mourning and separation—but its characters are not defeated by the problems they face, and instead learn how to understand and live with them.

⑥ *Twelfth Night*, written c.1601, is the last in a line of comedies before Shakespeare turned to the darker, more introspective dramas that followed.

One characteristic of Shakespearean comedy is a tone of comfort, optimism—and play. While we may not know exactly how the play will end, we can sense it will not end in disaster or death, but much more likely in reunion, marriage and celebration. A threat of danger or the actions of evil characters may be present, but these obstacles to general happiness, while taken at face value by the characters, are understood by us, the "omniscient" audience, as comic bumps along the road. Another common characteristic that scholars have identified

is that, unlike many of the tragic heroes, comedies are about the young. In *Twelfth Night*, the young characters find their ways in Illyria entirely without the help, or hindrance, of an older generation: Viola and Sebastian are shipwrecked and quite alone, and Olivia mourns her father. It is as if the older generation steps aside and leaves the stage to those whose lives lie ahead.

Comedies often take place in a green, natural, pastoral place (like the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It*)—a place set apart from our day-to-day world. In this "green world," as scholar Northrop Frye writes, time barely matters or exists; no one

## "CONCEAL ME WHAT I AM"

When Viola washes up on the shores of Illyria she is homeless and alone, her one companion—her twin brother Sebastian—taken for dead. She can't take the "next flight" home and so must find some way to survive in a strange country, knowing no one.

Today in our culture, it's hard to imagine how vulnerable an unattended woman was in Elizabethan England. Shakespeare wrote at a time when women did not share the rights of their male counterparts, nor enjoy the freedom and opportunities of women today.

In the strong individuality of so many of his female characters who often put the male characters to shame with their wits and intelligence—or at least give them a good run for their money—Shakespeare was a kind of literary trailblazer. But while he created women who hold their own on the page, he was mindful that the real world was a very different place.

Viola understands that a single woman wandering around alone is in danger—vulnerable to deceit, robbery, assault or even rape, if she were not to take steps to protect herself from harm. Taking on the disguise of a young man provides Viola with the one chance she has to *survive* in Illyria. As a male page, Viola secures the freedom to move about the country as she pleases, even as she increasingly finds herself trapped by her own disguise.

feels the pressure of deadlines—or their own mortality. In this kind of setting, Shakespeare’s comedic characters are free to act and behave as they are allowed to do nowhere else—certainly not in the everyday world. *Twelfth Night* among Shakespeare’s comedies is unusual in that it depicts no other world from which its characters escape or to which they eventually return: Illyria is the play’s one and only setting. And though the seat of power rests here in the court of Orsino, his less-than-political interests in love and music tell us that this is a dreamy land where matters of state seem far away. Illyria is, in this sense, a “green world” too—an imaginary space existing outside our everyday world.



## Do we love those we love regardless of their biological sex? Regardless of their gender?



In the course of Shakespearean comedy, says Frye, chaos ensues, identities are lost, disguises are assumed and dreamlike states are confused with reality. In the final phase of comedy, the characters “awaken” to greater knowledge. They are released from their repetitive behaviors, and the community is reawakened by marriages and the promise of renewed life. The social conflict and malaise of earlier scenes is typically managed and controlled in a way that reinforces community and social norms: boy marries girl; nobility marries nobility, as happens in *Twelfth Night*’s final revelatory scene. The new society may be characterized by greater tolerance, but there is often someone left as an outsider with whom we as the audience, aware of other realities and conflicts, may identify.

To the extent that a particular production or reading of *Twelfth Night* gives weight to the plight of Malvolio, the play can teeter on the edge of tragedy. Many critics look upon *Twelfth Night* as the culmination of Shakespeare’s romantic comedies, paving the way for the often darkly comedic “problem plays” that were to follow. “When Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night*,” comments Harold Goddard,

*...he could only surmise what the future had in store for him. But we know. To us this play, with the song that brings it to a conclusion, looks both ways. It is a bridge between the poet’s Comedies and his Tragedies as Julius Caesar more obviously is between his Histories and his Tragedies... He is now for the first time about to confront the full force of the wind and the rain, to come to man’s estate. King Lear is not far under the horizon. His ‘play’ is done.*



photo: John Trampler

MICHAEL BROWN AND RHYS MEREDITH IN TIM CARROLL’S PRODUCTION FROM SHAKESPEARE’S GLOBE (CST WORLD’S STAGE, 2003)

Comedy depicts metamorphosis, and like our dreams, it reflects our hopes—as unrealistic or complicated as they may be. In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare makes fun of lovers with unrealistic expectations and of sentimental romance without satirizing the lovers or representing romance as farcical. Shakespeare isn’t saying people shouldn’t fall in love, but he may be saying that people are prone to be a bit ridiculous and helpless when they *do* fall in love. In satire and farce, nothing is sacred. But in Shakespearean comedy, the ridiculous and the serious stand side by side and clarify each other—humor becomes a means of dealing with profound and universal issues.



## The Wo/man I Love

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*Twelfth Night* makes us think about recognition, particularly gender recognition. It asks if it matters if your best male friend turns out to be the woman you love (as Duke Orsino’s pal “Cesario”—Viola in male drag—eventually becomes his wife). And it asks what happens to your passion when the man you love turns out to be, first, a woman, and then the brother of that woman (as Olivia’s love for “Cesario” is eventually transferred to Viola’s twin brother Sebastian). Most of all,

# Twelfth Night

do we love those we love regardless of their biological sex? Regardless of their gender?

Viola explicitly constructs her sexual ambiguity: she plans to present herself to Orsino as neither a man nor a woman, but as a eunuch. Yet clearly no one takes her to be a eunuch: first she is a boy, and then she is a woman. Orsino remarks that “Cesario” looks more like a woman than a man, and Malvolio, mistaking femininity for youth, quips that “Cesario” is “in standing water, between boy and man,” though we know that the standing water is between boy and girl. Yet they take “Cesario” at face value, as a boy, and mistake him for the real thing—Viola’s twin brother Sebastian—when Sebastian finally appears.

Are we to assume that the voices and bodies and personalities of “Cesario” and Sebastian, as well as their faces, are the same? Sebastian is quite different from “Cesario”—not only a different sex, but also a different gender (a violent swordsman). Yet when Orsino sees them both he cries out, in a quasi-liturgical formula, “One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons.” Olivia simply croons, “Most wonderful!” both because she realizes that “Cesario” is male after all, and because there are two of him!

There is no point in treating the play like a murder mystery, let alone a legal case. It is a recognition play, which demands that we suspend our disbelief. When the victim of the masquerade finally recognizes the masquerader (“Oh, it’s Viola!”), the audience recognizes the plot (“Oh, it’s one of those recognition plays!”). That moment brings with it the same satisfaction as the moment when the last piece of the jigsaw puzzle—or the last line connecting the dots—slips in to reveal the total image. Perhaps we should grant to the characters the same double pleasure and conscious illusion that we grant to ourselves, the right both to see through the trick and to be taken in by it.

⑥ On the outside, it would seem that a male “Cesario” is in love with a male Orsino; on the inside, a female Olivia loves a female Viola. ⑥

The awkward fact that a woman (Olivia) falls in love with a man (“Cesario”) who is a woman (Viola) who falls in love with a man (Orsino) allows the play to express a complex series of meditations on androgyny. On the outside, it would seem that a male “Cesario” is in love with a male



photo: Vladimir Vyatkin

SIR TOBY BELCH (ALEXANDER FEKLISTOV) AND FESTE (IGOR YASULOVICH) IN THE CHEKHOV INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL PRODUCTION FROM RUSSIA, DIRECTED BY DECLAN DONNELLAN (CST WORLD’S STAGE, 2006)

Orsino; on the inside, a female Olivia loves a female Viola. Viola/“Cesario” thus experiences simultaneously two different sorts of gender/sex asymmetry, one public, one private. Shakespeare then resolves the triangular tangle by squaring it, adding a fourth person, Sebastian, to make it come out even, like a good dinner party. Sebastian materializes the dream figure of “Cesario,” who has existed only in the infatuated imagination of both Olivia and Orsino but now proves actually to exist, so that Olivia can have him. But why does Olivia love Sebastian? If, in her temporary, grief-induced misanthropy, she loved “Cesario”’s gender (feminine), but not her sex (female), has she really gotten what she wants in Sebastian, who is entirely male?

We might view this story as expressing a kind of gender essentialism: Orsino knows, somehow, that underneath the clothing there really is someone of the opposite sex. But we might, on the other hand, view it as just the opposite, as a story that denies gender altogether. The attraction between Orsino and “Cesario” is a powerful testimony to a love that transcends not sexuality but gender, a love made all the more titillating by the woman’s safe hiding place behind man’s clothing. Gradually we in the audience share Orsino’s confusion: Is this a boy or a girl? And does it matter? Eventually we learn, as Orsino does, that he loves one person, male or female, in a way that renders gender irrelevant.

## From a Scholar's Perspective



### THE SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE, THE NATURE OF FORGIVENESS

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*Illinois at Chicago. He holds appointments as Professor of English and Art History, and has published extensively in his research specialties, Shakespeare, Renaissance literature, and visual culture.*

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* takes its title from the last day of the Christmas festival, the Feast of the Epiphany, which we know better as the day of 12 drummers drumming. To Shakespeare and his society, it was a day for revelry and gift-giving, and a day for theater. It is possible that *Twelfth Night* was written to be performed on the holiday. But the play is, fundamentally, less about a specific time of year than a state of mind, indicated by its subtitle, *What You Will*. One by one, its characters put their desires ahead of social rules until they are snarled in such a tangle that only fate or nature can sort it out.

Shakespeare builds his plot and his atmosphere gradually, as he introduces a series of characters who at first seem unrelated: Orsino, the fantastical love-sick duke, who may be more in love with his own love-sickness than with any lady; Viola, the shipwrecked maiden who disguises herself as Orsino's page "Cesario"; and the outrageous Sir Toby Belch, whose behavior is summed up by his name. Finally, there is the puritanical Malvolio, the socially ambitious steward who dreams of being a great statesman while trying to put a stop to all revelry.

At the center of the myriad characters and multiple plots of the play is the noblewoman Olivia, who has retired from the world in mourning for her father and brother. The long, complex scene where she is introduced is a masterpiece. At its opening she is, in the jesting words of her fool Feste, a "madonna," and a "mouse of virtue." When Viola, disguised as Cesario, arrives as the ambassador of Orsino's love-suit, Olivia shows herself to be a satirist in her own right, cutting through the hypocrisy of courtship and of the cult of female beauty. But in the youthful Cesario she sees something else—a passion based on genuine emotion and free of the socially confining weight of conventional marriage. Step by step, Olivia casts off her self-imposed repression and gives

in to her giddy love for Cesario. "May one so easily catch the plague?" she asks herself, "Well, let it be." Viola/Cesario in turn feels pity for this woman who has mistakenly fallen in love with a cross-dressed woman, but is intent on her own love for Orsino, who in turn is attracted to her as a man.

Should we give in to such desires? That is the question that the play poses so acutely for its characters and for us. The desires that the characters feel for each other zigzag across socially established courtship rules and gender roles, leaving rules and roles in shambles. But in a comic world, nature is finally more forgiving than social convention, and by following their instincts the characters gradually work out what they want. By loving another woman—however unwittingly—Olivia is able to evade the forms of male dominance that have made her retreat from the world in the first place. She is able to choose the mate she wants, not the one others want, and have a chance at independence. Viola/Cesario, in turn, learns to speak her true feelings, at first obliquely, as what Orsino might say to Olivia, or what she as Viola might wish to say to Orsino. And at the end she releases Orsino from the conventionality of his own desires, as he ponders whether he likes her best as a woman or as a man.

By loving another woman—however unwittingly—Olivia is able to evade the forms of male dominance that have made her retreat from the world in the first place.

Holidays should end happily, and *Twelfth Night* ends almost perfectly. After all the confusions and cross-dressings, the couples are still paired off boy/girl, boy/girl. Viola's twin brother Sebastian sums it up as "Nature's bias," drawing them to an ending that reconciles desire with conventional social order. But Shakespeare rarely is content with a perfectly happy ending. The spirit of resistance embodied by Olivia and Viola passes at the end to Malvolio. It is hard for audiences to feel much sympathy for this egotistical killjoy, because his driving ego and seething class resentment represent the desires that finally cannot be contained in the neat world of a comic ending. "I'll be revenged on the pack of you," he cries as he rushes off stage. Into the world of comedy, he cannot return. But in Shakespearean tragedy—above all in the figure of Iago—we see how terrible the desire for vengeance can be.

# What the Critics Say...

1700s



[Malvolio] has Wit, Learning, and Discernment, but temper'd with an Allay of Envy, Self-Love, and Detraction. —Richard Steele, 1711

[*Twelfth Night*] is in the graver part elegant and easy, and in some of the lighter scenes exquisitely humorous. —Samuel Johnson, 1765

When we consider the Variety and proper Contrast of Characters, the many uncommon Situations to unfold and bring forth the several Humours, Passions, and Peculiarities of the Dramatis Personae, there is no Performance of five short Acts which contains such Matter for Mirth, arising from the happy Disposition of the Scenes and from the natural, though unexpected, Mistakes of the Characters. —George Stevens, 1772

*Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, unites the entertainment of an intrigue, contrived with great ingenuity, to a rich fund of comic characters and situations, and the beautiful colours of an ethereal poetry. —August Wilhelm Schlegel, 1808

6

1800s



[*Twelfth Night*] is justly considered as one of the most delightful of Shakespeare's comedies. It is full of sweetness and pleasantry. It is perhaps too good-natured for comedy. It has little satire, and no spleen. It aims at the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous. It makes us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them, and still less bear any ill-will towards them. Shakespeare's comic genius resembles the bee rather in its power of extracting sweets from weeds or poisons, than in leaving a sting behind it. —William Hazlitt, 1817

Malvolio is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality. —Charles Lamb, 1822

*Twelfth Night* is a genuine comedy—a perpetual spring of the gayest and the sweetest fancies. In artificial society men and women are divided into castes and classes, and it is rarely that extremes in character or manners can approximate. To blend into one harmonious picture the utmost grace and refinement of sentiment and the broadest effects of humour, the most poignant wit and the most indulgent benignity, in short, to bring before us in the same scene Viola and Olivia, with Malvolio and Sir Toby, belonged only to Nature and to Shakespeare. —Mrs. Anna Jameson, 1833

We are all, in varying degrees, insane...Some have a graceful poetic madness, others a madness grotesque and trivial. —E. Montégut, 1867

[The] piece in truth is constituted throughout to make a strong impression of the maddest mirth. Rightly conceived and acted by players who even in caricature do not miss the line of beauty, it has an incredible effect. —G. G. Gervinus, 1850

[In *Twelfth Night*] Shakespeare erected the exquisite, graceful structure of the most perfect of his comedies, and at the same time, by the most complete scheme and by a rarely full range of characters, he drew the attention from external circumstances and concentrated it on the inner life of the action, and by giving an absolute unity of interest he breathed into it all the true dramatic soul. —F. Kreyssig, 1862

*Twelfth Night* is, we think, on the whole, one of the bright, fanciful, and varied productions of Shakespeare's less earnest dramatic mold; but it possesses neither complete imagination nor complete natural truthfulness; and it seems to us to be more or less deficient throughout in consistency, in harmony, in the depth and firmness of touch, which distinguish the finer creations of his genius. —Thomas Kenny, 1864

We are all, in varying degrees, insane...Some have a graceful poetic madness, others a madness grotesque and trivial. —E. Montégut, 1867

In none of his dramas, to my sense, does the Poet appear to have been in a healthier or happier frame of mind, more free from the fascination of the darker problems of humanity, more at peace with

# What the Critics Say...

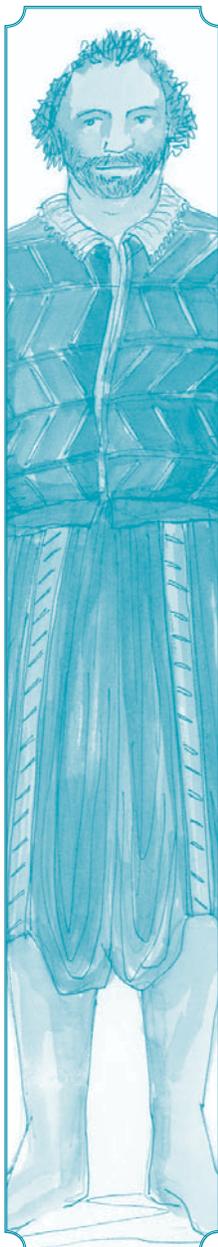
## 1800s CONTINUED

himself and all the world, or with Nature playing more kindly and genially at his heart, and from thence diffusing her benedictions through his whole establishment. —H. N. Hudson, 1872

The poet has emphasized his meaning, furthermore, by the expedient of contrast between the two women. Olivia—self-absorbed, ostentatious in her mourning, acquisitive and voracious in her love, self-willed in her conduct, conventional in her character, physically very beautiful but spiritually insignificant—while she is precisely the sort of woman for whom men go wild, serves but to throw the immeasurable superiority of Viola into stronger relief. —William Winter, 1893



## 1900s



*Twelfth Night* is, to me, the last play of Shakespeare's golden age. I feel happy ease in the writing, and find much happy carelessness in the putting together. —Harley Granville-Barker, 1912

Times change, and we are more likely to regard Malvolio with some measure of sympathy than was Shakespeare; indeed, in spite of his vanity, to us he is a figure not untouched by pathos, for the possibility of Olivia falling in love with him appears to us not entirely preposterous, nor do his portentous gravity and puritanical airs seem to us so offensive, now that our Sir Tobies have been steadily rebuked in the manner of Malvolio for at least two generations...Malvolio has been steadily coming into his own for a long time, so that it is difficult for us to regard him as an unpleasant oddity as Shakespeare did. And perhaps it says something for our charity that, sitting as we are among ever-diminishing supplies of cakes and ale, we can still see something pathetic in this figure. —J.B. Priestley, 1925

Shakespeare's sympathies were so wide and his dramatic genius so universal that it is always dangerous to give him a point of view and dower him with various likes and dislikes. Nevertheless it is true to say that certain types of character very clearly aroused his dislike; and it is also true to say that these are the very types of character that appear to have some fascination for our world. In short, his villains are rapidly becoming our heroes. Thus, Shakespeare clearly detested all hard, unsympathetic, intolerant persons, the over-ambitious and overweening, the climbers and careerists, the 'get-on-or-get-outs' of this world. —J.B. Priestley, 1925

[In *Twelfth Night* there is] a silvery undertone of sadness, which makes it perhaps the loveliest of all Shakespeare's high comedies. Maybe, in this, my ear is super-subtle and self-deceived; but the impression is unailing. —John Middleton Murry, 1936

[With *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*,] Shakespearian comedy realises its most perfect form, and therefore in them Shakespeare's comic idea, his vision of the reach of human happiness in this world of men and women, is richer, deeper, more sustained, and more satisfying than in any other of his plays. —H. B. Charlton, 1937

Shakespeare has built a world out of music and melancholy. —Mark Van Doren, 1939

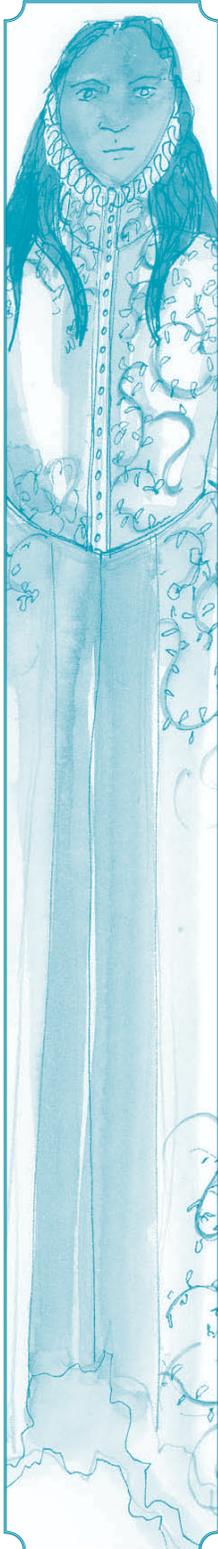
'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?' This most famous sentence in the play is more than Sir Toby disposing of his niece's steward; it is the old world resisting the new, it is the life of hiccups and melancholy trying to ignore latter-day puritanism and efficiency... [Malvolio] is of a new order—ambitious, self-contained, cold and intelligent, and dreadfully likely to prevail. —Mark Van Doren, 1939

Pretty nearly everybody in it but Viola and Sebastian...is at the extreme point where from excess of something or other he is about to be converted into something else. —Harold C. Goddard, 1951

The thing that this society of pleasure-seekers has forgotten is the wind and the rain. It's all right to play with toys while we are children, and later we may thrive for a little time by swaggering or crime. But knaves and thieves are soon barred out. There is such a thing as coming to man's estate, such a hard reality, for instance, as marriage, which all the cakes and ale will not turn into what it is not. The world, with its weather, is an ancient fact. —Harold C. Goddard, 1951

# What the Critics Say...

1900s  
CONTINUED



When Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night* he could only surmise what the future had in store for him. But we know. To us this play, with the song that brings it to a conclusion, looks both ways. It is a bridge between the poet's Comedies and his Tragedies as *Julius Caesar* more obviously is between his Histories and his Tragedies...He is now for the first time about to confront the full force of the wind and the rain, to come to man's estate. *King Lear* is not far under the horizon. His 'play' is done. —Harold C. Goddard, 1951

Shakespeare's play is, of course, a romantic comedy, with even less of a threat to a happy outcome than there is in his other plays in this genre. No Shylock whets his knife, no Don John lurks malignantly in the shadows; indeed, there is not even a Charles who threatens to crack an Orlando's ribs... —Sylvan Barnet, 1954

*Twelfth Night* deserves special consideration because it has the greatest complexity of plot structure [of the great comedies of Shakespeare's Middle Period] and because the net effect of the play, in spite of Malvolio, is not comic. —Milton Crane, 1955

*Twelfth Night* is the climax of Shakespeare's early achievement in comedy. The effects and values of the earlier comedies are here subtly embodied in the most complex structure which Shakespeare had yet created. —Joseph H. Summers, 1955

Every character has his masks, for the assumption of the play is that no one is without a mask in the serio-comic business of the pursuit of happiness. —Joseph H. Summers, 1955

I have always found the atmosphere of *Twelfth Night* a bit whiffy. I get the impression that Shakespeare wrote the play at a time when he was in no mood for comedy, but in a mood of puritanical aversion to all those pleasing illusions which men cherish and by which lead their lives. The comic convention in which the play is set prevents him from giving direct expression to the mood, but the mood keeps disturbing, even spoiling, the comic feeling! —W. H. Auden, 1957

Feste is the principal link between the other characters in *Twelfth Night*. Unless Puck is counted, he is the only clown for whom Shakespeare provides an epilogue. And as it happens, his is the epilogue to the whole group of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. —L. G. Salingar, 1958

The fool in *Twelfth Night* has been over the garden wall into some such world as the Vienna of *Measure for Measure*. He never tells where he has been, gives no details. But he has an air of knowing more of life than anyone else—too much, in fact... —C.L. Barber, 1959

The action of *Twelfth Night* is indeed that of a Revels, a suspension of mundane affairs during a brief epoch in a temporary world of indulgence, a land full of food, drink, love, play, disguise and music. But parties end, and the reveler eventually becomes satiate and drops heavily into his worldly self again ... The essential action of revels is: To surfeit the Appetite upon excess that it "may sicken and so die." It is the Appetite, not the whole Self, however, which is surfeited: the Self will emerge at the conclusion of the action from where it has been hidden. The movement of the play is toward this emergence of humanity from behind a mask of comic type. —John Hollander 1959

The role of Malvolio is proper enough in the context of revelry, but the context is hardly strong enough to drown completely the overtones of *Hamlet*; the malcontented outsider is not always despicable. In *Twelfth Night* the impetus towards reconciliation is sufficiently tentative to allow such thoughts, and in such thoughts lies the death of Comedy. —G. K. Hunter, 1962

So that with *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare's insight into the world of man appears to have reached a point of no return... The primrose path of comic perception had led Shakespeare to the pathetic core of human nature: man's helplessness as he finds himself controlled by his own blindness and self-love. From this point, there were only two courses left, each of which Shakespeare was to follow to the bitter end: the savagery of satire and the cathartic awe of tragedy. —Albert Gerard, 1964

To see *Twelfth Night* is to be reminded of occasions when we are making merry with those who are closest to us in sympathy and affection, and yet, though the pleasure is keen and genuine, we

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are fractionally conscious that the formula is not quite right, so that we cannot quite keep it from ourselves that an effort is needed for the contrivance of harmony. —Clifford Leech, 1965

*Twelfth Night* or what you will. What will you have, a boy or a girl?...Viola transformed herself into Cesario, then Cesario became Viola, who turned into Sebastian. Ultimately, then, in this comedy of errors, what was just an appearance? There is only one answer: sex. Love and desire pass from a youth to a girl and from a girl to a youth. Cesario is Viola, Viola is Sebastian. Passion is one; it only has different faces: of man and woman; of revulsion and adoration; of hate and desire. —Jan Kott, 1965

The truth is that Malvolio is mad: he is a classic instance of what the psychoanalyst calls erotomania. His treatment for madness is therefore well deserved, though apparently it is unsuccessful and the prognosis is bad. His attitude toward life—his self-love, his “seriousness”—are inexcusable in the world of the play, and we should never pity him. —Elias Schwartz, 1967

Every character has his masks, for the assumption of the play is that no one is without a mask in the serio-comic business of the pursuit of happiness. —Joseph H. Summers, 1955

*Twelfth Night* is a festival that has already been going on too long. Twelve days and nights of overeating and overdrinking, little or nothing done in the way of useful work: the Elizabethans were not so different from ourselves. By 6 January they were ready enough for one more party, and then back to work. —John Barton, 1969

‘I’ll be revenged,’ he pauses and pouts, ‘on the whole pack of you.’ It is a totally empty threat. The House, Illyria, the World, will shortly be laughing at his predicament. I believe there is but one thing for Malvolio—suicide. —Donald Sinden (*Malvolio* in John Barton’s 1970 production at the RSC)

I first saw *Twelfth Night* at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1947...I fully appreciated the charm of this delightful play, so much so that when early in 1969 John Barton telephoned to ask me to play Malvolio I unhesitatingly said ‘yes’...When I reread *Twelfth Night*, however, I soon realized that this was not the play I thought I knew. Troubled, I telephoned John Barton: ‘I am afraid you may have to recast Malvolio—I find him tragic.’ ‘Thank God for that,’ he replied, ‘I thought I would have to talk you round to it.’ —Donald Sinden (*Malvolio* in John Barton’s 1970 production at the RSC)

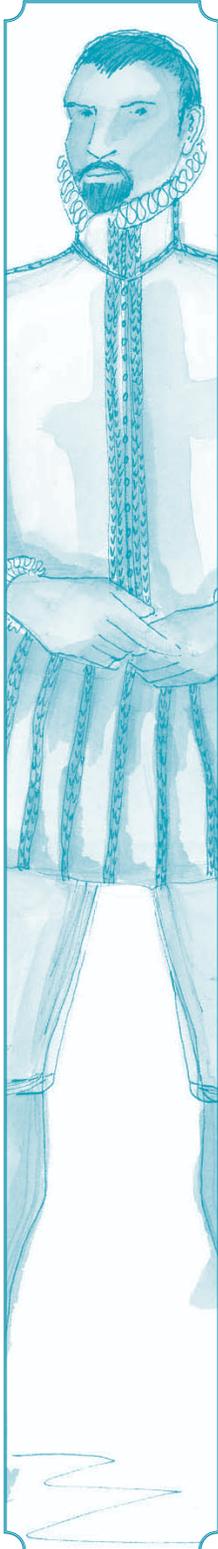
[Feste] does not attempt to judge, or even to reason. He simply states fact...The reality of wind and rain wins out, the monotony of the everyday. The passing of time is painful, may even seem unendurable, but there is nothing for it but resignation, the wise acceptance of the Fool. All holidays come to an end; all revels wind down at last. Only by the special dispensation of art can some people, Viola and Orsino, Olivia and Sebastian, be left in Illyria. For the rest of us, the play is done; fiction yields to fact, and we return to normality along with Sir Toby and Maria, Sir Andrew and Malvolio. —Anne Barton, 1972

At a party where everyone is joyously drunk Malvolio is the guest who insists on remaining cold sober, who reads long lectures on temperance to everyone else, and threatens to summon the police. As such, he is our enemy as well as Sir Toby’s, not only because he tries to suppress music and revelry which we find entertaining, but because we recognize that, in his view, we ought not to be indulging ourselves by going to the theatre at all. This is why his downfall, in its early stages, is so delicious. —Anne Barton, 1974

The ‘dykes that separate man from man,’ upon which, according to W.B. Yeats, ‘comedy keeps house,’ are nowhere more apparent in Shakespeare’s comedies than they are in *Twelfth Night*. In plays like *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *As You Like It* the confrontation of different minds was mostly stimulating and entertaining—a celebration of human variety. In *Twelfth Night*, however, we see the other side of this vision: each individual is locked in his own private understanding, and his ability to escape from himself and share experiences with others is limited. That did not matter so much in *A Midsummer’s Night’s Dream*

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and *As You Like It*, where the comedy created a broad, secure community, and our delight sprang from watching each individual take his place in that community, all of them contributing to a larger vision. But here the sense of community is weaker. Instead, we are aware of each character as an individual, out on his own, the lovers trying to make contact but with limited success...  
—A.S. Leggatt, 1974

[Malvolio] too is in the prison of his ego, but for him it is a gorgeous palace...In fact Malvolio is fully happy only when he is alone; his prickly manner at other times is his reaction to the presence of other people, whose very existence is an irritating intrusion.  
—A.S. Leggatt, 1974

Change is the essence of sanity in *Twelfth Night*, whether we view it as a play about transformations within the inward self or about actors performing roles...The constant change necessary to maintain order in the world is also necessary to maintain order within the self. In this sense, Malvolio is mad in his refusal to change...  
—M.E. Lamb, 1980

We are all actors assuming various roles with various degrees of competence. Like Viola and Malvolio, we are defined not by our 'real selves,' but by our ability to play our roles, to step outside them, to understand the roles of others. Absolute reality and even absolute identity are illusory. This is the Rome celebrated by Ovid, and it seems much like Shakespeare's Illyria.  
—M.E. Lamb, 1980

The tensions implicit in Shakespearean comedy are tensions of willed ignorance followed by knowledge.  
—Marjorie Garber, 1980

As we watch Viola mediating between Olivia and Orsino, inhabiting one sex with them and another with us, we are forced to conceive of novel and conflicting ways in which sexual identity might be detached from personal identity; we are cut loose from our habitual assumption that the two are inextricable, that the person is defined by his or her sex.  
—Coppélia Kahn, 1981

Viola and Feste...share the distinction of being the only pretenders in Illyria who do not wear their motley in their brains.  
—Karen Greif, 1981

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The tensions implicit in Shakespearean comedy are tensions of willed ignorance followed by knowledge.

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—Marjorie Garber, 1980

Illyria is a world of deceptive surfaces, where appearances constantly fluctuate between what is real and what is illusory. Out of the sea, there comes into this unstable society a catalyst in the form of the disguised Viola, who becomes the agent required to free Orsino and Olivia from the bondage of their self-delusions.  
—Karen Greif, 1981

Identity and disguise motivate much of the action in *Twelfth Night*. Identity, it is important to bear in mind, includes both the identity that represents the essence of one's being, the 'what I am' that separates one individual from another, and also the identity that makes identical twins alike...  
—Karen Greif, 1981

*Twelfth Night* poses questions about 'the purpose of playing' and about whether illusion is perhaps too deeply embedded in human experience to be ever completely separated from reality.  
—Karen Greif, 1981

What the audience encounters in the mirror of the play is its own reflected identity in the characters who play out their experiences upon the stage. In sharing the experience of *Twelfth Night*, we come to recognize the ties of identity that link our own world of being to the imagined world of the play; and, on a more personal level, we identify our private follies and desires in our fictional counterparts upon the stage. In acknowledging this kinship of resemblance, we too gain a fresh awareness of the nature of 'what I am,' the true self concealed beneath the surface level of appearances. Moreover, having witnessed how deeply life is ingrained with illusion within Illyria, we may awake from the dreamworld of the play to wonder if 'what we are' in the world outside the playhouse is perhaps less static and immutable than we once believed. At this point, imagination and truth may begin to merge in our own world: 'Prove true, imagination, O, prove true.'  
—Karen Greif, 1981

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One is always aware of mixed responses in the theatre, of laughter in the wrong places. It's a general hazard of playgoing, and one accepts it without comment. But once [while watching a production of *Twelfth Night*]...I understood it as the dramatist's design: what had seemed an imperfection of theatre experience become the truth of the play...The laughter of others, but not of oneself, became the experience of the drama. One by one the laughs ceased, like lights going out in the house, as the edge of the great play, dark as logic, moved over the consciousness of the audience. It received in total silence the destruction of Malvolio...That silence, that end of laughter, is today's *Twelfth Night*. —*Ralph Berry, 1981*

Imagine a Malvolio in the center of the platform stage, addressing others downstage: he is surrounded on three (or all) sides by tiers of spectators, who are still jeering at him, and turns on his heel through at least 180 degrees to take in 'the whole pack of you.' That way the house, not merely the stage company, is identified with the 'pack.' It is theatre as blood sport, theatre that celebrates its own dark origins. That, too, is 'festive' comedy. What the audience makes of its emotions is its own affair. I surmise that the ultimate effect of *Twelfth Night* is to make the audience ashamed of itself. —*Ralph Berry, 1981*

Because the tragedies concentrate on 'masculine' values, they have been considered, by generations of critics, more serious and more realistic than the comedies. They are neither. They deal with much the same material, the same concerns, and use many of the same techniques and devices. There is use of folktale, supernatural elements, and disguise in both genres. The difference is that in tragedy, not only acts, but even words are irrevocable. If in comedy, a serious act or speech is saved by the disguise convention, the bed trick, or a fairy potion, in tragedy, acts or words that need not necessarily lead to irrevocable consequences always do. The tragedies seem more realistic because they deal with the masculine principle, that is, they deal with structures, power, possession, and action, all of which are palpable, substantial, whereas the comedies deal with feelings, attitudes, reflections—the fluid and generative and nonsubstantial dimensions of human life. —*Marilyn French, 1981*

Feste is an outsider because his experience has damaged his capacity for joy...Life is hard, and love does not last, he insists. He is right. But it an error, I think, to find his truth the central truth of the play. It is one truth among many in this round view. —*Marilyn French, 1981*

As Feste moves through the world of Illyria, he challenges our assumptions about festivity and foolery; he suggests not only that the fool is the only sane person in this world, but also that festivity is not as satisfying an experience as we might imagine... Feste does not often amuse us, or the other characters; we do not often laugh with him—he does not give us occasion to do so... Feste is distanced from the other inhabitants of Illyria because he is immune to the lures of drink, love, fantasy, and the distortions they create: he seems to have known these things and come out the other side. The festive experience is his trade; it holds no mysteries for him, and no delights. —*Thad Jenkins Logan, 1982*

*Twelfth Night* is itself an elusive work, which—perhaps because of this quality of 'musicality' or aesthetic self-consistency, an expressive reticence, seems to resist critics' attempts to explain or define or even describe the work as a whole, to say why or how it succeeds and why we value and admire it so. —*Barbara Everett, 1985*

Malvolio's very gullibility reveals that he has yet to measure certain of the more cynical elements in the life around him. He does not grasp how unlikely it is that merely because of his diligent work Olivia would fall in love and ignore the vast social gap that separates them. Viola and Maria, by way of contrast, assiduously lure their prey with flattery. While it is perfectly true that Malvolio's own desire for Olivia is inextricably bound up with his ambition, he is as or more capable of affection than any Illyrian in the play. —*Richard A. Levin, 1985*

Shakespearean comedy is acutely aware that characters in love are simultaneously at their most 'real' and 'unreal,' most true and most feigning. Love is the ultimate self-definition, the most precious and unique mode of being; yet it is also intolerably hackneyed and banal, something that millions of people have done before and millions more will do again. To say 'I love you,'...is always at some level a quotation;

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in its very moment of absolute, original value, the self stumbles across nothing but other people's lines, finds itself handed a meticulously detailed script to which it must slavishly conform. It discovers, that is, that it is always already 'written,' scored through in its noblest thoughts and most spontaneous affections by the whole tediously repetitive history of human sexual behavior, subjected to impersonal codes and conventions at exactly the moment it feels most euphorically free of them. Sexuality is a theatre with a strictly limited array of roles: cold mistress, unrequited lover, jealous paranoiac, unblemished madonna, vampiric whore. The most 'natural' human activity is thus a question of high artifice... —Terry Eagleton, 1986

There is something anarchic about sexual desire which is to be feared, and the fear is less moral than political: in exposing the provisional nature of any particular commitment, Eros offers a potent threat to social order. And if desire is 'natural,' then the unwelcome corollary of this is that it is natural for things to wander, deviate, stray out of place. —Terry Eagleton, 1986

Like *Measure for Measure*, the play would be perfectly rancid if it took itself seriously, which it wisely refuses to do. *Twelfth Night*, I would suggest, is a highly deliberate outrage, and should be played as such. Except for Feste...none of its characters ought to be portrayed wholly sympathetically, not even Viola, who is herself a kind of passive zany, since who else would fall in love with the self-intoxicated Orsino? —Harold Bloom, 1987

Like Rosalind...Viola is a teasing representation of the convergence of opposites, a man-woman like the strange figure from earlier revels...disquieting unions of the dissimilar, which represent the imagination's power over difference... —Nick Potter, 1990

[Viola] exhibits an attitude which Gabriel Marcel has called 'disponibilité,' a putting oneself at the disposal of things, a being open and ready to respond to the demands of a situation with good will and willingness. This is nothing like being prepared for all eventualities. It is quite the opposite. That kind of preparedness depends on having thought out all eventualities, of having reduced all possibilities to a determinate and manageable number of types of possibility, so that nothing comes as a surprise, or is taken for what it is. That is a being in command of things. 'Disponibilité' means giving up that kind of command and being ready to respond to the invitations proffered by the situations in which you find yourself, whatever may turn up. —Nick Potter, 1990

There is a feature of Shakespeare's own world of which we ought to be aware, and that is the fact that to a Jacobean English audience the presence of poverty—grinding, dangerous, abject poverty—was such a fact of life that nobody in the theatre could forget about it, even if the plays they were watching were primarily concerned with the doings of lords and ladies and kings... Now, to some extent it is possible for a contemporary audience to go to a theatre now and forget about the people who are sleeping in Cardboard City, but I think a sense of contrast and inequality along the social scale is automatically understood in every Shakespeare play, even if, as in the case of *Twelfth Night*, it is not very specific in the text. There is no actual social debate in the play; the aristocratic characters seem very comfortable being so and have no particular sense of being challenged or feeling guilty. But I think to its original audience there would automatically have been a sense that Feste, and Fabian, perhaps Maria, even Toby Belch, were having to work on their wits' ends because the alternative to being attached to a big household like Olivia's would be the beach, the doorway, hopelessness. —Michael Pennington, 1992

The erotic twist in *Twelfth Night* is achieved by the irony that it is Olivia—the lady of significant independent means and a disinclination to submit herself and her lands to any 'master'—whose eroticized relationship of 'service' with Cesario is most socially and sexually transgressive. I think critics are right in seeing this as Olivia's 'come-uppance'—patriarchy's retribution for mistaking the conventions both of service and of marriage as a female head of household in an order explicitly designated male in its defining relationships. —Lisa Jardine, 1992

Malvolio is still around, closing the theatres...The revenge taken on him is extreme because what he stands for is so massively dangerous, starting as it does with an utter denial of tolerance and

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good humor. The Elizabethans would have been scared stiff of him, getting a whiff of the puritanical bigotry that within their lifetimes would close the playhouses and damage the subversive cosmopolitan vitality of the theatre almost beyond recovery...When Malvolio leaves the play vowing revenge on the company, they know he will be back in a moment; the original audience knew it and so should we. Malvolio is the one who cuts off the grant, tears up the agreement, won't lift the tax... He doesn't want you to go to the theatre at all.  
—Michael Pennington, 1992

The forest games in *As You Like It* have the pretext of filling an enforced suspension in the lives of those who participate. They are a way of making the best of a bad situation, of filling the temporary pause in normal life forced upon the courtly participants by the tyrannizing of Frederick and Oliver. But no such enforced temporal hiatus underlies the aristocrats and their doings in *Twelfth Night*, and the posturing and impersonating seem typical of daily life in Illyria, not the extraordinary behavior appropriate to a temporal interlude.  
—Ronald R. Macdonald, 1992

Having witnessed how deeply life is ingrained with illusion within Illyria, we may awake from the dreamworld of the play to wonder if what we are in the world outside the playhouse is perhaps less static and immutable than we once believed.  
—Karen Greif, 1981

“Property” in all its senses, along with the related ideas of possessing and possessions, having, holding, appropriating for the self and bestowing from it, is at the heart of the giddy swirl of foolery in *Twelfth Night*. To wish to possess in the romantic sense is to become possessed by the madness to which love is repeatedly compared; to hold the self in aloof reserve, as Olivia tries to do in her protracted mourning, is in a paradoxical way to lose it...  
—Ronald R. Macdonald, 1992

In *Twelfth Night* where Shakespeare displaces the exorcism on to authority figures, he constructs a narrative that represents exorcism as the play-acting that the authorities undertake to persecute the puritan... Shakespeare focuses not on puritanism or on madness or on exorcism, but on the extent to which authority will fabricate in order to protect itself, thus laying bare the strategies of containment, suppression, demonizing, and scapegoating that the ecclesiastical officials had been using...  
—Donna B. Hamilton, 1992

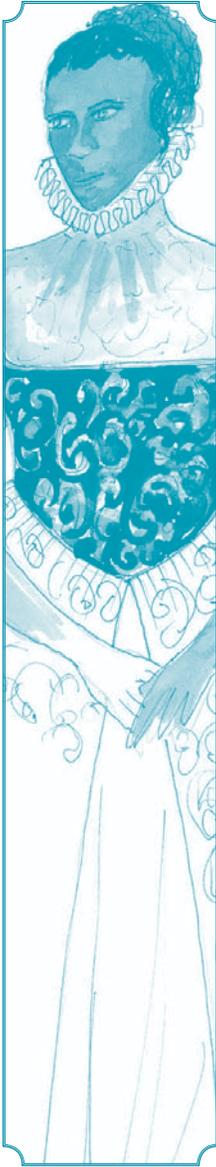
In *Twelfth Night*, and by way of the self-righteous Malvolio, Shakespeare interrogates the degree to which a closed political system, one which survives by maintaining the strictest control over competition for place, is also a system that maintains itself by devising means of controlling meaning. Such a society is not, however, secure, for contrary to the fiction created at the top, the systems of control are not invisible. Moreover, the marginalised, who ultimately come to understand those systems, indeed have the option of breaking away and so of defeating or severely rupturing the strategies of containment that worked for a while.  
—Donna B. Hamilton, 1992

Shakespearean comedy is typically complicated in its narrative structure: even so, *Twelfth Night* is unusually ambitious in the number of narratives which it sets going simultaneously, and the complexity with which they need to interrelate. It attempts simultaneously to create both the accelerating fugue-like structure of good farce, and also a series of characters who are allowed their own space to develop emotionally complex or subtle relationships with each other and with the audience. There are so many narratives going on at the same time that it is easy for the audience to lose track of everything that is happening. Plots of disguise and cross-dressing become interwoven with stories of mistaken identities, separated twins, and lost brothers; tricks are played on several characters simultaneously; and there is not one love-story but many.  
—Michael Mangan, 1996

Cesario has the same effect on Orsino that he has on Olivia, drawing both characters out of self-absorption by riveting their attention onto himself. But whereas Olivia was attracted by the audacity of one who dared to

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be “saucy at my gates,” Orsino finds himself drawn to the feminine qualities of his page... Cesario’s feminine male persona, like the image of the master-mistress of sonnet 20, must have made Orsino’s attraction to him both more understandable and more troubling. But unlike the speaker at the end of the sonnet, Orsino never explicitly dissociates himself from a sexual relationship with Cesario, and the actor can choose whether or not to make the duke self-conscious about his attachment to the youth. —Michael Shapiro, 1996

Learning to accept the disorder of experience, to enjoy its possibilities, and, like Viola, to allow time to “untangle” the hard knots of life’s confusion, are what makes the characters of the main plot ultimately successful in finding mates... The vulnerabilities and tragic possibilities of Viola’s, Sebastian’s, Olivia’s, and Orsino’s quests for love and selfhood seem to have been displaced onto Malvolio, whose quests for the very same things are failed ones. His particular position of ambiguous authority, his own social inferiority, his faltering ego (perhaps his emerging modern “self,” divided and doubtful), all contribute to making him a very convenient scapegoat. For, ultimately, as the receptacle for the play’s unwanted tragic potential, the Malvolio subplot makes comedy possible for the main plot. —Edward Cabill, 1996

Endowed with wealth, their lives graced by neither fathers, brothers, husbands, nor lovers, the two major women characters of *Twelfth Night* briefly challenge patterns of patriarchy... Although at the play’s end, neither woman achieves her goal, defeated by contemporary conventions surrounding love and matrimony, the dramatist, here, raises questions about women, wealth, power, and conformity, and teases his audience with contradictory evidence. —Irene G. Dash, 1997

Viola does not explicitly disguise herself in men’s clothes to avoid sexual predators. While she may share this motive, the scene points towards a practical desire to secure a court position and an impulse to escape from herself. It is as though, by becoming Cesario, she hoped to leave Viola to grieve in secret. That is, paradoxically, why her suit to serve the Duke can resemble Olivia’s immurement. Just as the countess resolves to withdraw into a nun’s asexuality, and thus become a ‘cloistress,’ so Viola proposes to be a eunuch—if not for the kingdom of heaven, then at least to sing at court. —John Kerrigan, 1997

Of all the characters, Maria has the most to gain from Malvolio’s fall. As fellow servants (if highly placed servants) they compete for power over the members of Olivia’s household. Malvolio’s officiousness can annoy Sir Toby and Olivia, but it cannot really affect their behavior. As steward and lady’s maid, Malvolio and Maria are in parallel—not necessarily hierarchical—relationship to one another, but they both occupy precarious positions. Malvolio uses his authority in the household to threaten Maria. Maria uses hers to crush him. —L. Caitlin Jorgensen, 1999

Malvolio may be the play’s most ‘notorious geck and gull,’ but he is certainly not alone in the part. *Twelfth Night* is replete with gullings, albeit of different degrees and durations. Andrew Aguecheek is by nature a gull (as he virtually admits), and he is gulled from first to last... But gulling is not merely exemplified by those designated as ‘gulls’ nor is its functioning simple. The dynamics of gulling is centripetal and draws many of the characters into its force field... [Sir Toby Belch] gulls Andrew into providing him with money, and inveigles Viola/Cesario into a farcical duel... Gulling shows itself to be a reversible game since Toby himself is gulled most effectively by Maria. —Angela Hurworth, 1999



## 2000S



The most salient reason for *Twelfth Night*’s elusive nature lies in the difficulty of striking a balance between the play’s light and dark aspects... Music contributes to this elusive nature of *Twelfth Night* because it eludes any attempts at an understanding of its aesthetics. *Twelfth Night* becomes a play that, like music, can communicate simultaneously joy and sadness, festive revelry and a deep-rooted melancholy, and so share a common feature of elusiveness. It is perhaps this pervasive presence of music that accentuates the elusive quality of *Twelfth Night*. —Marcus Cheng Chye Tan, 2001

The last scene of the play is complicated in its stage business, with many comings and goings and careful postponements of the full comical conclusion. Disguises are dropped and misunderstandings resolved only when it is abundantly clear that the twelfth-night festival of folly has led each character

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to a manifestation of “What they will.” Through madness, folly, confusion, revels, and disguises, the “truth,” as Shakespeare calls it, has become progressively apparent. —John Russell Brown, 2001

It is a mistake that some actors have made to play Malvolio as a near tragic victim.” —Peter Thomson, 2002

I surmise that the ultimate effect of *Twelfth Night* is to make the audience ashamed of itself.

—Ralph Berry, 1981

The main use that Viola makes of her intellect is in the moral/emotional education of the Duke. At the beginning of the play, Orsino depicts himself as the resident authority on love, and its chief victim. He equates love with “fancy,” the Elizabethan word for infatuation, a quality as changeable as the sea. He says that his desires are like “cruel hounds,” pursuing and destroying him... These fantasies are entirely self-centered... It takes Viola, come from the sea, to show him the difference between infatuation and love. —Sharon Hamilton, 2003

There is a lack of community exhibited in this play... But this sense of fragmentation begins to turn with the entrance of Viola, who after her shipwreck advises her new society that death will come for all and that, therefore, one must live wisely while there is time to do so. —Lisa Marciano, 2003

Viola as a boy, though carefully described as high-voiced and clear-complexioned, is able to educate both Orsino and Olivia in love, as Rosalind did Orlando in *As You Like It*, because she is herself in a middle space, in disguise, and in both genders. —Marjorie Garber, 2004

Olivia puts herself in a nunnery of her own devising. She is her own repressive parent, and her mourning for her brother puts her in a condition that is itself a kind of symbolic or emblematic death. —Marjorie Garber, 2004

Interaction between the genders depends on the discovery of a new, nonconventional way for them to see one another: a way to which the boy/girl Viola/Cesario offers a beguiling key. In the meantime, however, Viola’s disguise gives her the unwelcome opportunity to learn at first hand about men’s fantasies of ideal manhood. In *Twelfth Night* as in so many of Shakespeare’s plays men define their masculinity through violence, and this crude means of self-definition subjects non-violent men to considerable pain. —R.W. Maslen, 2005

Every instance of desire in the play is intertwined with service; Viola’s status as Orsino’s servant is the condition of possibility and impossibility of her love for him and also of Olivia’s erotic desire for her as Cesario; Orsino himself embodies courtly infatuation as a form of service in his dotage on Olivia; Malvolio exemplifies, Sonnet-like, the servant’s fantasy of social elevation through erotic conquest... even Sir Toby follows the pattern of reciprocal service when he marries his niece’s lady-in-waiting. —David Schalkwyk, 2005

As the male servant Cesario, Viola can develop a kind and degree of intimacy with Orsino that would be unlikely if not impossible were he a woman. —David Schalkwyk, 2005

Unlike her counterparts in Shakespeare’s other comedies, Viola experiences her transformation into a boy as a form of imprisonment. Although she plays her part with admirable forthrightness and self-sufficiency in Orsino’s service... her commitment to such service goes beyond even the self-sacrificial poses of the Sonnets’ servant-poet. In a show of ecstatic devotion, Viola finally ‘comes out’ by declaring her complete willingness to sacrifice her life to appease her master’s jealousy. —David Schalkwyk, 2005

Unlike Iago, who also entertains fantasies of social advancement and empowerment, Malvolio is not a playmaker. And since he never addresses the audience in speeches normally marked as asides, that audience lacks access to the reflections that threaten to make viewers complicit with Iago’s destructive actions. Like Iago, however... Malvolio lives with the ‘curse of service’ and the resentment of the tenuously positioned subordinate, delegated to serve his superior. —Barbara Correll, 2007

# A Play Comes to Life

## A Look Back at *Twelfth Night* in Performance

*Twelfth Night*, or *What You Will* by its very title invites actors, directors and audiences alike to construct their own play. Power, desire, dominance—call it what you will—drives the characters in this late Shakespearean comedy. The main characters live the leisurely life of the aristocracy, and have time to play games with love. We as the audience become part of the leisure class, not having to worry about the outcome; we trust that everything will turn out for the best. After all, this is a comedy, isn't it?

*Twelfth Night* was written around 1601, just before Shakespeare turned his attention to more tragic, introspective works such as *Othello* and *King Lear*. Similar in some respects to the later, so-called “problem plays,” *Twelfth Night* explores more than how these mismatched couples see their way clear to falling in love. Conflicts of power, class structure and sexuality run rampant through the text. Through the centuries,

performances of *Twelfth Night*, emphasizing different aspects of the play, have changed the focus of the work—and even the perceived “lead role.”

A barrister named John Manningham recorded in his diary that on February 2, 1602, he saw a performance of a play entitled “Twelve night or what you will.” He noted especially the character of Malvolio, calling his deception “a good device.” Richard Burbage created the role, most likely emphasizing the comic aspects of the character. Manningham was apparently not the only one who took a liking to the ambitious courtier. The play proved popular, and by 1623 came to be known simply by the name of the audience’s favorite character, Malvolio. At this time, women’s roles would have been played by boys or men; the part of Viola called for a boy playing a woman pretending to be a man. The inherent sexual complications seem to have been unimportant to these early productions—Shakespeare’s audiences were accustomed to seeing men playing women’s roles.

During the Restoration (after the monarchy was restored in 1660 and the theaters reopened), productions of *Twelfth Night* were not well received. Some bits and pieces of the play were incorporated into other works, but the play as a whole was not generally performed. By 1741, however, the play was once again an established favorite among London’s theatergoers. The famous actor-manager David Garrick presented *Twelfth Night* at least once a season at Drury Lane until the end of the eighteenth century, now employing women in the female roles. The main focus of the play continued to be the machinations of Malvolio. The principal actor still took the role of Malvolio, and he still interpreted it as a comic part.

Actor-managers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries moved away from the schemes of Malvolio. Their productions teemed with festive, musical and spectacular elements. Favorite selections from other Shakespeare plays and sonnets were incorporated into the play—musical interludes from *The Tempest* and *Venus and Adonis* for example. Although Malvolio still figured prominently in these productions, he was portrayed as a more dignified steward. Frequently during this period the production was set in the Spanish Golden Age, giving Malvolio all the pomp and circumstance of an hidalgo or Grandee.

Henry Irving’s production of 1884 at the Lyceum Theatre in London cut entirely the music and songs from the play. Irving played the role of Malvolio with emphasis not on the comedic aspects of the character, but on what he perceived to be its “tragic nuances.” Instead of focusing on the humor of the plotters in the play, Irving encouraged his audiences to



photo: Luz Lauren

GREG VINKLER AS MALVOLIO IN CST’S 1996 PRODUCTION, DIRECTED BY MICHAEL PENNINGTON

# A Play Comes to Life

see the desperate side of the characters. This interpretation led to audiences actually booing Malvolio by the final act, and to critics decrying his performance of this standard comedic favorite. Irving brought this production to America, where it received the same unfavorable reception.

By the very end of the nineteenth century, *Twelfth Night* was revived as a traditional comedy. This time the focus moved from any single character to the play's setting itself—and the more elaborate, the better, accommodating the lavish expectations of theatergoers at the time. In one production in the United States there were more than 16 complete sets that recreated the magic land of Illyria. This interpretation was based on American perceptions of aristocratic English country life. Again, the idea that the aristocracy had time to loll about and play love games figured prominently; songs and music were reinstated; and in one remarkable production, a set featuring a terraced garden with real grass and working fountains graced the stage.

The twentieth century saw dramatic changes in performance interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. Although the play was infrequently staged until the 1930s, since then it has enjoyed almost constant production. In 1937 Tyrone Guthrie staged a production featuring Laurence Olivier as Sir Toby Belch, Alec Guinness as Andrew Aguecheek, and Jessica Tandy doubling as Viola and Sebastian. Using one actress to play the boy-girl look-alike twins was not well received on stage, but when Joan Plowright doubled as Viola and Sebastian in a television version in 1967, the effect worked well on camera, where editing could guide the audience's eye.

⑥ Our evolving perception of gender and gender roles has also opened new understandings of the attraction between the characters.

After World War II Laurence Olivier appeared in another production of the play, this time as Malvolio, with Richard Burton as Sir Toby Belch. Vivien Leigh played a Viola sporting a very 1950s interpretation of boy's clothes—tight trousers, a wasp-waist coat, and no attempt to conceal her bustline. In fact, at the end of the play she appeared for her curtain call in full evening dress, complete with tiara. This production pushed even further the idea that the audience was “playing” along with the actors; since “Cesario” was clearly a girl, why shouldn't she look like one?



photo: Liz Lauren

HENRY GODINEZ AS ORSINO IN CST'S 1996 PRODUCTION, DIRECTED BY MICHAEL PENNINGTON

Productions in the past 40 years have explored further the questions of gender and sexuality that *Twelfth Night* poses. In the 1960s and 1970s, society's experimentation with new ideas of sexual freedom opened up entirely new avenues of interpretation for the play's leading female characters, Viola and Olivia. Our evolving perception of gender and gender roles has also opened new understandings of the attraction between the characters.

*Twelfth Night's* appearances on the Chicago Shakespeare Theater stage exemplify the play's recent performance history. First performed at CST in 1996, the play was directed by British actor and director Michael Pennington in a production that balanced the comic with the pathos. In the twenty-first century, two companies have performed the play at CST with all-male casts. Shakespeare's Globe visited with its “original practices” production, which used conventions from Shakespeare's time, including hand-made clothing, live music and dance from the period, and an entirely male company. Artistic director Mark Rylance played Olivia in the production. Director Declan Donnellan and designer Nick Ormerod, joint founders of the British theater company Cheek by Jowl, teamed up with actors from the Pushkin Theatre of Moscow to create their stripped-down, contemporary, Russian-language version, which toured as part of CST's World's Stage in 2006.

*Twelfth Night* has perhaps come into its own in the modern era. Still popular in production and still full of debate as to the “true comic” or “true tragic” nature of the work, *Twelfth Night* offers us a world where, even though things aren't perfect (or even what they seem), it offers us a degree of safety where our imaginations can explore the many possibilities that its story offers up.

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## TWELFTH NIGHT ON FILM

Shakespeare's plays have basked in a long history on the silver screen. Directors have been making movies of his plays for about as long as films have been around. But until recently, *Twelfth Night* was largely ignored by filmmakers. Aside from some television specials, the only mainstream film version of *Twelfth Night* is the 1996 Trevor Nunn film with Helena Bonham Carter (*Fight Club*, *Harry Potter*, *Sweeney Todd*) as Olivia and Ben Kingsley (*Ghandi*, *The Wackness*) as Feste.

In taking liberties with Shakespeare's script, cutting some scenes and adding lines to the opening sequence, Nunn is certainly not the first director to adapt the text to fit his own vision. In film versions of Shakespeare, scenes are often added that do not appear in the script or existing ones are rearranged for dramatic effect. The shipwreck that casts Viola and Sebastian on the shores of Illyria is only reported in the script but, with the visual effects available to filmmakers, Nunn chose to open his film with a violent storm at sea.

In recent years Hollywood has cashed in on Shakespeare with modern adaptations that preserve the basic plot line and characters while "translating" the story into a modern context and language. *10 Things I Hate About You* (based on *The Taming of the Shrew*) and *O* (based on *Othello*) reframe Shakespeare in contemporary high school settings—as does the 2006 adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, *She's the Man*. Viola, played by Amanda Bynes, disguises herself as her brother Sebastian in order to play soccer at his school.

Long before film-making and Hollywood, Shakespeare, too, was taking old material and turning it into something new—just as he borrowed from his own sources like Barnabe Riche's tale "Apolonius and Silla" to imagine his own *Twelfth Night*.



## A Conversation with Director Josie Rourke

Members of the Education staff met with Josie Rourke to discuss her approach to directing Shakespeare, as well as her thoughts about her upcoming production of *Twelfth Night* here at CST.

**CST:** Can we begin by talking about your decision to set your production of *Twelfth Night* in the Elizabethan period?

**Josie Rourke:** Social status is crucial to this play. We need a sense of Olivia's status to understand what she's trying to play and the world in which she's trying to operate and survive. I think we get that through setting it in the Elizabethan period—though you see a lot of productions of *Twelfth Night* set in the Victorian period because that world makes sense of who and what a servant is. The Trevor Nunn film version is a bit like that. Robert Altman's *Gosford Park* illustrates that particularly English sensibility. In that context, the Malvolio character immediately makes sense. The sting of status comes up in that brilliant moment in the first scene between Cesario and Olivia when she tries to pay the page at the end, and Cesario is mortally offended by it.

The Elizabethan period is also very sensual. There's so much in the play about clothing, and un-clothing, and re-clothing. There's a great French film called *Queen Margot* set around the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the slaughter of the Huguenots in Paris in 1572: visually, it's absolutely stunning—very sumptuous in some parts and very disgusting in others. When these court women in their beautiful dresses walk through the streets, their dresses get dirty. You really feel like they are clothed and not costumed. That's what I mean by referring to our design as "dirty Elizabethan."

**CST:** As a comedy, would you say that there's never really any doubt in our minds that it's all going to turn out well for the characters we care about?

**JR:** Unless you care about Malvolio.

**CST:** True...a good percentage of the play is spent on the humiliation of Malvolio, and much of its comedic force is driven by the gulling of him throughout.

**JR:** There's a way of thinking about *Twelfth Night* as a "suitor play." *The Merchant of Venice* is another good example of a suitor play, where there's a virgin who's very rich and never wants to marry, and different men turn up and try to marry her. Malvolio is one of those suitors. He's really serious about wanting to obtain this woman and everything that represents. Orsino and Andrew are suitors, as is Cesario in some ways. You can see how that provides a kind of framework for the play.

If you think about the play in those terms, then the Malvolio ending is a very profound coda, an important part of the action that weaves through the play. You have a set of people who want to marry this woman, apart from the one whom she wants. How do you solve that? Well, guess what? There's

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photo: John Trammer

MALVOLIO (TIMOTHY WALKER, LEFT) IN SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE PRODUCTION (CST WORLD'S STAGE, 2003)

a twin! Isn't that marvelous! But that's almost too neat, isn't it, and Shakespeare is many things, but he's not neat.

**CST:** Do you imagine that this comedy ends darkly, then?

**JR:** Well, how do we define a comedy? Our 21st-century grip on comedy is extremely dark. To me, the most fascinating aspect of Shakespeare's comedic resonance is how it walks that line—the proximity of laughter to tears, of joy to horror. The tauter you stretch that line, the better.

**CST:** And Shakespeare starts his comedy with multiple deaths and imagined deaths.

**JR:** Grief is famously hard to write because it's an inactive emotion, but Shakespeare has managed to do that brilliantly in *Twelfth Night*—to find a way where grief is mobile and active and acted upon. There's a sense in which Olivia just needs a good shake. You just want to go, "Oh, snap out of it!" You're completely sympathetic to the fact that she's lost her father and her brother but, logically, she should marry the richest man in town—everybody else seems to think he's fantastic.

Viola gives Olivia a good shake. Those two women are in the same position: they've both lost a father and a brother in a very short space of time. One of them is dealing with it by dressing in black and refusing the advances of the hottest bachelor in town, and one of them is dealing with it by dressing up as a boy and going around causing trouble. You want to go, "Look, look what she's doing! Try that, or try something like that!" It's the same with Orsino, who is nursing a kind of grief, so that Olivia will have nothing to do with him. They both ball up their emotions into something rather beautiful and spend all day holding their ball of grief up to the light and examining it.

Viola and Sebastian make people impulsive and they make people do things they wouldn't normally do. Everyone submits to them. Somehow these twins are able to tilt the lives of other characters to an extreme, where they start to express things about themselves and take risks they wouldn't normally take.

**CST:** And be attracted to people they wouldn't be ordinarily.

**JR:** Yes. It's a very sexual play. It's easy to forget that part of Shakespeare's fun was having a boy dressed up as a girl who then dresses up as a boy, falling in love with a boy dressing up as a girl. And you've lost track, haven't you? After a certain point, it doesn't matter at all. That was the culture of the epoch. I imagine people didn't think about it very much—you accepted that it was a girl, even though everyone knew it was a boy actor. The Elizabethans had a similar attitude to sexuality. Sexuality existed as a spectrum. There was no such thing as "coming out." People just slept with whomever they fancied. There were complicating factors like marriages, but then marriage was much more clearly a contract, much more clearly about wealth.

When people get married in Shakespeare's plays, the play stops because the characters are no longer interesting. As Byron said, "All tragedies are finished by a death, all comedies are ended by a marriage." People who keep spinning that sense of who they might be and where they might land give you a play.

**CST:** We haven't yet talked about Feste. He's such a different sort of fool—certainly not a particularly happy fool. What are your thoughts about him?

⑥  
Our 21st-century grip on comedy is extremely dark. To me, the most fascinating aspect of Shakespeare's comedic resonance is how it walks that line—the proximity of laughter to tears, of joy to horror.

⑥  
**JR:** In many ways, Viola is the proper fool of the play because she changes authority much more than Feste does. One of the things I'm interested in is how he's failed as a fool: why he's gone away, where he's been, what he's been doing. What made him so angry in his "day job" that he had to leave? I don't feel like he's left for a personal reason, like his aunt has just died and he had to leave town. He has long absences, as if he can

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photo: John Trammer

SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK (ALBIE WOODINGTON) IN SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE PRODUCTION (CST WORLD'S STAGE, 2003)

only take Illyria in small doses. Part of it must be that his main source of income has been Olivia's house, which doubtless has become a very different place since the death of her father and brother. Between that and Malvolio's influence over the house, there's certainly something to get away from. It's fascinating that he kindles so quickly to Malvolio's jibes, when really anything that Malvolio says should be water off a duck's back. There's a sensitivity in him involving his ability to deal with his job. One of the first things you hear Feste soliloquize about is, "Let me get this right, let me get this right." It's like watching an actor in the wings before he goes onstage going, "Oh my God, let me not mess this up."

That's a fascinating conversation where someone who's not always succeeding in their job comes back and finds himself wrapped up in a way that a fool shouldn't be in the day-to-day goings on of a household. He really oversteps a line. Actually, if you think of Viola as another fool figure within the play, they both get too close to what's going on and lose their objectivity. That's the nature of Illyria. It's a whirlpool that will drag you in if you stay in it for too long.

**CST:** It's always interesting to people to know more about a director's process. What edition of the script do you use? Do you work from the first Folio?

**JR:** I start with the first Folio and then I prepare my own edition of the play. I sit with the Folio on screen and a couple of the editions that I think are the best. I look at edited punctuation mainly. Penguin gives good, nice, quick glosses, and the Arden gives long notes: "We think he probably pulled on his sock here," a 12-page note on that. I then extrapolate and do my own notes on the play. The third layer is at the library, where I have my own kind of process of looking up etymologies in a complete *OED*, the *Oxford English Dictionary*. I evolved the process when I directed a Philip Massinger play that hadn't been done for 300 years called *Believe As You List*, or *Believe What You Will*—the RSC re-titled it. There were no scholarly editions of it. That's when I developed this method of finding my own kind of scholarship of the text, just to prepare.

**CST:** Why do you start with the first Folio text?

**JR:** Because I get irritated with scholarly punctuation. This is kind of a truism but, like all clichés, it's a cliché because it's really true: in classical acting, thought is breath. Where you breathe allows the audience to follow the thought of the line, the meaning of the line, its travel, as it were. It gives the sense and, if you're very lucky, it gives the feeling of the line. Actors tend to be extremely respectful, certainly English actors are, of punctuation. Punctuation in Shakespeare's time meant something completely different from punctuation now. So if an editor has inserted a comma where there wasn't a comma, or if they've commuted a semicolon to a dash, or if they've put a full-stop at the end of the line where it doesn't exist—each editor has their own style or their own way of translating different punctuation marks. I could go on about the history of the semicolon for hours! I won't dismay anyone by doing that. It's about interpretation really, looking for a clean interpretation. Doing my own punctuation from the baseline of the Folio, if the Folio exists for the play, I begin to hardwire the meaning, to start in a good place.

**CST:** So, you're starting with the Folio punctuation and you're creating your own edition, looking at what a couple of contemporary editors have done, and then making your own decisions about what feels right.

**JR:** Exactly. When you work with some actors, brilliant classical actors with Oxford educations, you may have a 20-minute conversation about where a semicolon goes! There's no two ways about that—you just have to be ready for that kind of work. That kind of rigor gives you a grip on the text and a discipline for the work and I find it really good preparation.

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**CST:** Do you give that script to the actors?

**JR:** I do. It's a strategy to make sure all the actors are using the same version of the text. But, more so, it's a really detailed way to prep. I tend to work to find the scene from the text on the page. Some directors might go, "I think this scene is about this, let's get the scene to work like that." I'm more interested in going, "What's on the page? How does it sound? What are the actors doing? How can we use the process of working on the scene to find out what the scene is?" And you need a really, really good grip on the text in order to do that.

**CST:** You have said before that you approach Shakespeare's work as if it's a new play. What did you mean by that exactly?

**JR:** That's a good way of thinking about it, because for me it's not a dissimilar process. I run a theater that's dedicated to the production of new plays. In a successful rehearsal process, you discover the play in the room. It is fascinating to watch the play reveal itself. And I find it's not dissimilar to working on a classical text, actually, where you're burrowing through the play, in order to try to infer what the playwright intended. That doesn't mean you're wholly successful, but you say, "Okay, well, I think this is the scene Shakespeare was trying to write, this is the shape of it, this is what it does, and this is what these people are doing to each other within it." And when you have a good sense of the shape, then you have a map of the play, and you can sit back and have a more profound sense of the whole.

Then, I'll make lists: I'll go through, for example, all colors as they appear in the play, or look at all adverbs, or I might go through and trace bits of imagery through the play. "There's a rose here. Where does the rose reappear?" You might go through and look at metaphor, just to try and get at a central understanding of the language of the play.

## A Conversation with Designer Lucy Osborne

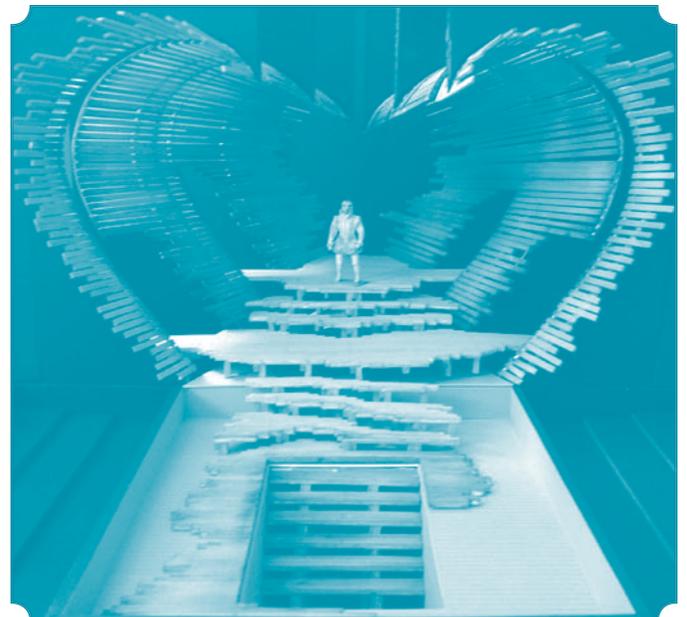
*CST's Education staff met with Scenic and Costume Designer Lucy Osborne when she visited Chicago in the summertime for pre-production meetings and to present her set model to the Chicago team.*

**CST:** Lucy, how did you and [director] Josie Rourke decide to set the play in the Elizabethan period?

⑥ The sexual ambiguity of the clothes at that time is also really interesting, which is so helpful when Viola dresses as Cesario. In that period, men's and women's clothes were made by tailors to the same patterns. ⑥

**Lucy Osborne:** We could set *Twelfth Night* in any period. We ultimately felt that the social codes and the formality of the play fit best within the Elizabethan time frame. In the play, there are references to specific Elizabethan practices—they talk about "cross-gartering" and a "box tree." It doesn't have to be a box tree, but if it's not a box tree, what is it? Finding solutions out of context can be a completely valid way of approaching a production. But the more we talked about it, the more we felt that we wanted to root it in that Elizabethan sensibility—the formality of these two houses, the social hierarchy and the idea of status, which feels so specific to this time. Each of the characters has a specific position within society.

The sexual ambiguity of the clothes at that time is also really interesting, which is so helpful when Viola dresses as Cesario. In that period, men's and women's clothes were made by tailors to the same patterns. Men's and women's doublets



DESIGNER LUCY OSBORNE'S SET MODEL FOR CST'S 2009 PRODUCTION OF *TWELFTH NIGHT*

# A Play Comes to Life

were constructed in the same way, with allowances for body shapes. There still exist first-hand accounts written by people who hate this trend, that women are wearing doublets and look the same as men. “Why can’t women be more feminine?” It’s an age where the men are trying to emulate Elizabeth I and become more feminine, and the women, also because of Elizabeth I, are becoming masculine. The queen had to take on many manly traits in order to run the country. Sexual ambiguity was really important to this period.

**CST: How did you settle on the idea of your scenic design?**

**LO:** Our starting point came from an image that Josie had in mind when we first started talking about *Twelfth Night*—the play begins with Viola falling in the water and landing in Illyria. In water, things get lost, people get lost. It’s dangerous. There are storms. Viola gets pulled out of that danger and into a surreal land—Illyria has an *Alice in Wonderland* quality, with larks and games and messing about. Viola comes into this world, the outsider into this strange, dysfunctional land, and shows them what love can be. We wanted to set the play on a pier—on this pier here in Chicago. So there’s the sense that this pier is slowly disintegrating into the sea, and then Viola climbs out of the water and into safety, rescued in this slightly strange and uncontrollable world.



The play begins with Viola falling in the water and landing in Illyria. In water, things get lost, people get lost. It’s dangerous. There are storms. Viola gets pulled out of that danger and into a surreal land.



The play is all about broken love and seeking to make a whole. We started talking about the sense of completion, and the idea of two halves making a whole—whether that’s Viola reuniting with Sebastian in brotherly/sisterly love, or the different lovers finding each other and finding peace and love. We wanted to explore the idea of the heart shape, two halves of a heart creating a whole heart. They are unknowingly playing in this sort of carcass of their hearts, which also has the look of the hull of a ship.

**CST: Does the whole play then take place on the pier and surrounding water?**

**LO:** Yes, although Elizabethans would not have had a pier like the one we designed. They would have been practical, for boats to dock. In the UK, that idea of the seaside pier that juts into the water is from Edwardian and Victorian times. There’s something about a pier that suggests a voyage into the unknown, doesn’t it? It’s a statement of sheer ambition, just for the fun of it. Walking out to sea down a long, thin strip that takes you out from the land and into the middle of the sea—it’s completely impractical, it serves absolutely no purpose whatsoever. People like venturing out, we like to go out into open spaces, and pleasure piers are just fundamentally playful and sort of decadent: so expensive to build, so expensive to maintain, and yet, certainly in the UK, we adore them, we absolutely love them. The idea of promenading and piers for pleasure—the idea of leaving the city, going to the seaside for your holiday, and walking down the pier—that’s just a complete part of our culture. And here we are, at Navy Pier, set on one, as well.

**CST: Eight million people come out to Navy Pier each year, just to “promenade”—more visitors than to any other Midwest attraction. They wander out here, they buy lemonade and funnel cakes. It really is a “pleasure pier.” How are you imagining that *Twelfth Night*’s pier will work as a scenic element?**

**LO:** We wanted a really fluid space. I think the play is best served by an environment that’s very flexible. Shakespeare works so well when you just let the words breathe. We didn’t want to impede that in any way, we wanted it to be a loose, open space. We’ll have lots of elements that we’ll bring on, to give a sense of being on a really beautiful, hot, summer holiday, where you’re as happy in the water as on the beach. And they all love the water—apart from Malvolio, who absolutely can’t stand it. Everybody will be barefoot throughout. And they’ll take off their jackets and be in short sleeves. It’s a very comfortable, hot place to lounge around—there’s a laziness that you get from Orsino’s court. Orsino’s court will be incredibly populated and very masculine. These boys hang out, go hunting and fishing, and don’t do much of constructive value. They are all seeking pleasure.

**CST: What about Olivia’s household?**

**LO:** In Olivia’s world we get a fractured landscape. There is pure pleasure and there is pure pain, completely coexisting, a contrast that is most heightened in her world. Toby and Aguecheek are in the water quite a lot, mucking about. Olivia

# A Play Comes to Life



OLIVIA'S TRANSFORMATION FROM MOURNING (LEFT) TO WEDDING (RIGHT)

is somewhere in the back, austere and distant, trying to work out exactly what it is that she is feeling and wanting, and how she can achieve that. The two households will feel different because of the clothes and the colors, and the props that we introduce into the space. During the play, they find warmth and love and the set, the fractured heart, fills up.

**CST:** How will you, as both the set and costume designer, reflect that heart getting fuller as the story progresses?

**LO:** Interesting things can happen in terms of color when you put costumes in there. For example, Olivia's palette changes enormously as we go through the play. First we see her in mourning, in a very dark dress. When she meets Cesario, she throws aside her mourning, and we see her in garments that are more elegant, with more color. Then, in essence, she runs and gets her wedding dress, one she has

secretly ready, and we see her in ivories and pink. Color can do a lot of the transformation.

In the final scene, when Sebastian and Viola reunite—everybody's onstage for nearly the whole of Act 5. Up until that point, Feste and Viola have an equal life in both courts as they wander between the two, but all the others—Orsino's boys and Olivia's court—exist only in one place or the other, and aren't together until that final scene. It will inevitably be a cacophony. The groupings will be very specific, with their own palettes. In terms of populating the last moment and making it feel alive, where the play has felt quite fractured up to that point, it will all come together in harmony. All those people on stage and all that color—we don't need to illustrate it too much, and just let the words do the talking.

# Classroom Activities



## Theater Warm-ups

A brief physical and vocal warm-up can help your students move from a “classroom mode” to a “studio mode.” It sets the tone for a student learning Shakespeare in a theatrical sense as well. And, perhaps most important, it helps students focus, as well as build community (“ensemble”).

Every actor develops his/her own set of physical and vocal warm-ups. Warm-ups help the actor prepare for rehearsal or performance not only physically, but also mentally. The actor has the chance to focus on the work at hand, forgetting all the day-to-day distractions of life, and beginning to assume the flexibility required to create a character. The body, the voice and the imagination are the actor’s tools.

### PHYSICAL WARM-UPS

#### Getting started

- ⑥ creates focus on the immediate moment
- ⑥ brings students to body awareness
- ⑥ helps dispel tension

Begin by asking your students to take a comfortable stance with their feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing straight ahead, knees relaxed. Ask them to inhale deeply through their noses, filling their lungs deep into their abdomen, and exhale through their mouths. Repeat this a few times and ask them to notice how their lungs fill like a six-sided box, creating movement in all six directions.

#### Warm-up from the top of the body down *(This should take approximately 7 to 10 minutes.)*

- ⑥ gentle movement helps increase circulation, flexibility, and body readiness,
- ⑥ increases physical and spatial awareness

- Begin by doing head-rolls to the left and to the right, about four times each way, very slowly. Then do a series of shoulder rolls to the back and to the front, again very slowly, and emphasizing a full range of motion.
- Stretch each arm toward the ceiling alternately, and try to pull all the way through the rib cage, repeating this motion six to eight times.
- Next, with particular care to keep knees slightly bent, twist from the waist in each direction, trying to look behind. Again, repeat six to eight times.
- From a standing position, starting with the top of the head, roll down with relaxed neck and arms until the body is hanging from the waist. Ask the students to shake things around, making sure their bodies are relaxed. From this position, bend at the knees, putting both hands on the floor. Stretch back up to hanging. Repeat this action about four times. Then roll back up—starting from the base of the spine, stack each vertebra until the head is the last thing to come up.
- Repeat the deep breathing from the beginning of the warm-up. Ask the students to bring their feet together, bend their knees, and keeping their knees together ask the students to rotate their knees in a circle parallel to the ground six to eight times. Repeat in the other direction. Return to standing.
- Pick up the right foot, rotate it inward six to eight times, and then do the same with the left foot. Repeat with outward rotation of the foot. Take a few moments and shake out the entire body.

## VOCAL WARM-UPS

Your vocal warm-up should follow your physical warm-up directly (*Approx. 7 min.*)

- 🕒 helps connect physicality to vocality
  - 🕒 begins to open the imagination to performance possibilities
- (a) Ask students to gently massage and pat the muscles of their faces. This will help wake up the facial muscles.
- (b) Ask students to stick their tongues out as far as possible—repeat this with the tongue pointing up, down, and to each side. (This process will probably seem strange, but can be made silly and fun, while accomplishing the necessary vocal warm-up. When students see you going through these exercises with commitment, that’s often all they need to draw them in.) Repeat this exercise once or twice.
- (c) Ask students to put their lips gently together and blow air through them, creating a “raspberry.”
- (d) Next, hum, quietly, loudly, and across the entire vocal range. The vocal instrument loves to hum. Explore all the resonating spaces in the body, by moving the sound around. Humming helps to lubricate.
- (e) Create the vowel sounds, overemphasizing each shape with the face —A, E, I, O, and U—with no break.
- (f) Choose two or three tongue-twisters—there are some listed below. Again overemphasizing the shape of each sound with the lips, tongue, jaw, and facial muscles, begin slowly with each tongue-twister, and gradually speed up, repeating until the speed is such that the enunciation is lost.

## Tongue twisters

- 🕒 red leather, yellow leather ... (focus on the vertical motion of the mouth)
- 🕒 unique New York ... (focus on the front to back movement of the face)
- 🕒 rubber, baby, buggy, bumpers ... (focus on the clear repetition of the soft plosives)
- 🕒 Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers ... (focus on the clear repetition of hard plosives)

One of the actors at Chicago Shakespeare Theater likes to describe the experience of acting Shakespeare as the “Olympics of Acting.” Shakespeare’s verse demands a very flexible vocal instrument, and an ability to express not only the flow of the text, but the emotional shifts which are suggested by the variations in rhythm and sound. In light of the sheer volume of words, some of which are rarely—if ever—used in modern vocabulary, the actor must also be prepared to help the audience with his body, as well. An actor acting Shakespeare must go through each word of his text, determine its meaning, and then express it clearly to his audience. This can be a very physically demanding style. The physical and vocal warm-up is the actor’s basis for each performance.

## Stage pictures

- 🕒 show how varied interpretation is: there is no wrong answer
- 🕒 encourage the students to interpret concepts with their whole bodies
- 🕒 begin to show how the body interprets emotion

You will need a list of very strong descriptive, colorful, emotional words from the script for this activity. Ask your actor-students to begin walking around the room. Ask them to fill up the entire space, exploring pacing, what it would feel like

# Classroom Activities

to be a different weight, a different height, and ask them to move the center of their body into different places. Encourage them to see if they feel any emotional differences within these changes. Giving them about three minutes to explore these changes, see if you notice any particularly interesting discoveries. Encourage these discoveries without necessarily drawing focus to individual students, as this is a self-reflective activity, but perhaps suggest to the group they might “Try what it feels like if you slow your pace, hunch your shoulders, droop your head, and move your center into your knees.”

After a few minutes of this exploration, ask your actor-students to find a “neutral” walk. Explain that they are going to create a stage picture as an entire group. You will give them a word, and then count down from seven. After those seven beats, you will say freeze, and they must create a photograph of the word you have given them, with their entire body, collectively. Comment on the emotions you feel from their stage picture. After a couple of words, split the group in half—half will be in the space and half will be audience. Repeat the process, encouraging the audience’s reactions after each tableau. This might be a good time to discuss balance, stage direction, and the use of levels as effective variation for the audience’s visual interpretation. *(This activity should take about ten minutes.)*

Shakespeare’s characters are often very physically broad: crippled characters, old people, clowns, star-crossed lovers, and more. These characters call for the actors to figure out how they move. If the character is greedy, should his center be in a big fat belly? The actor must be prepared to experiment with the character’s body.

## Mirroring

- ⑥ helps build trust within the ensemble
- ⑥ encourages the students to “listen” with all their senses
- ⑥ helps the students reach a state of “relaxed readiness,” which will encourage their impulses, and discourage their internal censors

Either ask your actor-students to partner up, or count them off in pairs. Ask them to sit, comfortably facing their partner, in fairly close proximity. Explain to them that they are mirrors of each other. One partner will begin as the leader, and the other partner will move as their reflection. Explain to the actor-students that they must begin by using smaller, slower movements, and work up to the maximum range of movement that their partner can follow. Encourage the partners to make eye-contact and see each other as a whole picture, rather than following each other’s small motions with their eyes. Switch leaders and repeat. After the second leader has had a turn, ask the actor-students to stand and increase their range of movement. Switch leaders and repeat. After the second leader has had a turn, tell them that they should keep going, but there is no leader. See what happens, and then discuss. *(This activity should last about ten minutes.)*

Many actors will tell you that learning the lines is the easy part; making it come out of their mouths as if for the first time is the hard part, especially with Shakespeare. Shakespeare can sound like a song, but how do you make it sound like real people talking to each other? Actors listen to each other, and try to respond to what they hear in the moment of the play. Listening is a very important part of acting; it keeps the moment real.

## COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Each of these exercises is meant to open and expand your students’ imaginations, increase their sense of “ensemble” or teamwork, and bring them “into the moment.” These are some of the most fundamental and crucial elements of an actor’s training. Their imaginations will allow them to believe the situation of the play, their sense of ensemble will bring them together with their scene partners to create the relationships necessary to the movement of the play, and their willingness to be in the moment will allow them to live in the play in such a way as to make it believable to their audience. In each

# Classroom Activities

of these exercises the use of students as audience, and constructive reflection from that audience, will be helpful to the ensemble of your classroom. Remember, there is no wrong answer, only different interpretations—encourage them!

## Zing! Ball *(This exercise requires a soft ball about 8-12 inches in diameter.)*

- ⑥ helps the ensemble grow together
- ⑥ helps the students let go of their internal “censor” and begin tapping into their impulses
- ⑥ brings the physical and the vocal actor tools together

Ask the students to stand in a circle, facing in. Explain that the ball carries energy with it. This energy is like a feedback loop that increases the energy, speed, and focus of the entire group by the amount that each actor-student puts into the ball. The idea is to keep the ball moving in the circle without letting the energy drop. There should be no space between throw and catch. There should be no thought as to whom the actor-student will throw the ball to next. As the ball is thrown, to keep the intensity of the energy, the actor-student must make eye contact with the person he is throwing the ball to, and at the moment of release, the throwing actor-student should say “Zing!” Note: Encourage the actor-students to experiment with the way they say “Zing!” It could be loud or soft, in a character voice, or in whatever way they wish, as long as it is impulsive and with energy. *(This activity lasts about five minutes.)*

Shakespeare has love scenes, sword fights, betrayals, and all sorts of relationships in his plays. An ensemble must have the trust in each other to make a performance believable, without any of the actors getting hurt. They must be able to experiment, follow their impulses, and create character without the fear of failure. Shakespeare wrote many clues about his characters in his text, but the actor must be given license to find his character, and his relationship with the rest of the characters in the script.

## Zing! Ball without a Ball *(This activity takes 5 to 7 minutes.)*

- ⑥ asks the students to make their imagination clear to the ensemble
- ⑥ focuses the students on physical detail

This exercise builds on Zing! Ball. Take the ball out of the circle and set it aside. Take an imaginary Zing! Ball out of your pocket. Grow this ball from a tiny rubber ball into a huge balloon. Using “Zing!,” toss the ball to an actor-student across the circle, and as it floats down, ask the actor-student to catch it with the same weight and speed as you threw it. Then ask that actor-student to recreate the ball into a different weight and size, making it clear to the rest of the circle how they’ve changed it. In the same way as Zing! Ball, work around the circle.

The wide range of vocabulary in Shakespeare’s plays can often be intimidating as one reads the scripts. The actor’s job is to make the language clear, and this is often accomplished by very specific physical gesturing.



# Classroom Activities



## Before You Read the Play

(This “Before You Read” section can be helpful also in preparing students who will not be reading the play.)

### AS A CLASS

1. As a class, create the skeleton framework of a bulletin board for *Twelfth Night*, which you’ll add to as you read and watch the play the performed. Start by putting up pictures or words that represent anything you know or think about this play’s story before you start to read. Look for pictures of some of the play’s prominent ideas and actions. As you read the play, add images, quotes, headlines, poetry—anything that reminds you of characters, events, key objects, words, anything that you feel is relevant to your responses and thoughts about *Twelfth Night*. As a class, discuss your additions in the context of the play. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1b, 2ab, 5a)**

2. Mind map *Twelfth Night*. Discuss as a group what students know about the play, about Shakespeare, and/or about the holiday of Twelfth Night. Use the large ideas from this discussion as branches off the focal point of *Twelfth Night*, and supplement with other important thematic elements (twins, shipwreck, music, practical jokes, disguise, etc.). Invite students to cut out photos, articles, phrases, words, etc. that each of these branches make them think of, and add them all to the map (you may want to use a large bulletin board). Based on these images, words and ideas, what expectations do students have of *Twelfth Night*? What kind of play could it be?

As you read the play, revisit the mind map after each act or as needed, add new content or sub-themes, and discuss again what students think might happen next. When the whole play has been read, have each student create their own mind map to review the action and themes of the play, and discuss together whether their expectations were met, and what they learned over the course of reading. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1C, 2Ba, 5Ab, 5Ca)**

3. *(To the teacher: Excerpt 30 lines from the play that are rich in Shakespeare’s language or are descriptive of character. Distribute a line or lines to each student on a slip of paper, not revealing the character who spoke it.)* Look at your line/s and, as you walk around the room, say it aloud again and again without addressing anyone. Now walk around the room and deliver your line directly to your classmates as they do the same. Regroup in a circle, each reading your line aloud in turn.

Sit down in the circle and discuss the lines. What questions do you have about the words? Imagine what this play is about based upon some of the words you’ve heard its characters speak. What do you imagine about the character who spoke your line? Did you hear lines that seemed to be spoken by the same character? All ideas are encouraged, and none can be wrong! This is your time to listen to the language and begin to use your imagination to think about the world of the play you’ve just entered... **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Ab, 1B4a, 1Ca, 4Aa, 4A4b)**

4. So often in Shakespeare (as in other texts), the context will help lead you to a word’s meaning—even if the word is totally unfamiliar. Leaf through the script to find three words you’re pretty sure will be unknown to everyone. Using the footnotes in your text (or a lexicon of Shakespeare’s words if you have one in the classroom), look up and write out the definition that seems to make the most sense in the context of the story. Next, make up two other convincing definitions for each word that the class will likely believe—even if they’re nowhere near what the word actually means, it’s your job to make the false definitions sound real. In small groups, read aloud the line in the play in which the word appears. Then, read the three possible definitions for the word, including the right one—be sure not to give yourself away; each definition should be read as if it could be the right one! Have the rest of the group vote for which definition is correct. If you like, you can keep score—you earn one point for every definition that you guess correctly, and one point for each vote your false definition receives from the group. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1A4a, 1A5a, 1A4b, 1B4a, 1C4a, 1C5a, 4B4b)**

# Classroom Activities

5. Shakespeare often wrote in “iambic pentameter”—10 syllables to a line of text, and (like the “de-dum” of our heartbeat), alternating the stress with every other syllable starting with the second and ending on the tenth. And though actors in performance never emphasize the rhythm enough that we hear it (though they may as they learn their lines), it has a different impact, much like a piece of music does, because it is so like the rhythm of our heart and breath. Take Orsino’s first monologue at the opening of *Twelfth Night* and read it silently first to yourself. Count out the number of syllables in each line—there will be a few that aren’t in perfect iambic pentameter. Now, as a class, get up and form a circle. In the circle, walk as you read the monologue out loud. Let the rhythm of the writing set the pace. Don’t think too hard about this, just read the passage and walk the walk. When you reach the end, just pick right up at the beginning again. Soon you should notice the rhythm affecting the pace of your steps. You’re walking in iambs! (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1b, 4ab**)

6. An “acting circle” involves an entire class in approaching the characters and their relationships through the language of a single scene. Scene 1.2 is a great place to start—and you need not be familiar with the play yet at all! Position yourselves in a circle, facing one another. Let the words take you from one person to the next in your circle, reading it through several times:

- ⑥ First, each person reads up to any punctuation mark (except a comma) and stops, the next person in the circle picks up from there until the next punctuation mark;
- ⑥ Repeat the read-through, but this time as you hear the words, circle any and all that you’re uncertain about.

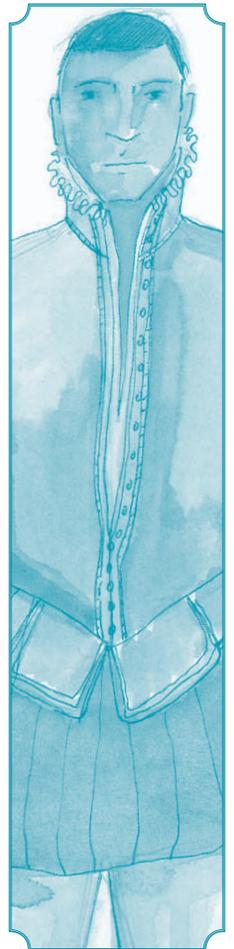
Now, begin to discuss this section you’ve just listened to twice. Here are some of the questions you might be exploring:

- ⑥ Who is Viola? Who is the Captain? What do we know about each of them from this scene alone? (Remember, you can’t bring into this discussion any information that you’ve not learned from these lines alone!)
- ⑥ Where are they? Why are they there? What’s happened to them? What seems to be the relationship between the two?
- ⑥ Who else is with them? What are they up to throughout the scene?
- ⑥ What do we learn about some other characters that Viola and the Captain discuss? What do we learn about the Captain and Viola as they discuss these other characters?
- ⑥ What plan is set in motion? And why? What does Viola’s plan suggest to us about her?

Now that you’ve explored the scene a bit, return to the words or phrases that stumped you. What can you sort out from the context? What clues does the script hold? If there are still words after your discussion that the class hasn’t figured out, do some research in the *Oxford English Dictionary* before the next session of class as homework.

Return to the scene again to read through a third time, this time changing readers at the end of each speaker’s part. Twice more now, with two volunteers each time assuming the speaking roles of Viola and the Captain.

Now it’s time to put the scene “up on its feet.” With the rest of the class serving as directors, a Viola, a Captain, and a to-be-determined number of sailors will volunteer to act out the parts. Thinking back to the possibilities you discussed earlier, let your discussion inform your acting decisions now! As Viola, the Captain and the sailors take the stage, interject your questions to help them clarify their parts: Where are they? What’s just happened? Who are they? What’s the relationship between them? What does their conversation tell us about them? Any question that helps you understand the action is fair game! And you might want to “rewind” the action and try another take as your directors help guide you through the scene. Be playful in your approach, and explore some different possibilities! (**Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Ab, 1Bc, 1C4b, 2Ad, 4Aa, 4B4b**)



# Classroom Activities

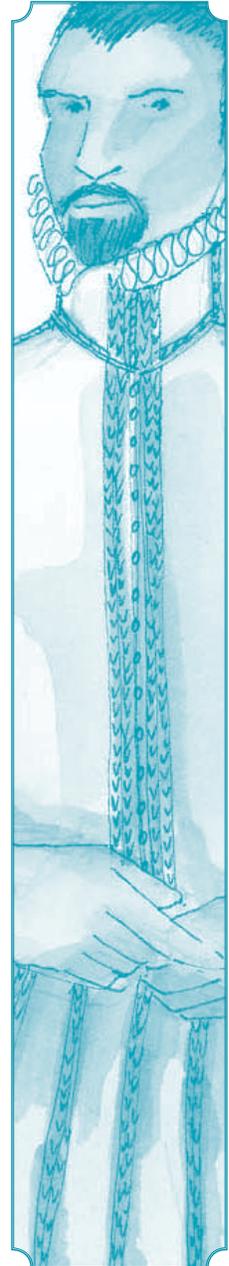
## IN SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS

7. In groups of 5-6: Practice aloud—at each other with feeling!—the insults below that characters from *Twelfth Night* sling at each other. If the meaning of a word is not clear, don't get stuck! Keep repeating the insult and you'll be closer to the meaning than you might think... Then, taking eight quotes, imagine a contemporary situation that might prompt such a rebuke. (For example, a student who has just given up trying to lobby his teacher to raise his grade for the term: "I have said too much unto a heart of stone.")

Staying in your groups, reconvene as a class. Each group presents in turn one insult-provoking situation to the rest of the class. The other groups compete to come up first with an appropriate answer from the list, and score is kept. (It need not be the same insult that the group had in mind, as long as it makes sense!)

|                                                                                                                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>What great ones do, the less will prattle of.</i>                                                                                                        | 1.2 |
| <i>He's a coward and a coistrel that will not drink to [her] till his brains turn o'th'toe, like a parish top.</i>                                          | 1.3 |
| <i>[Your hair] hangs like flax on a distaff...</i>                                                                                                          | 1.3 |
| <i>Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage.</i>                                                                                                         | 1.5 |
| <i>The lady bade take away the fool, therefore I say again, take her away.</i>                                                                              | 1.5 |
| <i>One of thy kin has a most weak pia mater.</i>                                                                                                            | 1.5 |
| <i>If you be mad, be gone: if you have reason, be brief.</i>                                                                                                | 1.5 |
| <i>Th'art a scholar; let us therefore eat and drink.</i>                                                                                                    | 2.3 |
| <i>Welcome, ass.</i>                                                                                                                                        | 2.3 |
| <i>Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night?</i>                                                             | 2.3 |
| <i>Now the melancholy god protect thee, and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal.</i>                             | 2.4 |
| <i>Observe him, for the love of mockery.</i>                                                                                                                | 2.5 |
| <i>Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him: how he jets under his advanced plumes!</i>                                                                | 2.5 |
| <i>I do care for something: but in my conscience, sir, I do not care for you: if that be to care for nothing, sir, I would it would make you invisible.</i> | 3.1 |
| <i>She will keep no fool, sir till she be married, and fools are as like husbands as pilchards are to herrings, the husband's the bigger.</i>               | 3.1 |
| <i>Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines everywhere.</i>                                                                            | 3.1 |
| <i>Now Jove, in his next commodity of hair, send thee a beard!</i>                                                                                          | 3.1 |
| <i>If he were opened and you find so much blood in his liver as will clog the foot of a flea, I'll eat the rest of th' anatomy.</i>                         | 3.2 |
| <i>I can hardly forbear hurling things at him.</i>                                                                                                          | 3.2 |
| <i>Youth, whatsoever thou art, thou art but a scurvy fellow.</i>                                                                                            | 3.4 |
| <i>I have said too much unto a heart of stone.</i>                                                                                                          | 3.4 |
| <i>[You are] a coward, a most devout coward, religious in it.</i>                                                                                           | 3.4 |
| <i>I would not be in some of your coats for twopence.</i>                                                                                                   | 4.1 |
| <i>How many fruitless pranks / This ruffian hath botch'd up.</i>                                                                                            | 4.1 |
| <i>Out, hyperbolical fiend!</i>                                                                                                                             | 4.2 |
| <i>Leave thy vain bibble babble.</i>                                                                                                                        | 4.2 |
| <i>[You are] an ass-head, and a coxcomb, and a knave, a thin-faced knave, a gull.</i>                                                                       | 5.1 |

(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Aa, 1Ab, 2B3c, 4Ab)



## ON YOUR OWN

8. One of the reasons that Shakespeare’s plays are still so enjoyed is that their stories relate to our own experiences in life. *Twelfth Night* has many situations which may seem familiar to you. Jot down some of your ideas about one of the following situations. Don’t worry about your writing style.
- ⑥ Think back to one of those “most embarrassing moments ever” in front of a bunch of people when something you did or said became the source of humiliation. How did the people around you respond? How did you respond publicly? And privately? What were some of the ways you thought of recovering some face? In hindsight, would you have handled the situation differently?
  - ⑥ Have you ever decided to play a particular role in a situation that you weren’t keen to do? What prompted you to do it? What was at stake? What were your other choices? What difficulties did assuming this role get you into? Were they the ones you predicted?

(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 3A, 3Ba, 2B3a)

9. Shakespeare was a descriptive writer—which any of us can be when we observe our subject matter very closely. Choose a place to sit and free-write for 10 minutes on your own. Pick a location that is active, like a school hallway, the cafeteria, or the gym. Keep writing throughout, and don’t stop writing until the time is up. Just write what you see, hear, smell, and how the place feels. Make your words as descriptive as possible. Poets like Shakespeare rely on metaphors—comparisons of seemingly dissimilar things (like comparing love to food) to describe abstract emotions and sensory experience. Test out your metaphorical skills! (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2A4a)



## As You Read the Play

### AS A CLASS

1. In writing his plays, Shakespeare moved back and forth between prose and verse. It’s easy to see on the page: the prose has margins justified on both the left and right; the verse has shorter lines, justified on the left margin only, and with capitalization at the beginning of each new line. There are no hard-and-fast rules that dictate Shakespeare’s choices, but sometimes prose characterizes the speech of commoners; verse, the upper class. But he also uses the two forms to set a different mood, or to indicate a change in the character’s state of mind. *Twelfth Night* is a play that has as much prose as verse in it. As you read the play, imagine the possible reasons for Shakespeare’s use of prose and verse.

There are many examples of these “gear changes” throughout *Twelfth Night* where Shakespeare switches from prose to verse. As the first Act switches from scene to scene, so does Shakespeare’s use of prose and verse. As you study *Twelfth Night*, note when its characters speak in prose and when in verse:

- ⑥ Are there characters who speak in both prose and verse?
- ⑥ In which situations do Shakespeare’s characters use prose? When do they use verse?
- ⑥ What might Shakespeare’s intentions be when characters switch from one to the other?
- ⑥ Make note of when Malvolio is finally permitted to speak in verse. What might this alteration in his language suggest? (And remember that there’s no one “right” answer to any of these questions!)

(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B4b, 1B5b, 1Cb, 2Aa, 2Ad)

# Classroom Activities

2. Scholars have argued about whether Viola is an essentially active or passive character in *Twelfth Night*. While outspoken and quick on her feet, she also chooses to conceal her true identity and seems content to live forever in her disguise. Divide up the parts in 2.4 between two halves of each small group and take turns reading—one group reads Viola as very active (lots of energy, passion in her speech, speaks very quickly, etc.), and the other group reads her parts very passively (slow or lethargic speech, quiet or timid, cautious, etc.). What do you learn about Viola from these two different interpretations? What words or lines of text support the theory that Viola is active? What lines or phrases support her being passive? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Cb, 1Cd, 2Aa, 4Ba)**
3. “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.” This delicious line is repeated three times in *Twelfth Night* and is one of the most fun to play with. As a class, ask several volunteers to read this line aloud, stressing different words, and using as many different moods, pitches, tones as they can imagine. The assignment then becomes this: each person (teacher included!) must repeat the line to some unsuspecting person outside the class by the end of the day. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Ab, 4Ba, 4Bc)**
4. Love is a major theme in many of Shakespeare’s plays and *Twelfth Night* is no exception. There are many different kinds of love in *Twelfth Night*; romantic love, familial love, friendship, etc. As a class, look at 2.4, the scene between Viola and Orsino. Assign respective roles and read the scene aloud. Invite the students to read the scene a second time, but this time the rest of the class becomes the Chorus. Whenever either Viola or Orsino says the word love, or a word that relates to love, the Chorus repeats the word. Does the scene take on a different meaning? Discuss what you think this says about Orsino and Viola’s relationship and the play as a whole. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Ab, 2Ad, 4Aa, 4Ab, 4Ac, 4Ba)**

## IN PAIRS

5. Pair off as an actor and an understudy for a part, select a character from the dramatis personae of *Twelfth Night* to explore through the play. Skim through the play and mark speeches or lines that appear to typify your character. Select three or four small segments that seem to best portray your character and prepare to present to the class. This is the way that Elizabethan actors learned their roles: they were given just their own lines with the cue lines that precede theirs, and were never handed the entire script. (At the end of your study, go back and repeat this exercise with your partner and the same character. Present again and discuss the differences you’ve discovered now that you’ve read the play.) **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Ba, 1Bb, 1Cd, 4Ab)**

## IN YOUR SMALL GROUPS

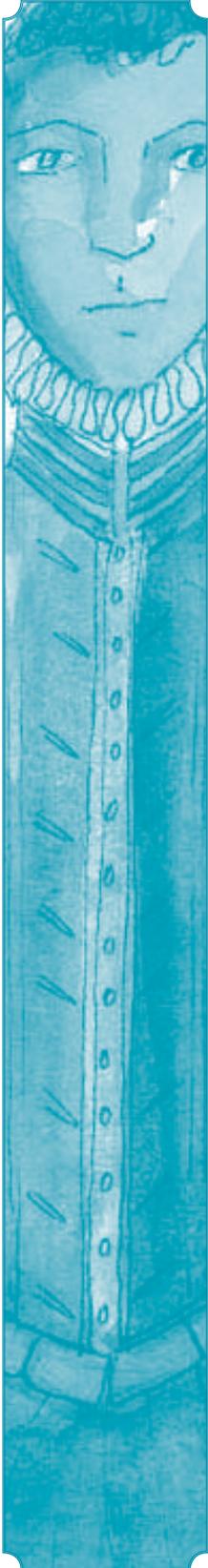
6. A tableau is a wordless picture composed of still bodies. Theater productions sometimes end in a still life “picture” or tableau. Tableaux are fun to play with, and can help you look below the surface of some of Shakespeare’s word images. In your small groups, find lines in the play as you read that lend themselves to still life pictures, and play with the possibilities. Compare your tableaux ideas with other groups. Here’s one to get you started:

VIOLA *And though that nature with a beauteous wall  
Doth oft close in pollution...* (1.3.48-49)

**(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 4A4d, 4A4c)**

7. To many, 1.5 is one of the most interesting and significant scenes in all of *Twelfth Night*. For each director and cast, just how the meeting between “Cesario” and Olivia unfolds is a matter of much focus and thought in the rehearsal process. From the moment when Olivia first refuses to see the Duke’s emissary to the moment that she unveils her face (1.5.191), the character of Olivia must travel a great emotional distance. Talk together in your small group about this meeting. Exploring the script, at what moment do you think Olivia begins to feel and show her interest and attraction

# Classroom Activities



to this stranger? Work out how you would stage this encounter to show Cesario's growing effect and Olivia's growing fascination. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B4b, 1C4b, 1Cd, 2Aa, 2B3c)

8. Shakespeare takes his time before introducing us to Olivia in the fifth scene of the play. And by then, we've heard a lot said about her—by the Captain, Orsino, Sir Toby, etc. In small groups, read the very first scene of the play, 1.1 where Orsino describes Olivia and his love for her. Based on what the other characters say about Olivia, write a description for her. What does she look like? How does she behave in public? In private? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Ba, 1Ca, 1Cb, 3A)
9. One of the challenges in reading a play comes in keeping all those silent characters still on stage as part of the picture and part of the scene. Shakespeare's closing scenes are famous for the silences he gives to particular characters. If we're only paying attention as we read to those who do speak, we're overlooking what the playwright might be saying in powerful, but silent presence. In your small groups, take a look at the final scene of *Twelfth Night*. Who is present but doesn't speak? Discuss what the silences might mean. Think about how you would stage this last scene to include the silences in your interpretation as well. Where would characters stand? How would they act? How would they be included in the final moments? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1A5b, 1B5d, 1C5a, 2A4a, 2A5b)
10. The character of Malvolio has long been a topic of debate—some see Olivia's steward as a tragic character, while others maintain that Malvolio should be a comic figure. He is abused and ridiculed by Sir Toby and his gang, but his yellow stockings are pretty funny. In small groups, read 4.2 out loud twice. The first time, read it as a comedy and the second time as a tragedy. Discuss as a class what you discovered. Which way works better? What did you learn about Malvolio and comedy and tragedy in general? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Cb, 2A5b, 2A5d)
11. Rarely is one of Shakespeare's plays performed in its entirety. Most would last between three and four hours—even without an intermission! The Prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* refers to “two hours traffic on our stage,” but these days, if performed in its entirety, the play would last at least three hours.  
  
You can learn a lot about Shakespeare's use of language by reducing a longer speech or scene while trying to retain its original meaning, its poetic language and approximate ten-beat meter whenever possible, and its purpose to further move the plot. In your small groups, work together to edit. 3.3 might be a good one to practice on—the scene in which Antonio follows Sebastian out of his friendship for him. The scene uncut is approximately 48 lines. In your small groups, your task as directors is to cut it down to approximately 30.  
  
Read the scene through aloud once. Talk about the story line: what's going on in this scene between these two characters? How is the plot being advanced? What must be preserved for clarity? What is negotiable? If you cut part of a verse line, remember that you have to “protect” the meter by tagging it to another partial line. What do you cut? After you've made your choices, read the cut scene, and revise any choices you've made that aren't working for you. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 3A4, 3B5, 3B3b)
12. Somewhere in Act 3 always marks the midpoint of Shakespeare's five-act plays. In your small groups, imagine that you are directors who must decide where to place your intermission. Take a look back at Act 3, follow its course of action and decide where you would choose to take a break. (For some ideas, think about how television positions its commercial breaks.) Reconvene as a class and discuss your ideas—then compare your intermission placement to that of the Chicago Shakespeare Theater's production. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B5a, 1C4a, 1C5a, 1C4c, 4A4a, 4A4b, 4B4b, 4B5b)

# Classroom Activities

13. While the vast majority of Shakespeare’s language can be decoded through context clues or a quick peek at the history behind certain words or phrases, there are still snippets of text that remain mysterious to us today. In 2.4, many of the jibes Toby, Andrew and Fabian throw at Malvolio from the safety of the box tree are especially archaic or confusing slang (“Sowter will cry upon’t for all this, though it be as rank as a fox,” or “...with what wing the staniel checks at it...” for example). No one knows exactly what these lines mean.

Choose a phrase from this scene and pick it apart to determine what you think Shakespeare’s trying to say here—use context clues, parts of words that seem familiar, and what you know about the character to decide what the phrase means. There are no wrong answers! It’s totally up to you. Then, rewrite the section of text with a new phrase that you’ve invented that communicates the same idea, and perform your new “translation” for the class. If you’re lucky, maybe your new slang will catch on... **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Aa, 1Ab, 3Bb)**



## YOUR OWN THOUGHTS ON PAPER

14. In order to understand their characters, actors use a number of different “clues” from the text: their own lines, other characters’ lines, whether the text is in prose or verse, the setting of a particular scene, etc. For actors playing roles with fewer lines, creating a full character can sometimes be daunting, since they have fewer of these textual hints to help them. On the other hand, they are faced with a terrific creative challenge.

Imagine that you have been cast as one of the smaller parts in *Twelfth Night*. Keep a journal of that character’s reactions to what goes on around him or her. Start by using text references as a clue, and go on from there, building on your observations of the character to decide what he or she thinks or feels about what happens during the play. Some questions to answer might be:

- ⑥ Who does my character like and dislike?
- ⑥ Does my character know something at a particular point that the other characters don’t?
- ⑥ Is there anything going on in the play that my character doesn’t understand? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Bb, 2B3a, 3A)**

15. List five of the major characters in *Twelfth Night*. Write a single sentence for each that begins, “What I want most is...” Take a risk—there’s not just one right answer! Then write a sentence for each character that begins, “What I’m most afraid of is...” Is there ever a situation when what one most wants is also what one most fears? Now, as a class, compare your sentences. How much agreement upon their motives is there? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Bb, 1Ca, 1Cb, 2B4c)**

16. As you read *Twelfth Night*, make note in a journal of the lines that strike you. When you finish the play, choose one line that “speaks” to you. This will be “your” line from *Twelfth Night*. Using it as your catalyst, write about the line and your personal response to it. What is its significance to the character/s in the play? But also, what is its significance to you? If there are any obscure words or phrases in it, make sure that you wrestle with their meanings. This is a very personal response to some of Shakespeare’s language—there’s no right answer. (When you see the play, listen for the line in performance. Was the mood of the line what you imagined? If you read the line differently, how so? Did hearing it spoken in any way enhance your understanding or appreciation of the line?) **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2Ba, 4A4b)**

17. Maria’s fake love letter, which Malvolio finds in 2.4, probably took a couple attempts to create the perfect practical joke. She would have had to think about his character, and what he’d respond to. What information could someone like Malvolio misinterpret? Try writing your own version of Maria’s letter—what would you say to Malvolio to trick him? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2Ab, 3A, 3Ba, 3C3a)**



## After Reading the Play

### AS A CLASS

1. “Twelfth Night Jeopardy” (This activity works well as a review session. It’s set up like the TV game show, and does take some preparation—but it goes more quickly than you would think! A few students can set up the game for extra credit.) First, choose several categories. For example: “Orsino’s Court,” “Olivia’s Household,” “Songs,” “Quotes,” etc. Then leaf through the text and find several bits of information and creative facts to use as “answers”—eight per category, or more. The more specific and exclusive the information is, the less ambiguous the game will be. Organize the “answers” by range of difficulty and create a point value sheet. An overhead projector sheet works well for this, then the whole class can see the categories being marked off as the game progresses. Divide the class into a few teams. A student from the team chooses a category: “The answer is. . . the island where Viola is shipwrecked.” The student answers in the form of a question to try to win the points: “What is Illyria?” A correct “question” wins the points for the group. It is then the next group’s turn to choose a category, and so on. If the student is wrong, don’t give the correct “question,” because when the next group chooses a category—they can choose the same one if they wish. The more exclusive the information is, the fewer options the students will have to develop multiple correct “questions” for the “answer.” (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 4ab and 5a)
2. Choose a leader to stand in the middle of a circle, with the rest of the class standing around her, passing a small ball around in clockwise direction. When the leader says, “Stop,” the person who has the ball has to answer the leader’s Twelfth Night question before the ball makes it back around the circle. Come up with questions like: “Name two characters who are in love with Olivia,” or “Who does Feste disguise himself as?” or “What token does Olivia give to Cesario?” If you don’t answer the question correctly by the time the ball makes its way around the circle, you take the leader’s place inside the circle—and start thinking of questions! Hint: It’s helpful to write down a list of them beforehand! (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1bc, 4ab)

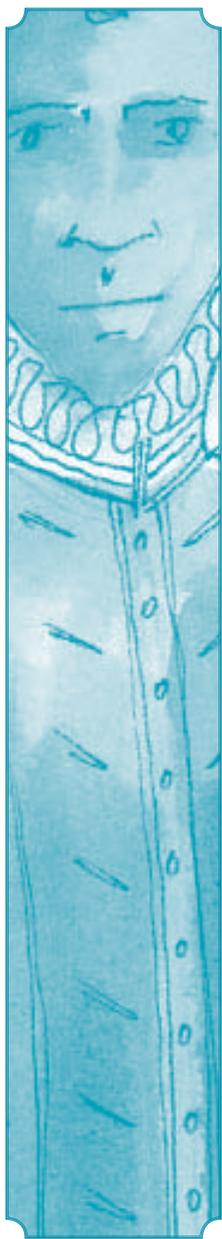
### IN SMALL GROUPS

3. Music is an important part of *Twelfth Night*—from Feste’s songs to Sir Andrew and Sir Toby’s late-night carousing. But no one has a more rich and complicated relationship with music than Orsino, beginning with the opening lines of the play (1.1). Divide into groups and each pick a different song to set the mood in 1.1—the music can be classical or modern, Beethoven or Fallout Boy, whatever you prefer. Perform the opening scene using the music you’ve chosen, then discuss as a group how the kind of music affects the meaning of Orsino’s words, and our impression of him. What kind of music works best for this scene? What kind of expectations for the rest of the play does a particular kind of music create? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Ce, 3C4b, 4Aa, 5Ca)
4. Malvolio swears vengeance, but then leaves the stage, and the play ends before he can do anything. What do you think he does? Write an epilogue for Malvolio to deliver after the play has ended. How will he take his revenge? And how will he speak to the audience? Does he use verse, or does he speak plainly? Choose an actor, writer, and director, and work together to perform your epilogue for the rest of the class. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B5a, 2B3c, 4Ba, 4B4b)

### ON YOUR OWN

5. Many times in film, scenes are added that do not appear in the script or they are rearranged for dramatic effect. Imagine you were making your own movie version of *Twelfth Night*. How would you film the duel between Viola and Sir Andrew? Would you use swords? Would Viola and Sir Andrew actually fight? There are also many elements available to filmmakers that are not available to stage directors. Would you add any visual effects? Create a storyboard of the scene (like a comic strip, directors often use this

# Classroom Activities



to outline the action in a scene) and pitch your ideas to the class. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B5a, 1C5f, 3Cb)**

6. Shakespeare often did not record where each scene took place, and in most editions of his plays, locations were added later. Directors often take great liberties with the locations of the action, and *Twelfth Night* is no exception. Some productions of this play have expanded the setting to include the sinking ship that separates Viola and Sebastian, while others have contracted the action to take place entirely on the grounds of Olivia's estate. Where would you set the action of *Twelfth Night*? What locations not currently included in the play might you add? What changes would occur if some locations were no longer available? Share your decisions with the class. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B5a, 2B5a, 3Cb)**
7. Write an epilogue to *Twelfth Night*. What's happening five years following the conclusion of Shakespeare's play? Are the three couples still happily married? Where is Malvolio? Has he gotten revenge upon the whole lot of them as he vowed he would? Be creative in your telling of what happened next. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goal 1C4a, 1C4d, 3C4a)**
8. Like many of Shakespeare's plays, *Twelfth Night* has been "translated" to many different times and places beyond an Elizabethan-era "Illyria." Nineteenth-century British estates, early twentieth-century Mediterranean Spain, and even a present-day high school have all been imaginative settings for *Twelfth Night*. But those yellow cross-gartered stockings are just so Elizabethan! Recast *Twelfth Night* in a new setting and draw or describe how you would deal with this very specific, colorful detail in Shakespeare's script. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B5a, 2A5b, 3Cb)**
9. If you had to pick out one line that might serve as a character's personal slogan that you could see him/her walking around with on a sandwich board, what would it be? Choose a character that interests you. The front of the sandwich board displays the character's line. What would the back of the sandwich board say—as a subtitle in either your own words or those of another character? (You may want to actually create these to display for the rest of your class.) **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1c, 2ab)**
10. *Twelfth Night's* subtitle, *What You Will*, has been interpreted to mean many different things—from a commentary on ignoring the rules of social order to a suggestion that we're living in a dream. Some have even argued it's Shakespeare's way of shrugging his shoulders and leaving the meaning up to us as the audience to determine. Write down what you think Shakespeare's unusual subtitle means and support your claim with lines from the text. (By the way, this is the only subtitle that exists in the entire canon!) **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1C5b, 3B4a, 1Bb)**



## Preparing for the Performance You'll See

### AS A CLASS

1. Put the act and scene numbers for each scene in the play on slips of paper, and mix them up in a hat. Everyone picks one scene out of the hat. Imagine that you are designing a production of *Twelfth Night*. What does your scenic design look like? What kinds of costumes are your characters wearing? What is the lighting like? Some questions to get you started:

# Classroom Activities

- ⑥ Where does the scene take place?
- ⑥ What props are helpful in setting the mood?
- ⑥ What is the weather like? What time of day is it?
- ⑥ What's the overall tone of the scene?
- ⑥ Who's in the scene? Where are they from?

It may help to make a designer's collage—that is, a large piece of poster board with swatches of fabric, copies of paintings or photographs that have an element of what you envision, and anything else that illustrates the scene for you. Magazines and art books are often a good source of ideas. When you've finished your collage, pick the line or lines from the scene that are essential to your design concept. As a class, do a “show and tell” in order of scenes (designers often do this for the cast on the first day of rehearsal). When you see the play, be aware of the design. Are there similar elements to some of the designs you saw in class? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B5a, 2Ba, 3Cb, 5Ca)**

## IN SMALL GROUPS

2. Before you see the characters of *Twelfth Night* brought to life on stage through the vision of a director, spend some time imagining your own version. Then after you see the play, contrast your vision to that of Director Josie Rourke and the actors. Take, for example, Malvolio. Go back to the text and look for clues that suggest what he might look like and how he might act. What stars might you cast in this role? In other key roles in the play? When you see Chicago Shakespeare Theater's production, how does its interpretation of *Twelfth Night's* characters compare to yours? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Cb, 1C5c, 2Ab)**

3. Soliloquies are important tools in Shakespeare's dramatic technique. The soliloquy is ideally suited to a thrust stage where the actors can approach the audience and speak intimately with them, as if one-on-one. On the proscenium stage where there is much greater distance between the actor and the audience, the soliloquy tends to become a moment when the character talks aloud to himself. The soliloquy allows the audience to learn about the character and his motivations privately—that is, without the knowledge of other characters.

In your small groups, look at Viola's soliloquy in Act 2.2. Divide the soliloquy into “sense groups” of related ideas. Each sense group is allocated to a member of the group who then practices speaking those line/s, listening carefully to their sound and rhythm, noting any key images or patterns of sound. All members of the group then stand in a semi-circle in the order of their lines and speak the soliloquy in a continuous sequence as though all of you are one person. Spend some time discussing each group's performance. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1C4a, 1C4d, 2A4d, 2B4a)**

4. Shakespeare is known for his brevity—at least when it comes to writing stage directions! He rarely indicates more than an Enter or Exeunt, which means that actors and directors get to be extra creative when they bring any of his plays to life. In groups of three, write your own stage directions for your favorite scene in *Twelfth Night*. To get started, think of specific details: How old are the characters, and how will age affect their movements? What are some of the sounds we hear? The smells? Will the characters' clothes affect their movements? What are their states of mind during the scene? After writing our stage directions, present your scene, and explain your reasons for staging it the way you did. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1C4a, 1C4b, 1C4d, 3B4a)**

## JUST TO THINK ABOUT

5. In traditional Shakespearean or courtyard-style theater, the audience is always in view of each other. The experience of theater is one of community. We are watching together a story that has been enacted many, many times for hundreds of years and in hundreds of cities all over the world. The thrust stage at Chicago Shakespeare Theater is much like the stages

# Classroom Activities

of Elizabethan theaters—and situates the action of the play with members of the audience facing each other around the stage. When during the performance do you become aware of other audience members? How does this affect your own experience? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 4Aa, 4Ab, 4Ad)**

6. Directors have always struggled with the order of the scenes in *Twelfth Night*. Victorian directors usually switched the first two scenes of Act 1, so that the play would start with the aftermath of the shipwreck. Director Michael Pennington, in his 1995 production at CST, switched the first two scenes of Act 2, so that Malvolio was seen delivering Olivia's ring to Viola before we're introduced to her twin. Why do you think directors might have made these choices? How do we understand characters and the play differently when scenes are reordered? Taking the Act that you are most familiar with (or enjoyed the most), play with reversing the order of a couple of scenes. Find a switch that still makes sense in the story, but ends up changing the story a bit. What changes? Is it plot? Is it our understanding of a particular character? Is it someone's motivation that changes because they have different information now? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B5a, 1Cb, 3B4c)**



## Back in the Classroom

### AS A CLASS

1. Did your views about the play or any of the characters change after seeing this live production of *Twelfth Night*? If so, how? Try to be very specific about moments in the action of *Twelfth Night* that affected you and your feelings about the play. Discuss these moments and your experience at the theater as a class. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goal 1C4d, 1C5d, 4A4a, 4B4b)**
2. *Twelfth Night* has been set in a number of periods and settings from classical to modern times. Discuss as a class the setting and costume designs that the director and her design team chose for the play you just saw. Why do you think they made these choices? What was useful or helpful about the design elements of *Twelfth Night*? What was distracting or not believable to you? How did the choices affect your experience of the play?

Did your views about any of the characters change after seeing this live production? If so, how? Try to be very specific about moments in the action that affected you. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1B5a, 1Cb, 4Ab)**

### IN SMALL GROUPS

3. Working in groups of three, brainstorm your ideas and write an ad for the *Chicago Tribune* about the production you just saw. Remember that you must characterize the play and attract a large audience in just a few words. What visual image from the play would you choose to capture the play's essence? Compare your ideas with the ads that appear in the Friday "Arts" section of the *Tribune*. What are the strengths of each? How do they work differently? **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Ce, 3B4b, 3Cb, 5Ba)**
4. The costume design for this production of *Twelfth Night* was inspired by the collection of Tudor and Elizabethan portraits at the National Portrait Gallery in London (you can browse the collection online here: <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/explore/by-period/tudor.php>). How might the costumes have been different if they'd been inspired by a different museum, like the Art Institute of Chicago, the Field Museum...or the Shedd Aquarium? What if they'd been inspired by a current TV show or movie, like *Lost* or *The Devil Wears Prada*? Divide into small design teams and pick a different inspiration for each group—share your design ideas with the class. **(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1Cb, 1Ce, 3Cb, 5Ab)**

## YOUR OWN THOUGHTS ON PAPER

5. Selecting one or two quotes from the list of quotes in the section “What the Critics Say,” respond to the ideas with your own point of view. Call upon your playgoing experience as well as your reading of the text if you’ve studied the play—and be specific about moments in the production and lines in the text that support your viewpoint! What is it about this particular quote that strikes a chord? (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1C5c, 1C5d, 2A5d)
6. In Shakespeare’s time, there was very little scenery on stage. Obviously, this is no longer the case, and very elaborate sets with special effects are often used to help create Shakespeare’s world (like the 7,000 gallons of water built into the set that Scenic and Costume Designer Lucy Osborne created for this production). Sketch your own scenic design for *Twelfth Night*, using either a bare minimum of sets and props, 16th century style, or the most opulent and ornate set you can imagine. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 2B3a, 3Ba, 3Cb, 4Ab)



## ON YOUR OWN

7. Using music that you already know, create a soundtrack for *Twelfth Night*. The songs don’t necessarily have to reflect the same ideas as the scenes in the play – they can be as literal or abstract as you’d like. Be sure to note to which moment each song corresponds. And for extra credit... create your own CD cover art to go along with your soundtrack. (Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1C4d, 1C5d, 3C4b)
8. Create an enticing, descriptive, alluring travel brochure for Illyria as it is featured in *Twelfth Night* that would encourage tourists to take their next vacations in that location. (Illinois English Language Arts 3B4a, 3C4a, 3C4b, 5B4a)



The **Bard Card Program** encourages Team Shakespeare students who first attend Chicago Shakespeare Theater on a field trip to return on their own with friends and family. Bard Card student members may purchase two tickets to each full-length, mainstage show at

\$15 each through our 2008–2009 Season. The two-year membership is designed to bridge the gap between a school trip and a student’s personal life. The program’s mission is to make tickets affordable to students, so they learn how to make Shakespeare and theater a continuing part of their lives.

Students interested in becoming a Bard Card member should email us at [bardcard@chicagoshakes.com](mailto:bardcard@chicagoshakes.com). Please encourage them to become members!

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## Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's website  
<http://www.chicagoshakes.com>

## Comprehensive Link Sites

William Shakespeare and the Internet  
<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>

Shakespeare in Europe Shine (Basel University)  
<http://www.unibas.ch/shine/home>

Touchstone Database (University of Birmingham, UK)  
<http://www.touchstone.bham.ac.uk/welcome.html>

Sher's Shakespeare Index  
<http://www.websher.net/shakespeare/>

BBC1 Web Guide  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webguide/schools/search.shtml?query=Shakespeare>

Absolute Shakespeare  
<http://absoluteshakespeare.com>

## Teaching Shakespeare

\*indicates specific focus on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in addition to other plays

The Folger Shakespeare Library\*  
<http://www.folger.edu/education/getarchive.cfm>

ShakespeareHigh.com\* (Amy Ulen's revamped "Surfing with the Bard" site)  
<http://www.shakespearehigh.com>

Web English Teacher\*  
<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/midsummer.html>

Shake Sphere  
<http://sites.micro-link.net/zekscrab/illustrations.html#Shakespeare%20Paintings>

Proper Elizabethan Accents  
<http://www.renfaire.com/Language/index.html>

The English Renaissance in Context: Multimedia Tutorials (University of Pennsylvania)\*  
<http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/eric/teach/index.htm>

The History of Costume by Braun and Schneider  
<http://www.siue.edu/COSTUMES/history.html>

The Elizabethan Costuming Page  
<http://costume.dm.net/>

The Costumer's Manifesto (University of Alaska)  
<http://www.costumes.org>

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Rare Map Collection (The University of Georgia)  
<http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/maps.html>

Blue Mountain Shakespeare Sonnet eCards  
<http://www.bluemountain.com/category.pd?path=34889>

Spark Notes\*  
<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/>

Shakespeare Resource Center\*  
<http://bardweb.net/plays/index.html>

## Shakespeare and Elizabethan England

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust  
<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk>

The Elizabethan Theatre  
<http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/englisch/shakespeare/index.html>

Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet  
<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/life.htm>

Queen Elizabeth I  
<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm>

Shakespeare and the Globe: Then and Now (Encyclopedia Britannica)  
<http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/index2.html>

Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend (The Newberry Library's exhibit commemorating the 400th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's death)  
<http://www.elizabethexhibit.org>

Shakespeare's Globe Research Database  
<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/globe/>

Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I  
<http://www.marileecody.com/eliz1-images.html>

Renaissance Sites and Elizabethan Resources  
<http://elizabethan.org/sites.html>

Tudor and Elizabethan Portrait Gallery  
<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/explore/by-period/tudor.php>

## Texts and Early Editions

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Massachusetts Institute of Technology site)  
<http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html>

The First Folio and Early Quartos of William Shakespeare (University of Virginia)  
<http://etext.virginia.edu/frames/shakeframe.html>

Furness Shakespeare Library (University of Pennsylvania)  
<http://dewey.lib.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/>

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The Internet Shakespeare Editions (University of Victoria, British Columbia)  
<http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/>

Shakespeare: Subject to Change (Cable in the Classroom site)  
<http://www.ciconline.org>

What Is a Folio? (MIT's "Hamlet on the Ramparts" site)  
<http://shea.mit.edu/ramparts/newstuff3.htm>

## Words, Words, Words

Alexander Schmidt's Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary (Tufts University's Perseus Digital Library site)  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0079>

Word Frequency Lists (Mt. Ararat High School)  
<http://www.mta75.org/search/curriculum/english/shake/home.html>

## Shakespeare in Performance

The Internet Movie Database: William Shakespeare  
<http://www.us.imdb.com/find?q=Shakespeare>

## Shakespeare in Art

Shakespeare Illustrated (Emory University)  
[http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html](http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html)

The Faces of Elizabeth I  
<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizface.htm>

Tudor England: Images  
<http://www.marileecody.com/images.html>

Absolute Shakespeare  
[http://absoluteshakespeare.com/pictures/shakespeare\\_pictures.htm](http://absoluteshakespeare.com/pictures/shakespeare_pictures.htm)

## Twelfth Night

"Enjoying *Twelfth Night*" (by a Brown University English department grad who went on to become a 'real' doctor!)  
<http://www.pathguy.com/12n.htm>

Web English Teacher: *Twelfth Night* Teacher Resources and Lesson Plans  
<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/12night.html>

*Twelfth Night* Study Guide  
By Michael Cummings  
<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/xTwelfth.html>

No Fear Shakespeare (side-by-side original text and modern English prose "translation")  
<http://nfs.sparknotes.com/twelfthnight/>

Radio 4 Online Activity Pack for *Twelfth Night* (including video clips)  
<http://www.channel4.com/learning/main/netnotes/subid469.htm>

# Suggested Readings

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Berry, Ralph. *Changing Styles in Shakespeare*. London, 1981.

Bevington, David. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. New York, 1992.

Bevington, David. *Action Is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture*. Cambridge, 1984.

Bloom, Harold. *Modern Critical Interpretations: "Twelfth Night."* New York, 1987.

Eagleton, Terry. *William Shakespeare*. Oxford, 1986.

French, Marilyn. *Shakespeare's Division of Experience*. New York, 1981.

Gay, Penny. *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women*. London, 1994.

Gibson, Rex, ed. *Cambridge School Shakespeare*.

(This excellent series, used extensively as a resource in Shakespeare Repertory's education efforts, includes *Twelfth Night*, along with approximately half of Shakespeare's other plays, with more to follow each year. Available in the United States through Cambridge University Press, 40 W. 20th St., New York, NY 10011)

Goddard, Harold C. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Chicago, 1951.

Hamilton, Donna. *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England*. Lexington, 1992.

Hills and Öttchen. *Shakespeare's Insults: Educating Your Wit*. Ann Arbor, 1991.

Kott, Jan. *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. London, 1965.

Macdonald, Ronald R. *William Shakespeare: The Comedies*. New York, 1992.

Mullaney, Steven. *The Place of the Stage*. Chicago, 1988.

O'Brien, Peggy. *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching "Twelfth Night" and "Othello."* New York, 1995.

One of the finest, most creative approaches to teaching Shakespeare in the English classroom. This is the third in a three-volume series; other plays include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*.

Ornstein, Paul. *Shakespeare's Comedies: From Roman Farce to Romantic Mystery*. Newark, 1986.

Potter, Lois. *Text and Performance: "Twelfth Night."* London, 1985.

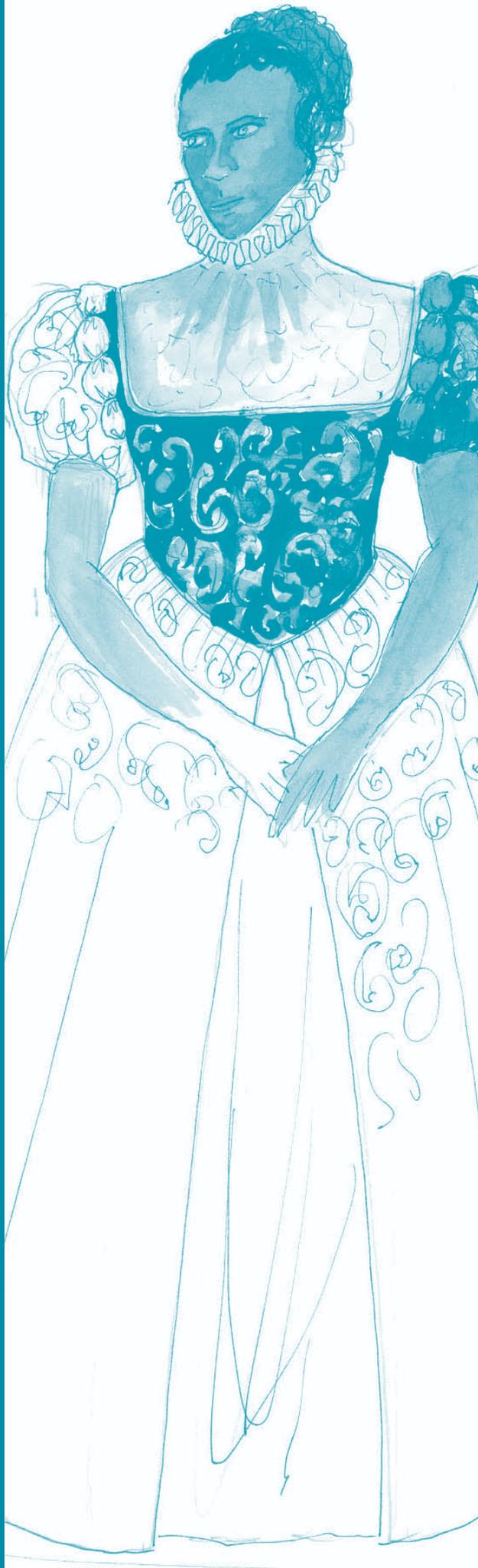
Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800*. Harper & Row, 1979.

Wells, Stanley. *"Twelfth Night": Critical Essays*. New York, 1986.

# Notes

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**Chicago Shakespeare Theater**  
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