

# Twelfth Night

By William Shakespeare  
Directed by Rebecca Taichman

**MC**  
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THEATRE CENTER  
**Matthews**  
Theatre

Samantha Soule in Twelfth Night,  
photo by Scott Suchman

**March 10 – 29, 2009**

Co-produced with The Shakespeare Theatre Company of Washington, D.C.

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Group Services: 609.258.6526 • 91 University Place • Princeton, NJ 08540

## Emily Mann on *Twelfth Night*



Dear Patrons,

For me, this production of *Twelfth Night* promises to be an embarrassment of riches. I wanted a Shakespeare comedy in our 2008-2009 season, and I have been eager to get the supremely talented director Rebecca Taichman to direct a production at McCarter. When I found out that *Twelfth Night* was one of her dream projects, I jumped at the chance to produce it.

*Twelfth Night* is one of Shakespeare's greatest comedies. Hilarious and sublime, it is an elegant and effervescent story, chock full of mistaken identities, antic pranks, and misguided affections. At its core are its wonderful characters (Viola, Malvolio, Orsino and Olivia), all of whom desperately long for the unattainable. Shakespeare was in prime form with this sumptuous, exhilarating play, and I can't wait to see it seduce you as it has completely seduced me.

With this production, I am absolutely delighted to introduce McCarter audiences to Rebecca Taichman, a brilliant young director who is making waves in the American theater. I've been following Rebecca's work for several years, and invited her to direct McCarter's IN-Festival reading of *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, which she carried out with great aplomb. Rebecca is one of those rare directors who combines great imagination and utter discipline. She has a great sense of color, fun, imagination, play, and humor, but she is also able to find the razor's edge between comedy and tragedy. She has a love for beauty, and her plays are inevitably elegant; I am delighted that we will be able to offer her the historic Matthews Theatre as a canvas.

Rebecca's production promises to fill Shakespeare's fantastical country, Illyria, with music, longing and desire. *Twelfth Night* will be a co-production with The Shakespeare Theatre Company, in Washington, D.C. This company has fast become one of the most important centers for classical theater in our nation, and the quality of their work is superb. I look forward to seeing you at *Twelfth Night*!

All Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Mann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "M".

# *Twelfth Night Plot Summary*

By Akiva Fox, Literary Associate, Shakespeare Theatre Company

Duke Orsino of Illyria persists in courting the beautiful Countess Olivia, even though she has sworn off love to mourn for her deceased brother. Meanwhile, a shipwreck separates a young woman named Viola from her twin brother, Sebastian. Fearing for her safety, she disguises herself as a man and secures a position in Orsino's house. Orsino soon sends the young "man" as his emissary to Olivia.

Olivia's Uncle, Toby Belch, disturbs her mourning, despite the efforts of Maria, Olivia's attendant. In order to finance his drunken binges, Toby has brought in the dim-witted Andrew Aguecheek. Feste, Olivia's fool, also returns to the house to disrupt the mourning—much to the disapproval of Olivia's steward, the sanctimonious Malvolio.

When Viola (now going by the name Cesario) arrives to woo Olivia for Orsino, the charming messenger unintentionally wins Olivia's heart for "himself." The love-struck Olivia sends Malvolio after Cesario/Viola with a ring as a ploy to make him return the following day. Viola immediately realizes that the countess has fallen in love with her male alter ego. Elsewhere in Illyria, Viola's brother Sebastian surfaces alive, believing his sister to be drowned.

Toby and Andrew wake up the house with their late-night carousing, and Malvolio threatens them with eviction—on Olivia's authority. Maria is outraged by Malvolio's arrogance and vows to help Toby get his revenge.

Cesario/Viola attempts to make Orsino accept Olivia's rejection, nearly revealing her own unrequited love for him, but he sends her back to woo Olivia again.

Maria forges a cryptic love letter in Olivia's handwriting, and Malvolio interprets it as an expression of Olivia's love for him. He determines to follow its instructions—to wear yellow stockings and crossed garters, and to act boldly. Cesario/Viola returns, and Olivia declares her romantic feelings.

When Sebastian and his friend Antonio arrive in town, Antonio reveals that he once fought against Orsino and must hide until night. He gives Sebastian his money for safekeeping.

Cross-gartered and in yellow stockings, Malvolio presents himself to a mystified Olivia. She entrusts him to Toby, who orders him bound and imprisoned like a madman. Toby next encourages a duel between the timid Cesario/Viola and Andrew. Seeing what he thinks is Sebastian under attack, Antonio intervenes. But Orsino's officers arrest Antonio, and he feels betrayed when Cesario/Viola denies having his money. The real Sebastian appears and is mistaken for Cesario, both by Toby and Andrew and by the amorous Olivia. Attracted to Olivia, Sebastian impulsively agrees to marry her.

When Orsino arrives to court Olivia personally, Olivia not only rejects him but also calls Cesario her husband. Andrew comes seeking help for Toby—wounded, Andrew claims, by Cesario. Finally, Sebastian appears and apologizes to Olivia for injuring her uncle. Reunited in the presence of the stunned assembly, Sebastian and Viola reveal that they are twins, brother and sister. Olivia and Orsino accept the pair as their respective mates. Olivia discovers the practical joke played against Malvolio, but he refuses to be reconciled as the others celebrate.

## Character Profiles

**Orsino:** Duke of Illyria, in love with Olivia—who refuses his romantic proposals.

**Olivia:** A countess in mourning over the deaths of her father and brother. She has vowed not to marry for a period of seven years.

**Viola:** Twin sister to Sebastian; Rescued by the Sea captain after a shipwreck, Viola lands in Illyria, disguises herself as a boy named Cesario, and enters Orsino's service.

**Sebastian:** Viola's twin brother; presumed lost at sea, rescued by Antonio.

**Antonio:** A rugged pirate wanted in Illyria.

**Feste:** Olivia's jester, this clown is particularly adroit at witty wordplay and recognizing the foolishness of others.

**Malvolio:** A steward in Olivia's household; his self-righteousness is exceeded only by his desire for increased social standing.

**Sir Toby Belch:** Olivia's slovenly uncle whose fondness for drink interrupts his niece's dismal atmosphere and Malvolio's puritanical order.

**Sir Andrew Aguecheek:** Sir Toby's friend; a foppish nobleman and suitor to Olivia.

**Maria:** A cunning gentlewoman who waits on Olivia.

**Fabian:** A servant to Olivia.

**Captain:** The captain of the twins' ship; rescues Viola.

# How much do you know about Shakespeare?



*William Shakespeare*

## **What do you know about William Shakespeare?**

While not every detail of the Bard's life is a known fact, we do have a great deal of information about his life. The following are some frequently asked questions, with information provided courtesy of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

## **When and where was Shakespeare born?**

According to the church records, Shakespeare was baptized at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, on April 26, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, was an affluent glove-maker, tanner and wool dealer, who owned property in Stratford, though he was struck with financial difficulties around 1576. His mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a prosperous farmer. In the 1500s, Stratford was a market town of about 200 households. Famous for its fairs, Stratford was two days from London on horseback.

## **How many children did Shakespeare have, and what were their names?**

William Shakespeare and his wife, Anne Hathaway, had three children — Susanna baptized on May 26, 1583, and twins, Judith and Hamnet, baptized on February 2, 1585. Hamnet contracted black plague and died in August 1596.

## **Was Shakespeare famous in his own lifetime?**

During his lifetime, Shakespeare provoked the envy and admiration of fellow writers, as we know from their surviving comments in print. The First Folio, an unprecedented collection of a playwright's work, is the best illustration of the high regard held for Shakespeare in literary circles. The statue his family erected to his memory in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, also demonstrates his status as a prosperous man of property as well as a famous poet.



*Queen Elizabeth*

## **What was Shakespeare's relationship with Queen Elizabeth?**

Elizabeth I was an active and generous patron of the theater. She had her own acting company called the "Queen's Men," and stood against the Puritans who wished to close down the theaters. Without her support, the Elizabethan theaters would not have survived. In the 1590s, court performances by acting companies became popular, and Shakespeare's company was selected to perform more than any other.

## **When did Shakespeare die, from what did he die, and where was he buried?**

Shakespeare's burial is recorded in Stratford's parish register as having taken place on April 25, 1616. His monument, inside Stratford's parish church, indicates that he died on April 23. We do not know the cause of Shakespeare's death. He made his will on

March 25, almost a month before he died, and in it describes himself as 'in perfect health & memories, god be prayed.' However, this was a conventional phrase and does not necessarily mean he was not already experiencing symptoms of an illness which later proved fatal. Moreover, his will of March 25 is, apparently, a re-drafting of one made the January before, suggesting he may have been ill over an even longer period. What his illness was may never be known.

(Reprinted from McCarter Theatre's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Audience Resource Guide)

## Shakespeare's Education By Sarah Powers

While there is little record of Shakespeare's early life, it is almost certain that he attended the Stratford grammar school, beginning at the age of seven. Any male child who had learned the rudiments of reading and writing could attend free of charge, and probably forty to fifty students attended the school. This school, as with most other grammar schools of the time, was centered on a classical education, particularly instruction in Latin. In fact, the curriculum consisted almost entirely of Latin language and literature, with a little arithmetic, and basic instruction in the Christian faith.

An average school day began at 6:00 a.m. in the summer or 7:00 a.m. in the winter and continued until 5:30 or 6:00 p.m., with a recess around 11:00 a.m. School was held six days a week, year-round. Younger children might learn their ABCs from a hornbook: a wooden tablet with letters and sometimes a prayer or Bible verse printed on a piece of parchment and covered with a thin, transparent sheet of horn. Older children would study Latin through rote memorization and relentless drills, rhetorical exercises, and analysis of texts.

In 1575 or 1576, when he was at the height of his wealth and prestige, Shakespeare's father applied for a coat of arms, hoping to rise from a yeoman to the status of gentleman. The application languished and was eventually forgotten, but in 1596 the process was renewed, most likely by William Shakespeare, and this time his father's claim was approved.

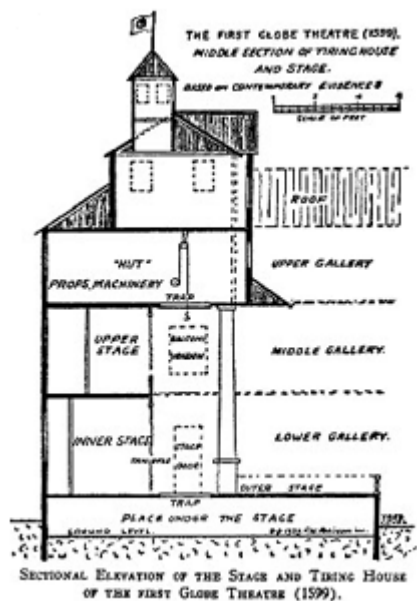
Babies were usually baptized at three days old, so Shakespeare was probably born on April 23—and died on the very same day, fifty-two years later.

Shakespeare may have had some of his first experiences with drama while attending this school. Almost all schoolmasters had their students read and perform ancient plays, particularly the comedies of Terence and Plautus, in order to instill the Latin language. Many of Shakespeare's comedies reflect his familiarity with these plays — he may have drawn from his schoolboy experiences many years later.

The town of Stratford had several scholarships available to help students go on to a university, but, unlike some of the other young men of his social and economic class, Shakespeare was not able to continue on to Oxford. In the late 1570s, Shakespeare's family suffered financial troubles, and he withdrew from school to help out at home. Nevertheless, he had gained a background in Latin, and possibly a taste for theater, in his years at the Stratford grammar school.

(Reprinted from McCarter Theatre's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Audience Resource Guide)

## Theater in Shakespeare's Time



In Shakespeare's time, the professional theater was a booming business and a popular entertainment for people of all backgrounds, from royalty to illiterate apprentices. Shakespeare wrote plays for a specific company, known first as the Lord Chamberlain's Men and later as the King's Men. While they performed in the courts of Elizabeth I and James I, as well as in churches and guildhalls in the countryside, they most frequently performed in their own theaters. From 1599 onward, that theater was the Globe. An outdoor theater, the Globe stood approximately 36 feet high and had a diameter of about 84 feet. The inside of the structure contained three tiers of galleries that surrounded an uncovered yard roughly 56 feet in diameter. Actors performed on a stage space that thrust into the yard area and had three sides where audience members could stand to watch the action. There was a roof over the stage but no

curtain, and while there were occasional props or furniture, there was no scenery. Audience members could pay a penny to stand in the yard (these people were known as groundlings); if they chose and could afford to sit in one of the side galleries, they had to pay extra. Plays were probably performed without an intermission as we know it, though they may have included a short musical interlude or a dance. The audience was far more casual and unruly than we would expect, often milling about, talking with each other and commenting on the action as the play was being performed.

It was illegal for women to appear on stage, so Elizabethan and Jacobean acting companies did not include women, and female roles were played by boys or young men. The actors in the company wore contemporary Renaissance clothing, no matter in what country or period the play took place—indeed, actors often wore their own clothes.

Although Shakespeare frequently gives his plays different settings, the way his characters speak and act is most similar to the way English people in the 16th and 17th centuries would have spoken and acted. So for his audience, they were, in every sense, contemporary plays.



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## Shakespearean Verse

What is the “language” of Shakespeare? How does it work? Most of the playwrights in Shakespeare’s time were writing in a metrical form of verse known as iambic pentameter. In this form, each line consists of five poetic units called “feet,” and each foot is equal to two syllables. The second syllable of each foot is accented. Sometimes these lines rhyme, as they do in Feste’s songs in *Twelfth Night*. However, Shakespeare more often used unrhymed iambic pentameter, known as blank verse. Blank verse closely resembles the natural rhythms of speech in English, which allows the speaker greater freedom of tone, while still having a specific emphasis within the line, which would be lacking in prose.

A line such as, “But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?” from *Romeo and Juliet* provides an excellent example of the use of iambic pentameter because it can easily be broken up into its five feet: five stressed and five unstressed syllables.

But, **soft** / what **light** / through **yon-** / -der **win-** / -dow **breaks?**

Whether or not a character speaks in iambic pentameter is often attributable to his or her station in life. People who are of a higher position in the class structure of the play (including Olivia, Orsino, and Viola) often speak in meter, while the lesser subjects (including Maria and Fabian) tend to speak in prose. This, however, is not always the case.

Shakespearean Verse: Some Basics



## GENERAL TERMS

**Scansion:** the analysis of verse to show its meter.

**Meter:** the systematically arranged rhythm in verse – rhythm that repeats a single basic pattern of **stressed** and **unstressed** syllables.

**Foot:** the basic unit of verse meter.

## TYPES OF FEET

**Iamb:** A metrical foot consisting of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable. (E.g., A-bove, Me-thinks, The night)

**Trochee:** A metrical foot consisting of one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed syllable. (E.g., Me-tal, Feel-ing, Flow-er)

**Spondee:** A metrical foot consisting of two stressed syllables. (E.g., Play on, Well said)

## TYPES OF VERSE

**Pentameter:** A form of verse consisting of 5 feet, 10 syllables.

**Iambic Pentameter:** A form of verse consisting of five iambs. (E.g., I do / I know / not what, / and fear / to find)

**Irregular meter:** Often Shakespeare will break the pattern of stresses to create moments of interest, to highlight themes and word choices, to create a rest or pause, or to underline the specific intention of the character. (E.g., Would I / or not. / Tell him / I'll none / of it.)

**“Feminine” endings:** Lines of verse that have an “extra” unstressed syllable which can occur at the end of a verse line or within a verse line at the end of a phrase. (E.g., There is / a fair / be-hav- / -ior in / thee, capt-ain)

For a helpful online glossary that provides definitions for some of the language and Shakespeareanisms in *Twelfth Night*, see [http://www.english-literature-essays.com/twelfth\\_night.htm](http://www.english-literature-essays.com/twelfth_night.htm)

(Reprinted from McCarter Theatre's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Audience Resource Guide)

# Shakespearean Comedy

By Adam Immerwahr

## “How to identify a comedy”

The strategies described in this article can help you read a comedy, but how are you going to know whether or not the play you are looking at *is* a comedy? Don't worry, there's a simple solution using only the title of a play - and it works for almost every play by Shakespeare! If the play title has the name and a number in it, it is most likely a history (*Richard III*, *Henry V*). If the title of the play has either a pair of names or a single name, but no numbers, it is probably a tragedy (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*). If the title of the play has a phrase or saying in it, you can bet that it is a comedy (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Measure for Measure*).

## “Why are Shakespeare's comedies so similar?”

There are several factors that might explain certain shared patterns in Shakespeare's comedies.

**Biographical:** Shakespeare wrote most of his comedies early in his career; perhaps it is no mistake that the plays he penned in his youth deal with young people rebelling against the social order of their parents' generation, while in the tragedies and romances he wrote at the end of his career, the theme is often of children betraying or refusing to obey their parents.

**Historical:** When Shakespeare was writing romantic comedies, the other playwrights of his era were too, and when he later began focusing on tragedies, it was also part of a large shift in the theatrical vocabulary around him. This shift (from comedies to tragedies) corresponds to the change in England's politics as James I succeeded Elizabeth I on the British throne. Elizabeth, the “Virgin Queen,” had refused to marry, and all of England was concerned about what would happen to their society if she died without an heir. Perhaps it is because of this that the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries during her life glorified marriage and the positive transformative effect it could have had on the society around it.

**Architectural:** During the early part of Shakespeare's career, the adult playing companies were primarily based in large, outdoor theaters, but midway through his career they began to move into the indoor playhouses that had once been occupied by children's companies. It is possible that the noisy hubbub of the outdoor playing spaces required more festive, boisterous, celebratory comedies, and that

What makes a Shakespearean comedy? If you tried to make a list of every Shakespeare play that had funny parts in it, you would end up

the indoor playhouses, with their more refined audiences, allowed for the more nuanced tragedies and romances.

with a list that included comedies, histories, tragedies, and romances alike. The comedy *As You Like It* begins with a Duke forcibly exiling his niece from her home; it is a

poignant scene, and if sadness were the only factor, then *As You Like It* would be a tragedy. Rather than looking for plays that funny, sad, boring, and/or lyrical, it is helpful to think of the categories of comedies, tragedies, histories, and romances as groups of similar plays. All of the comedies have a set of shared tropes—certain patterns that help define them as comedies. It is important to remember, though, that these tropes are not necessarily inherently funny; humor is certainly a part of Shakespearean comedy, but it is not the defining characteristic.

At heart, the Shakespearean comedy is about a conflict between two opposite social groups (rulers and subjects, older and younger, wealthy and poor). The comedies tend to begin in a court in turmoil. Usually, this turmoil has arisen out of a crisis over marriage—the aristocrat female has refused to wed, or the laws of society forbid two young aristocrats to marry. The characters flee or are exiled, and they go from the court to a greener, less “civilized” world. They often choose (or are forced) to flee to a far-off exotic location, or a forest. Oftentimes, they are forced to don disguises. In this new place, far from the court that constrained them, they meet all sorts of other characters, and various plots intertwine. There are confusions and mistaken identities, but no major characters die. Central to these confusions is a topsy-turvy element in which society is flipped around: women are mistaken for men; servants end up ruling their masters; those who once chased find themselves pursued; and words are taken to mean their opposites. In this upheaval of the social order, the societal structure that once prevented the young lovers from marrying is transformed, and all the plots are resolved as the younger generation is brought back and welcomed to the court. The final act often includes a wedding and a celebration." with this text: "In this upheaval of the social order, the societal structure that once prevented marriage is transformed, and all the plots are resolved as those where were unable to marry are brought back and welcomed to the court. The final act often includes a wedding and a celebration.

The first strategy in reading a Shakespearean comedy is to find the common elements listed above. No Shakespeare comedy fits this formula exactly, but the key points can be found—in one aspect or another—in each of the plays of this genre. The ways in which these elements differ from one play to another are often quite interesting, and one might begin analysis by asking what makes the Shakespearean comedy being analyzed unique, and why Shakespeare might have diverged from his pattern? Next, it is helpful to ponder what Shakespeare is trying to *do* with a given comedy. Often, the plots seem to resolve at the end of the fourth act, but Shakespeare often goes on to a fifth, celebratory act; discovering why that fifth act is necessary can often lead to surprising and intriguing conclusions. For instance, by the end of the fourth act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the lovers have been reunited with the court, but the

wedding celebration takes up an enormous fifth act. Why are the “rude mechanicals” of that play important to Shakespeare; what does the story they tell have to do with the larger story of the plot; and are there any more transformations that are necessary before Shakespeare’s tale can conclude? Also, pay particular attention to the first lines of the play, often Shakespeare will give a hint as to his prime interest in the first few exchanges. What can you glean from the first three lines of *Twelfth Night*?

*If music be the food of love, play on  
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting  
The appetite may sicken and so die.*

Lastly, don’t forget to pay attention to the humor. Oftentimes, it is hard to find when mired in footnotes and dictionary definitions; once you understand a passage, go back and read it aloud, and you’ll often find hidden hilarity and wordplay. Not only will it make the reading more enjoyable, but you might find some clues to Shakespeare’s meaning buried in the buffoonery.

(Reprinted from McCarter Theatre’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* Audience Resource Guide)

## *Twelfth Night* Timeline

By Akiva Fox, Literary Associate, Shakespeare Theatre Company.

*Twelfth Night*, William Shakespeare’s lyrical and complex comedy of love, premiered in 1601. Since that first performance, the play’s memorable characters, stunning language and ingenious plot have made it one of Shakespeare’s most popular comedies. In this timeline, we follow *Twelfth Night* through 400 years on stage (and screen).

### 1601

Shakespeare writes *Twelfth Night*. On January 6 (Twelfth Night), Shakespeare’s company performs a play at court for Queen Elizabeth and her guest, the Italian nobleman Virginio Orsino. Some scholars have speculated that this marks the premiere of *Twelfth Night*.

### 1602

After a celebration at the Middle Temple Hall on February 2, the law student John

Manningham records in his diary: "At our feast we had a play called *Twelve Night, or What You Will*."

**1661**

With the restoration of King Charles II and the end of the Puritan ban on theatres, William Davenant opens the Duke's Playhouse. His production of *Twelfth Night* becomes the first to feature female actors as Viola, Olivia and Maria.

**1741**

Irish actor Charles Macklin stages *Twelfth Night* at Covent Garden, as part of a repertory with *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice*. The three plays feature women disguised as men, a tremendous box-office draw.

**1884**

Henry Irving plays Malvolio at London's Lyceum Theatre, turning the character from a joke into a dignified and almost tragic figure.

**1955**

John Gielgud directs Laurence Olivier as Malvolio at the Royal Shakespeare Company. Following Irving's lead, Olivier plays the wronged steward as a sympathetic man.

**1969**

Director John Barton changes the way audiences look at *Twelfth Night* with his Royal Shakespeare Company staging. Featuring Judi Dench as Viola, the production brings a quiet melancholy to the comedy.

**1989**

At the Shakespeare Theatre Company, Michael Kahn's production of *Twelfth Night* (set in Sri Lanka) was the recipient of three Helen Hayes awards for: Outstanding Director, Michael Kahn; Outstanding Lead Actress, Kelly McGillis; and Outstanding Supporting Actor, Philip Goodwin. The production was also prominently featured in a speech Representative Fred Gandy made in Congress addressing arts funding and censorship.

**1996**

Trevor Nunn directs a film of *Twelfth Night*, with Helena Bonham-Carter as Olivia and Ben Kingsley as a very serious Feste.

**1998**

New York's Lincoln Center Theater produces *Twelfth Night* with a star-studded cast, including Helen Hunt, Paul Rudd and Kyra Sedgwick.

**2003**

British director Declan Donnellan directs an all-male *Twelfth Night* with a company of Russian actors. The production originates in Moscow and later tours the world to great acclaim.

# A Double Life

By Akiva Fox, Literary Associate, Shakespeare Theatre Company

When Shakespeare wrote about twins, he wrote from experience. In early 1585, his wife, Anne, had given birth to fraternal twins. Not long after, Shakespeare traveled to London to make his name in theater. One of his first efforts as a playwright was an adaptation of an old Roman play about a pair of separated identical twins who reunite on one frantic day in Ephesus. Called *The Comedy of Errors*, the play hinged on mistaken identity; Shakespeare even added a second set of twins to compound the confusion and hilarity.

By 1596, Shakespeare had become one of the most successful playwrights in London. But that summer, tragic news came from home: Hamnet, his only son, had died. Hamnet's twin sister, Judith, was 11 years old. The next time Shakespeare wrote a play featuring twins, the twinning served as much more than a gimmick. *Twelfth Night* opens with a young woman named Viola washing up on an unfamiliar shore, convinced that her twin brother has died in their shipwreck. Distraught and alone, she takes an unusual step to protect herself: she puts on her lost brother's clothes and sets off into Illyria disguised as a boy.

Viola's choice may be as much emotional as it is pragmatic. In her study *The Lone Twin*, the British psychotherapist Joan Woodward writes that after the death of a twin, "one of the ways that guilt feelings were expressed by many of the lone twins was in their attempt to 'live for two.'" More than just a woman in disguise, Viola becomes a double creature comprising both herself and her brother. She all but admits this when she cryptically tells her master Orsino that she is "all the daughters of my father's house, and all the brothers too." She even embeds this doubling in the name she chooses: Cesario, which comes from the Latin word for "cut" or "split."

Viola's doubleness (and the miraculous reappearance of her brother Sebastian) gives rise to the mistaken identity and unrequited love that drive the comedic engine of *Twelfth Night*. But just as the similarity between Viola and Sebastian causes confusion, so, too, does their oppositeness. Unaware of the twinning, characters are baffled when Cesario suddenly switches from brave to cowardly, assertive to reserved, lusty to shy. Cesario—and by extension Viola—is a walking contradiction.

*Twelfth Night* is full of such contradictory twins. The play begins in a state of mourning; like Viola, the noblewoman Olivia has lost her father and brother and determines to mourn within her house for seven years. Her steward Malvolio encourages this mourning, in part because it allows him greater control over her. On the opposing side, Olivia's uncle Sir Toby Belch declares that "care's an enemy to

life" and spends his days in drunken revelry. But when love enters the scene and the characters all move from extreme mourning to extreme revelry, these apparent opposites reveal their similarity. "Toby's misrule and Malvolio's excessive rule are really two sides of the same coin," writes the scholar Marjorie Garber. "Both are aimless, fruitless, and preoccupied with sterile formalities." The same could be said for the twinned opposites pain and pleasure, tears and laughter, and repression and release.

Once revelry and release replace mourning and repression, everyone in *Twelfth Night* falls in love. But instead of falling in love with a person, they fall in love with their idealized image of that person—a kind of shadowy twin. Orsino, who burns with love for Olivia despite hardly knowing her, confesses that he is smitten only by the "image of the creature that is beloved." "I am not what I am," Viola warns a love-smitten Olivia, but Olivia replies, "I would you were as I would have you be." Even Malvolio convinces himself that Olivia loves him, imagining an elaborate fantasy of his life as "Count Malvolio."

Only one character sees without the double vision induced by excess: Olivia's jester, Feste. He believes in the "whirligig of time," named for a spinning toy. Over time, mourning spins to revelry and back again in an endless cycle. Fame and status come and go, and the least person soon becomes the greatest. People fall in and out of love, experiencing exhilaration and dejection anew each time. Feste's position allows him to mock everyone alike, and he never misses an opportunity to puncture inflated extremes of love or despair. "What's to come is still unsure," he tells the other characters, urging them to live their lives free from all-or-nothing hysteria. In a world torn between the twins "all" and "nothing," only Feste sees that reality lies in between.

## Who's Who

### ACTING COMPANY



**Christopher  
Innvar**  
Orsino



**Rebecca  
Brooksher**  
Viola



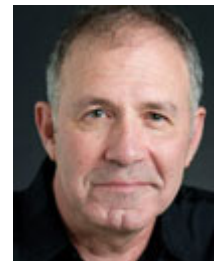
**Kevin Isola**  
Sebastian



**Veanne Cox**  
Olivia



**Nancy  
Robinette**  
Maria



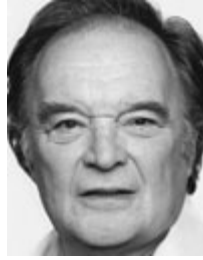
**Rick  
Foucheux**  
Sir Toby Belch



**Tom Story**

Sir Andrew

Aguecheek



**Ted van  
Griethuysen**

Malvolio



**J. Fred  
Shiffman**

Fabian



**Stephen  
DeRosa**

Feste



**Brent  
Langdon**

Captain



**JaMario Stills**

Antonio

Rich Dreher - Valentine

Ben Graney - Curio

ENSEMBLE - Janelle Abbott, Rich Dreher, Ben Graney, Jamal Green, Meda Miller

## **ARTISTIC STAFF**

<i>artistic director/resident playwright</i>	Emily Mann
<i>managing director</i>	Tim Shields
<i>written by</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>directed by</i>	Rebecca Taichman
<i>set design</i>	Riccardo Hernandez
<i>costume design</i>	Miranda Hoffman
<i>lighting design</i>	Christopher Akerlind
<i>original music and sound design</i>	Martin Desjardins
<i>fight director</i>	Rick Sordelet
<i>choreographer (McCarter)</i>	Seán Curran
<i>choreographer (STC)</i>	Daniel Pelzig
<i>producing director</i>	Mara Isaacs
<i>director of production</i>	David York
<i>production stage manager</i>	Alison Cote
<i>casting directors</i>	Laura Stanczyk, CSA Stuart Howard, Amy Schechter, and Paul Hardt
<i>Musicians</i>	Musical Director/Piano: Barbara Irvine Bass: Philip Racz Saxophone: Peter Zimmerman Trumpet: Alex Schmauk Violin: Gregory Teperman



Singer: Valentina Flear

## An Interview with Rebecca Taichman



McCarter Theatre's *Twelfth Night* is a co-production with The Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC. After the DC leg of the play's journey, Producing Associate Adam Immerwahr asked *Twelfth Night* director Rebecca Taichman a few questions about the play, her process, and her plans for *Twelfth Night* in Princeton.

**Adam Immerwahr:** What is your process of reading a script, and how do you begin to unpack its meaning? How did that approach inform your production of *Twelfth Night*?

Rebecca Taichman: To be honest, I hate reading plays. Especially that constantly-looking-back-to-the-character-breakdown first pass.

A well-crafted play is a small but complete universe of its very own—with its own logic, rules, vocabulary, sense of gravity & time passage, etc. It's a slow process for me—stepping into that new universe. Once I've gotten through the painful first pass, I force myself to read the play over and over without thinking up an approach or a "concept." I listen to and parse the text, and eventually images or a point of view emerges. With *Twelfth Night*, my initial image was of the twins underwater being separated slowly, mysteriously, both reaching back towards each other while being pulled apart. The image, I came to understand, was a reflection of the river of sadness and insatiable longing that runs through *Twelfth Night*, and the beginning of my sense that in Illyria, laughter is always shot through with tears and tears with laughter.

I had a dream that the first half of the play should be all ice and the second half somehow surrounded by thousands of roses. I brought this dream to the designers, and it became our touchstone throughout the process. A deep freeze that thaws into a wild playground of desire was our organizing principle.

**AI:** How is your approach to directing a work by Shakespeare different than it is for work by other playwrights?

RT: Mostly I run behind Shakespeare, trying desperately to keep up. I trust the text completely and surrender to it. I try to enliven it in the most evocative, honest ways I can, but never work to contradict it.

**AI: So how do the Elizabethan/Jacobean language or the verse influence the process?**

RT: I think of verse as music—the notes simply have to be played correctly. Occasionally, I will add a silence that Shakespeare doesn't give us, but it's something I do with great awareness (and usually some measure of angst). I love the wild *gallop* of the speech. Too often the plays are slowed down. Verse is meant to *move*—so that we're sweating and breathless trying to keep up.

**AI: One of the wonderful things about two theaters doing a co-production is that the work gets to grow over time as it re-enters the rehearsal process and meets new audiences. What did you learn from the run of *Twelfth Night* at The Shakespeare Theatre in DC? What are your plans for your time at McCarter?**

My understanding of *Twelfth Night* is constantly evolving. My biggest question—and it still dogs me—is about the elusive tone of the piece. It's ambiguous and slippery, and resists being overly defined. Scene to scene, the tone shifts from raucous comedy to searing romance to heartbreaking drama. It all needs to feel very much of the same world, and yet retain its vast differences. The comedy can run away with the mysterious sadness and vice versa.... It's a delicate balance.

**What do you want the audience to walk away with after seeing *Twelfth Night*?**

I remember at a preview at the Shakespeare Theatre I looked behind me during the curtain call and saw a woman, maybe 80 years old, behind me. I think about her a lot. She was smiling and reaching to grab a rose petal floating towards her. She was so beautiful, and for that moment I imagined she had forgotten about the real world and how it is collapsing around us, and was swept away by how beautiful love can be, how painful, and how terribly exquisite.

**What are the other projects that you can't wait to do?**

I am going to Africa this spring with Sundance to develop a piece in Rwanda and am looking forward to that. I am also developing a new musical, *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, with Rachel Sheinken, Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda at McCarter, and am starting to think about my next Shakespeare play—I feel like I can only do one a year, it takes such focus and commitment—and I can't wait to wander, wide eyed, into another of his beautiful universes.

## Rebecca Taichman's Biography



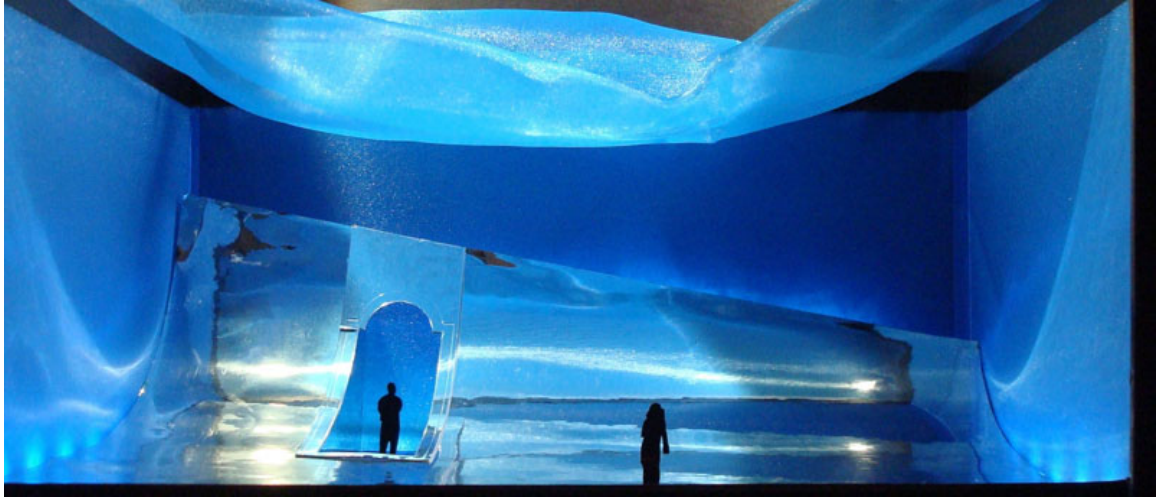
Rebecca Taichman (*Director*) Off-Broadway: Theresa Rebeck's *The Scene*, starring Tony Shalhoub and Patricia Heaton (Second Stage); *Menopausal Gentleman* (Obie Award). Regional: *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew* (The Shakespeare Theatre); premiere of David Adjmi's *The Evildoers* (Yale Rep; Sundance Theater Lab); premiere of Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Woolly Mammoth, Helen Hayes nomination); premiere of Theresa Rebeck's *Mauritius* (The Huntington, IRNE and Elliot Norton Awards); premiere of *The Scene* (Humana); Sarah Ruhl's *The Clean House* (Woolly Mammoth, 2006 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Resident Play); Elise Thoron's *Green Violin*,

starring Raul Esparza (2003 Barrymore for Outstanding Direction), among others. Yale School of Drama graduate.

## The Design of *Twelfth Night*

*"Before I started working with the designers I had a dream about the set. In the dream I wanted it to be all ice in the first half of the play and red roses in the second. Ice melted into water and roses bloomed into one magnified and rendered enormous. And yet the dream foretold my core images for the play: a frozen, isolating world that blossoms into a lush rose garden."* — *Twelfth Night* director, Rebecca Taichman

Director Rebecca Taichman's extraordinary vision for *Twelfth Night's* visual life has been manifested in Riccardo Hernandez's set design. Below are models of the set design from various moments in the play.







## EDUCATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the McCarter Audience Guide educator materials for *Twelfth Night*. This guide has been assembled to complement both your students' theater-going experience and your class curriculum by offering a variety of interesting and edifying activities for both pre-show and post-performance instruction and enjoyment.

This production of one of William Shakespeare's most beloved comedies presents opportunities for enrichment in history, language arts, theater and visual art. Students can explore the play's themes presented by the playwright and consider them intellectually and personally in relation to their own lives and time; investigate Shakespeare's biography, Elizabethan theater practice, and the Bard's overall influence on Western drama and theater; consider who they would cast in their own production of *Twelfth Night* through the creation of a character collage; contemplate the actor's work and the special challenges afforded him or her by Shakespeare's text through the experience of scene study, preparation, and presentation; ponder the work of the theatrical adaptor by updating a scene for a twenty-first-century audience; and conclude their play-going experience by taking on the role of theater reviewer and chewing over the artistic intentions of the production and its ultimate efficacy. Teachers can also link their classroom directly with McCarter Theatre via the McCarter Theatre Blog ([www.mccarter.org/blog](http://www.mccarter.org/blog)) and utilize it for pre- and post-show educational assignments.

Our student audiences are often our favorite audiences at McCarter, and we encourage you and your students to join us for a lively conversation with member of *Twelfth Night's* talented cast after the performance. Our visiting artists are always impressed with the preparation and thoughtfulness of McCarter's young audiences, and the post-performance discussion offers a unique opportunity for students to engage intellectually with professional theater practitioners. We look forward to seeing all of you for a wonderful and exciting discussion about one of William Shakespeare's most popular comedies.

## CORE CURRICULUM STANDARDS

According to the NJ Department of Education, "experience with and knowledge of the arts is a vital part of a complete education." Our production of *Twelfth Night* and the activities outlined in this guide are designed to enrich your students' education by addressing the following specific Core Curriculum Content Standards for Visual and Performing Arts:

- 1.1 (Aesthetics) All students will use aesthetic knowledge in the creation of and in response to dance, music, theater, and visual art.
- 1.2 (Creation and Performance) All students will utilize those skills, media, methods, and technologies appropriate to each art form in the creation, performance, and presentation of dance, music, theater, and visual art.
- 1.3 (Elements and Principles) All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of dance, music, theater, and visual art.
- 1.4 (Critique) All students will develop, apply and reflect upon knowledge of the process of critique.
- 1.5 (History/Culture) All students will understand and analyze the role, development, and continuing influence of the arts in relation to world cultures, history, and society.

Viewing *Twelfth Night* and then participating in the pre- and post-show discussions and activities suggested in this audience guide will also address the following Core Curriculum Content Standards in Language Arts Literacy:

- 3.1 (Reading) All students will understand and apply the knowledge of sounds, letters, and words in written English to become independent and fluent readers, and will read a variety of materials and texts with fluency and comprehension.
- 3.2 (Writing) All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- 3.3 (Speaking) All students will speak in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- 3.4 (Listening) All students will listen actively to information from a variety of sources in a variety of situations.
- 3.5 (Viewing and Media Literacy) All students will access, view, evaluate, and respond to print, nonprint, and electronic texts and resources.

In addition, the production of *Twelfth Night* as well as the audience guide activities will help to fulfill the following Social Studies Core Curriculum Standards:

- 6.1 (Social Studies Skills) All students will utilize historical thinking, problem solving, and research skills to maximize their understanding of civics, history, geography, and economics.
- 6.3 (World History) All students will demonstrate knowledge of world history in order to understand life and events in the past and how they relate to the present and the future.



# PRE-SHOW PREPARATION, QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION, AND ACTIVITIES

*Note to Educators: Use the following assignments, questions, and activities to introduce your students to Twelfth Night and its intellectual and artistic origins, context, and themes, as well as to engage their imaginations and creativity before they see the production.*

1. **EXPLORING SHAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT*, BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE.** The questions for discussion immediately below are designed for both teachers able to incorporate the reading of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* ([available online via Project Gutenberg](#)) into their pre-performance curriculum (read Section A, then proceed to C), as well as for those whose students will not have the opportunity to read the play in advance of their experience of the performance (begin with Section B).
  - A. After reading *Twelfth Night* either aloud as a class or individually, ask your students to brainstorm a list of themes central to the play. [See section B for a list of themes.]
  - B. William Shakespeare begins his romantic comedy *Twelfth Night* by shipwrecking his heroine Viola on the semi-fictional, quasi-Italianate shores of Illyria; Alone, unprotected, and thinking her twin brother, Sebastian, drowned, she disguises herself as a young man and becomes attached to the court of Illyria's Duke Orsino, with whom she falls madly in love. Enlisted as his page, Viola (in the guise of her male alter ego, Cesario), is sent to woo the woman for whom Orsino pines, the countess Olivia, who immediately falls head over heels in love with the cross-dressing Viola. In true Shakespearean comic fashion, confusion, crisis, love triangles, hate triangles, humor, subplots, and swordplay ensue and engender a number of compelling themes, including: the joy and the pain of love; the types and natures of painful love (i.e., unrequited love, unspoken love, and lost love) and how they manifest themselves in humanity; the sadness, longing, loneliness, and anxiety that accompanies the loss of a loved one; the conflicts that crop up between opposing social groups (men and women, young and old, master/mistress and subordinate); the social order and decorum upended by the chaos of love, blind/foolish ambition, the blurring of class lines, cross-dressing/gender confusion and mistaken identity; how and why people deceive other people and how and why they deceive themselves; and madness and how a person's sanity is judged, defended, and dealt with/punished. Share these themes with your students. (For a more thorough explication of the story of *Twelfth Night* see the plot synopsis in this resource guide.)

- C. Ask your students if they find an intellectual or personal connection (either in relationship to their own experience or someone that they know) to any of the themes of *Twelfth Night*. Have them write/journal about one theme with which they personally connect. If appropriate, students may volunteer to share their thematic connection with the rest of the class for purposes of discussion.
- D. Ask your students to recall and make connections to other plays or works of literature they have read, studied, or seen in performance with themes similar to those of *Twelfth Night*. [Homework suggestion: Extend this activity into a competitive mini-research assignment by having your students investigate the plots/stories of other Shakespearean comedies (e.g., *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Taming of the Shrew*) to see who can come up with the most thematic connections.]

2. **IN CONTEXT: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND *TWELFTH NIGHT*.** To prepare your students for *Twelfth Night* and to deepen their level of understanding of and appreciation for the life, work, and theatrical and cultural influence of the Bard of Avon, have your students research, either in groups or individually, the following topics:

- William Shakespeare:
  - Biography
    - Early Life, Family and Education
    - In London and Early Theatrical Career
    - Late Career (c. 1600 to death)
- Shakespeare's London (Overview)
- Major influences on and sources for Shakespeare the Playwright
- Renaissance Acting Troupes—Types and Basic Structure
- Shakespeare's Troupe: Lord Chamberlain's Men (later called the King's Men)
- The Renaissance Public Playhouse
- Shakespeare's Tragedies (Overview)
- Shakespeare's Histories (Overview)
- Shakespeare's Romances (Overview)
- Shakespeare's Other Major Comedies:
  - *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
  - *As You Like It*
  - *Much Ado About Nothing*
  - *The Merry Wives of Windsor*
  - *The Taming of the Shrew*
- Shakespeare's Sonnets
- The First Folio and Shakespeare's Influence

Have your students teach one another about their individual or group topics via oral and illustrated (i.e., posters or PowerPoint) reports. Following the presentations, ask your students to reflect upon their research process and discoveries.

3. *Twelfth Night* Casting Collage. One of the most challenging aspects of directing a play is casting the right actors. One major issue involves making sure that the people you employ have the acting prowess to effectively and believably perform their roles, especially in a Shakespearean play, where they need to be able to handle highly poetic language (For more information on iambic pentameter see the article entitled "Shakespearean Verse" in this resource guide.) In addition to acting ability, an actor is also often chosen for a certain temperament or emotional energy s/he gives off, and her or his demeanor often inform a director if s/he is right for a given role.

Have your students, either individually or in groups, create a casting collage for their "distinctive" production of *Twelfth Night*.

- Using the list and descriptions of characters from *Twelfth Night* below, ask your students to find images online or in magazines of people they think would be best suited to play each role. [Note: The clothing the people in their found images wear does not need to be from any particular time period, but should, along with the person's attitude and energy, give a sense of why they were chosen for each character. Images can be of anyone, including historical figures and celebrities.]
  - **Orsino**: The overly romantic Duke of Illyria. He is in love with Olivia—who refuses his proposals.
  - **Olivia**: A distinguished, wealthy countess in mourning over the deaths of her father and brother. [She has vowed not to marry for a period of seven years, though some think this may only be a ploy to put off Orsino, who relentlessly courts her.]
  - **Sebastian**: Viola's twin brother. He is nobleman presumed lost at sea. His features are identical to those of his sister's, as they are often mistaken for one another when she is dressed as a man.
  - **Viola**: Twin sister to Sebastian. Rescued by a sea Captain after a shipwreck, Viola lands in Illyria, disguises herself as a boy named Cesario, and enters Orsino's service.
  - **Feste**: Olivia's jester. This clown is particularly adroit at witty wordplay and recognizing the foolishness of others.
  - **Malvolio**: A snobbish steward. He is first among Olivia's servants. His self-righteousness is exceeded only by his desire for increased social standing.
  - **Sir Toby Belch**: Olivia's slovenly uncle. His fondness for drink interrupts his niece's dismal atmosphere and Malvolio's puritanical order.

- Sir Andrew Aguecheek: Sir Toby's friend. He is a foppish nobleman and unsuccessful suitor to Olivia.
- In addition to their found images, students will need an 8½" x 11" sheet of paper and glue to complete their collages. [Or educators might also opt for their students to create electronic collages by utilizing PowerPoint technology and images gleaned from the Internet.]
- Once completed, students should be given time to show their finished character collages to the class to explain what thoughts went into their casting decisions.

4. **AN ACTOR PREPARES: SCENE FROM *TWELFTH NIGHT*.** To prepare themselves to begin rehearsing a play, actors need to look for clues in a play's text about who their characters are and how to play them. An actor asks: "What are the hints the playwright has given to me?" "What does my character say about him or herself?" and "What do other characters say about me?" If other characters in the play are constantly making mention of how suave a character is, then the actor has been given a pretty good clue from the playwright about how his or her character might walk and talk.

Have your students explore how an actor prepares to play a character by having them study and present scenes from *Twelfth Night*.

- Break your class up into scene-study groups and assign them (or have them choose) one of the following scenes to prepare/rehearse for script-in-hand presentations for the class.
  - Act I, scene iii (lines 1-141): Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and Maria (pronounced Mah-rye-ah)
  - Act I, scene v (lines 1-98): Maria, Olivia, Malvolio, and Feste (Clown)
  - Act II, scene i (lines 1-148): Sebastian and Antonio
- Have them look for the clues given by Shakespeare. Let the clues inform them about how to talk, how they might move, and with what energy they approach their lines and reactions to one another. If their scene is in iambic pentameter, refer them to the "Shakespearean Verse" article included in this resource guide.
- Additionally, have your students answer the following questions about their characters before they rehearse:

- **What do other characters say about me?** Not only in the things they say, but also in the things they do. (E.g., in Act I, scene iii, when Maria politely refuses Andrew's affection and then makes a few jokes at his expense, this should tell Andrew about his prowess to impress the ladies.)
- **What is my "objective?"** Consider what your character wants in the scene and how he or she goes about trying to get it? (E.g., Feste's objective in Act I, scene v, might be "to rescue Olivia from her melancholy state" and he might go about doing this by, "trying to make her laugh by making Malvolio look like a fool." This is also referred to by actors as your "want" or "action.")
- **How important is it for me to achieve my objective?** Consider how much there is for your character to gain or lose. If the stakes are really high, then this will inform you about how passionately you need to play your scene.
- **What sorts of tactics do I use to try to achieve my objective?** When Sir Toby tries to get Sir Andrew to stay in Illyria, does he try to build his confidence by convincing him that he still has a chance with Olivia? If that is his tactic, then this should inform the actor playing Sir Toby about how to play the scene.
- Following scene presentations, lead students in a discussion of their experience preparing, rehearsing, and presenting their scenes. Questions might include:
  - What are the pleasures and challenges of staging and performing Shakespearean characters?
  - What insights regarding the characters of *Twelfth Night* did you gain from putting the scene on its feet?

# POST-SHOW QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

*Note to Educators: Use the following assignments, questions, and activities to have students evaluate their experience of the performance of *Twelfth Night*, as well as to encourage their own imaginative and artistic projects through further exploration of the play in production. Consider also that some of the pre-show activities might enhance your students' experience following the performance.*

1. **TWELFTH NIGHT: PERFORMANCE REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION.** Following their attendance at the performance of *Twelfth Night*, ask your students to reflect on the questions below. You might choose to have them answer each individually or you may divide students into groups for round-table discussions. Have them consider each question, record their answers and then share their responses with the rest of the class.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT THE PLAY IN PRODUCTION

- a. What was your overall reaction to *Twelfth Night*? Did you find the production compelling? Stimulating? Intriguing? Challenging? Memorable? Confusing? Evocative? Unique? Delightful? Meaningful? Explain your reactions.
- b. Did experiencing the play heighten your awareness or understanding of the play's themes? [e.g., the joy and the pain of love; the types and natures of painful love (i.e., unrequited love, unspoken love, and lost love) and how they manifest themselves in humanity; the sadness, longing, loneliness, and anxiety that accompanies the loss of a loved one; the conflicts that crop up between opposing social groups (men and women, young and old, master/mistress and subordinate); the social order and decorum upended by the chaos of love, blind/foolish ambition, the blurring of class lines, cross-dressing/gender confusion and mistaken identity; how and why people deceive other people and how and why they deceive themselves; and madness and how a person's sanity is judged, defended, and dealt with/punished.
- c. What themes were made even more apparent in production/performance? Explain your responses.
- d. Do you think that the pace and tempo of the production were effective and appropriate? Explain your opinion.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

- a. Did you personally identify with any of the characters in *Twelfth Night*? Who? Why? If no, why not?

- b. What qualities were revealed by the action and speech of the characters? Explain your ideas.
- c. Did either character develop or undergo a transformation during the course of the play? Who? How? Why?
- d. In what ways did the characters reveal the themes of the play? Explain your responses.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT THE STYLE AND DESIGN OF THE PRODUCTION

- a. Was there a moment in *Twelfth Night* that was so compelling or intriguing that it remains with you in your mind's eye? Write a vivid description of that moment. As you write your description, pretend that you are writing about the moment for someone who was unable to experience the performance.
- b. Did the style and design elements of the production enhance the performance? Did anything specifically stand out to you? Explain your reactions.
- c. How did the production style and design reflect the themes of the play?
- d. What mood or atmosphere did the lighting design establish or achieve? Explain your experience.
- e. How did the music and sound design enhance your overall experience?
- f. Did the design of the costumes and/or makeup serve to illuminate the characters, themes, and style of the play? How?

2. ADDITIONAL POST-SHOW QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS FOR *TWELFTH NIGHT*

- According to Adam Immerwahr in his article "Shakespearean Comedy" (found in this resource guide), when dealing with one of the Bard's comedies, one should "pay particular attention to the first lines of the play" because Shakespeare often gives "a hint as to his prime interest in the first few exchanges." Read Duke Orsino's opening lines of the play below to your students, but before you do, instruct them to keep in the forefront of their minds their memory of the play in performance. In addition, ask them, as you read, to record words or phrases that strike them as being of "prime interest" in their experience of the story, characters, and themes of *Twelfth Night*.

*If music be the food of love, play on;  
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,  
The appetite may sicken, and so die.  
That strain again! it had a dying fall:  
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:  
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.*

*O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,  
That, notwithstanding thy capacity  
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,  
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,  
But falls into abatement and low price,  
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy  
That it alone is high fantastical.*

- Ask your students to reflect upon how Shakespeare depicts romantic love in *Twelfth Night*. How is romantic love presented? What view do they think the playwright is trying to put forth about romance? Do they find the play's final three couples to be "well-matched" romantic couples? Ask them to explain their responses. And what about the matches that don't work out in the play—how do they contrast with the marriage matches? Viewing the play as a reflection of Elizabethan society, what do students think Shakespeare and his audience considered appropriate matches? What are considered appropriate and inappropriate matches in American society, circa 2009?
- Share with your students, information on Shakespeare's use of twins as comic characters/types in his early play *A Comedy of Errors* and the story of his own twins, Judith and Hamnet, as outlined in Akiva Fox's article "A Double Life" (found in this resource guide). Then ask students to consider how the death of Shakespeare's son, Hamnet, informs the story of *Twelfth Night*.
- As a final discussion point, ask your students what Shakespeare's title, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, means in the context of the play and in their experience of the piece in performance. If they do not know to the significance of the title, ask them to do some research for homework. At the opening of the next class session, have them share their research and reflect upon how it informs the play and its production.

### 3. ADAPTING *TWELFTH NIGHT* FOR 2009

Theatrical adaptation involves the rewriting of a dramatic text, utilizing the original work as raw material. Adaptation can entail the relatively straightforward transposition of a play's original place and time with minor changes in character and/or dialogue necessary for the play's new context. Other approaches to adaptation can involve extensive changes to a play's text, narrative content, and even its ultimate meaning and/or outcome. Some adaptors of Shakespeare's works, especially those who adapt plays for children, transpose Shakespeare's verse into more straight-forward and easily understandable prose; they paraphrase and modernize Shakespearean language so that it plays more like everyday speech.



Get your students directly and dramatically engaged in Shakespeare's 1601 text through the process of writing their own adaptations of a dramatic moment from *Twelfth Night*.

- Working in groups, students should choose one of the following partial scenes from *Twelfth Night* for present-day adaptation (or they may adapt a dramatic moment of their own choosing):
    - Act I, scene v (lines 167-295): Viola/Cesario's and Olivia's first meeting. (2 person group)
    - Act II, scene v (lines 1-185): Malvolio's letter scene with Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Fabian, and Maria. (5 person group)
    - Act III, scene iv (lines 218-373), The "duel scene" with Viola/Cesario, Sir Toby Belch, Fabian, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Antonio, and Officers (5-6 person group; Officers 1 and 2 can be combined)
  - Understanding the meaning of the original text as well as its dramatic context (that is, what the characters want and why) is a key first step in the adaptation process.
  - In addition to choosing a dramatic moment for adaptation, each group of adapters should choose where and when they would like to set the play and should feel completely free to modify the characters and dialogue accordingly for the play's updated setting.
  - Conduct readings of each adaptation followed by a class discussion (urge your students to focus their analysis and critique on the adaptations themselves and not the performances). Ask your students if there was an adaptation that they thought was best. Ask them to explain why it is that they found it to be superior to the other adapted dramatic moments
4. **TWELFTH NIGHT: THE REVIEW.** Have your students take on the role of theater critic by writing a review of McCarter Theatre's production of *Twelfth Night*. A theater critic or reviewer is essentially a "professional audience member," whose job is to provide reportage of a play's production and performance through active and descriptive language for a target audience of readers (e.g., their peers, their community or those interested in the arts). Critics/reviewers analyze the theatrical event to provide a clearer understanding of the artistic ambitions and intentions of a play and its

production; reviewers often ask themselves, “What is the playwright and this production attempting to do?” Finally, the critic offers personal judgment as to whether the artistic intentions of a production were achieved, effective and worthwhile. Things to consider before writing:

- Theater critics/reviewers should always back up their opinions with reasons, evidence and details.
  - The elements of production that can be discussed in a theatrical review are the play text or script (and its themes, plot, characters, etc.), scenic elements, costumes, lighting, sound, music, acting and direction (i.e., how all of these elements are put together). [[See the Theater Reviewer’s Checklist.](#)]
  - Educators may want to provide their students with sample theater reviews from a variety of newspapers.
  - Encourage your students to submit their reviews to the school newspaper for publication.
  - Students may also post their reviews on McCarter’s web site by visiting [McCarter Blog](#). Select “Citizen Responses” under “Categories” on the left side of the web page, and scroll down to the *Twelfth Night* entry to post any reviews.
5. **BLOG ALL ABOUT IT!: THE DAY AFTER *TWELFTH NIGHT*.** McCarter Theatre is very interested in carrying on the conversation about *Twelfth Night* with you and your students after you’ve left the theater. If you are interested in having them personally reflect upon their experience of the play in performance, but are not interested in the more formal assignment of review writing, have them instead post a post-show comment on the McCarter Theatre Blog. To access the blog, click on this link [McCarter Blog](#), then select “Citizen Responses” under “Categories” on the left side of the web page, and scroll down to the *Twelfth Night* entry to find a place to post an inquiry or comment. [For structured responses, consider the following prompt: What expectations did you bring with you to *Twelfth Night* and were your expectations met, not met, or exceeded by the performance?] See you on the blog!

## Additional Resources

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#### Online Resources

Folger Shakespeare Library

<http://www.folger.edu/index.cfm>

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk>

The Royal Shakespeare Company

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/learning/>

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