

GREAT
LAKES
THEATER

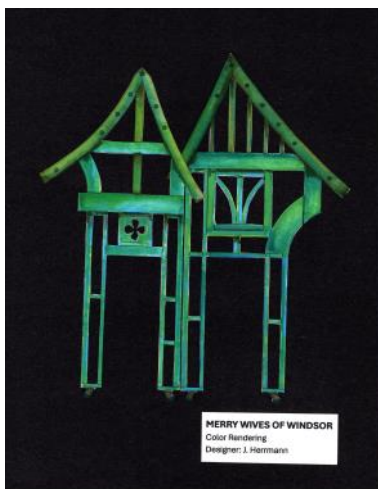
TEACHER PREPARATION GUIDE

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR



By William Shakespeare
Directed by Terri McMahon

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Spring 2024

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your student matinee ticket order to Great Lakes Theater's production of William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This production will be performed in the beautiful Hanna Theatre at Playhouse Square from March 22—April 7, 2024.

Meet the rotund rascal Sir John Falstaff and the wise wives of Windsor in one of Shakespeare's most raucous comedies. With an ego as big as his voracious appetite, Falstaff conspires to woo the two wealthiest married ladies in town and pocket their riches. However, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page devise a scheme of their own to teach him a well-deserved lesson in Wooing 101. Join us and feast on a hilariously magnificent treat of monogamously artful deceit.

This guide is designed – through essays, discussion questions and classroom activities – to give students both an introduction to, and a point of entry for, a personal exploration of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Great Lakes Theater is proud to provide you with the finest in classic theater and the necessary educational resources to support your work in the classroom. We are thrilled that you will be coming to see us and we welcome your input on how best to support your classroom preparation for our work. Please let us know what you think!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Kelly Schaffer Florian".

Kelly Schaffer Florian
Director of Educational Services
Kflorian@greatlakestheater.org

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David Hansen".

David Hansen
Education Outreach Associate
dhansen@greatlakestheater.org



A Note to Students: What to Expect at the Theater

You may or may not have attended a live theater performance before. To increase your enjoyment, it might be helpful to look at the unique qualities of this art form — because it is so different from movies or video.

The live theatrical performance not only involves the actors on the stage; it is meant to involve you, the audience, in ways that film and television cannot. In truth, although you are sitting in an auditorium and the actors are on stage, there is very little separating the audience from the performers. How you react to the play *deeply affects* the actors. Something as seemingly trivial as whispering or unwrapping a candy bar can distract them and disrupt the mood and tone of their performance. Due to the important relationship between actors and audience members, there are certain, perhaps obvious, provisions of live theater we wish to call to your attention.

In the Hanna Theatre, it is important to know that the taking of pictures, either with or without a flash, is strictly prohibited. Also, it is essential that all electronic equipment, including cell phones, music players (even with headphones), alarm watches, etc., be completely powered off once you have entered the theatre. Even the glow from a watch or a silent cell phone (used for checking the time, text messaging, or posting social network updates, for example) can be very distracting to fellow audience members, even if you try to mask it under your hand or an article of clothing. Our goal is to provide every person in the audience with the best possible theatrical experience, so we appreciate your respectful cooperation during the performance.

Other differences live theater provides: in film or video, the camera and editing define what we will see. In the theater, however, each of us works as our own camera and editor, choosing our own personal points of focus. And in the Hanna Theatre, you should know that often we do not use microphones. As audience members you'll need to actively listen and "tune in" to the sound of the unamplified human voice.

As for our lighting and scenery, it might surprise you to know that these are not necessarily meant to be realistic. In this production, for example, there may be design elements that are abstract or metaphorical.

The theater's ability to focus on human experience — distilled through the dialogue and behavior of people on stage and enhanced by the scenery, costumes, lighting, music and dance — is a centuries-old tradition. Being part of the communal magic when performer and audience connect — whether at a baseball game, music concert or theater performance — cannot be duplicated.

The performance you will see at Great Lakes Theater will happen only once. It is unique and personal. Though this play will be performed more than a dozen times, the performance you see belongs only to you.

We hope you enjoy it, and we'd like you to share your response with us.

FROM THE DIRECTOR *Terri McMahon*

Whether Queen Elizabeth I wanted a comedy written with her favorite theatrical character in love OR William Shakespeare had a last-minute entertainment commission for his patron's big knight-naming shindig OR he wasn't finished with the character Falstaff from his history plays ... no matter. Hundreds of years later we've got *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a merry tale of sexual misadventure some call a fabliau story with utterly recognizable human foibles. A story that is meant to not only entertain but open our minds ... for that's what laughter does. WS doubles the fun with not just one, but two married women, friends in cahoots, to turn Queen Elizabeth's beloved John Falstaff inside out and wish his jumbotron ego had never made a play for their sexual favors and family money.

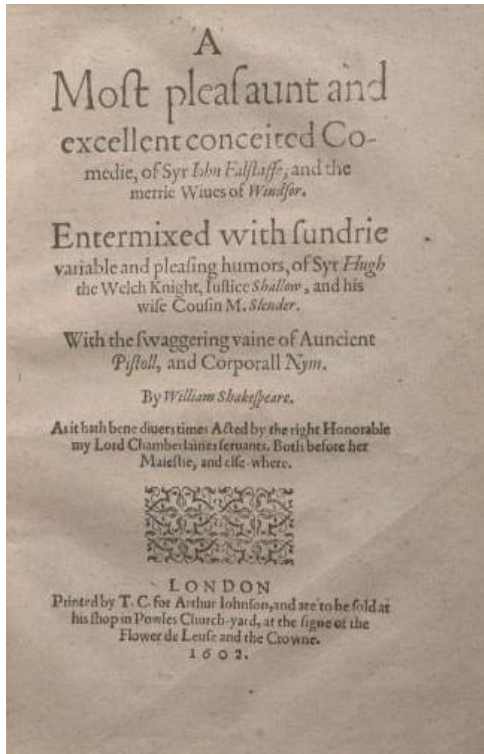
All the incredibly loveable idiosyncratic townspeople of Windsor as well, ultimately turn toward laughter after being pranked, duped, one-upped or singed. Without a Falstaff in their midst this group of Windsorites could never have advanced their own human colors out of ruts they may be finding themselves in at the top of this bubbly tale. Watch and see!

I hope you are not only entertained with our *Merry Wives*, brought to you by some of the finest actors, staff and designers for GLT, but you'll want to get cozy with someone, call them community for a bit, and think generously about laughing at yourself and others round you. Laughter protects our mental health, and community IS therapy.

Cast of Characters

Mrs. Ford.....	Jessie Cope Miller*
Mr. Ford	Jeffrey C. Hawkins*
Robert, of the Ford household.....	James Alexander Rankin
John, of the Ford household.....	Trevor Gill-Snow
Mrs. Page	Jodi Dominick*
Mr. Page.....	Jason Eno*
Anne Page, their daughter	Kechanté Baker
Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh parson.....	Nick Steen*
Dr. Caius, a French physician.....	Anthony Michael Martinez*
Widow Quickly	Teri Brown*
John Rugby.....	James Alexander Rankin
Artura Murray, the dance teacher of Brentford.....	Grayson Heyl*
Host of the Garter Inn	Grayson Heyl*
Sir John Falstaff, a knight.....	Dan Parker*
Pistol, a follower of Falstaff.....	Jerrell Williams
Bardolph, a follower of Falstaff.....	Anthony Michael Martinez*
Nym, a follower of Falstaff.....	Malik Bilbrew*
Robin, Falstaff's page.....	Calvin Carvagnaro
Robert Shallow, a country justice of the peace	M.A. Taylor*
Abraham Slender, Shallow's cousin.....	Josh Houghton*
Peter Simple, of Slender's household.....	Trevor Gill-Snow
Fenton, a young gentleman.....	Jerrell Williams

The Merry Wives of Windsor by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)



Unlike the fictional Falstaff, the historical Sir John Oldcastle was motivated by deeply held religious beliefs. A woodcut included in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, the source for many of Shakespeare's history plays, called attention to Oldcastle's fate in 1417 as a martyr for the anti-clerical Lollard movement.

The title page of the quarto edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, published in 1602, emphasized information that would sell. The character of "Syr John Falstaffe" received top billing, and other comic characters were also mentioned by name. The author and his theater company were both named. Included as well was the fact that the play had been presented "before her Maieste, and Else-where."

In 1602, when many plays were released anonymously, Shakespeare's name appeared on the title page of a quarto edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The Shakespeare brand was a selling point. At the time, the playwright's theater company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, was packing in crowds at the Globe Theatre and performing frequently at the court of Queen Elizabeth. King James would assume the company's patronage after his coronation the following year.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a confident craftsman deftly combined elements of various genres—history, romantic comedy, tragedy, "city" comedy, folklore, and masque—into an original and entertaining mix.

Shakespeare seems to have whisked up this unique concoction during a period when he was also penning a successful spate of history plays. In *Henry IV Part 1* (ca. 1596) and *Henry IV Part 2* (ca. 1597), the writer introduced the larger-than-life character of Sir John Falstaff, who embodied the lure of the dissolute tavern life that Prince Hal had to repudiate on his path to kingship. But before announcing Falstaff's offstage death in *Henry V* (1599), Shakespeare transplanted the tavern crew from the history plays into the England of his own day in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (ca. 1597).

The real-life story of Henry V already included an actual companion of the future king in Sir John Oldcastle. Ralph Holinshed's *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (1577), the source for many of Shakespeare's

history plays, established Oldcastle as a friend of Prince Hal's whose fervent proto-Protestant beliefs eventually drove him into rebellion against his former friend. However, a 1580s-era anonymous play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, began the process of transforming Sir John "Jockey" Oldcastle into the riotous tavern dweller of Shakespeare's plays.

In Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1*, Prince Hal calls his drinking buddy "my old lad of the castle," and a stray speech prefix in the quarto edition of *Henry IV Part 2* assigned a line to "Old." rather than "Fals." In evoking the Oldcastle name the playwright was wading into court politics, even though he quickly swapped the character name to Falstaff. Oldcastle family members, always scheming, but always well-connected, championed Lady Jane Grey in one decade, opposed the Catholic Queen "Bloody" Mary in another, and promoted Mary Queen of Scots in the next—but used strategic marriage alliances to preserve their footing at court. In Shakespeare's day, an Oldcastle descendant was numbered among the Knights of the Garter, a select assemblage rewarded for service to the crown.

To counter their ancestor's portrayal by Shakespeare, Oldcastle's family may have commissioned the Admiral's Men, the chief rivals of Shakespeare's company, to produce *The First Part of the True and Honorable Historie of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle* in 1599. Sir John Oldcastle promulgated the view that Oldcastle remained loyal to Henry V, despite his sincere religious dissent.

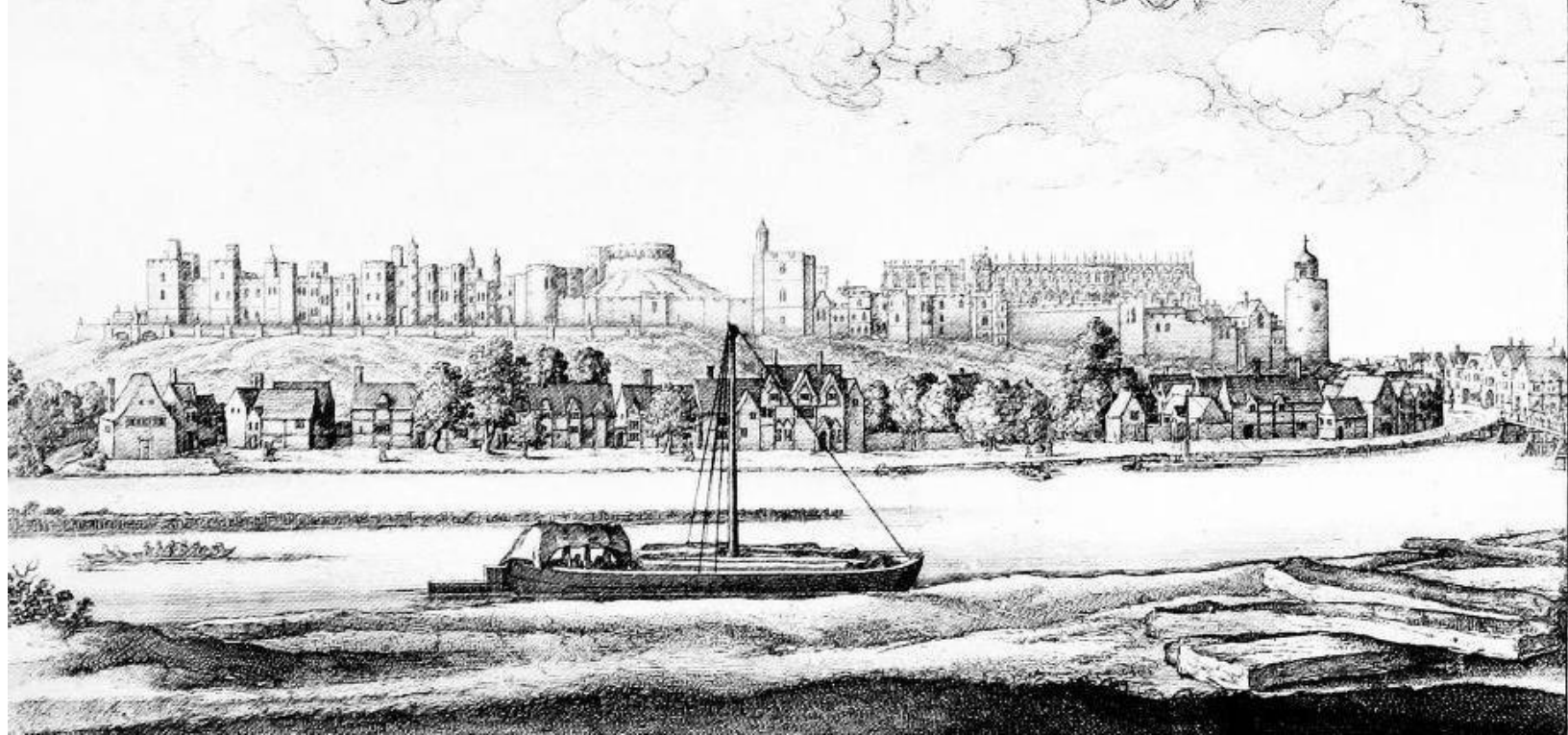
Whatever Shakespeare intended by alluding to John Oldcastle in the Henry plays, the playwright doubled down on depicting Falstaff as a scallywag in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. And the roguish Falstaff was a fan favorite. Leonard Digges, the stepson of an executor of Shakespeare's will, wrote in a preface to the First Folio collection of Shakespeare's plays that crowds gathered to see these characters. He said, "let but Falstaff come, Hal, Poins, the rest." Nicholas Rowe, an early 18th century editor of Shakespeare, conveyed the theater lore that Queen Elizabeth "was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of *Henry IV* that she commanded [Shakespeare] to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love." Whether or not Elizabeth requested the play, it seems to have been written quickly, perhaps for a special occasion at court, but undoubtedly to capitalize on the popularity of an engaging character.



King Edward III of England founded the Order of the Garter in 1348—as commemorated in this miniature painting included in the Bruges Garter Book. Knights of the Garter were appointed solely by the monarch, for service to the crown, and could not number more than 24 at any given point in time.



The so-called "Procession Portrait" of Queen Elizabeth I, born aloft by her Knights of the Garter, was painted ca. 1600 by Robert Peake, who was subsequently appointed as "serjeant-painter" to King James in 1607.



This engraving of Windsor Castle, as seen from the River Thames, was one of a series of illustrations by Bohemian artist Wenceslaus Hollar for a volume entitled *The Institution, Laws and Ceremonies of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, which was published by the antiquarian Elias Ashmole in 1672.

In Shakespeare's hands, Falstaff "in love" was not the stuff of a typical comedy, however. Like many of Shakespeare's comedies, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* does feature a young couple thwarted by an overbearing parent. As in *The Taming of the Shrew*, the young lovers deploy an elaborate plot involving three suitors and disguises to achieve their goal of marriage. But in *Merry Wives*, middle-aged parents take center stage as two married women employ clever stratagems to ward off Falstaff's unwanted advances.

As was the case in many of Shakespeare's plays, elements of comedy and tragedy intertwine. The jealousy of one of the middle-aged husbands, Mister Ford, is as unfounded and corrosive as Othello's in the playwright's tragic masterpiece. But the suspicion that destroys Othello is patiently dispelled in *Merry Wives* by Ford's level-headed wife and friends. In the light-hearted and close-knit community that Shakespeare depicts in this comic play, jealousy cannot fester long and even a miscreant like Falstaff can be included—once he knows his place.

Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, and history plays all shared a focus on high-born characters. Lower-or middle-class characters are glimpsed, for

instance, in the tavern scene of the "induction" to *The Taming of the Shrew* and those of the *Henry IV* plays. But *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is the only play of Shakespeare's to center primarily on middle-class characters in a middle-class setting like the so-called "city" comedies written by several of the playwright's contemporaries. Between 1599 and 1602, the most avid practitioners of satirical city comedies—such as John Marston, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, and Ben Jonson—were also slinging barbs at each other in the so-called Poetomachia or "War of Theatres." City comedies such as *The Dutch Courtesan* (Marston, c. 1604), *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (Middleton, c. 1613), and *Bartholomew Fair* (Jonson, c. 1614) were set in "present-day" London and took place against the backdrop of the growing economic power of the emerging middle class in the 1590s and 1600s.

The "merry" wives of the typical city comedy would have welcomed Falstaff's attention and betrayed their husbands without qualm. But just as Shakespeare subverted the conventions of other genres, he had his merry wives use their wit to defend and preserve their virtuous reputations. And Shakespeare's "present-day" play is set in a rural village, not on the vice-ridden

streets of London.

The setting of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* accommodates associations with two other very different genres—masques and folklore. Windsor is not just any rural village; it's also the site of the royal castle and parkland that was one of Queen Elizabeth's favorite refuges. In Tudor and Stuart England, masques—entertainments featuring costumes, elaborate scenery, and characters from classical mythology—were used to exalt the monarchy. Masques presented at the court of Elizabeth often revolved around a "Fairy Queen," understood to represent Elizabeth herself.

In contrast, the fairy queen in this play is acted by a lower status character - Mistress Quickly - as opposed to in a courtly masque where the parts would have been played by noble

courtiers. In addition, the ancillary characters of Shakespeare's masque are not drawn from Greek or Roman mythology but from English folklore. Hobgoblin, Herne the Hunter, and the communal ritual for shaming a would-be cuckold all derive from English village life.

Shakespeare always walked a tightrope between the public audience of the Globe Theatre and the aristocratic audience of the royal court. Would Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen who never married, have enjoyed seeing herself in the two shrewd and virtuous householders who fended off unwelcome proposals? Whether or not either constituency fully appreciated Shakespeare's clever subversion of genres, both audiences seem to have delighted in his inventive creation.

A 19th century view, from a watercolor by Joseph Nash, of St. George's Chapel, the home church for the Order of the Garter, which was founded on the grounds of Windsor Castle by King Edward III in the 14th century.



The Merry Wives of Windsor: Production History



One of the first performers to gain acclaim for playing in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was the Irish-born Peg Woffington (ca. 1714-1760), an actress and woman-about-town who became known in London for her performances of Mistress Ford and other comic characters.

The “Revels Book” of 1604-1605, a register of court entertainments, notes that The King’s Men presented *The Merry Wives of Windsor* on November 4, 1604, before King James and his court at Whitehall Palace. Shakespeare authored eight of thirteen plays performed at court that year.

The Merry Wives of Windsor was one of the first of Shakespeare’s plays to be revived after King Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660 and



Stephen Kemble (1758-1822), an English actor-manager and member of a well-known theater family, was acknowledged as the best Falstaff of his generation.



For a 1902 production of the play at His Majesty’s Theatre in London, actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree assumed the role of Falstaff and coaxed two theater doyennes to join him as the Mistresses Page and Ford—the acclaimed Ellen Terry (left) and the comedienne Madge Kendall (right).

the theaters reopened. The diarist Samuel Pepys attended a performance of the play by the King’s Company on December 5, 1660.

Actor-manager Stephen Kemble (1758-1822)—a member of the famous theater family that included brother John Kemble, sister Sarah Siddons, and niece Fanny Kemble—was acclaimed by the Edinburgh Literary Journal as “the best Sir John Falstaff which the British stage ever saw.”

In 1799, Antonio Salieri, the rival of Mozart, was the first composer to see Falstaff as an apt subject for opera. Guiseppe Verdi’s *Falstaff* followed in 1893, and Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *Sir John in Love* debuted in 1929.

In 1902, actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree fielded an all-star cast in a production at His

Majesty's Theatre, with himself as Falstaff, the acclaimed Ellen Terry as Mistress Page, and Madge Kendal, an accomplished comedienne, as Mistress Ford.

Orson Welles considered Falstaff to be "Shakespeare's greatest creation." He strove for decades to adapt the character's several appearances into a single coherent story, producing and starring in *Five Kings* on Broadway in 1939 and introducing a new adaptation, *Chimes at Midnight*, on stage in Ireland in 1960 and on film in 1965.

Great Lakes Theater has produced the play seven times, including a musical version in 2001, with the Red Clay Ramblers, entitled *Lone Star Love, or, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Texas*.

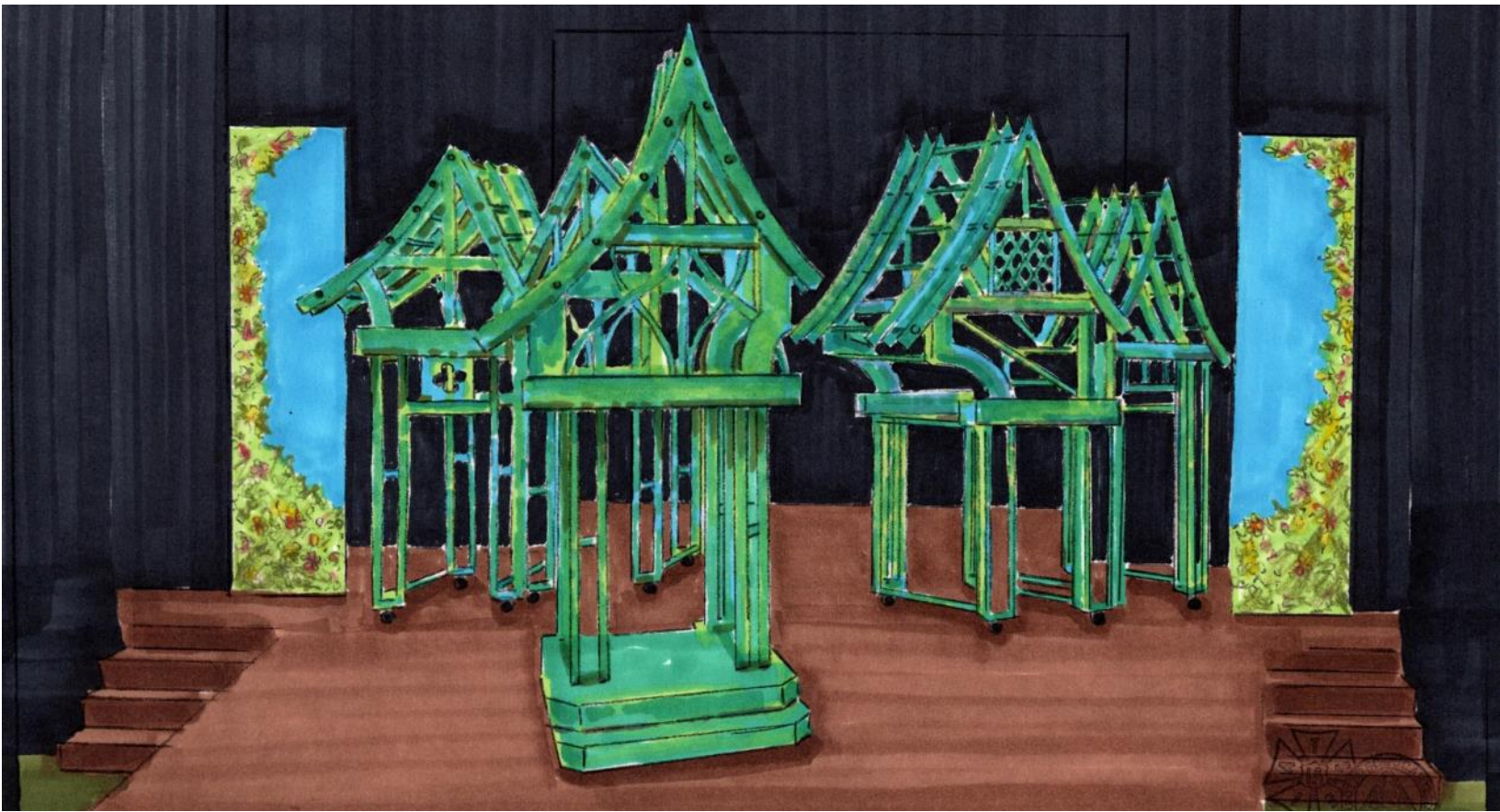
Falstaff has been the subject of fan fiction since the release of *Sir John Falstaff a Notorious Highwayman* in 1714. James White published a book of *Falstaff's Letters* in 1796, claiming the letters had been preserved by Mistress Quickly's sister. In the present-day, Volstagg the Voluminous, a Marvel Comics character in the *Thor* storyline, was modeled on Falstaff.



Orson Welles as Falstaff In the 1965 film *Chimes at Midnight*



Volstagg the Voluminous (center), a Marvel Comics character from the *Thor* storyline, was modeled after Falstaff.



A set model rendered by scenic designer Jeff Herrmann shows the array of movable architectural set pieces and “flying” panels that can be deployed in various configurations to support the production’s lively pace and movement.

From Page to Stage

Terri McMahon was enthusiastic about tackling *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in her first guest directing stint at Great Lakes Theater. “The delightful thing we’re chasing in this play is community,” she exclaimed. “Shakespeare never wrote another community like this one—a steadfast, middle-class community. The people love, tolerate, and make fun of each other but choose to stay together.”

Drawn to the play’s characters and interactions, she also admired its structure. “In the very first scene,” she observed, “it’s a real community scene. Everyone is there, except there’s no Mr. Ford. But Ford cannot have seen Falstaff and his wife interact that early in the play.” For the play to work in a lighthearted way, Ford’s jealousy has to be groundless. “We can never have the fear that the women are at peril with a predator,”

A series of half-timbered structures from the Tudor period still stand in the village of Lacock near the Cotswolds region of southwest England.



McMahon insisted. “The production has to attain the ‘right temperature.’”

The play’s unusual setting in the England of Shakespeare’s own day “gave us a hook,” McMahon revealed. Numerous locations in and around Windsor—the village inn, the castle, Frogmore estate, the River Thames, the forest, the ancient oak trees in Windsor Park—are detailed



For one of his assignations with the women, Sir John Falstaff dresses in a way that emphasizes his aristocratic rank—with a fitted, padded doublet and sash.

Costume designer Daniele Tyler Mathews carried forward the floral scheme that also figures into the production's scenic elements. Each character's clothing is hand painted with flowers that might flourish in an English Garden—peonies for Mrs. Ford, for instance, and tiger lilies for Mrs. Page.

throughout the playscript, especially in the version included in the First Folio collection. The Great Lakes Theater production embraced the play's grounding in the Elizabethan period. In addition, the central role that dance played in the festivities at the court of Queen Elizabeth and in English folk life inspired ways for McMahon and choreographer Jaclyn Miller to weave the play's spirited community through dance.

The show's design team had to balance the need to render the specificities of a historical period with the need for freedom of movement in both scenic elements and costumes. The facades of half-timbered houses and shops offered a look that would immediately telegraph English village life during the Tudor period. However, as scenic designer Jeff Herrmann reported, McMahon "wanted a sense of movement throughout the piece. We had to open up the space. And yet we had to accommodate a number of different exteriors and interiors and also had to move out of town into nature."

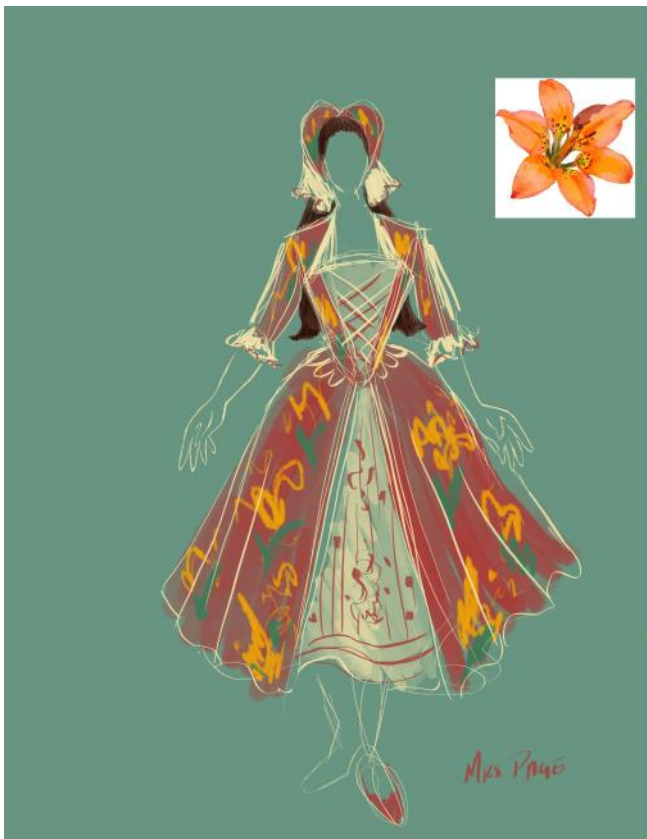
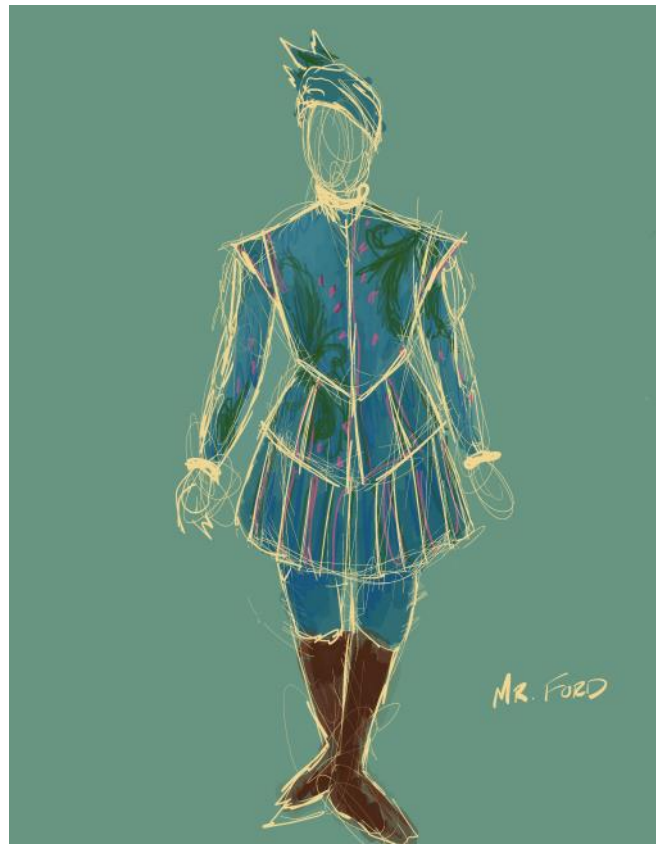
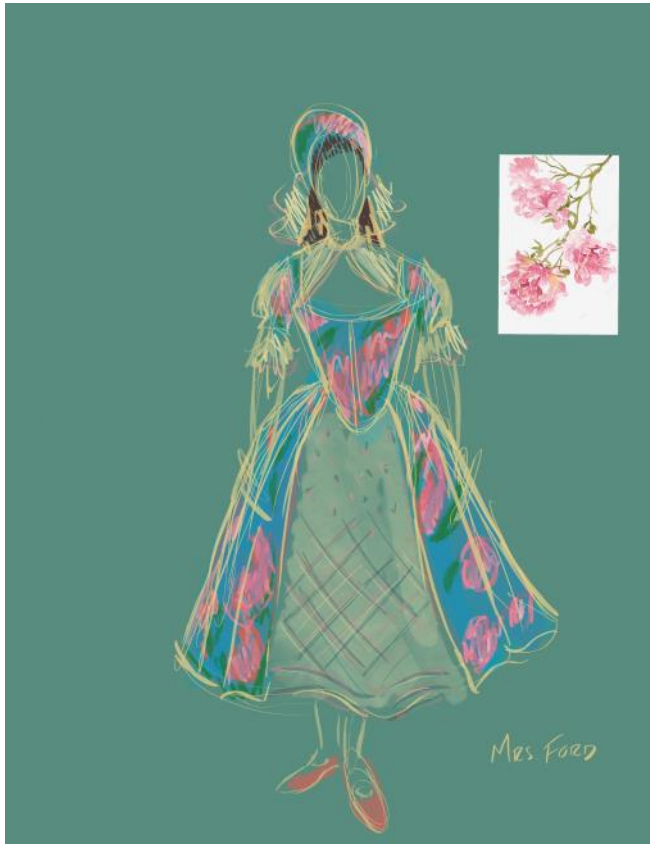
As Herrmann explained, he decided to "simulate the idea of a Windsor street" by creating three movable set pieces that represented abstracted but recognizable silhouettes of half-timbered structures. Furniture and signage could be swapped in and out to establish different locations within the village. Forays into the natural world could be signaled by "flying" panels in and out from the rigging space above the stage. Carrying out Herrmann's abstract and

flexible approach to denoting space, the panels were painted to evoke blue sky and wildflowers without realistically depicting particular locations.

Costume designer Daniele Tyler Mathews carried the floral motif into the clothing, amplifying the abundance and vitality of a middle class, Mathews said, "dreaming of something greater. An English Garden is a great image," the designer added, "for encompassing the wide variety of personalities you get in this play and how best to express their evolution."

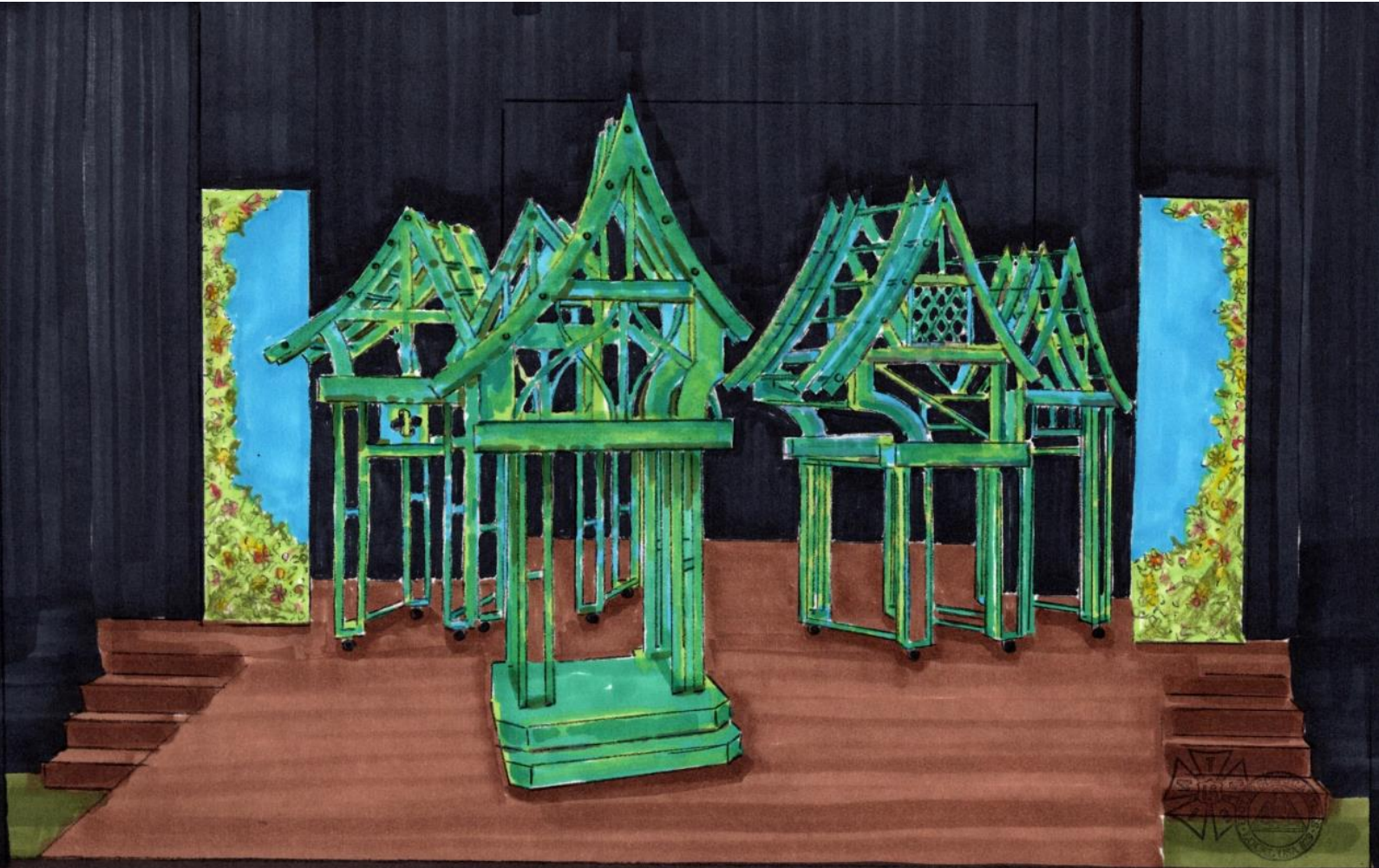
Linen—a humble, authentic period textile that's also supple—became Mathews' go-to fabric for the clothing worn by most of the play's middle- and lower-class characters. The designer also supported the production's emphasis on movement by judiciously shortening the women's skirts. The aristocratic class tended to wear more structured, padded, and embellished apparel during the Elizabethan period, providing Mathews with the opportunity for using such clothing markers to reflect the higher rank or aspirations of certain characters.

Above all, Mathews strove to create clothing that the actors could have fun with. In providing opportunities for comedy, both the costumes and scenic elements aligned with director McMahon's overall goal of "creating playfulness and joy."









MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

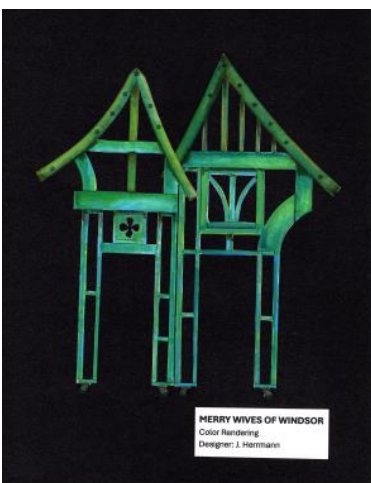
Scenic Rendering

Designer: J. Herrmann

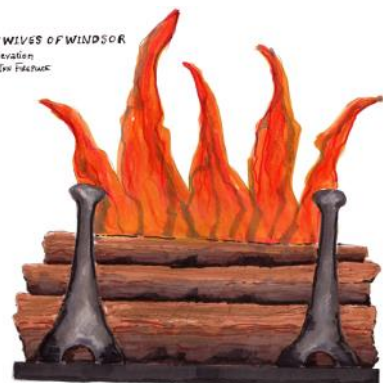
GLT-Hanna Theater

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SCENIC DESIGNER

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MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
Paint Elevation
Garret, The Playbook





MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

Color Rendering
Designer: J. Herrmann



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DR. CAIUS OFFICE
SIGN

SCENIC DESIGNER
SIGNATURE
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MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
Paint Elevation
HEARNE'S OAK

Discussion Questions

Prior to attending the performance

1. What are the first thoughts and/or images that come to mind when you hear “Shakespeare.” Why do you think that his plays continue to be read and produced almost 400 years after his death? What makes his work relevant to a modern audience? What — if anything — prevents contemporary productions from being fully accessible? What are some of your expectations about seeing Great Lake Theater’s production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*?
2. What makes a great comedy? What is your favorite comedy? What draws you in: character, situation, physical antics, or dialogue? What is the difference between wit, satire, and farce? Which do you prefer and why?
3. In what way is social satire funny? When issues are presented in a comical or exaggerated way, do they land differently? Why? In what way does current social and political satire like the comedy sketches on *Saturday Night Live*, the “newscast” of *The Daily Show*, or any political comedy sketch found on social media influence the way you think about a social issue or a politician? To what extent — if any — does the satire bring about positive changes? Give examples.
4. Think of some of your favorite movies and TV shows...what moments of physical comedy always make you laugh? What is it about a pratfall or an unexpected bash on the head or a predictable spit take or great food fight that adds hilarity to the moment? Who are the best physically comical actors in film and TV? What makes them so funny?
5. Shakespeare honors the women of the play with his title — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. What role does gender play in our understanding and appreciation of comedy? What can female comics/actors get away with that are seemingly taboo for male comedians and visa versa? What accounts for the different standards? Can you think of a comedian who breaks the mold? What makes their work unique and original?
6. Who is the funniest person you know? What makes them funny?
7. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* features one of Shakespeare’s best-known characters, Sir John Falstaff. Falstaff is paradoxical in nature – both jolly and full of melancholy, both a sage and a dupe, both honest and deceitful, as well larger than life. What current comic characters in TV or film are near iconic? What makes these characters both transcendent and current?
8. What is a malapropism? Can you think of an example where someone misused a phrase or word to comic effect? Please share. What makes malapropisms humorous? Have you ever unknowingly misused a word or phrase that resulted in laughter and/or embarrassment? How did it make you feel?
9. What makes pranks so funny? What is the allure of watching a person get pranked? What is the greatest prank you ever pulled off? Have you ever been on the receiving end of a prank or the butt of a joke? How did it make you feel? In what ways can a prank teach a lesson? What happens when a joke or prank goes too far? What is the difference between a prank and bullying?
10. What do you imagine it takes to produce a successful production of a classic comedy the scope of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*? Do you believe that producing Shakespeare requires a different skill set from the actors, than a contemporary piece? What skills are required? What does it take for you to personally to lose yourself in the story and journey of the characters? Is this type of transcendence more difficult at

a live performance? Why? How does the experience of witnessing live performance differ from going to the movie, sitting in front of the TV, or watching on your phone/computer?

11. Who is your best friend? Where did you meet them? Why do you care for them so much? How does this person inspire, motivate, laugh with you? How would you feel if the adults in your life told you who you were or were not allowed to date? How would you react? Would you take their advice into consideration or do what you felt was right?
12. How would you define the words “jealous” and “envy”? What is the difference between the two? How do either of those definitions fit with the phrase “a jealous husband”? Why do you think Shakespeare and his contemporaries used this trope so much in their plays? What are you afraid to lose in your own life? How far would you go to protect it or keep it just for yourself? What happens when one person tries to control the feelings or the behaviors of another?
13. How do you get to know someone when meeting them for the first time? What qualities/actions do you look for that help inform you on whether you want to continue to interact with them? How does “judging a book by its cover” help or hinder getting to know a person? Have you ever tried to get someone to change their mind about yourself or another person? How did you do that?
14. Do you believe that there is a match for everyone? What is required of both parties to form a healthy and happy relationship? What qualities and/or attributes are essential? What is overrated?

Activities & Writing Prompts

WRITING PROMPTS

1. Falstaff writes a love letter and sends it to both Mistress Ford and Mistress Page. Is it, in your and the class's opinion, a good love letter?

Ask me no reason why I love you, for though Love
use Reason for his precisian, he admits him not for
his counselor. You are not young; no more am I. Go
to, then, there's sympathy. You are merry; so am I.
Ha, ha, then, there's more sympathy. You love sack,
and so do I. Would you desire better sympathy? Let
it suffice thee, Mistress Page—at the least, if the love
of soldier can suffice—that I love thee. I will not say
pity me—'tis not a soldier-like phrase—but I say love
me. By me,

Thine own true knight,
By day or night,
Or any kind of light,
With all his might
For thee to fight,

John Falstaff

What are the qualities of a love letter? Using Falstaff's letter above and other examples from Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*), pick apart the components of a "love letter". Using the components you discovered, write your own love letter. To help, answer the following questions: What kind of love is being presented: romantic, familial, an enjoyed object or event, etc.? Who or what in your life would fit that kind of love? Will your letter be an actual letter or a poem? If it is a poem, do you want it to have a particular meter or rhyme scheme? Once you have all the different parts decided, try it out. After you have written it, perform it!

2. Write a review (see page 27).
3. Imagine you are the host of a cooking show but instead of food you teach people how to create the perfect prank. Write a recipe for the perfect prank. Have you ever pulled a prank? What did you do? Why did you choose the prank you did for the person you performed it on? How did the person/people react? What is needed for a prank to be successful? What tools and items will they need? How much time will it take to set everything up? How much time do you need between setting things up and for the prank to be finished? What steps does a person have to follow for the prank to be completed? How can the prank be achieved so that no one gets hurt and everyone has fun? Teach the class your prank!

ACTIVITIES

THE DATING GAME

Based on the American game show from the 1960s-1980s, create a semi-improvised dating game where Anne Page must choose which suitor she will marry. Anne is the judge and her three suitors are hidden from her: Dr. Caius, Slender, and Fenton. The student playing Anne can ask whatever dating related question they wish to the suitors. Have the other characters try to answer Anne's questions to the best of their ability using only their quotes from the play. Once a quote has been used, it should be discarded. Below are some quotes that can be used for the game, feel free to add or subtract any that you wish:

Dr. Caius:

Vat is you sing? I do not like des toys.

Fe, fe, fe, fe! ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m'en vais a la cour—la grande affaire.

Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to the court.

Wherefore shall I be content-a?

What shall de honest man do in my closet? Dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

Peace-a your tongue. Speak-a your tale.

Do not you tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself?

By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my...

Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?

Mock-vater!

Clapper-de-claw! By gar, me do look he shall clapper-de-claw me

For, by gar, me vill have it.

By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

By gar, me dank you for dat: by gar, I love you

By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear.

Wherefore vill you not meet-a me?

Ha, do I perceive dat? have you make-a de sot of us, ha, ha?

By gar, 'tis no the fashion of France; it is not jealous in France.

By gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

If dere be one or two, I shall make-a the turd.

I cannot tell vat is dat: but it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamany

Slender:

Mistress Anne Page? She has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman.

You'll not confess, you'll not confess.

Ay, it is no matter.

Ay, you spake in Latin then too; but 'tis no matter: I'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again,

O heaven! this is Mistress Anne Page.

I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets here.

Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says: I pray you, pardon me; he's a justice of peace

Why, if it be so, I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.

I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

Ay, or else I would I might be hanged, la!

No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

I' faith, I'll eat nothing; I thank you as much as though I did.

I had rather walk here, I thank you.

That's meat and drink to me, now.

Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome.

You do yourself wrong, indeed, la!

Ah, sweet Anne Page!

I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell you good jests of him.

Ay, that I do; as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire.

My will! 'od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed!
Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with you.
I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne Page, and she's a great lubberly boy.

Fenton:
How now, good woman? how dost thou?
What news? how does pretty Mistress Anne?
Shall I do any good, thinkest thou? shall I not lose my suit?
Yes, marry, have I; what of that?
I see I cannot get thy father's love
I will confess thy father's wealth Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne
 Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value than stamps in gold or sums in sealed bags;
 And 'tis the very riches of thyself that now I aim at.
Farewell, gentle mistress: farewell, Nan.
I thank thee; and I pray thee as I am a gentleman, I'll give thee a hundred pound in gold more than your loss.
And here it rests, that you'll procure the vicar to stay for me at church 'twixt twelve and one, and, in the lawful name of marrying, to give our hearts united ceremony.
So shall I evermore be bound to thee; Besides, I'll make a present recompense.
From time to time I have acquainted you with the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page
You do amaze her: hear the truth of it.
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted, Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.

THE WHITE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

One of the great comic moments in the play is when Mistress Ford tries to hide Falstaff's presence from her husband, in either the basket or through disguise. Divide the class in groups of three and have each group create an improvised scene in which they need to "hide" a character's presence while that character tries to escape without being noticed. Encourage creativity...let the situation and environment dictate the action. Groups may use props if needed.

Student "A" is hiding student "B" from student "C" because....

Make sure that each group gives each player a specific role/character and that each "character" is invested in both the situation and outcome.

Examples:

- Student A (child) hiding Student B (stray dog) from Student C (A's parent) who comes into their bedroom to say goodnight.
- Student A (student) hiding Student B (their math tutor) from Student C (distracted math teacher) who returns to classroom to proctor a make-up test.
- Student A hiding Student B (their prom date) from Student C (their second prom date) because they double booked prom.

Have each group share their improvisations. What, if any, moments of physical comedy developed from the need to hide and cover-up? What tactics were used to "not be seen?" In what ways desperation lead to absurdity? What is the most ridiculous thing you have ever done to avoid getting caught doing something (or being with someone) that was bound to get you in trouble?

Discussion Questions

After Attending the Performance

1. What were your favorite aspects of this production? How did the visual elements — the set, costume, and lighting design — aid in the telling of this classic work? How were the characters personality displayed through costume? What actor do you believe had the most fully realized characterization? What was it about it about their performance that drew you in? What moment was the most memorable? Why?
2. Track each character's transformation from the beginning to the end of the play. What discoveries are made by the characters? Which character, if any, do you think grows the most? Why? How is that growth manifested in performance? Which character did you most relate to or identify with? Why?
3. What moment in Great Lakes Theater's current production stood out? Why? How did the director/adaptor's choice of setting aid in your overall enjoyment? Why do you think productions of Shakespeare's play vary in time and place settings? What other time periods might work for this play? Which one would you pick if you could design or direct this play? How do the themes and the setting align to help tell the story?
4. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* focuses on a small town community – When you think of a small town, what comes to mind? How did this production support or give you information about how a small town community can work and how the people in it interact with one another?
5. What effect can an outsider have on a community? What effect do folks outside of Windsor have on the community present in this production? Why do you think that Shakespeare wrote British characters as the outsiders in this play instead of the foreign Sir Hugh and Dr. Caius? How do you react to a new student joining your school, team, or club? How long does it take to feel like a newcomer is a part of the established community? How does a person go from being an outsider/new to a member/established?
6. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is the only one of Shakespeare's plays where the main characters are predominantly from the merchant class; they are not royalty or have titles. Why do you think Shakespeare changed the social status of his characters for this play? How might this play be different if everyone was a lord or lady? How does social standing influence the ideas of love and revenge? Compare the social standing of these characters to one in romantic comedy movies/TV shows from the last 5/10/20 years. What is similar? What is different? What was our culture like when those movies were made and how do you think they affect the status of the characters in the stories?
7. What was your first impression of Sir John Falstaff? Do you agree that he is considered one of Shakespeare's most beloved comic characters? What aspect of his persona did you find most appealing? Did you ever feel sorry for him? Why? Did Falstaff get his just dessert?
8. What makes the wives of Windsor so "merry?" What limitations and freedoms are the wives given? In this play, how do the women differ from the men? How does setting the production in an older time affirm or challenge how you believe gender roles should be portrayed in art? In what way may your understanding of the role of women been altered had the production been in Cleveland in 2024? Are there behaviors we are willing to forgive from a certain gendered person if they are set in the past versus now? Why? In what ways do you think gender is perceived and portrayed in theater/movies/TV/internet that has changed since the late 1500s?

9. Do you feel that Mistress Page and Mistress Ford's antics to teach Falstaff a lesson are warranted? How would the story have changed if they let their husbands in on their pranks from the start? What might you have done if you and your best friend received identical propositions from a "would-be suitor?"
10. In your experience, what are the qualities of a good love letter? In what ways does Falstaff's missives to Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, miss the mark? He begins his plea somewhat indelicately:
'Ask me no reason why I love you. You are not young, no more am I; go to then, there's sympathy: you are merry, so am I; ha ha! Then there's more sympathy: you love to drink, and so do I; would you desire better sympathy?

Why do you think Falstaff starts his love letter this way? How would you react if you received a letter with this tone? What is a backhanded compliment and what does it feel like to be on the receiving end of one?

11. What, do you suppose, gives Falstaff the confidence to approach not one but two married women in such a bold manner? Should Falstaff be admired for his confidence or ridiculed for his self-importance? Why? What is the difference between the two? If Falstaff was younger/thinner/wealthier would his love letters be received differently? Why? Have you ever met someone who had little or no idea how idea of who they were or how they were perceived by others? How are they treated?
12. How do you know when someone is flirting with you? Have you ever misread signals or had someone misread yours? Is Falstaff accurately "reading the room" or is he creating a situation to justify his actions?
13. Why do you think Ford is suspicious of his wife and is worried about her "alliance" with Falstaff? How does he differ from Page? Do you think some people are naturally more jealous and mistrustful than others? Why? What is truly at stake for Ford? Why do some people think their own reputation and character are suspect when they are the victim of cheating/infidelity? Where do you fall on the jealousy/trust scale? What does it take for you to fully trust someone?
14. What purpose does revenge serve? Revenge and jealousy are such powerful emotions; once fully tapped, can you ever stop the flow? How? Do the schemes and pranks in the play feel different because they are comic in nature? How do you know if a prank has gone too far? Is the public humiliation of Falstaff justified? What do you think Falstaff is thinking and feeling during the end performance? Did you feel sorry for him? Why? What, if any, lessons were learned and by who?
15. What are your impressions of the exaggerated characterizations of some of the characters? If you could label each character with a specific stereotype, which would you choose? Why? How do accents or different voices add to the hilarity of the comedy in the production? Think about other movies and TV shows you've watched that also use stereotype to portray characters – why do you think stereotypes are used to communicate character qualities? How does stereotype affect your life? Do you think people in your school easily fit into specific stereotypes? How is that helpful or harmful to navigate your daily life?
16. At the end of the play, upon learning of Anne and Fenton's union, Ford states, "In love, the starts themselves do guide the state; Money buys love, but wives are sold by fate" (5.5). What do you think he means? What role does fate play in love and romance? Does money buy love? Are love and happiness always within our grasp? Is love a choice? Explain.
17. How do you feel about all three of the Pages trying to use the final trick on Falstaff to have Anne Page married? How would you feel if someone in your family tried to influence who you had a romantic relationship with? Should parents have a say in who their child dates or marries? Do Mister and Mistress Page have a point in their dislike of Fenton? What attributes does her father see in Slender? Why is Dr. Caius Mistress Page's choice for her daughter? How does Anne know that Fenton is "the one?"
18. In the end, Falstaff is invited to join the community. What does his joining the group say about his character and/or the weight of their final prank? What does it take to be a good sport? What, if anything, has Falstaff learned about himself and his transgressions during the course of the play?
19. Compare and contrast the two main female characters, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page. How do their

personalities and approaches to the situations in the play differ? How would you describe their friendship? Would you describe yourself as more of a Mistress Ford or a Mistress Page? Why?

20. In what ways, if any, do you believe that the marriages of the Fords and Pages have been altered because of Falstaff's proposition to the "merry" wives and their subsequent actions? Do you think the marriages would have found their way to this place had Falstaff not engaged with his plan? Describe what you think these relationships would be like in five years as if they had never met Falstaff. Where do you think these marriages will be in five years after the events of the play?
21. What role does dance play in this production? How is it connected to the idea of community? What dances are important to your community? How can dance build and/or strengthen a community?

How to Write A Review

MORE HOW AND LESS WHAT

A theater review is not a book review, you do not need to summarize what happens. Provide the necessary background so the reader knows the name of the play and the basics of what kind of play it is, and then move into your commentary. You do not need to explain WHAT the play is, instead write about HOW successfully it was presented.

THE ACTOR NOT THE CHARACTER

You can disapprove of the decisions a character makes, but how well did the ACTOR perform the role? Was their behavior appropriate to the part as written? Feel free to share your opinions, comparing or contrasting their work with other actors with whom you are familiar.

WHAT IS DIRECTION?

Maybe you have heard of a “director” in theater or film, but do you know what they do? It is not a director’s job to tell the actors how to say every line, but they are the person responsible for creating the general mood and concept for the production. What was your impression of the production as a whole? Was it too funny for a serious play? Or not amusing enough for a comic play? Use words to reflect back to the director how successful the production is as a whole.

DON’T FORGET THE DESIGN

The set you see and the sounds you hear are also unique to this one production of this play. Describe what you see and hear, but also be sure to make clear how successful these designs are in telling the story of the play.

IN CONCLUSION ...

While it is not necessary to give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” your concluding sentence should summarize your impression of the production as a whole.

THEATER REVIEWS IN THE NEW MEDIA

Reviews in news websites may be 1000 words, they may be as brief as 300 words. Can you write a one-page review? Can you write a 100 word review, to post on Facebook? Do you think you could create a 140-character review that sums up the production for posting on Twitter?

A sample review written by a student follows this page.

A Sample Review Written by a Student

"Gambit": More Poetry Than History — Mark Wood

If Aristotle was correct when he said that poetry "is a higher thing than history," then "Royal Gambit," which opened Friday night at Pentacle Theater, is, I suppose, on the right track.

For those who were expecting a representational treatment of the life of England's Henry VIII, "Royal Gambit" was a shock, if not a disappointment. Those who sought poetry got it, although of a very dogmatic and simplistic sort.

This unusual, highly presentational play by Hermann Gressieker, directed by Ed Classen, is an indictment of modern man as a ruthless opportunist. The Tudor king is a representative of a rationalizing, shifty society which has become "superior to the highest" while "wallowing in the depths."

As Henry uses the banners of "reason" and "humanism" to obtain then dispose of his six wives, so modern man uses them for his own pleasure and glorification, uses them to wage war in the name of peace, to hate in the name of love.

Such is the grim theme pleasingly presented by a company of seven actors, who performed their roles energetically, if unevenly. The presentational acting style employed here is difficult to perfect. It should be theatrical, yet believable; aimed at the head, yet acceptable to the heart.

Louise Larsen was a standout as Catherine of Aragon, Largely because she utilized this presentational approach and was not afraid of open theatricality. Her flamboyant stage presence, which needed to be toned down in her recent role in "Last of the Red Hot Lovers," found full vent here.

Henry's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, was portrayed by Gale Rieder, who quickly became an audience favorite. Her thick accent was letter-perfect and her direct humor was a welcome contrast to the bitter satire of the rest of the play.

The other four actresses—Kathy Stratton, Marcia Engblom, Polly Bond and Patricia Sloan—each had their exceptional moments. However, they generally seemed tied to more conventional, representational acting styles.

Ron Fox was superb in the role of Henry. Tuxedoed, leering with the look of a demonic marionette, the vacant stare of a deranged orator, Fox dominated the stage fully, commanding both in voice and stage presence.

The technical elements of the play were more than adequate. Musical accompaniment was appropriately sparse and simple.

At one point the play, King Henry roared, "In my realm I decide what constitutes tragedy!" Ironically, Gressieker strips modern man not only of his possibilities as a tragic figure worthy of any sympathies at all. In the final moments of the play, Catherine of Aragon announces the death of modern man and the birth of a new era. It is a scene of great hope, but it is not as profound as her earlier pronouncement to her husband that "the ways of the world are not so cut and dried!"

For my own part, I wish that "Royal Gambit's" statement were not so cut and dried. By making man out to be such a simple monster the play defeats its own purposes and turns poetry into scathing dogma, which is probably even less interesting than, say, history.

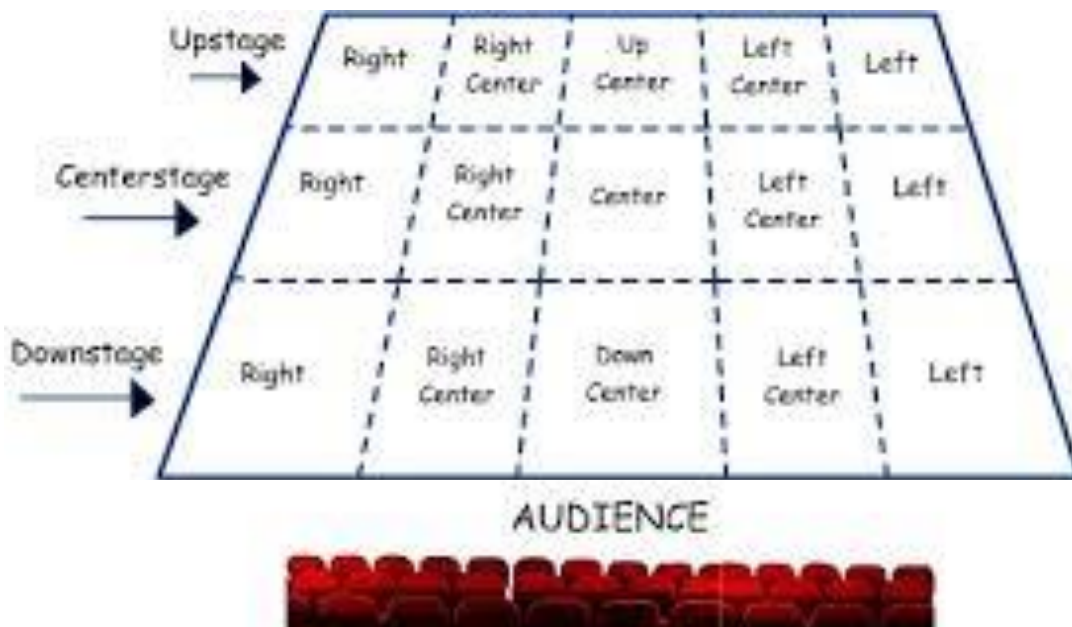
<http://faculty.chemeketa.edu/jrupert3/eng105/Annrev.html>

A Brief Glossary of Theater Terms

Apron	The part of the stage in front of the curtain
Auditorium or House	Where the audience sits
Beam Spread	The area a single light covers
Blackout	Turning off all the lights in the theatre at once
Board	The control center for lights, sound, or both
Book (The)	A copy of the script containing all notes and blocking
Box Office	Where the audience buys tickets
Box Set	A set in a proscenium with three walls
Call	The time certain members of the production need to be at the theatre
Cheat	When an actor takes a realistic action and modifies it for the audience to see
Cloth	Scenery painted on fabric
Cue	A line or action that immediately leads to another action by the actor (for them to speak) designer or stage manager (to change the lights or sound)
Curtain Call	The bows at the end of the show
Dimmer	Equipment that controls the brightness of a light
Director	The creative head of a production. They create a vision for the show and work with actors, designers, and crew to bring that vision to life
Flat	A frame covered with canvas, cardboard, or some other light material which is then painted as part of the set
Floodlight	A light that has a wide unfocused beam covering most of the stage
Fly	A system used to raise set backgrounds, set pieces, or potentially actors
Follow-spot	A spotlight that can follow an actor as they move across around the stage
Footlights	Floodlights on the floor at the front of the stage.
Gel	A piece of plastic placed over the light to change its color
Greenroom	A room where the company can relax, eat, or potentially watch the show if a TV and a camera has been rigged
Notes	The director's notes on the performance or rehearsal
Pit	An area between the stage and the audience where an orchestra can sit (typically below audience level)
Producer	The person responsible for all logistical and financial aspects of a production (as opposed to the creative head, the director).
Properties or Props	Items used by actors in a show (such as swords, plates, watches, etc.)

Proscenium	A type of stage defined by a proscenium arch. Proscenium theatres typically distinctly separate the audience and stage by a window (defined by the proscenium arch). The stage typically will not go far past the proscenium arch (the Ohio Theatre, for example).
Raked Stage	A stage that is angled (upstage is the top of the hill and downstage the bottom) so that the audience can see the action more clearly
Set	The scenery used in a scene or throughout the play
Set Dressing	Parts of the set that don't serve a practical function but make the set look realistic.
Spotlight	A type of light that is focused so that it can light a very specific area
Strike	Taking apart and removing a set from the theatre
Thrust	A stage that goes beyond the proscenium arch so that the audience is sitting on three sides of the set - in front, and on either side (the Hanna Theatre, for example).
Tracks	The rails on which curtains (tabs) run.
Trap	A hole in the stage covered by a door where actors or set pieces can exit or enter
Understudy	An actor who learns all of the lines and blocking of another actor (typically one of the actors in a lead role) who can perform in case the main actor cannot go on
Upstage	The rear of the stage
Wings	The sides of the stage typically blocked off by curtains where actors and crew can stand and wait for their cues

STAGE DIRECTIONS



Learning Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A

Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1.A

Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A

Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.B

Analyze nuances in the meaning of words

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).



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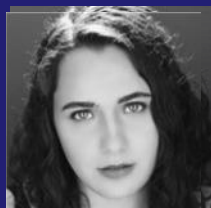
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Charles Fee, Producing Artistic Director

The mission of Great Lakes Theater, through its main stage productions and its education programs, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

Since the company's inception in 1962, programming has been rooted in Shakespeare, but the company's commitment to great plays spans the breadth of all cultures, forms of theater and time periods including the 20th century, and provides for the occasional mounting of new works that complement the classical repertoire.

Classic theater holds the capacity to illuminate truth and enduring values, celebrate and challenge human nature and actions, revel in eloquent language, preserve the traditions of diverse cultures and generate communal spirit. On its mainstage and through its education program, the company seeks to create visceral, immediate experiences for participants, asserting theater's historic role as a vehicle for advancing the common good, and helping people make the most joyful and meaningful connections between classic plays and their own lives. This Cleveland theater company wishes to share such vibrant experiences with people across all age groups, creeds, racial and ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The company's commitment to classic theater is magnified in the educational programs (for both adults and students) that surround its productions. Great Lakes Theater has a strong presence in area schools, bringing students to the theater for matinee performances and sending specially trained actor-teachers to the schools for weeklong residencies developed to explore classic drama from a theatrical point of view. GLT is equally dedicated to enhancing the theater experience for adult audiences. To this end, GLT regularly serves as the catalyst for community events and programs in the arts and humanities that illuminate the plays on its stage.

Great Lakes Theater is one of only a handful of American theaters that have stayed the course as a classic theater. As GLT celebrates over a decade in its permanent home at the Hanna Theatre, the company reaffirms its belief in the power of partnership, its determination to make this community a better place in which to live, and its commitment to ensure the legacy of classic theater in Cleveland.

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