

GREAT  
LAKES  
THEATER

TEACHER PREPARATION GUIDE

# *Twelfth* NIGHT

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Directed by SARA BRUNER



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Spring 2025

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your student matinee ticket order to Great Lakes Theater's production of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. This production will be performed in the beautiful Hanna Theatre at Playhouse Square from March 21—April 6, 2025.

A shipwreck throws lives into disarray, where mistaken identities lead to hilarious havoc and unexpected connections. Viola, stranded and disguised as a boy, falls for the Duke, who pines for Olivia. However, Olivia, in mourning, finds herself smitten with Viola, setting off a comical chain of romantic entanglements. This delightful gem brims with wit and wordplay to tell a timeless tale of love, loss and the joyous absurdity of life.

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 black ink that reads "Kelly Schaffer Florian".

Kelly Schaffer Florian  
Director of Educational Services  
[Kflorian@greatlakestheater.org](mailto:Kflorian@greatlakestheater.org)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hansen".

David Hansen  
Education Outreach Associate  
[dhansen@greatlakestheater.org](mailto: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.



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE *Sara Bruner*

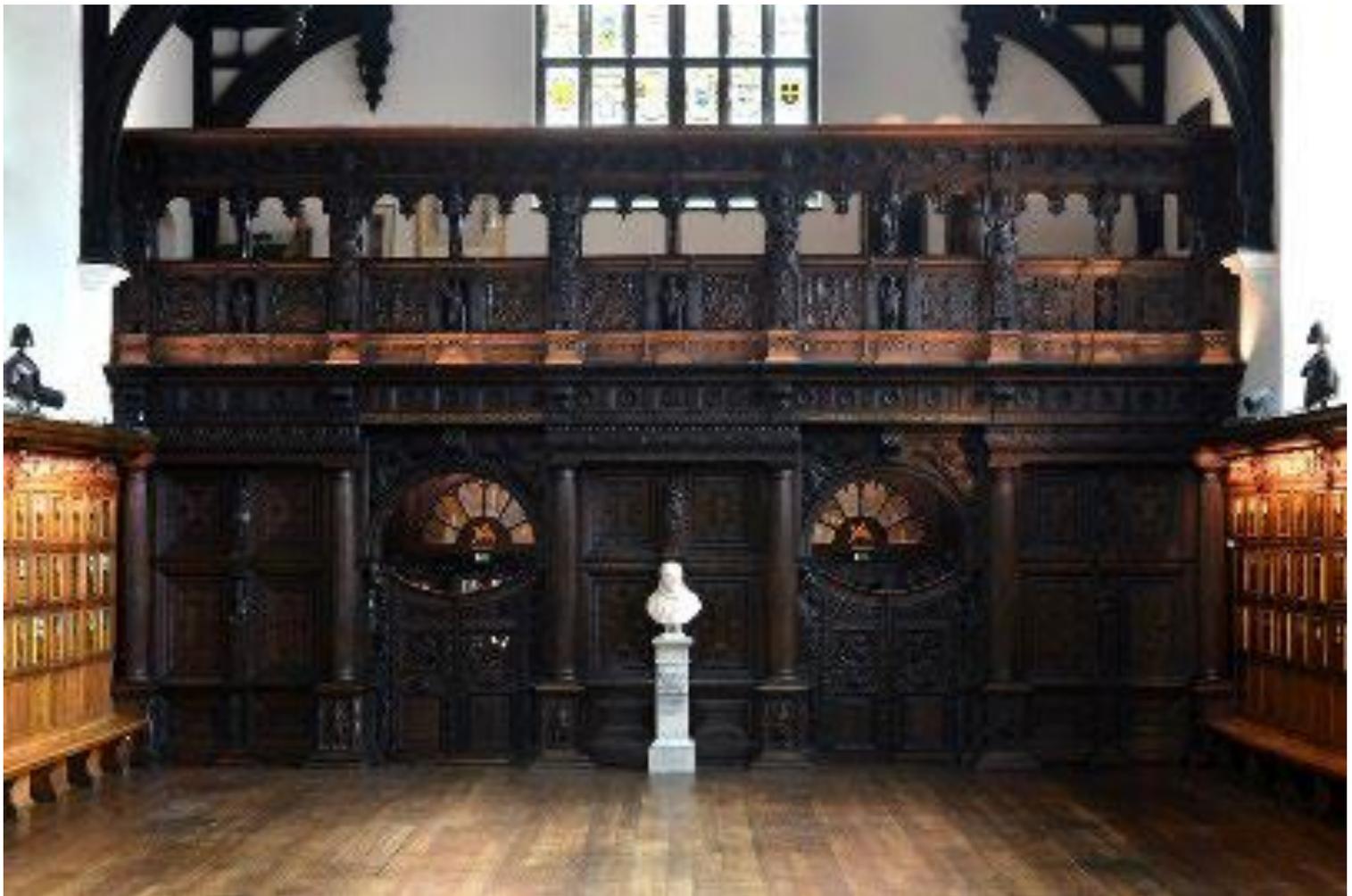
Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is a play of contradictions—a story of joy and sorrow, laughter and loss, disguise and truth. At its heart, it is a comedy deeply rooted in grief. The play opens with a tempest-tossed Viola, shivering and alone, believing her twin brother is dead. At the same time, Countess Olivia lives in a deep state of mourning, having recently lost her brother. Neither of them has parents; their lives have forever been changed. And yet, amid the darkness, life persists in masquerade, revelry, and the undeniable pull of love.

Our production embraces these paradoxes, illuminating how grief and joy are not opposites but rather intimately linked. Shakespeare shows us that even in the depths of mourning, there is an absurdity—Orsino's lovesickness, Malvolio's misfortunes, Sir Toby's drunken antics, and Feste's wit, and paradoxical truth-telling remind us that humor can exist within sorrow. Likewise, the play's moments of elation, discovery, reunion, and love—are never entirely free from shadows. Viola's

love is bound in deception, Olivia's affections are misdirected, and even the happy endings leave a lingering melancholy note.

In staging *Twelfth Night*, we lean into these complexities, seeking to celebrate the emotional contradictions that make the play resonate—that reflect the agony and ecstasy of being. Shakespeare reminds us of life's fragile, bittersweet beauty in a world where loss and laughter coexist. We invite you to embrace the contradictions, laugh through tears, and find, like the characters of Illyria, that joy and grief are two sides of the same coin.

## PLAYNOTES: *Twelfth Night*



The Middle Temple dining hall, where law student John Manningham saw *Twelfth Night* in 1602, still stands.

On the evening of February 2, 1602, a law student named John Manningham went to a performance of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, in the Middle Temple Hall at the Inns of Court. The title of the play, the date of the performance, and even the venue had specific associations for contemporary audiences.

In the practice of the day, the twelfth night after Christmas marked the end of the holiday season, though February 2, the night of the performance, provided one "last call" for Christmas revelry. During *Twelfth Night* festivities a servant was often

chosen to preside, as a Lord or Abbot of Misrule, over a Feast of Fools. Shakespeare's play—centered on cross-dressing mix-ups and a Fool character—fizzes with the topsy-turvy spirit of *Twelfth Night* celebrations.

The February 2 presentation of *Twelfth Night* at the Inns of Court was a private one, for hire. Private, public, and court performances provided the three income streams for Shakespeare's theater company, the Lord Chamberlain's (later the King's) Men. Appeals to all three audiences can be tracked throughout the playwright's work.



A popular visual meme of Shakespeare's day, "We Three Loggerheads," depicted two fools holding an image meant to suggest that the viewer makes the third fool. This early 17th century version of the trope featured identifiable court jesters, who, like Shakespeare's Feste, were professional fools.

The Inns of Court campuses, each with its own library, dining hall, and lodgings, provided an educated audience of law students, young barristers, and more than a few would-be writers. Writing in his diary, the law student Manningham noted that *Twelfth Night* resembled the twin-fueled hijinks of Shakespeare's earlier *Comedy of Errors* and of the playwright's sources in classical Roman comedy (the *Menaechmi* by Plautus) and Italian commedia dell'arte (*Gl'ingannati* or *The Deceived Ones*).

The plugged-in audience at the Inns of Court would

have caught the play's *au courant* references—to a "new map" that was published in 1598; to a melody by composer Thomas Morley that was hot off the presses in 1599; to a popular visual "meme" of the day known as "We Three Loggerheads." Insider allusions to rival writers would have drawn a knowing laugh.

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, made its debut ca. 1600 just as the so-called "War of the Theatres" was heating up. Rival playwrights skewered each other in satirical plays performed for close followers. Satirist John Marston, a denizen of the Inns of the Court and one of the chief lampoonists, fired numerous volleys into the fray, including a play titled *What You Will*.

Shakespeare was largely a non-combatant in this insider game. The shareholders of his company built a capacious public playhouse, the Globe Theatre, in 1599, staking their resources on a broader public audience. However, "the Bard" wasn't above sniping from the sidelines now and again. Whether Shakespeare or Marston wrote his *What You Will* first, a challenge to the other's literary prowess may have been implied. The shared title puns on Shakespeare's own first name, Will.

The coterie audience at the Inns of Court would have enjoyed Shakespeare's pinpointing parts of London. There's a call-out in his play to The Elephant, a popular pub in the "south suburbs," and to "Westward Ho," the cry of boatmen heading west on the Thames River. These directional references had socio-cultural implications at the time. The suburbs south of the Thames signaled London's burgeoning theater and entertainment district, while the west was the place where London's growing middle class was moving.

The changes in London society were of particular interest to the participants in the "War of the Theatres." The literary rivals were sharpening their wits on contemporary topics in a new genre of "city comedy." In 1604, Thomas Dekker and John Webster would deliver a rollicking but cynical take on emerging middle-class capitalism in a play titled *Westward Ho*. Marston, Ben Jonson, and George Chapman countered with a moralistic scolding in *Eastward Ho* the following year, prompting Dekker and Webster to respond with *Northward Ho* a few months later.

It didn't take a coterie audience to recognize that class boundaries were shifting at the time. Shakespeare's public audiences were living through these changes—as was Shakespeare himself. The playwright's father, a glover and town official of Stratford, applied for a coat of arms in 1596, expressing the family's aspiration to rise to the gentry class.

*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which was peopled entirely with middle class characters, was the closest Shakespeare came to writing a "city comedy." And yet the playwright often enlivened his plays with comic middle-class characters. His constables, tutors, innkeepers, and sheriffs often had stolid English names and spoke in prose rather than in the verse of their betters. Sir Toby Belch and his crew of tricksters in *Twelfth Night* bear a family resemblance to Sir John Falstaff and his knavish sidekicks in *Henry IV* and *Merry Wives*.

The crisis of class identity was particularly acute for theater makers, like Shakespeare, who depended on royal patronage. Although Shakespeare's company controlled their own commercial venture for paying customers, their core income and identity was based on service to the Lord Chamberlain, who was charged with supplying entertainment to the court. From time to time, Shakespeare directly addressed the social inferiority of players, for instance, in the amateur theatricals of the "rude mechanicals" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

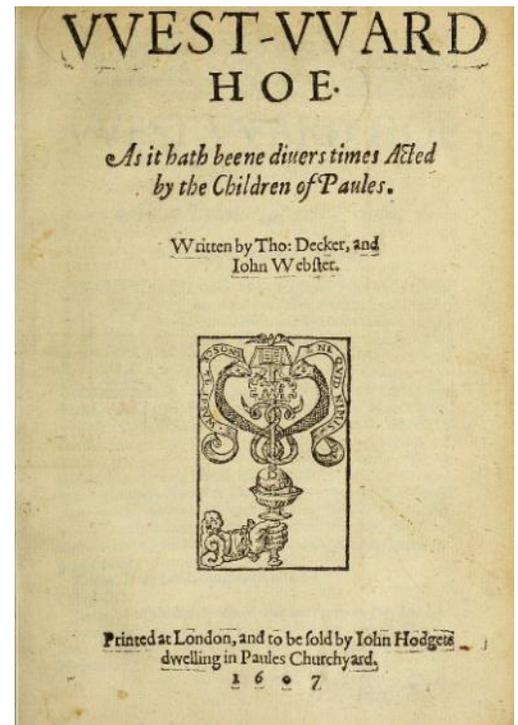
The character of Feste, the Clown, forefronts the issue of performer as servant in *Twelfth Night*. Feste is a paid, or "licensed," fool in Olivia's household, and yet he expresses an outsider's critique of social mores and moves as he pleases between her place and Orsino's. Feste's role as a philosophical fool, rather than a buffoon, was made possible by a change in personnel in the Lord Chamberlain's Men. In the company's early days, its "clown" was Will Kempe, an extroverted, physical comedian. But Kempe was replaced in about 1600 by the more intellectual Robert Armin, a sometime writer and musician.

Feste knows how far he can push Olivia. When she cries, "Take the fool away," he quickly retorts, "Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady." Shakespeare himself played a similar game. In the



This androgynous portrait of Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, dates to the time of his early acquaintance with Shakespeare, ca. 1590-1593. The playwright dedicated two long narrative poems to Southampton that were published in 1593 and 1594.

Shakespeare's use of the "Westward Ho" cry in *Twelfth Night* suggests he was attuned to the emerging genre of London city comedies, exemplified by the satirical *Westward Ho*, by Thomas Dekker and John Webster, which was published in 1607.



character of Olivia, he created a woman whose circumstances could have reminded contemporary audiences of Queen Elizabeth's. Like Elizabeth, Olivia was without father or brother to "protect" her. Independently wealthy, both women had many suitors but refused them all. Shakespeare even had the character of Viola voice the argument for marriage that many advisors used on Elizabeth: "Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive,/ If you will lead these graces to the grave/ And leave the world no copy." In the spirit of misrule, however, Shakespeare's Olivia fell for a servant. Elizabeth famously remained single.

Court audiences may have gossiped that the killjoy character of Malvolio had a real-life counterpart. In 1598, Henry Wriothesley—the Third Earl of Southampton and a sometime favorite of Queen Elizabeth and patron of Shakespeare—was playing cards outside Elizabeth's bedchamber after she retired one night. Ambrose Willoughby, an "Esquire of the Queen's Body" or personal assistant, chided the earl for disturbing the queen's sleep. The two squared off, and Willoughby was said to have pulled Southampton by his flowing locks. Whether modeled after a particular person or not, Shakespeare created in Malvolio a character who didn't know his social place and was punished for over-reaching.

Much scholarly ink has been spilled on whether Southampton was the "Fair Youth" addressed in 126 of Shakespeare's 154 Sonnets and whether Shakespeare and other writers and courtiers of the day were bisexual. Exploration of gender fluidity does seem hard-wired into *Twelfth Night*. In Elizabethan England, female characters were played onstage by boys, and in this play, Viola is also disguised as a boy. Olivia, played by a boy, falls for Viola, a boy playing a woman playing a boy. And Orsino also falls for Viola in her appearance as a boy as well. Free of disguises, the fervent love that the character Antonio bears for Viola's brother Sebastian echoes the theme in a less comic way. No matter what Shakespeare's personal gender identity may have been, he wrote with empathy about unrequited love in a gender-complex environment.

Shakespeare's own experience of pain may underly another hallmark of the comedy—its strong sense of loss. In 1596, Shakespeare's only son Hamnet died at the age of 11. Hamnet, a fraternal twin, was survived by his sister Judith. In *Twelfth Night*, Viola is also a fraternal twin who believes she has seen

her brother Sebastian perish in a storm. Whether the sundering of his children's twinship was on Shakespeare's mind as he wrote, the play does imagine what it might feel like to be and lose a twin. Shakespeare brought the experiences of a grieving father, the son of an ambitious tradesman, a player chafing at his service, a rival writer and more to the writing of *Twelfth Night*.

The so-called Darnley portrait of Queen Elizabeth, painted in 1575, when she was 42, established the prototype of ageless beauty that would characterize portraits of Elizabeth until her death in 1603 at age 70. It displays the face-whitening makeup and large collar ruffs that she started to deploy when she was 29, to cover up smallpox scarring, but used more and more to hide her aging.



# TWELFTH NIGHT *Through the Ages*



M<sup>rs</sup> Jordan as Viola .

Irish actress “Dora” Jordan (1770-1779) relied on her spirited personality to sell “breeches” roles, creating a dashing Viola/Cesario.

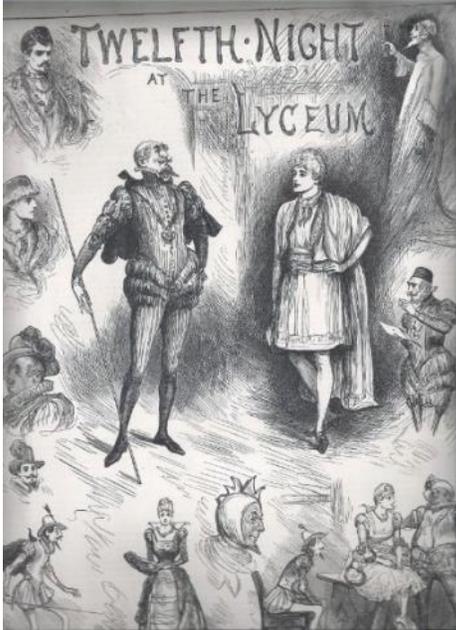
- *Twelfth Night* remained popular during Shakespeare’s lifetime and beyond, with productions documented in 1618 and 1623. It was one of the earliest of Shakespeare’s plays to be revived when the theaters reopened in England in 1660. In Great Lakes Theater history, *Twelfth Night* joins *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in receiving its eighth production.

- Thomas Betterton, the leading man of the Restoration theater, played Sir Toby Belch, but the role didn’t have the nobility that attracted David Garrick, Edmund Kean, and other male player-managers of the 18th and 19th centuries. Most of them did not favor the play.
- Female performers championed *Twelfth Night*, however. Women with comic skills were eager to tackle the play’s vivid female characters—Viola, Olivia, and Olivia’s maid Maria. Dorothea Jordan (1716-1816), an Irish actress, sometime



Irish-born comedienne Ada Rehan (1857-1916), who made her career in America, was another woman of the stage whose spunky personality brought her acclaim in the role of Viola.

Mark Rylance as Olivia—displaying the accentuated white makeup and ruff collar of Queen Elizabeth—and Stephen Fry as Malvolio in Rylance’s all-male production of *Twelfth Night*.



Henry Irving (1838-1905), a leading actor-manager, cast himself as Malvolio. In a promotional lithograph of his 1884 production of *Twelfth Night*, his Malvolio is at least as prominently positioned as Viola, played by Ellen Terry (1847-1928), who was arguably the most esteemed performer of her generation.

courtesan, and mistress of the future King William IV, was judged to be too low in status for tragic roles. But she reveled in—and was acclaimed for—playing Viola and other comic “breeches” roles.

- In actor-manager David Garrick’s day, a comic character actor named Richard Yates took the role of Malvolio as well as other Shakespearean “clown” characters. But in 1884, actor-manager Henry Irving cast himself as Malvolio (to Ellen Terry’s Viola). Irving was not the first leading actor to play the role, but he may have been the first to fully exploit the tragic dimension of the wronged steward.
- Since Irving’s time, the role of Malvolio has often been played by a leading man, from Herbert Beerbohm Tree in the early 20th century to Laurence Olivier to David Tennant.
- In 2002, Mark Rylance, who was then artistic director of the Globe Theatre in London, staged *Twelfth Night* Elizabethan-style, with an all-male cast. Rylance played Olivia, wearing makeup and attire that evoked Queen Elizabeth, and Stephen Fry played Malvolio. The production called attention to the play’s gender fluidity and that of Shakespeare’s world. It was reprised at the Globe Theatre during the 2013-2014 season and transferred to London’s West End and Broadway.



Designer Courtney O'Neill's model of the set for the GLT *Twelfth Night* places figures at varying stage depths to suggest the numerous playing areas provided.

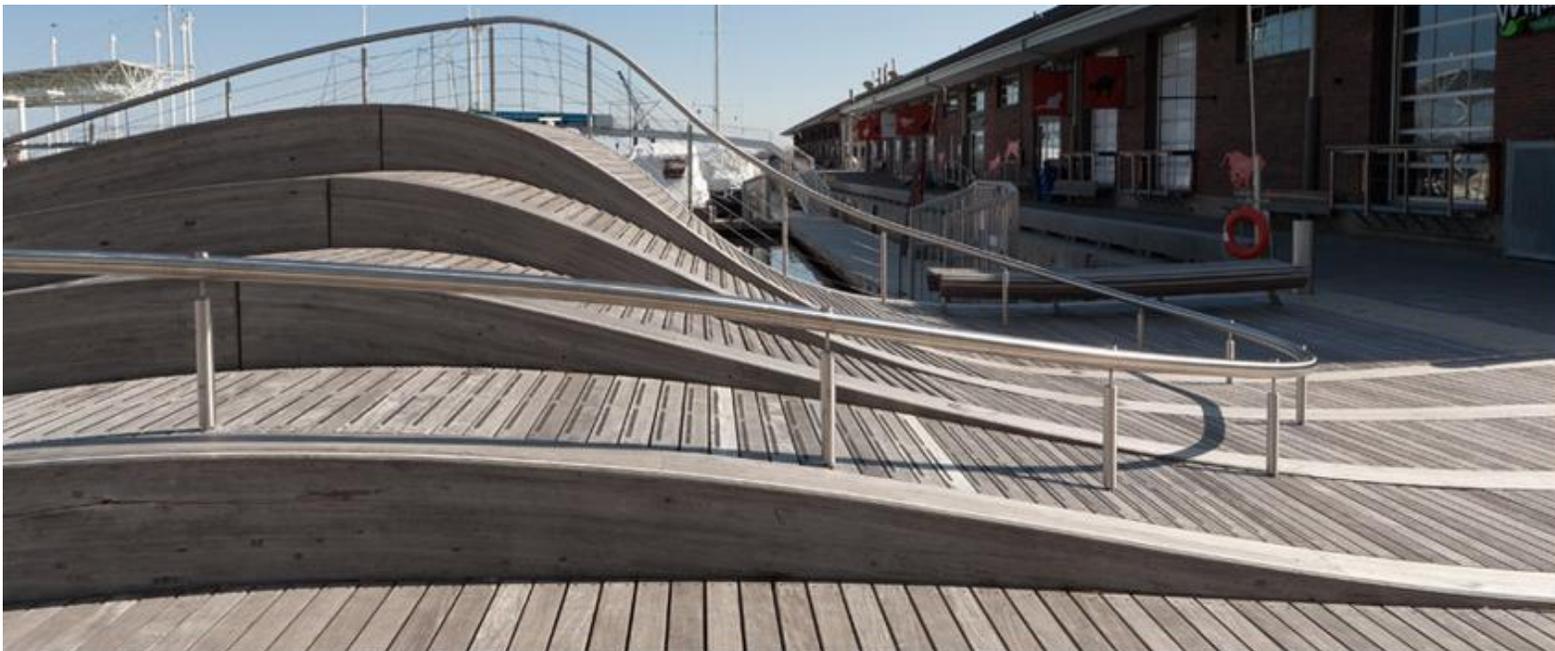
## From Page to Stage

"*Twelfth Night* is a story of love and joy born out of loss," says Sara Bruner, Great Lakes Theater's Producing Artistic Director. At the beginning of the play, the three characters who are about to form a love triangle are all struggling with heartache. Olivia is sunk in mourning for her dead brother, Viola is distraught over the loss of hers, while Orsino is suffering the pain of unrequited love. "You have to get at the reality of the grief," observes Bruner, before adding, "but you can't let it swamp the comedy."

Fighting for what Bruner calls the play's "beautiful balance" has provided the acting company with

exciting challenges. "Viola isn't able to be herself for the whole play," Bruner points out. "Olivia is not allowing anyone access, but Viola pushes against her, challenges her. The women come toe to toe. The veil lifts. Their interaction is a total joy."

As the plot unspools, many things are righted. But everybody doesn't get everything they want. "There are marriages at the end of the play. But while everyone is singing and dancing, there's one person who's not," Bruner explains. "Malvolio takes himself way too seriously, but then Sir Toby and Maria give him more than he has coming. Everything isn't always just right."



Toronto's waterfront features a WaveDeck boardwalk that was designed to mimic the waves of Lake Ontario.

Within the play's upside-down world of "misrule," the director and actors together explored such questions as "Who is master, who is servant, who is male, who is female?" As Bruner reflects, "Gender becomes a way to create identity as well as to hide identity." Casting choices mirror the play's topsy-turvy gender-blending.

The themes of Identity, fluidity, and transformation also governed the work of the production's design team. The common thematic ground between *Twelfth Night* and *Peter and the Starcatcher* enabled the two GLT productions to share a common set. In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, the set represents actual waves and sand dunes. Although *Twelfth Night* commences with a shipwreck, its setting in Illyria lacks specificity. "We gave ourselves license to create more of an abstracted space," admits scenic designer Courtney O'Neill. "At the beginning of the play, it's an isolated, lonely place, a place of despair and mourning."

Bruner asked O'Neill to provide layered playing areas that relied on curvy, feminine shapes rather than angled platforms. The director wanted to compose stage pictures that would underscore each character's isolation within the natural lushness and potential pleasures of a seaside town. While pouring over images of

water and sea, Bruner and O'Neill began to imagine Sir Toby Belch's domain as a hot tub hangout.

In freeing the set from a particular time and place, the design team embraced an eclectic approach to costuming as well. One bathing suit might be patterned after a 1950s model, while another might sport an 1890s silhouette. In clothing created by contemporary fashion designer Thom Browne, Bruner and costume designer Mieka van der Ploeg found an "of the moment" style that often comments wittily on the past. Browne-inspired cropped pants, short suits, "cod piece" inserts, asymmetrical cuts, and mismatched patterns give the production a jaunty panache.

Under Bruner's unifying vision, the designers, a composer, the acting company, and the crew were all tasked with realizing the movement of the play from the darkness of loss into the light of joy.



Asymmetrical cuts and colorful, mismatched patterns mark the “uniform” of the professional fool.



Viola—when she’s impersonating Cesario—and her twin Sebastian will wear identical fashion-forward short suits.



Contemporary designer Thom Browne’s work provided an inspiration for playfully deconstructing and reimagining traditional forms in gender-bending ways.

## Cast of Characters

Viola, a lady of Messaline shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria ..... (later disguised as Cesario)	Grayson Heyl*
Olivia, an Illyrian countess .....	Ángela Utrera*
Maria, her waiting-gentlewoman.....	Jessie Cope Miller*
Sir Toby Belch, Olivia’s kinsman.....	Dar’Jon Marquise Bentley
Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Sir Toby’s companion.....	James Alexander Rankin*
Malvolio, steward in Olivia’s household.....	Joe Wegner*
Fool, Olivia’s jester, named Feste .....	Theo Allyn*
Orsino, duke (or count) of Illyria.....	Jeremy Gallardo*
Gentlemen serving Orsino:	
Valentine.....	Boe Wank*
Curio.....	Evan Stevens*
Sebastian, Viola’s brother.....	Nic Scott Hermick*
Antonio, friend to Sebastian.....	Evan Stevens*
Captain/Priest.....	M.A. Taylor*

\*Members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States



Viola



Orsino



Olivia



Sebastian



Sir Toby Belch

Malvolio



Feste

Maria





Sir Andrew  
Aguecheek



Captain



Valentine



Priest



Curio



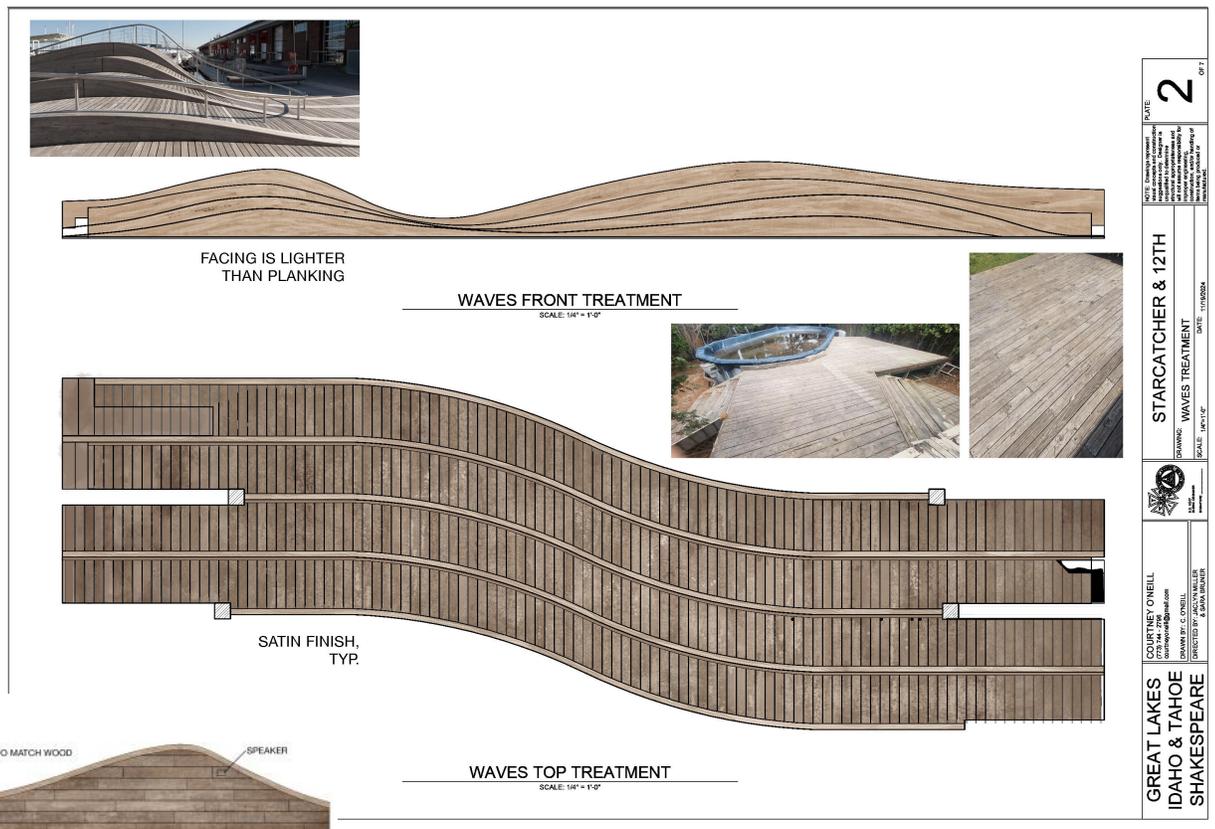
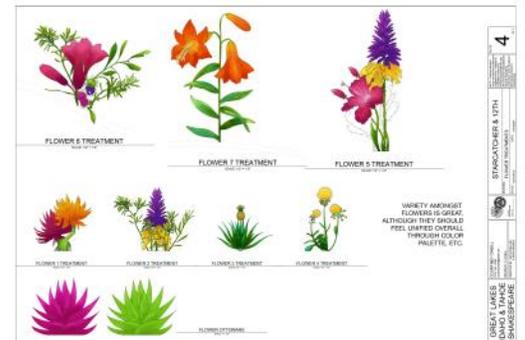
Antonio



Courtney O'Neill's scenic model for *Twelfth Night*.

Another painter's elevation details large, colorful flower elements conveying the natural lushness that the play's would-be lovers are initially too grief- and love-stricken to take comfort from.

The swells of Toronto's WaveDeck inspired the configuration of the stage deck.



## Discussion Questions

### Prior to attending the performance

1. How would you describe grief? Most of Shakespeare's comic plays start with a tragic decision or situation happening but *Twelfth Night* begins with not only the information that one of the main characters has lost both her father and her brother in the same year but also with the separation and supposed death of twins in a shipwreck. Why do you think Shakespeare started a comedy with so much loss and death? What do you think are some successful strategies with processing and living with grief?
2. Have you ever met someone who you would describe as "in love with love"? How does that person talk about love and romance? How do they pursue their romantic relationships? How would you describe the idea of romantic love? Why do you think so much art is dedicated to this idea?
3. When you think of a love song, which one pops in your mind? Why? What about that song captures the idea of love for you? Compare your song to the song from Act 2, Scene 3 of *Twelfth Night* below. What is similar? What is different? How much, if at all, do you think feelings about love have changed between Shakespeare's time in the late 1500s England to here and now in the United States?

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?  
O, stay and hear! Your true love's coming,  
That can sing both high and low.  
Trip no further, pretty sweeting.  
Journeys end in lovers meeting,  
Every wise man's son doth know.  
What is love? 'Tis not hereafter.  
Present mirth hath present laughter.  
What's to come is still unsure.  
In delay there lies no plenty,  
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty.  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

4. Why do you think love and music are so intricately tied together?
5. Viola chooses to disguise herself in order to get a job in Illyria where she is shipwrecked. Have you ever felt like you had to disguise a part of yourself to get through a situation? How did that feel? What kind of social situations affect how you talk, act, or look in order to peaceably navigate it? How is talking to your friends different from talking to your parents/guardians?
6. Has there ever been a time when you felt like you couldn't get what you wanted because of your gender? How could you pursue what you want without pretending to be something you're not? Why does someone's gender sometimes dictate access, whether it's being allowed to do or have something, go somewhere, act in certain ways?
7. In the company Shakespeare worked with, only male actors were allowed to perform this play on the professional stage. Using the synopsis of the play provided in this guide, discuss how the use of male performers might affect not only how the female characters might have been played but also how they might have been perceived in late Elizabethan England, where a queen who refused to marry ruled. How would this play be perceived today if the same practice was observed? Show clips of the 2013 production of *Twelfth Night* by Shakespeare's Globe, starring Mark Rylance and Stephen Fry.
8. Several pranks are played throughout the story of *Twelfth Night* with varying results. What was a prank you were involved with? How was it received? Would you do it again? Why do we like to pull pranks or watch people being tricked by others? What happens when a prank goes too far?

9. What happens when a person is told who they are or are not allowed to date? How would you feel if friends or family dictated who you are allowed to be romantically interested in? Why does a society make rules about who is allowed to be romantically involved with? What are some rules that might be in practice today or throughout history?
10. Shakespeare uses twins in several of his plays which might be informed by the fact that two of his kids were multiples. However, Shakespeare isn't the first or the last to use twins in a story. Why do you think twins might be used for a story? What makes the idea of them interesting? What kind of story would you include twins as the protagonists? Why?
11. Have you ever been mistaken for another person? What happened? How did it make you feel? How far did the interaction go before the mistake was discovered?

## Writing Prompts

1. Create a love poem: Individually or in a group, create a love poem. To help create the structure of the poem consider the following questions:

- What kind of love do you want to sing about: familial, romantic, platonic, love for a pet/food/place/ etc.?
- Why did you pick the kind of love you did?
- What are three qualities of the object(s) of the song you admire?
- How does this type of love make you feel?
- What does this type of love make you (want to) do?
- What would happen if you no longer had this type of love in your life?
- Why should the listener celebrate this kind of love as well?

Turn the poem into a love song: create or adapt an existing melody to be able to sing the poem. How can you perform this song? What would you include in a video for it?

2. Using the same passage from Act 1, Scene 5 on page 22, investigate how verse and prose are utilized in the dialogue. At what point in the conversation does each character move from prose to poetry? When the dialogue is in verse, does it use regular iambic pentameter or does it vary at any point? Imagine you are Shakespeare and you are giving advice to your fellow actors on how to deliver the dialogue for performance in a letter that is to be delivered to the actors' home with these new lines. What would you tell them that the shift from prose to verse, verse to prose might mean? If there are deviations from the regular iambic pentameter of the poetry, what emotion might be communicated in that moment? If it's regular all the way through, what might that mean to the emotion of the characters in the moment?
3. Malvolio's Revenge - a trial! Malvolio announces at the end of the play that he will get his revenge for how he was treated but the play ends before the audience can know what he would do. Suppose that the events of the play happen today and Malvolio decides to sue for damages. What exactly would he sue for? What would be an appropriate punishment he should seek? Does he have a case? Who would he sue? How could the character(s) he sues defend themselves? Split the class into two law firms - for the plaintiff and the defense - and have them create then argue their cases. If possible, get a judge or jury to hear the cases without advance notice of the arguments. Things to think about:
  - What evidence would be presented?
  - Which character(s) would be called to testify?
  - What current law(s) or court cases could help either side with their argument?

# Activities

1. Choose a character from the play and create a character collage for them. Use images from magazines, old books, or the internet to visually represent the character. What color would they wear? What love song would be their favorite? What kind of style would they have if they lived today? If you could cast a celebrity in this role, who would you choose? Present your collage to the class and, using what happens in the play, explain why you chose the images you did.
2. Many of the melodies that were used for the songs Shakespeare wrote in his plays have been lost to time. Throughout Shakespeare performance history, many theories have been put forth about what popular songs the words aligned with. Many melodies have been created for productions of *Twelfth Night*. Divide the class into groups. Have each group choose one of the songs in the play, then create or adapt a melody for it. What music genre will be chosen and why? What style and imagery is usually associated with that genre? Storyboard a music video and then record it.
3. The Performance of Gender: In Elizabethan England, it was established that only male actors were allowed on the professional stage and the Lord Chamberlain's Men (the company Shakespeare worked in) were no exception. Today, these roles are often played by female actors. Using all or part of the following dialogue from Act 1, Scene 5 of *Twelfth Night*, perform the scene with several different ways of casting: 2 female actors; 2 male actors; 1 female and 1 male actor. Does the gender of the actor make a difference in the way the scene is received by the audience? Why? Does certain language sound different coming from different genders? Which language and why?

## ACT 1, SCENE 5 - Olivia and Viola as Cesario

OLIVIA            Now, sir, what is your text?

VIOLA            Most sweet lady—

OLIVIA            A comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it. Where lies your text?

VIOLA            In Orsino's bosom.

OLIVIA            In his bosom? In what chapter of his bosom?

VIOLA            To answer by the method, in the first of his heart.

OLIVIA            O, I have read it; it is heresy. Have you no more to say?

VIOLA            Good madam, let me see your face.

OLIVIA            Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You are now out of your text. But we will draw the curtain and show you the picture.

[SHE REMOVES HER VEIL]

Look you, sir, such a one I was this present. Is 't not well done?

VIOLA Excellently done, if God did all.

OLIVIA 'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.

VIOLA 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white  
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on.  
Lady, you are the cruel'st she alive  
If you will lead these graces to the grave  
And leave the world no copy.

OLIVIA O, sir, I will not be so hard-hearted! I will give out divers schedules of my beauty. It shall be inventoried and every particle and utensil labeled to my will: as, item, two lips indifferent red; item, two gray eyes with lids to them; item, one neck, one chin, and so forth. Were you sent hither to praise me?

VIOLA I see you what you are. You are too proud.  
But if you were the devil you are fair.  
My lord and master loves you. O, such love  
Could be but recompensed though you were crowned  
The nonpareil of beauty.

OLIVIA How does he love me?

VIOLA With adorations, fertile tears,  
With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.

OLIVIA Your lord does know my mind. I cannot love him.  
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,  
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;  
In voices well divulged, free, learned, and valiant,  
And in dimension and the shape of nature  
A gracious person. But yet I cannot love him.  
He might have took his answer long ago.

VIOLA If I did love you in my master's flame,  
With such a suff'ring, such a deadly life,  
In your denial I would find no sense.  
I would not understand it.

OLIVIA Why, what would you?

VIOLA Make me a willow cabin at your gate  
And call upon my soul within the house,  
Write loyal cantons of contemnèd love  
And sing them loud even in the dead of night,  
Hallow your name to the reverberate hills  
And make the babbling gossip of the air

Cry out "Olivia!" O, you should not rest  
Between the elements of air and earth  
But you should pity me.

OLIVIA      You might do much.  
                  What is your parentage?

VIOLA        Above my fortunes, yet my state is well.  
                  I am a gentleman.

OLIVIA        Get you to your lord.  
                  I cannot love him. Let him send no more—  
                  Unless perchance you come to me again  
                  To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well.

## Discussion Questions

### After Attending the Performance

1. *Twelfth Night* explores different kinds of love—romantic love, self-love, unrequited love, and friendship. Which relationships best illustrate these themes?
2. Many characters in the play have strong feelings about love. What kind of love song would be the theme or anthem for each of the following characters?

Viola  
Olivia  
Orsino  
Malvolio  
Sir Toby  
Sir Andrew  
Sebastian  
Antonio

3. The title of this play, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, refers to the Christian celebration of Twelfth Night. After researching the historic practices of Elizabethan English Twelfth Night and the idea of Topsy Turvy, what similarities are there between the play and the holiday? Why do you think Shakespeare titled the play after the holiday? If you could create a title for the play, what would it be and why?
4. Viola is often seen as one of Shakespeare's most compelling female protagonists. In what ways is she empowered by her disguise, and in what ways is she limited? How does her love for Orsino develop differently from Olivia's love for Cesario?
5. How was the expression of grief handled in the performance for the characters Olivia, Viola, and Sebastian? How does the play allow or not allow the characters to express their sadness over the loss of a loved one? If you had to give one of those characters some advice on how to deal with their grief, who would you choose and what would you say?
6. The portrayal of twins on stage is a challenging endeavor and throughout the years, productions have come up with different solutions for casting Viola and Sebastian. How did this production solve the challenge? How did it help or hinder your suspension of disbelief? If you had to direct the play, how would you solve the issue?
7. How was the idea of masculinity addressed in this production? How did it meet or challenge your expectations? Why do you think Shakespeare has a female character disguise herself as male? How does her representation of masculinity affect or is affected by so many different types of male characters in the play?
8. Viola's ability to pass as Cesario raises questions about gender as performance. Do you think Shakespeare is suggesting that gender is fluid, or is it simply a comedic plot device? How does this compare to today's discussions about gender identity and expression?
9. Olivia quickly falls in love with Cesario (Viola in disguise). Do you think this reflects true love or

infatuation? How does her behavior compare to Orsino's?

10. Olivia initially declares that she will mourn her brother's death for seven years, yet she quickly falls for Cesario. What does this contradiction reveal about her character? Do you think she and Sebastian have a realistic foundation for their sudden marriage?
11. What role does Feste, the fool, play in the story? How is this character different from the other characters? Feste often appears wiser than the nobility. Meanwhile, characters like Sir Andrew and Malvolio take themselves too seriously and become the butt of jokes. What is Shakespeare suggesting about the nature of wisdom and foolishness?
12. Why do you think Olivia allows Cesario to enter the house and have a conversation with her? Why do you think she starts to have feelings for Cesario?
13. What happens when a prank goes too far? What advice would you give Sir Toby in regards to his pranks? Would you join Sir Toby with his pranks or would you try to stop him? Why?
14. How do you feel about what happens to Malvolio? Does he get what he deserves? Why or why not?
15. What do you think Malvolio's revenge would look like? Would the revenge be different between now and the time Shakespeare would have written the play (late 1590s)? How would Malvolio's revenge be different depending on his age? His gender?
16. Who do you think is the most foolish character in the play? Who is the wisest?
17. Music plays a significant role in *Twelfth Night*, with characters like Orsino and Feste using song to express deep emotions. How does music enhance the mood of the play? If you were directing a modern adaptation, what kind of soundtrack would you use?
18. The play resolves in a flurry of marriages and reunions, yet Malvolio's fate is left unresolved. Does the ending feel satisfying? Does it align with the play's themes, or do you think Shakespeare is making a statement about the consequences of deception and social ambition?
19. *Twelfth Night* relies heavily on mistaken identity and disguise as a plot device. What modern films, TV shows, or books use similar tropes? Why do you think this theme remains so popular?
20. How did design help tell the story of this play? Many designers -set, costumes, lights, sound, choreography - have a hand in telling the story of a play. What was successful and what was confusing? In particular, how did a character's costume help you understand their relationship to their world and the people around them?

## 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.

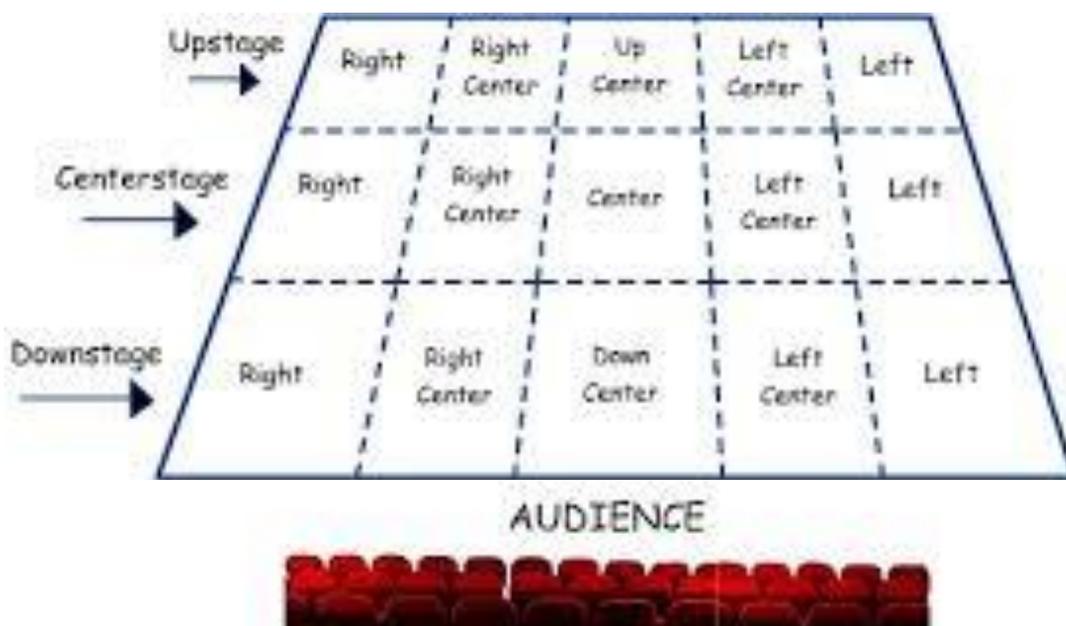
<http://faculty.chemeketa.edu/jrupert3/eng105/Annrev.html>

# A Brief Glossary of Theater Terms

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

<b>Proscenium</b>	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).
<b>Raked Stage</b>	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
<b>Set</b>	The scenery used in a scene or throughout the play
<b>Set Dressing</b>	Parts of the set that don't serve a practical function but make the set look realistic.
<b>Spotlight</b>	A type of light that is focused so that it can light a very specific area
<b>Strike</b>	Taking apart and removing a set from the theatre
<b>Thrust</b>	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).
<b>Tracks</b>	The rails on which curtains (tabs) run.
<b>Trap</b>	A hole in the stage covered by a door where actors or set pieces can exit or enter
<b>Understudy</b>	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
<b>Upstage</b>	The rear of the stage
<b>Wings</b>	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).



# Student Matinee Series 2025-2026 Season

**Sunday in the Park with George** by Stephen Sondheim & James Lapine

**Dial M for Murder** adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher, original by Frederick Knott

**A Christmas Carol** by Charles Dickens

**The Heart of Robin Hood** by David Farr

**Macbeth** by William Shakespeare

**Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson—Apt. 2B** by Kate Hamill

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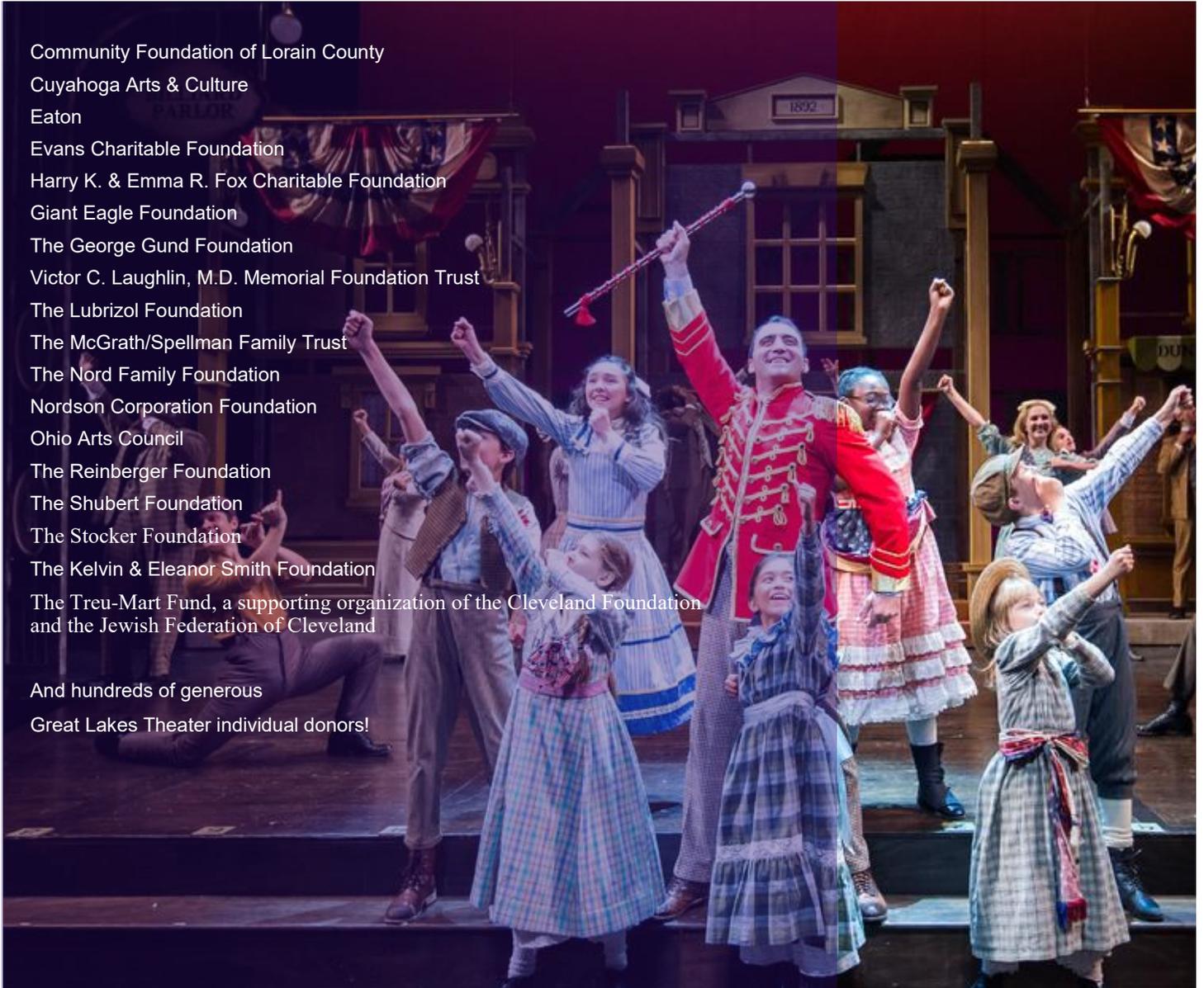
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**Sara Bruner, Producing Artistic Director**

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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