

## TWELFTH NIGHT, OR WHAT YOU WILL

### Audition Announcement

This is the audition announcement for the Robsham Theater Arts Center/Theatre Department production of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night, Or What You Will*. Anyone and everyone who is interested in being a part of this project is encouraged to audition. Please read the following information carefully in preparing to audition.

The production. *Twelfth Night* will be directed by Scott T. Cummings, Associate Professor of Playwriting and Dramatic Literature in the Theatre Department. It will be performed on the mainstage of the Robsham Theater Arts Center Wed 18-Sun 22 Nov 2009.

Auditions -- when and where? Auditions will be held on the RTAC mainstage on Fri 11 Sep starting at 3pm (earlier if needed) and running into the evening. If necessary, audition slots will be added for the morning of Sat 12 Sep (the day of a home football game). Auditionees will be seen in groups of five for half an hour per group. (Please plan to stay the entire half hour.) A sign-up sheet will be posted on the callboard in the rear hall of the Robsham no later than Tue 8 Sep. For information about what to prepare, see below.

Callbacks. Callbacks will take place on the RTAC mainstage on Sun 13 Sep 4pm-10pm.

Rehearsal period. Rehearsals will be held Mon-Thu evenings (for up to four hours) and on Sundays (for up to six hours) *starting on Mon 05 October*. In addition, there will be three Friday evening rehearsals (tba) during the rehearsal period and an all-day rehearsal workshop on Mon 13 October (Columbus Day -- no classes). The entire cast will be called for many rehearsals but not all. This rehearsal period conflicts with all other fall semester departmental, Dramatics Society, and Contemporary Theatre productions.

The *Code Monkey* question. Students involved (backstage or onstage) in the Theatre Department production of *Code Monkey* are welcome to audition for *Twelfth Night*. If cast, rehearsals for *Code Monkey* folk would begin with the all-day rehearsal workshop on Mon 13 October.

Roles available/casting needs. The play -- not including extras -- calls for three women (Viola, Olivia, Maria) and eight men (Orsino, Sebastian, Antonio, Feste, Malvolio, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian). But I am interested in considering women for several male roles, particularly Feste (aka Clown) -- who sings several songs in the play. Other characters may sing as well. Some characters will have combat sequences.

"The Supers". In addition to a core group of eleven actors, a group of three or four additional performers ("The Supers") will be cast to play secondary roles (servants, maids, police) AND to serve as the backstage/onstage run crew. "The Supers" will have speaking roles and will be crucial facilitators of the play's action, a theatrical hybrid of performer and stagehand. If approved, these individuals will receive a one-credit Lab for their crew work.

A note about the play. First performed in 1601 or 1602, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* is the last of Shakespeare's "festive comedies." Like other Shakespeare plays, it is two plays in one: 1) a romantic comedy about the effort of Orsino, Duke of Illyria, to woo the maiden Olivia with the help of a young man named Cesario, who is actually a woman named Viola in disguise; and 2) a knockabout farce involving an elaborate practical joke perpetrated against Malvolio, Olivia's self-important steward, by her maid Maria, her drunken uncle Toby Belch, his cohort Andrew Aguecheek, and a clown named Feste. Each of these plotlines explores in its own way what happens when things are taken to extremes, when love or a good time will not be denied, when foolishness leads to a kind of madness. The play displays an outwardly blithe attitude (suggested by the play's subtitle) that masks a serious investigation of the nature of love, gender, and intoxication.

The audition -- what to present. Please come to the audition prepared to do the following:

- 1) Perform a monologue -- choose one of the monologues from *Twelfth Night* included at the end of this announcement. Memorize it, rehearse it, prepare it, and perform it (this should take about a minute);
- 2) Read from the play -- if time permits, you may be asked to read a speech or a scene from the play. There's no particular preparation required, although the more familiar you are with the play, the better;
- 3) Express yourself physically -- here again, there's nothing to prepare, but you may be asked to make an entrance or move about the stage or perform a physical improvisation that will be explained at the audition;
- 4) (optional) Sing a little -- if you are interested in or even willing to be considered for the role of Feste, come prepared to sing something, preferably a bit of a love song or a ballad or a folk tune, without accompaniment (this should take less than a minute);
- 5) (optional) Perform another monologue -- if time permits and you have another prepared piece you would like me to hear (Shakespeare, contemporary, what you will), I'm happy to hear it.

The audition -- how to prepare. First, you should be familiar with the play in general and with the given circumstances of the monologue from the play that you perform. The best way to do this is to read the play (carefully, more than once), but you may find it useful to consult other sources. That's fine. Second, you should take an imaginative leap in what you present. Don't just recite the speech -- take command of it and take it somewhere. The characters in this play, by and large, are 'full of themselves' in a couple senses: 1) they have healthy, even inflated egos -- some are outright narcissists; 2) they don't hold themselves back -- they're not sheepish or reserved or inhibited -- they put themselves out there.

The audition -- what am I looking for? Student actors who show signs of being able to deal with Shakespeare's language, who speak the speech rather than letting the speech speak them. In a word, articulate. Student actors who have a full-bodied approach to character, who can find a theatrical balance between 'larger than life' and 'true to life.' In a word, robust. Student actors who demonstrate by their audition a ready-willing-and-ability to work like demons for six-plus weeks to make this play come alive. In a word, passionate.

A note on the choice of monologue from the play. Don't worry about it too much. Pick what appeals to you. Don't worry whether it's from the character you want to play or the character you think you're best suited for. To be clear, I will not limit my consideration of an auditionee to the role they present at the audition. To the contrary.

What else? If you have any questions about the auditions, please contact the director Scott Cummings at [scott.cummings@bc.edu](mailto:scott.cummings@bc.edu) or the stage manager Alex Lucci at 201-341-0960 or [luccia@bc.edu](mailto:luccia@bc.edu).

## TWELFTH NIGHT, OR WHAT YOU WILL

### Audition monologues

Choose your audition piece from the monologues below. Your choice of monologue will not limit in any way the roles for which you are considered. Not all characters in the play are represented here. An ellipsis ( . . . ) indicates that a small portion of text has been cut from the play in order to piece together a discrete monologue. Be sure you understand both exactly what is being said and the context in which it is being said. As best you can, capture the moment for the character and the situation or event that he or she is reacting to. Bear in mind when and if a character is soliloquizing (thinking out loud) and/or who a character is speaking to. Bear in mind that some of these characters are speaking in prose and some are speaking in verse. Make the speech your own. Take command. Have fun.

#### ORSINO -- Act 1 Scene 1

If music be the food of love, play on;  
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,  
The appetite may sicken, and so die.  
That strain again! it had a dying fall:  
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:  
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.  
O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,  
That, notwithstanding thy capacity  
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,  
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,  
But falls into abatement and low price,  
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy  
That it alone is high fantastical.

#### FESTE (aka CLOWN) -- Act 1 Scene 5

[aside] Wit, an't be thy will, put me into good fooling!  
Those wits, that think they have thee, do very oft  
prove fools; and I, that am sure I lack thee, may  
pass for a wise man: for what says Quinapalus?  
'Better a witty fool, than a foolish wit.' -- [to Olivia]  
God bless thee, lady! -- [voicing OLIVIA] "Take the  
fool away." -- Do you not hear, fellows? Take away  
the lady. -- "Go to, you're a dry fool; I'll no more of  
you: besides, you grow dishonest." -- Two faults,  
madonna, that drink and good counsel will amend:  
for give the dry fool drink, then is the fool not dry; bid  
the dishonest man mend himself -- if he mend, he is  
no longer dishonest; if he cannot, let the botcher  
mend him. Any thing that's mended is but patched:  
virtue that transgresses is but patched with sin; and  
sin that amends is but patched with virtue. If that this  
simple syllogism will serve, so; if it will not, what  
remedy? As there is no true cuckold but calamity, so  
beauty's a flower. The lady bade take away the fool;  
therefore, I say again, take her away.

#### OLIVIA -- Act 1 Scene 5

'What is your parentage?'  
'Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:  
I am a gentleman.' I'll be sworn thou art;  
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions and spirit,  
Do give thee five-fold blazon: not too fast: soft, soft!  
Unless the master were the man. How now!  
Even so quickly may one catch the plague?  
Methinks I feel this youth's perfections  
With an invisible and subtle stealth  
To creep in at mine eyes. Well, let it be.  
What ho, Malvolio!

#### VIOLA -- Act 2 Scene 2

I left no ring with her: what means this lady?  
Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!  
She made good view of me; indeed, so much,  
That sure methought her eyes had lost her tongue,  
For she did speak in starts distractedly.  
She loves me, sure; the cunning of her passion  
Invites me in this churlish messenger.  
. . . .  
How will this fadge? my master loves her dearly;  
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;  
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.  
What will become of this? As I am man,  
My state is desperate for my master's love;  
As I am woman,--now alas the day!--  
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!  
O time! thou must untangle this, not I;  
It is too hard a knot for me to untie!

MALVOLIO -- Act 2 Scene 3

My masters, are you mad? or what are you? Have ye no wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that ye squeak out your coziers' catches without any mitigation or remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you? . . . Sir Toby, I must be round with you. My lady bade me tell you, that, though she harbours you as her kinsman, she's nothing allied to your disorders. If you can separate yourself and your misdemeanors, you are welcome to the house; if not, an it would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to bid you farewell.

MARIA -- Act 2 Scene 3

Sweet Sir Toby, be patient for tonight: since the youth of the count's was today with thy lady, she is much out of quiet. For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him: if I do not gull him into a nayword, and make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed: I know I can do it . . . I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love; wherein, by the colour of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expresse of his eye, forehead, and complexion, he shall find himself most feelingly personated. I can write very like my lady your niece: on a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands . . . I know my physic will work with him. I will plant you two, and let the fool make a third, where he shall find the letter: observe his construction of it. For this night, to bed, and dream on the event. Farewell.

VIOLA -- Act 2 Scene 4

Ay, but I know--

. . . Too well what love women to men may owe:  
In faith, they are as true of heart as we.  
My father had a daughter loved a man,  
As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,  
I should your lordship . . . She never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought,  
And with a green and yellow melancholy  
She sat like patience on a monument,  
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?  
We men may say more, swear more: but indeed  
Our shows are more than will; for still we prove  
Much in our vows, but little in our love.  
. . . Sir, shall I to this lady?

OLIVIA -- Act 3 Scene 1

[aside] O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful  
In the contempt and anger of his lip!  
A murderous guilt shows not itself more soon  
Than love that would seem hid: love's night is noon.  
Cesario, by the roses of the spring,  
By maidhood, honour, truth and every thing,  
I love thee so, that, maugre all thy pride,  
Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide.  
Do not extort thy reasons from this clause,  
For that I woo, thou therefore hast no cause,  
But rather reason thus with reason fetter,  
Love sought is good, but given unsought better.

SEBASTIAN -- Act 3 Scene 3

My kind Antonio,

I can no other answer make but thanks,  
And thanks; and thanks; and oft good turns  
Are shuffled off with such uncurrent pay:  
But, were my worth as is my conscience firm,  
You should find better dealing. What's to do?  
Shall we go see the reliques of this town?  
. . .  
I am not weary, and 'tis long to night:  
I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes  
With the memorials and the things of fame  
That do renown this city.

ANTONIO -- Act 3 Scene 4

Let me speak a little. This youth that you see here  
I snatch'd one half out of the jaws of death,  
Relieved him with such sanctity of love,  
And to his image, which methought did promise  
Most venerable worth, did I devotion.  
. . .  
But O how vile an idol proves this god!  
Thou hast, Sebastian, done good feature shame.  
In nature there's no blemish but the mind;  
None can be call'd deform'd but the unkind:  
Virtue is beauty, but the beauteous evil  
Are empty trunks o'erflourish'd by the devil.

DUKE ORSINO -- Act 5 Scene 1

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,  
Like to the Egyptian thief at point of death,  
Kill what I love?--a savage jealousy  
That sometimes savours nobly. But hear me this:  
Since you to non-regardance cast my faith,  
And that I partly know the instrument  
That screws me from my true place in your favour,  
Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still;  
But this your minion, whom I know you love,  
And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly,  
Him will I tear out of that cruel eye,  
Where he sits crowned in his master's spite.  
Come, boy, with me; my thoughts are ripe in  
    mischief.  
I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,  
To spite a raven's heart within a dove.

MALVOLIO -- Act 5 Scene 1

Pray you, peruse that letter.  
You must not now deny it is your hand:  
Write from it, if you can, in hand or phrase;  
Or say 'tis not your seal, nor your invention:  
You can say none of this: well, grant it then  
And tell me, in the modesty of honour,  
Why you have given me such clear lights of favour,  
Bade me come smiling and cross-garter'd to you,  
To put on yellow stockings and to frown  
Upon Sir Toby and the lighter people;  
And, acting this in an obedient hope,  
Why have you suffer'd me to be imprison'd,  
Kept in a dark house, visited by the priest,  
And made the most notorious geck and gull  
That e'er invention play'd on? tell me why.