

BEFORE YOU SEE THE SHOW

Before you see the CTP production of *Twelfth Night*, consider what goes into putting on a show. What choices would you make if you were directing, designing or performing in *Twelfth Night*?

Direction

The Role of the Director

The director interprets the play and makes decisions about the best way to tell the story on stage. In addition to choosing the actors and working with them in rehearsal, the director works closely with the designers to create the look of the show.

You're the Director

What is your vision of how the play should be staged? Write a brief concept for your production including who you would cast and what themes you would emphasize.

Design

The Role of the Designers

The designers work closely with the director to create the look of the show by deciding what the costumes for each character and what scenic elements should appear on stage throughout the play.

You're the Designer

Choose a scene from *Twelfth Night* and sketch your vision of the set. Or choose two characters and cut pictures from magazines with what you think they should wear. Consider the themes and symbolism you wish to convey.

Acting

The Role of the Actors

The actors work to interpret each role in the play and work in rehearsal with the director to find the best way to present a character. They have to memorize lines and make decisions about the personality, age, and physical characteristics of their roles.

You're the Actor

Memorize a speech from your favourite character. Perform the speech, keeping in mind the following: how does the character sound? What does he or she look like? What is the emotional journey of the speech?

Going to a play in Shakespeare's London would have been similar to attending a sporting event today. The Rose and Globe Theatres were large, open-aired arenas and they would be packed with 3000 people, more than 1000 of whom would be groundlings or "penny stinkards" (since they paid a penny for admission) standing in the pit in front of the stage. The performances took place at two o'clock in the afternoon on a stage that was a large empty platform with the audience on three sides.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Attending the theatre is an interactive event. There is a unique energy created when the attention of the actors and the attention of the audience combine with imagination to create a world that exists only for the duration of the performance. Consider the following before you arrive at the theatre:

A) Design Elements

How do the costumes, lighting or music support the tone and meaning of the play?
How do design motifs enhance themes in the play?

B) Non-verbal Cues

Body language and non-verbal cues in a live performance support and clarify the words the characters speak. Watch for moments in the play where body language plays an important part in the interactions between characters. How do the physical actions express the characters' reactions and attitudes without words?

C) The Text

Watch out for scenes that have been abridged or cut entirely. How do such cuts affect the impact of the performance as a whole?

CHARACTERS IN CTP'S PRODUCTION OF TWELFTH NIGHT

Before the going to see the performance, write down some observations about the play, the characters, and lines of the text that stand out. After you have seen the CTP's production of *Twelfth Night*, it is very obvious that some characters are missing or have been combined into others. Take a look at your notes, the character lists and discuss in class some of the following questions:

- Who was missing from the cast? Did you actually miss them?
- What lines were condensed or given to other characters?
- Were the actors successful in presenting themselves as numerous characters?
- What do you think the performance gains or loses through having five actors performing eleven roles?
- Do you think this show would work better or worse with more actors?
- What did you think of the last scene, where there are too many characters present for the actors to present?

Once you have discussed, take the last scene of *Twelfth Night* and try to create your own ending. You can use any number of people, but try to limit the number to less than the number of characters. Work on the scene, creating the characters, changing lines or roles if necessary, and present it to the rest of the class. Have fun with this!