

9 August – 6 September 2025

TWELFTH NIGHT

BY WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE



EDUCATION PACK

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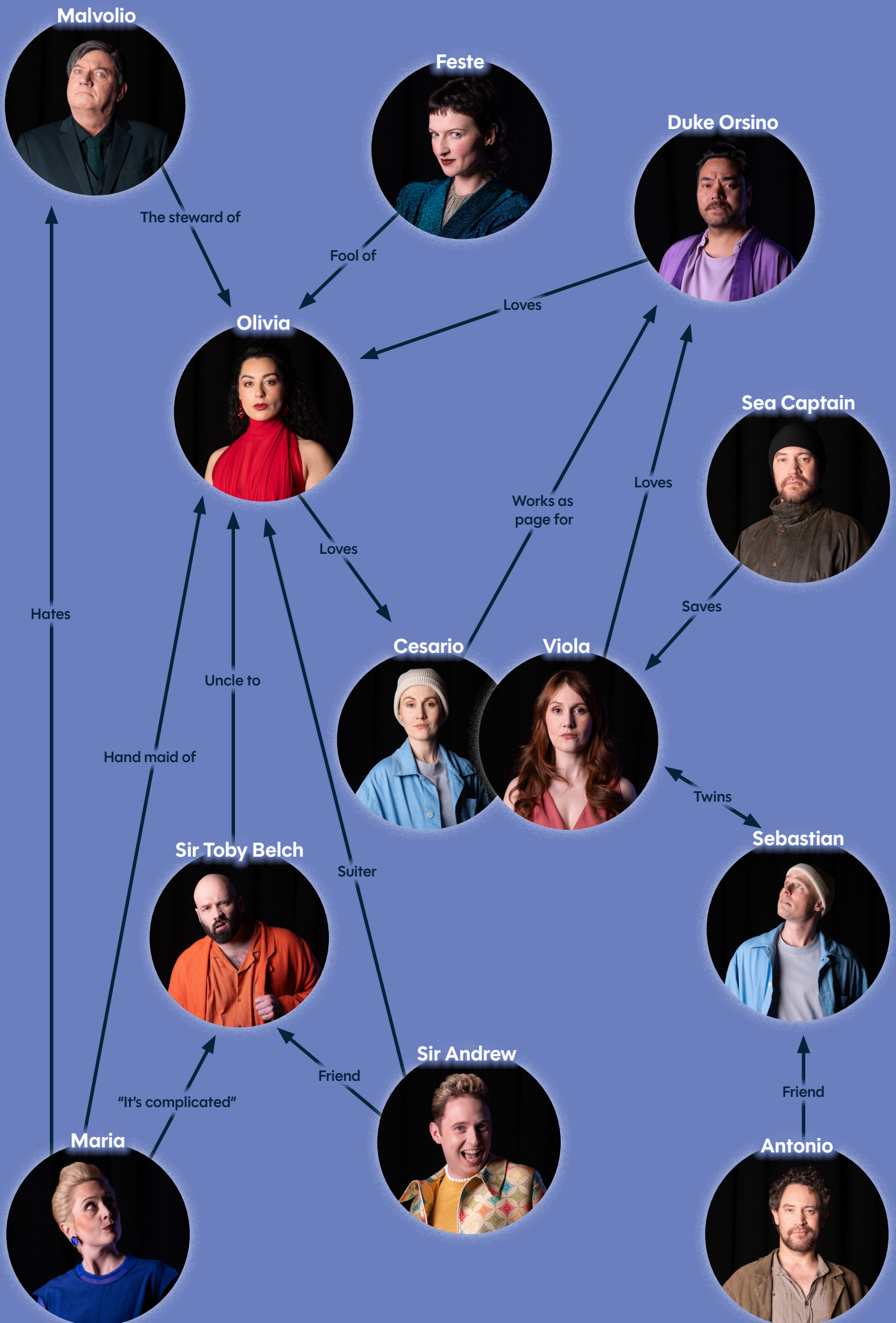
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TWELFTH NIGHT

Cast

Victoria Abbott
Viola

Emma Katene
Olivia

Dan Bain
Sir Toby Belch

Jonathon Hendry
Malvolio/Officer

Hester Ulliyart
Feste

Kathleen Burns
Maria

James Kupa
Duke Orsino

Nic Kyle
Sebastian

William Burns
Sir Andrew/Valentine

Cameron Clayton
Antonio/Captain

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Giles Tanner
Lighting Designer

Tim Budgen
Sound & AV Designer

Hester Ulliyart
Music Composition

Louise Topping
Stage Manager

Ruairi Boyd
Operator

Hannah Everingham
Studio Musician

Shaun Malloch
Studio Musician

Acknowledgements

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Running Time: 150 minutes including a 20 minute interval.

Twelfth Night staged at The Court Theatre 9 August – 6 September 2025

SYNOPSIS

Contains Spoilers

Act I

Orsino, Duke of Illyria, is despairing that he is spurned by the Countess Olivia. She has forsworn romance for seven years while she mourns the death of her brother and rebuffs all Orsino's advances. Nearby, a captain arrives on shore with a young woman, Viola, whom they have rescued from a storm at sea. Viola laments the loss of her twin brother, Sebastian, in the shipwreck. She resolves to fend for herself by dressing as a boy to get work as a page to Duke Orsino.

Despite his former rejection, Orsino sends his new page Cesario (Viola in disguise) to court Olivia for him. Cesario/Viola fell in love at first sight with her master Orsino, so she goes to court Olivia unwillingly. To make matters more complicated, Olivia continues to reject Orsino but is attracted to Cesario. She sends her proud steward, Malvolio, after him with a ring. A love triangle arises between Olivia, Viola/Cesario, and Orsino.

Act II

Meanwhile, members of Olivia's household plot to expose the self-love and aspirations of the steward, Malvolio. These include Olivia's uncle, Sir Toby Belch, her handmaid, Maria, and Sir Toby's rich & foolish friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Sir Andrew also happens to be seeking the hand of Olivia. Together, they use a letter to trick Malvolio into believing Olivia loves him. The letter demands that Malvolio appear in yellow stockings, cross-gartered, and smiling to show his love for Olivia. The Countess is horrified and Malvolio is shut in a dark room. Meanwhile, Viola's twin brother, Sebastian, has also survived the shipwreck. He comes to Illyria with Antonio, who is a wanted man for former piracy against Orsino.

Act III

Sir Andrew's affections for Olivia lead him to be jealous of Cesario, and Sir Toby persuades him to declare a duel between them. Thanks to a prank by Sir Toby, both Andrew and Cesario believe that their opponents intend to fight to the death and try to back out of the fight. However, Antonio passes by and mistakes Cesario for Sebastian, and intervenes to defend his friend. He is recognised by Orsino's men and arrested. Later, Sebastian comes along and is challenged by Sir Andrew, who thinks he is Cesario. Sebastian is a stronger fighter but Olivia intervenes and invites Sebastian into the house, also thinking him to be Cesario. Olivia and Sebastian are married that night.

Act IV

Malvolio, held in a dark cell for his apparent mental break, is cruelly manipulated and taunted by Maria, Sir Toby, and Feste, the court fool. Feste dresses up as a priest to convince Malvolio that he is, in fact, insane. After realising that they might get into trouble for treating Malvolio this way, they allow him a pen and paper to write a letter to Olivia.

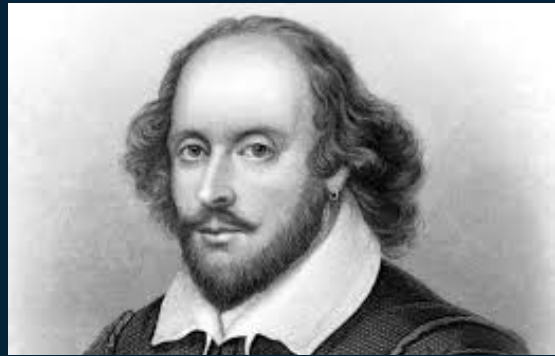
Act V

Antonio is brought to talk with Orsino, and upon seeing Cesario, he accuses him of betrayal. Just then, the real Sebastian arrives to apologise for fighting Sir Toby. The twins see each other and discover that they are both alive. Feste brings a letter from Malvolio, and on his release, Maria's letter is revealed to be fraudulent. Malvolio departs promising revenge. Maria and Sir Toby have already married in celebration of the success of their plot against the steward.

The play ends with Orsino giving his blessing to Olivia and Sebastian's love – but it's his own heart that finally speaks. Realising his feelings for 'Cesario', he turns to Viola and asks for her hand, choosing love in its truest form.

THE BARD 101

Contains Spoilers



1. He Invented a Ton of Words (Over 1,700!)

Ever used the words bedroom, lonely, swagger, or gossip? You can thank Shakespeare. He either invented or popularized many words and phrases we still use today.

2. He Had a Talent for Creative Spelling

Shakespeare spelled his own name in more than 80 different ways, including "Shakspeare" and "Shakspere." There was no "correct" spelling of his name in his time.

3. His Writing Output Was Massive

Shakespeare wrote 37 plays, 154 sonnets, and a few long narrative poems—all before the age of 52. He worked fast and didn't waste time.

4. The Globe Theatre Literally Went Up in Flames

During a performance of Henry VIII in 1613, a stage cannon misfired and set the Globe's thatched roof on fire. The whole theatre burned down—but it was rebuilt the next year.

5. His Work Is Performed All Over the World—in All Kinds of Ways

From Hollywood films and hip-hop adaptations to school plays and Broadway musicals, Shakespeare's stories keep getting reinvented... and continue to be socially relevant!

6. He Lived Through Epidemics—Which Shut Down Theatres

The bubonic plague closed London theatres multiple times during his career. Sound familiar? Just like during COVID-19, artists had to find new ways to work.

7. He Never Went to College

Shakespeare finished grammar school (basically middle school by today's standards) but didn't attend a university. Yet he's considered one of the greatest writers in history.

8. He May Have Died on His Birthday

Shakespeare was born in April 1564 and died on April 23, 1616 – possibly on his 52nd birthday. He probably would have loved the poetic symmetry!

9. He Wasn't Always Famous

After his death, his plays nearly faded into obscurity. If his friends hadn't published a collection of his works (known as the "First Folio") in 1623, we might not be enjoying them today.

10. He Started The 'Your Mama' Trend

Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies are filled with sarcasm, clever insults, and irony. He could make people laugh, cry—or cringe—with just a few lines. The Bard is credited with the first recorded 'Thy Mother' joke in Titus Andronicus, (Act 4, Scene 2).



Victoria Abbott
Viola

Victoria is a writer, performer, voice artist, clown, deviser, and director from Ōtautahi, now based on Gadigal Country in Sydney. She recently appeared in the Australian premiere of Kate Hamill's *Pride and Prejudice*, followed by her solo show *Run Rabbit* in Sydney. A graduate of Otago University and Toi Whakaari, her stage highlights include a year-long stint with Pop-Up Globe, and multiple seasons of *Kororāreka: The Ballad of Maggie Flynn* with Red Leap Theatre. On screen, she has appeared in *Top of the Lake*, *Power Rangers*, and *Educators*.

Victoria started her career at The Court Theatre as a multitude of baby woodland animals in 1995's *The Wind in the Willows*. She is delighted to be returning to The Court Theatre for *Twelfth Night*.



Emma Katene
Olivia

Emma (Ngāti Kahungunu) is a Pōneke based actor, excited to perform in her third Court Theatre show. She made her debut with her performance of Anna in *The Girl on the Train* and also played Medium Alison in *Fun Home* last year.

Her other theatre acting credits include *Cringeworthy: Boppin in the 50's* and *Swinging in the 60's* (Centrepunt Theatre), *Mannbann* (Centrepunt Theatre), *Pinocchio: The Pantomime* (Circa Theatre), *Land of the Long Long Drive* (Circa Theatre), *Sing to Me*, and *Destination Mars* (Te Papa).

Emma also enjoys working as a director, sound designer, and emcee.



Dan Bain
Sir Toby Belch

Dan Bain is 'one of New Zealand's most experienced theatre practitioners' (RNZ) and is a multi-award-winning playwright, director, and standup comedian. He is the creator of *Sleepy Time Mumbles*, a bafflingly popular sleep-aid podcast and the cult hit improv show *Perfuct Storm*.

He was the Artistic Director of the Court Jesters from 2014-2020, the Associate Director of The Court Theatre from 2017-2020, and is currently the Artistic and Programming Director of Little Andromeda Fringe Theatre.



Jonathon Hendry
Malvolio/Officer

Jonathon (Jonty) is delighted to return to the stage in his Court Theatre acting debut. A fellow of Shakespeare's Globe in London and a graduate of Toi Whakaari, he's played Shakespeare in various theatres around Aotearoa NZ. In 1989 he was Malvolio in a raucous late night offering at The Depot and BATS Theatre Wellington under the direction of Simon Bennett. He returned to the role in 2017 at the Fortune Theatre Dunedin with director Benjamin Kilby-Henson.

Jonty's passion for Shakespeare has led to success in other roles such as Richard III, Macbeth, Iago, Jaques, and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which toured to the Isaac Theatre Royal in 2001.



Hester Ulliyart
Feste & Music Composition

Hester Ulliyart trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London.

Her previous Court Theatre credits include *A Doll's House* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Her other theatre credits include *King Lear* (Auckland Theatre Company), *Woyzeck* (Free Theatre Christchurch), *Paragon Dreams* (various venues internationally), and *The Mousetrap* (UK Tour). Screen credits include *One Lane Bridge S2*, *One Of Us is Lying*, and *Cracker*.

A multi-disciplinarian, Hester also directs and writes music, plays and poetry. She runs Common Ground Spoken Word Kā Tūka Toikupu.



Kathleen Burns
Maria

Kathleen's career began at The Court Theatre in 2003 with *The Court Jesters*, and she still performs in *Scared Scriptless*. Since then, she has worked the country as an actor, writer and director. She is also a graduate of the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Art. Her previous Court Theatre acting credits include *The End of the Golden Weather*, *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express*, *Educating Rita*, *Ladies Night*, *Steel Magnolias*, *RENT*, and *Sense and Sensibility*. Other theatre credits from around the country include *A Servant to Two Masters*, *Under Milkwood*, *Cinderella*, and *Treasure Island* (Circa Theatre), *Avenue Q*, *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*, and *Flagons and Foxtrots* (Fortune Theatre). Her screen credits include *Sextortion*, *Ghost Shark 2*, *The Bostrom Scenario*, and *Wilbert Wire*.



**James Kupa
Duke Orsino**

James (Ngāti Kahungunu) is a graduate of Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School (Bachelor of Performing Arts).

His Court Theatre credits include *The Perfumed Garden*, *Frankenstein*, *The Girl on the Train*, *Dance Nation*, *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express*, and *The End of the Golden Weather*. His other theatre credits include *Betty's Summer Vacation*, *Twelfth Night* (Toi Whakaari), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Circa Theatre), *Strange Resting Places* (Taki Rua), *Penalties, Pints and Pirouettes* (Centrepont Theatre), and *Dungeons & Comedians* (Little Andromeda).

James' television credits include *Dark City: The Cleaner*, *The Brokenwood Mysteries*, *Ka Pai Living*, *Agent Anna*, and *Nothing Trivial*.



**Nic Kyle
Sebastian**

Nic has spent 18 years performing across New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Germany, and the UK—with stints in the West End, on tour with Elaine Paige, and in immersive hits like *Star Wars* and *Back to the Future* (Secret Cinema London). Credits include *Kinky Boots*, *The Music Man*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Producers*, *Cabaret*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Le Cage Aux Folles*, and *Shrek The Musical*.

A Broadway World Best Actor nominee and Variety Club's 2023 Top Male Artist, Nic is thrilled to be back at The Court Theatre—where it all began.

Nic is a proud member of Equity New Zealand.





William Burns
Sir Andrew/Valentine

William is a theatre director, actor, maker, tech, and teacher.

At The Court Theatre he has most recently been seen as Rhys in *Appropriate* and Pinkie in *Flagons and Foxtrots*. Other Court Theatre credits include Stage Manager for *The SpongeBob Musical: Youth Edition* and *Disney's The Little Mermaid JR.*, sound and AV design for *Dance Nation* and *Katzenmusik*, and various projects as director with The Court Youth Company.

William has produced five solo shows including *The First Annual Parnell Croquet Club Facebook Live Telethon*.

He is a proud member of Equity New Zealand.



Cameron Clayton
Antonio/Captain

Cameron studied at the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Arts (Bachelor of Performing Arts). His previous credits include *Cats* (Showbiz & AMICII Productions), *RENT* (AMICII Productions), *The Witches of Eastwick* (Riccarton Players), *Shrek the Musical* (Showcase Entertainment), *Flagons and Foxtrots*, *RENT*, *Cinderella*, *Something Rotten!*, and *Strictly Ballroom The Musical* (The Court Theatre).

Cameron's television credits include *Sextortion* (2020) and *David Lomas Investigates* (2021).

Cameron has also performed in country music throughout NZ, Australia, and USA, and was awarded Gore Gold Guitar Award Overall Winner (2004), NZ Entertainer of the Year (2005), and Trans-Tasman Entertainer of the Year (2001).





Alison Walls
Director

Alison is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College (MFA, Acting) and The Graduate Center (PhD, Theatre and Performance Studies).

She directed *Katzenmusik* (The Court Youth Company) and *Dance Nation* for The Court Theatre. Other theatre highlights include *Henry V* (Wellington Summer Shakespeare), *Fuddy Meers* (director, BATS, Chapman Tripp Award nominee), *When the Rain Stops Falling* (Circa Theatre), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (Director, Wellington Summer Shakespeare). While living in New York, Alison was a proud company member of theatre non-profit The Upstart Creatures.



Mark McEntyre
Set Designer

Mark is best known for his set designs for The Court Theatre, Tawata Productions, Pacific Underground, NZ International Festival of the Arts, Christchurch Arts Festival, Taki Rua Productions, and Auckland Theatre Company.

Mark has represented New Zealand in the Prague Quadrennial of Scenography and Theatre Architecture. His recent designs include *The End of the Golden Weather* (The Court Theatre), *Transmission Beta* (Circa Theatre), and *Prima Facie* (Birds of a Feather).

Mark is also the Portfolio Manager in Creative at Ara.



Jenny Ritchie
Costume Designer

Jenny is a multidisciplinary artist specialising in visual arts, costume, aerial apparatus design and choreography.

The diversity of her career has allowed her to explore many roles in a variety of performance industries, from working as a movement artist with Robert Lepage's *Ex Machina* for the Metropolitan Opera of New York, to touring internationally as a choreographer and performer for experimental Zurich contemporary circus company Rigolo, to her current roles as Aerial Director for the World of Wearable Art and costume work for NZ film, television and theatre.

Her passions lie in any realm where bodies and design collide.



Giles Tanner
Lighting Designer

Giles is a graduate of Hagley Theatre Company (Diploma in Performing Arts), where he concentrated on technical production, and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Philosophy from the University of Canterbury.

Currently Head Technician at The Court Theatre, Giles has worked on more than 50 Court productions including *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express*, *Mr and Mrs Macbeth of Heathcote Valley Road*, *A Doll's House*, *The End of the Golden Weather* and *Black Faggot*.

Giles was one of 2023's The Arts Foundation Te Tumu Toi Out of the Limelight Awards, recognising dedicated theatre practitioners in Aotearoa.



Tim Budgen
Sound & AV Designer

Tim Budgen is a digital motion designer and animator based in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Tim has over 25 years' experience in animation and post-production design for video installations, online media, theatre and corporate events. He has directed and produced music videos, and creates motion graphics and visuals for live music events and festivals including *Electric Avenue* and *Homegrown*, and for artists including Tiki Taane, Shapeshifter, and Fly My Pretties.

In addition to his freelance work, he has taught animation and motion graphics for over 20 years and is currently a lecturer in Game Art & Animation at the University of Canterbury.



Key Themes:

1. Love and Desire

Love drives almost every character in the play—but it's often confused, unbalanced, or misdirected.

2. Identity and Disguise

Disguises and mistaken identities are at the heart of the plot.

3. Gender and Role Reversal

By having Viola dress as a man, Shakespeare challenges gender roles and expectations.

4. Folly and Foolishness

Almost every character does something foolish in the name of love, pride, or revenge.

5. Appearance vs. Reality

People and things aren't always what they seem. What you see is not always the truth.

6. Festivity and Celebration

The title refers to the Twelfth Night of Christmas, a holiday known for mischief, role reversals, and celebration. The play reflects that festive spirit, with music, comedy, and chaos.

7. Manaakitanga (Hospitality)

Hospitality plays an important role in shaping the relationships and tensions in the play. It reflects the social norms, power structures, and moral values of the world Shakespeare is portraying.

DIRECTOR'S VISION

Alison Walls

Love, loss, liberation, class, recognition, music, weather, change, transformation (class, gender, composure), subjectivity, unwanted love, love as servitude, role-play (enforced and willing), siblinghood, constancy/inconstancy (sibling love is unchanging, romantic love is passionate but fluid).

Twelfth Night is 5 or 6 January, the last day of Christmas; the Feast of the Epiphany. It marks the visit of the Magi, the baptism of Jesus, and The wedding at Cana, where Jesus performed his first miracle, turning water into wine. It is a time of rowdy festivity and—in the tradition of the King cake (the man who finds a bean in his slice of cake is King for a day, the woman who finds a pea is Queen for a day)—the possibility of transformation and role-play.

The earliest known performance of *Twelfth Night* took place at Middle Temple Hall, one of the Inns of Court, on Candlemas night, 2 February 1602, so possibly as part of Twelfth Night celebrations.

I'm pretty confident Shakespeare didn't think he was a literary genius writing a grand classic; he was a popular playwright, writing a f-ing great story, a delightful romantic comedy, with some heart-wrenching darker elements.

In none of his plays is Shakespeare concerned with factual realism. The precision of time or place is not important. We are far from the realistic/naturalistic conventions that would come about in the nineteenth century. There are the precisions and peculiarities of character (he was writing for specific actors and his characters carry that specificity through). There is emotional and psychological truth. We have structure and we have freedom. We set the rules of the world and of our theatrical convention and stick to them.

Our *Twelfth Night* takes place somewhere like Monaco. It is a world unto itself, monied, coastal, filled with pleasure seekers, but also history and class structures (it is a monarchy). Some people have been there for generations, others are there to escape their lives and themselves for a moment. The sea and the sky are always present. This is our reference point but we are in a world of our own making. Illyria was an ancient kingdom in what is now the Western Balkan region, but Shakespeare's Illyria was already no longer a nation when Shakespeare wrote and is

fully fictionalised—it served the purpose of being not England. So we have the same freedom with our Illyria. It is, above all—for Viola and Sebastian—ELSEWHERE. Viola and Sebastian are strange visitors (Messaline is a total invention); Olivia, Orsino and their households are strange inhabitants. This makes everything possible. This is almost sci-fi; a country that might exist and is very close to our own world, but where things have developed differently and the rules of possibility are different.

It is a world of entertainment. Feste lives by her art. She is both free and dependent on the lifestyle of the wealthy—she has an artist's impulse to comment and provoke, and also to please and feed emotion. She is attached to Olivia's household but, being an artist, is comfortable in liminal spaces and moves easily between groups of people. The music is catchy enough to be easily enjoyed by all audiences, but with the edgy appeal of something just a little weird—it can be flirty, sentimental, ironic, or insightful. The old simple tune is one of those romantic ballads that has been covered by major singers in every era.

Twelfth Night was once a contemporary play. The actors wore modern dress that reflected status and so shall we. But, this is a heightened world, everything is just slightly pushed. The fashion is believably what might be, but not necessarily referencing any existing trend. It is polished; minimalist but extra. Colour is just slightly intensified. Class is essential. Malvolio's cross-gatering is fashion victim territory.

For historical context, it is worth noting just how much dress was controlled in Shakespeare's time—and not just gender-conforming dress; sumptuary laws controlled dress according to class, wealth, and station also. BUT, also essential is that any prohibition is prescriptive not descriptive. The prohibition would have no purpose if there wasn't a pre-existing transgression—it reveals anxiety more than anything. Ten years after *Twelfth Night*, Thomases Middleton and Decker wrote *The Roaring Girl*, inspired by the real-life Mary Frith [1581/89 – 1659], who was notorious for dressing in men's clothing, among other transgressions (there was also a book published about her in 1610). Moll in the play also boasts about her ability to attract both men and women.

The weather is everywhere. We begin with a wild storm. Then there is the eerie, beautiful and romantic calm of the day after the storm. The sea and the sky are as changeable and as potent as human emotion.

There is no built structure, or literal representation of location. Only essential elements of seating and props. Indoor and outdoor, confinement and expansiveness is conveyed by the quality of light and sound. Panels, gauze, and a cyc provide a sometimes solid, sometimes moving surface, for light and minimal projection. We have a soundscape of natural sounds, which meld with motifs from Feste's songs.

Scene changes are determined by exits and entrances and move without pause. Pace is everything.

This is a comedy with dark bits. Love is painful, confusing, and exhilarating.

Focusing lines by act:



Act One

Secrecy, pity, devotion

"And yet by the very fangs of malice I swear I am not that I play"

"What I am and what I would are as secret as maidenhead: to your ears, divinity; to any other's, profanation."

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

Act Two

Transformation, loyalty, searching

"If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant."

"What is love? 'Tis not hereafter. Present mirth hath present laughter."

"I shall never begin if I hold my peace."

"thy mind is a very opal"

"I am all the daughters of my father's house, And all the brothers, too—and yet I know not."

Act Three

Unraveling, lack of control, delightful madness

"I am not what I am."

"I would you were as I would have you be."

"I am your fool."

"I love thee so, that, maugre all thy pride, Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide"

"Why, this is very midsummer madness!"

"A fiend like thee might bear my soul to hell."

Act Four

Delirium (joyous and torturous), cruelty

"Let fancy still my sense in Lethe steep; If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!"

"O, say so, and so be!"

"But tell me true, are you not mad indeed, or do you but counterfeit?"

"And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus, Yet 'tis not madness."

Act Five

Resolution, love, restoration

"Most wonderful!"

"He hath been most notoriously abused."

"With hey, ho, the wind and the rain"

DIRECTOR'S MOODBOARD



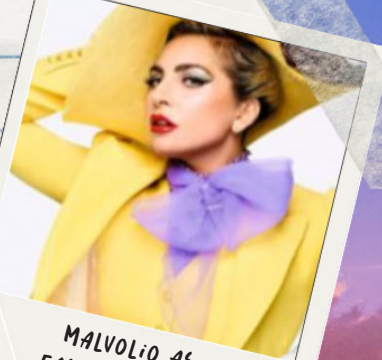
COASTAL LUXURY, A PLAYGROUND
FOR THE RICH. BE SOMEWHERE
AND SOMEONE ELSE



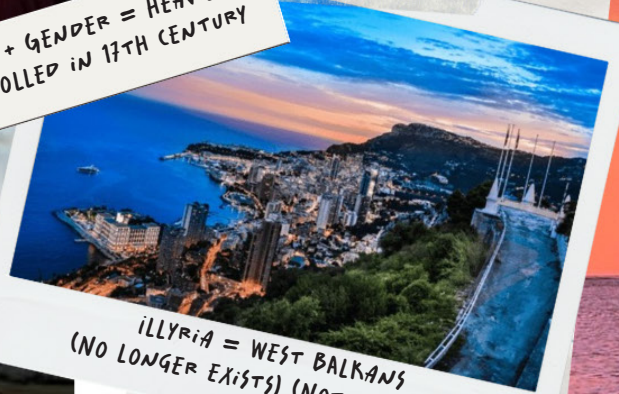
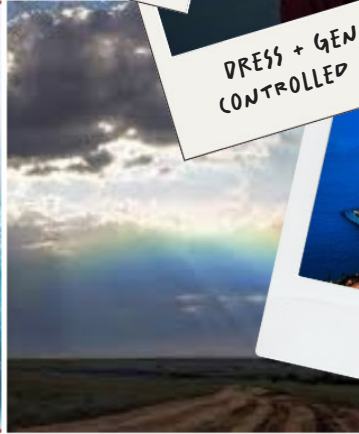
ANDROGENY, MONOCHROME



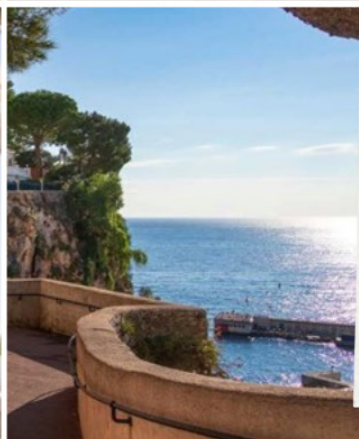
DRESS + GENDER = HEAVILY
CONTROLLED IN 17TH CENTURY



MALVOLIO AS
FASHION VICTIM

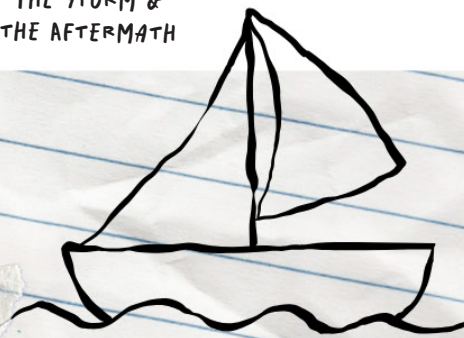


ILLYRIA = WEST BALKANS
(NO LONGER EXISTS) (NOT ENGLAND)



FESTIVITY, CARNIVALE
ROLE PLAY

THE STORM &
THE AFTERMATH



OLIVIA - STYLISH
MOURNING

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

When you are discussing *Twelfth Night* in the classroom one of the first areas you will want to dive into is connecting the director's concept to the performance. Alison Walls has outlined in her vision and in the director's moodboard what she has hoped to achieve in her realisation of Shakespeare's romantic comedy. Through a contemporary approach, design elements and directing choices and by delving into themes and ideas relevant to a 2025 audience.

Individually read through the Director's Vision and referencing the Directors Mood Board; complete the following steps:

- Highlight, circle or underline ideas, quotes, themes that stand out to you
- Identify the overarching concept Walls was aiming to achieve
- Note down questions you have for your teacher or peers

In small groups collate your individual thoughts and ideas into a comprehensive mind map or brainstorm. Discuss the questions you had individually, as a group, adding notes.

As a class add your questions to a white board for your teacher to look at. While they do that, share your brainstorms / mind maps. You could do this by walking around and looking at each other's work or sharing them verbally as a class. Move back to your original groups to discuss the questions noted on the board with your teacher and add notes.

Once you have completed this work, ensure that you save it in a shared digital space to access when compiling your portfolio, exploring internal work or revision.

Twelfth Night: The Court Theatre's Stamp

Twelfth Night has seen many classical and contemporary interpretations on the stage and also in popular culture. Each director, design team and cast imprint their own mark on the Bard's classic work. As a class reflect on the following prompt. Include discussions about casting, staging, themes, ideas, symbols and motifs:

"Why this particular Shakespearean play? Why these characters? Why now?"

Individual extension: from your class discussion collate the ideas you discussed into a short essay, voice note or vlog that also incorporates your own opinions and point of view. Discuss the wairua of the performance (see definition below) as referred to as part of the new Level One standards. This will be beneficial for all students, not just Year 11.

"The wairua of a performance refers to the reciprocal relationship between performers and audience. It includes the personal connections audience members make to a performance through their individual worldviews and perspectives."

Discussing the wairua of a performance requires an understanding of ihi, wehi, and wana through the expression of the work by performers (ihi), the viewer's personal reaction to the work by the performers (wehi), and how this shapes the overall experience and lasting impression of the performance as a whole (wana)." - [Respond to a drama performance | NCEA](#)

Exploring Key Themes and Walls' Vision

Using "The Key Themes, Directors Vision and Mood Board" pages, explore the ideas that you have picked up or are interested in after viewing *Twelfth Night*. You could use the following activities to help you unpack these ideas and connect them to the answers you will eventually write in your exam or build into your portfolio.

Brainstorm: Divide the class into seven groups and unpack each of the key themes. Once you have written everything you can about your theme, rotate around all the groups adding further information or ideas. You could use the following prompts to guide your thinking:

- Where did you see this theme presented in the play? A specific scene, character or design choice. Describe in detail.
- What is interesting about this idea? How does it link to what is going on in the world today? Describe in detail
- Quotes or scenes from the play that support or exemplify this idea.

Practical activities:

- Use the ideas from the key themes to brainstorm, devise or improvise a scene.
- Find a scene from *Twelfth Night* (you can access all of William Shakespeare's plays online) and stage it in class. Focus on using the ideas from your key themes brainstorm as the subtext or in the decisions you make in rehearsals.
- Sketch the set and annotate how technology was used in a moment where one of the ideas is highlighted by the directorial and design choices.
- Complete a Role on the Wall for one of the characters in the performance, flesh out their inner and outer lives with one of the key themes in mind. Think about who has been cast in the role and why Walls might have chosen them. You could extend this activity by Hot Seating each other.
- Write a short essay on how Walls wove one of the key themes into a specific moment in the performance. Discuss the choices you think they have made, what was physically happening and use quoted evidence from the Director's Vision and Mood Board to support your answer.
 - You might choose to do this practically as a presentation, podcast (using voice notes on your phone) or a performance based discussion.

Reference: [Drama](#) | [NCEA](#)



ACTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Viola – Victoria Abbott



What part of Viola's personality resonates most with you, if any?

I think her approach to managing her grief is really similar to mine. So, the way that she opens her heart more when she's feeling sad is definitely something that I do. And at times where I've lost people in my life, I felt like I loved the people that were around a lot more. Viola pines a lot. I'm not really a piner, I'm pretty direct. So I don't relate to that, but it's out of necessity for her. There's a bit where she says, "Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we. For such as we are made of, such we be." (Act 2, Scene 2). Traditionally, that can be seen as women are naturally more frail. In our version, I think I'm infusing a little bit of my sort of opinion, which is that if you create a small box for women to sit inside, then they might seem frail, but that's what we've done to women over the years. For such as we are made of by society, such we be.

Do you think that modern audiences are going to interpret gender fluidity or the ambiguity around gender in the same way that Shakespeare's audience does? You speak to Viola's relationship with her own gender... does that play differently in the modern interpretation?

Well, back in Shakespeare's day, it would have been a man playing a woman playing a man. So there was a little sort of twist on it there. But honestly, gender fluid people have always been around through all of history. Trans people have always been around through all of history. There are so many cases of

that throughout history. So that's not new. I think what is new is our awareness of how gender can be expressed day to day. That's really exciting that we live in a world. Of course, there's a really powerful kickback against that at the moment, which is deeply upsetting to our trans and queer and non-binary community that have always existed. But we are more playful with it now in certain safe places, which is really wonderful. So I think the unpacking of Viola's character is really wonderful because you see a woman who's actually maybe been confined to womanhood get to express herself more fully in some ways, but it's still only half of the puzzle. And when she gets to be her full self and her womanhood and her masculine side, that's when we see Viola whole and able to offer herself to Orsino.

Speaking of Orsino, Viola is caught in a quite complex love triangle. How are you learning to play that tension? What are you discovering about that relationship between the three characters with physicality and dialogue?

I think the thing about a crush is that you always know where they are in the room. So Viola's always so aware of where Orsino is. Whenever he's looking away, she might take that moment to have a little stolen glance. She's in the dialogue kind of unable to lie to him. There's this bit where he goes, It seems like you've been in love before, have you? And she goes, um, yeah. And he goes, oh, of what favour was this person? And she goes, a little of your favour. And he goes, oh, of what complexion? And she goes, of your complexion. (Act 2, Scene 4). She's technically not lying, because she can't lie to Orsino, but she's trying her best to disguise the fact that she has this massive crush on Orsino.

Do you think that that might create that blindspot that allows Olivia's fantasy to grow as well? That wherever Viola's eyes are focused, there's also that whole rest of the room that's observing Cesario?

Yeah, exactly. It's that, and, you know, Maria's super jealous of Cesario because Cesario's taking the attention because Olivia just wants to talk to

Cesario. Cesario just wants to talk to Orsino, and Orsino just wants to talk to Olivia, and they should all just talk to each other.

How did you work on the physicality and voice to distinguish Viola from Cesario?

When I'm Viola, I'm playing pretty much with my day-to-day voice, which is more feminine, a little bit more lyrical. It's a little bit higher in tone. My hips are more fluid. My body moves more. I express myself in a little bit more of a wafty way, I suppose, and then when I'm Cesario, really me and Kyle, who plays Sebastian, have spent time together going through how he stands because Viola says in here that she is copying Sebastian. So she's not just any man. She's not just trying to be masculine. What she's really trying to do is something quite beautiful, which is in her grief she's trying to recreate her brother because they look alike, and that way she doesn't have to say goodbye to him so soon, as well as helping to disguise herself in a new land. So Viola's not just any guy. She's trying to bring back the loss of her brother by dressing like him as well.

Is there anything else that stands out to you about the process, about what made you choose to audition for this role, or whether you auditioned for this role specifically?

I did a general audition for this, but I always knew that I wanted to be Viola. There's this bit where she talks about "patience on a monument" (Act 2, Scene 2), and that was the little speech that I always learnt in drama school and would try to audition with whenever I had to do a Shakespeare monologue. I really, really love this very funny rom-com, but it is also about grief and love and what to do after you lose someone that you love. I just think that at this time in the world where there's so much being lost, it's so beautiful to see a play where we talk about what to do after grief and with grief and how do you love with grief. So that really attracted me to it. And then in the audition, I remember Alison, who is the director, saying, like, oh, is that all? Did anyone want to do any other scenes? And I said, "Look, can I please do the willow cabin scene? Because I don't know when I'm going to get the chance to say these words again, and it would be just really wonderful." I think that's when I got the part. Not every director will let you have that chance to choose what you want to show. So I feel very lucky, and happy about all the cool people in the cast. Everyone's so funny and so cool and so kind.



ACTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Malvolio – Jonathon Hendry



How do you see Malvolio—villain, victim, clown, or something more complicated?

I think he's all of the above. The great thing about playing him is he has a terrific journey both as an antagonist/villain to characters like Maria or Sir Toby and as someone who's treated cruelly. He's also fun to play as he is very foolish. What's great for the actor playing Malvolio is that there are exciting choices you can make about 'how' he meets these story points and what motivates him.

How did costume and styling help build your version of Malvolio's world and self-image?

A lot. I've enjoyed working with designer Jenny and director, Alison, around how he fits into the world they're creating and how we can reflect his inner desires as well as his job running Olivia's house. He has a desire to advance himself into the world of money and privilege and his clothes reflect some of that. I had a very strong sense of some key costume and make-up elements I needed to help tell the story. I've been lucky to have played the role twice before and at this point in my life there are different things that preoccupy me and inform the performance. A few years ago, I got to study with master teacher, John Bolton. Aspects of clowning help in playing this role and informs Malvolio's self image. I'm excited to discover how people respond to him this time!

Do you think audiences in 2025 will respond differently to Malvolio than Shakespeare's original audience might have?

Yes! The world was very different then. For example, wanting to break through class barriers was not acceptable at all. It was a more controlled and hierarchical society in many ways. We're lucky that there is a contemporary diary entry around seeing the play and celebrating the downfall of Malvolio. That appears to be the way people responded and indeed the play became known by the title "Malvolio" for a period as audiences liked the story of his 'fall'. King Charles I wrote the word Malvolio next to the title of the play in his copy of the Second Folio collection of plays in 1623.

Nowadays, there are perspectives around gender, age and sexual politics that an actor should consider. The play is wonderfully rich in exploring human behaviour and most people watching will view your actions as Malvolio through those lenses either consciously or not.

What advice would you give to another actor preparing to play Malvolio in a modern production?

Be open and bring yourself to him. There are certain notes the character needs to hit to allow him to contribute to the story as a whole, but 'how' you do that is up to you. Your own voice, spirit and soul will guide you. Malvolio's journey from self importance, vanity, falling in love to despair is challenging so bring your full self to him and be brave. He's quite a ride!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

In your portfolio, exam revision or when exploring *Twelfth Night* as part of your internal assessment learning, you will want to think deeply about the characters and their purpose within the narrative. It is important to be able to link characters to the themes, symbols and motifs of the play in your discussions in class and to be able to express your ideas in written, oral and sketch format. When thinking about characters you will want to link your examples to the Elements of Role, Time, Place, Focus and Tension, as well as thinking about the four Drama Techniques; Body, Voice, Movement and Space. It is also important to consider how these characters link to, discuss or represent the wider context of the play. This is where you will consider the social, historical, political and geographical purpose of these specific characters.

Use the following activities to help you explore as a class, in groups and as an individual.

Exploring the actors' interviews:

- Choose an interview to read
- Circle or highlight ideas that interest you or you think will be helpful to support your discussions, revision, portfolio collation
- Get into pairs or small groups and share what you have circled or highlighted and explain why. Make notes or a brainstorm to record your ideas
- Choose a scene that highlights how the character (s) that actor plays connects to ideas you have identified. Brainstorm how you might talk about the scene, describing what was physically happening on stage for that character. You could present this to the rest of the class as a: (make sure you save a copy of whatever form you complete this task in)
 - Fleshed out brainstorm
 - A verbal presentation with written prompts
 - A written response
 - Acting out a scene and explaining what you are doing.

Mapping the characters' relationships:

In small groups, create a graphic character web using what you learnt from the performance and the information provided in the education pack, especially the relationship chart. Create a brief acting profile for each of the characters, using the following template (you may want to allocate a number of characters to each group member). You can design this character web in any way that suits your group:

Character description: name, age, type of person that they are

Costume and makeup: colour, material, what this says about their personality, how it impacted posture and movement

Relationships: who they are connected to and why

Purpose in the story: what is the character's purpose in the story of *Twelfth Night*

Motivations: what motivates their character and where do you think these motivations are coming from?

Actor's use of body, voice, movement and space: think about what feels new, fresh and also classic about the actor's choices.

Subtext: think about specific moments where a character was communicating through subtext.

Comedic trope: a trait that will mean the character sits within Shakespeare's comedic canon

Favourite quote:

Practical activity:

Choose characters from your character profiles or who inspired you in the performance. In a group take the characters and expand their storylines. Devise or improvise a short scene that didn't happen in the play but could add more information to that character's storyline. You could include some of the following drama conventions or Elizabethan features in your scene:

- Soliloquy
- Asides
- Chorus
- Soundscape
- Frozen image
- Any features you have been exploring if you have been learning about Elizabethan Theatre.

Individual reflection: What new ideas or resonances stood out to you about the characters and their relationships? Discuss the timeless nature of Shakespeare's writing and why it works so well through a contemporary lens.



COSTUME DESIGN

Jenny Ritchie



Can you share the overall vision for the costumes in this production of *Twelfth Night*?

With so many diverse characters, it was important to consider a concept that would allow a cohesiveness to be clearly communicated through the costumes. Mark McEntyre's minimalist set design gave us the perfect backdrop to work with a monochromatic costume palette. And so the choice was collectively made to work with this as our overarching costume design theme. Understanding the location of the story was also essential. Alison Walls' vision was that Illyria was an elsewhere location with a hint of Monaco. It was a tourist location not just for people to be somewhere else but to be somebody else. It was also a playground for the established wealthy and she wanted the fashion to be heightened and for class differences between characters to be subtly reflected in their costumes. With all this information I then needed to summarise the costume vision:

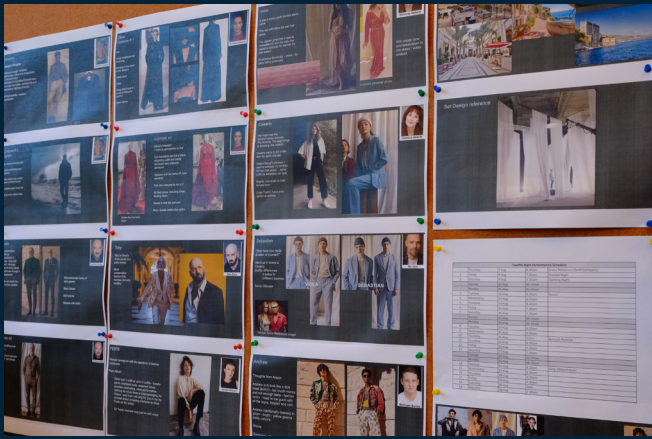
A monochromatic palette where each character has their own colour, with at least 3 tones of their assigned colour in their costumes. The fabrics chosen for each character are to reflect their status.

What role does costume play in conveying themes of identity, disguise, and gender fluidity?

Costume plays a huge role in these themes. This play is a game of dress ups! Viola starts in an elegant dress and we then transform her into Cesario where she decides to dress exactly as her memory of her brother and so her true identity becomes disguised. After reading the fake love letter from Olivia, Malvolio, a conservative and stern character is activated to dress up at the opposite end of his costume spectrum when he enacts his love for her in his yellow cross gartered look. In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare is playing with the concept that gender is performative, an incredibly relevant topic for the world we are navigating today, and highlights how clothing can allow the wearer to transcend gender constructs. Gender constructs exist as part of our cultural life and when bodies repetitively act on these assumptions, the existence of masculinity and femininity is both generated and perpetuated.

Are there specific colours, fabrics, or accessories that carry symbolic meaning in your designs?

The decision to create a monochromatic palette across all the costumes provided a clear and cohesive story telling tool. It allowed each character to be supported by a colour. The romance of Olivia's red dress, the bold cobalt blue of Maria, the conservative dark green for Malvolio, the loud orange of Toby. Sir Andrew is the only character with print in his costume, this choice enabled his character to stand out as a fashion victim by not including him in a monochromatic colour palette like the other characters. It was also important that Antonio did not wear a full set of monochromatic tones, as he was not from the wealth that the others were. Fabric choices were closely considered. Linen and cotton blends were chosen as the dominant fabric to help convey that the characters were in a warm climate and silks and sheer fabrics were chosen for characters like Orsino and Olivia to support their status and set them apart from the other characters.



In which ways do the cast and wider production crew influence the evolution from initial sketches to final fittings?

As mentioned above, the first part of the process involves understanding the set designer and artistic director's visions. This involves discussions around who each character is and what they would or wouldn't wear. Once the costume moodboards are created, I share and discuss them with the artistic director to make sure that my understanding of what the characters would wear is aligned with their vision and Shakespeare's! Once the artistic director approves the designs, I then share them with the actors so that they have an opportunity to respond to their characters' clothing and to share their ideas. This allows them to let me know important details like colour tones that work or do not work on them, for example Viola's storm dress was originally a lot lighter but Victoria Abbott communicated that that colour usually makes her look pale and washed out and so we deepened the tone and it brought out the best in her for that character.

Jonathon Hendry who plays Malvolio shared all the small details that he thought his character would wear, this included a wig and glasses, and a look that I had not considered which was his night time robe and pyjamas. The costume team at The Court Theatre play a huge and essential role in the costume vision being realised. I include them in all of my design decisions, especially the ones I am finding challenging. They have so many diverse skills, including many skills that I do not have and so it is essential that we work closely together so that we can produce garments as close to the original vision as possible. Collaboration is essential. Working together makes the ideas stronger and allows you to feel supported when you know that everyone is on the same page. It also allows for the sharing of ideas that you had never considered and for me, it is all the small details that can really add to the depth of good story telling.



SET DESIGN

Mark McEntyre

How does the set reflect or enhance the themes of the play, like disguise, transformation, or mistaken identity?

The use of semi-transparent cloth floating in the space allows the characters in this play to shift and glide between what is real and what is a mistaken identity. My aim was to create an 'in between space', an ephemeral space.

Are there moments in the play where the set transforms or shifts metaphorically — and if so, how is that accomplished?

The set is part of a wider design concept as in providing a platform/structure so we can use light, image and sound as the transformative moments. However, the set does change with the ability to fly out the gauze. The actors are also able to operate the set elements using a hand pulley system.

How closely did you work with the director and other production designers to achieve a cohesive vision?

It is always a collaborative process. It must be to create a strong cohesive vision. I am always designing with the other design elements in mind, especially in this particular project where the set elements come alive through the use of light and projected images.

Did actors' rehearsals influence how the set evolved, especially in terms of physical interaction?

Absolutely! Some of the elements that were in the original design shifted in scale as their function was understood in the rehearsal. Or some elements were cut because they were not helping drive the story telling. We spent time on stage testing out how the fabric would move and how the pulley systems would work so the actors could be part of that physical interaction with the set.



MUSIC COMPOSITION

Hester Ullyart



What was your musical vision for this adaptation of *Twelfth Night*?

First of all, there are so many ways to go about envisioning the music for a play, so you need a few things to help specify and bring down the endless option count. The music within it is a key element to convey to the audience what the world and time of the play is – for example, if it was set in the 1950's, it would be unlikely that you would find the characters listening to drum and bass or hip hop, unless there was a purposeful era clash. For this version of *Twelfth Night*, my first task was to find out from the director what time period she was setting the piece in– are we doing it in Shakespeare's time? If so, it would likely need old instruments that would fit in that world, such as lutes or drums. The answer came back that we were in a contemporary, modern world, in a place where rich people party, a hot, likely Europeanish place. She wanted it to be pop-driven and romantic, with the ability to appeal to a wide audience, but still have a bit of character. The next thing that informed my vision was that I was to be cast as Feste and sing three of the main songs myself – therefore the bulk of the music had to be original sounding songs that a possible 'local performance artist' (Feste in this version) would come up with and play and sing to entertain people with. I imagined an androgynous, fun, word-playing songstress, who could vary her song choices depending

on the mood or the vibe of the asker. I imagined upbeat synths, some decent rallying beats, a mixture of around the campfire folk, or dancefloor pop.

Another element of the vision and the story, is the sea – the fact that Sebastian and Viola lose each other in a shipwreck at the beginning– that got me thinking about how to bring elements of that sea-storm into it as well.

Did any specific artists, composers, or soundtracks inspire your score?

After my first meeting with the director, we talked about the type of performer Feste was. We started to think about some icons of our current time, and the way they approached love songs (which a lot of the songs in the piece are). Some of the names that came up were Nina Simone, Roberta Flack, Lady Gaga, Christine and the Queens, Annie Lennox, Wet Leg, Arlo Parks, Lauryn Hill... quite an eclectic, talented lot. It's great to have such a broad range of iconic women to draw from, but in the end, you just have to see what comes up when you start singing rather than imitate, and go from there, otherwise you can fall into a trap. One of the key words that I was to play with was 'cabaret', so for 'Come Away Death,' I wanted to conjure a sultry night feeling, and a song style that could easily fit into a late night jazz bar.

In terms of what I am calling 'Viola's Theme', I wanted a melancholy song that could feel as though it has come from an age gone by, with a sense of longing, that showcases the beauty (and femininity) of Viola's voice. I took the words from a speech of Feste's (which we had cut from the play), which had a theme of loss and sea voyaging within it.

How did you approach the existing musical content within the play?

I took the words from Feste's songs – O Mistress Mine, Come Away Death, and Hey, Ho, The Wind and the Rain, then came up with entirely new tunes and styles for them. I was going off the idea that Feste was a singer of modern times who had come up with some fresh pop songs. The beauty of Shakespeare having been written so long ago is that we can adapt the songs for a modern audience without feeling that he would mind too much. I came up with melodies, played around with the words, thought how to keep rhythm and meaning, and sometimes layered harmonies or mucked around with the tempo until I felt something click. I then took the songs to my small studio band, and we jammed them out and tried different instruments with them. Play and experimentation is as key to music creation as it is to the drama room.

For the other musical moments, of which there are plenty, I played around with how to find a way to modernise silly moments. For example, what late night party music would Toby and Andrew actually want to listen to? What ridiculous tune might Toby know to take the mickey out of Malvolio with?

Often I would have ideas when reading the script again alone in a quiet moment, or walking home from work, or sitting up in bed late at night – the best thing for me in those moments is the gift of a voice note on your phone. You can get down your ideas in 30 seconds, and the next thing you know, they've taken flight and turned into a full blown mock-opera tune with tango-esque dancing around Malvolio's pretentious bedware.



Can you identify any musical motifs that may help guide the audience's understanding of the action and/or character relationships?

In the Storm Scene, and when you see Viola/Cesario or Sebastian (the twins), you will hear a song I am calling 'Viola's Theme' that I wrote out of a speech cut from Feste:

*'Thy mind, is a very opal
now the melancholy god, protect thee
oh to have you put to sea, to have you put to sea,
another good voyage of nothing'*

The aim here is to remind the audience of the longing the twins feel for one another, and to blend in the bittersweetness amid the joy.

Other motifs that will come through are underscores from 'O Mistress Mine', which is a love song over a driving beat which represents a heartbeat, or that fizzy feeling you have when you are standing next to someone you really like and are not sure how to explain. You will see this as Orsino and Viola fall for each other.

There are also more ominous motifs that will come through, which will hopefully help add pressure to the remorseful state that Malvolio is put into by the trickster trio. I'm a big believer in trying to support the actors' work rather than forcing a song over the top of them, but when you see the silly characters that are Andrew, Maria, Feste and Sir Toby yelling late at night to a club-style party anthem with matching movements, hopefully you'll know you're allowed to laugh!



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

One of the most exciting aspects of viewing live theatre is seeing how the designers bring to life the written play on the stage. This is especially true with each new incarnation of Shakespeare's classic play. Each production will take a different approach to design, which can highlight themes and ideas that are recognisable to current audiences. During the design brief the key themes of identity, disguise, class difference and gender fluidity were drawn out. There was also commentary around an atmosphere of longing, melancholy and foreboding that are also created through the design elements. Use these activities to explore how the designers created this vision and Shakespeare's world on stage:

Class and costume:

This play has two strong narrative threads, the love story of the upper class and the comedic pursuits of Malvolio and the comedic trio, who are a mix of the upper class Sir Toby and Andrew, and Olivia's servants. Costume is key to the expression of this on stage, with characters such as Viola, Olivia, Sebastian and Orsino all dressed in their best, expressing a Monaco-esq world for the elite. Sir Andrew and Sir Toby join this flamboyance, while characters such as Malvolio, Maria and Feste mimic those they serve in colour and cut, but with cheaper fabric and dressing.

Activity: Choose two characters, one of the Upper Class and one of the Serving Class who have a relationship with one another. Complete the following, using relevant quotes from the designer and the actor who played the characters you have chosen:

- Fold an A4 page in half. Sketch each characters costumes side by side
- Annotate around how the following demonstrated class; fabric, design/cut, accessories
- Add notes on how their costumes demonstrated a relationship to one another
- How did the costume choice express a sense of identity?
- Annotate on how their costume communicated their character arc and purpose within the narrative of *Twelfth Night*
- Add notes about how the costume design expressed a sense of time and place
- **Extension:** In a short essay or voice note discuss the impact these costume choices had on you as a member of the audience. What did these choices communicate about a theme or idea? What did they make you think about at the time and what have you thought about since?

Moments of disguise: costume, lighting and set

The set should evoke an "in between space" and the actors should "shift and glide between what is real and what is mistaken identity." This activity will help you think about how Viola and Sebastian move in and out of this space, the gender fluidity of their costuming and how this creates *Twelfth Night's* main plot contention.

Activity: Focusing on Sebastian's entrance into the love triangle and how Viola and him move in and out of the stage space. You could do this activity as a Power Point/Slides or in your workbook. Include quotes from the design interviews throughout each of the steps outlined below.

- Describe the scene - either in writing or as a voice note
- Sketch the stage and set elements, making clear annotations of the colours, fabrics and shapes used, how did this establish an "in between space." Make detailed notes about how lighting was used to enhance this sense of space
- Sketch Sebastian and Viola's costumes, annotating how they look identical or how they differentiate from one another
- Discuss how the choices around set and costume expressed gender fluidity and led to a sense of mistaken identity. Use specific moments from the scene, with details from the performance
- Discuss why it was important that this story happened in a place that felt fluid, ethereal



Elizabethan Theatre Form and *Twelfth Night*

Within your learning and assessment work this year you might be exploring Elizabethan Theatre and using Shakespeare's texts in performance. These activities will help you to think about what you saw on stage, features of the Elizabethan form that were evident in the performance and how you could explore your ideas through performing excerpts.

The art of hiding, lying and shielding: Shakespeare's use of prose

Twelfth Night is a play about disguise and misdirection. Shakespeare had a clever way of directing his actors from his script in the way he used language. If a character was hiding, lying or shielding something they often speak in prose. This language is still poetic, but doesn't have the measured rhythm of Blank Verse. Sixty percent of *Twelfth Night* is written in prose which means that you will see high status characters slip out of Blank Verse and into Prose when they are attempting to hide, lie or shield something from other characters or from themselves. You will also see characters of different class status using prose as a form of misdirection and comedy. Use the following activity to explore this idea in discussion and in practice.

Top tip: you can tell it is prose because dialogue will be written in paragraph form.

Activity - Using the two scenes below:

- What are they hiding, lying or shielding from each other?
- Discuss the characters' status and why they might be speaking in prose at this moment.
- Bring the excerpt to life using your discussion from instruction one as subtext. Ensure you use drama techniques associated with Body and Voice to clearly communicate this.

Scene One: Olivia vs Malvolio

OLIVIA

How say you to that, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO

I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal: I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone. Look you now, he's out of his guard already; unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged. I protest, I take these wise men, that crow so at these set kind of fools, no better than the fools' zanies.

OLIVIA

Oh, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets: there is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man, though he do nothing but reprove.

Scene Two: Sir Toby Belch vs Viola

SIR TOBY BELCH

Gentleman, God save thee.

VIOLA

And you, sir.

SIR TOBY BELCH

That defence thou hast, betake thee to't: of what nature the wrongs are thou hast done him, I know not; but thy interceptor, full of despite, bloody as the hunter, attends thee at the orchard-end: dismount thy tuck, be yare in thy preparation, for thy assailant is quick, skilful and deadly.

VIOLA

You mistake, sir; I am sure no man hath any quarrel to me: my remembrance is very free and clear from any image of offence done to any man.

SIR TOBY BELCH

You'll find it otherwise, I assure you: therefore, if you hold your life at any price, betake you to your guard; for your opposite hath in him what youth, strength, skill and wrath can furnish man withal.

VIOLA

I pray you, sir, what is he?

The language of love: Shakespeare's use of blank verse

Twelfth Night has all the ingredients of a modern day rom com and Shakespeare is a master of the language of love through his expert use of Blank Verse. The poetic metre that thrums to the human heart beat and allows characters to express sincerity, honesty and true love in its rhythm. The play explores different kinds of love; familial, romantic, unrequited. The following activity will help you to explore the language of these different types of love in both discussion and practically.

Before you begin: Your teacher can either walk you through what blank verse is OR you can watch the video below as a class before trying out the activities: What is Iambic Pentameter – Royal Shakespeare Company

Top tip: you can tell it is blank verse by the capital letter at the beginning of every line.

Activity – Using the two scenes below:

- How is love evoked in the blank verse of the scene? Discuss the type of love expressed.
- Select the specific lines that evoke love and put these lines into plain language. Discuss what is happening with the characters' relationship at this moment. How does putting the lines into plain language help you understand the relationship?
- Bring the excerpt to life using your discussion from instruction two as subtext. Play with proximity, as well as body levels, eye line, gesture and posture in your interpretation.

Scene One: Familial love

SEBASTIAN

*Do I stand there? I never had a brother;
Nor can there be that deity in my nature,
Of here and every where. I had a sister,
Whom the blind waves and surges have devour'd.
Of charity, what kin are you to me?
What countryman? what name? what parentage?*

VIOLA

*Of Messaline: Sebastian was my father;
Such a Sebastian was my brother too,
So went he suited to his watery tomb:
If spirits can assume both form and suit
You come to fright us.*

SEBASTIAN

*A spirit I am indeed;
But am in that dimension grossly clad
Which from the womb I did participate.
Were you a woman, as the rest goes even,
I should my tears let fall upon your cheek,
And say 'Thrice-welcome, drowned Viola!'*

VIOLA

My father had a mole upon his brow.

SEBASTIAN

And so had mine.

VIOLA

*And died that day when Viola from her birth
Had number'd thirteen years.*

SEBASTIAN

*O, that record is lively in my soul!
He finished indeed his mortal act
That day that made my sister thirteen years.*

VIOLA

*If nothing lets to make us happy both
But this my masculine usurp'd attire,
Do not embrace me till each circumstance
Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump
That I am Viola: which to confirm,
I'll bring you to a captain in this town,
Where lie my maiden weeds; by whose gentle help
I was preserved to serve this noble count.
All the occurrence of my fortune since
Hath been between this lady and this lord.*

Scene Two: Romantic Love

OLIVIA

*I have said too much unto a heart of stone
And laid mine honour too unchary out:
There's something in me that reproves my fault;
But such a headstrong potent fault it is,
That it but mocks reproof.*

VIOLA

*With the same 'havior that your passion bears
Goes on my master's grief.*

OLIVIA

*Here, wear this jewel for me, 'tis my picture;
Refuse it not; it hath no tongue to vex you;
And I beseech you come again to-morrow.
What shall you ask of me that I'll deny,
That honour saved may upon asking give?*

VIOLA

Nothing but this; your true love for my master.

OLIVIA

*How with mine honour may I give him that
Which I have given to you?*

VIOLA

I will acquit you.

OLIVIA

*Well, come again to-morrow: fare thee well:
A fiend like thee might bear my soul to hell.*

Fun extension activity: Rewrite your scene in plain language and bring it to life onstage. Perform both the original Shakespearean language scene and your edit to your peers. Ask them to comment on how the scenes differ, what was effective and how impact may have been lost in the translation.

Status: Power and love

This activity asks you to think about the secondary narrative line in *Twelfth Night* which provides comedy, buffoonery and intrigue. These characters vie for power throughout the play by playing on one character's feelings of unrequited love to humorous effect. In the playing of these scenes the Elizabethan feature of asides are used to great effect.

Create a power map:

- Place characters in order of who holds the most power/status
- Outline why they are trying to grab power, include a quote from the performance
- Discuss their downfall or how they succeed
- Discuss how comedy is created in this power play

Unrequited love and yellow garters:

Read through Act 2, Scene 5 in groups of four (you could have groups of five if one of you would like to play director.) Discuss the following questions:

- What are the characters trying to achieve in this scene?
- Why is Malvolio the target of the joke?
- How is the Elizabethan feature of 'asides' used at this moment?

After your discussion, bring your scene to life. Consider:

- The placement of the audience, so that Maria, Sir Toby and Andrew can interact with ease
- Facial expressions and body language to demonstrate the subtext of the scene
- Posture and gesture to express the comedy of the scene
- How status is demonstrated using proximity and levels

Perform your scene for the class and discuss each group's different interpretations.

Fun extension activity: Discuss how this scene has been interpreted in popular culture; movies, different stage adaptations, etc. What is it about Shakespeare's comedy that translates so well in contemporary mediums?

Features chart:

Use this chart to make a note of other features of Elizabethan Theatre. Your teacher will be able to flesh out the different features of the theatre form. Think of ways that you could play with the feature practically in class and where The Court Theatre's cast used the features in the performance as discussion material for revision.

Feature	Description of the feature	A scene where the feature used in The Court Theatre 's production	What the use of the feature made you think about

References:

"Creative Shakespeare; The Globe Education Guide to Practical Shakespeare. Fiona Banks, 2014."

Royal Shakespeare Company:

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/learn/schools-and-teachers/teacher-resources/twelfth-night-teacher-pack-2024>

Full text:

<https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/twelfth-night/read/>

Level One

External Assessment Activities

After viewing *Twelfth Night* your teacher will support you to unpack the show with your peers and to collate an individual portfolio which you will submit in October this year. The following questions and activities will support you to unpack the performance with the assessment specifications in mind.

You can find the specifications for both Level One externals via this link: [Level One Assessment Specifications](#)

Your portfolio will be based around the following three points:

- Key message
- The use of drama components; techniques, elements, conventions and techniques
- Wairua of performance, which captures your personal response and experience of *Twelfth Night*

You should aim to weave the three points throughout your portfolio.

Unpacking key message:

When you get back to class, sit in a circle with a small bean bag or ball that you can pass across the room.

- Pass the ball or small bean bag across the circle when you have a key message to contribute.
- Someone should take note of all the ideas put forward.

There might be an obvious overriding message but try to think of all the messages that were communicated throughout the play, so that you can have a deep and robust discussion about the play.

Your focus question is:

"What do you think the key messages of *Twelfth Night* were"

Once you have collated a big list or brainstorm of the key messages, have a discussion as a class on ideas that you feel were the most important in the performance; important could mean challenging, funny, thought provoking or entertaining. **In this context you could think about how Shakespeare's work resonates with a contemporary audience and how this was reflected in decisions made by the Director, Designers and Actors.**

- In groups or pairs choose one idea from the wider brainstorm
- Write down how the message was communicated to the audience; through acting, directorial or design choices
- Note down specific moments where the key message was highlighted to the audience (remember that this will be different from person to person, it is ok if your understanding is different from your partner.)
- From your discussions do a short presentation back to the class about your key message, how it was highlighted in the show and why you thought it was important.
- Gain feedback and thoughts from your peers.

Individual activity: Choose one of the key messages that haven't been touched on and complete one of the following activities to explore whether you had a personal reaction to it:

- A voice note or vlog discussing what the key message was, how it was highlighted and how you connected with it
- A sketch with annotations of a specific moment that highlighted this key message.
- A short essay (200 words) about the key message and why you connected to it

Exploring moments where drama components were used effectively:

Before you start discussing *Twelfth Night*, make sure you understand what techniques, elements, conventions and technologies are. Break down a glossary of words with your teacher and make sure you know how to use them when you are talking and writing about live performance.

Split into four groups with each group taking one component each.

- Note down important moments in the performance where that component highlighted the key message
- Add brief sketches and annotate details of the moments as you discuss
- Add notes, quotes (from the actor/director/designer or from the play) and your own thoughts

Each group will share their information back to the class and upload all the information to a shared space; such as a google classroom, OneDrive or up on your classroom wall.

Individual activity: Looking at all the unpacking your class has done together around use of components, complete the following activity to support the construction of your report. Extending on the key message you have already used or a new one that means more to you. You can record this work in whatever way suits you best; writing, slides, vlog, voice note or in role (be creative)

- Choose a moment where this key message was highlighted by all or a combination of components
- Explicitly explain the moment and the use of components
- Add details, examples from the performance and quotes
- Use specific drama terminology in every part of your response
- Sketch and annotate if you think that will help you to elaborate your ideas

Wairua of performance:

As part of your reflection on *Twelfth Night* and in the process of collating your individual portfolio you will need to explore your own personal response and the 'wairua of performance.' Your teacher will have access to the unpacking of this standard which gives you a more detailed explanation and can explore this with you in class.

"Personal response will be from their perspective, as either an audience member, or performer. They will also understand how the wairua of a performance is channelled through the performers, and how the use of drama components can influence how effectively it is projected onto the audience." – 1.4 Unpacking

Questions to ask yourself to explore your personal response to the performance:

- What did you feel during the performance?
- What thoughts did you have during the performance?
- What have you been feeling since?
- What have you been thinking about since?
- What do you need to discuss further with your teacher, your family or your peers?
- What conversations have you had?

Group activity: in small groups, brainstorm all the moments that the audience visibly reacted during the performance.

- Why were they reacting to these moments?
- What was the actor doing at the time?
- What decisions did the designer and directors make in these moments?
- Did the audience's reaction impact your thoughts, feelings or ideas at this moment?

Individual activity: write or record a reflection based around the following prompt, incorporating responses to the questions above.

*What thoughts, feelings or responses did the performance of Twelfth Night prompt you to think about?
How did the decisions that the director/designers made or the performance of the actor contribute to these thoughts, feelings or responses?*

Once you have completed the activities outlined you can start to explore how you might use ideas, thoughts and evidence compiled to build your portfolio. Remember it needs to be your own work and that you can present your ideas in a way that suits you best.

References: <https://ncea.education.govt.nz/arts/drama/1/4?view=standard>

Revision questions

Level Three and Four

If you are a Level Two or Three student these revision questions are curated to support you to be able to answer your exam questions. You need to think carefully about the answers that come up as your work through the questions and how your thoughts, evidence and physical examples could be used in your exam responses.

The assessment specifications for both Level Two and Level Three are linked below:

[Level Two: Level Two Assessment Specifications](#)

At Level Two you "should be familiar with the use of drama elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies". Questions may cover a combination of all four drama components.

[Level Three: Level Three Assessment Specifications](#)

At Level Three you will be expected to

- "Make connections between the director/designer's concept(s) and the performance seen."
- "Be familiar with the use of drama components such as elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies."
- Think about wider context
 - "the performance as a whole
 - the playwright's purpose
 - the nature and/or purpose of theatre as an art form
 - the social or historical context. Questions may cover a combination of drama components such as elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies."

Questions to help you think about the actors' creation of character and their use of techniques:

- How did an actor use techniques to create their character? Give specific examples from the performance.
- How did an actor use their voice to create a connection with the audience?
- How did an actor use their body language and use of the space to build a connection with the audience?
- Discuss an actor's use of tone and pitch during a memorable moment in the performance.
- How did an actor use gesture and posture to communicate the characters age, thoughts and feelings?
- Discuss how the ensemble used the space to create a sense of time and place in a specific moment in the performance?
- How did an actor use space/proximity and eye contact during a moment of tension? Why was this important to the story being told?
- How did an actor use pace and body energy to move the story along? Give specific examples from the performance.
- Discuss how an actor's use of voice, body, movement and space helped to explore this contemporary retelling of *Twelfth Night*.

Questions to help you think about the use of conventions in performance: "strategies established to make meaning and connect to wider context"

- Discuss a moment in the performance where a drama convention was used effectively to move the story forward.
- Explain how a convention or a combination of conventions were used in a performance. How did this use of conventions create a sense of mood or atmosphere?
- How did the use of a convention build tension during an important moment in the performance?
- Discuss how the use of a convention helped to create meaning in a moment in the performance?
- Discuss the roles of Olivia and Viola, their use of conventions and how this supported the telling of the story.
- Discuss how the use of a convention or combination of conventions in a specific moment helped you think

about the big ideas and themes of the play in this contemporary retelling of Shakespeare's love story:

- What was the wider context (socially, historically, politically or geographically) that this moment linked to?

Questions to help you think about the director's choices and use of drama elements:

- Choose a moment in the performance where you think the director tried to build tension?
- How did the director build mood and atmosphere?
- Discuss what you think the director's concept was and what key messages they wanted the audience to focus on.
- Discuss how the director collaborated with the designers to focus the audience on the key messages, ideas and themes of the performance?
- Discuss how the director created a sense of time and place in the choices they made around staging. Give physical examples from the performance.
- Discuss why you think this play is important for audiences to watch? Why this play, at this point in time?
- Discuss how this play heals, entertains, educates or transforms the audience and the directors role in communicating that message.

Questions to help you think about design and use of technologies; reference the design information in this pack to support your answer

- How did lighting and the choices the designer made create mood and atmosphere?
- Discuss the costume choices and how they contributed to the world that was being created on stage. Sketch, with detailed annotations including fabric and colour choices.
- Choose one costume to discuss in detail, how did this support the narrative of the character wearing it and why you think specific choices about colour, material and fit were made.
- What was the purpose of the physical environment the designers created? How did it communicate the Director's vision for her version of *Twelfth Night*?
- What were the key pieces of set used and what was the symbolism or purpose of each piece. Sketch, with detailed annotations.
- Make notes on the music choices and how they supported the world being created on stage
- How did sound give a sense of time and place to the performance?
- Discuss the significance of the props used in the performance and how they communicated the themes, ideas, messages and symbols.
- Make notes on the purpose of the way the set was constructed? Why was it important in this particular type of story?
- How was the idea of love, mystery, deceit and reunion represented in the performance?