

Will & Company

Teacher Preparation and Study Guide

William Shakespeare's

The Tempest

adapted by Colin Cox and Sam Robinson©2007

THE PROGRAM

The Tempest is performed by five actors. Some of the actors portray several characters; each distinguished by a change of costume. The play is presented in a 45-minute version which highlights the major plot points and uses a narrator to link the scenes together. In this way, the audience gets a whole sense of the play in a short period of time. Will & Company productions use a single backdrop, traveling with trunks filled with costumes, props and swords, similar to the way the shows were originally performed by Shakespeare and his troupe. In addition, Will & Company invites 8 to 10 students from your school to perform in the play!

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Will & Company is a non-profit theatre ensemble based in Los Angeles at the Ricardo Montalban Theatre, who travel the country with productions geared for K-6, high school, college age and adult audiences. Founded in 1988, Will & Company presents live theatre with multicultural professional actors dedicated to providing exciting adaptations of classic literature to our nation's youth. In addition to performing, Will & Company artists, who have Professional Designation in Arts Education, travel to schools and theatres providing workshops and residencies tied to the California State Standards. Will & Company is supported by the California Arts Council, The Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.

More information about Will & Company can be found at
<http://www.willandcompany.com>

SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare was probably born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England and died on April 23, 1616. His parents were John Shakespeare and Mary Arden. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582 and had 3 children: Susanna, Judith and Hamnet. For more information on Shakespeare go to:

<http://ise.uvic.ca/index.html>

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/life.htm>

<http://www.stratford-upon-avon.co.uk/soawshst.htm>

PLAYS

William Shakespeare wrote 37 plays that we know of, along with a book of sonnets and short poems. Shakespeare is recognized as one of the world's greatest writers. Some of his most popular plays are *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar* and of course, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Many of his works are written in the form of iambic pentameter, and his early plays contain many rhyming couplets.

For full scripts of Shakespeare's plays go to:

<http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/>

THEATRE

During Shakespeare's time, theatres were banned in London, so they were built across the Thames River in Southwark. The Globe Theatre, a circular wooden outdoor space – called a “wooden O” in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, was built in 1598 and could hold 3,000 audience members. Some audience members stood on the ground before the stage and were called “groundlings”. Others paid two pence and were given a seat in the galleries that formed the walls of the theatre. There were also box seats and some royal members of the audience sat on the state. Foundations of the original Globe Theatre were discovered in 1989 and a new Globe Theatre was built close to the original site in 1997.

For a virtual tour of the new Globe, go to:

<http://shakespeare.about.com>

QUEEN ELIZABETH 1

England was ruled by Queen Elizabeth I from January 15, 1559 to March 24, 1603.

Daughter to Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth Tudor was born on September 7, 1533. Elizabeth's reign is known as England's Golden Age. She defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588. Shakespeare refers to Queen Elizabeth, known as the Virgin Queen because she never married, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a description of cupid's arrow hitting a Queen. Elizabeth was probably honored by the tale of a Queen who lives life unconcerned with love: “...And the imperial votaress passed on, in maiden meditation, fancy free.”

For quotes from Queen Elizabeth go to:

<http://www.elizabethi.org/us/quotes/>

For more information on Queen Elizabeth go to:

<http://www.elizabethi.org/us/>

KING JAMES 1

Upon her death, Elizabeth's cousin, James I (son of Mary Queen of Scots, or "bloody Mary") was crowned in 1603 and ruled until 1625. He sponsored Shakespeare's troupe of actors, the Chamberlain's Men and renamed them The King's Men.

THE TEMPEST

Sources: *The Tempest* is based loosely on plays of the Italian Comedia Dell'Arte – many of which depict sailors shipwrecked on islands inhabited by magicians. The exploration of the New World inspired many writers during Shakespeare's time. In 1609 William Strachey wrote a letter describing his experience being shipwrecked on a Bermuda Island en route to Virginia. Two other public accounts were also resourced – The Discovery of the Bermudas written in 1610 by Sylvester Jordan and A True Declaration of the state of the Colonie in Virginia (1610) by Dudley Diggs. *The Tempest* first recorded performance was at the court of King James I on November 1, 1611. *The Tempest* was first published in 1623 in the First Folio.

For more information on printing and the Quarto's go to:

http://shakespeare.about.com/library/weekly/aa060800z.htm?PM=ss15_shakespeare

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Alonso, King of Naples

Sebastian, his brother

Prospero, rightful Duke of Milan

Antonio, usurping Duke of Milan and brother to Prospero

Ferdinand, son of the King of Naples

Caliban, a savage and deformed slave

Trinculo, a jester

Stephano, a sailor

Boatswain

Mariners

Miranda, Prospero's daughter

Ariel, an airy spirit

SUMMARY OF OUR PRODUCTION

- 1. SCENE 1 Ariel, a spirit, forces a ship bound for Virginia to wreck on an enchanted island in the Bermudas. Prospero, a magician, demands that Ariel split the ship in half and disperse the sailors on different parts of the island.**
- 2. SCENE 2 Prospero tells his daughter that he is the deposed Duke of Milan – cast out to sea with Miranda and landed on this island. He liberated Ariel from a spell and now has Ariel and the monster Caliban under his service.**
- 3. SCENE 3 We meet Ferdinand who is King Alonso's son. Miranda falls head over heels in love. Prospero tests Ferdinand's love by having him do chores.**
- 4. SCENE 4 We next meet King Alonso, who is grieving over his son – whom he fears drowned. Prospero's brother, Antonio and Sebastian, nobles from the ship, plot to kill Alonso and take the crown.**
- 5. SCENE 5 We meet two sailors, Trinculo and Stephano on the opposite side of the island. The monster Caliban decides that Stephano should be king of the island and they plot to overthrow Prospero.**
- 6. SCENE 6 Ariel and the other spirits scare Alonso and the other nobles with a song and dance.**

7. **SCENE 7 Prospero and Ariel frighten Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo by placing royal garments on a clothesline and then sending spirits chasing after them when they try to steal the finery.**
8. **SCENE 8 Prospero marries Ferdinand and Miranda, forgives Alonso and his brother Antonio, has Ariel rebuild the ship and they sail home. Ariel is given her freedom.**

THE PRODUCTION ENDS WITH A Q/A SESSION WITH THE AUDIENCE.

OBJECTIVES OF PRESENTATION

1. Exposure to performance by professional actors.
2. Experience Shakespeare's words and characters as living breathing entities and not just literary abstractions.
3. Promote literacy. After observing the performance students can go back to the text with a clearer sense of what the play is about.
4. Encourage students to perform. Will & Company actors are very accessible and representative of their audience. Students easily relate to them and often after a performance, feel less intimidated to perform the materials themselves.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP

1. Have students act out a scene from the play. Encourage them to incorporate costumes into the scenes. Simple costumes can consist of hats, vests, jackets, aprons, glasses, etc. It is not important for the costume pieces to be of the period, only that in some way they reflect the essence of the character.
2. Have students create their own characters using scenarios from the play to act them out. Example: A scene in which two people survive a shipwreck on a deserted island. What objects do they have with them? How do they survive?
3. Have students write a skit that has a beginning, middle and an end. There must be a conflict, and a hero or heroine. The character must have a mission, or go on a journey with obstacles to surmount along the way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you think about Shakespeare before you saw the show? What do you think of Shakespeare now?
2. Do you think Shakespeare's stories have any relevance today?
3. Would you like to perform any of Shakespeare's plays? Which one?
4. Which character is most like you?

Sam Robinson, Managing Director
Will & Company @ The Ricardo Montalban Theatre
1615 North Vine Street
LOS ANGELES CA 90028 323 461-0093 Office 323 461-4390 fax
sam@willandcompany.com