

Twelfth Night

Zoe Golub-Sass '16

Short description: Twelfth Night is one of Shakespeare's most popular and crowd-pleasing comedies, but like all great art, it is complex and multifaceted. It is lighthearted yet thought provoking and visceral. It is, in essence, a celebration of the arts—music, poetry, drama. Our production will feed on the life of the play, stressing the value of text and the illustrative power of phonetics and listening. The process will be focused on playing with Shakespeare, keeping the text alive while creating an inviting and relatable performance. This project is about getting comfortable with the text, understanding it, owning it, and sharing our discoveries and enjoyment.

Amount requested: \$350. Other sources of support: Beginning discussions with the Theater Department about borrowing costumes and props, as well as using their rehearsal spaces.

Creative and production staff:

Director/ Dramaturg: Zoë Golub-Sass

Zoë is a sophomore here at Brandeis, majoring in English and theater. She has also studied with The Rebel Shakespeare Company (Salem, MA) for almost ten years where she has performed, directed, dramaturged, and designed. In 2008, she traveled with the company to England to see productions, attend workshops at The Globe, The RSC, and RADA, as well as perform in Stratford for Shakespeare's birthday. Last semester, she stage-managed Hillel Theater Group's production of The Children's Hour. This spring, she can be seen as J.S. in Necessary Targets with the BTC's Senior Festival.

Artistic Associate/ Actor: Justy Kosek

Justy is a senior at Brandeis, majoring in theater and creative writing. He has worked with the UTC, including directing Waiting for Godot and performing in The Children's Hour, as well as the BTC, performing in The Glass Menagerie and The Seagull. He also studied with BADA last spring. He wrote and will appear in his play, All You Need, as a part of the BTC's Senior Thesis Festival.

Production Manager/ Actor : Caley Chase

Caley was most recently seen in the BTC's production of Cabaret. She has also appeared in Lady in the Dark with the BTC's 2013 Senior Festival and in leading roles in both Bat Boy the Musical and Seussical the Musical with the UTC. She's volunteered with Shakespeare Santa Cruz for numerous years, and she spent summer of 2010 training at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon. This coming semester at Brandeis, she is choreographing Grace Fosler's original senior thesis The Elephant in the Room and will appear in Make Me a Song, both with the BTC's Senior Festival.

Reference: Alicia Hyland

PROJECT STATEMENT

Theater is in its essence collaborative. It is very appropriate for a festival of the arts. There are visual, aural, and oral design elements that demand attention and direction from a range of artists. In rehearsals, artists and actors will be one and have the chance to learn and build off of the talents and perspectives each other provide. This production is independent of the Undergraduate Theater Collective and gives students who typically don't work together the opportunity to create a production as an offering to the Brandeis and Boston communities.

Shakespeare is often dismissed as inaccessible and even when performed, sometimes made inaccessible. It is imperative to the success of Shakespeare to bring the text off the pedestal and understand why it is considered a classic. To do this, the actors and audience must be put at ease, and then the play will open itself up. Twelfth Night is a cast of approachable and relatable characters that are not intimidating in their speech. This down to earth nature will be prized and preserved in our production.

Throughout the process, we will never forget that our goal is to create a theatrical event that will stick in the audience's mind, a play that they will leave relaxed and focused, a play spectators feel they actively participated in. Theater on the Brandeis campus traditionally distances the audience in its conventional separation of event and observer. In Shakespeare's day, the plays were performed in daylight and the theater was a social space. People would mix with the actors and each other. Theater was interactive. We will take this as a premise for our performance. We will perform outside and invite our audience to bring blankets and folding chairs, to get comfortable in an Elizabethan vein.

I want to share my love of Shakespeare with fellow students in the rehearsal process. And they will go out and then infect the audience with the original genius that is Shakespeare. I went to a Shakespeare camp (The Rebel Shakespeare Company in Salem, MA, <http://www.rebelshakespeare.org>) where I learned to love Shakespeare by watching others explore text and listening to the words in a laid back, summer, atmosphere. In rehearsals, I will recreate that environment. I will work to create a space where we can look at Shakespeare and experiment with modes of communicating the text. It is our mission to make Twelfth Night ours and our audiences, to make it familiar—to make it Brandeis.

PRODUCTION LOGISTICS

There is already tremendous student interest in the production. We will be holding auditions early in February.

We would like to have two to three performances, with one later in the evening (around 10). The piece will run about 2 hours.

Location: We've submitted requests to the Rose Art Museum and Public Safety (Dennis Finn, William Dawes, and Edward Callahan) to use the outdoor space to the left of the museum for the performance. We've also spoken to Leslie Chiu about using rehearsal spaces in Spingold Theater.

Goals:

1. We want to find the modernity in the text and, through rehearsals, find those entry points into adaptation and interpretation. As we, the ones creating this performance, are the filter for our eventual audience.
2. We want to make Shakespeare accessible for actors and audience alike. Through text exercises designed by various theaters, including The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Globe, and Shakespeare and Company, we will access the core of the play.
3. Serendipitously, the weekend of the Festival and Shakespeare's 450th birthday weekend coincide. Internationally, this weekend is devoted to celebrations of Shakespeare's life and works. Also, this production would be the only Shakespeare on campus this semester.

BUDGET

Materials: \$150. This money will go towards transforming our outdoor space for the performance. (Tea lights, sound effect materials, canvas, rope.)

Costumes: \$50. As the costumes are contemporary, we will primarily pull from people's closets. We will use the money to rent specific pieces from the Spingold Theater Costume Stock.

Props: \$50. We will need to rent foils for the fight sequences.

Rights/permissions: \$50. We will need to purchase performance rights to a couple songs. The text itself is in the public domain and will not need to be purchased.

Other: \$50. Miscellaneous printing (programs, scripts, etc).

Total amount requested: \$350