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engaging

# classic acts

from court theatre's  
CAST partnership



dynamic



## Twelfth Night

by william shakespeare

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## Piano


by trevor griffiths

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CLASSICS  
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TEACHERS





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# twelfth night

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## introduction

The contents of **Classic acts** fall into six broad categories:

1. Information and background on Shakespeare.
2. Information and background on Elizabethan theatres.
3. An introduction to the play by Prof. David Bevington of the University of Chicago.
4. A synopsis of the play.
5. Interviews with the actors and photographs of the set design model.
6. Suggested activities.

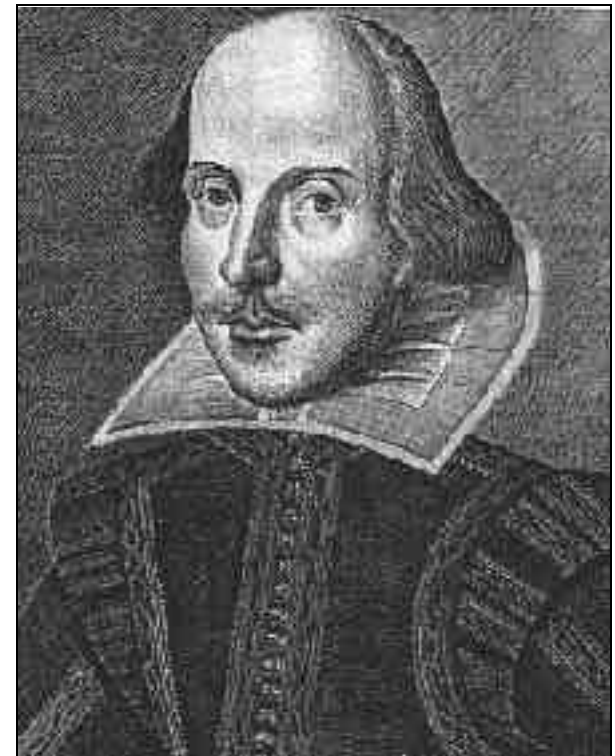
**Categories 1-4** support the study of the play as literature, as well as being the essential dramaturgical information which the director, designers and actors drew upon when preparing for the production you are to see.

**Category 5** gives insight into the process by which a literary text becomes a performance text, the process by which an original and imaginative work of one artist is re-authored—re-imagined—by another artist, the Director, together with her or his collaborators, the dramaturg, the designers and the actors.

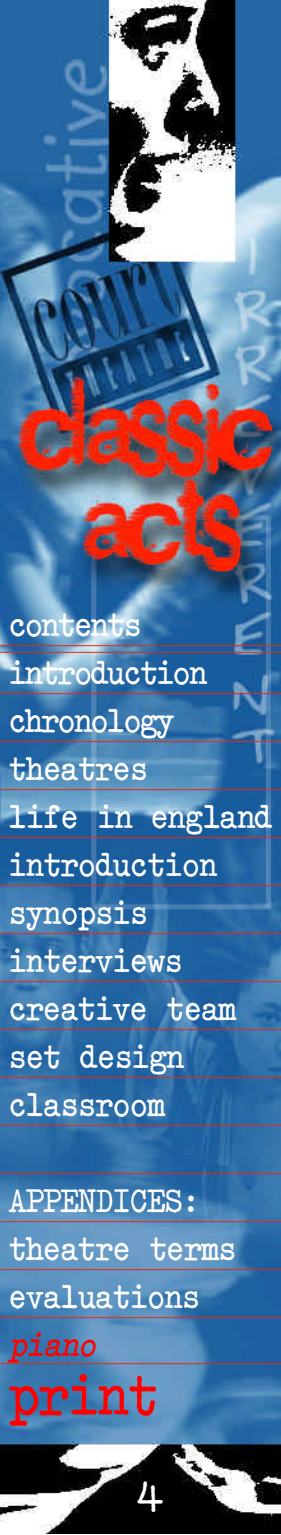
Included in **Classic acts** are early models—by the scenic designer. By looking at these and comparing them to the realized set it is possible to see how the ideas of the designer and director grew and developed.

**Suggested activities** invite exploration of the themes of the play and create opportunities for discussion and writing. There are other activities which can be conducted as discussions or role play exercises, these encourage the development of a further understanding of the work of the artists involved in a theatrical production and of the creative process.

Of particular interest might be the [Virtual Audition](#), where you can watch video of actors performing audition monologues. You can then, after careful consideration of issues of character and character development, choose in what roles you would cast these actors.



*William Shakespeare*



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## a chronology of shakespeare's plays

*This list is based, in part, on the scholarship of Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, who prepared the Oxford edition of the complete works. As with many things Shakesperean, there remain conflicting opinions about the date and order of many of the plays.*

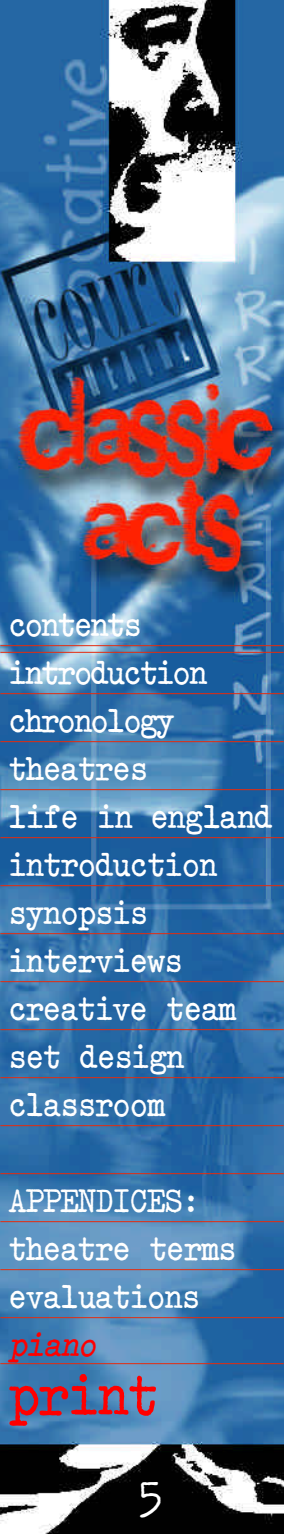
- *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, mentioned by Francis Meres in 1598.
- *Taming of the Shrew*.
- *Henry VI, part 1*, probably written in 1590-1.
- *Henry VI, part 3*, first published in 1595.
- *Titus Andronicus*, according to the first printing, performed by a company that had folded by the summer of 1593.
- *Henry VI, part 2*, probably the play 'harey the vj' recorded as performed on 3 March 1592 by Lord Strange's Men.
- *Richard III*, probably first performed in 1592-3
- *The Comedy of Errors*, probably the play 'The Night of Errors' performed on 28 December 1594.
- *Love's Labour's Lost*, probably written in 1593 or 1594.
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, probably written in 1594 or 1595 immediately before or after *Romeo and Juliet*.
- *Romeo and Juliet*, probably written in 1594 or 1595.
- *Richard II*, probably written no later than 1595.
- *King John*, probably written in 1595 or 1596.
- *The Merchant of Venice*, listed in the Stationers' Register on 22 July 1598, probably written a year or two before...
- *Henry IV, part 1*, listed in the Stationers' Register of 25 February 1598
- *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, probably performed on the occasion of the installation of George Carey, Lord Chamberlain and patron of Shakespeare's company, as a Knight of the Garter at Windsor (23 April 1597)



This chronology can be found, together with a good deal of further interesting information on Shakespeare and his life, at the following web-site:

<http://www.shopthenet.net/publiclibrary/Shakespeare/life.html>

- *Henry IV, part 2*, probably begun in late 1596 or 1597
- *Much Ado About Nothing*, the role of Dogberry was probably written for Will Kemp, who left Shakespeare's company in 1599.
- *Henry V*, probably written in the spring of 1599.
- *Julius Caesar*, a performance is recorded on 21 September 1599.
- *As You Like It*, recorded in the Stationers' Register on 4 August 1600.
- *Hamlet*, probably written in 1600 and later revised.
- ***Twelfth Night*, probably written in 1601.**
- *Troilus and Cressida*, 1602.
- *All's Well That Ends Well*, 1603.
- *Measure for Measure*, 1604.
- *Othello*, 1604.
- *The Tragedy of King Lear*, 1605.
- *Macbeth*, 1606.
- *Anthony and Cleopatra*, 1607.
- *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1607.
- *Coriolanus*, 1608.
- *Timon of Athens*, 1609.
- *Winter's Tale*, 1610.
- *Cymbeline*, 1609.
- *The Tempest*, 1611-13.
- *Henry VIII*, 1611-13: the firing of a canon during one of the first performances of this play, on 29 June 1613, started the fire that burned the Globe Theatre to the ground.



elizabethan theatres

by Amanda Mabillard

Introduction

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The plays of Shakespeare during his lifetime were performed on stages in private theatres, provincial theatres, and playhouses. His plays were acted out in the yards of bawdy inns and in the great halls of the London inns of court. Although the Globe is certainly the most well known of all the Renaissance stages associated with Shakespeare and is rightfully the primary focus of discussion, a brief introduction to some of the other Elizabethan theatres of the time provides a more complete picture of the world in which Shakespeare lived and worked.

We can classify Elizabethan theatres into two main groups — those within the London district and those located throughout the English countryside. The theatres within the London district can be further classified as follows:

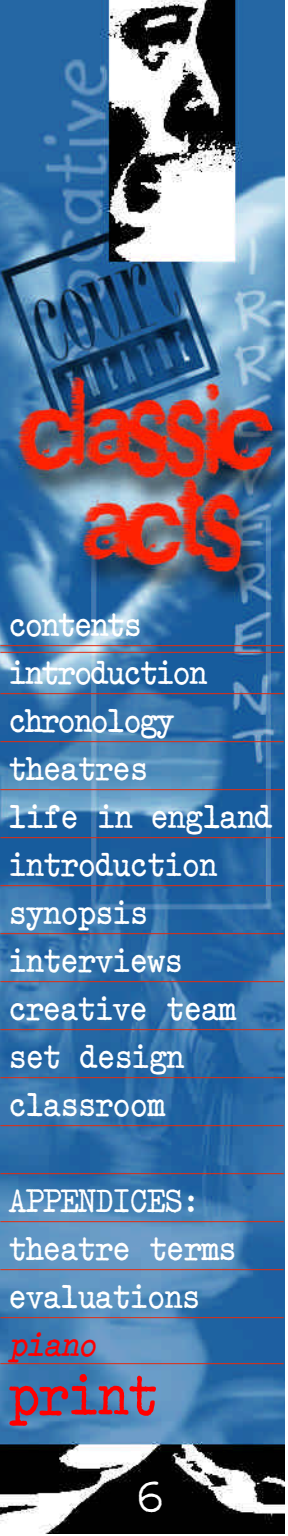
# playhouses

## The Theatre

The Theatre was the first London playhouse, built in 1576 by the English actor and entrepreneur James Burbage, father of the great actor and friend of Shakespeare, Richard Burbage. It was located in a northern suburb of London (north of London Wall which bounded the city proper); on the edge of Finsbury Fields, just past Bishopsgate Street, where Shakespeare called home up to 1597.

There are no images of the Theatre, but written accounts of the building describe a vast, polygonal, three-story timber structure, open to the sun and rain. Its exterior was coated with lime and plaster. It had features similar to those of the future Globe playhouse and other playhouses of the day, such as galleries, upper rooms, a tiring house, and trap doors in the stage floor. Like the Globe, the Theatre had two external staircases, standing on either side of the building, and leading up to the galleries. Those people who watched from the main “yard” surrounded by the comfortable covered galleries, were forced to stand during the entire performance.

The Theatre was home to many acting companies, but was used primarily by Shakespeare’s acting troupe, the Chamberlain’s Men, after 1594. Unfortunately, the Theatre fell victim to government censorship, due to the production of Thomas Nashe’s “seditious” play *Isle of Dogs* that prompted all of the London theatres to be closed for the summer of 1597. The Theatre did not reopen, and was dismantled by the carpenter Peter Street in 1598, forcing the Chamberlain’s Men to find another home.



## The Curtain

The Curtain was the second London playhouse, built in 1577, next to the Theatre, north of the London Wall. It had the same structure as the Theatre, only slightly smaller, and at times the two were under the same management. Between 1597 and 1598, the Curtain was the home of the Chamberlain's Men, before they moved to the Globe in 1599. The Curtain was used by many popular acting companies after the Chamberlain's Men, including the Queen's Men (from 1603-1609), and the Prince Charles' Company (after 1621), but there is no record of the Curtain after 1627.

There is really very little information on the Curtain available, but for more details about the owners and profits made by this playhouse, read William Ingram's essay entitled "Henry Lanman's Curtain Playhouse as an 'Easer' to the Theatre, 1585-1592" which can be found in a collection of writings called *The First Public Playhouse* (see full bibliography below).


## Newington Butts

Very little is known about this theatre, which was in use on occasion from approximately 1580. It was, unfortunately, situated over a mile from the Thames, in Surrey, near an archery training field, and the Privy Council complained of "the tediousness of the way". It appears to be the first theatre in what would later become the most important theatre district in London. When a riot in Southwark broke out on June 23, 1592, the Privy Council closed Newington Butts and all of the other playhouses around London. A brief time after this ruling, Lord Strange's Men were granted permission to resume acting, not in their former abode,

the Rose, but at the more unpopular Newington Butts. Outraged, the troupe refused and decided they would rather perform around the countryside. But they could not make a living outside the London area and so they returned, once again petitioning the Council to grant them permission to return to the Rose. This is the response by the Privy Council to Lord Strange's Men, and one of the very few contemporary documents that mention Newington Butts whatsoever:

To the Justices, Bailiffs, Constables, and Others to Whom it Shall Appertain:  
Whereas not long since, upon some considerations, we did restrain the Lord Strange his servants from playing at the Rose on the Bankside, and enjoyned them to play three days a week at Newington Butts; now forasmuch as we are satisfied that by reason of the tediousness of the way [in reference to Newington Butts], and that of long time plays have not there been used on working days, and that for a number of poor watermen are thereby relieved, you shall permit and suffer them, or any other, there [at the Rose] to exercise themselves in such sort as they have done heretofore, and that the Rose may be at liberty without any restraint so long as it shall be free from infection, any commandment from us heretofore to the contrary notwithstanding.

In June, 1594, the Chamberlain's Men gave their earliest recorded performances of *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Hamlet* (most likely the version written by Kyd) at Newington Butts, but few other details of the theatre or the troupes that used it are known.



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## The Rose

The Rose was built by dyer and businessman Philip Henslowe in 1587. Henslowe, an important man of the day, had many impressive titles, including Groom of the Chamber to Queen Elizabeth from the early 1590's, Gentleman Sewer to James I from 1603, and churchwarden and elected vestryman for St. Saviour's Parish from 1608. Henslowe built the Rose above an old rose garden on the Bankside near the south shore of the Thames, in Surrey. The Rose property consisted of a plot lying on the corner of Maiden Lane and Rose Alley — an alley about 400 feet long, "leadinge [south] from the Ryver of thames into the saide parcell of grownde," according to Henslowe's own papers. By the time Henslowe acquired the land lease and began drawing up plans for the Rose, professional playhouses like the Theatre, and the Curtain had been open for over a decade. Realizing the ease with which audiences could ferry across the Thames to London's South Bank, Henslowe desired to establish a playhouse in that particular location, already familiar to Henslowe's contemporaries as an area saturated with sundry and sometimes infamous 'pastymes' such as bear-baitings, bullbaitings, brothels, and bowling alleys.

The Rose was round and elegant, solidly composed of brick and timber, and easily accessible, making it more sophisticated than the Theatre. After 1592, the Rose seems to have become very popular, and many acting companies performed on its stage, including Lord Strange's Men (probably including Shakespeare as an actor) from 1592 to 1593, Sussex's Men from 1593 to 1594, the Queen's Men in 1594, the Admiral's Men (Shakespeare's chief rivals, who performed in the Rose for seven years starting in the spring of 1594), and Worcester's Men as late as 1603. During the plague of 1593, the Rose closed down for a time, and nearly 11,000 Londoners succumbed. It appears that actors from Lord

Strange's Men were among those that perished because, when the Rose did reopen, Sussex's Men opened in their place. What happened to Shakespeare at this time is an enigma; however, he might have been making plans to move across the river and join Heminges at the Theatre. The Rose had many successful years, standing the lone, majestic playhouse on the Bankside. But others wished to share in Henslowe's success and new theatres were built beside the Rose, contributing to its ultimate demise.

The land lease Henslowe had secured some thirty-one years before, expired in 1605. Records show that Henslowe, although suffering financially due to the competing playhouses (primarily the Globe), was ready to renew his lease under the original terms, but the parish from which he was renting insisted on renegotiating the contract, tripling his rent, and demanding 100 marks toward the upkeep of the parish. Henslowe was livid and replied to the parish, exclaiming that he 'wold [r]ather pulledowne the playehowse then . . . do so.' Henslowe gave up the Rose in 1605, and it is assumed that it was torn down the following year. Henslowe went on to build the Hope Theatre in 1613, and he died in 1616.

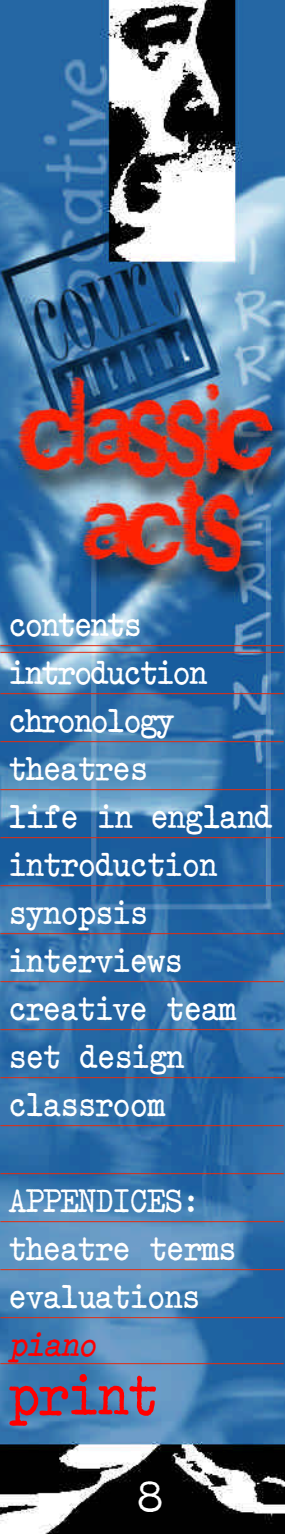


*Excavation of The Rose*

© Andrew Fulgoni Photography  
Museum of London



For more information about the Rose Theatre, visit The Rose Theatre Exhibition Home Page <http://www.rdg.ac.uk/Rose/>



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## The Swan

The Swan Theatre was built by Francis Langley about 1594, south of the Thames, close to the Rose, in Surrey. Scholars disagree as to whether Shakespeare and his company, the Chamberlain's Men, played there — some argue that the troupe definitely played at the Swan from time to time while they were looking for a permanent home.

The Swan was one of the largest and most distinguished of all the playhouses, but its place in history is primarily owing to the following two facts. First, it was at the Swan that the acting company Pembroke's Men staged the infamous play, *The Isle of Dogs*, which was responsible for the government's closure of all playhouses in the summer of 1597. Second, the Swan is represented in the only contemporary drawing of the inside of an Elizabethan playhouse known to exist (see picture on left). The drawing was created in 1596 by Johannes de Witt, a Dutch traveler who made the sketch while on a trip to London, shortly after the Swan playhouse was built. The copy pictured here was discovered in Amsterdam in 1880.

Anything we can deduce from this drawing of the Swan can most likely be applied to Shakespeare's Globe. The Swan has a rather bleak history after 1597, when the staging of plays gave way to a variety of other activities such as amateur poetry readings, and swashbuckling competitions. In 1632 it was declared that the Swan was now "fallen to decay".



*Interior drawing of the Swan Theatre by Johannes de Witt, circa 1596*



## The Globe

The Globe Theatre was constructed in 1599, out of timber taken from the Theatre. It stood next to the Rose, on the south side of the Thames, and was the most elaborate and attractive theatre yet built. The Globe was designed and constructed for the Chamberlain's Men by Cuthbert Burbage, son of the Theatre's creator, James Burbage. The lease for the land on which the Globe stood was co-owned by Burbage and his brother Robert, and by a group of five actors — Will Kempe, Augustine Phillips, John Heminge, Thomas Pope, and Shakespeare. Much of Shakespeare's wealth came from his holdings in the Globe.

The Globe was the primary home of Shakespeare's acting company beginning in late 1599, and it is a possibility that *As You Like It* was written especially for the occasion. On June 29, 1613, during a performance of *Henry VIII*, a mis-fired canon ball set the Globe's thatched roof on fire and the whole theatre was consumed. Swift reconstruction did take place and the Globe reopened to the public within a year, but with the addition of a tiled roof. The theatre lasted until 1644, at which time it was demolished, and housing was quickly built where it once stood.

Recent attempts have been made to re-create the Globe, and replicas have been built in Tokyo and in London. The exterior appearance of the Globe can only be pieced together from sketches of the theatre found in sweeping Elizabethan city scenes, and the interior appearance from the drawing of the Swan Theatre. From these images we



Check out the new Globe Theatre in London—

<http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/>



*The exterior of the Globe Theatre*

can describe the Globe as a hexagonal structure with an inner court about 55 feet across. It was three-stories high and had no roof. The open courtyard and three semicircular galleries could together hold more than 1,500 people. The stage had two primary parts: 1) The outer stage,



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which was a rectangular platform projecting into the courtyard, from the back wall. Above it were a thatched roof and hangings but no front or side curtains. 2) The inner stage was the recess between two projecting wings at the very back of the outer stage. This stage was used by actors who were in a scene but not directly involved in the immediate action of the play, and it was also used when a scene takes place in an inner room.



Impression of the original Globe by Paul Cox

Underneath the floors of the outer and inner stages was a large cellar called “hell”, allowing for the dramatic appearance of ghosts and the like. This cellar was probably as big as the two stages combined above it, and it was accessed by two or more trap-doors on the outer stage and one trap door “the grave trap” as scholars call it, on

the inner stage. Actors in “hell” would be encompassed by darkness, with the only light coming from tiny holes in the floor or from the tiring-house stairway at the very back of the cellar. Rising from behind the stages was the tiring-house, the three story section of the playhouse that contained the dressing rooms, the prop room, the musician’s gallery, and connecting passageways. The tiring-house was enclosed in curtains at all times so the less dramatic elements of play production would be hidden from the audience. Two doors on either side of the tiring-house allowed the actors entrance onto the stage. Sometimes an actor would come through the “middle door”, which really referred to the main floor curtains of the tiring-house that led directly onto center stage.

The three levels of the tiring-house were each very different. The first level was, essentially, the inner stage when one was needed. Many times Shakespeare’s plays call for a scene within a scene, such as Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess as a backdrop to the main scene in *The Tempest* (V,i); or a scene in which a character or item needs to be dramatically revealed, as we find in *The Merchant of Venice* (II,vii), when Portia asks Nerissa to “draw aside the curtains” to show the caskets; or a scene that should take place in a small, confining space, such as the Capulet’s Tomb in *Romeo and Juliet* (V,iii).

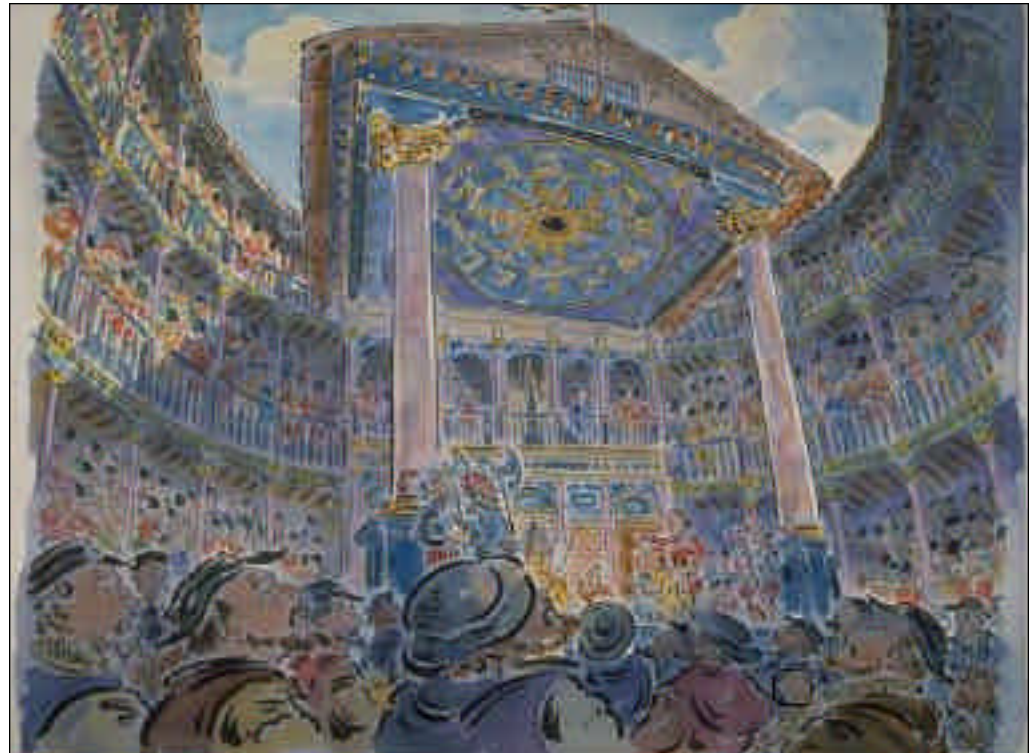
For scenes such as these, the actors would have pulled back the curtains on the outer stage to expose the tiring-house as the inner stage. Moreover, the plays often call for one character eavesdropping from behind a curtain or door.

The tiring-house was used in this case as well, because at its very rear, even further back than the inner stage floor, was a tiny room, hidden by a set of drapes. These floor length drapes or dyed cloth hangings were suspended from the ceiling, concealing the actor. The drapes of the first floor tiring-house would have hidden Falstaff in *1 Henry IV* (II,vi), when the Sheriff comes to the door of the tavern, and would have cloaked Polonius right before he is killed by Hamlet, in Act III, scene iv, just to name two situations.

The second level of the tiring-house contained a central balcony stage in the middle, undoubtedly used multiple times in the production of *Romeo and Juliet*, (II,ii) — the most famous balcony scene in the canon; a small window-stage on each side of the balcony, directly above the side doors on the first floor, used when up to four characters had to be seen from a window; and a curtained inner room behind the balcony stage, that served the same purpose as the inner room on the first floor of the tiring-house.

The third level consisted of a central music gallery and two large lofts on either side of it, used as storage and dressing rooms. In rare instances the orchestra was seen by the audience, when select members would come down to the main stage to accompany a dancer or a chorus, but in most cases the musicians played in the third-floor curtained gallery, hidden from site. The lofts holding the props and instruments were always closed off from the public. In the Elizabethan theatre extraordinary amounts of money were spent on costumes

and the Globe's storage area would have been overflowing with beautiful clothing, not unlike the kind listed in Henslowe's Diary, as he took inventory at the Rose.



*Impression of the original Globe by Paul Cox*

Unfortunately, the arcane spelling is difficult to read, but it is nonetheless interesting to peruse a portion of the list:

Item, j orenge taney satten dublet, layd thycke with gowld lace.

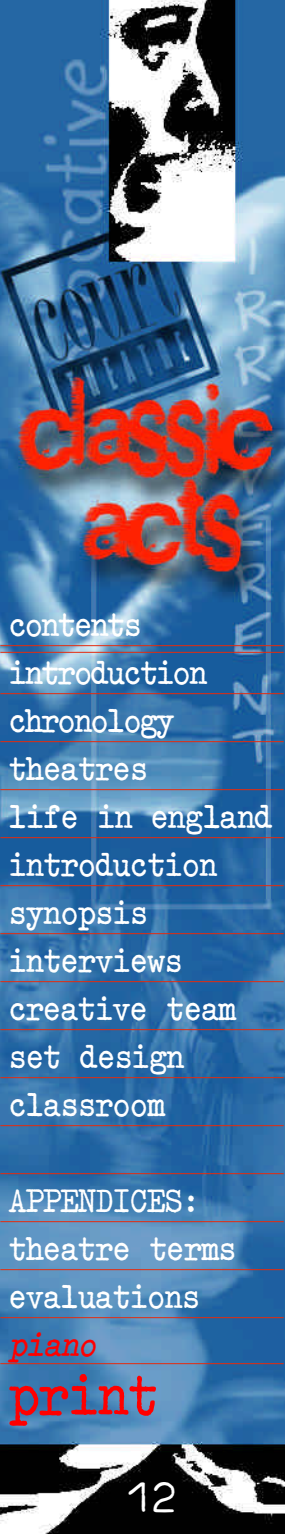
Item, j blew tafetie sewt.

Item, j payr of carnatyon satten Venesyons, layd with gold lace.

Item, j longe-shanckes sewte.

Item, ij Orlates sewtes, hates and gorgettes, and vij anteckes hedes.

Item, vj grene cottes for Roben Hoode, and iiij knaves sewtes.



Item, ij black saye gownes, and ij cotton gownes, and j rede saye gowne.

Item, Cathemer sewte, j payer of cloth whitte stockens, iiij Turckes hedes.

Item, j mawe gowne of calleco for the quene, j carnowll hatte.

Item, j red sewt of cloth for pyge, layed with whitt lace.

Over the three-story tiring-house was a superstructure composed of huts, resting on a protecting roof (also referred to as a stage-cover), held up by giant posts rising from the main platform. It would appear from drawings of the Bankside that every playhouse contemporaneous with the Globe had a superstructure of one or multiple huts, but the Globe's huts, or "heavens", seem the most elaborate. In the floor of the superstructure were several trap-openings allowing props to hang down over the stage or actors to descend to the floor, suspended by wires concealed under their costumes.

The cannon that was so often fired during battle and coronation scenes was located in the huts, and so too was the trumpeter who heralded the beginning of a performance. Atop the huts of the Globe and of every Bankside theatre stood the playhouse flagpole. When raised, the flag was a signal to people from miles around that a play would be staged that afternoon. J.C. Adams discusses the impact of the playhouse flags in his book *The Globe Theatre* and includes the following excerpt from the *Curtain-Drawer of the World*, written in 1612: "Each play-house advanceth his flagge in the aire, whither quickly at the waving thereof are summoned whole troops of men, women, and children" (379). The flag continued to wave until the end of each performance. No one knew exactly when they would see the flag again, for the Elizabethan theatre community lived in uncertain times and were at the mercy of harsh weather, plague, and puritanical government officials.



[http://www.reading.ac.uk/globe/newglobe/new-globe\\_index.htm](http://www.reading.ac.uk/globe/newglobe/new-globe_index.htm)

A truly comprehensive view of the new Globe Theatre in London. The site covers the following topics:

- The archaeology of the Globe
- Drawings for the rebuilt Globe theatre
- Theo Crosby's design for the Frons Scenae (1994)
- Theo Crosby's design for the main entrance way to the Globe
- The dimensions of the Globe
- Building the New Globe
- The Gates to the Globe Theatre
- The Globe theatre's environs
- Performances in the reconstructed Globe
- The launch of the Opening Season
- Changes to the Globe stage in 1999
- The Shakespeare Globe Exhibition
- Virtual Reality images of the Globe during reconstruction
- An image map of the Stage and Frons Scenae
- Shakespeare and the Globe: an annotated bibliography
- The Globe Picture Data-Base
- The Globe Guide Book

Regarding the structure of the Elizabethan playhouses, it is important to note that, unlike our modern auditoriums with cloaked main stages, and seating limited to the front view, the Elizabethan playhouses were open to the public eye at every turn, and scenery could not be changed in between scenes because there was no curtain to drop.



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It is no coincidence that in all of Shakespeare's plays, the scene, no matter how dramatic or climatic, ends on a denouement, with the actors walking off or being carried off the stage. If the play required a change of place in the next scene, most times the actors would not leave the stage at all, and it would be up to the audience to imagine the change had occurred. If props were used, they were usually placed at the beginning of the play, and oftentimes would become unnecessary as the performance went on, but would remain on the stage regardless. As G. C. Moore Smith mentions in the Warwick edition of Henry V, "properties either difficult to move, like a well, or so small as to be unobtrusive, were habitually left on the stage . . . whatever scenes intervened" (Addendum). For very large objects that were vital in one scene but became an obstacle to the actors on stage in the next scene, it is most likely that the action was halted for their prompt removal. Due to the lack of props and scenery, the acting troupes relied very heavily on costumes. Even though Elizabethan audiences were deprived of eye-catching background scenes, they were never disappointed with the extravagant, breathtaking clothes that were a certainty at every performance.

Above we saw Henslowe's inventory of costumes that he stored in the Rose, and certainly every theatrical company in Shakespeare's day would have had a large and costly wardrobe. In Robert Greene's "A Quip for an Upstart Courtier", written in 1592, a player is dressed in a cloth gown faced down before with grey coney, and laid thick on the sleeves with lace, which he quaintly bore up to show his white taffeta hose and black silk stockings. A huge ruff about his neck wrapped in his great head like a wicker cage, a little hat with brims like the wings of a doublet, wherein he wore a jewel of glass, as broad as a chancery seal.

## Inn-yards

In December 1574 the Common Council of London, under the influences of puritanical factions, issued a statement describing great disorder rampant in the city by the inordinate haunting of great multitudes of people, especially youth, to plays, interludes, namely occasion of frays and quarrels, evil practices of incontinency in great inns having chambers and secret places adjoining to their open stages and galleries, inveigling and alluring of maids, especially of orphans and good citizens' children under age, to privy and unmeet contracts, the publishing of unchaste, uncomely, and unshamefast speeches and doings . . . uttering of popular, busy, and seditious matters, and many other corruptions of youth and other enormities . . . [Thus] from henceforth no play, comedy, tragedy, interlude, not public show shall be openly played or showed within the liberties of the City . . . and that no innkeeper, tavernkeeper, nor other person whatsoever within the liberties of this City shall openly show or play . . . any interlude, comedy, tragedy, matter, or show which shall not be first perused and allowed . . .

Due to the London city government refusing to sanction professional acting, the building of playhouses within the city proper (within London Wall) was forbidden.

Performers were, therefore, forced to receive approval by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, and were limited to the interior yards of inns. Shakespeare's plays may have been performed in many inn-yards, including the Bell Savage inn yard, the Boar's Head, the Cross Keys, and the Bull in Bishopsgate Street. The Chamberlain's Men performed throughout the winter of 1594 at the Cross Keys, and in the summer at the Theatre in Finsbury Fields, north of London Wall.

# private theatres

## The Blackfriars Playhouse

The Blackfriars was built by Richard Burbage in 1596 on the northern bank of the Thames. Unlike the public theatres, private theatres such as the Blackfriars had roofs and specifically catered to the wealthy and highly educated classes of London society. In addition, while there were strict regulations on public playhouses within the circuit of the old city wall, the private theatres in London were built upon grounds that belonged to the church — grounds that had been appropriated by Henry VIII and were therefore not under the control of the Lord Mayor. The Blackfriars soon became the premier playhouse in all of London. The price for admission was up to five times that of the Globe, and it seated about seven hundred people in a paved auditorium. It was equipped with artificial lighting and other amenities that the other playhouses did not possess, but overall it quite closely resembled the public theatres with its trap doors, superstructure of huts (with wires and belts to hang props and lower actors), inner stage, and tiring house.

In 1603, when James I acceded to the English throne, the Chamberlain's Men's patron, Lord Hudson, stepped down and allowed James I, a lover of the theatre, to become the group's new supporter. Hence, the Chamberlain's Men quickly underwent a name change and were known thenceforth as the King's Men. The King's men took on the lease of the Blackfriars from Richard and Cuthbert Burbage in August of 1608, for a period of twenty-one years at 40 pounds per year, with each member of the troupe holding a seventh share. They performed there during the winter months while continuing to spend the summers at the Globe. As Gerald Eades Bentley points out in his book *Shakespeare*:

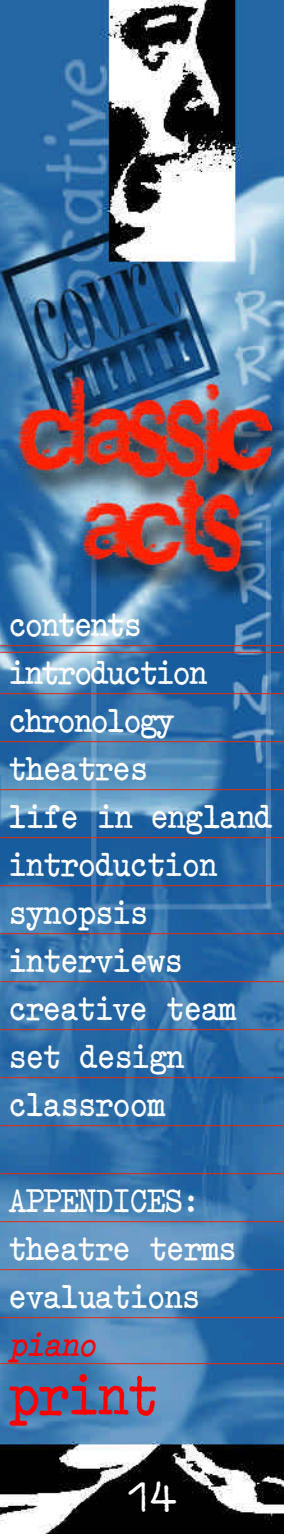
...for more than half of his career in London Shakespeare shared in the enterprise of the Lord Chamberlain-King's company as actor, patented member, dramatist, and housekeeper, first of the Globe and then of both the Globe and the Blackfriars. No other man of the time is known to have been tied to the theatre in so many different ways.

## The Royal Palaces

The royal family did not, for obvious reasons, attend plays with the common populus in the playhouses, and so Shakespeare and the Chamberlain's Men would, on occasion, be requested to perform at court. During Christmas, 1594, Shakespeare acted before Queen Elizabeth in her palace at Greenwich in two separate comedies, and during Christmas, 1597, the Chamberlain's Men performed *Love's Labour's Lost* before the Queen in her palace at Whitehall. In 1603, Shakespeare performed multiple times before King James I at Hampton Court.

## The Inns of Court

The Inns of Court were four law schools in London, namely the Inner Temple, the Middle Temple, Gray's Inn, and Lincoln's Inn. Gala performances of Shakespeare's plays were held in the halls of at least two of the Inns of Court — *Twelfth Night* in 1602 in the Middle Temple and *The Comedy of Errors* in 1594 in Gray's Inn. Shakespeare was interested enough in the Inns of Court to make them the setting for scene 2.4 of 1 *Henry VI*.



## The Houses of the Nobility

Like Queen Elizabeth and King James, noblemen did not attend playhouses. It was not uncommon for Shakespeare and the Chamberlain's Men to perform at the country houses and estates of the nobility. In 1603, Shakespeare performed at the house of the Earl of Pembroke, and in 1605 he performed at Lord Southampton's London house.

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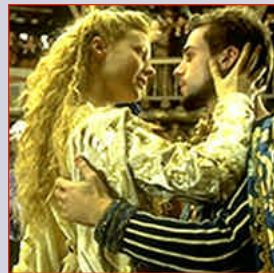
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# introduction to twelfth night

by David Bevington

*Twelfth Night* may be the most festive of Shakespeare's festive comedies. It celebrates, in its title, the festive Christmas season. On this final day of the old Christmas season, January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, Christian churches throughout Europe celebrated the revelation of the Christ child to the Magi. Over a twelve-day period, in Shakespeare's day, noble households and municipalities sponsored numerous entertainments and feasts. It was a time of reveling that combined the festive spirit of Christmas with a remembrance of the winter Roman Saturnalia. In churches, choristers and minor church officials were given a once-a-year opportunity to play king for the day: they appointed a Boy Bishop from the choir who bossed around the regular clergy and lampooned the divine service by introducing braying noises and obscene gestures. Schoolboys took the occasion of a holiday from their studies to put on plays and revels. At the Inns of Court, London's prestigious institutions for the study of law, and where *Twelfth Night* was actually performed in early 1602 (though written perhaps a year or two earlier), the fledgling lawyers instituted a tradition of festivities that were raucous enough to earn a rebuke for their "great disorder and scurrility" involved in the producing of their "lewd and lascivious plays." The Feast of Fools gave rise to similar inversions of law and lawlessness, sobriety and drunkenness, restraint and license. The stern rigors of a rule-bound society gave way momentarily to a playfully subversive inversion of authority.

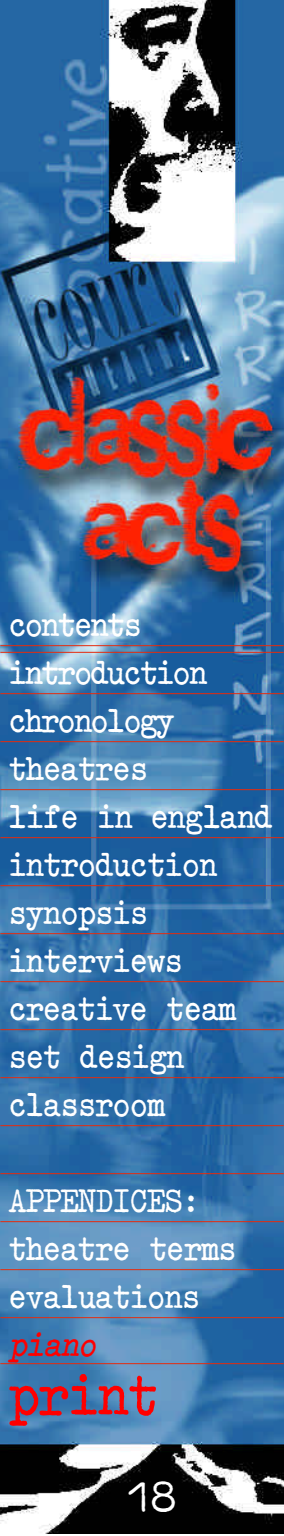
This may seem to us an odd way to celebrate Christmas; it sounds rather more like Mardi Gras, when the looming restraints of Lent invite a similar defiance of ordered regularity. Notwithstanding, this festive tradition is entirely



David Bevington is an internationally renowned Shakespeare scholar, a professor at the University of Chicago, and has been associated with Court Theatre for many years.

appropriate to Shakespeare's play written in honor of *Twelfth Night*. This is a play about a struggle between license and restraint, disorder and order, Carnival and Lent.

The opposition manifests itself to us in the household of the Countess Olivia. This elegant and wealthy lady, recently deprived of her father and her brother by untimely deaths, has chosen to remember those death by a cloister-like withdrawal from the world. The Countess "hath abjured the sight / And company of men," we are told. She wears the veil and is dressed in black. In her daily ritual of mourning she walks "like a cloistress," watering "once a day her chamber round / With eye-offending brine — all this to season / A brother's dead love." Her aristocratic neighbor, the Duke Orsino, pays court to her by sending insistent messengers, but she refuses to see him or any other men. She is denying her beauty to the world. Not surprisingly, then, she appoints as the steward of her household a sober-suited apostle of melancholy, Malvolio. His very name, Mal-volio, the ill-wishing one, betokens denial, sobriety, repression. He is someone we might call a puritan, and in fact the Countess's sprightly gentlewoman, Maria, ventures to suggest that "sometimes he is a kind of puritan." Contrastingly, Olivia's household also embodies some devotees of merriment. Her uncle, Sir Toby Belch, lives with her as a kind of amiable sponge, enjoying the privileges of rent-free accommodations and access to her wine cellar. He announces his creed the moment he steps onstage: "I'm sure care's an enemy to life." Sir Toby's constant companion is Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a genial idiot whose ostensible reason for



being there is that he too pays court to the Countess Olivia, but whose days and nights are spent mainly in dissipation with Toby. Andrew is physically a caricature: he is tall, his uncurling hair “hangs like flax on a distaff,” and he is rather vainly proud of his “back-trick” or dance step in the invigorating dance known as the galliard. “Faith, I can cut a caper,” he boasts, though admitting more or less in the same breath that he is no scholar; he doesn’t even remember what *pourquoi* means in French. “What is *pourquoi*? Do or not do? I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting. O, had I but followed the arts!” Together, the bean-pole Andrew and the ectomorphic Toby are a comic pair in the tradition of Mutt and Jeff, Abbott and Costello, Laurel and Hardy. Nothing is more precious to them than drinking and singing loudly at 3 or 4 o’clock in the morning.

Their companions in revelry include Maria, who is romantically drawn to Toby even though she reproves him for drinking and partying so noisily, and the fool, Feste. This remarkable clown is in some ways the presiding genius of festive merriment in *Twelfth Night*. It is Feste who sings Shakespeare’s most exquisite song about Epicurean pleasure, about seizing the moment of happiness and youth before it vanishes.

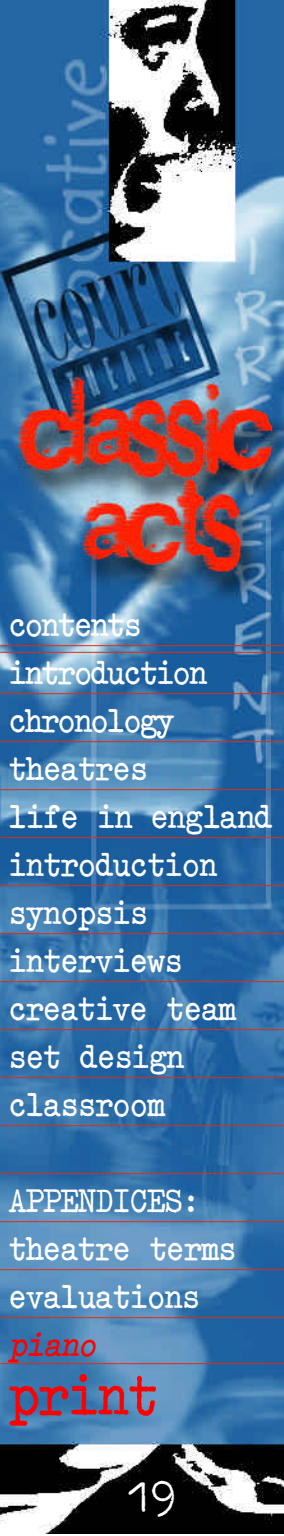
“What is love? ‘Tis not hereafter.  
Present mirth hath present laughter.  
What’s to come is still unsure.  
In delay there lies no plenty.  
Then come and kiss me, sweet and twenty;  
Youth’s a stuff will not endure.”

Feste helps to rebuke Malvolio for his churlishness; in fact, the revelers all join in Maria’s plot to trick Malvolio into thinking that his mistress, the Countess, is secretly in love with him and will welcome his ridiculous smiling and appearing before her in yellow stockings and cross-gartered. It is Feste who, disguised as a curate, comes to

the cell in which Malvolio has been incarcerated for his seemingly mad behavior; the fool and the supposed apostle of sobriety have changed places. And it is Feste who ends the play with his plaintive song about foolishness.

If merriment ultimately triumphs over sobriety in the Countess’s household through the Saturnalian inversions of Feste and his friends, it is Viola who brings the spirit of renewal and youthful joy into the lives of the Countess herself and of Duke Orsino. Obligated to disguise herself as a young male in the strange country where she has been shipwrecked, Viola thus comes before us as still another inversion of orderly process. As a young woman disguised as a young man (though in fact a boy actor playing the role on Shakespeare’s stage), Viola is a breath of fresh air introduced into the posturing, sterile world of Orsino and the Countess. She teaches Orsino what genuine friendship and affection can be like. She is so disarmingly candid as a pretended male that Olivia falls in love with “Cesario,” thus posing a dilemma for Viola that only comedy can solve. The answer turns out to be that Viola has a twin brother, also having landed on the shores of Illyria. Their discovery of each other is one of theater’s most successful moments of recognition and reunion, and it provides a romantic solution for practically everyone. Only Malvolio is left wholly unreconciled, vowing to the “revenged on the whole pack of you.” One is tempted to see this moment as both a celebration and a warning: a celebration of the joys of reveling and of theatrical entertainment, to which the killjoy spirit of Malvolio is in unremitting opposition. Merriment and Carnival win in this play, but when Carnival is over can Lent be far behind? The urgency of that warning gives all the more point to Feste’s song:

“What’s to come is still unsure.  
In delay there lies no plenty.”



## synopsis

by Celise Kalke

*This synopsis is divided up into “movements” and the scenes are numbered consecutively one through eighteen. This division was done by Twelfth Night director Karin Coonrod in order to more accurately portray her feeling of the dramatic structure of the play, and the play’s continuously building momentum.*

*The more traditional act and scene divisions are indicated in brackets underneath each movement.*

**Prologue:** Feste, the clown, smokes and reads La Monde. Sebastian and Viola are separated in a ship wreck. Orsino and his court come home from walking all night in the rain.

### **Movement 1, Scene 1**

*[Act 1, scene 1]*

The Court of Orsino, Duke of Illyria. Orsino, in a famous speech that begins “If music is the food of love, play on” speaks of his consuming passion for Olivia, a noblewoman also of Illyria. One of Orsino’s courtiers, Valentine, says that Olivia refuses to hear Orsino’s message because she intends to remain in seclusion for seven years in memory of her late brother. Orsino only admires her all the more for her loyalty and dedication.

### **Movement 1, Scene 2**

*[Act 1, scene 2]*

The sea-coast outside of Illyria. Viola, a young aristocrat from another country, and a sea captain have just survived a terrible shipwreck. Viola’s brother, Sebastian, was also on board, but Viola fears he may have drowned in the storm and that she is now completely alone in the world (since her parents are both dead). The Captain tells Viola that they have landed in Illyria, where Orsino is Duke and Olivia is a wealthy heiress. Viola decides to ask

Olivia for a position in her household; but the Captain tells the young lady about Orsino’s hapless courtship of the mournful Olivia and says Olivia won’t allow any visitors of any kind. Viola is charmed by the picture of the lovelorn Count chasing the grieving woman and decides to work for Orsino. Viola pays the Captain to disguise her as a man—using clothes from one of her brother’s trunks that washed up on shore—and then to introduce her to the duke.

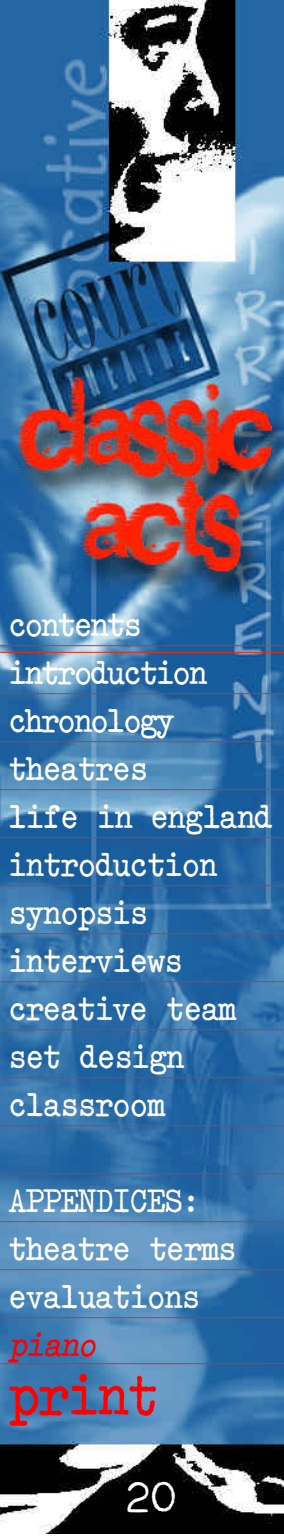
### **Movement 1, Scene 3**

*[Act 1, scene 3]*

*Olivia’s house*

Unlike Orsino’s Court, where Orsino is clearly in charge of a household united in the sole activity of nurturing Orsino’s courtship of Olivia, Olivia’s household is one of rival factions. Malvolio, the steward, keeps order while Sir Toby, Olivia’s debauched uncle, creates chaos. Maria, Olivia’s lady, is aligned with Toby (because she wants to be Lady Belch) but is a rival to Malvolio for control of the house’s administration. And Feste, the fool, rivals Malvolio for Olivia’s time and attention and is the only resident of Olivia’s household allowed to make fun of his mistress’ all-consuming grief.

In this scene, Sir Toby Belch is enjoying Maria’s company and that of his friend Sir Andrew Aquecheek somewhere in the bowels of the house (this scene is often set in Olivia’s kitchen). Sir Andrew is completely under Sir Toby’s control, and is currently the victim of a scheme wherein Toby pretends to arrange for Sir Andrew to marry Olivia in return for Sir Andrew’s financial support. Maria tries to talk Toby into reforming his lifestyle without success. Toby successfully talks Andrew out of leaving Olivia’s house, since Sir Andrew believes that his suit is quite hopeless given Orsino’s rivalry for Olivia’s hand. Sir Toby assures Sir Andrew that Olivia disdains the duke, and Sir Andrew decides to stay.



## **Movement 1, Scene 4**

*[Act 1, scene 4]*

Orsino's Court. A few weeks later. Valentine assures Viola, now disguised as "Cesario", that Orsino likes "him". Orsino confirms Valentine's opinion by sending "Cesario" on the errand—bearing a love message to Olivia. On her way, Viola confesses that she loves her employer and now is in the unenviable position of convincing another woman to love Orsino as well.

## **Movement 1, Scene 5**

*[Act 1, scene 5]*

Olivia's House. Later that day. Feste has returned from an absence, and Olivia berates him for his truancy. But Feste charms Olivia into both forgiving him and laughing at herself. Malvolio berates Feste for his truancy, but Olivia criticizes Malvolio for disliking anyone who challenges his puritanical austerity. The factions of Olivia's house are bubbling away, entertaining Olivia in her period of self-indulgent seclusion.

Into this murky soup walks Viola as Orsino's messenger. On her way in she encounters Maria, Malvolio and Sir Toby. Olivia's usual tactics don't work since Sir Toby is too drunk to block Viola's entrance. Malvolio in turn reports that the new emissary is more of a boy than a man. Olivia first agrees to see the messenger, and then sends her court away and speaks with "him" alone. Viola woos so charmingly that she wins Olivia's heart. Olivia first sends Viola away, but then sends Malvolio to chase after Viola with a ring so that Viola will be obliged to come back.

## **Movement 2, Scene 6**

*[Act 2, scene 1]*

The Seacoast. Viola's brother Sebastian was saved from the shipwreck by Antonio, a sea captain and sometime pirate. Antonio nursed Sebastian back to health and they have become very close. Sebastian decides to visit Orsino, and insists that Antonio stay behind because Sebastian feels his bad luck may be contagious. Sebastian leaves, and Antonio follows the young man although he is an outlaw in Illyria.

## **Movement 2, Scene 7**

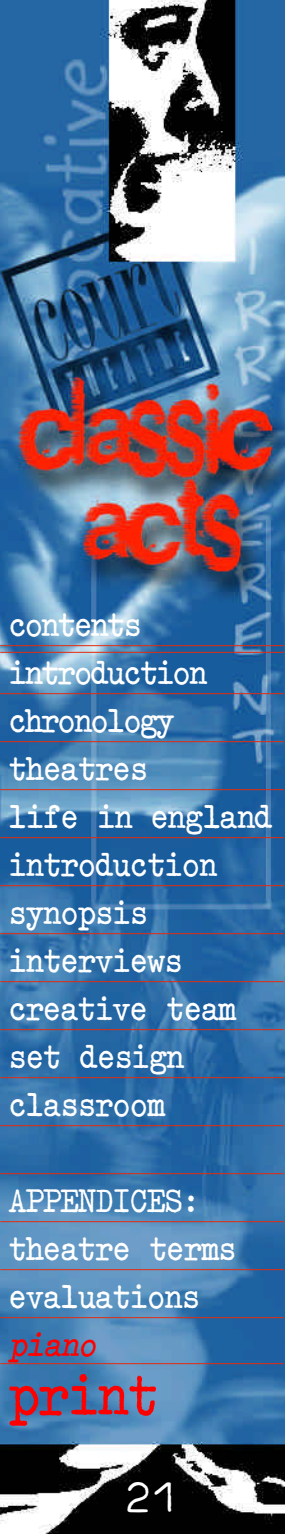
*[Act 2, scene 2]*

A street in Illyria. Malvolio catches up with Viola and gives her Olivia's ring. Viola realizes that Olivia has fallen in love with "Cesario." Viola sums up the situation—she loves Orsino (and only gets to see him every day because she is disguised as a man), Orsino loves Olivia, and Olivia loves Viola but as a man. Viola decides that only time can undo this tangle.

## **Movement 2, Scene 8**

*[Act 2, scene 3]*

The bowels of Olivia's house. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Feste are drinking and singing. It is very late, they are very drunk and very loud. Maria comes in to quiet them down, but it's all just too seductive and she doesn't want to shut down the party. Finally Malvolio ruins the evening with his bad temper and scolding. Sir Toby mocks Malvolio, who threatens them all with reprisals and leaves. Maria has had enough. She decides to get revenge by writing love letters to Malvolio in Olivia's handwriting. In the letters, "Olivia" will make outrageous demands as proof that her love is returned. Maria suspects that Malvolio has a crush on his employer, and will embarrass himself in proving his love.



## **Movement 2, Scene 9**

*[Act 2, scene 4]*

Orsino's Court. "Cesario" has become Orsino's chief confidante. Orsino talks of his love for Viola, and says he thinks women can't love with the fervor and intensity of men. Viola says she knew a woman once who loved a man much like Orsino. Feste, who is visiting from Olivia's court, sings a sad love song. Orsino sends "Cesario" back to Olivia.

## **Movement 2, Scene 10**

*[Act 2, scene 5]*

Olivia's House: a secluded Garden or Courtyard. In this scene, one of the comic masterpieces of Shakespeare's canon, Maria's plot against Malvolio comes to fruition. Maria, Toby, Andrew and Fabian, another of Maria's faction, gather to watch behind a boxtree. Maria leaves a letter where Malvolio can find it. Malvolio enters, fantasizing to himself about his crush on Olivia. He imagines himself as her husband, and envisions his happy future chastising Toby as a drunk and insulting Sir Andrew. Malvolio finds the fake letter and believes it to have been written by Olivia. He decides to follow the instructions to smile, insult Toby, and wear funny yellow stockings cross-gartered. He really thinks that his suite will be met with favorably, since the letter clearly states "some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em." Both Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are so impressed with Maria's trick that they say they could marry her. Maria's faction leaves in order to be there when the newly confident and oddly dressed Malvolio meets with Olivia.

## **Movement 2, Scene 11**

*[Act 3, scene 1]*

Outside Olivia's House. Viola has been sent on another love errand by Orsino. She first fools with Feste, paying him for his banter. Viola then speaks a small monologue on the profession of fooling, acknowledging Feste's wisdom and his position as the one person in Illyria who is intimate with both Orsino and Olivia's households. Sir Andrew and Sir Toby come to rudely escort Viola indoors, but they are interrupted by Olivia and Maria. Olivia sends away her household, and presses her suit to "Cesario" while Viola continues to try to convince her to stop loving "Cesario" and love Orsino instead. Olivia refuses to be swayed, but does tell Viola to come again on Orsino's behalf.

## **Movement 2, Scene 12**

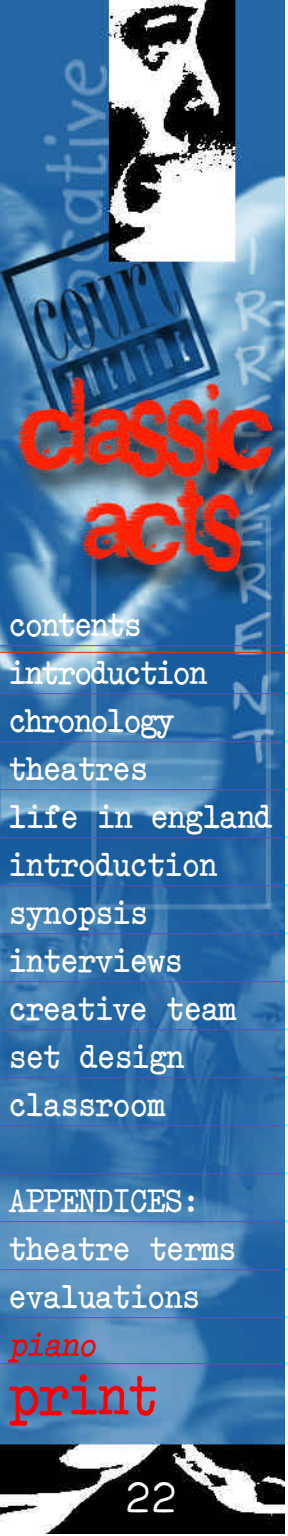
*[Act 3, scene 2]*

Olivia's house, a common or outdoor space. Sir Andrew realizes that Olivia loves "Cesario", and decides to leave. Sir Toby convinces him to stay, and to challenge "Cesario" to a duel. Sir Andrew leaves to write out his challenge. Maria comes and tells Fabian and Tony to watch the absurd Malvolio.

## **Movement 2, Scene 13**

*[Act 3, scene 3]*

The streets of Illyria. Antonio catches up with Sebastian in Illyria, since Antonio couldn't leave his friend alone in a strange city. Sebastian berates Antonio for risking his life (since he is a wanted man) but accepts Antonio's company. Antonio decides to stay in seclusion at Sebastian's lodging, the Elephant Inn, but lends Sebastian his purse so that Sebastian can buy whatever trinkets he likes while he explores Illyria.



## Movement 2, Scene 14

[Act 3, scene 4]

Olivia's house, some public garden or courtyard. Olivia and Maria wait for Viola as "Cesario." Olivia calls for Malvolio because she feels glum and Malvolio's personality suits her mood. Maria warns Olivia that something is wrong with Malvolio, since he keeps uncharacteristically smiling. Malvolio flirts with Olivia and looks so odd that she thinks he is demented. When she hears that "Cesario" has arrived, she tells Maria to have Toby look after her steward and leaves. Malvolio takes this as further sign of her affection.

Sir Toby and Fabian tease Malvolio about being crazy with Maria, and Malvolio runs off. Maria's faction decide to confine Malvolio as if he were a mad man.

Sir Andrew enters with his letter challenging "Cesario" to a duel, which he gives to Toby. Toby decides the letter is too absurd to give to "Cesario", but instead decides to challenge "Cesario" on behalf of Sir Andrew in very strong language.

Olivia and Viola enter, Olivia declaring her love, Viola in turn spurning her affection. Calling "Cesario" a fiend, Olivia asks "him" to come again the next day. She leaves. Sir Toby bears Sir Andrew's challenge to Viola, claiming that Sir Andrew is a "devil in private brawl." Viola tries to avoid the duel, asking Sir Toby to act as a mediator. Sir Toby leaves to fetch Sir Andrew, while Viola walks off with Fabian asking him to make peace. Sir Toby and Sir Andrew return to fight, as do Fabian and Viola. Toby and Fabian coerce the extremely reluctant duelists into going through with the duel.

Viola is suddenly saved by Antonio (who thinks she is Sebastian), and Antonio throttles Sir Andrew and draws on Sir Toby. Officers in turn arrive to break up the brawl and

to arrest Antonio. Antonio asks Viola for his purse. Viola denies that she knows him at all, much less borrowed money from him. As Antonio is led away, he accuses "Sebastian" of ingratitude. Viola realizes that Antonio has mistook her for her brother and that Sebastian is alive. Sir Toby and Fabian convince Sir Andrew that "Cesario" is a coward, and Andrew leaves determined to resume the duel.

## Movement 3, Scene 15

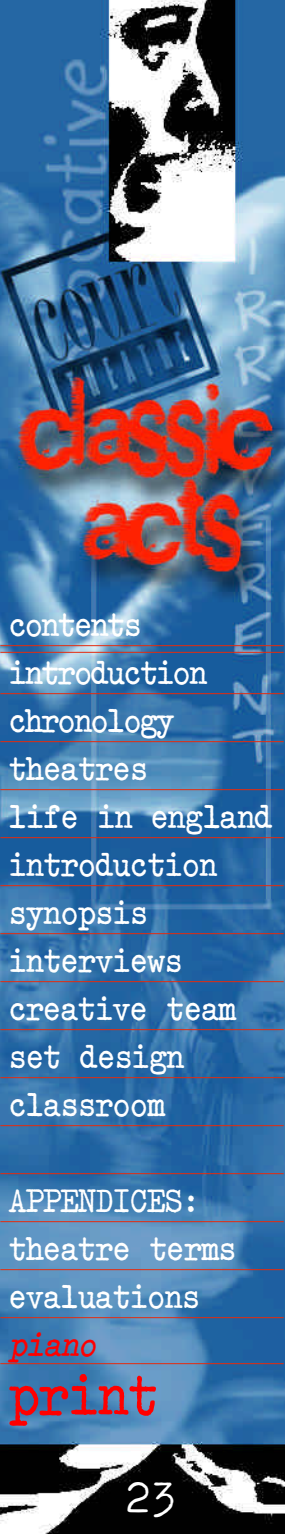
[Act 4, scene 1]

Another part of Illyria. In this scene, Sebastian is mistaken for "Cesario" by Olivia's household. First Feste tries to banter for money with Sebastian as he bantered with Viola, but Sebastian both refuses to banter and then refuses to give Feste money. Then Sebastian is accosted by Sir Andrew, Sir Toby and Fabian and Sir Andrew resumes the duel. Sebastian beats Sir Andrew and draws on Sir Toby. Olivia interrupts the duel, and invites Sebastian into her house in order for Olivia to apologize. Sebastian says he will be "ruled" by Olivia, and Olivia thinks she has finally won over "Cesario."

## Movement 3, Scene 16

[Act 4, scene 2]

A part of Olivia's house where Maria and Sir Toby have had Malvolio confined as a madman shut up alone in the dark. Feste comes to visit Malvolio disguised as Sir Topas, the curate. Malvolio pleads with "Sir Topas" to believe that he is sane. "Sir Topas" poses ridiculous questions which Malvolio can't work out, and then "Sir Topas" declares him mad. Feste then goes to Malvolio as himself, and Malvolio asks Feste to bring him pen and ink and paper so that Malvolio can write to Olivia for help. Feste asks Malvolio if he is mad, and Malvolio swears that he is sane. Feste leaves, agreeing to return so that Malvolio can write his letter.



### **Movement 3, Scene 17**

*[Act 4, scene 3]*

Olivia's Garden. Sebastian wonders if he himself dreams or is mad, or if Olivia is mad. But he decides that he is awake and sane, and that if Olivia were mad she couldn't run her household as well as she does. He knows that something strange is going on, but decides not to question his good fortune too closely. He only wishes that he could find Antonio to ask his advice; he is concerned because he went to the Elephant Inn where he discovered that Antonio was out looking for him.

Olivia enters with a priest and suggests that they get married, and Sebastian agrees.

### **Movement 3, Scene 18**

*[Act 5, scene 1]*

A public place in front of Olivia's house. Fabian begs Feste to see Malvolio's letter to Olivia, but Feste refuses. Orsino arrives in front of Olivia's house with his entourage, including Viola.

The Officers bring Antonio to Orsino. Viola identifies Antonio as the stranger that came to her rescue, while an officer reminds Orsino that Antonio captained a ship in a sea-fight where Orsino's nephew lost his leg. Orsino asks Antonio why he came to Illyria, where Antonio is a wanted man. Antonio replies by telling the story of his friendship with and his supposed betrayal by Sebastian. Before Orsino can pass judgement on Antonio, Olivia sweeps in with her court.

Orsino and Olivia finally confront each other. Olivia accuses "Cesario", whom she believes that she has married, of neglecting her. Orsino, in a jealous rage, decides to kill "Cesario" both to prove his love for Olivia and because Orsino believes that "Cesario" has seduced

Olivia. Viola says she would gladly die for Orsino. Olivia feels betrayed, and calls "Cesario" her husband in front of Orsino, sealing "Cesario's" fate.

To make matter's worse, Sir Andrew comes in saying that "Cesario" has broken his head and beaten up Sir Toby. Viola protests that she never hurt anybody, but no one believes her and Olivia orders that Sir Toby be taken care of.

At this point, Sebastian enters and encounters Antonio, who Sebastian has been searching for frantically. Sebastian is so concerned with his friend that he fails to notice Viola. Realizing that there are two "Cesarios", Olivia says "most wonderful" and is content with her marriage to Sebastian. Orsino, in his turn, takes Olivia as his "sister" and decides to marry Viola since "thou hast said to me a thousand time/Thou never shouldst love woman like to me". Orsino asks Viola to get changed into her female clothes as quickly as possible. Viola says that the ship captain has her female clothes, but that Malvolio imprisoned the captain on some small charge and she doesn't know the whereabouts of either the captain or her clothes.

Everyone then remembers Malvolio, locked up as a madman. Olivia reprimands herself for being so caught up in her romantic affairs, "a most extracting frenzy", that she failed to take care of her ailing steward. Olivia orders her retinue to bring Malvolio to her.

When Malvolio accuses Olivia of leading him on, Maria's plot is exposed by Fabian and Feste. Fabian further says that because of Maria's trick on Malvolio, Toby finally married her. Malvolio leaves, swearing vengeance on "the whole pack of you."

Orsino tells his servants to pursue Malvolio in order to find the captain with Viola's clothes and then makes plans to marry Viola.



interviews with the actors

Kate Fry returns to Court Theatre, where she has appeared in *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards*, *The Learned Ladies*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Tartuffe*, *The Philadelphia Story*, and *The Barber of Seville*. Earlier this season, she played Julia in Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Other credits include *Kindertransport*, *Falsettos*, and *Baby* at Apple Tree Theatre; *A Wonderful Life* (Jeff Nomination) at Candlelight Playhouse; *Humulus the Mute* with the Drama League of New York; *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* with Lincoln Center's Directors' Lab; *Into the Woods* at St. Louis Rep; as well as work with StreetSigns, Roadworks Productions, Magellan Theatre Company, and Bailiwick.



kate fry

Click on Kate's headshot to watch her interview in which she talks about the characters she plays in Court Theatre's 2001 Repertory season of *Piano* and *Twelfth Night*.

(The video may take a few moments to load. You need QuickTime or Microsoft MoviePlayer installed on your computer to watch the video.)



Click on Carey's headshot to watch her interview in which she talks about the characters she plays in Court Theatre's 2001 Repertory season of *Piano* and *Twelfth Night*.

*(The video may take a few moments to load. You need QuickTime or Microsoft MoviePlayer installed on your computer to watch the video.)*

carey peters

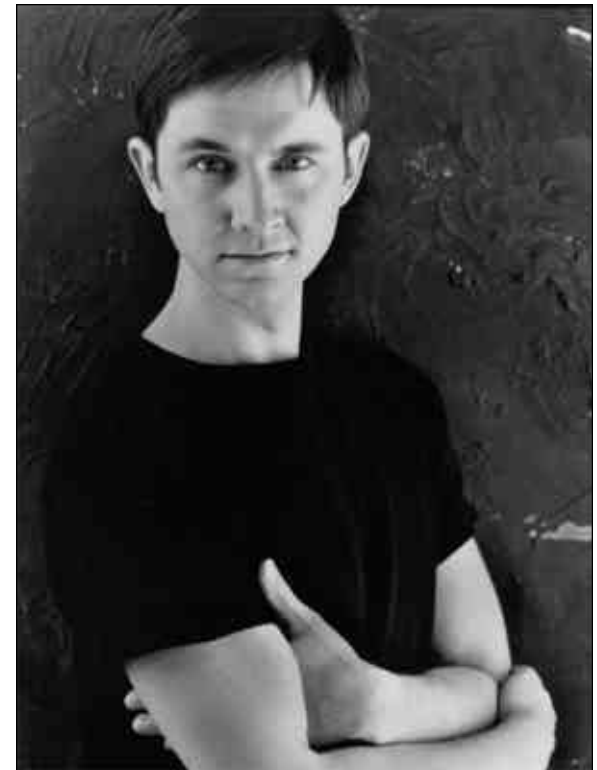


Carey Peters (Olivia, Sophia) was last seen at Court Theatre as Belise in *The Learned Ladies*, Yokobue in *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards*, and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other Chicago credits include Northlight Theatre (*An Experiment With an Air Pump*), Steppenwolf (*Pot Mom*), American Theater Company (*The Threepenny Opera*), and Apollo Theater (*Hello Muddah Hello Fadduh*). Film and television credits include *Mister Id*, *Lawrence Melm*, and *ER*. Originally from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, Carey received her BFA in Acting from DePaul University.

Click on Guy's headshot to watch his interview in which he talks about the characters he plays in Court Theatre's 2001 Repertory season of *Piano* and *Twelfth Night*.

*(The video may take a few moments to load. You need QuickTime or Microsoft MoviePlayer installed on your computer to watch the video.)*

guy adkins



Guy Adkins' credits at Court Theatre include *The Invention of Love*, *The Learned Ladies* and *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards*. At the Goodman he appeared in *Floyd Collins*, *Arcadia*, *The House of Martin Guerre*, *Design for Living*, *Straight as a Line*, and *A Christmas Carol*. At Northlight, *Away*, *The Last Survivor*, and *Visiting Mr. Green* (also Royal George). Other Chicago appearances include *Apple Tree*, *Mariott Lincolnshire*, and *Drury Lane*. He has also appeared regionally at the Old Globe (San Diego), Prince Music Theatre (Philadelphia), and Alliance Theatre Co. (Atlanta). Guy is the recipient of two Joseph Jefferson Awards, two After Dark Awards, and Philadelphia's Barrymore Award.


## The Director

“The most important thing a director can do for an actor is to awaken the actor’s intuition and assure the intuition that it is going to be witnessed and used.”

“Essentially an actor says, ‘I will trust the director to function in the capacity of my critical brain while I give my intuitive brain full opportunity to express. I will rely on the director to keep me from looking foolish.’”

William Ball

The Director is similar to the captain or coach of a team of talented individuals, all of whom contribute a great deal to a production, and without whom it could never take place. Like a coach, the Director’s job is to get the best out of every individual. She or he will decide on the general game plan and then work with the team to make this vision a reality.

 For one of the most insightful and easily read books on directing read William Ball’s *A Sense of Direction: Some Observations of the Art of Directing*. Published by Drama Book Publishers, New York. ISBN 0-89676-082-0

Directors differ widely in their styles as do coaches, but the Director has the ultimate responsibility for determining what happens on stage. Some directors, such as Robert Wilson or Julie Taymor (*The Lion King* or the movie *Titus*), are more particularly visually oriented and have a strong sense of what the production is to look like. They then work with their designers to bring those ideas to the stage. Other directors tend to focus more exclusively on the script and the actors; they will give their designers more general guidance by talking about a mood or tone for each scene and then rely on their designers to originate a larger part of the design ideas.

## The Scenic Designer

The scenic designer is responsible for envisioning the set, the setting, the place where the action of the play takes place. They may re-create a realistic world, such as a 7-Eleven convenience store, as for Eric Bogosian’s *SubUrbia*, or it may be a very abstract unreal world.

The Scenic designer often begins her or his design process by looking at photographs or paintings. They will then produce a series of sketches using pencil or water colors for example. More and more designers are turning to computers and create their sketches in applications such as Photoshop.

In most cases scenic designers will then build a scale model of the set.

Scenic designs then have to draw up plans similar to those created by architects. These plans give the *precise* dimensions for the set, from which the set builders work.



## The Costume Designer

The Costume Designer creates the designs for the clothes the actors wear. They consider the period of the play, the time in history that the events take place, the character and role in society (Queen, servant, doctor etc.) of the person and whether or not the design team's vision of the production is literal—trying to make everything in the production look as close to the real world as they can—or more abstract, metaphorical.

It is possible to mount a production of *Hamlet*, of course, with all the actors in period dress, or with everyone in black polo neck shirts, black pants and black shoes.

The Costume Designer may decide to choose to make subtle choices about the costume design, such as placing people from a specific group in clothes whose colors are drawn from the same color palette.

The Costume Designer will begin by doing a good deal of historical research if the play is not a contemporary one, and will then produce a series of preliminary sketches. These will be shown to the Director and the rest of the design team and discussed. From this point on the Costume Designer will produce color renderings and will find samples of actual fabric for each costume.

## The Sound Designer

The Sound Designer is responsible for what can be the most subtle yet powerful element of the design of a production. As an audience we can be very aware of sound effects such as thunder or a gun shot, but much of the Sound Designers work goes almost, if not completely, unnoticed. Sound effects and music which help establish a

location or a mood can affect us on an almost subliminal level. Even without a set at all, the right soundscape can help our imaginations create a clear sense of where the action is set. Some sound cues are required by the script, while others are decided upon by the sound designer and the Director where they want to add to what is suggested in the written script.

Sounds can range from the wholly naturalistic to effects that are abstract. The music used may be taken from the period of the play, or from another period—sometimes written especially for the production—but which is intended to create an atmosphere or convey a mood.

## The Dramaturg

The Dramaturg is the person responsible for helping the director interpret the play, and for coordinating and doing the research needed to understand the play. The Dramaturg is a member of the Creative team, and also sometimes works closely with the designers as they do their research. The Dramaturg is also responsible for editing the text of the play - comparing different editions and/or deciding on different translations. Finally, the Dramaturg is responsible for writing the program notes and any other articles about the play (including magazine articles) that will be distributed to the audience.



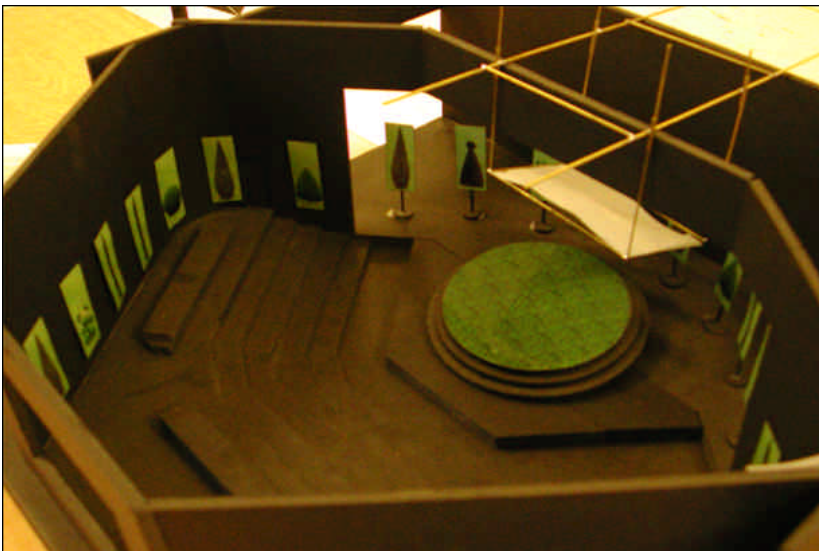
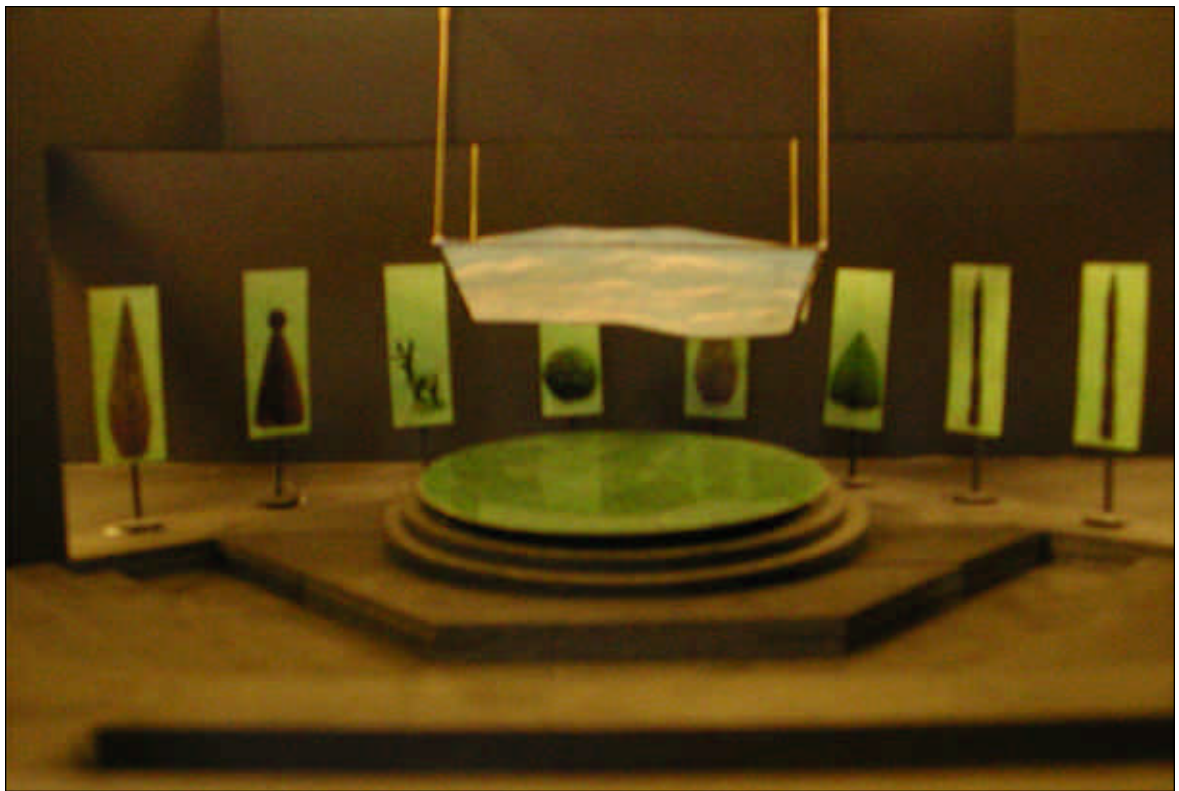
# classic acts

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- introduction
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- interviews
- creative team
- set design
- classroom

- APPENDICES:
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  - evaluations

piano  
print

## scenic design



*Photographs of the set model for Twelfth Night designed by Todd Rosenthal*

## classroom activities

1. [Virtual Audition](#). Carefully read the play. Identify those who you think are the key characters. Consider in some detail what you think are their most important qualities as people, and perhaps, how you imagine they might look.

Then, attend a [Virtual Audition](#). By following this link you can watch video of five actors from Court Theatre's repertory company perform audition two minute long monologues. This is very often the first step in choosing an actor to play a role.

After watching the monologues, who do you feel exhibits, or could exhibit, the key qualities you see in the characters you have chosen?

Be very precise in defining the qualities you see in the actor's performances in terms of the emotions and character they portray.

2. Consider in some details what for you are some of the major themes of the play.

After seeing the production were these themes played out and developed as you imagined, or did you see other issues in the play? What were these?

Do you feel the production was effective in realizing the play as you imagined it in you head? Think of specific reasons why, or why not.

4. As the [Director](#) of the play, what are the important ideas, themes and relationships you would seek to develop in the production through your guidance of your designers and actors?

Choose a short section of the script, then study in detail the description and pictures of Shakespeare's

Globe Theatre. Describe in some detail which part(s) of the set you would use, where the actors would enter/exit and how and when and where the actors would move around the set.

Some moves will be dictated by events specified in the script — entrances and exits for example — but other moves will be determined by the way in which the characters are relating to each other at any given moment.


Do they stand close to each other? Are they distant from each other? One at the top of the stairs, one at the bottom? What causes them to move? Something one of the other characters says? Whether they are happy or upset by another character or characters?

Would you move the characters into certain positions to make a point? Is this ever done in the production you saw? If so, what point was the director trying to make?

5. Look at the [photographs of the set design for \*Twelfth Night\*](#). Is the set wholly [realistic](#), or is it a more [symbolic](#) or [stylized](#) version of reality?

From you reading and watching of the play, do you think this is a good setting for the play or not? Think in detail about your reasons.

Using photographs from color magazines, collect images that you think would form the basis of an effective set for the play. If you were the [Scenic Designer](#) how would you explain your choice of images to a [Director](#)?



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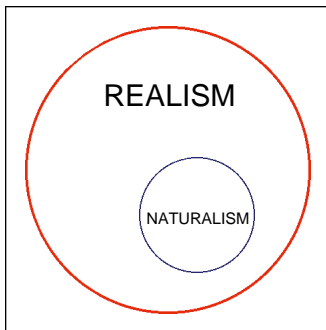
theatre terms you should know

## Realism, Naturalism and beyond.

The concepts of REALISM and NATURALISM have specific meanings when related to the theatre, but over the years they have tended to become virtually synonymous and are often used interchangeably. They tend to be linked together in opposition to the notions of expressionism or symbolism.

### Realism

Realism is generally considered a broad umbrella of which Naturalism is part. Although Shakespeare talks of “holding a mirror up to nature”, and there are many elements of Shakespeare’s writing that may be said to be realistic, REALISM as a movement emerged between 1830 and 1880.



Realism aims to present an objective view of human psychology and social reality. It does not aim to give us a photographic reproduction of reality—to put reality itself onstage. It aims to give the audience the *illusion* of reality.

Its dialogues, what the characters say to each other, “are drawn from the speech patterns of a period or of a social or occupational group. The acting makes the text (what the actors say) appear natural, downplaying the literary or poetical effects by stressing the spontaneous and psychological aspects of the interaction between the characters.” (*Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*)

In other words, even though the playwright will have spent many hours carefully writing the actors’ speeches and may have consciously included rhetorical devices such as rhythm, alliteration, parallelism or repetition, the actors’ job is to downplay these attempts to make the language engaging and to emphasize the *apparent* REALISM of the scene.

Well known realistic playwrights are Ibsen, Shaw or in the modern era, David Mamet. Realism was the basis of the work of the great acting teacher Stanislavsky.

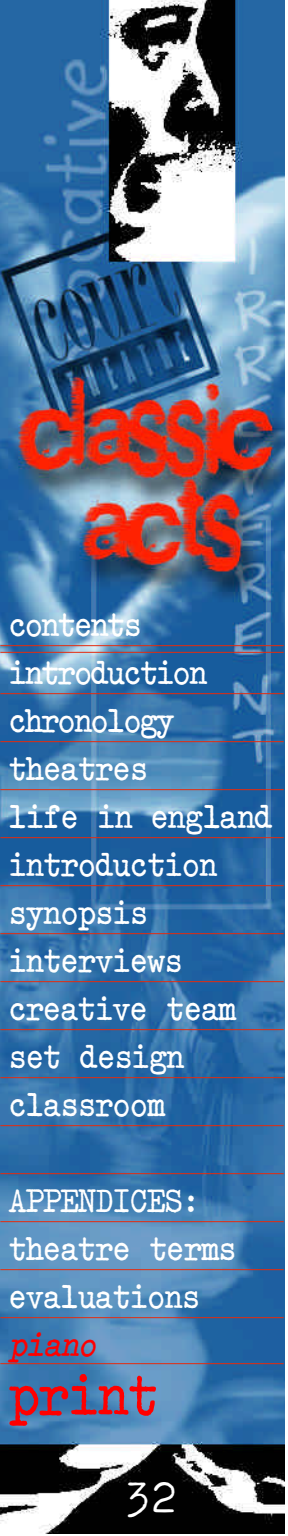
### Naturalism

“Historically, NATURALISM is an artistic movement that, around 1880-1890, advocated a total reproduction of... reality, stressing the material aspects of human existence.” (*Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*) NATURALISM aimed to use the rigorous methodology of scientific research to observe and analyse society.

The first notable exponent of NATURALISM in literature was French novelist and playwright Emile Zola. His novel *Therese Raquin*, which he himself then adapted into a play, is one of the best known examples of NATURALISM in literature. Zola believed that nothing should be on stage that did not appear in nature. In the 1880’s at the Théâtre Libre in Paris, Antonin Antoine used bloody quarters of beef and live chickens onstage.

NATURALISM aimed to shatter the world of illusion onstage.

As an artistic movement it was short lived, because short of observing real people in ‘real’ situations all that is placed onstage and watched by an audience is to a degree artificial and relies on creating a believable illusion.



In Roman times sea-battles were staged on lakes or in flooded amphitheatres. It was thought to be slaves who manned the boats and who fought in these 'mock' sea battles, known as *naumachia*. The participants actually died fighting for the entertainment of others. In 52 AD 19,000 men fought on Fucine Lake, east of Rome. Many perished. Clearly such naturalism is not widely accepted these days, though we are still fascinated by extreme drama in life. We watch "real" court cases on TV; we follow "real" police officers as they chase and engage with "real" villains; we watch people on remote islands; and there is an underground industry which markets so-called "snuff movies" in which those who are disposed to do so can watch the all too real deaths of others.

## Symbolism

Most artistic movements begin as a reaction against what has gone before. This seems to be true in every age. SYMBOLISM began as an opposition to naturalism. It began in Paris in the early 1890's. "The essential of symbolism was the abandonment of the appearances of life in favor of its spirit, symbolically represented and in favor of a more *poetic* form of drama." (*The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre*)

## Symbol

"A symbol is something which represents something else (often an idea or a quality) by analogy or association. Thus 'white', 'lion', and 'rose' commonly symbolise or represent innocence, courage or beauty. Such symbols exist by convention and tradition. A serpent may stand for evil or wisdom according to different conventions. Writers use these conventional symbols, but also invent and create symbols of their own." (*A Dictionary of Literary Terms*)

In literature and thus in drama, symbols may take the form of similes and metaphors. The theatrical production of a play adds the possibility for visual and auditory symbols.

## Expressionism

"Expressionism originally dominated German theatre for some time during the 1920's. It too was a reaction against theatrical realism, it sought to mirror inner psychological realities rather than physical appearances." (*The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre*)

Expressionism at this time tended to focus on extreme psychological states and explore them "in a bold use of symbolic settings [scenery] and costumes. Expressionism was in many ways primarily a designer's theatre."

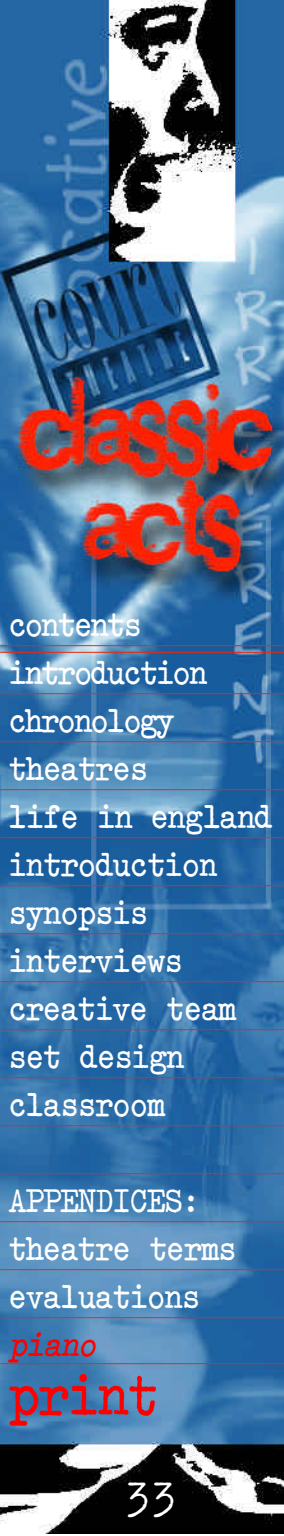
## Stylization

A way of presenting a play or theatrical production that "represents reality in a simplified way, stripped to its essential features, eliminating excess detail." (*Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*)

Onstage actors don't die or (usually) eat a full meal. The actor replaces the real act with a *stylized* representation of the act. We are not troubled to even see actors eating from an empty plate—or travelling in a non-existent boat—we accept these things as *signifying*—standing for—the real act by virtue of a *convention*—a rule, or set of rules some of which we already come to the theatre with, because they are part of our culture (we know that anyone who dies in a play will be back for the curtain call), or because the rules are worked out during the performance between the actors and the audience. We can come to understand and accept that actors walking across a certain area of the stage in a certain manner are in actual fact "in a boat".

Stylization even adds to our fascination with theatre because we must superimpose the real act upon the theatrical act through our imagination.





## Teacher and Student Evaluations

The feedback you give us on your visit to Court Theatre and **classic acts!** will help us to improve both.

You can follow these links to Adobe Acrobat versions of the evaluation forms:

[Teacher Evaluation Form \(.pdf\)](#)

[Student Evaluation Form \(.pdf\)](#)

These forms can be printed out and returned by mail to:

Court Theatre  
5535 South Ellis Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60637

FAX: (773) 834-1897

You will also find **Microsoft Word** versions of these files in the folder named EVALUATIONS, included on the CD.

These can be filled out on the computer and e-mailed as attachments to:

[education@courtheatre.org](mailto:education@courtheatre.org)



*Each production has to go through several days of TECHNICAL REHEARSAL when important elements, such as light cues and sound cues, are added to the production and integrated with the work of the actors.*

*During this time the control board for a complex computer driven lighting system at Court Theatre is placed in the auditorium so that the lighting designer and his/her assistants can see exactly what the audience will see while s/he make adjustments.*

# classic acts

from court theatre's  
CAST partnership

classic acts was designed & edited by Roger Smart  
with extensive dramaturgical information  
compiled and edited by Celise Kalke.  
Special thanks to Diane Clausen.

For technical assistance in the use of  
this CD-ROM please call 773.702.8874  
or e-mail [education@courttheatre.org](mailto:education@courttheatre.org)

Multi-media presentation created using  
QuarkXpress, Adobe Acrobat, Adobe  
Photoshop, Felt Tip Sound Studio &  
SoundApp

CLASSICS  
ACTORS  
STUDENTS  
TEACHERS

Made with  
Macintosh



Court Theatre High School Matinee Program  
Teacher Evaluation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Subject \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Production \_\_\_\_\_

Date Attended \_\_\_\_\_

# of Students Participating \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of class \_\_\_\_\_

- 
1. Did you enjoy the performance? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
  2. Did your students indicate that they had enjoyed the performance? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
  3. Did you feel the performance was educationally relevant? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
  4. If so, please give some reasons.

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5. If not, why not?

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6. Did you use the Study Guide that was provided? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

7. If so, what parts did you find useful?

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8. If not, why not?

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9. What recommendations would you make for improving/updating the Study Guide format?

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*(please continue of back of sheet)*

10. Did the experience of seeing this live performance stimulate or motivate your students to:

- Discuss the play in class       Write critical essays  
 Act out scenes from the play  
 Act out original skits       Write original poetry, plays etc.  
 Draw or create any type of artwork       Other

*(specify)* \_\_\_\_\_

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*(please continue of back of sheet)*

Please rate the following:

**Study Guide:**

	Poor-----	Good-----	Excellent		
Thoroughness	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to use	1	2	3	4	5
Connected to curricula	1	2	3	4	5
Relevant to students	1	2	3	4	5
Fun	1	2	3	4	5
Prepared Teacher	1	2	3	4	5
Prepared Student	1	2	3	4	5

**Post-Show Discussion:**

Helped clarify ambiguities	1	2	3	4	5
Gave students voice	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraged varied opinions	1	2	3	4	5
Was educationally relevant	1	2	3	4	5

Overall, how would you describe your experience at Court?

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*(please continue of back of sheet)*

What suggestions would you have for improving the Court experience?

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*(please continue of back of sheet)*

Did you attend the teacher workshop and free preview for this production?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If not, would you like information on the An Audience at Court program? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Would you be interested in classroom workshops at your school with Court artists?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Court Theatre High School Matinee Program  
Student Evaluation

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Show \_\_\_\_\_

Did you enjoy the performance or not? Please give your reasons.

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What did you think about the production values?  
*(set design, lights, costumes, sound and props)*

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What did you think about the acting? Were there any actors you particularly liked or disliked, and why?

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If you could talk to the playwright, the director or the designers of this play or both, what sort of things would you like to say to them?

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Did you use the multi-media CD *Classic Acts*? Did you find it interesting, informative and easy to use?

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Suggest any improvements you would like to see made to the multi-media CD *Classic Acts*

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Double-click on the actor's headshots and watch them perform an audition piece.

Then decide how YOU would cast them in either *Twelfth Night* or *The Piano*.



**jennifer barclay** Favorite past productions include *Haymarket Eight* (Steppenwolf Arts Xchange), *The Mousetrap* (International Theatre Vienna), *Murder at the Vicarage* and *The Little Prince* (Acadia Repertory), *Guys and Dolls* (Peninsula Players), and *American Voices* (Geva Theatre).



**aaron cedolia** is originally from Oakville, Ontario but moved to Chicago last year after completing his M.F.A. degree in Theatre from the University of Mississippi. He has appeared in Chicago in *Nebraskoblivion*, *Doo Lister's Blues*, *Standing on My Knees*, and, most recently, *Macbett*.



**john bryce fischer** Regional credits include *Measure for Measure*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Richard III*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Falcon's Pitch*, and *John O'Keefe's Wild Oats* (Illinois Shakespeare Festival). Other credits include *Angels in America*, *Two Rooms*, and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Illinois State Theatre); *Beau Jest* (Attic Playhouse); and *Brilliant Traces* (Fontbonne Theatre).



When a theatre is casting a production they invite actors to attend for **audition**. Unless the theatre knows the actor's work well, the first step is usually for the actor to perform an audition monologue.

The Director of the play looks to see who best demonstrates the qualities s/he imagines in each character from her or his close reading of the text.

The actors s/he likes are then **called back** and they perform short sections from the script as the character the Director thinks of them playing. The director will often match actors together whom s/he thinks might make a good combination.

The actors who are closest to the Director's vision of the play, and who work well together, are then **cast** in a role. Once called back, it is not so much about being the "best" actor, but the most suitable.


**matthew krause** is delighted to be joining the repertory company again after appearing in last season's *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards*. Most recently, he worked with greasy joan & company and Division 13 on Ionesco's *Macbett*. Matt has also been involved with Victory Gardens, Emerald City, and Open Eye, where he is an ensemble member.




**dana wise** is pleased to return to Court Theatre where she last appeared in *The Cherry Orchard* and *An Ideal Husband*. Since then, she has worked with Curious Theater Branch, Theater Oobleck, and Lookingglass Theatre. Most recently, she became a founding member of the Artistic Home Acting Ensemble.








creative



**classic acts**

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# piano

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## introduction

The contents of **classic acts** fall into six broad categories:

1. Information and background on the play and its adaptation by Trevor Griffiths.
2. Information and background on Anton Chekhov.
3. A synopsis of the play and a glossary.
4. Interviews with actors in the production.
5. An exploration of environmental staging, including photographs of Court Theatre's auditorium and the environmental set being prepared for the production.
6. Suggested activities.

**Categories 1-3** support the study of the play as literature, as well as being the essential dramaturgical information which the director, designers and actors drew upon when preparing for the production you are to see.

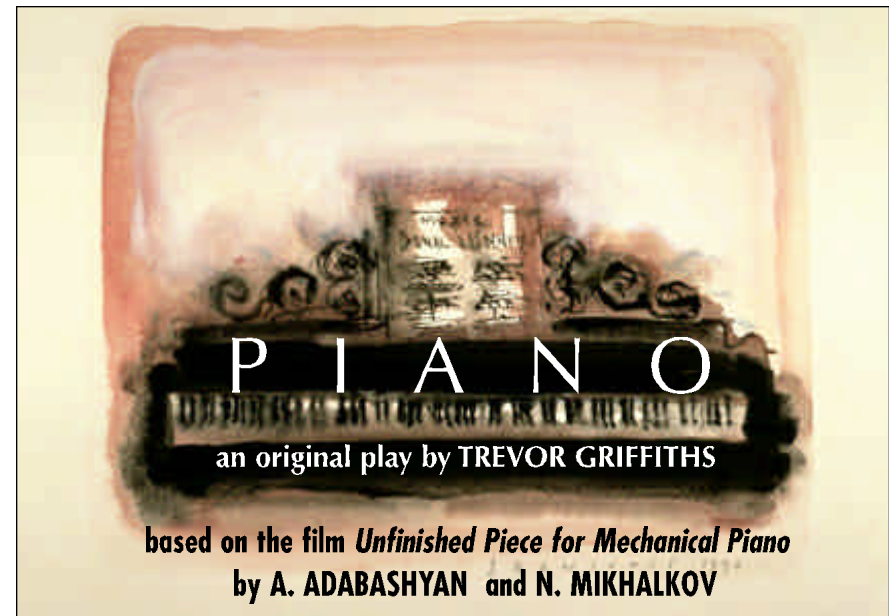
**Categories 4 & 5** give insight into the process by which a literary text becomes a performance text, the process by which an original and imaginative work of one artist is re-authored—re-imagined—by another artist, the Director, together with her or his collaborators, the dramaturg, the designers and the actors.


**Suggested activities** invite exploration of the themes of the play and create opportunities for discussion and writing. There are other activities which can be

conducted as discussions or role play exercises, these encourage the development of a further understanding of the work of the artists involved in a theatrical production and of the creative process.

Of particular interest might be the [Virtual Audition](#), where you can watch video of actors performing audition monologues. You can then, after careful consideration of issues of character and character development, choose in what roles you would cast these actors.

**Please note** a copy of the script is published by Faber and Faber, but is out of print. For teachers who cannot procure this edition of the play and who wish to read the script in order to prepare their students, a copy of the production script used by Court Theatre is included on the CD-ROM as a Microsoft Word document. This is for educational use only.





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4

the journey from chekhov to griffiths

by Celise Kalke

Sonya, Zizi, Mami, Masha—there are enough of you. I love you all. When I was at the university I used to say a few kind words to the street-walkers in Theatre square. . . I bought one called Raisa. Then I collected three hundred roubles with some other students and we bought another one her freedom. . . . They all love me, all. You insult them—but they still love you. For instance, I insulted the Grekov girl and banged her against the table, but still she loves me. . . . Being Platonov hurts. . . . You love me, don't you? They all love me. . . I used to help prostitutes, now I help to recruit them.

Anton Chekhov, from *Platonov*.

In the early 1880s, Anton Chekhov wrote *Platonov*—a long unwieldy play neither performed or published in the author's lifetime. It explores a type, "the superfluous man" which was much discussed in Russian literary and intellectual circles at this time. Chekhov's character is an ineffectual schoolteacher, a man of great promise and charisma who, although married, spends his time pursuing a series of torrid affairs with various women. The play has challenged Chekhov scholars and interpreters since it is unperformable as written, being both long and melodramatic. In addition, the violence and torrid emotions of the play set it apart from the subtle irony and gentle good humor that characterize Chekhov's mature work. However, the character of Platonov himself is a delicious stage type—he is sensual and irreverent. He causes great pain while at the same time stirring up great affection.

"In Chekhov's best plays, the hero tries to kill himself [as in Uncle Vanya and Cherry

Orchard] but does not succeed, which is logical since suicide is an act and the Chekhovian hero is incapable of action. And it's precisely in this derisory effort to achieve the act, and in the impossibility of accomplishing it, that he comes into existence, with all his passions, complexes, experience and hope."

Nikita Mikhalkov, director and creator of *Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano*

Russian film director Nikita Mikhalkov created his own adaptation of *Platonov* in the 1970's. First adapted for the stage, the work became the striking and compelling film, *Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano*. The main characters from *Platonov* are portrayed enjoying a long summer visit together. They eat, they talk, they banter, Platonov enjoys women throwing themselves at him, there is heartbreak, there is tension, there is release. The film shows us the Platonov story in the vein of the Chekhov who wrote *The Cherry Orchard*. The character Platonov is placed in a world where he is still superfluous, and still sensual and irreverent. He also continues to stir up great affection, but in this world he isn't taken seriously by anyone but himself to cause great pain. Removed from Chekhov's play, Mikhalkov makes the character a more truly archetypal Chekhovian hero.

"I rarely see myself in terms of a role or a mission as a writer. I'm just a writer. But I happen to be a social writer. And I think the best writing is social. That includes not just Brecht but Chekhov, not just Mayakovsky but Turgenev. So 'social' is broadly defined by me. And I don't see myself as having some kind of heroic mission to represent socialism on the stage. All I can do as a socialist and a playwright is look at what hurts, what scares and terrifies, what warms and inspires me."

Trevor Griffiths, playwright, author of *Piano*

English writer Trevor Griffiths in turn fell in love with Mikhailov's exploration of the world of *Platonov*. *Wild Honey*, an earlier adaptation of *Platonov* condensed the play and heightened the melodrama of Chekhov's original work. *Piano* responds to the creative use of Chekhovian types in the movie, and expands the world of the play to include more prominent roles for the peasant characters. Griffiths is a prominent Leftist playwright who believes that theater should help the audience to imagine a better more egalitarian world "beyond this one." To that end, Griffiths adapted *Piano* to include two characters, Zakhar and Radish, from "My Live; the story of a Provincial." This short story portrays the emotionally rich story an architect's son who works as a manual laborer in a provincial part of Russian. In combining the world of the film and the world of the story, Griffiths has expanded the world of *Platanov* to include members of the working class. *Piano* portrays the story and characters of *Platonov* in a social world with depth and balance from the aristocrats to the servants.

"You are right to demand that an artist should take a conscious [social]attitude to his work, but you are confusing two concepts: answering [social] questions and formulating them correctly. Only the latter is required of an artist. There's not a single question answered in [the novels] Anna Karenina or Eugene Onegin, but they are fully satisfying, simply because all the questions they raise are formulated correctly. It is the duty of the court to formulate the questions correctly, but let the jury answer them, each according to his own preference."

Anton Chekhov

In turn, director Charles Newell and the *Piano* design team will be taking the characters and situations one step further in terms of the theatrical space. Playing with both the ideas of hyper realism and heightened theatricality, *Piano* will exist in a world where each audience member will play the role of camera. The action of the play will exist in and around the audience, on a variety of levels throughout the Court Theatre space. But the style of this action will be more real than real, a style created by the ingenious use of props and also subtle and emotionally complex acting. The production's final effect will combine the theatrical characters from *Platonov*, the meditation on the Chekhovian from *Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano*, Griffith's social consciousness built into *Piano*, and Charles Newell's theatrical imagination.



Charles Newell, Director of Piano

The text that follows is a theatrical mediation of Adabashyan and [Mikhalkov's](#) remarkable [Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano](#) (1980), itself an imaginative filmic reworking of themes from [Chekhov's](#) plays (most notably *Platonov*) and his short fiction. The Russian film-makers, whether out of respect or simple unconcern, have allowed me to plunder their own piece in order to find my own; and I'm truly grateful for the generous space they've afforded me.

If I call *Piano* a new play, then, it is in part because I have no right to saddle them (or indeed [Chekhov](#)) with the piece I've finally fashioned. For while in respect of character, relationship, incident and dramatic terrain, *Piano* draws heavily on these several works, there is yet within it, at the level of tone, language, form, means and intentions, something other than what they have sought to say, for which I must both claim and accept full responsibility.

As to what exactly that something other is and where precisely it might be found upon the tragicomic map of the human project, I can at this stage, a month ahead of the play's first rehearsal, usefully say nothing. So let me instead offer a context for a possible reading of the piece with a passage from the late and deeply missed Raymond Williams:

"The condition of realism in the nineteenth century was in fact an assumption of a total world. In the great realists, there was no separation in kind between public and private facts, or between public and private experience. This was not, as it may easily appear in retrospect, a wilful joining of disparate things. Rather, it was a way of seeing the world in

which it was possible to experience the quality of a whole way of life through the qualities of individual men and women. Thus, a personal breakdown was a genuinely social fact, and a social breakdown was lived and known in direct personal experience . . . Chekhov is the realist of breakdown, on a significantly total scale."

Should *Piano* prove to be about anything at all, I suspect it may prove, like its illustrious forebears, to be about just this felt sense of breakdown and deadlock; and thus perhaps, in a nicely perverse irony, about what it's like to be living in our own post-capitalist, post-socialist, post-realist, post-modern times.

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Trevor Griffiths



Anton Chekhov

## Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860-1904)

Note: his name is sometimes written Chekov or Tchekov

Russian dramatist and short story writer. He studied medicine in Moscow, where he began writing short humorous stories for journals. Among the greatest of his mature stories are 'A Dreary Story' (1889), 'Ward No. Six' (1892), 'My Life' (1896), 'Ionych' and the trilogy 'The Man in a Case', 'Gooseberries', and 'About Love' (all 1898), and 'The Lady with the Little Dog' (1899). Chekov's first successful play was *Ivanov* (1887), and he then wrote several light one-act comedies. His status as a dramatist, however, rests on his four late plays. *The Seagull* (1895) ... was followed by *Uncle Vanya* (1900), *Three Sisters* (1901), and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904). ...

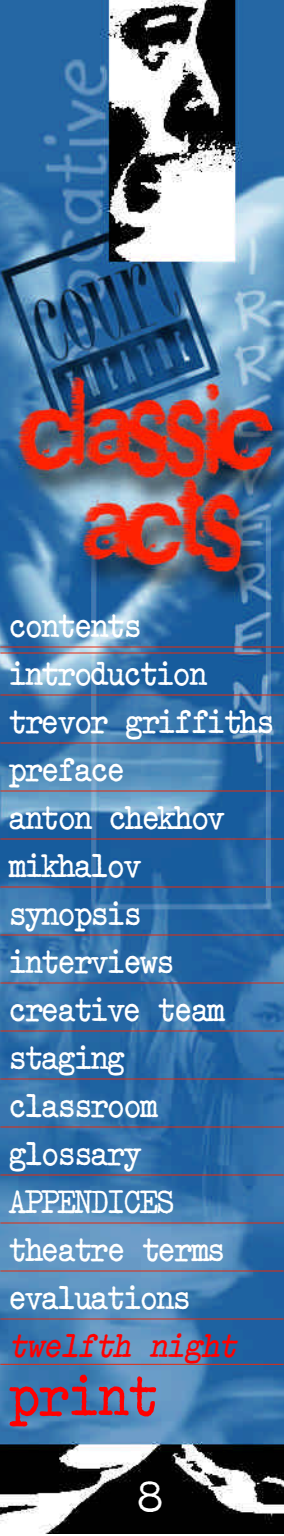
Chekhov's work is characterized by its subtle blending of naturalism and symbolism; by its sympathetic, humane, but acutely observed portraits of a threatened upper class stifled by inactivity and ennui; and above all by its unique combination of comedy, tragedy, and pathos, and the sensitivity of its movement from one mode to another.

(source: The Oxford Companion to English Literature, 5th edition, ed. Margaret Drabble, 1985)



Here is another web site  
that have more information  
on Chekhov:

[http://eldred.ne.mediaone.net/ac/yr/Anton\\_Chekhov.html](http://eldred.ne.mediaone.net/ac/yr/Anton_Chekhov.html)



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mikhalov on chekov and unfinished piece for player piano

from *About his films* in "Nikita Mikhalkov, a collection" 1989.

Translated by Jonathon Platt

The idea of making a Chekhovian film [Unfinished Piece for Player Piano] came to me pretty much by accident, but, all the same, I do think it was a development of my previous work in cinematography. Already in "Slave of Love," in a series of scenes depicting the everyday life of the cast of a [prerevolutionary] film, we tried to find a Chekhovian intonation, the writer's particular sense of irony, subtlety, the elusiveness of human relationships.

Why did we decide on the most unknown of all [Chekhov's](#) plays? First of all because almost all of the mature Chekhov's plays (*Three Sisters*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Seagull*) have already been made into films in our country, and such young artists as us would doubtfully have been trusted to make *The Cherry Orchard*, all the more so since we were not the first to have wanted to make that film.

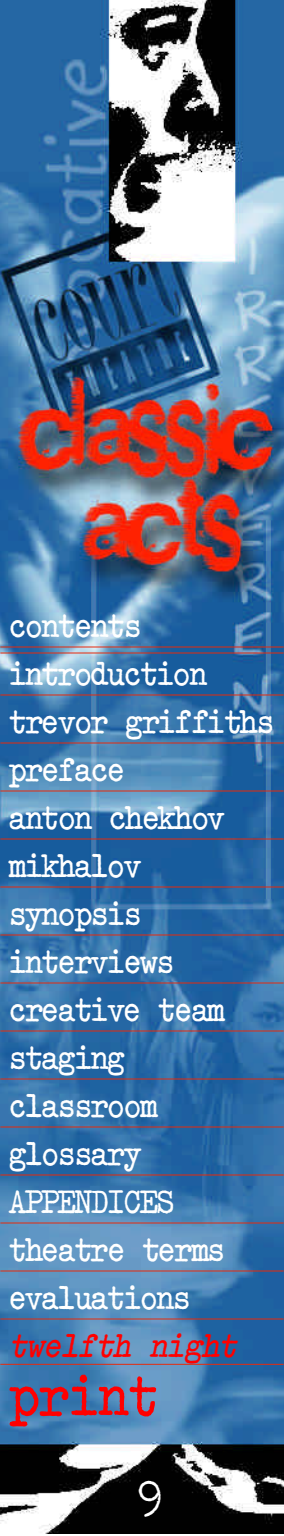
On the other hand, in *Fatherlessness*, we were drawn to just that fact that in comparison with other [Chekhov](#) plays, this work was weak, immature, written when the writer was only seventeen. And this gave us the privilege to be utterly free in our interpretation. We took the play only as a foundation, transforming it gradually as we worked on the script, trying to sort of make out of the young writer's play a work that could have been written by the later Chekhov. We used motifs from other works of his, by the way, to a very slight degree: in the script only one character was manifestly from another thing by Chekhov—Rashkevich from the story "On the Estate" played by Oleg Tabakov [included in the

actor packet]. Everything else we took wasn't so much directly from Chekhov, as from the feelings produced by Chekhov.

This is why in building up the dramatic situation, we strived to resolve it as comically and grotesquely as possible. And from the other side, in comic situations we tried to uncover their inner drama. There wasn't any specifically formal agenda for us in this: we have upset the audience, now let's have some fun; we've had some fun, now let's upset them. It was important for us to preserve the unity of the action's movement, the freedom of this movement, so that the impression of someone pointing a finger, moralizing, or exaggerating little passions and pseudo-sufferings was never felt.

According to the play, Platonov dies, killed by Sofia. We decided against this ending. It's possible that this will be a seditious thought, but it seems to me that it was a mistake of the writer that his Ivanov [in the play Ivanov] shot himself. Only a person capable of a serious act can shoot himself. Chekhov's heroes do not commit serious acts. Even when uncle Vanya shoots Serebriakov, he isn't in a condition to kill him. Even Trepliov, having killed himself, still had failed to shoot himself once before this. The heroes of Chekhov's plays, even when intending to commit a serious act, approaching an act, still, in the decisive moment, back away. And in this, in my view, there is a large truth to the characters he created. Chekhov said himself that he doesn't write about heroes, villains, or angels.

Only a person capable of a serious act can shoot himself. Chekhov's heroes do not commit serious acts.



[In Mikalkhov's film] Platonov is just the same. At some point he betrayed his own feeling, it was a betrayal only in relation to himself. It continued to seem to him that everything lay ahead of him, everything was still possible, he was young, healthy, smarter and more sarcastic than everyone around him, he could continue on in life, showing up all the provincial philistines near him. But it turns out that he is already in a tailspin, even if it seems to him as though everything is in the future.

A chance to commit a serious act falls upon him. Sofia, a woman he loved and sought after, tells him: do what is most significant for yourself, for the world—commit a noble act. Noble because you will act by your conscience. It will hurt your wife, it will hurt my husband, but you will have acted.

Platonov does not act—not because he pities others, but simply because he is already unable to do it. And, being a weak person, he blames everyone but himself for this. They and not he are to blame for his life having come to nothing. But, having challenged Platonov to act, Sofia turns out to be incapable of acting herself. Rejected by Platonov, she returns to her husband, to that same life which she had dreamed to escape.

Failure befalls Platonov even when he tries to kill himself—he throws himself off a cliff into a river. If he had drowned, we could have considered him a hero, a man

Platonov does not act--not because he pities others, but simply because he is already unable to do it. And, being a weak person, he blames everyone but himself for this.

who preferred death to the rotten existence in his philistine milieu. That would have been an act! But instead he is only pitied: the water here is shallow, no one warned him, he hurts himself. From this combination of contradictory traits—spiritual expansiveness and limitations, perceptiveness and blindness, human loftiness and pettiness—for us his character became clear in all its complex volume and depth.

I consider the appearance of the figure of the boy in the film very important for the world it depicts. This figure arose unexpectedly, literally a few days before shooting, when I suddenly felt that it was necessary to find a counterpoint to the existence of the characters of the play, some oxygen to allow the audience to breathe.

When the script was ready, I felt as though there was still some effort that had been missed, something that would take the blinkers off this little world of the interrelations of these people, to show that beyond its limits there was some other life, some other world. That's how the boy came about. To be honest, I am extremely proud of the idea. It wasn't just a stroke of luck in the script, it was the fruit of the feeling of having a picture that was ready.

Here I had some arguments with my friend and co-author Aleksandr Adabashian; he thinks of the boy as something foreign sprinkled throughout the play, not emerging out of the dramaturgy. And indeed it is like that, the appearance of the boy is not at all conditioned by the logical development of the action, but I am convinced that in this case it was possible and necessary to tear the dramaturgical fabric, the larger concept of the film demanded it. In my opinion, this gives the film the feeling of the motion of life.





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**synopsis** *Piano is a fascinating synthesis of various adaptations. The work was adapted from a Russian film script, Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano, for the stage. And this film script, in turn, was adapted from a lesser play by Anton Chekhov, Platonov, and some short stories into a screen play celebrating the “Chekhovian” style of realism.*

## act one

The play opens in a southern Province in Russia, summer of 1904, on the estate of General Voynitsev. The General has died, leaving his widow, Anna, as the owner of the estate and the center of the province’s social life. Anna has bought a player piano, and two peasants, Radish and Zakhar, move this cumbersome instrument into the house—supervised by Yasha, the acerbic butler.

Nearby Anna plays chess with her admirer, the local doctor, Triletski. Petrin, a rich merchant, reads a paper. Anna obviously enjoys Triletski’s flirtation, but doesn’t seem to take him very seriously and complains of boredom. But her boredom isn’t just with Triletski, with the game of chess, or with the beautiful summer day. Anna is bored with life.

Porfiry, a shy landowner (in his late fifties) joins Anna and Triletski, accompanied by Anna’s step-son Sergei. They have been demonstrating mowing techniques to a young peasant. Sergei, although a landowner himself, is going through a phase of affinity with the Russian peasants, and his opinions reflect this flirtation with radical politics.

The Platonovs, the schoolteacher and his wife Sashenka (Triletski’s sister), arrive. Platonov is obviously fun, but considered a bit ridiculous by his male peers. Anna, how-

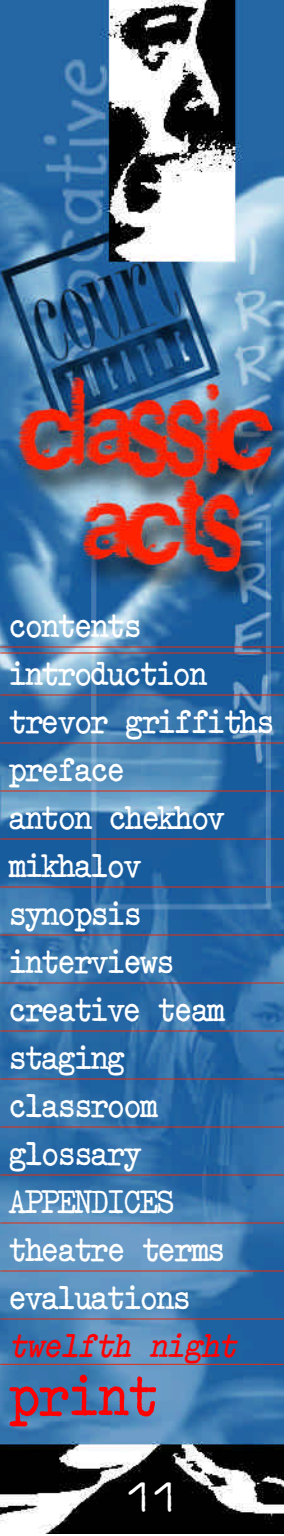
ever, adores him and they have been having an affair. Platonov represents a Russian type—the intellectual of promise gone to seed, potential without substance. He and his wife were isolated together for the last six months and have both put on weight. A shot rings out, fired by Triletski. His father, the Colonel, joins the others outside. Anna sends Porfiry to fetch Sergei’s new wife, Sophia.

Platonov is amazed to hear Sophia’s name once again. She awakens in this inconsequential man the promise of his youth. When Platonov was a student, he met Sophia and they had a summer romance. She went to Moscow for two days, and never returned. Platonov and Sophia reunite, remembering the eight years between their last meeting. It’s apparent that strong feelings remain on both sides. Shcherbuk, another landowner arrives with his nephew, Petya. Anna’s party, made up of her closest circle of friends, family and neighbors, is complete.

Anna seeks Platonov out to ask his advice about marrying Porfiry—who would teach her to mow and pay her debts, but who she can’t love. Platonov asks Anna to stop their affair because he feels guilty about betraying Sashenka, but Anna figures out that her real competition is Sophia. Yasha, the butler, interrupts this difficult scene, telling Anna that “the surprise” is ready.

Anna assembles her guest to unveil the player piano. Zakhar stands before the piano and orders it to play. Then as music emanates from the instrument, Zakhar walks away. The guests stare at the instrument in amazement and Sashenka faints.

Sergei embarrasses everyone by saying that since his wife Sophia wants to help the peasant women and children, he will donate his old clothes to the peasant workers. Platonov makes the moment worse by pointing out



how silly peasants will look working in “frock-coats.” But then Platonov laughs and infects everyone (even Sergei) with his mirth. Only Sophia bitterly stares at her old lover. Petya approaches the player piano, and plays the air above the instrument.

## act two

It is evening, and Anna sits on her veranda shuffling cards. Her guests spill out of the house, dressed in costumes. They play a game of forfeits, where whoever holds the drawn card must do as the person drawing the card commands. Sophia orders that whoever holds the Knave of Spades must ride a pig around the house. Triletski holds the card and agrees. Anna orders a reluctant Yasha to find a pig.

Anna takes a turn. She commands the bearer of the Ace of Hearts to kiss her. It is Platonov. Sashenka discovers his card. Platonov moves forward, and Anna kisses him in a “long and increasingly intense embrace. Lifetimes elapse, stars die in the silence.” Sophia drops her glass, and the kiss is over.

Anna moves the party along, ordering everyone to dance. A peasant, Gorokhov, asks Triletski to come and take care of Gorokhov’s wife. Triletski refuses to leave the party, saying he may come tomorrow. Platonov demands that Triletski do his job, and Triletski says he will go after dinner. Triletski then attacks Platonov for lack of dedication to his work as a teacher. Shcherbuk interrupts with a pantomime, the “Monarch of the Glen,” and Platonov and Triletski tentatively make up.

## black out

The party sits down to dinner. Soon Shcherbuk pontificates about the social deficiencies of all lower classes. Petrin, the merchant, asks if he should leave. Petrin explains that his father was a worker, and yet now Petrin has loaned Anna the money to support her aristocratic lifestyle. Anna saves her party by ordering everyone to eat. Petya turns the gramophone on loudly, and Scherbuk chases the boy with a switch. Anna toasts Petrin for his character and his generosity. The pig arrives, but Triletski refuses to perform his forfeit. The party is a mess.

Platonov, who has been egging everyone on, strums a guitar and tells the story of his love affair with Sophia. Sophia breaks down. Everyone turns to watch the fireworks by the river. But Sophia remains alone. Platonov accosts her, and they kiss — a kiss interrupted when Sophia sees Sergei watching them. Sergei congratulates Platonov on ruining his marriage to Sophia.

Sergei then runs to his stepmother for comfort. Anna thinks that Sophia will stay with him, but Sergei only wants to run away and nurse his broken heart. Triletski finds Anna, and wants to declare his love, but she stops him with a cynical comment. Porfiry accuses Platonov of ruining everyone’s life and threatens to beat Platonov, but Platonov questions Porfiry’s manhood. Humiliated, Porfiry slinks away.

Sergei hauls the servants out of bed asking for his hat and a horse. Yasha brings only the hat, and Sergei can’t even pull off his wedding ring. Sergei’s romantic escape is ruined.

Platonov prays alone on the terrace. Sophia asks him to run away with her, but he loses his nerve and tries to get back in the house in a state of total panic. Sophia returns to her husband, asleep on a trunk.

Platonov bangs on the door, waking everyone up. He yells about his wasted life and his horrible wife. It's a complete break down. He runs to drown himself in a nearby lake. Sashenka follows, tries to keep him from leaping, but when the water is too shallow to drown in she wades out to comfort her husband. The crisis is over. Platonov and his wife join the others as the sun rises. Radish, Zakhar and Petya stand together looking down at Anna and her guests.



*Anton Chekhov*

interviews with the actors

Kate Fry returns to Court Theatre, where she has appeared in *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards*, *The Learned Ladies*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Tartuffe*, *The Philadelphia Story*, and *The Barber of Seville*. Earlier this season, she played Julia in Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Other credits include *Kindertransport*, *Falsettos*, and *Baby* at Apple Tree Theatre; *A Wonderful Life* (Jeff Nomination) at Candlelight Playhouse; *Humulus the Mute* with the Drama League of New York; *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* with Lincoln Center's Directors' Lab; *Into the Woods* at St. Louis Rep; as well as work with StreetSigns, Roadworks Productions, Magellan Theatre Company, and Bailiwick.



kate fry

Click on Kate's headshot to watch her interview in which she talks about the characters she plays in Court Theatre's 2001 Repertory season of *Piano and Twelfth Night*.

(The video may take a few moments to load. You need QuickTime or Microsoft MoviePlayer installed on your computer to watch the video.)

Click on Carey's  
headshot to watch her  
interview in which she talks  
about the characters she  
plays in Court Theatre's  
2001 Repertory season of  
*Piano and Twelfth Night*.

*(The video may take a few moments to load.  
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video.)*

carey peters

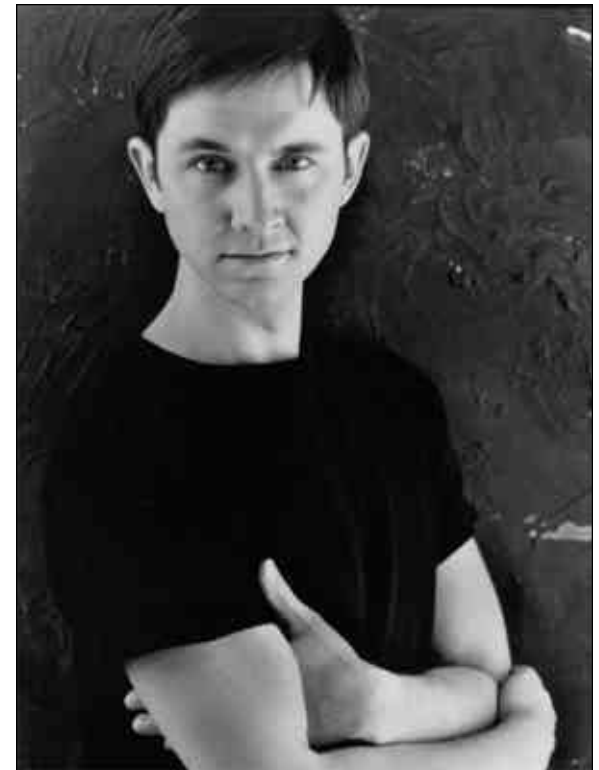


Carey Peters (Olivia, Sophia) was last seen at Court Theatre as Belise in *The Learned Ladies*, Yokobue in *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards*, and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other Chicago credits include Northlight Theatre (*An Experiment With an Air Pump*), Steppenwolf (*Pot Mom*), American Theater Company (*The Threepenny Opera*), and Apollo Theater (*Hello Muddah Hello Fadduh*). Film and television credits include *Mister Id*, *Lawrence Melm*, and *ER*. Originally from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, Carey received her BFA in Acting from DePaul University.

Click on Guy's  
headshot to watch his  
interview in which he talks  
about the characters he  
plays in Court Theatre's  
2001 Repertory season of  
*Piano and Twelfth Night*.

*(The video may take a few moments to load.  
You need QuickTime or Microsoft MoviePlayer  
installed on your computer to watch the  
video.)*

guy adkins



Guy Adkins' credits at Court Theatre include *The Invention of Love*, *The Learned Ladies* and *Fair Ladies at a Game of Poem Cards*. At the Goodman he appeared in *Floyd Collins*, *Arcadia*, *The House of Martin Guerre*, *Design for Living*, *Straight as a Line*, and *A Christmas Carol*. At Northlight, *Away*, *The Last Survivor*, and *Visiting Mr. Green* (also Royal George). Other Chicago appearances include *Apple Tree*, *Mariott Lincolnshire*, and *Drury Lane*. He has also appeared regionally at the Old Globe (San Diego), Prince Music Theatre (Philadelphia), and Alliance Theatre Co. (Atlanta). Guy is the recipient of two Joseph Jefferson Awards, two After Dark Awards, and Philadelphia's Barrymore Award.

## The Director

“The most important thing a director can do for an actor is to awaken the actor’s intuition and assure the intuition that it is going to be witnessed and used.”

“Essentially an actor says, ‘I will trust the director to function in the capacity of my critical brain while I give my intuitive brain full opportunity to express. I will rely on the director to keep me from looking foolish.’”

William Ball

The Director is similar to the captain or coach of a team of talented individuals, all of whom contribute a great deal to a production, and without whom it could never take place. Like a coach, the Director’s job is to get the best out of every individual. She or he will decide on the general game plan and then work with the team to make this vision a reality. Directors differ widely in their styles as do coaches, but the Director has the ultimate responsibility for determining



For one of the most insightful and easily read books on directing read William Ball’s *A Sense of Direction: Some Observations of the Art of Directing*. Published by Drama Book Publishers, New York. ISBN 0-89676-082-0

what happens on stage. Some directors, such as Robert Wilson or Julie Taymor (*The Lion King* or the movie *Titus*), are more particularly visually oriented and have a strong sense of what the production is to look like. They then work with their designers to bring those ideas to the stage. Other directors tend to focus more exclusively on the script and the actors; they will give their designers more general guidance by talking about a mood or tone for each scene and then rely on their designers to originate a larger part of the design ideas.

## The Scenic Designer

The scenic designer is responsible for envisioning the set, the setting, the place where the action of the play takes place. They may re-create a realistic world, such as a 7-Eleven convenience store, as for Eric Bogosian’s *SubUrbia*, or it may be a very abstract unreal world.

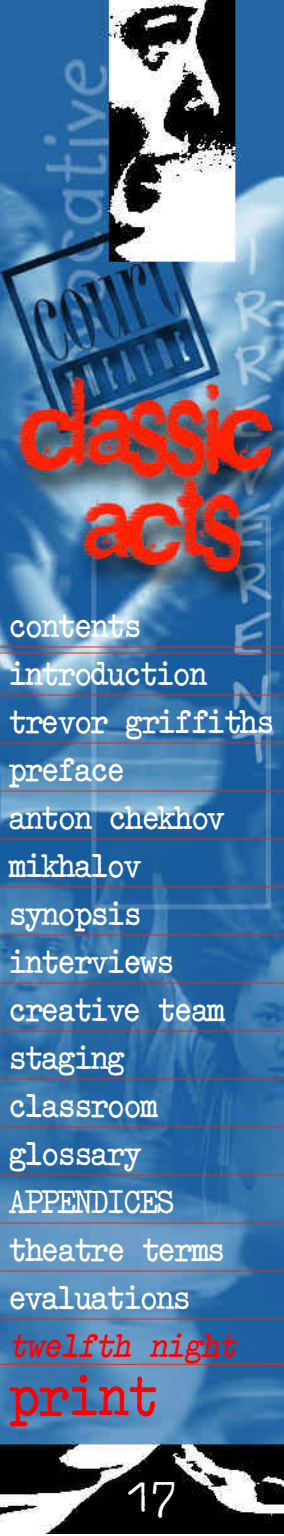
The Scenic designer often begins her or his design process by looking at photographs or paintings. They will then produce a series of sketches using pencil or water colors for example. More and more designers are turning to computers and create their sketches in applications such as Photoshop.

In most cases scenic designers will then build a scale model of the set.

Scenic designs then have to draw up plans similar to those created by architects. These plans give the *precise* dimensions for the set, from which the set builders work.

## The Costume Designer

The Costume Designer creates the designs for the clothes the actors wear. They consider the period of the play, the time in history that the events take place, the



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character and role in society (Queen, servant, doctor etc.) of the person and whether or not the design team's vision of the production is literal—trying to make everything in the production look as close to the real world as they can—or more abstract, metaphorical.

It is possible to mount a production of *Hamlet*, of course, with all the actors in period dress, or with everyone in black polo neck shirts, black pants and black shoes.

The Costume Designer may decide to choose to make subtle choices about the costume design, such as placing people from a specific group in clothes whose colors are drawn from the same color palette.

The Costume Designer will begin by doing a good deal of historical research if the play is not a contemporary one, and will then produce a series of preliminary sketches. These will be shown to the Director and the rest of the design team and discussed. From this point on the Costume Designer will produce color renderings and will find samples of actual fabric for each costume.

### The Sound Designer

The Sound Designer is responsible for what can be the most subtle yet powerful element of the design of a production. As an audience we can be very aware of sound effects such as thunder or a gun shot, but much of the Sound Designers work goes almost, if not completely, unnoticed. Sound effects and music which help establish a location or a mood can affect us on an almost subliminal level. Even without a set at all, the right soundscape can help our imaginations create a clear sense of where the action is set. Some sound cues are required by the script, while others are decided upon by the sound designer and the Director where they want to add to what is suggested in the written script. Sounds can range from the wholly naturalistic to effects that are abstract. The music used may be taken from the

period of the play, or or from another period—sometimes written especially for the production—but which is intended to create an atmosphere or convey a mood.

### The Dramaturg

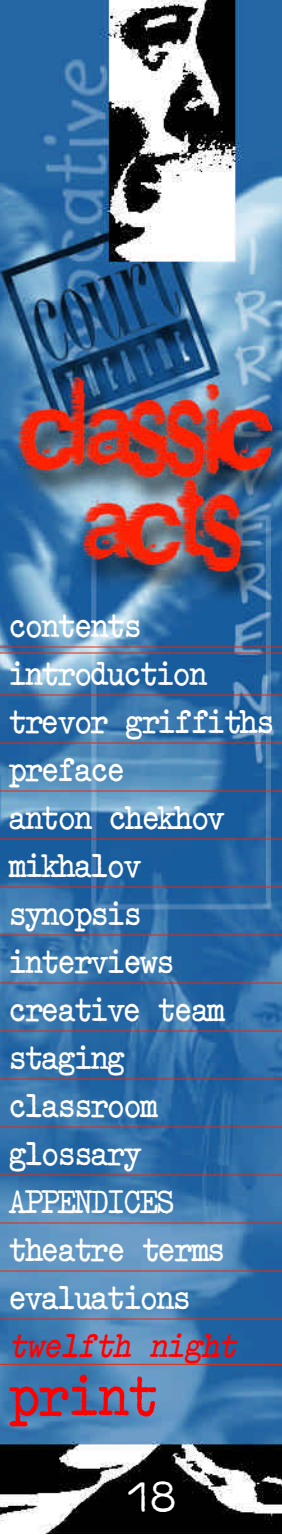
The Dramaturg is the person responsible for helping the director interpret the play, and for coordinating and doing the research needed to understand the play. The Dramaturg is a member of the Creative team, and also sometimes works closely with the designers as they do their research. The Dramaturg is also responsible for editing the text of the play - comparing different editions and/or deciding on different translations. Finally, the Dramaturg is responsible for writing the program notes and any other articles about the play (including magazine articles) that will be distributed to the audience.

For *Twelfth Night* and *Piano*, Celise Kalke, Court Theatre's Resident Dramaturg, had the job of working with Shakespeare words and ideas one day, and Chekhov's ideas the next.

Much has been published about *Twelfth Night*, so her main job was facilitating the flow of information. In addition, director Karin Coonrod wanted special pieces of research for most of the major characters. This included Petrarch's sonnets for Orsino, poetry by Emily Dickinson for Viola, and the Wife of Bath's Tale from the *Canterbury Tales* for Olivia.

For *Piano*, Celise became an expert on Russian estate life, early 20th century Russian history, and peasant culture in Russia. She also spent time preparing a Russian name pronunciation guide, and answering questions about Russian societal norms. Throughout the productions, Celise spent time in rehearsal offering feedback to the director and helping the actors more fully understand the world of each play.





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environmental staging

by Roger Smart

If a contemporary theatre-goer were asked to describe “a theatre”, their initial portrait, irregardless of the extent of their theatrical experience, would be to describe a place where one group of people sit in comparative darkness and stillness as largely passive observers, while another group performs within the same room, but in an area which is denoted by comparatively bright lights, a raised platform and within some architectural ‘picture frame’.

This is typically how we view “a theatre”, and for good reason. Since the early days of Greek theatre some 400 years BC, when the skene (the hut in which the—at the time solitary—actor changed his masks and costumes) was moved to the edge of the orchestra (performance area) to form a scenic

and acoustic backdrop, and the audience was arraigned in something close to a semi-circle around the opposite side of the orchestra, this has been, in one form or another, the most predominant arrangement of the theatrical space.

Roman theatres continued the Greek tradition with some minor modifications. During the 1,000 years between the Fall of Rome and the time of the Renaissance, most theatres deteriorated greatly or were destroyed and few, if any, were built. It was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that theatre became popular again and new theatres were built.

Attempts in Italy in the 1600’s to build theatres based on Roman descriptions resulted in certain errors. The doors, for example, that were present in the Roman scaenae frons (skene) were widened to show perspectives of city streets. All acting however still took place in front of the skene or



Reconstruction of a Greek Theatre in 400 B.C. from History of the Theatre by Oscar G. Brockett

scenic wall, know as the proscenium. In 1618, however, at the Teatro Farnese, the center door in the proscenium

was widened to cover almost the entire stage, forming an arch. Thus it was that the dominant feature of many subsequent theatres, the proscenium arch, was born. This arrangement of the theatrical space has clearly helped define the relationship between performer and the observer, between the actor and the audience and created the dichotomy which is one of the defining features of much contemporary theatre.

Despite this predominance, however, there have been notable aberrations in theatre practice. Much ecclesiastical drama being presented in most notably Spain, Italy and England between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries utilized what would now be termed environmental staging (a term coined in the late 60's by Richard Schechner). During this period dramatizations of biblical stories, and later the medieval morality plays, were played on multiple stages set up in the naves of churches, on multiple mansions—raised platforms—and on multiple wagons, with the audience moving from station to station. Actors would tend to descend from these raised stages and play out scenes amidst the audience.

In 1992 Court Theatre staged the first part of *The Mystery Cycle, Creation*—adapted by Bernhard Sahlins and directed by Nicholas Rudall—in the body of the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. In 1993, *Creation* was presented in the same location in rotating repertory with the second part of *The Mystery Cycle, The Passion*. The inside of Rockefeller Chapel was transformed by the construction of bleachers, where many of the audience sat. Others sat on the floor and had the actors move between them; often the audience had to move to allow a scene to take place. A number of locations were used around the Chapel for staging scenes, thus the relationship between the audience and the actors was constantly changing. As Richard Schechner says:



Photo: Mathew Gibson

Court Theatre's Production of The Mystery Cycle

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“...each scene creates its own space, either contracting to a central remote area or expanding to fill all available space. The action ‘breathes’ and the audience itself becomes a major scenic element.”

Six Axioms for Environmental Theater  
*in Public Domain: Essays on the Theater* (1969:167)

There have been—and continue to be—many experiments in environmental theater, most particularly during the late 60’s and the 70’s. Some environmental productions take place in theater spaces, some in other found spaces, some on the streets. Anne Bogart, one of America’s pre-eminent directors, staged some of the earliest plays she directed in her New York apartment. Audiences moved from room to room following the action of the performance. Her later productions would begin in an interior space (for example, an apartment or warehouse) and then continue on the streets of New York, with the haphazard interaction with passers-by forming an integral part of the action. Recently, Cornerstone Theater Company mounted a production of *Everyman* in a number of shopping malls in the Los Angeles area. The audience moved around the mall following the action which took place on escalators, in storefront windows, and on the ground floor of an atrium with the audience looking on from above.

In traditional theatre we are very much used to a “single-focus”: even with a large proscenium stage, one glance can take in all the action. “...within these panoramic scenes, there are centers of attention, usually a single focal point, around which everything is organized. The response of one perceptive spectator may be the response of all.” (Richard Schechner 1969:175)

Schechner continues:

“The environmental theatre does not eliminate this practice. It is useful. But added to it are two other kinds of focus. In multi-focus more than one event...happens at the same time, distributed throughout the space. Each independent event competes for the audience’s attention. The space is organized so that no spectator can see everything. The spectator must move or completely refocus his attention to see what is going on... In local-focus, events are staged so that only a fraction of the audience can see and hear them.”

Thus it is that different audience members have very different experiences of the same events. Audience members who are ‘local’ to an event may have a much stronger visceral response than those observing from the far side of the space—the response of the more distant observers may be more reflective, analytical. “Spectators experience great extremes—of deep, perhaps active involvement and participation; then critical distancing, looking at the performance, the theater, the other spectators from far away.”

“Many people, trained in the rigid reaction program of orthodox theater...think that the ‘in-out’ reaction is ‘wrong’ or an indication that the play ‘doesn’t work.’ People come up to me and say, ‘I couldn’t keep my attention focused on the play.’ Or, ‘I was moved by some of it, but I kept thinking my own thoughts...’ Or, ‘You know I watched the audience so much I lost part of the play.’ ...I think all of these responses are appropriate.”

Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theater* (1973:19)

While many argue that no two audience members experience any theatre production in the same way, and will create different meanings from the same series of events and the same symbols—or ‘signs’—present in the performance space, in environmental theater, the Director’s “job of controlling meaning” (Schechner) is placed even more in the hands of the audience.

In breaking down the barrier between audience and performer created by the raised stage or the proscenium arch, environmental theatre, where the performers are close enough to touch—and sometimes may actually touch—the audience, environmental staging makes the experience much more immediate, much more intense for those close to the action.

As Court Theatre continues to explore ways in which to re-imagine classic theater, ways that are irreverent and provocative, it should come as no surprise that Artistic Director Charles Newell, Director of *The Piano*, and Scenic Designer John Culbert, are looking to re-imagine the use of the Court Theatre itself by staging Trevor Griffith’s play environmentally. Audience members will not find themselves roaming the streets of Hyde Park to keep up with the production, nor will they follow it around the local shopping mall, but they should not be surprised if they discover the action of the play taking

place, at one time or another, in many areas of the theatre—even above them. This will be a very dynamic, very different experience of theatre at Court.



*Crew members work on the set in preparation for the actors’ first rehearsal on it. While the set is being built, the actors rehearse in an ordinary room with the set marked on the floor with tape. It is always a big adjustment for them when they move onto the actual set.*

*Note how the ramp crosses through and above the audience.*



*A panoramic view of the auditorium and stage of Court Theatre from the top of the ramp which runs from the rear of the house to the back of the stage, above the heads of the audience. The scaffolding house right and stage right and left are also acting areas. Actors also move through the aisles and behind the audience in Director Charles Newell's environmentally staged production.*

*Scenic design by John Culbert.*

## classroom activities

1. [Virtual Audition](#). Carefully read the play. Identify those who you think are the key characters. Consider in some detail what you think are their most important qualities as people, and perhaps, how you imagine they might look.

Then, attend a [Virtual Audition](#). By following this link you can watch video of five actors from Court Theatre's repertory company perform audition two minute long monologues. This is very often the first step in choosing an actor to play a role.

After watching the monologues, who do you feel exhibits, or could exhibit, the key qualities you see in the characters you have chosen?

Be very precise in defining the qualities you see in the actor's performances in terms of the emotions and character they portray.

2. Study the [photographs of the Piano set](#). Identify *all* the different possible acting areas—be as imaginative and unconventional as you can.

Choose a scene from the play. Describe where and how you would stage it. Where would the actors begin the scene? How would they move around the acting area as the scene unfolded. Consider in details your reasons for their movements.

3. Read the [article on environmental staging](#). Next study the [photographs of the Piano set](#).

**i) Before seeing the production:**

In what ways do you expect an environmentally staged play to be different from one staged conventionally?

With the action of the play happening all around you, sometimes very close, sometimes

far away; sometimes in front of you, sometimes behind or above you, do you think every member of the audience will experience the production in the same way—will 'see' the same play?

Do you think watching the other audience members will become an important part of the production?

**ii) After seeing the production:**

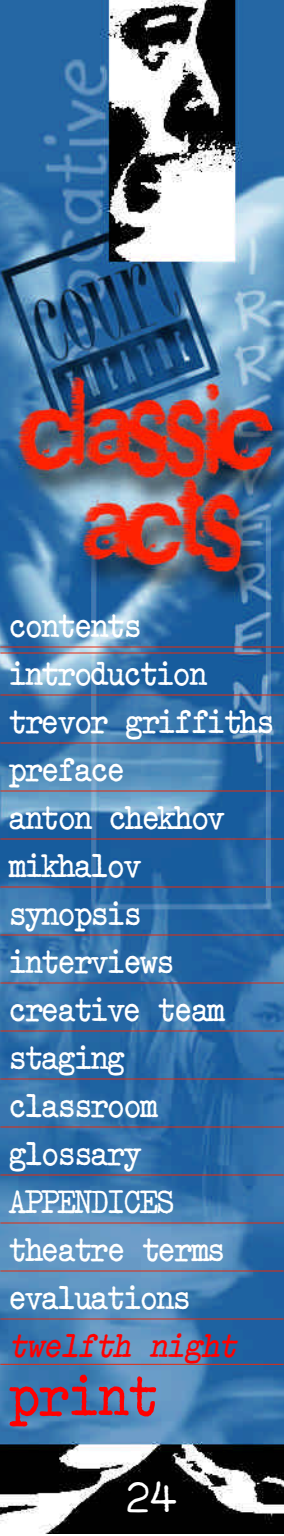
Consider the above questions, but from the perspective of looking back on your experience. How did you experience the production? How did it measure up to your expectations? Were you surprised in any way?

4. Look at the [photographs of the set for Piano](#). Is the set wholly [realistic](#), or is it a more [symbolic](#) or [stylized](#) version of reality?

From your reading and/or watching of the play, do you think this is a good setting for the play or not? Consider in detail about your reasons.

Using photographs from color magazines, collect images that you think would form the basis of an effective set for the play. If you were the [Scenic Designer](#) how would you explain your choice of images to a [Director](#)?

5. What, for you, are the major themes of the play? How were these manifested in the production you saw?
6. Trevor Griffiths has said that he writes his plays as if he were writing for film, and his screen-plays as if he were writing for the theatre. Having seen *Piano*, do you feel he is correct about his own work? Consider in detail how this may, or may not, be true.



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## glossary

Compiled by Celise Kalke with Willa Bepler, Fay Rosner and Kevin Hawthorne

### **Pianola**

The original word for player piano

### **The French language in 19th century Russia**

In the 19th century, Russian was still thought to be a language spoken by relative barbarians. Really cultured upper-class people spoke French. Even after the turn of the century, aristocrats had not yet abandoned the practice of sprinkling their speech with bits of French.

### **Two thousand rubles**

A ruble is the main currency of Russian currency.

### **Moscow**

In Russia in the 19th century, there were two main cities: Moscow and St. Petersburg. Moscow was the political capital and slightly more “Russian”, while St. Petersburg was the cultural capital and slightly more “European.”

### **Serfs**

Agricultural laborers who were tied to the land. Until the reforms of 1861, serfs served in as property analogous to the American slave system. Even after, a bureaucracy arose to monitor the peasants’ loyalty and affiliations with the property they worked.

### **Kopeks**

There are 100 kopeks in a ruble

### **Siberia**

A vast region of Northwestern Asia from the Ural Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Ocean to Kazakhstan. The Russian czarist administration used this region for penal colony/work camps. It is known for it’s harsh winters without snow (-90°F).

### **Penal settlement**

Because of the remoteness of Siberia, as well as the region’s rich mineral deposits, convicts were sent to penal settlements in the region. For all but the strongest, this was a death sentence because of the unmitigated harshness of the climate.

### **Peasant**

A class of Russian agricultural laborer, also the name for the serf class after the abolition of serfdom.

### **Penal colony resident beliefs about the second coming and peasant uprisings**

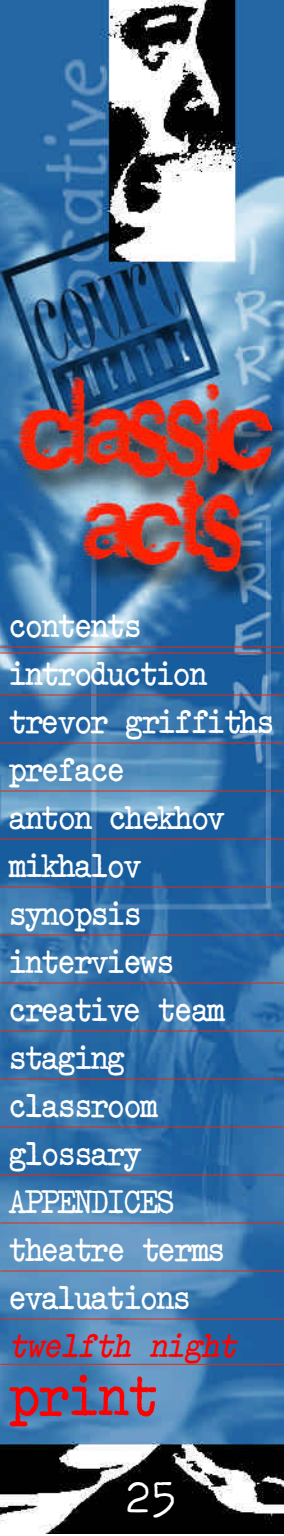
A belief in the 2nd coming of Christ is a widely held folk believe in Russia. Since the legalization of serfdom in the 17th century, there had also been numerous peasant uprising—sometimes in favour of a false czar, a religious figure or a charismatic ruler. While the element of social protest was present in these rebellions, the tone was set by the anarchic element whose aim was simple loot and destruction. These rebellions were especially terrifying given the almost frontier nature of much of the Russian empire.

### **Making bombs. And laying them.**

Activities of Russian anarchists.

### **Russian anarchists**

In the late 19th century, anarchists tended to perform individual acts of terrorism such as the assassination of a royal figure. Some successful assassinations branded a public image of anarchists as mindless destroyers. Anarchism was prevalent throughout Europe from 1890-1901. After 1901, anarchist acts were usually only in Spain and Russia.



## Icons

In Eastern Christian tradition, a representation of sacred personages or events in mural painting, mosaic, or wood. After the iconoclastic controversy of the 8th-9th century, which disputed the religious function and meaning of icons, the Eastern Church formulated the doctrinal basis for their veneration: since God had assumed material form in the person of Jesus Christ, he also could be represented in pictures. Icons are considered an essential part of the church and are given special liturgical veneration.

## Our Lady of Khazan; Our Lady of Smolensk; Our Lady of the Three Arms

Three different icons portraying the Virgin Mary. The first two are probably named after where they are from—Khazan and Smolensk. The third is a descriptive title.

## Samovar

A Russian device for heating water and seeping tea.

## Orangery

A protected place and esp. a greenhouse for raising oranges in cool climates.

## “little monk’s bed”

After rigorous search by the entire dramaturgical department, it was decided that Triletski is only referring to a small uncomfortable bed, like a trundle bed.

## Enema

the injection of liquid into the intestine by way of the anus

## Merci, mon ange

Thank you, my angel

## pas du tout

Not at all

## je brule pour une cigarette

I’m dying for a cigarette

## ah oui?

Oh, yes

## scythe

an implement used for mowing (as grass) and composed of a long curving blade fastened at an angle to a long handle.

## Sergei going through his Tolstoy phase

Sergei’s interest in the peasants and the practical details of farming mimics Tolstoy’s character Levin in Anna Karenina. Some of the other character’s reaction to Sergei’s good will is boredom with his mimicing a “type” of Russian aristocrat. Also, in 1859 Tolstoy first gave up life as a literary celebrity to live on his estate and devote himself to its management and the education of his serfs.

## Voltaire (name of dog)

Voltaire was an 18th century French writer, esp. known for his satirical novel Candide. It is a pretentious and silly name for a dog.

## Navvy

Derived from “navigator” or construction worker on a canal, this is a British term for an unskilled laborer.

## Gypsies

A nomadic people, calling themselves Roms, also spelled GIPSY, Romany ROM. Any member of a dark Caucasoid people originating in northern India but living in modern times worldwide, principally in Europe. Most Gypsies speak Romany, a language closely related to the modern Indo-European languages of northern India, as well as the major language of the country in which they live.



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**bunloaf**

loaf of bread, “risen like a bunloaf’ compares Sashenka to a loaf of bread rising like a yeast bread

**panama**

a lightweight hat of natural-colored straw hand-plaited of narrow strips from the young leaves of the jipijapa, or a machine-made version of this hat.

**trough**

a long shallow often V-shaped receptacle for the drinking water or feed of domestic animals

**Syzran**

Syzran is a city in the Samara oblast (province) of western Russia. It lies along the Volga River at the latter’s confluence with the Syzran River.

**Hail Jupiter, God and Bull!**

Triletski is being a bit facetious calling Platonov Jupiter (the Roman king of the Gods). But he is also referring to Platonov’s promiscuity, as Jupiter disguised himself as a bull in order to carry away Europa the daughter of Agenor, king of Phoenicia (Tyros).

**quail**

Any of 130 species of small, short-tailed game birds of the family Phasianidae (order Galliformes), resembling partridges but generally smaller and less robust.

**female liberation 1902 style**

also called Feminist Movement, social movement that seeks equal rights for women, giving them equal status with men and freedom to decide their own careers and life patterns. In the 19th century, however, the awareness of

women’s need for equality with men crystallized in the movement to obtain woman suffrage, rather than in any fundamental or far-reaching reevaluation of women’s social status, roles, and their place in the economy. In the later 19th century a few women began to work in the professions, and women as a whole achieved the right to vote in the first half of the 20th century. The Colonel is using an anachronistic phrase probably more inspired by conditions in England in 1902 than conditions in Russia.

**Goddess Diana**

The Moon Goddess in Roman mythology, and sister of Apollo, goddess of wild animals and the hunt. Diana was often thought to be (like her Greek counterpart Artemis) a Virgin goddess.

**Alexandra the Great**

A play on Alexander the great – ruler of Macedonia and most of the Ancient world.

**Sans doute**

Without a doubt

**Madeira**

An amber-colored fortified wine from Madeira: a similar wine made elsewhere.

**Eh bien. Me voici.**

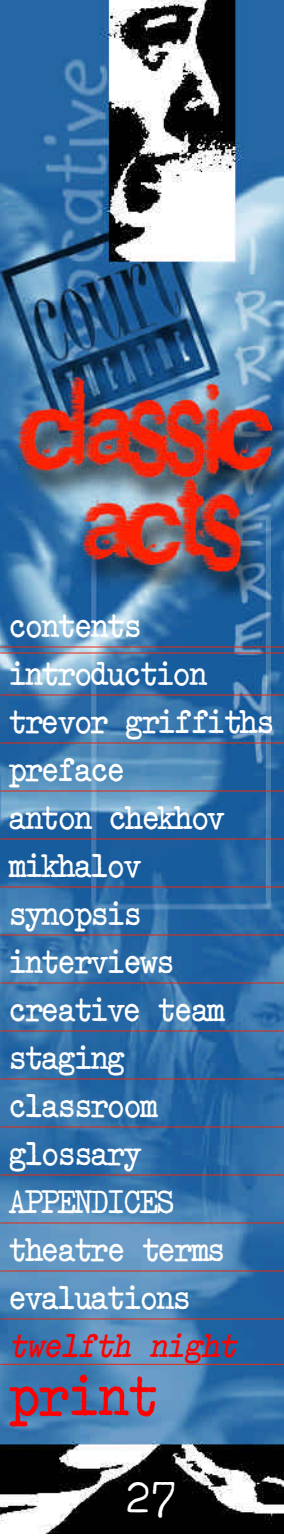
Well, here I am.

**Comment ca va**

How are you?

**Kolya**

Russian nickname for Nikolai.



### “japes”

things said jokingly or mockingly, things said to make mocking fun of; or things designed to arouse amusement or laughter

### Cabbage soup

Traditional Russian dietary staple, white beans are sometimes but not always an ingredient

### Misha

Russian nickname for Michael

### Lord Byron

1788-1824. Early 19th century English poet and adventurer. “Mad, bad, and dangerous to know.” Sexually charged bad boy archetype who championed an ordered derangement of the sense.

### “Minister of State”

a high officer in the government entrusted with the management of a division of governmental activities or a diplomat often one ranking below the level of ambassador; Sophia I think means someone of high rank in the Russian Civil Service

### Darwinist

Triletski (like the Doctor in Uncle Vanya) is interested in studying Darwin’s theories of evolution. Beginning in 1837, Darwin proceeded to work on the now well-understood concept that evolution is essentially brought about by the interplay of three principles: (1) variation—a liberalizing factor, which Darwin did not attempt to explain, present in all forms of life; (2) heredity—the conservative force that transmits similar organic form from one generation to another; and (3) the struggle for existence—which determines the variations that will confer advantages in a given environment, thus altering species through a selective reproductive rate.

### Woman Question

A phrase from Bernard Shaw which takes into account all late 19th century questions about the changing status of women in 19th century society.

### They look like actors

(shaved heads of peasants)  
The peasants’ heads are shaved in order to prevent lice.

### Una Furtiva Lacrima

Famous tenor aria from Donizetti’s Elixir of Love. It’s a comedy, but in this aria the tenor is getting beautifully sad about the soprano. It is one of the most beloved arias in the tenor repertoire, and was famously recorded by the superstar tenor, Enrico Caruso in 1905. Caruso’s recording is the one Anna owns.

### larder

a place where food is stored, also known as a pantry

### En voila

Here are some.

### Mon Chevalier

My knight, or just knight.

### Petya


Russian diminutive for Petr or Peter.

### creditor

a person to whom money or goods are due.

### Liberals

one who is open-minded or not strict in the observance of orthodox, traditional, or established forms or ways  
b capitalized : a member or supporter of a liberal political party  
c : an advocate or adherent of liberalism especially in individual rights.



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## Humanists

One who maintains a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values; especially : a philosophy that usually rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason

## Progressives

one believing in moderate political change and especially social improvement by governmental action

## Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

The rallying cry of the French revolution of 1789.

## Hogwash

Nonsense. (from pig swill or slop)

## Q.E.D.

Latin, quod erat demonstrandum: which was to be demonstrated.

## St. Petersburg

With Moscow, the major cultural capital of Russian. St. Petersburg is also Russia's only port and is on the North Sea. In general, St. Petersburg is more European and cosmopolitan than Moscow.

## Kostowata

Perhaps obscure place in the Ukraine.  
From Trevor Griffiths: I too couldn't find the place. In my mind, for what it's worth, it's always been a small town out on the Sea of Okhotsk somewhere, or a bit further south, facing Japan. But if the paper Petrin's reading at the time is a local one, it's more likely to be in their area. But Kostawata is a fairly untypical name Russian place name; there's a fair number of Kostasomethings, but wata sounds more asian/japanese.

## Quod licet jovi non licet bovi

Shcherbuk translates the latin next as "What befits Jupiter does not necessarily befit a bull". Literally this is: What is right/lawful/allowed to Jupiter is not to a bull. In other words, although Jupiter when disguised as a bull could carry off attractive young human women, mere bulls are not allowed such behavior.

## but here the country is so vast, in bad weather we can hardly reach our neighbours, let alone the people in Kamchatka or Siberia

Siberia is an extremely remote Northern part of the Russian empire, in the Asian steppes. Kamchatka is a 900-mile-long peninsula roughly the size of California on the Eastern coast of Siberia. A little bit west of the Aleutian Islands, the peninsula was just far east enough to eavesdrop on the United States during the Cold War. Some of the largest grizzly bears in the world roam Kamchatka's interior, while tens of millions of salmon invade its undammed streams and rivers each summer, just as they have for thousands of years.

## My cup runneth over

Psalm 23, Verse 5

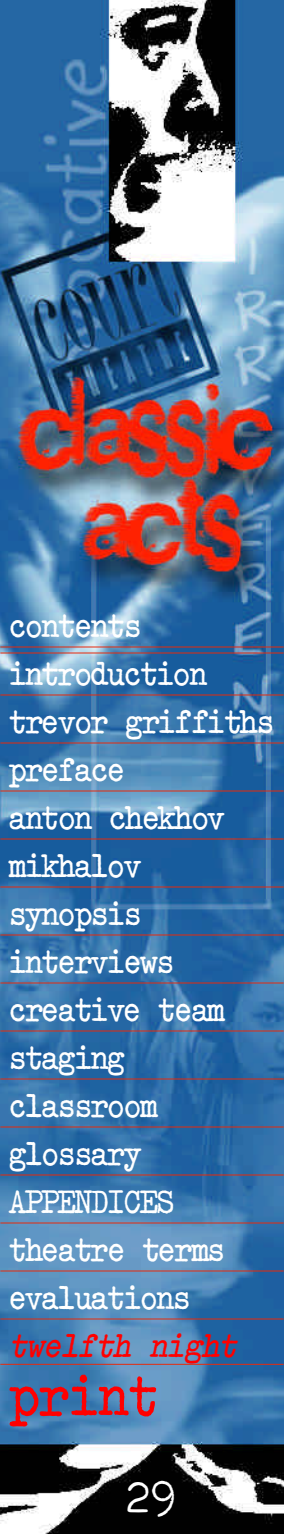
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

## Richard the Lionheart

English Medieval King. Known for being a great fighter.

## Anna Karenina (the fainting scene)

In the novel (finished in 1877), Anna Karenina is having an affair, which because of her abhorance of hypocrisy and deceit she is unable to conduct discreetly. While with her husband at the races, she sees her lover, Veronsky, falls. She faints, giving away her feelings in public.



### **Putilov plant in Moscow**

From 1868–1917 the Putilov plant was Imperial Russia's biggest arms manufacturer. It was also the most famous Russian Imperial industrial conglomerate (with a name recognition comparable to Microsoft in contemporary American)

### **Forfeit and forfeit-players**

3 a : something deposited (as for making a mistake in a game) and then redeemed on payment of a fine b plural : a game in which forfeits (penalties) are exacted. Although this game is more like executing dares.

### **Fu Manchu mustaches**

NOUN : A mustache with ends that hang downward toward or below the chin. ETYMOLOGY: After Fu Manchu, character in novels by Sax Rohmer, pen name of Arthur Sarsfield Ward (1886–1959), British mystery writer This is slightly anachronistic.

The Fu Manchu novels: the former Chinese mandarin, Fu Manchu, was part of (and possibly master of) a secretive Oriental organization dedicated to conquering the world, supported by a host of nefarious Middle Eastern and Oriental criminal organizations. His greatest nemesis was British investigator Sir Dennis Nayland Smith. Fu Manchu was particularly known for his hypnotic jade green eyes.

### **la jeune fille de Moscou**

The young girl from Moscow (Anna means the Colonel, who is dressed like a Moscow tart)

### **The Knave of Spades**

This may be a very slight allusion to Pushkin's Queen of Spades, but a superficial allusion at best.

### **Je l'ai. C'est moi.**

"I've got it. It's me"

### **glass breaking, "it's a sign of good fortune to come, my love"**

At the end of a Jewish wedding ceremony a wine glass is covered with a white cloth and laid on the ground. The groom breaks it by stomping on it. This symbolizes the destruction of the ancient Jewish temple. It is a reminder of the seriousness of marriage and that it cannot be reversed.

### **Tais-toi, mon vieux.**

"Be quiet, old chum" or "be quiet, buddy", or literally, "old man"

### **Monarch of the Glen**

Griffith's being a bit ironic about Shcherbuk's imitation of the Siberian moose call. He means that the moose is the Monarch of the Glen.

### **hemorrhoids**

a mass of dilated veins in swollen tissue at the margin of the anus or nearby within the rectum

### **metalloids**

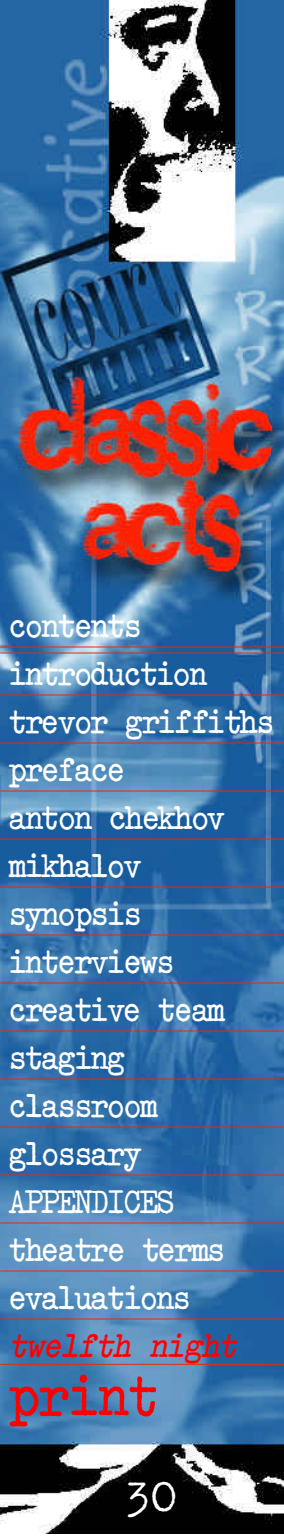
resembling a metal

### **Kulaks**

A prosperous or wealthy peasant farmer in 19th century Russia

### **Pushkin 1799-1837**

Pushkin occupies a unique place in Russian literature. It is not just that Russians view him as their greatest poet; he is also virtually the symbol of Russian culture. He both proved that the Russian language could achieve high poetry and also lived in a manner the became archetypal for Romantic Russian poets. He was killed in a duel defending his wife's honor, although the duel was forced on him by Pushkin's political enemies.



To criticize Pushkin, or even one of his characters has been taken as something akin to blasphemy. Even if one sets this mythic image aside, Pushkin is truly one of the world's most accomplished poets.

### **Lermontov**

1814-1841, the leading Russian Romantic poet and author of the novel in 1840; *A Hero of Our Time*, which was to have a profound influence on later Russian writers. Lermontov's mature prose showed a critical picture of contemporary life in his novel containing the sum total of his reflections on contemporary society and the fortunes of his generation. The hero, Pechorin, is a cynical person of superior accomplishments who, having experienced everything else, devotes himself to experimenting with human situations. Exiled in the army, Lermontov lingered in the health resort of Pyatigorsk. A quarrel was provoked between Lermontov and another officer, N.S. Martynov; the two fought a duel that ended in the poet's death. He was only 27 years old.

### **Gogol**

1809-1852 Ukrainian-born Russian humorist, dramatist, an novelist, whose novel (*Dead Souls*) and whose short story "Shinel" ("The Overcoat") are considered the foundations of the great 19th-century tradition of Russian realism. Finally he settled in Moscow, where he came under the influence of a fanatical priest, Father Matvey Konstantinovsky, who seems to have practiced on Gogol a kind of spiritual sadism. Ordered by him, Gogol burned the presumably completed manuscript of the second volume of *Dead Souls* on Feb. 24 (Feb. 11, O.S.), 1852. Ten days later he died, on the verge of semimadness.

### **Goncharov**

1812-1891 Russian novelist and travel writer, whose high-

ly esteemed novels dramatize social change in Russia and contain some of Russian literature's most vivid and memorable characters. His novel *Oblomov* is one of the most important Russian novels, draws a powerful contrast between the aristocratic and capitalistic classes in Russia and attacks the way of life based on serfdom. Its hero, Oblomov, a generous but indecisive young nobleman who loses the woman he loves to a vigorous, pragmatic friend, is a triumph of characterization. From this character derives the Russian term *oblomovshchina*, epitomizing the backwardness, inertia, and futility of 19th-century Russian society. The characters in *Piano* are plagued and concerned by many of the same issues as this book. Unlike the other author's mentioned, Goncharov had a long and uneventful life working as a civil servant.

### **her Excellency**

As the widow of a general, whose military title was linked to an aristocratic position, Anna would retain aristocratic forms of address.

### **cholera**

acute bacterial infection of the small intestine and characterized by massive diarrhea with rapid and severe depletion of body fluids and salts. Cholera often rises to epidemic proportions in Southeast Asia, having been responsible for at least 370,000 deaths in India in the period from 1898 to 1907. After an incubation period of 12 to 28 hours, the disease usually starts with an abrupt, painless, watery diarrhea that may amount to a volume of 15 to 20 litres (3 to 4 gallons) or more in 24 hours. This purging diarrhea is soon followed by vomiting, and the patient rapidly becomes dehydrated; the skin becomes cold and withered, and the face is drawn; the blood pressure falls, and the pulse becomes faint; muscular cramps may be severe,



# classic acts

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and thirst intense. As dehydration increases, the person becomes stuporous and comatose and may die in shock. The disease ordinarily runs its course in two to seven days. With prompt fluid and salt repletion, recovery can be remarkably rapid; but if therapy is inadequate, the mortality rate is high. The prevention of cholera outbreaks rests upon good sanitation, particularly the use of clean drinking water.

## Uspenski

One of the Uskpenski cousins, Gleb or Nikolai – both were realistic writers.

Gleb Uspenski (1843-1902) was a writer and journalist who wrote a cycle of sketches picturing the bleak hopelessness of ordinary Russian life. The end of his life was marked by mental illness.

Nikolai Uspensky also published sketches, especially of unflattering portrayals of peasants. Later sketches described the difficult lot of the intelligentsia. From 1884 onward, Uspensky led a nomadic life as a street buffoon, storyteller, and alcoholic and finally committed suicide.

## Leskov

1831-1895. novelist and short-story writer who has been described as the greatest of Russian storytellers. As a child Leskov was taken to different monasteries by his grandmother, and he used those early memories of Russian monastic life with good effect in his most famous novel, 1872; Cathedral Folk. In 1865 he published his best known story, Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District, the passionate heroine of which lives and dies by violence. His most popular tale, however, remains 1881; "The Tale of Cross-eyed Lefty from Tula and the Steel Flea", a masterpiece of Gogolesque comedy in which an illiterate Russian smith outwits the skill of the most advanced British craftsman. Leskov died suddenly of a heart attack.

## Long Rider's coat

This kind of coat seems to be Australian in origin.

## pygmy

in anthropology, member of any human group whose adult males grow to less than 150 cm (59 inches) in average height. The best-known pygmy groups and those to whom the term is most commonly applied are the Pygmies of tropical Africa; elsewhere in Africa some of the San (Bushmen) of the Kalahari are of pygmy size.

## post-mortem tremor

a quivering or vibratory motion; especially : a discrete small movement following or preceding a major seismic event such as death.

## banal

lacking originality, freshness, or novelty; boring

## cuckold

13th century English word for a man whose wife is unfaithful; often used in Shakespeare

## calmestoi, enfant

Calm down, little child.

## sine qua non

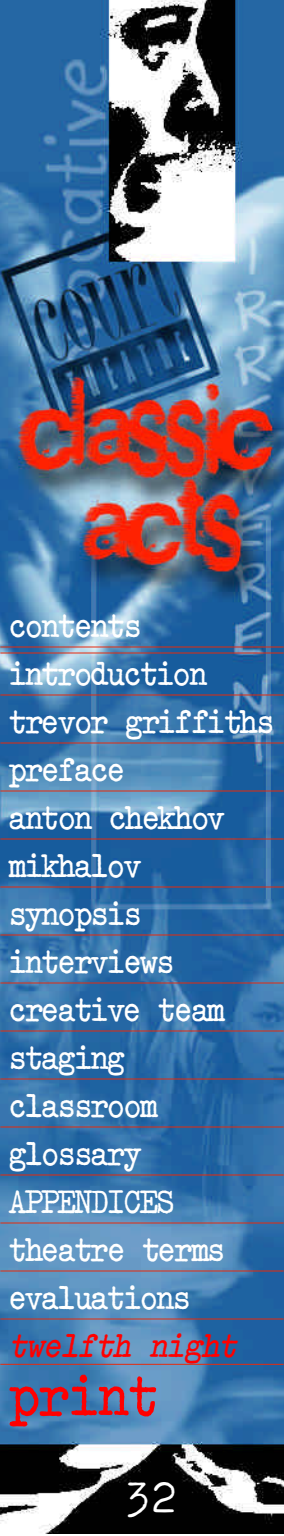
literally- without which not; in this context absolutely essential

## impunity

exemption or freedom from punishment, harm, or loss

## bile

either of two humors associated in old physiology with irascibility and melancholy or an inclination to anger; Platonov seems to be combining the two meanings.

**spittle**

saliva, but often used for drool

**balustrade**

in this case a balcony or upper porch

**Napoleon at 35**

1769-1821

First Consul (1799-1804), and emperor of the French (1804-1814/15), one of the most celebrated personages in the history of the West. By the time he was 35 (1804) Napoleon was emperor of France and had conquered most of Western Europe for the French Empire and was only fighting the British.

**louche**

not reputable or decent, it literally means cross-eyed or squinty-eyed but I think is not being used literally in this instance

**Uncouth**

awkward and uncultivated in appearance, manner, or behavior

**litany**

a usually lengthy recitation or enumeration; a familiar litany of complaints

**Chekhov's death**

Chekhov died on July 2, 1904 in a health spa in Germany. He had tuberculosis. In March 1897 Chekhov had suffered a lung hemorrhage caused by tuberculosis, symptoms of which had become apparent considerably earlier. Now forced to acknowledge himself a semi-invalid, Chekhov built a villa in Yalta, the Crimean coastal resort. From then on he spent most of his winters there or on the French Riviera.

**Grass dies. Iron rusts. Lies eat the soul. . . .**

In Russian: "Tlya est travu, rzha—zhelezo, a lzha—dushu" literally, "The greenfly eats grass, rust—iron, and lies—the soul." This quotation is very famous and is often attributed to Chekhov himself. However, there were numerous folk sayings beginning with "Tlya. . ." and this may just be a variation. It may derive from Matthew 6:19, where the words "moth" and "rust" appear and "tlya" is another word for "mol" of moth although moth's of course don't eat grass.

**Matthew 6:19-21**

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.



creative

classic acts

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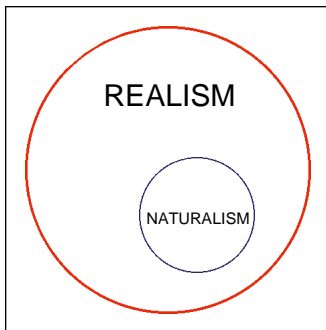
theatre terms you should know

## Realism, Naturalism and beyond.

The concepts of REALISM and NATURALISM have specific meanings when related to the theatre, but over the years they have tended to become virtually synonymous and are often used interchangeably. They tend to be linked together in opposition to the notions of expressionism or symbolism.

### Realism

Realism is generally considered a broad umbrella of which Naturalism is part. Although Shakespeare talks of “holding a mirror up to nature”, and there are many elements of Shakespeare’s writing that may be said to be realistic, REALISM as a movement emerged between 1830 and 1880.



Realism aims to present an objective view of human psychology and social reality. It does not aim to give us a photographic reproduction of reality—to put reality itself onstage. It aims to give the audience the *illusion* of reality.

Its dialogues, what the characters say to each other, “are drawn from the speech patterns of a period or of a social or occupational group. The acting makes the text (what the actors say) appear natural, downplaying the literary or poetical effects by stressing the spontaneous and psychological aspects of the interaction between the characters.” (*Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*)

In other words, even though the playwright will have spent many hours carefully writing the actors’ speeches and may have consciously included rhetorical devices such as rhythm, alliteration, parallelism or repetition, the actors’ job is to downplay these attempts to make the language engaging and to emphasize the *apparent* REALISM of the scene.

Well known realistic playwrights are Ibsen, Shaw or in the modern era, David Mamet. Realism was the basis of the work of the great acting teacher Stanislavsky.

### Naturalism

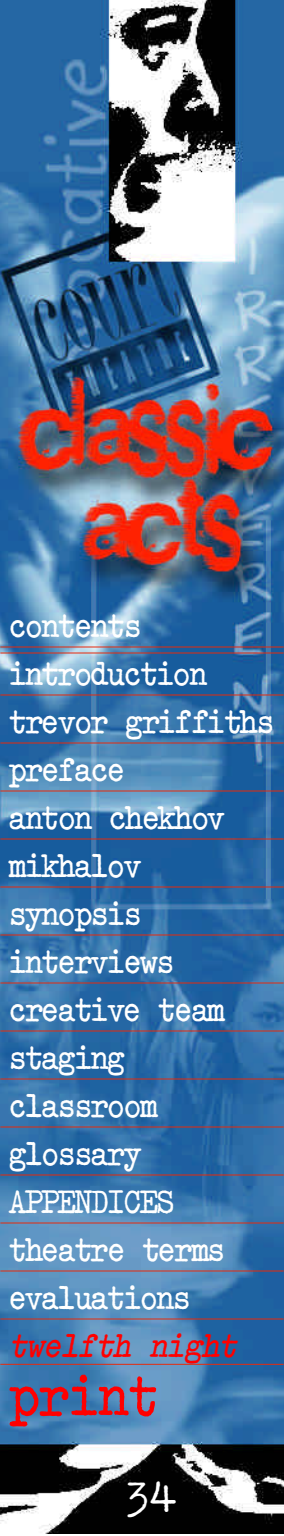
“Historically, NATURALISM is an artistic movement that, around 1880-1890, advocated a total reproduction of...reality, stressing the material aspects of human existence.” (*Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*) NATURALISM aimed to use the rigorous methodology of scientific research to observe and analyse society.

The first notable exponent of NATURALISM in literature was French novelist and playwright Emile Zola. His novel *Therese Raquin*, which he himself then adapted into a play, is one of the best known examples of NATURALISM in literature. Zola believed that nothing should be on stage that did not appear in nature. In the 1880’s at the Théâtre Libre in Paris, Antonin Antoine used bloody quarters of beef and live chickens onstage.

NATURALISM aimed to shatter the world of illusion onstage.

As an artistic movement it was short lived, because short of observing real people in ‘real’ situations all that is placed onstage and watched by an audience is to a degree artificial and relies on creating a believable illusion.





In Roman times sea-battles were staged on lakes or in flooded amphitheatres. It was thought to be slaves who manned the boats and who fought in these 'mock' sea battles, known as *naumachia*. The participants actually died fighting for the entertainment of others. In 52 AD 19,000 men fought on Fucine Lake, east of Rome. Many perished. Clearly such naturalism is not widely accepted these days, though we are still fascinated by extreme drama in life. We watch "real" court cases on TV; we follow "real" police officers as they chase and engage with "real" villains; we watch people on remote islands; and there is an underground industry which markets so-called "snuff movies" in which those who are disposed to do so can watch the all too real deaths of others.

## Symbolism

Most artistic movements begin as a reaction against what has gone before. This seems to be true in every age. SYMBOLISM began as an opposition to naturalism. It began in Paris in the early 1890's. "The essential of symbolism was the abandonment of the appearances of life in favor of its spirit, symbolically represented and in favor of a more *poetic* form of drama." (*The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre*)

## Symbol

"A symbol is something which represents something else (often an idea or a quality) by analogy or association. Thus 'white', 'lion', and 'rose' commonly symbolise or represent innocence, courage or beauty. Such symbols exist by convention and tradition. A serpent may stand for evil or wisdom according to different conventions. Writers use these conventional symbols, but also invent and create symbols of their own." (*A Dictionary of Literary Terms*)

In literature and thus in drama, symbols may take the form of similes and metaphors. The theatrical production of a play adds the possibility for visual and auditory symbols.

## Expressionism

"Expressionism originally dominated German theatre for some time during the 1920's. It too was a reaction against theatrical realism, it sought to mirror inner psychological realities rather than physical appearances." (*The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre*)

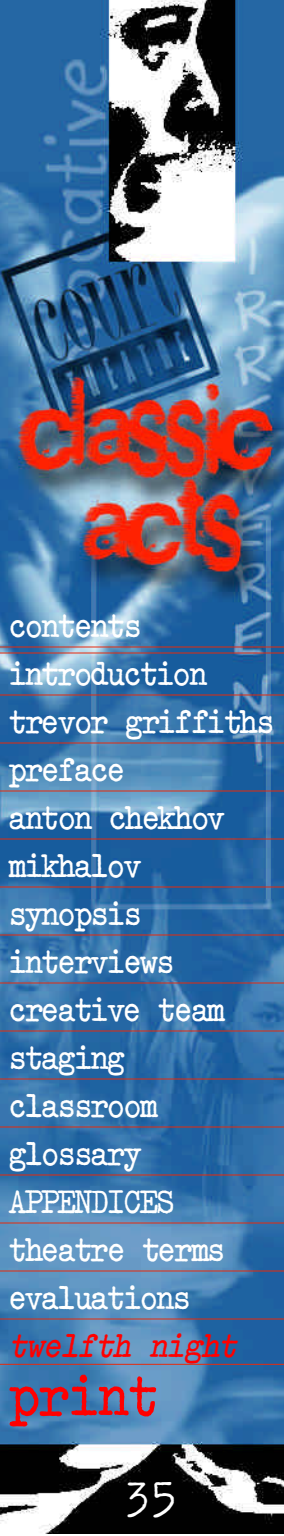
Expressionism at this time tended to focus on extreme psychological states and explore them "in a bold use of symbolic settings [scenery] and costumes. Expressionism was in many ways primarily a designer's theatre."

## Stylization

A way of presenting a play or theatrical production that "represents reality in a simplified way, stripped to its essential features, eliminating excess detail." (*Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*)

Onstage actors don't die or (usually) eat a full meal. The actor replaces the real act with a *stylized* representation of the act. We are not troubled to even see actors eating from an empty plate—or travelling in a non-existent boat—we accept these things as *signifying*—standing for—the real act by virtue of a *convention*—a rule, or set of rules some of which we already come to the theatre with, because they are part of our culture (we know that anyone who dies in a play will be back for the curtain call), or because the rules are worked out during the performance between the actors and the audience. We can come to understand and accept that actors walking across a certain area of the stage in a certain manner are in actual fact "in a boat".

Stylization even adds to our fascination with theatre because we must superimpose the real act upon the theatrical act through our imagination.



## Teacher and Student Evaluations

The feedback you give us on your visit to Court Theatre and **classic acts!** will help us to improve both.

You can follow these links to Adobe Acrobat versions of the evaluation forms:

[Teacher Evaluation Form \(.pdf\)](#)

[Student Evaluation Form \(.pdf\)](#)

These forms can be printed out and returned by mail to:

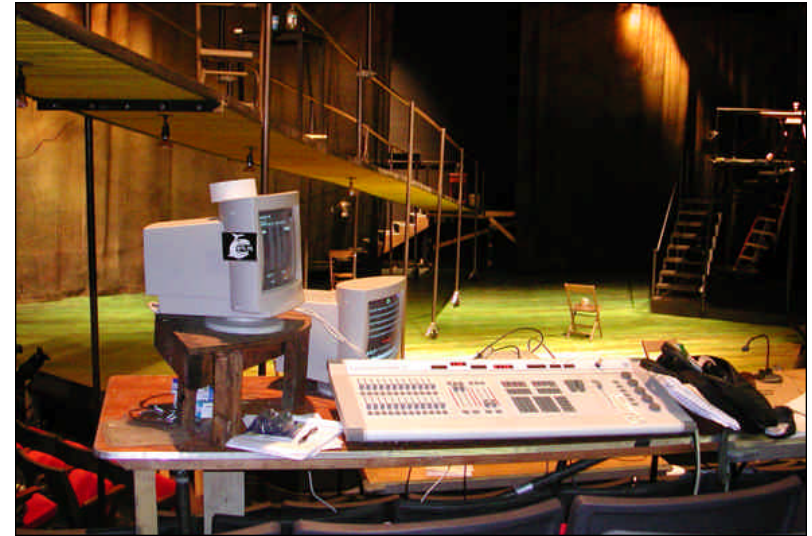
Court Theatre  
5535 South Ellis Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60637

FAX: (773) 834-1897

You will also find **Microsoft Word** versions of these files in the folder named EVALUATIONS, included on the CD.

These can be filled out on the computer and e-mailed as attachments to:

[education@courtheatre.org](mailto:education@courtheatre.org)



*Each production has to go through several days of TECHNICAL REHEARSAL when important elements, such as light cues and sound cues, are added to the production and integrated with the work of the actors.*

*During this time the control board for complex computer driven lighting system at Court Theatre is placed in the auditorium so that the lighting designer and his/her assistants can see exactly what the audience will see while s/he makes adjustments.*

# classic acts

from court theatre's  
CAST partnership

**classic acts** was designed & edited by Roger Smart  
with extensive dramaturgical information  
compiled and edited by Celise Kalke with Willa Bepler.  
with special thanks to Diane Clausen

For technical assistance in the use of  
this CD-ROM please call 773.702.8874  
or e-mail [education@courttheatre.org](mailto:education@courttheatre.org)

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SoundApp

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**ACTORS!**  
**STUDENTS!**  
**TEACHERS!**

Made with  
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click here  
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Court Theatre High School Matinee Program  
Teacher Evaluation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Subject \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Production \_\_\_\_\_

Date Attended \_\_\_\_\_

# of Students Participating \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of class \_\_\_\_\_

- 
1. Did you enjoy the performance? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
  2. Did your students indicate that they had enjoyed the performance? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
  3. Did you feel the performance was educationally relevant? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
  4. If so, please give some reasons.

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5. If not, why not?

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6. Did you use the Study Guide that was provided? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

7. If so, what parts did you find useful?

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8. If not, why not?

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9. What recommendations would you make for improving/updating the Study Guide format?

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*(please continue of back of sheet)*

10. Did the experience of seeing this live performance stimulate or motivate your students to:

- Discuss the play in class       Write critical essays  
 Act out scenes from the play  
 Act out original skits       Write original poetry, plays etc.  
 Draw or create any type of artwork       Other

*(specify)* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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*(please continue of back of sheet)*

Please rate the following:

**Study Guide:**

	Poor-----	Good-----	Excellent		
Thoroughness	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to use	1	2	3	4	5
Connected to curricula	1	2	3	4	5
Relevant to students	1	2	3	4	5
Fun	1	2	3	4	5
Prepared Teacher	1	2	3	4	5
Prepared Student	1	2	3	4	5

**Post-Show Discussion:**

Helped clarify ambiguities	1	2	3	4	5
Gave students voice	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraged varied opinions	1	2	3	4	5
Was educationally relevant	1	2	3	4	5

Overall, how would you describe your experience at Court?

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*(please continue of back of sheet)*

What suggestions would you have for improving the Court experience?

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*(please continue of back of sheet)*

Did you attend the teacher workshop and free preview for this production?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If not, would you like information on the An Audience at Court program? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Would you be interested in classroom workshops at your school with Court artists?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Court Theatre High School Matinee Program  
Student Evaluation

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Show \_\_\_\_\_

Did you enjoy the performance or not? Please give your reasons.

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What did you think about the production values?  
*(set design, lights, costumes, sound and props)*

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What did you think about the acting? Were there any actors you particularly liked or disliked, and why?

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If you could talk to the playwright, the director or the designers of this play or both, what sort of things would you like to say to them?

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Did you use the multi-media CD *Classic Acts*? Did you find it interesting, informative and easy to use?

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Suggest any improvements you would like to see made to the multi-media CD *Classic Acts*

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