

National Theatre Collection

Twelfth Night – Learning Pack

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About

This learning pack supports the National Theatre's production of *Twelfth Night*, directed by Simon Godwin, which opened on 23rd February 2017 at the National's Olivier Theatre in London.

Our packs are designed to support viewing the recording on the **National Theatre Collection**. This pack provides links to the UK school curriculum and other productions in the Collection. It also has a plot synopsis with timecodes to allow you to jump to specific sections of the play.

Background Information

Recording Date – 6th April, 2017

Location – Olivier Theatre, National Theatre

Age Recommendation – 12+

Cast

Viola	Tamara Lawrance
Sebastian	Daniel Ezra
Orsino	Oliver Chris
Curio	Emmanuel Kojo
Valentine	Brad Morrison
Captain and Priest	James Wallace
Sir Toby Belch	Tim McMullan
Maria	Niky Wardley
Sir Andrew Aguecheek	Daniel Rigby
Antonio	Adam Best
Feste	Doon Mackichan
Olivia	Phoebe Fox
Malvolia	Tamsin Grieg
Fabia	Imogen Doel
Servant	Whitney Kehinde
Officer	Ammar Duffus
Ensemble	Claire Cordier
Ensemble	Mary Doherty
Ensemble	Andrew MacBean
Ensemble	Imogen Slaughter

All other characters are played by members of the Company

Background Information

Recording Date – 6th April, 2017

Location – Olivier Theatre, National Theatre

Age Recommendation – 12+

Creative Team

Director	Simon Godwin
Playwright	William Shakespeare
Designer	Soutra Gilmour
Lighting Designer	James Farncombe
Sound Designer	Christopher Shutt
Music	Michael Bruce
Fight Director	Kev McCurdy
Choreographer	Shelley Maxwell

Teaching Information

This production is particularly suitable for:

- **English Literature** students who are studying the play for A Level.
- **Drama and theatre** students who are studying the play for GCSE.
- Anyone with an interest in the staging of comedies.
- **Production arts** students with an interest in costume design.

In particular you might like to explore:

- How the creative team and actors make the play resonate for a contemporary audience, in particular thinking about the comedy.
- The decision to change the role of Malvolio to Malvolia and have the role played by a woman.
- Costume design in the production and how it aides both storytelling and our understanding of the characters.

Teaching Information

There are a number of other productions in the National Theatre Collection that relate to this one, which you and your students may wish to explore alongside it.

Other productions by William Shakespeare

Production	Date	Director
<i>Coriolanus</i>	2014	Josie Rourke
<i>Hamlet</i>	2010	Nicholas Hytner
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	2018	Nicholas Hytner
<i>King Lear</i>	2011	Michael Grandage
<i>Macbeth</i> (Schools)	2017	Justin Audibert
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Schools)	2017	Bijan Sheibani
<i>The Winter's Tale</i> (Schools)	2018	Justin Audibert
<i>Othello</i>	2013	Nicholas Hytner

Other productions featuring members of the same creative team

Production	Date	Artist
<i>Les Blancs</i>	2010	Soutra Gilmour - Designer
<i>Antigone</i>	2012	Soutra Gilmour - Designer
<i>Yerma</i>	2017	James Francombe - Lighting Designer
<i>Coriolanus</i>	2017	Michael Bruce - Composer

Adaptation Details & Plot Synopsis

Differences to Shakespeare's original*

Simon Godwin's production makes few changes to the original, with certain scenes trimmed without changing the plot at all. The order of some scenes is also changed, as highlighted in the summary section below.

The characters of Feste, Malvolio (Malvolia) and Fabian (Fabia) are women in this production.

Using Arden Shakespeare Third Series edition of *Twelfth Night

The order of several scenes has been changed in this production. Where this is the case, the original Act and Scene position is shown in brackets.*

Prologue: Aboard a ship in a fierce storm, two twins Sebastian and Viola are separated.

Act I, Scene i 0:01:05: Orsino, Duke of Illyria, speaks of his consuming passion for Olivia. His messenger, Valentine, reports that Olivia has turned him away, saying that she proposes to enter seclusion for seven years in memory of her late brother.

Act I, Scene iii 0:08:27: Sir Toby Belch complains of the asceticism of his niece Olivia, with whom he is living. Olivia's chambermaid, Maria, suggests that he and his visiting friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who hopes to woo Olivia, lead less riotous lives, for her mistress dislikes their drunken behaviour. Sir Andrew enters and announces that he will leave, given Orsino's rivalry for Olivia's hand, but Sir Toby assures him that Olivia disdains the Duke, and he decides to stay.

Act I, Scene iv 0:14:15: Valentine assures Viola, who is disguised as a boy, Cesario, that Orsino has taken a liking to "him". Orsino enters and

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sends Cesario to try to persuade Olivia to marry him. Once alone, Viola muses on her distress: she has fallen in love with Orsino.

Act I Scene v (Act II, Scene i) 0:17:02: Sebastian has been saved him from a shipwreck by Antonio, but believes his sister died. He proposes to visit Duke Orsino. He insists that Antonio not accompany him. Sebastian then leaves alone, but Antonio decides that, although he has enemies at Orsino's court, he will follow his new friend.

Act I, Scene vi (Act I, Scene v) 0:20:04: Maria chastises Olivia's jester, Feste, for her absence from court. Olivia appears with her steward, Malvolia. She is angry with the truant Feste, but her witticisms cajole Olivia into a friendly mood.



Maria announces that a messenger from Orsino has arrived; she and Malvolia are sent to keep him away. Sir Toby has encountered the messenger, but he is too drunk to report on him. Malvolia returns and says that the emissary has refused to depart. Olivia decides to greet this youth, who is the disguised Viola. Cesario sings a song on behalf of

Adaptation Details & Plot Synopsis

Orsino to charm Olivia. She sends him back to the Duke with another refusal. After he leaves, Olivia confesses to herself that she has fallen in love with Cesario. She sends Malvolia after him with a ring, which she asserts the Duke's messenger had forced on her.

Act I, Scene vii (Act II, Scene ii) 0:36:25: Malvolia gives Olivia's ring to Cesario and departs. Viola realizes that Olivia has fallen in love with her. She reflects on the complexity of the situation.

Act II, Scene i (Act II, Scene iii) 0:41:04: Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Feste carouse drunkenly in Olivia's courtyard, when first Maria and then Malvolia appear to chastise them. Sir Toby mocks the steward, who departs, including Maria in her threats of reprisal as she goes. Maria proposes revenge upon Malvolia - she will write her love letters in Olivia's handwriting, and she will make a fool of herself when he responds to the supposed love of her mistress.

Act II, Scene ii (Act II, Scene iv) 0:53:30: At his sombre birthday party, Orsino talks of love with the disguised Viola; Cesario speaks of his affection for someone who resembles the Duke. At Orsino's request, Feste sings a sad love song. Orsino sends Cesario on another mission to Olivia.

Act II, Scene iii (Act II, Scene v) 1:02:21: Maria leaves the spurious love letter to be found by Malvolia. She, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabia, a fellow conspirator, spy on the steward, who pictures herself married to Olivia. She envisions a future when, as Olivia's wife, she will chastise Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. Malvolia finds the planted letter and responds as predicted; she will follow the letter's instructions: behaving oddly and wearing peculiar clothes to signify that she has received the message. Malvolia leaves, and the conspirators rejoice in the success of their scheme.

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Act III, Scene i 1:18:58: Cesario bandies wit with Feste. Sir Toby and Sir Andrew take Cesario to Olivia, whom she is visiting on behalf of Orsino. Olivia confesses her love to Cesario, who rejects her suit, leaving Olivia melancholy.

Act III, Scene ii 1:27:27: Sir Andrew, seeing that Olivia favours Cesario, prepares to abandon his suit, but Sir Toby and Fabia reassure him, asserting that Olivia's behaviour towards the young man is intended to make Sir Andrew jealous. Sir Toby suggests that Sir Andrew challenge Cesario to a duel; Sir Andrew leaves to write a challenge to the youth. Fabia and Sir Toby chortle over the prospect of watching two cowards - Sir Andrew and Cesario - try to get out of the duel. Maria enters with news that Malvolia is ridiculously dressed in response to the fake love letter. They all run to watch.

Interval

Act III, Scene iii 1:31:25: Sebastian is attacked in the streets by

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hooded thugs and is saved by Antonio who has been following him. Sebastian thanks him profusely. Antonio observes that, because he had once been an enemy of Duke Orsino's, he cannot be seen in Illyria. He will seclude himself at an inn, the Elephant, and meet Sebastian there.

Act III, Scene iv 1:34:57: Malvolia, garishly costumed, sings flirtatiously with Olivia, who is mystified.



When word arrives that Cesario has arrived, Olivia leaves but insists that Malvolia, obviously demented, be treated with care. Malvolia interprets her concern as evidence of her love.

Sir Toby and Fabia enter, suggesting that Malvolia may be possessed by the devil; she sneers at them and leaves. The exultant plotters plan to have their victim locked up as a lunatic. Sir Andrew appears with a comically unthreatening letter challenging Cesario to a duel. Sir Toby sends him to find the youth, then declares that the letter is too foolish to scare anyone, so he will deliver his own version of it directly to Cesario.

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The plotters withdraw as Olivia and Viola enter. Olivia repeatedly offers her love, and Cesario insists that she should grant it to Orsino. Olivia leaves, and Sir Toby ferociously challenges Cesario, allegedly on behalf of a famous swordsman. Cesario, alarmed, attempts to find an excuse to leave. Sir Toby fetches Sir Andrew and tells him that Cesario has responded fiercely; he and Fabia encourage them to fight. Antonio appears and draws his sword in defence of Viola, believing her to be Sebastian, but two Officers appear and arrest him. He asks Viola to repay an earlier loan, which he now will need, but Viola naturally denies that she knows him. As he is taken away, Antonio accuses Viola of ingratitude and calls her Sebastian. Viola realises that her brother must be alive and departs ecstatic with hope. Sir Toby and Fabia point out that Cesario is a coward; Sir Andrew takes heart and sets out to resume the duel.

Act IV, Scene i 1:56:15: At the Elephant a drag artist sings the opening of Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' speech. Feste mistakes Sebastian for Cesario and is astonished to be treated as a stranger. Sir Andrew enters, and, making the same mistake, he slaps Sebastian, who responds by



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beating him. Sir Toby intervenes, and a large scuffle breaks out. Olivia appears, ordering everyone else to leave. She speaks with Sebastian, whom she also believes to be Cesario. She apologises for the assault and invites him inside. Mystified but delighted, he goes with her. The singer resumes as the scene ends.

Act IV, Scene ii 2:01:48: Feste disguises herself as Sir Topas, a clergyman, and visits Malvolia in prison. She insists that Malvolia is mad and denies the steward's complaint that her cell is dark. Sir Toby congratulates the jester on his performance but says that it is time to end the joke, for he is in enough trouble with Olivia already. Feste again visits Malvolia, this time undisguised. Malvolia asks her for pen and paper so that she can write to Olivia about her predicament. Feste teases her before agreeing to help.

Act IV, Scene iii 2:08:16: Sebastian muses happily on the bewildering fact that he is apparently loved by a beautiful noblewoman. Olivia appears with a Priest and they agree to marry.

Act V, Scene i 2:11:07: Orsino calls on Olivia with Cesario and other followers. Antonio appears in the custody of the Officers and is identified as the Duke's enemy. He tells of Sebastian's disloyalty. Orsino does not believe him because he knows that Cesario has been with him during the time Antonio claims to have spent with Sebastian. Olivia arrives and again rejects Orsino, who responds hysterically that he will kill Cesario, not only because he knows of Olivia's fondness for him but also because he loves the youth himself. Cesario/Viola declares herself willing to die for the duke, and Olivia cries out to her husband, as she believes Cesario to be. Viola denies this, and Olivia summons the Priest, who testifies to their marriage two hours earlier. As the Duke berates Cesario, Sir Andrew and Sir Toby appear, wounded, claiming to have been assaulted by him. They are followed by Sebastian, whose appearance confounds everyone. Sebastian and Viola identify each

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other and rejoice in their reunion. Orsino declares that he will marry Viola. Malvolia is summoned and shows Olivia the letter that he believes she sent him. Olivia realises that Maria has written it; Fabia defends Maria, saying that the plot was Sir Toby's idea and that Toby has married Maria. Feste teases Malvolia, who removes a wig revealing her natural short blonde hair. She coolly leaves vowing revenge from the characters and the audience. Orsino declares that a double wedding shall soon occur, and all go indoors to celebrate.

Feste sings a song of worldly resignation. Thunder claps and we see snapshots of the weddings and the dejected Malvolia climbing steps in the rain.

The End

Find out more

Read

The **Rehearsal Insights Pack**, featuring the rehearsal diary from this production

Watch

Twelfth Night: Ambition

Twelfth Night: Disguises

Twelfth Night: Gender

Twelfth Night: Mistaken Identity

Twelfth Night: Sexuality

Twelfth Night: Communication

Twelfth Night: Madness

Twelfth Night: Darkness

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[Simon Godwin](#) discussing the play

[Tamsin Grieg](#) discussing her role in the play

A discussion focussing on [Redressing the Balance - Gender in Shakespeare](#)

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The National Theatre's digital exhibitions on Google Arts & Culture, including [Shakespeare at the National Theatre](#)

More materials relating to the production including the costume bible, poster, prompt scripts, programme, stage management reports and more are held at the National Theatre Archive, which is free to visit. Find out more here: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/archive>