

Theatre & Dance Presents

As You Like It

by William Shakespeare



**STUDY
GUIDE**

Keene
STATE COLLEGE

Performance: 11/15/2019

As You Like It

“As You Like It” was first performed in 1599 by Shakespeare’s company, the Lord Chamberlin’s Men at the Globe Theater. The play has become an audience favorite but provided audiences in 1599 with a bit of a surprise. “As You Like It” departed from the usual drama of the period, providing a jolt of realism rarely seen by Elizabethan audiences. It was over a century before the play was mentioned or staged again after the first performance. Of course, for today’s audiences, access to the ideas, concepts, and language of the play might also seem strange, dated, or downright foreign. The goal of this teachers’ guide is to help make the Keene State College production of “As You Like It” by William Shakespeare accessible and provide exercises to complement our staging of the play.

The Design Process

The process of bringing a play from the text on the page to what audiences see on the stage is complex. The director formulates a directorial concept, which refers to the overall plan for the design of the production.

Each member of the design team, the costume designer, scenic designer, and lighting designer partake in conversations with the director to take the play from the page to the stage.



« All the world's a stage. »»



Design Concept

Generally, the ideas generated by these collaborative discussions are developed along a central idea or selected from one of the themes of the play; this central theme in turn influences the way that the production is designed, becoming its design concept.



Design Goals

- > Inspire a feeling of community.
- > Create a space of intersection for the audience and actor.
- > Design a platform to focus on the ideas debated in the play rather than create a concept highlighting one specific aspect of the text.



- > For fun, come dressed in a 1970s inspired outfit and become a part of the costume design!

As You Like It

In thinking of the overall messages of the play, as there are many, the director considered Shakespeare's use of "As You Like It" to provide social commentary.

Shakespeare accomplished this by mining the cultural obsessions of his time and incorporating them into entertaining formats that resonated with London audiences. Topics deemed detrimental to the moral fiber of London society were transformed into appealing theatrical events that escaped censorship.

Jeannie-Marie Brown, the director, found parallels between our present world, the period in which the play was written, and the early 1970s. As such, in exploring how all the world is a stage, we are inviting audience members to attend the production in a 70s inspired outfit.

Thinking About Costumes

Arden came into focus quickly with earthy influences reflective of a music festival culture and 1970s clothing. Political balls and state dinners influenced the costuming for courtiers at Court. All the costumes are colorful. At Court, there is a formality, and in Arden, costumes reflect flowing lines or casual earthy-tones.



The designer, Joseph Blaha, worked with the director to flesh out the circumstances of the play and the costuming needs.

Rosalind's Transformation



At court (left)



Ending (above)



Ganymede (right)

Who
is
who
in
Arden?



Guess
which
characters
are
in
these
costumes!



Class Exercise

Can you imagine what the characters should look like? Create your own images of the main characters in “As You Like It” by drawing or collaging. Think about ways you can highlight their social standing; what about costumes helps define character status? What other character traits can influence your costume choices?

Lighting and Sound

Lighting and sound are closely linked in a theatre production and not fully realized until technical rehearsals. Technical rehearsals begin the week before a show opens with a focus on incorporating all technical aspects into the production.

The lighting designer creates a lighting plot and master schedule of instruments. The production electrician hangs all the lights in preparation for the designer to focus the lights. The focus ensures lights are pointing in the right direction to provide illumination on the stage, set, and of course, the actors.

Try to notice how light defines space!



Un - der the green-wood tree who
Who doth am - bi - tion shun and
If it should come to pass that

Em⁷



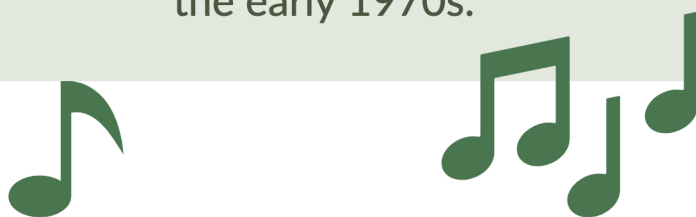
Music

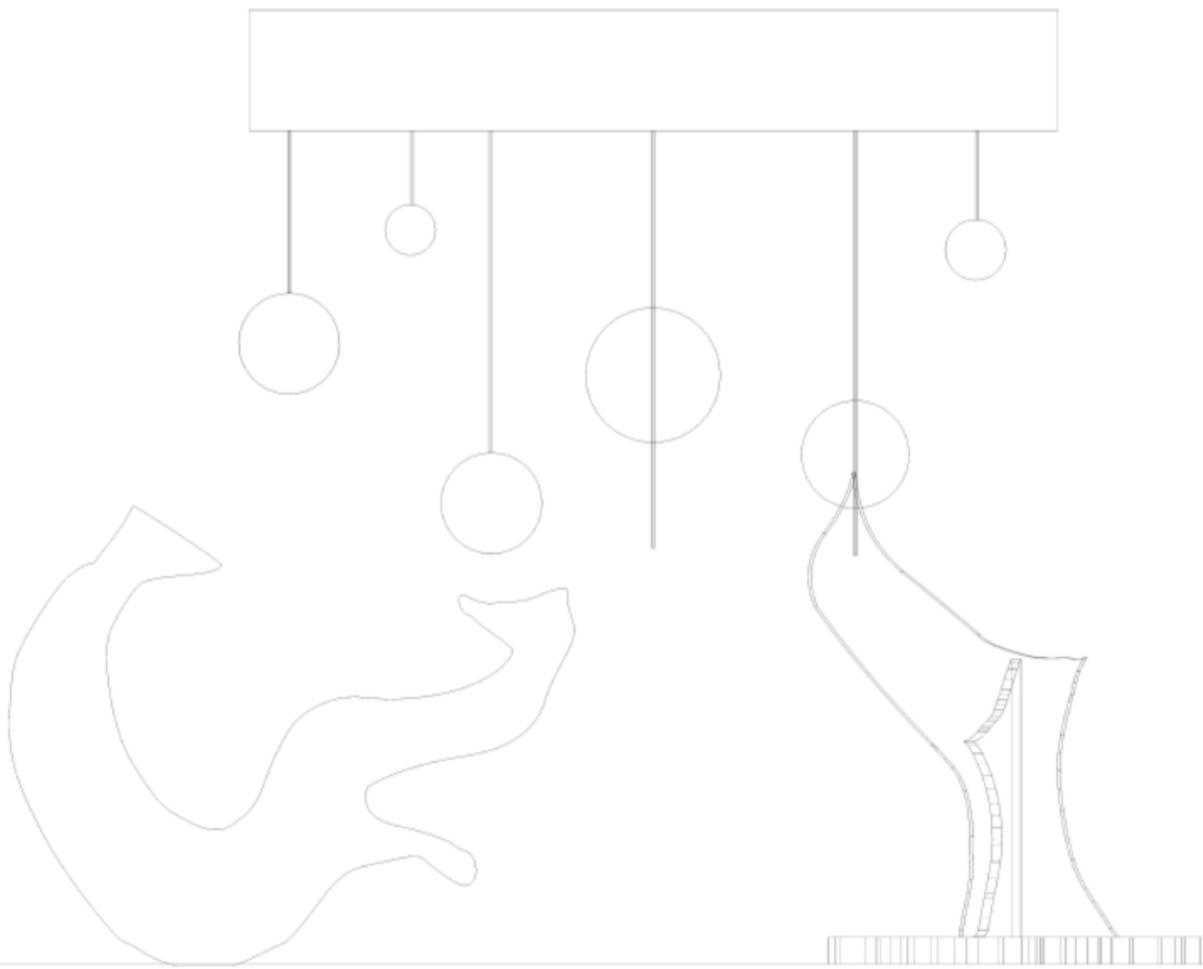
What type of melody
comes to mind when
you read the following
lyric?

The composer Christopher Chappell,
and the director found inspiration in
artists such as Bread, Joni Mitchell,
and Carly Simon.

Come hither, come hither,
come hither.
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough
weather.

The six original songs composed for
the production were inspired by
acoustic/folk artists popular during
the early 1970s.





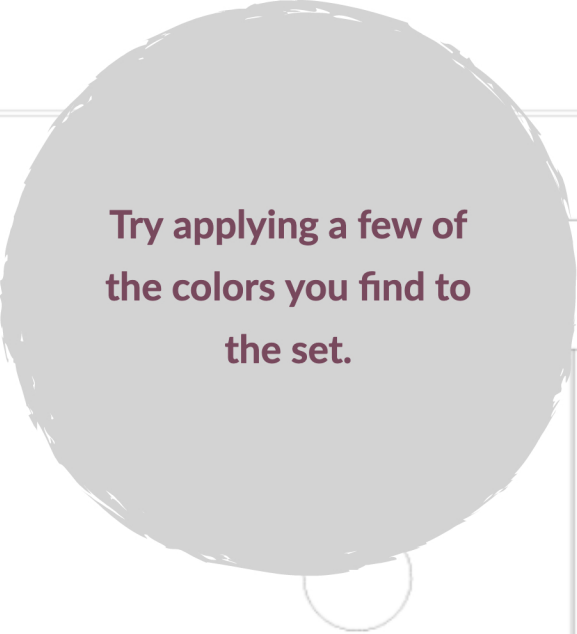
Scenic Design

The scenic designer, Celine Perron, feels an integral part of her work is communicating the director's vision using elements of design, line, shape, value, mass, color, and texture. The scenic designer formulates visual cues to guide the audience into the world of the play.

Class Exercise

Using the image of the set, experiment with color to create a mood for the setting.

Search online for pictures of 1970s artwork.



Try applying a few of
the colors you find to
the set.



Do the new colors
change the way
you feel about
the set?



How are the colors
different from those
you first used when
applying color to the
set?

Cutting the Script

Today, it is rare for Shakespeare texts to be performed in their entirety. The director often “cuts” the script (literally take lines or passages out of the play).

For this production, about 40% of the text (roughly 1105 lines out of 2,764) were removed. The director decided to tell the story of “As You Like It” simply and without the removal of the songs.

The process can involve anything from eliminating entire characters and scenes to merely removing a few extraneous lines from the text. The director removed some period-specific references, repetitive dialogue, and kept the essential dialogue to tell the story.

Another change, we cast the same actor in the role of Duke Senior and Duke Frederick. The sequence of scenes was slightly altered to accommodate casting the same actor as both characters.

Question

At what point do you think cutting the text alters the fundamental essence of the play, and the production becomes an adaptation?



troubled with you. You shall have some part of my will. I pray you leave me.
ORLANDO I will no further offend you than become me for my good.

As you read “As You Like It,” think about the following questions:

alls your Worst
as not Charles,
th me?

o please you, he
nes access to y
all him in. *Dennis*

education. You have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentlemanlike qualities. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it. Therefore Allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament. With that I will go buy my fortunes.

Orlando

IVER And what wilt thou do—beg when that is spent? Well, sir, get you in. I will not long be troubled with you. You shall have some part of my will. I pray you leave me.

LANDO I will no further offend you than become me for my good.

IVER, to Adam Get you with him, you old dog.

AM Is “old dog” my reward? Most true, I have lost my teeth in your service. God be with my old master. He would not have spoke such a word.

OLIVER Call him in. *Dennis exits.* ’Twill be a good way, and tomorrow the wrestling is.

- 1) What parts of the play would you cut?
- 2) What dialogue is essential to the story?

IVER Call him in. *Dennis exits.* ’Twill be a good way, and tomorrow the wrestling is.

Enter Charles.

The Elizabethan Stage and Spectacle

By Maryanne Olson, A Production Dramaturg

We all know that the Elizabethan citizen didn't have television, movies, or radios to entertain them, but despite what 17th century Puritans would have wished, Elizabethan audiences certainly didn't want to stay at home and pray. On the contrary, Renaissance audiences enjoyed roving the city from one entertainment spectacle to another.

Here are some typical entertainment options for Renaissance audiences:

—Lazar-houses – homes where lepers were kept virtually on display for commoners to view	—Public executions – it may seem gross to us today, but during the Renaissance, people loved going to see hangings and beheadings
—Bear-baiting contests - exactly what it sounds like: bears were tied to a stake and teased by dogs. Audiences would cheer this on until either the bear or dog was killed.	—Exhibitions of the “exotic” including “Wunderkammer or Curiosity Cabinets” (rooms owned by wealthy Londoners which contained curiosities from around the world). —Bringing “exotic people” from far-away lands, and placing them on display (for example, two Eskimos who were brought to London from Nova Scotia and could be seen ice-fishing on the Thames).
—Playhouses (Theaters) Theaters, or “Playhouses” as they were commonly referred to in Elizabethan England, were far from the lofty places of academic esteem that they're often considered today. They were the chief form of entertainment and spectacle for Elizabethan audiences. They incorporated many forms of entertainment existing in the city, and most notably drew on the violence that fascinated audiences of the period. Theaters also examined the unknown, using foreign locales as settings or introducing foreign characters, which appealed to both the growing cosmopolitanism of Londoners, as well as their fear and fascination with the unknown.	

The following quote by a contemporary Renaissance scholar gives us some sense of how theater was viewed in Shakespeare's time:

We need to recognize that the drama we regard as one of the supreme literary achievements of the English language was viewed quite differently by the period in question – as a troublesome and potentially subversive social phenomenon that threatened religious and civic hierarchies and yet, despite considerable antagonism, could neither be outlawed nor put down.”

Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage*, vii.



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Playhouses were not generally accepted by the city authorities, or by Puritans who were gaining power in London, so playhouses were (particularly during Shakespeare's time) moved to the city "liberties." The "liberties" were the more "suburban" areas of London, that lay outside of the city walls. These were tough places (not the suburbs we think of today) populated by cutthroats, pickpockets and prostitutes. Despite the danger of going outside city walls, not to mention the smell of the marshes rotting, people of all classes flocked to the playhouses. It is believed that one third of all Londoners saw at least one play a month.

Playhouses became a place where people could mingle across social class and take in a day of entertainment. Audiences were often rowdy and were well-aware of the control they had over theater companies. Playhouses tried to provide their audiences with a new play every day, which meant there were a lot of plays written at this time. If a play didn't appeal to audiences, it was forgotten. Shakespeare designed Arden as a place for classes to intermingle.

Playwrights often disliked the power audiences had and would write lengthy speeches insulting the uncouth behavior of their audiences. Shakespeare was one of the few playwrights who did not berate audiences. He was also one of the only playwrights who managed to avoid confrontations with those in power by cleverly disguising criticisms of the social and political order.

The following quote from a civic decree of the time reflects the behavior that was common in an Elizabethan theater.

Item: That no tobacco be taken in the Hall nor anywhere else publicly, and that neither at their standing in the streets, nor before the comedy begin, not all the time there, any rude or immodest exclamations be made, nor any humming, hawking, whistling, hissing or laughing be used, or any stamping or knocking, nor any such other uncivil or unscholar like or boyish demeanour, upon any occasion; nor that any clapping of hands be had until the Plaudite at the end of the Comedy, except his Majesty, the Queen, or others of the best quality here, do apparently begin the same.

At any given performance, audience behavior was unpredictable. For example, there are accounts of cutpurses being apprehended and tied to the stage so that audience members could look at them and wonder at their crimes.

"Working women" used the playhouses as a chief source of income, soliciting new clients. Young noblemen (often referred to as "gallants" but also insultingly referred to as "gulls") attended plays outrageously dressed for attention.

Theater audiences today are very different from 1599, the time "As You Like It" was written. Today, audiences sit quietly in their seats, and hopefully enjoy the show. There is less direct interaction between the audience and the performers in our culture. With this production, we decided to try and erase some of our contemporary boundaries particular to audience engagement. With the Keene State College production of "As You Like It" we invite you to embrace the modern equivalence of an Elizabethan theater-going experience.

This suggestion raises questions about the role of the audience in a production. In thinking about the rowdy behavior of Shakespeare's audience, you might consider how you should behave. We invite you to experience the play in whatever way you feel you need to experience the play. You can come as a gallant in an outrageous costume, shout out if you don't like something, or perhaps engage with the actors sitting right next to you! For this production of "As You Like It," we are exploring the idea of spectacle, theatricality, and what it really means if "All the World's a Stage."



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The Globe Theater.



A Few Facts, 1599

War:

1. Elizabeth sent an army off to end the Irish Rebellion.
2. 7,300 men drafted the first six months of 1599.
3. The government cracked down on histories, satires, and sermons that included themes relevant to the war.
4. It was forbidden to discuss Irish affairs – the pain of death.

Familia Bonds:

1. Strangers breastfed babies.
2. Babies were often swaddled for their first year.
3. Plague, death in childbirth, harvest failures, high infant mortality rate impacted family bonds.
4. Eldest sons inherited all family assets with death of the father, often creating family friction.

Love and Marriage:

1. Marrying for love is a new concept.
2. Many people did not marry.
3. Holy matrimony, could not be performed in the theater.
4. A handfast was a legally binding marriage thus audiences of the time would have seen Celia's performance of the handfast a legal marriage.

As You Like It:

1. Based on Thomas Lodge's popular story, Rosalind.
2. Sets up and knocks down literary conventions.
3. The political frame, the introduction of new types of the clown as a satirist, multiple marriages gender-bending, reflects on the conventions of poetry and the pastoral.
4. Very much a plotless drama that is driven by the debate of ideas and love relationships.

A Few Facts, 1974

Women's Rights

1. A significant impact on the 70s culture was the growth of women's rights.
2. In 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion in the United States with its landmark Roe v. Wade decision.
3. The divorce rate began to climb towards the end of the decade.
4. Women and men started questioning the government.

The Environment

1. Understanding of our Ecology came into focus.
2. First Earth Day was held during April 1970.

Government

1. President Nixon refused to hand over tape recordings and documents subpoenaed by the Senate Watergate Committee.
2. Jan 21, 1974, The U.S. Supreme Court decided that pregnant teachers could no longer be forced to take long leaves of absence.
3. In 1974 Richard Nixon resigned as the President of the United States because of the Watergate Scandal.
4. Apr 5, 1974, The World Trade Center (WTC), the tallest building in the world at 110 stories, opened in NYC.
5. In 1974 The Freedom of Information Act was passed by Congress over Pres. Ford's veto.
5. July 29, 1974, the Episcopal Church ordained female priests in Philadelphia.
6. Nov 5, 1974, Ella T. Grasso was elected governor of Connecticut, the first woman to win a gubernatorial office without succeeding her husband.
7. Dec. 16, 1974, The US Safe Drinking Water Act was passed.