

**THE
ACTING
COMPANY**

Kent Gash
Artistic Director

Erik Schroeder
Managing Director

Devin Brain
Producing Director

The Comedy *of Errors*

By
William Shakespeare



STUDENT GUIDE 2024-25



In 2003 I had the great good fortune to direct August Wilson's KING HEDLEY II for the Alliance Theatre. August Wilson came to Atlanta and continued to revise the script and rehearse with our company. During the opening August signed a poster for me saying "THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES...." As always, August was prescient and indeed even now in 2024-25, the struggle continues. Our current political climate in America continues to illustrate the sense of dislocation and exclusion that many African Americans feel. In TWO TRAINS RUNNING August Wilson's characters are on the precipice in American, struggling to stake their claim to a piece of the American Dream. It is a story about questioning your place in the world and amidst the turbulent 1960's these brilliant, witty, wry, and eloquent characters strive to thrive and realize the promise made by this great Country to all of its citizens.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS is Shakespeare's most lunatic comic escapade. It is similarly, about who belongs where and with whom. Identity, lineage and the privileges associated with these are all a part of the madness of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS. But its real motor is the family. Brothers, sisters, parents...family is where the sense of belonging begins for many of us. This may well be the thread that connects both of these plays. In both of these plays the characters go to physical, financial, and emotional extremes in order to achieve the happiness and freedom that they believe is the right of every human being.

In very different ways, both TWO TRAINS RUNNING and THE COMEDY OF ERRORS challenge our sense of how we identify and define ourselves, as well as how others project their perceived values of us onto our day-to-day lives. Both plays wonder if the tension between these two perspectives can ever be resolved, and if so... HOW? August Wilson doesn't give us concise answers. In TWO TRAINS RUNNING characters must cultivate their own hope but Wilson believes we are ever resilient and so we endure. Shakespeare and Christina Anderson allow for hope. Mishaps and missed opportunities are somehow righted, disparate family members rediscover each other and are joyously reunited. Happiness, the blessing of belonging and the freedom to realize our authentic selves is indeed possible. These are but a few of the reasons why August Wilson's TWO TRAINS RUNNING and Christina Anderson's translation of Shakespeare's THE COMEDY OF ERRORS adapted are more necessary, essential, and vital than ever before.

The Acting Company

Founded by John Houseman and Margot Harley over 50 years ago, The Acting Company has helped launch the careers of nearly 500 actors, including Kevin Kline, Patti LuPone, Rainn Wilson, Frances Conroy, Harriet Harris, Jeffrey Wright, Hamish Linklater, Jesse L. Martin, Roslyn Ruff, and Kelley Curran. We have performed for over four million people in 48 States, 10 foreign countries, on and Off-Broadway, and at leading resident theaters including The Guthrie and The Kennedy Center.



New works commissioned by the Company include plays by William Finn, Marcus Gardley, Rebecca Gilman, John Guare, Beth Henley, Tony Kushner, Lynn Nottage, Meg Miroshnik, Ntozake Shange, Maria Irene Fornés, Spalding Gray, Marsha Norman, Charles Smith, Samm-Art Williams, and Wendy Wasserstein. Among many accolades, the Company received the 2003 Tony honor for Excellence in the Theater.



Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kent Gash, Producing Director Devin Brain, and Managing Director Erik Schroeder, the Company brings professional productions and education programs to thousands of audience members in diverse communities throughout the United States each year. Annually, over 20,000 audience members see a Company production and nearly 7,000 students benefit from the Company's award-winning arts-in-education curriculum.



2024-25 National Repertory *Tour*

Each season The Acting Company tours two productions that feature the same actors in a form called rotating repertory. They are designed to be in conversation with each other. These two productions uphold our mission to reinvigorate the classics of the canon with vibrantly diverse perspectives even as we expand the definition of "classic" for audiences around the country.



William Shakespeare's **THE COMEDY OF ERRORS**

Modern verse translation by Christina Anderson

Directed by Devin Brain

Shakespeare's quintessential comedy, this farcical tale of separated families and mistaken identities delights audiences young and old. Antipholus and his servant, Dromio, travel in search of a long-lost family member, only to get mixed up in a madcap race against the clock, love-at-first-double-take, run-ins with local law enforcement, and double trouble – times two. Christina Anderson's translation maintains all we love about Shakespeare's language even as it updates the jokes and wordplay, breathing new life into the double (and triple) entendres. This madcap whirl through bawdy adventures, mad scientists, romance, heartfelt reunions, and even a few happy endings will excite and titillate any audience.



August Wilson's **TWO TRAINS RUNNING**

Directed by Lili-Anne Brown

From the author of "The Piano Lesson" and "Fences" comes the story of Memphis Lee, a diner owner in a historically black neighborhood in Pittsburgh at the height of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, who must decide if he should allow the government to take over his building or sell the property to a ruthless businessman. Full of vivid characters, joy, hope, love, and perseverance, this Tony-nominated play celebrates the spirit, laughter, heart, and resilience of the people who make our country great even when faced with overwhelming odds.

2024-25 Company



J'LANEY ALLEN Clown 1 (Dromio, and others)



CHUCKIE BENSON Clown 2 (Dromio, and others)



DIANA COATES Clown 6 (Luciana, and others)



BRIAN D. COATS Clown 8



ROBERT CORNELIUS Clown 9



JAMES MILORD Clown 3 (Antipholous, and others)



JEFFREY RASHAD Clown 4 (Antipholous, and others)



MICHAEL A. SHEPHERD Clown 7 (Dr. Pinch)



DEANNA SUPPLEE Clown 5 (Adriana, and others)

In the city of Ephesus, a merchant from Syracuse named Egeon is arrested for entering the city illegally. He explains that he is searching for his wife and their missing twin sons. His wife and one of their sons were lost twenty-three years ago in a storm at sea. The remaining son left to find his brother but has not returned home, and Egeon is searching for him. The Duke of Ephesus allows Egeon until the end of the day to raise ransom money, otherwise he will be put to death.

The son who left home, Antipholus of Syracuse, arrives in the city with his servant Dromio, and they both put on local dress to avoid being arrested as foreigners. Unbeknownst to them, both of their identical twin brothers are alive and living in the city. Dromio of Ephesus meets Antipholus of Syracuse and, mistaking him for his employer, berates him for not returning home to his wife, Adriana. When Antipholus of Syracuse does follow Dromio "home" to dinner, he falls in love with Adriana's sister, Luciana. When Antipholus of Ephesus returns home expecting his dinner, he is barred from entering and goes to dine with a courtesan instead.

A gold merchant gives Antipholus of Syracuse a chain meant for Antipholus of Ephesus, who is arrested along with his servant when he refuses to pay for a chain he never received. Fearing that he is mad, his wife Adriana attempts to exorcise him with the help of Dr. Pinch. The Syracusan brothers take refuge in an abbey after causing panic in people who think that they are the Ephesian brothers escaped from jail.

As the day wanes and Egeon's execution approaches, the Ephesian twins escape and appeal to the Duke of Ephesus for help. The Duke sends for the Abbess who appears with the Syracusan twins who have been sheltering in her abbey. The Abbess reveals herself to be Egeon's long-lost wife, and the family is reunited.



THE PLAYWRIGHT

William Shakespeare was an English playwright, poet, and actor. He lived over four hundred years ago and many records of his life have been lost or were never kept. However, there are some facts we do know about him. William Shakespeare was born in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564. When he was eighteen years old, he married Anne Hathaway and had three children with her, a daughter named Susanna and twins named Hamnet and Judith.

By 1592, Shakespeare was working in the London theater scene. Shakespeare was a founding member of an acting company named the Lord Chamberlain's Men. He wrote new plays for this company, often adapting existing stories, and produced on average two new plays per year for nearly twenty years. In 1603 after years of popular productions, his acting company became known as The King's Men when King James I gave them his patronage. In total, Shakespeare's surviving writing includes around 38 plays – some in collaboration with other playwrights – 154 sonnets, and 2 long poems. William Shakespeare died at the age of 52 in the same town where he was born. There are no surviving manuscripts in his hand, however some of his writing was published during his lifetime and 36 of his plays were published in a collected volume called the First Folio after his death.



THE TRANSLATOR

Christina Anderson is a 2022 Tony Award Nominee for Outstanding Book of the Broadway musical PARADISE SQUARE. She is a playwright, tv writer, screenwriter, educator, and creative. Her work has been produced by theaters such as the Goodman Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Kansas City Rep, Geva Theatre, and Yale Rep. Awards and honors include: 2022 Horton Foote Prize, 2022 Arthur Miller Legacy Award, 2021 Prince Prize, 2020 United States Artists Fellow, MacDowell Fellowship, Lily Awards Harper Lee Prize, Herb Alpert Award nomination, Barrymore Nomination, and New Dramatists Residency.

She was a staff writer on Edie Falco's CBS TV drama TOMMY. She taught playwriting at the David Geffen School of Drama, Wesleyan University, Rutgers University, SUNY Purchase College, and served as the interim Head of Playwriting at Brown University. An avid photographer for nearly ten years, the Magnum award review described Christina's work as "compelling" and "poignant." www.christinaandersonwriter.com

Production History *and* Adaptation

Christina Anderson's adaptation of THE COMEDY OF ERRORS is part of a long history of reshaping old stories to create new forms. Shakespeare himself took part: his KING LEAR, HENRY V, and HAMLET were all based in part on existing early modern plays. In fact, most of his work takes inspiration from histories, poems, and stories and THE COMEDY OF ERRORS is no exception.

Shakespeare's THE COMEDY OF ERRORS is an English play based on a Roman play based on a Greek play. Shakespeare's nearest source was a play by the Roman playwright Plautus. Plautus' play is called MENAECHEMI, which translates as "The Two Menaechmus." The twin brothers Menaechmus of Epidamnus and Menaechmus of Syracuse are the equivalents of the Antipholuses in Shakespeare's play. Plautus' original Greek source is not known, however all existing Roman comedies are based off Greek originals and we know of at least eight Greek plays that had some version of "The Twins" as their title.

Plautus lived around the 2nd-3rd century BCE when Roman plays adapted from the Greek were incredibly popular. They were known as "fabula palliata," meaning "cloaked stories," possibly because the actors wore Greek-style cloaks onstage or because the original Greek stories were "cloaked" or "covered" by their new Roman settings. When adapting Greek originals for a Roman audience, Plautus made changes that he hoped would appeal to his intended audience, much as the Play On Shakespeare adaptations do for modern audiences. While Greek plays almost always included a large chorus and rarely had more than three non-chorus characters onstage at once, Roman plays cut the chorus and leaned into the comedic and chaotic possibilities of a large company.

Plautus' MENAECHEMI has only one set of identical twins, but Shakespeare went a step further and added an additional pair as the servants of the first two. The chaos this creates has repeatedly proved irresistible to audiences since its first recorded performance as part of the Christmas celebrations for a group of London law students in December of 1594. The play is Shakespeare's shortest, possibly because it was only one part of a whole evening of entertainment for students celebrating the end of a long term. Comedy includes jokes and situations relating to the law – Egeon's imprisonment, the gold chain's complicated chain of custody – that may have been particularly amusing to its original audience of 16th century lawyers.

The performance was certainly eventful. The law students had been partying on their winter break since December 12 and were in high spirits by the time COMEDY was performed on December 28. So many people crowded into the hall where Shakespeare's troupe was due to perform that fights broke out before the play even started. The chaos in the audience combined with the chaos onstage led an anonymous audience member to recall: "that night was begun, and continued to the end, in nothing but confusion and errors, whereupon, it was ever after called, 'The Night of Errors.'"

Eighteenth century adaptations of Shakespeare's Comedy include EVERY BODY MISTAKEN, SEE IF YOU LIKE IT, and THE TWINS by playwright Thomas Hull, who added new music and songs to Shakespeare's original. Librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte, best known for writing the words for Mozart operas, adapted Shakespeare's play into an opera called THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS. Adding music to COMEDY continued to be popular into the 20th century: composer Richard Rodgers, lyricist Lorenz Hart, and book writer George Abbot adapted COMEDY into a musical in the 1930's as THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE. A 1970s adaptation by Trevor Nunn (book and lyrics) and Guy Woolfenden (music) kept Shakespeare's title, and The Acting Company toured this musical COMEDY in 2001.

Play on *Shakespeare* and Adaptation

When the Oregon Shakespeare Festival announced that it would commission 36 playwrights to translate Shakespeare's plays into modern English, people paid attention. OSF is the longest-running Shakespeare festival in North America and one of the oldest and largest non-profit theaters in the United States. Celebrating its 90th year of production in 2025, it has produced the entire Shakespeare canon four times and draws hundreds of artists and hundreds of thousands of audience members to Ashland, Oregon each year.

The company's 2007 "American Revolutions: the United States History Cycle" project commissioning 37 new plays about moments of change in US history had been well-received, certainly the Play On! project commissioning 36 translations of Shakespeare would be as well. (The numerical disparity is due to the disputed number of plays attributed to Shakespeare. The Play On! project now includes 39 translations.)

After testing the waters with British writer Kenneth Cavander's translation of *TIMON OF ATHENS*, chosen in part because its obscurity meant that its translation would be, according to the playwright, "less likely to draw criticism from the audience of scholars, Shakespeare lovers and the theatre community in general," OSF announced the full project in the fall of 2015 and immediately faced backlash.

Shakespeare scholar James Shapiro wrote in *The New York Times* that the *TIMON* translation "makes for dismal reading" and that the project as a whole was "likely to be a waste of money and talent." Defending the project in *American Theatre Magazine*, then-artistic director Bill Rauch articulated his hope that the translations would encourage audiences to return to the original texts "with even greater understanding and enjoyment" and questioned his critics "dangerously elitist assumption that old language is superior and new forms of language are somehow inferior."

The Play On! project set a goal of commissioning at least 51 percent women and 51 percent writers of color to create the translations and it succeeded. It created opportunities for dozens of playwrights and dramaturgs to engage deeply with Shakespeare over multiple years in a way that is rarely possible in the non-profit theater. Now an independent organization separate from OSF, Play On's translations are published, podcasted, and performed both nationally and internationally.

The Play On Shakespeare project asks the question, "Is it possible that there are conventions in the early modern English of Shakespeare that don't translate to us today, especially in the moment of hearing it spoken out loud as one does in the theater?" Its goal is to "carry forward the successful communication between actor and audience that took place 400 years ago" and its guidelines for playwrights are:

1. Do no harm
2. Go line-by-line
3. All other variables stay the same
4. Honor the structure – keep the iambic

Adapter Christina Anderson followed these guidelines in creating her translation of *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*. While Anderson has "never been a fan of Shakespeare's work," it has "haunted [her] for decades" and she approached the project of adapting *COMEDY* from a place of "deep love of language" and curiosity.

Side by Side Shakespeare-Anderson Comparison

In the excerpt below from Act II, scene ii, Antipholus of Syracuse has had an unpleasant encounter with Dromio of Ephesus but mistakenly takes his revenge on his servant Dromio of Syracuse. Playwright Christina Anderson highlights this passage as a particularly challenging one to adapt because of its use of homonyms – words that have the same spelling but multiple meanings.

“Sconce” is used in (at least) three ways: an object that holds light, a form of shelter that protects one from fire, and a slang word for head. A sincere threat of abuse from Antipholus is flipped into a jaunty plea of mercy from Dromio.”

SHAKESPEARE

Antipholus beats Dromio

SYR. DROMIO

Hold, sir, for God’s sake; now your jest is earnest,

Upon what bargain do you give it me?

SYR. ANT.

Because that I familiarly sometimes

Do use you for my fool, and chat with you,

Your sauciness will jest upon my love,

And make a common of my serious hours;

When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport,

But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.

If you will jest with me, know my aspect,

And fashion your demeanor to my looks,

Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

ANDERSON

Antipholus beats Dromio

SYR. DROMIO

Stop, sir, please; now that your joke has landed,

On what flight do you transport it to me?

SYR. ANT.

Because I am relaxed with you sometimes

And joke around, or chat idly with you,

Your sauciness takes advantage of me,

And makes light when I’m in a serious mood.

Let foolish gnats make sport in the sunlight,

But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.

If you try to play with me, know my state,

And adjust your behavior to my looks,

Or I will beat that tactic in your sconce

Elizabethan London and *Comedy*



When Shakespeare wrote *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*, London was the largest city in England. Over 100,000 people crowded around

the banks of the River Thames and Shakespeare was one of thousands who arrived in the city from the English countryside or abroad. London was the seat of government, where Parliament met and Queen Elizabeth I stayed at her palaces during the cooler months when the city stench and plague levels were less intense. The economy of London flourished and international visitors were a common sight.

Visitors and residents who wanted entertainment could attend the theater as well as animal baiting, fencing demonstrations, and concerts. These events often took place outside the legal limits of the City of London where they could avoid government bans on performance meant to limit the spread of plague and rowdy behavior. The first recorded performance of *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* took place at Gray's Inn, a private law organization inside the city limits, however most of Shakespeare's plays likely premiered at theaters outside the city limits.

One of those theaters was creatively called "The Theatre." After a disagreement with the landlord at its original location, it was renamed "the Globe" and moved across the Thames to the south bank of London where it became the home of Shakespeare's acting company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men.

While *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* is set in the Greek city of Ephesus in modern Turkey, Shakespeare's audience would have recognized several locations in the play as contemporary London venues. Antipholus of Ephesus's house is called "the Phoenix," which was the name of an actual 16th century London shop in Lombard Street. Antipholus of Ephesus also asks the goldsmith Angelo to bring his gold chain to an inn called "the Porpentine," modernized in Christina Anderson's translation as "the Porcupine." "The Porpentine" was a famous London inn within walking distance of the Globe. Some audience members would have recognized the reference to their favorite local drinking spot in the play, and wandered over after for a post-play pint.

Clown and *Comedia*

Shakespeare drew on theatrical traditions spanning millennia for *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*, including plots reaching back to the origins of theater in ancient Greece and characters inspired by early modern entertainments.

Commedia dell'arte was a popular theater tradition that originated in Italy and flourished across Europe in the 16th-18th centuries. Commedia features stock characters like the mischievous Arlecchino, often anglicized as "Harlequin," a zanni or servant character, the swaggering Capitano, the innamorati or young lovers, and miserly elderly characters like Pantalone and il Dottore, among others. Many of the characters in *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* trace their roots to these clownish types, in particular the servant Dromios who were frequently costumed in Arlecchino's triangle-checked suits during the 19th century.



The figure of the clown exists across almost all times and cultures. There is a record of a fool in Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Dadkeri-Assi's court around 2500 BCE. The clowning tradition traces its roots through the Greek and Roman plays that Shakespeare would have known into his own time and through to ours. The white-faced clown that many people think of today was first popularized by English actor Joseph Grimaldi in the 18th century. Many people today first encounter this kind of clown as children at the circus and they are instantly recognizable: red noses, white facepaint, big shoes.

Comedy director Devin Brain is interested something different. Drawing from a range of traditions, his clowns are "defined by the simplicity with which they interact with the world." Crediting companies like 500 Clown in Chicago, Pig Iron in Philadelphia, Complicité in London, and the Jacques Lecoq school in Paris, Brain's clowns are "elemental, somehow pure, but deep." In his book *DISCOVERING THE CLOWN*, Christopher Bayes, one of Brain's professors at drama school, defines the clown as:

"The most expressive of all creatures...at home in the midst of gleeful pandemonium, without shame or awareness of its own simplicity, the clown valiantly and courageously enters the world with a thundering cry in search of pleasure. The pleasure of play, movement, sound, chaos, and the pleasure in the big noise that an audience makes all together on the hot wind that flies from their faces when they laugh."

For Brain, clown is immediacy and joy. It is watching the world change from normal into magic through the power of attention to the extremes of truth.

Clowns take into account the humans that are sitting around them. A clown is able to both dream and create out of sort of pure imagination. A book becomes a bird, a pillow becomes a friend, an empty plate becomes filled with food, and gibberish becomes logic. And at the same time, they know the audience is there. They're performing, but they're able to hold two ideas in their heads simultaneously. At the core of it, it's about the joy of performance. It's about telling a story or engaging in a moment that shows the audience something beautiful, something elemental.



Just to get this out in the open...THE COMEDY OF ERRORS is a dumb play.

Don't get me wrong, I love this play, and I honestly don't mean that disparagingly, but it is undeniably dumb. The plot is a mishmash of coincidences, assumptions, and the absurd conceit of two sets of identical twins who share the same name. Yet, this confection of absurdity has quite literally stood the test of time. It boggles my mind when I think about it, but this story has been told, in one form or another, for more than 2,000 years. Shakespeare's play has been performed for more than 400 years. And the text you will see today was translated/punched up by a remarkable contemporary playwright - so this is a play that is both 2,000 years old and brand new.

How cool is that?

Through its silliness, this dumb play is able to tell a story about something simple and beautiful. It can do that because it's a story told by clowns. Not circus clowns or scary sewer clowns, but something older...perhaps Fools is a better word. Fools not because they lack intelligence but because they pursue what they love and need with abandon, without hesitation or deception. These glorious figures are utterly open-hearted, and because of that, their absurdity gives birth to poetry. This dumb play is a moving story of families reuniting and of finding your place in the world through the people you love.

So, I hope that as these Fools play and dance in front of you, that you'll let the laughter they inspire crack open your hearts a bit. Let yourself laugh, but also let yourself admire the courage and passion of these clowns - because I think we could all use a bit of that these days.

Bringing *Story to Stage* - Set Designer's Note

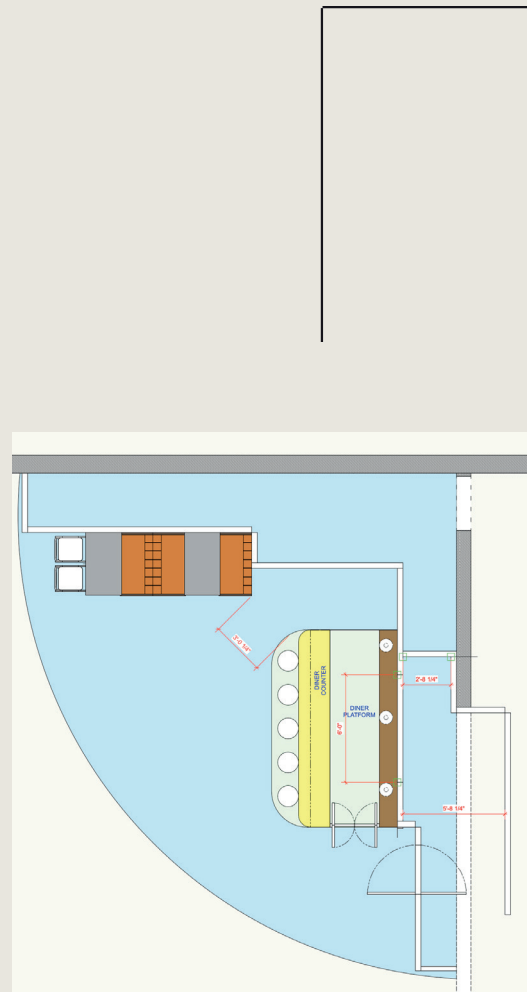
We first began with designing TWO TRAINS RUNNING, knowing that THE COMEDY OF ERRORS would take place in the restaurant. As we developed our idea that the space holds many different stories of the Hill District, it felt very natural to see THE COMEDY OF ERRORS as an additional story in the world of Memphis' restaurant. Therefore, we did not try to drastically change the set to become Ephesus but rather saw the reality of the restaurant as the point of inspiration. While the sense of theatricality is greatly heightened and joyfully exaggerated in THE COMEDY OF ERRORS, the feeling of the restaurant being a wellspring of stories and storytelling was aligned for both plays throughout the design process.

I wanted the set to have a sense of multiple histories layered on top of one another. The physical space of the restaurant showcases not just historical realism, but also the reality that when a community experiences displacement, generational stories that are physically embodied by gathering spaces are lost.

While the play takes place in the late 60s, we looked at historical research of restaurants in the Hill District from many different eras. It is important to us that the restaurant tells a truth that signals the decades of people and their stories that would have happened in this type of space.

For example, on the stage right side of the set we have a wall of windows that shows a black-and-white-printed drop of a historical image from the Hill District. I love the sense of theatrical reality that this kind of detail creates on the set, contrasted with an actual image of reality. It's incredible to me how playwrights can create stories with fictional characters but within the historical context of their time and place express ecstatic truths.

-Tanya Orellana



The People *Behind the Scenes*

THE PLAYWRIGHT

A "wright" is a type of artisan who makes things that people can use. For example, a wheelwright makes wheels. A playwright makes plays and usually completes a draft of the script before rehearsals begin.

THE DIRECTOR

After reading the playwright's script, the director decides on an overall vision for the production and decides which designers to hire to support their ideas. The director meets with the creative team to assemble a unified look for the sets, costumes, lighting, and other elements. The director oversees the actors in rehearsal with the help of the stage manager.

THE ACTORS

The actors perform the play and draw on their own experiences and understanding of life to create believable characters. Actors usually audition for their parts after the play is written and the director is chosen. Actors must memorize their lines and attend many rehearsals before opening night.

THE STAGE MANAGERS

The stage managers facilitate communication across departments, organize rehearsals, and call technical cues during performances as well as maintain the artistic intentions of a production after opening. They are usually hired around the same time as the designers and actors.

DESIGNERS (SETS, PROPS, SOUND, LIGHTS, AND COSTUMES)

All theaters need an environment created on stage for the play to take place and the designers help create that world in collaboration with the director. The set can be a literal world, with many objects ("props") and lots of furniture or it can be a suggestion of reality with minimal actual components. Music and sound effects can make the theatrical experience more real or more fantastical. The lights add to the environment of the play and enhance the mood that the other designers have created. The costume designer and costume staff work within the vision of the director for each character. They choose colors and styles to help the audience better understand the characters and often do historical research to make the world of the play come to life. For The Acting Company touring productions, the set must be easy to assemble and disassemble and the sound and lighting design must be able to be recreated in each venue.



Your Comedy of Errors

ACTIVITY

Once you have seen The Acting Company's COMEDY, you get a chance to Imagine your OWN COMEDY.

Our COMEDY is a world where contemporary Europe meets stories of Ancient Greece. It is a place where people wear young women with only the clothes on their backs conjure oceans and monsters, where songs become storms, and tables become ships.

But what would your COMEDY look like? Sound like? Where is it set? Who are the actors? How do they fight?

When you read a play, that is part of the magic: the words on the page are the prompt for you to imagine what it would all look like onstage.

THE PEOPLE

The key to any production is the cast, they are the heart and soul of your show. When you close your eyes, can you see what Dromio looks like to you? How about Dr. Pinch? Do they look like you?

Go to the front of the guide and look at the cast list. For each role find a picture online of an actor or historical figure that you would choose to play each role. With that you can create your COMEDY facebook.

THE SET

Now, you have a cast, but where are they? Shakespeare's play takes place in the city states of Italy and Greece, but for your production this city could look however you want it to look. Downtown NYC, Tokyo at night, or your block. Think about this play, about these characters, what do you think would help an audience see it and understand the story?

Find three images that represent the world of your COMEDY.

THE SOUND

What does your play sound like? Are there the drums and pips of Shakespeares Globe? Are there synths and guitars like The Acting Company's production? Music can be the heartbeat of a production, shedding light on your world.

Pick three songs from any artist that you think represent the sound of your COMEDY.

THE CLOTHES

You've already picked the actors, but what are they wearing? What makes the two Dromios different from each other? What connects them? Are they casual or formal? Do they live today or a thousand years ago?

Find four images of people in clothes that you think represent your production.

*Think when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings*

- HENRY V, PROLOGUE

PARENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Loud noises, stylized stage violence, discussion of mature content (adultery, etc.).

No nudity or graphic sexuality.

MORE RESOURCES AVAILABLE ONLINE

www.theactingcompany.org



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