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MAGAZINE

The Magazine of the Utah Shakespearean Festival



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MIDSUMMER MAGAZINE

The Magazine of the Utah Shakespearean Festival
 Summer 2009 • Thirtieth Edition • Cedar City, Utah

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Publisher and Editor	Bruce C. Lee
Contributing Writers	David G. Anderson, Amanda Caraway, Leonard Colby, Christine Frezza, Lawrence Henley, Don Leavitt, Ace. G. Pilkington, Elaine Pilkington, Olga G. Pilkington, Diana Major Spencer
Photography	Karl Hugh
Illustrations	Daniel W. Hermansen, Philip W. Hermansen

Cover Photo: Lisa Ferris as Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew*, 2008;
 background, Zion National Park.

You can contact *Midsummer Magazine* at 435-586-1972 or lee@bard.org.
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Here's to thirty years past—and
thirty more still in the future.

What a Thirty Years!

*Experiencing the passions
which great theatre explores.*

Midsummer Magazine is thirty years old this summer, and what a thirty years it has been! In 1979, ninety U.S. Embassy workers were taken hostage in Tehran, Iran. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel signed a historic peace treaty. Usenet, a precursor to today's internet bulletin boards, was conceived at Duke University. The Susan B. Anthony dollar was introduced. And Chrysler Corporation asked the US government for \$1 billion to avoid bankruptcy.

It was also the year I finished graduate school, moved to Cedar City and wrote my first article for *Midsummer Magazine*. Since that time I have watched the world change—and remain the same. I have seen the Utah Shakespearean Festival grow and mature. I have wept at the productions of *Death of a Salesman* and *The Winter's Tale* and laughed hilariously at *The Comedy of Errors* and *You Can't Take It with You*. I even hummed some tunes from *Camelot* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. And I admit I scratched my head in a bit of bewilderment after watching *Waiting for Godot*.

But it has been an grand adventure as I have experienced the various passions which great theatre explores. And this year the adventure continues with nine eclectic plays set in the beautiful surroundings of southern Utah. So, here's to thirty years past—and thirty more still in the future. ■

By Bruce C. Lee
Publisher and Editor



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The forty-eighth annual season will be packed with fury, romance, jealousy, intrigue, and all things Shakespearean and theatrical.



Michael Sharon (left) as Orsino and Shelly Gaza as Viola in *Twelfth Night*, 2007

The Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival invites Cedar City visitors to find their passion during the 2009 season. Our forty-eighth season will be packed with love, romance, jealousy, intrigue, and all things Shakespearean and theatrical.

Each June through August we present Shakespeare under the stars in one of the closest replicas of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre found in the nation, as well as contemporary plays and popular musicals, in the beautiful indoor Randall L. Jones Theatre. Each summer we offer six plays, which rotate continuously, giving our audience the unique opportunity to see six plays in three days.

Summer audiences for the 2009 season will see three Shakespeare plays including *As You Like It*, *Henry V* and *The Comedy of Errors*. We will also present Noel Coward's hilarious comedy *Private Lives*, Susan Cooper and Hume Cronyn's touching drama *Foxfire*, and the popular musical *The Secret Garden* with music by Lucy Simon, and book and lyrics by Marsha Norman.

The summer season, presented from June 29 to August 29, is followed by the 2009 fall season, which is presented from September 18 through October 17. Audiences will find more passion and excitement with the heart-warming *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Stephen Mallatratt's nail-biting ghost story *The Woman in Black*, and the hilarious spoof *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, by Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Borgeson.

As You Like It

Rosalind has a problem. Disguised as a boy to help her father, she has also fooled her beloved Orlando, who now asks this boy/woman to help him woo the woman of his dreams—none other than Rosalind herself! What's a girl (or boy) to do? For Rosalind, the

Article by Leonard Colby
Photo by Karl Hugh

answer is easy: play the game to the end in this rollicking frolic of confused courtship, beautiful poetry, and unsurpassed wit.

Henry V

Prince Hal has inherited the throne as King Henry V—and now faces his first major challenge against the mighty French army. Quickly, the new king must act. He can fall back to his boisterous youth or he can rush to the fore and attack. His St. Crispin's Day speech is stunning, but is it enough to rally his countrymen around their new king?

The Comedy of Errors

Antipholus and Dromio are bewildered. Everywhere they go, they seem to have already been there. And the more they try to unravel the lunatic events around them, the more farcical their lives become. It's double the laughter and twice the fun in Shakespeare's youthful comedy of, not one, but two sets of twins and the shenanigans swirling around them.

Private Lives

Love nearly is a fight to the death in this witty and glittering comedy. Elyot and Amanda (once married to each other) find themselves in adjoining honeymoon suites (now both recently remarried to others). One thing leads to another, and they soon

rekindle their old relationship, realizing that not only do they love, but (more importantly) they love to hate each other.

Foxfire

"We was lucky. We didn't have no choices," Hector once told his wife, Annie. But Annie does have choices, lucky or not. She can leave her Appalachian farm, or she can stay on the cabin porch with her memories, the old apple orchard, and the expansive mountain vistas. This surprising, emotionally-rich play will cause all of us to think about our own roots, our loves, and the choices we make.

The Secret Garden

A beautiful story for the entire family, this captivating musical tells of the orphaned Mary who goes to live with her emotionally stunted uncle. She soon discovers a secret garden, long locked away from the attentiveness of any caretaker. Mary brings sunlight and fresh air to the garden, and in the process unleashes the healing power of love and the miracle of rebirth.

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In a world full of cynicism and consumerism, the lessons Morrie Schwartz teaches his former student are powerful, deeply emotional, and, many times, unselfishly humorous. Although Morrie is dying, he is teach-

ing Mitch (in weekly doses) how to live, forgive, love, laugh, and be human. Based on the popular book and movie, this live theatre version brings a new level of vitality and depth to an already triumphant story.

The Woman in Black

Haunted houses, supernatural happenings, foggy and stormy nights, and a mysterious, ghostly woman all combine in this gripping and thrilling mystery which taps into our primal fears. Are Arthur Kipp's memories, which still terrorize him years later, accurate? Did he really see the woman in black? Can he ever have peace again? The truth will leave you shivering in this theatrical Halloween ghost story.

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)

Three actors. Ninety-seven minutes. All thirty-seven of the Bard's plays—and the sonnets! It's all here, with larges doses of clowning, street theatre, and vaudeville thrown in for good measure. This irreverent, hilarious, and lightning-paced overview of the greatest plays of all time will have you rolling out of your seat and jumping in the aisles.

Tickets and more information are available through the Utah Shakespearean Festival website, www.bard.org, or by calling 800-PLAYTIX. ■

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As You Like It

In the Forest of Arden, the exiles can play “many parts” that differ from those demanded of them at court.



As *You Like It* creates two very different worlds—the court of Duke Frederick and the Forest of Arden. Duke Frederick’s rule is capricious and autocratic, and no one is safe from his anger. He is a usurper who has displaced his older brother, Duke Senior, the legitimate heir and ruler. The Forest of Arden, on the other hand, is a safe haven for the fugitives of the court, and provides Shakespeare with the means to assemble a varied assortment of characters with equally varied perceptions of life and love.

The play begins at court where a second pair of brothers is also at odds. Oliver, though an older brother, is no less churlish to Orlando. Ignoring the wishes of their father’s will, Oliver denies Orlando his inheritance, treats him like a servant, and encourages Charles the wrestler to break his neck. Neither Duke Frederick nor Oliver has a legitimate reason to abandon his family obligation, for Duke Senior and Orlando have committed no act that would merit such treatment. In fact, Oliver admits that Orlando is “gentle, never school’d and yet learned, full of noble device. . . . [I]ndeed [he is] so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether mispris’d” (1.1.166–71; all line references are to *The Riverside Shakespeare* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974]).

Duke Frederick echoes Oliver’s words when he banishes his niece Rosalind, daughter of Duke Senior. Whether it was his own “pleasure” and “remorse” or his desire to keep Rosalind as a companion for his daughter, Celia, Rosalind was raised at his court when he took his brother’s dukedom. Now he does not “trust” her but finds her “subtle . . . her smoothness,/ Her very silence, and her patience/ Speak to the people and they pity her. . . . She robs thee [Celia] of thy name,/ And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous/ When she is gone” (1.3.70, 77–82).

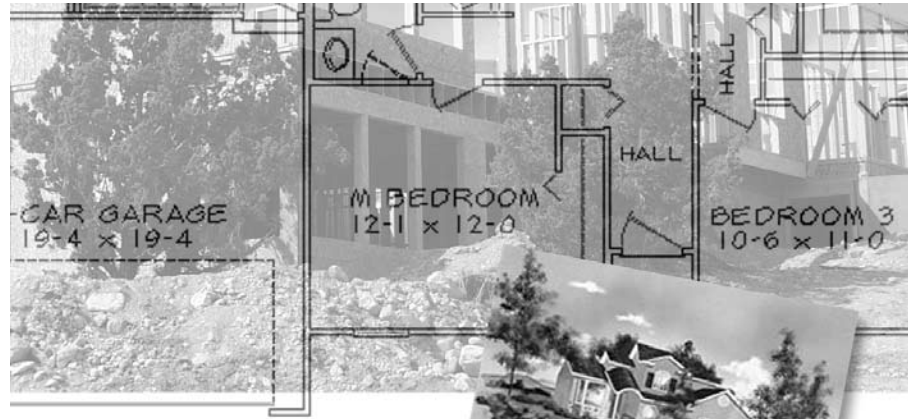
Article by Elaine Pilkington
Illustration by Philip W. Hermansen

In contrast to this disloyalty of brothers stands Celia's devotion to her cousin Rosalind. She volunteers to exchange fathers so that Rosalind may stay at court. Knowing that to be impossible, she vows that she and Rosalind are one, that they will never be parted, and that she will go with Rosalind into banishment, seeking Rosalind's father in the Forest of Arden. She also entices Touchstone, the court fool, to accompany them: "He'll go along o'er the wide world with me" (1.3.132).

Orlando also flees to the Forest of Arden. Adam, the elderly servant of his family, tells him that his defeat of Duke Frederick's wrestler has increased the praise of others, thus fueling his brother's envy. Adam warns Orlando that Oliver is plotting to kill him and that he must leave. Because Orlando has no money, Adam offers him all the money that he has saved to pay for his keep when he is too old to work. He also volunteers to go with him and serve him "to the last gasp, with truth and loyalty" (2.3.70).

And now to the Forest of Arden. According to report, the forest is an idyllic place for Duke Senior and three or four loving lords who put themselves in voluntary exile to accompany him and "live like the old Robin Hood of England. They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world" (1.1.116-19). Like her father, Rosalind flees Duke Frederick's threat, accompanied by Celia, another voluntary exile, and Touchstone, Celia's loyal follower. Orlando escapes to Arden, saved by Adam's warning, his money, and his sense of duty that mirrors "the constant service of the antique world" (2.3.57).

The reality of Arden, however, is far different from report. Duke Senior compares the "painted pomp" of the "envious court" with the "icy fang/ And churlish chiding of the winter's wind/ . . . [that] bites and blows upon [his] body even till [he] shrinks with cold" (2.1.3-4, 6-9). The forest is referred to as a "desert city" (2.1.23), a "desert place" (2.4.72), and "this desert inaccessible" (2.7.110). Their long, arduous journey to Arden exhausts Rosalind and her group. Their weary spirits and weary legs seem incapable of going further, and Touchstone summarizes their disappointment: "Ay, now am I in Arden, the more fool I. When I was at home, I was in



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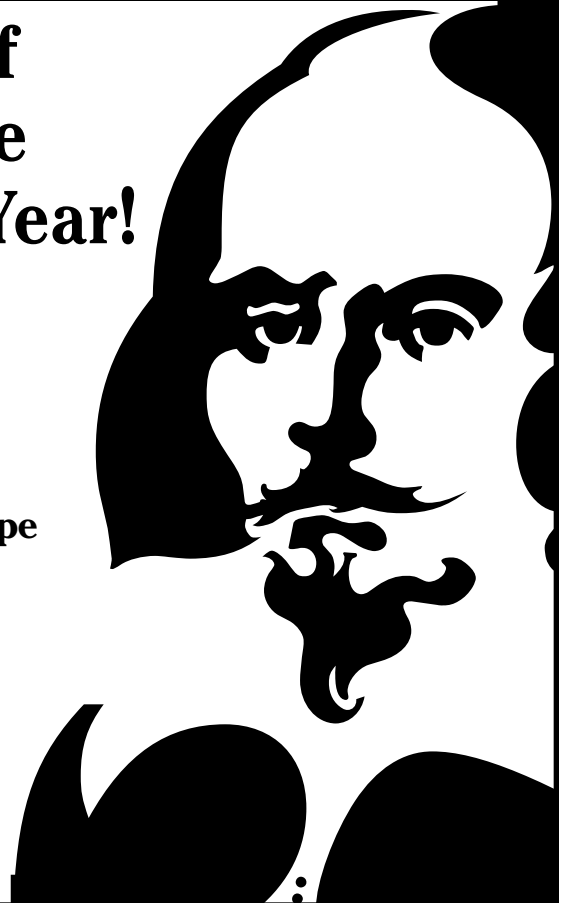


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a better place" (2.4.16–17). Arriving with Orlando, Adam too can go no further: "O, I die for food! Here lie I down, and measure out my grave" (2.6.1–2).

Harsh as the forest may seem, no discomfort is unbearable, no threat lasting. Corin and Silvius interrupt the dejected spirits of Rosalind's group, and their thoughts turn first to love and then to a new life as shepherds. Orlando, entering the duke's feast with sword in hand and brash words, is met by gentleness. Despite Arden's natural roughness, it provides the exiles the liberty they seek. Orlando, no longer a servant to a tyrant brother, can compose bad love lyrics and hang them on every tree if he wishes. Rosalind, disguised as Ganymede, can mock the love-sick Orlando with impunity, disagree with Jacques, and rebuke the scornful Phoebe. Celia is no longer confined to the role of comforter for her displaced cousin. In the Forest of Arden, the exiles can play "many parts" that differ from those demanded of them at court, moving freely, saying and doing whatever they want.

With very little real action in the forest, the story unfolds through dialogue, for *As You Like It* is more a play of personalities than of plot, and the primary entertainment comes from the opposing perspectives each character presents. The exiled duke's cheerful acceptance of his fate is directly countered by Jacques who can suck melancholy out of anything. Jacques's disillusioned Seven Ages of Man speech is countered by Orlando's return carrying Adam, who is too weak to walk. Repeatedly, scenes juxtapose opposing viewpoints, and dialogues within scenes become disputations. Touchstone even disagrees with himself when he answers Corin's "How like you this shepherd's life?" (3.2.11), replying that as a solitary life it is desirable, but as a private life it is vile, and that a spare life fits his humor, "but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against [his] stomach" (3.2.20–21). His full answer may seem a nonsensical series of contradictions, but it shows how easily perspective can alter judgment.

Compared to Duke Frederick's court, the Forest of Arden is a peaceful co-existence of diverse characters. The balance of opposing viewpoints creates a natural harmony foreign to the Duke Frederick's court of discord.

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Henry V

Beneath this rousing king-of-the-hill story lies a poignant tale of two sisters, their congenitally mad father, and a poet-prisoner

Agincourt! St. Crispin's Day! "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers" (4.3.60) and "Cry, 'God for Harry, England, and Saint George!'" (3.1.34). The "royal captain of this ruin'd band" of "poor condemned English" (4.chorus.29, 22), roundly defeats five times the number of "confident and overlusty French" (4.chorus.18)—and wins the French princess. In the process, the warrior king of "this scepter'd isle" exhibits swift justice to his conspiratorial friends (2.2); mercy to the besieged at Harfleur (3.3); humility, humanity, and good humor to his soldiers as he wanders anonymously among them (4.1); unyielding pragmatism to the prisoners he orders slain after French reinforcements outnumber his troops and rout the camp (4.6); and indifference to the final, fatal debaucheries of the low-life companions of his youth (3.6, 4.1).

The first Chorus tells us he's perfect. In every way tough, stern, single-minded and heroic, no wonder Shakespeare imbued the former madcap Prince Hal with such splendor. A glorious end it is to the tetralogy that begins with the demise of weakling philosopher Richard II at the hands of Hal's dad. Beneath this rousing king-of-the-hill story, however, lies a poignant tale of two sisters, their congenitally mad father, and a poet-prisoner, all of whom, save the older sister, appear as characters in *Henry V*.

Act 3, scene 4, a peculiarly girlish and innocent interlude between masculine scenes of politics and warfare, introduces Katherine, Princess of France and future Queen of England. Begging Alice for lessons, she foreshadows the betrothal that ends the play: "*It is necessary* that I learn to speak [English]" (3.4.4–5, emphasis mine). The play doesn't mention that negotiations persisted for most of her life to unite the ever-warring France and England through the body of this girl-child. Reduced here to comic relief with her elementary English, Katherine was yet another pawn



Article by Diana Major Spencer
Illustration by Philip W. Hermansen

in a decades-long attempt of the French to purchase peace with England, using its daughters as currency. England dutifully consumed them.

For a prior treaty, Katherine's father, Charles VI of France—known to history as the Mad King—shuffled in amongst the collateral an older daughter for a previous king. As King of France for forty-two years and father of thirteen children (twelve by the same woman—his wife!), he enjoyed both time and assets for cross-channel barter. Crowned at the age of twelve, he came to the throne in 1380, during the third year of the reign of thirteen-year-old Richard II—first-cousin to fourteen-year-old Harry Bolingbroke, future usurper of the English throne, future King Henry IV, and future father of Prince Hal (see *Richard II, Henry IV Part One*).

Fast-forward to 1396 as these young royals approach thirty. Charles has sired and buried two children. Richard, who married the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor to secure an ally against the French, has laid his beloved Anne to rest after twelve child-

less years. Tensions between England and France, never easy, escalate. In this context, Charles VI and Richard II conclude the treaty that encumbers not-quite-seven-year-old Isabel, along with a lavish dowry of jewels and money. Prince Hal was nine years old.

Accounts attest that Richard treated Isabel well and she showed him respect and affection. Political child marriages were common enough that the church had pronounced against consummation before child-bearing age, and no accounts suggest this liaison fared otherwise. France continued to send bride-gifts for the remainder of Richard's reign, which ended in 1399 when cousin Henry, garnering support from France and Scotland, seized the throne, imprisoned Richard, and ousted the child-queen from Windsor to the care of a bishop.

Five months later (February 1400), Henry exhibited Richard's emaciated corpse to assure the populace that he was dead. With Isabel officially widowed, Henry had no moral or political claim to her dowry, short of betrothing her to a future king of

England, his son. The nine-year-old former queen insisted on properly mourning her husband and adamantly refused to become the wife of twelve-year-old Prince Hal, who will become Henry V and marry her as-yet-unborn sister. Henry IV eventually returned her to the French King Charles VI, but those parts of her dowry that had been paid remained in England—indicating imperfect compliance on both sides of the treaty.

Our interest in Isabel might end there, had she not again, at sixteen, been given in marriage, this time to her thirteen-year-old cousin, Charles of Orleans, to show favor to King Charles VI's younger brother, Louis, who had named this first son for the king. Young Charles became Duke of Orleans the following year (1407) when his father, appointed by the king to act for him during episodes of insanity, suffered a brutal execution, probably on orders from his other brothers who wanted the power. Isabel's short, troubled life ended in childbirth two years later (1409), at age nineteen. The daughter survived to become, in her turn, a marriage pawn.



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Orleans remains of interest in the present context as a minor character in *Henry V*, appearing silently in two scenes, speaking brief lines in three more, and named among the “prisoners of good sort”: “Charles Duke of Orleans, nephew to the King” (4.8.74, 76). Factually twenty-one years old at Agincourt, he remained a prisoner of the English for twenty-five years, primarily because his second wife, left behind as he ventured forth to battle, lacked the means to ransom him. She died during his absence. “Captivity” for Orleans consisted of serial home-stays as a sought-after guest of various English noblemen, during which he wrote elegiac and love poetry in both French and English. Even today, his name appears in anthologies as an exemplary courtly poet in both languages, Charles d’Orleans. Like Richard II, the first husband of his first wife, Isabel, Orleans preferred poetry and philosophy to war and conquest.

Eventually, the aristocracy of France so thoroughly decimated at Agincourt (4.8.80–102) and subsequent battles, the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, his for-

mer enemies, ransomed Orleans home to become the husband of their niece, Marie, who had participated in raising the capital. Offspring of this marriage included King Louis XII of France.

Of the characters in *Henry V*, Orleans lived the longest, most positive, most productive life. His cousin Katherine ranks second. In the year of Agincourt (1415), Katherine was fourteen years old; in 1420, the year of act 5, scene 2, and the royal marriage, she was nineteen and her groom thirty-three. Widowed young, Katherine apparently lived a reasonably comfortable life in England, though closely monitored by Henry’s brothers, John Duke of Bedford and Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, regents to her infant son, King Henry VI (who inherited his French grandfather’s madness and catalyzed the War of the Roses). Katherine’s second marriage, to Owen Tudor, produced another son, Edmund, father of Henry, Earl of Richmond, who defeated Richard III (Crookback) in 1485 to become Henry VII, the first Tudor king and grandfather to Queen Elizabeth.

And Henry, the virile hero and model of English magnificence? Henry contracted dysentery during his last important battle, at the Battle of Meaux two years after the events of *Henry V*. He died in 1422—a most ignominious death, considering his illustrious performance as England’s supreme hero and warrior king—his aspirations for the French crown unfilled. Charles VI outlived him by two months, dying of general neglect in his madness.

Notes: For a heartfelt fictionalized life of Charles d’Orleans, which includes Isabel’s short history, see *In a Dark Wood Wandering* by Helle Haase (rev. and ed. Anita Miller [Chicago: Academy, 1989]). For a detailed account, based on contemporary records, of slogging through muddy fields at Agincourt with seventy-five pounds of armor and no Porta-Potties, see *The Face of Battle* by John Keegan (London: Penguin, 1976). See also *Shaping the Nation: England 1360-1461*, New Oxford History of England (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007). The 1974 *Riverside Shakespeare* provided line references to Shakespeare’s plays. ■



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The Comedy of Errors

This smallest of Shakespeare's plays has a practical vigor, a magical atmosphere, and a philosophical rigor that are satisfying and surprising.



The *Comedy of Errors* is an early play by Shakespeare, with the first recorded performance at Gray's Inn Hall in 1594. As usual with the early plays, there is much controversy about this one. Some critics dismiss it with faint praise or praise it with dismissive references to later works. In *A Reader's Guide to Shakespeare*, for example, H. Alan Pickrell does both: "The characters are shallowly developed, the plot is improbable, and the comedy is developed primarily through situation, but *The Comedy of Errors* has proved to be a play that delights audiences" (Joseph Rosenblum ed. [New York: Barnes & Noble, 1999], 95). One might think that this is more than enough of the weight of critical disapproval for Shakespeare's shortest play to bear, but Pickrell continues, "Shakespeare wrote more thought-provoking plays than this one, plays that were more sensitive and profound, and plays peopled with better developed characters, but *The Comedy of Errors* remains a fun [sic] romp, written in excellent pentameter" (95).

There are certainly worse fates than to be declared inferior to *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*, but, as Dogberry meant to say, "Comparisons are odious," and critical examinations of later plays are not, in fact, critical examinations of *The Comedy of Errors*. Such shifts in focus, however, are common, and they are usually accompanied by the assumption that *The Comedy of Errors* is inferior by its very genre and nature. Still, this smallest of Shakespeare's plays, if taken on its own terms, has a practical vigor, a magical atmosphere, and a philosophical rigor that are satisfying and surprising at the same time. It is a play that as Germaine Greer says, "wears its profundity lightly" (*Shakespeare's Wife* [New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007], 116).

Article by Ace G. Pilkington
Illustration by Philip W. Hermansen

In addition to much slapstick and even more slapping, *The Comedy of Errors* explores physical reality, personal identity, and even the humorous possibility of sorcery.

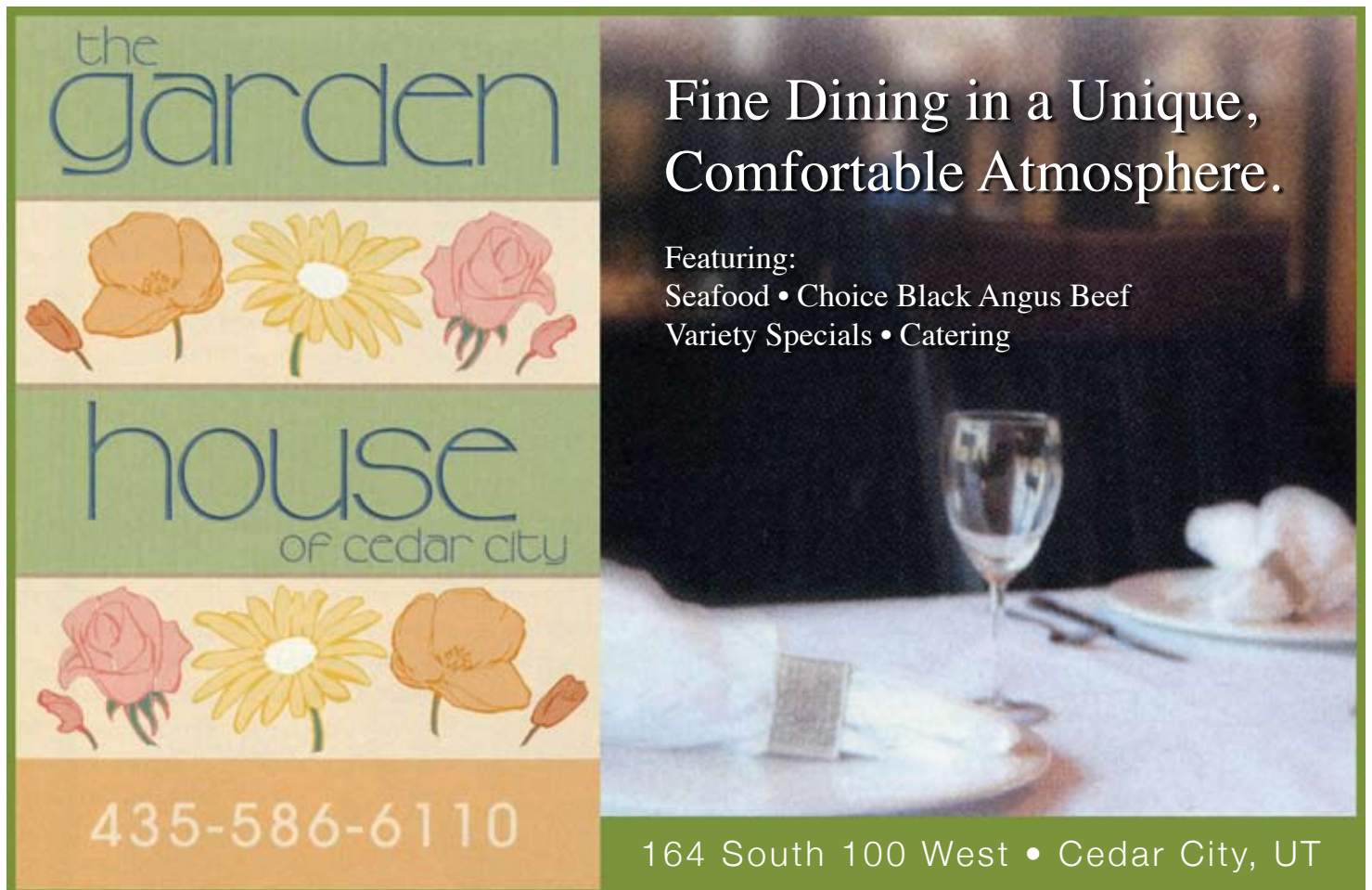
Here, for instance, is the Ephesian Dromio rattling along as Shakespeare's clever servants usually do: "Return'd so soon! rather approach'd too late:/ The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit:/ The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell:/ My mistress made it one upon my cheek:/ She is so hot, because the meat is cold:/ The meat is cold, because you come not home;/ You come not home, because you have no stomach;/ You have no stomach, having broke your fast;/ But we, that know what 'tis to fast and pray,/ Are penitent for your default today" (*The Works of William Shakespeare* Volume I, ed. W.G. Clark and J. Glover [Cambridge: Macmillan and Co, 1863], 1.2.43–52). He is extremely effective at making himself out to be the victim of all the twin-born misunderstandings.

At a later point he even turns himself into a simile, suffering for the games his betters play, "Am I so round with you as you with me;/ That like a football you do spurn me thus?/ You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither:/ If I last in this service, you must case me in leather" (2.1.82–85). He is remarkably practical, and his speeches are filled with real, physical things, but at the same time there is (as there is with the other characters and throughout the play) a natural tendency to soar above the practical and physical and reach the emotional and even the metaphysical. So the Ephesian Dromio starts with a burnt capon and ends with prayerful penitence.

In what is perhaps the most famous image in the play (and part of the best known image cluster), the Syracusan Antipholus says, "He that commends me to mine own content/ Commends me to the thing I cannot get/ I to the world am like a drop of water,/ That in the ocean seeks another drop;/ Who, falling there to

find his fellow forth,/ Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself:/ So I, to find a mother and a brother,/ In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself" (1.2.400–407). What does it mean to lose a family—or be part of one? The Syracusan Antipholus faces both dilemmas in the midst of an uncertain, possibly magical world, and as he faces those dilemmas, he suffers another shock to his already unsteady identity—he falls in love.

It might not be too much to say that Shakespeare has outdone himself on the subject of love in *The Comedy of Errors* (or at least equaled in many ways the Shakespeare yet to come). Germaine Greer writes, "Shakespeare did not think in twentieth-century clichés. We are not dealing here with representations of folk as 'happily married', but as truly married. For Shakespeare marriage was a demanding and difficult way of life—if anything, more demanding and more difficult for wives than for husbands. Even before the abbess appears to redeem her husband,



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the wronged wife Adriana steps in to do something similar for the man she thinks is her husband, bound as a madman and pursued for debt" (118). Here, in one early play is the whole course of true love. The starting point is represented by the rhapsody of the Syracusan Anthipholus's wooing of Luciana, "Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote:/ Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,/ And as a bed I'll take them, and there lie;/ And, in that glorious supposition, think/ He gains by death that hath such means to die:/ Let Love, being light, be drowned if she sink!"(3.2.47-52). The misunderstandings and bitternesses, the jealousies and ultimate loyalties between Adriana and the Ephesian Antiphilus are much further down the road.

The characters, their loves, and the play itself struggle to transcend themselves, to assert their identities while finding and forming their families—all at once. There is nothing here as simple as the regular vicissitudes of comedy, which must, of playwriting necessity, delay the happy endings. Here is Adriana's version of indelible love and inseparable souls, "Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!/ For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall/ A drop of water in the breaking gulf,/ And take unmingled thence that drop again,/ Without addition or diminishing,/ As take from me thyself, and not me too" (2.2.123-128). Adriana and the Abbess must redeem their husbands, not just stop fighting with them. This much-underestimated play reaches a breathtaking conclusion somewhere beyond mere reconciliation, "The wife who redeems her husband does so by remaining faithful to her bond, even in the absence of fellowship, comfort, and intimacy. The compact between spouses is a spiritual one; remaining faithful to it is what constitutes salvation. This is a hard doctrine; only the abbess knows how hard" (Greer, 117). This is an extraordinary play, and only those who approach it on its own terms and not as a harbinger of something to come or an unsuccessful type of something Shakespeare later did differently are likely to learn how extraordinary it truly is. ■

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NOEL

This delightful exchange of telegrams between Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence speaks volumes to audiences even seventy-nine years later. These telegrams referred to *Private Lives*, a play conceived in Tokyo, written in Shanghai, and produced in London and New York. Coward professed to have written the play in four days while suffering from influenza, and maintained that his long-time friend and revue star, Gertrude Lawrence, was his muse. "I thought it a shrewd and witty comedy well constructed on the whole, but psychologically unstable; however, its entertainment value has been obvious enough, and its acting opportunities for Gertie and me admirable" (Coward, *Present Indicative*, p.67).

Notably, the year was 1930, and the world was suffering from the effects of the Great Depression. Millions were out of work, the result of massive worldwide economic stagnation. Interestingly, Coward's



Article by David G. Anderson
Illustration by Daniel W. Hermansen

characters have an insouciant carelessness about money, principles, and practicalities. It is “a sophisticated tale of a couple who . . . epitomized the streamlined, sun-tanned Cote d’Azur lifestyle . . . to which Coward was a role model” (Philip Hoare, *Three Plays*, p. 4). Coward not only wrote the play, but directed and acted in it as well. The original cast included Lawrence and Coward, as well as Laurence Olivier as Victor, and Adrienne Allen as Sybil.

The characters Amanda and Elyot are Coward’s answer to a combination of Shakespeare’s Katherine/ Petruchio and Beatrice/ Benedict. What’s it about? That might be summed up by Shakespeare as well: “What fools these mortals be.” Explicitly it is meticulous attention to language tingled with pure fizz and combined with a complexity of exceptionally thorny relationships among its principals. In *Private Lives* he created what he confessed as a “frothy” show about nothing. The play is hysteri-

cally funny; however, humor alone can’t account for its longevity. The underlying themes are timeless. Each generation has been fascinated with the universal paradigm of relationships; Coward dramatizes paradoxically discursive roles that will entertain for generations to come.

Private Lives, a “comedy of manners,” is set in the roaring twenties. It spins on the axis of portraying traditional values and social rituals desirable in “public” life, while flaunting passions and motives that respectability dictates should remain “private.” The great English comic writer AG Macdonnell contends that “Mr. Coward’s plot is the contrast between brilliant cosmopolitanism and stodgy Anglo-Saxondom” (Hoare, p.5). The title springs from one of Amanda’s lines, “I think very few people are completely normal really, deep down in their private lives. It all depends on a combination of circumstances. If all the various cosmic thingummys fuse at the same moment, and the right spark is struck, there’s no knowing what

one mightn’t do.” The right sparks detonate. The storyline reads like a screwball sitcom chronicling the intrinsic absurdities of previously divorced Elyot and Amanda, who bump into one another on their respective second honeymoons, only to end up deserting their new spouses—Sybil and Victor. Reunited after five years, the couple has long-buried emotions which surface and result in a hastily-conceived escapade to Paris to revisit old passions. They perfectly exemplify the predestined emotional and intellectual kindred spirits who can’t live with or without each other.

Sometimes delving into private lives can be uncomfortable. As director H. Lee Gable expressed, “In actuality, *Private Lives* is much more a funnyman’s precursor to *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. Between couples fighting and flirting with each other and the intimate glimpses into flawed marriages, it is, at times, an uncomfortable voyeuristic look into a world that should remain private. But in Coward’s hands, that’s what makes it so

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funny" (*Barbed Wire* previews, Aug 2007).

Coward's brilliance sparkles in the play's construction. The way each couple mirrors the other in conversation and action lets the audience quickly recognize that the new marriages are doomed. The effervescent recalcitrance of Amanda and Elyot contrasts sublimely with the saccharine insecurities of Sybil and Victor. Philosophically the new partners are galaxies apart. Left alone, it appears a ploy that could be recognized as shrewdness. "What breathes magic into the play and gives it life is Coward's wit. 'Light comedy' doesn't convey quite how outrageous, delightful and immensely liberating an experience it offers" (Paul Krane, Manchester Library Theatre, 2007).

Contradicting their defiant posture, Elyot and Amanda are fluent in social ritual and liberally deploy it. Their pact to respect the magic words "Solomon Isaacs" to instantly halt a quarrel is a prime example. As long as the conversation leans toward the abstract, they are lovey-dovey,

but when the conversation turns to intimate, "private" matters, emotions fly in the face of rational bearings. Amanda's philosophy is to "behave exquisitely" even under the most dire circumstances. Her cool ability to "carry off the most embarrassing situation with such tact, and delicacy" astounds Elyot. Confronted with difficult situations, Elyot resorts to cynical "flippancy." He lampoons certain traditional social etiquettes disavowing "all the futile moralists who try to make life unbearable." For Elyot, traditional mores are "nonsense." His highbrow rationalization in living for the moment is to "be superficial and pity the poor philosophers."

Parodying protagonists in a sentimental love story, Elyot and Amanda are drawn together with an inexorable passion which transcends existent concerns and common sense. This fascinating, habitually hilarious, passion is an irrepressible force that disarms self-control, preempts reason, and sweeps them away with a fer-

vor of hurricane proportions. Read as a treatise, Coward seems to assert that "true love" is a tempestuous vice, vacillating between extremes of love and hate, bliss and misery, denying that conventional romantic love should ever bring contentment or fulfillment. The love personified by Amanda and Elyot is both a blessing and a curse; it is an intoxicating drug that elates but soon leads to childish, argumentative behavior. They deftly evade love's traps but lack the wisdom and social maturity to keep from rushing head-long into the minefields.

Today as before, there are millions of people out of work and the economic forecast is dubious. It is time again for *Private Lives*—that joyous romp which delivers its consignment of jokes and wit with explosive aplomb; an escape into a delectable world of taste and refinement characteristic of a Noel Coward play; a dessert that is decadent and borders on hedonistic. Ah—but like Amanda and Elyot, we always say: "yes please." ■

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Foxfire

Annie still feeds the chickens, slops the hogs, tills the garden, and pumps her own water. It's a simple life, but a hard one.



Ending a chapter in life. Moving on. It happens to every one of us at some point in our time on the Earth. Sooner or later, most of us face the choice of staying in places we've lived most of our lives (stagnation) and moving someplace where new opportunity lies (growth, renewal). Preserving roots and remaining with family are often incongruous with practicality and earning a livelihood. Life is ever changing, and requisite mobility is often a function of change.

Increasingly, moving is just a fact of life for Americans. It began with the westward migrations of the nineteenth century, ceded to the urban migrations of the twentieth, and continues in today's transient, networked existence. We're accustomed to moving from country to city, and the reverse. Pulling up stakes is accepted as a necessary evil, enabling progress. In moving to a new place, the next dream can be realized. Today, saying farewell to beloved places, relatives, and friends is viewed with inevitability. It's a modern rite of passage: a new beginning.

But for many living in remote parts of the country, pulling up deep roots was rare. In Appalachia, birth, death, and everything in between took place in one locality, with the story of a life written as chapters within a single volume. In Rabun County, Georgia, European-American ancestors began settling the mountains in the late eighteenth century, before the Cherokee were expunged westward. Until recently, most families lived in homes built and lived in by their great-grandparents.

For Annie Nations, the main character in *Foxfire*, life has always been there, high on that Blue Ridge mountaintop. The thought of leaving the home she raised her family in is difficult for her to imagine. This has always been her land, but today the backcountry is rife with developers seeking to subdivide the old places.

Article by Lawrence Henley
Illustration by Philip W. Hermansen

The human presences that always embodied life in Annie's world are mostly gone, probably forever. Her grown family long ago fled the country, moving out to distant places as far away as Alaska. Most of the neighbor folk have died, or sold and moved on. Anymore, the mountain is occupied mainly in summertime and on weekends by city folk. Still, the echoes of her past still call out to Annie, telling her to stay.

Hector Nations, Annie's salt-of-the-earth husband of more than a half-century, died five summers previous. Although daily life has become exceedingly difficult for her, Annie still feeds the chickens, slops the hogs, tills the garden, and pumps her own water. It's a simple life, but a hard one for an elderly woman reliant mainly upon herself and the earth. It's rare that she even leaves to visit the village grocery.

Since Hector's passing she has spent most of the present co-mingled with the past. It sounds odd, but another look at Annie's solitude reveals that she's not quite alone: Annie still converses constantly with the spirit of her late husband! His humble grave may lie in the Nations's orchard, but Hector, cantankerous-as-ever, constantly

shadows Annie jawing with her throughout chore time, just as he did in life. His incessant reappearances have kept her emotionally bound to the property.

This dual-reality, coupled with her advancing age concerns Annie's youngest, Dillard, a rhinestoned troubadour residing in Florida. Dillard is a gifted singer and guitarist, but he's languishing in country music's lower strata. Not coincidentally, he's booked a one-nighter in a neighboring town, primarily to look in on Annie. Dillard has yet to disclose his separation and impending divorce from the mother of two of Annie's grandchildren.

Troubled by his own prospects for happiness, Dillard is equally concerned for Annie's wellbeing. Repeatedly, he's tried to convince her she'd be happier (and safer) living near her grandchildren. After learning of an incident in which she absent-mindedly locked herself in the root cellar all night, he's more determined than ever to move her off of the mountain. Annie politely, yet stubbornly, refuses to leave.

On the day of the concert, Annie cheerfully receives a couple of rare visits. The first is from Prince Carpenter, an "aw-shucks" folksy yet savvy real estate sales-

man who hungers to obtain the deed to the Nations property. Turned away while Hector was alive, Carpenter isn't finished trying. Dumbstruck at Annie's apparent belief that Hector is still present and running the homestead, Prince is too polite to contradict her, or to refuse his help when she asks for assistance butchering the head of a large pig for souse meat.

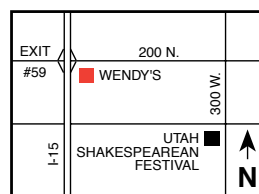
The second visitor, Holly Burrell, is a compassionate young high school teacher. Holly found city life unsatisfying and, unlike Dillard, returned to the mountains after college, content to serve the dwindling student populous of Rabun County. Holly makes sure Mrs. Nations gets to attend Dillard's concert, knowing that "Aunt Annie" hasn't seen her boy perform since high school.

While Holly still likes Dillard and enjoys his show, she is sharply critical of his new style. Preferring the pure, non-commercial tunes he played before music became a business, Holly challenges him over his less than truthful onstage characterizations of his father and exaggerations of the "hillbilly" life. Her memories of the real Hector Nations are powerful and honest.

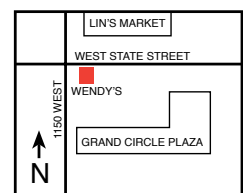


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On this Labor Day weekend, Annie and Dillard revisit their family history, each attempting to purge Hector's powerful grip on their lives. Only such an exorcism will allow them to determine the correct path toward a better future. Dillard confronts his sour memories of a broken relationship with his father, as well as the reality of his personal failures. Holly's sobering lecture gives him pause to re-assess the direction of his career. Have his choices prevented Dillard from being true to his talent, his heritage, and to himself?

Annie can no longer forestall the reality of her own mortality. How much longer will she be capable of taking care of herself? Visits with her five grandchildren have been scarce. Will she extract herself from Hector's illusory presence, and part with her beloved land in exchange for the chance to bond with her living kin?

"Foxfire," a term that refers to a luminescent form of fungi found on decaying wood in the forests of the Blue Ridge, serves as the play's metaphor; however, the title was borrowed from an ongoing series of folklore anthologies written by Rabun County students. Written and compiled over the course of four decades, the *Foxfire* series chronicles the sociology of a fading way of life in southern Appalachia.

The play, a collaboration of late Canadian-born actor Hume Cronyn (1911–2003) and his third wife, novelist and screenwriter Susan Cooper, premiered on Broadway in 1982 at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. Cronyn and Cooper married two years after the death of Cronyn's second wife and acting partner of fifty-four years. Jessica Tandy (1909–1994), winner of four Tony Awards (one of them for *Foxfire*), will be forever remembered as the original Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Late in her career, Tandy scored the 1989 Academy Award for Best Actress in *Driving Miss Daisy*. She remains the oldest actor of either sex to win an Oscar.

Cronyn and Tandy rank with the greatest stage and screen couples of all-time, starring in Broadway hits such as *The Fourposter* and *The Gin Game*. They were also lauded for Hollywood hits such as *Cocoon*, *The World According to Garp*, and **batteries not included*. In 1987, Tandy (Annie) won an Emmy for the television adaptation of *Foxfire*, alongside Cronyn (Hector) and the late John Denver (Dillard). ■

The Secret Garden

The musical has an emphasis which reflects the power of its four female creators, in that Mary Lennox's journey to self-growth is the major theme.

The musical of *The Secret Garden* was conceived and developed by a team of four women who were already prominent in the theatre and who shared a love of children's literature. As leaders in their field, it is natural that the musical is largely Mary's story.

The book and lyrics are by the famed playwright, Marsha Norman (most noted for her play, *Night, Mother*); and the music is by Lucy Simon winner of two Grammy awards for her albums for children. To the co-creators were added Heidi Landesman, scene designer, who had worked on designs for *Big River* and *Into the Woods* as well as "[having] . . . designed sets for two of Norman's plays." (Phyllis Bixler, "The Secret Garden 'Misread': The Broadway Musical as Creative Interpretation," [*Children's Literature*, vol. 22, 1994], 103). Indeed, Landesman is the one who began the project by sending Burnett's novel to Marsha Norman. The final member of the quartet was Susan Schulman, director, winner of the Tony award for directing *Sweeney Todd*. Summarizing much of the information found elsewhere, these four were, or rapidly became fans of the novel, and were determined to bring their version of it to the stage. (There is an earlier, less well-received British musical version.)

Norman and Simon's musical, while largely faithful to the original, (much of the dialogue is taken directly from the novel) has an emphasis which reflects the power of its four female creators, in that Mary Lennox's journey to self-growth is now the major theme. They are not the first to recreate the story in their own vision.

The Secret Garden seems to have been popular with several generations. Margaret Mackey in "Strip Mines in the Garden" remarks on the "plurality" of adaptations: "two movies, a television dramatization, an animated cartoon, three different audiocassette readings . . . two different musicals, a CD-ROM, . . . two texts which are not



Article by Christine Frezza
Illustration by Philip W. Hermansen

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much more than picture-book souvenirs . . . , and a coloring book . . . eighteen different versions." ("Strip Mines in the Garden: Old Stories, New Formats, and the Challenge of Change" [*Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1996], 4). Mackey's article points out the many differences between the various adaptations and the Burnett novel; the differences she enumerates are very helpful to the reader, but stop short of theorizing why there are such deliberate departures, or how they might increase the audience's enjoyment.

Burnett's opening page introduces the reader to the most "disagreeable-looking child ever seen." (*The Secret Garden* [Project Gutenberg, www.gutenberg.org, 1911 edition]). Mary is a child of privilege, when we first meet her, demanding her ayah, and beating and kicking the servant sent to fetch her. In the musical, we are first introduced to Lily, singing about her garden, then a dream sequence of Mary watching a party in India. She is discovered, an orphan, now a creature of pity, her one defiant act refusing to leave her aunt's picture behind.

As the musical progresses, Mary's influence on the other characters becomes rapidly apparent; the grown-up antagonists (Dr. Craven and Mrs. Medlock) are eager to prevent her from invading their world, even without having laid eyes on her. Only her uncle, remembering his wife and her sister, decides to let Mary come to live at the manor.

Mary's effect on the people she will live with is more evident than in the novel. The sulky little girl of Burnett's novel who called everyone a "pig" has been replaced by a sad young creature who misses her mother and is glad of the friendship offered by first Martha (the maid who becomes her confidante) and then by the garden boy, Dickon.

These two accept her in contrast to the grownups, Mrs. Medlock and Dr. Craven, who confine themselves to cautions. Martha urges Mary to go outside and play, saying she will love the moor, but Mrs. Medlock has told her "there's nothing out there but a big old park." (Marsha Norman, *The Secret Garden* [New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1992], 21). Before falling under the healing spell of nature, however, Mary meets her uncle, Archibald; she gains his attention by revealing she is carrying a portrait of his wife, her dead aunt, and then asking him

about death. They find a kinship in this sadness, and Archibald promises her a permanent home

When Mary finally goes outdoors, the second theme of the musical begins: the healing power of nature, one which transfers completely from the novel and which has an immediate impact on her. Both Ben, the gardener (now a sympathetic character), and Dickon sing of the beauty of the growth of nature from winter to spring, a metaphor for Mary's healing heart. The robin which guides her to find the key to her aunt Lily's hidden garden emphasizes that she must find herself in the beauty of the natural world, not in the closed house where she lives.

The garden's magic effect on Mary cannot be overstated; whereas the book has various kindnesses shown her by grownups as responsible for much of her emotional growth, in the musical Mary becomes, in a sense, the mother she so urgently needs by learning to tend the growing plants, and transfers her newfound mothering skills to heal Colin, Archibald Craven's apparently crippled son.

It is not surprising that Dr. Craven and Mrs. Medlock urge Archibald to send Mary away. Even they can see her resemblance to his dead wife, Lily, and join in a conspiracy against her before Mary begins to interfere in their care of Colin. Mackey complains that Norman and Simon have shifted the resemblance to Lily from Colin (in the book, he has his mother's eyes): "it makes one wonder why anyone would bother to change it, . . . [through] a whole song to Mary's hazel eyes . . . identical to Lily's." (Mackey 8-9). However, Mary must become the healing mother so that the father will accept his son, as having been cured by her; the eye color is but a further testament to Mary's ability to take the place of her dead aunt.

In keeping with the magic to which the musical has given itself over, Archibald returns to the manor, inspired not by a letter but by a dream duet, "How Could I Ever Know" in which Lily urges him to go to her garden. When he gets there, of course he finds Colin, completely well, Ben and Dickon as helpers, and Mary modestly in possession, at which Archibald renews his promise to give her a home forever.

The final tableau sees Mary, Colin, and Archibald, blessed by Lily as the Dreamers sing, and leave them; the dream has become reality. ■

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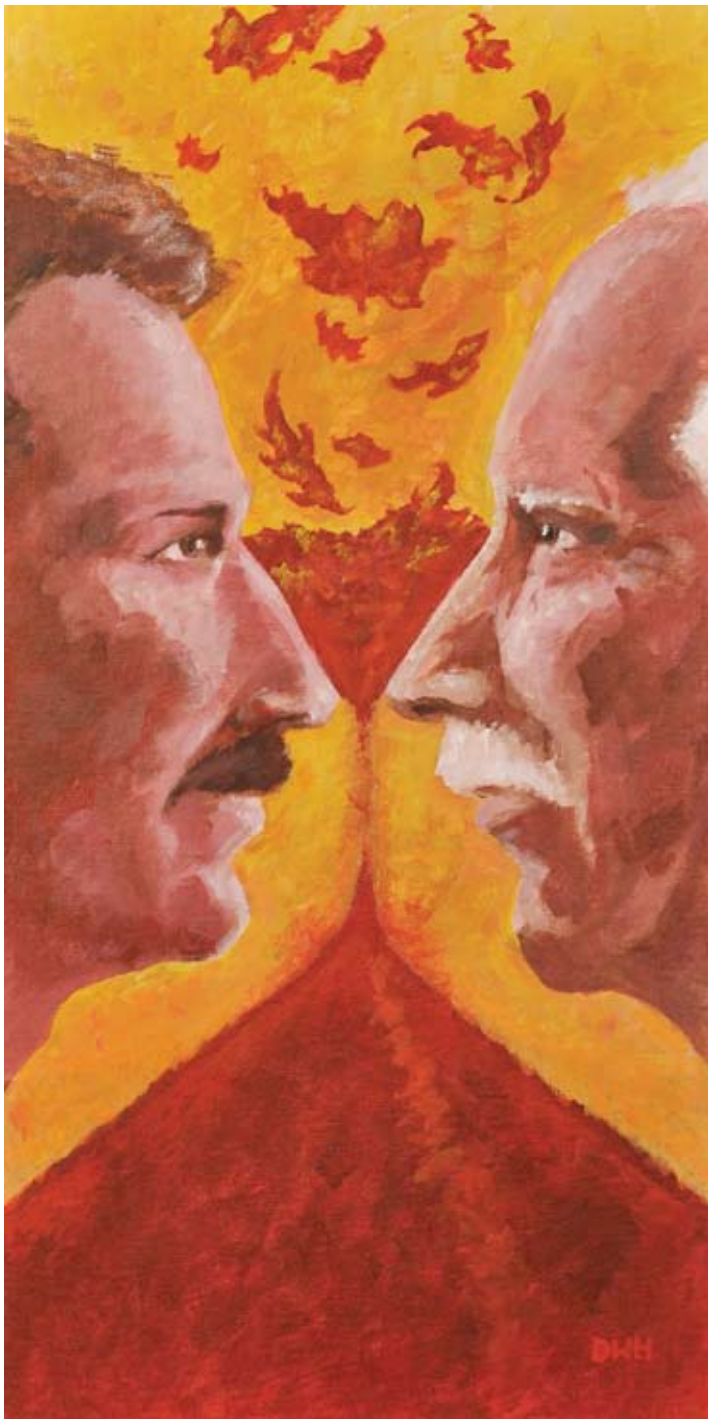
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Tuesdays with Morrie

*“Dying is one thing to be sad over.
Living unhappily is something else”*



If there is one thing that human beings share with every living creature on earth it is the inevitability of death. No matter how rich, famous, intelligent, or brave a person is, he or she will die. This can be a terrifying notion. Perhaps that is why all human cultures have theories regarding death and the afterlife. It is human nature to fear the unknown; therefore it is only natural that we seek to understand the meaning of death.

The play *Tuesdays with Morrie* is about a man who, while facing his own imminent death, rejects the death culture of American society and creates his own. The title character is based on a real man named Morrie Schwarts, who was a sociology professor at Brandeis University. Morrie died in 1995 of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), more commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease. During his final months, Morrie taught one last class in which he used his death culture to teach his former student, Mitch Albom, how to live a meaningful life. Morrie tells Mitch “dying is one thing to be sad over. Living unhappily is something else” (*Tuesdays with Morrie* [New York, New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc.], 19). Mitch wrote a book and later a play based on these lessons to give others the opportunity to hear Morrie’s teachings.

One of the most important things that Morrie teaches Mitch is that one does not have to “buy” the culture in which that person lives. He says, “If you don’t like the culture, make your own!” (27). Morrie takes his own advice to heart by creating a unique death culture, and ignoring any preconceived ideas on how one should spend their final days on earth. Morrie decides that his remaining

Article by Amanda Caraway
Illustration by Daniel W. Hermansen

time should be spent using his experience with dying to teach others how to live.

American culture promotes a great fear of death, but Morrie believes that people should accept the fact that death is inevitable. "Everybody knows they are going to die, but nobody believes it" (24). He tells Mitch that once a person accepts the inevitability of death, they will devote their lives to more worthy aspirations. Morrie says, "once you learn how to die, you learn how to live" (25). Acceptance of death can help people live a meaningful life.

Related to the fear of death is a fear of aging, and an emphasis on youth. Morrie rejects these ideas and teaches that growing old is natural and should be accepted. "If you are always battling against getting old, you're always gonna be unhappy because you're gonna get old anyway" (29). Morrie also doesn't buy the emphasis on youth, because he says that young people are, in truth, miserable. Morrie believes it is misleading to view aging as nothing more than decay. "As you age, you grow. As you grow, you learn. A tree's leaves are most colorful just before they die" (29). Morrie teaches

that age brings wisdom, and great opportunities to learn and grow.

One of the things that contribute to the fear of aging is a fear of becoming dependent on others. Morrie argues that this is a natural progression of life. As infants, people are "held, caressed, comforted," and Morrie argues that you need the same things when you are leaving this world. According to Morrie, dependency is "not only good, it's natural" (21). Morrie doesn't understand why people pretend they don't need each other throughout all the stages of life.

Despite the fact that accepting dependency on others is good, it is also important for a dying person to give rather than take. Morrie's illness eventually progressed to the point where he was no longer able to teach at the university, and he decided to teach in other ways. Morrie was made famous by an interview with Ted Koppel on *Nightline*, and he began to receive letters from thousands of people seeking comfort. Despite his failing health, Morrie spent hours each day answering letters. He told Mitch that he wanted to "make them feel

better" (27). Mitch is astounded by this and tells Morrie that he deserves sympathy more than the people who are writing him letters. Morrie responds with, "why would I take like that? Taking makes me feel like I'm dying. Giving makes me feel like I'm living" (27). Morrie refuses to let his illness stop him from communicating with people who need him.

Additionally, Morrie believes that it is foolish to wait until after one is already dead to bring loved ones together. Morrie says that he has always found funerals to be depressing, because people say nice things about the deceased person and he or she isn't present to hear. He tells Mitch, if "somebody's got something nice to say about me, I wanna hear it right now!" (21). Therefore, he decides to have a "Living Funeral" so he can hear all the wonderful things that people have to say about him while he is still alive.

Along these same lines, Morrie says that one shouldn't wait until someone is sick or dying before sharing one's true feelings. "The wise and wonderful things you want to say at the end are the kinds of things

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you should say all your life" (34). He tells Mitch that waiting till the last minute can be dangerous, because you might be too late. The inevitability of death also makes forgiveness important. Morrie tells Mitch to "forgive everyone everything," because when the end comes "you won't care who is right and who is wrong" (39). Morrie says that it is always important to say

goodbye with "I love you" (40), that way the people you love always know how you feel.

When viewing *Tuesdays with Morrie*, it is easy to see that Morrie Schwartz was an amazing teacher and an incredible individual. Rather than fearing death and falling into self-pity, Morrie faces his terminal illness with strength and courage.

He sees with the clarity that comes with the knowledge of eminent death, and uses this wisdom to create his own death culture. He rejects the American death culture that favors youth and fears illness and old age. Instead, Morrie embraces the natural progression of life, and creates his own philosophies, which he uses to teach others to live a full and meaningful life. ■

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Ticket Office hours are as follows:

Through June 26: Mondays through Fridays; telephone service only—9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

June 29 to August 29: Mondays through Saturdays; telephone service—10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; window service—10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

August 31 to September 12: Mondays through Fridays; telephone and window service—9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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The logo for the Utah Shakespearean Festival. It features a stylized graphic of a building or structure above the word "Utah" in a large, flowing script font. Below "Utah" are the words "SHAKESPEAREAN" and "FESTIVAL" in a smaller, all-caps, serif font.

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Harold Gould in
The Tempest, 1995.

The Woman in Black

*The most important ingredient in the play
is the audience's imagination.*

The *Woman in Black* is a ghost play that started its life as a novel by Susan Hill in 1983. In 1987, Stephen Mallatratt, an English actor and playwright, adapted the novel into a play. From that point on, both the novel and the play have been great successes all over the world. According to Susan Hill's official website, "It was not until Stephen Mallatratt adapted [the novel] for the stage, and then BBC Television produced a version one Christmas Eve, that both book and play took off" (http://www.susan-hill.com/pages/books/the_books/the_woman_in_black.asp, March 31, 2009). Now in its nineteenth season in the West End, the play started out as a "low-budget 'filler' for the Christmas season in Scarborough" (<http://www.thewomaninblack.com/education.html>, March 31, 2009). *The Woman in Black* now resides in the Fortune Theater. There are rumors that it was not only the play that took up residence in the theatre, but the ghost herself, "She has been witnessed in the wings by numerous cast members, watching in silence" (<http://www.secondstoryrep.org/Mainstage/womaninblack.html>, March 31, 2009).

A ghost story with all the traditional elements, *The Woman in Black* follows an easy recipe: 1. A ghost 2. A haunted house 3. Gloomy weather 4. A skeptic (www.susan-hill.com). When Steven Mallatratt approached the novel, he had to add a few more ingredients to make it work. His contribution to the recipe of success is theatricality. The play calls for a creative use of lights and sound to achieve the chilling atmosphere of a lonely house in the marshes of the English countryside. However, the most important ingredient in the play is the audience's imagination.

In order to tell the story, Mallatratt sets up *The Woman in Black* as a play within a play. Doing so, he still follows Susan Hill's basic



Article by Olga A. Pilkington
Illustration by Philip W. Hermansen

recipe. In fact, he uses some of Hill's ghost story elements to embellish the frame he created around the original narrative. Thus a skeptic refuses to believe not only in ghosts but also in the powers of imagination.

"Actor: There are so many things we cannot represent. How do we represent the dog, the sea, the causeway? How the pony and trap?"

"Kipps: With imagination . . . Our's, and our audience's."

"Actor: I would be obliged if you would inform me how imagination will create a

pony and trap upon this stage (Mallatratt, *The Woman in Black* [New York: Samuel French, 1989], 12).

While "a pony and trap" are important to imagine, there are more vital things for the audience's imagination to work on. Mallatratt suggests that, "The intent of the show is to frighten—so if it doesn't, it's nothing. The fear is not on a visual or visceral level, but an imaginative one" (Mallatratt, *The Woman in Black*, Adaptor's Note [New York: Samuel French, 1989]).

Unfortunately, the fear and tragedy of Susan Hill's novel did not stay confined to

the pages. In 1982, Hill started working on the revengeful ghost of the woman in black who brought sorrow and despair to every parent in her path, and in 1984, she herself experienced the terrible tragedy of her daughter Imogen's death. Susan Hill writes, "Our premature daughter Imogen was born in 1984, and died 5 weeks later. She is buried in the old graveyard behind the church of St Nicholas, Old Marston" (www.susan-hill.com).

The play suggests that the only way to get rid of the nightmares and terrifying memories of the ghostly encounters with the woman in black is to tell the story. Mr. Kipps believes this with all his heart, "All I wish, implore, is that this tale of mine be told. Be told and—laid to rest. God willing. So I may sleep without nightmares" (Mallatratt, 3). Mr. Kipps, unlike the woman in black, does not want to dwell on the horrors of the past. He realizes that moving on is more important than seeking revenge. In the words of Susan Hill, "After experiencing great distress or grief, a terrible life experience, a person must eventually—though it may take a long time—leave it to rest and move on. The ghost in *The Woman in Black* goes on and on wreaking revenge on the innocent for what has happened to her, even after death. She has never let go, can never move on. As she could not in life, so she cannot after life" (www.susan-hill.com).

Perhaps, if Mr. Kipps tells the story of his ghostly encounter, it will soothe not only his own soul but will also help the woman in black. The play suggests that though the inhabitants of Crythin Gifford know about the woman in black, they try to avoid talking about the subject or dealing with it in any other way. When Mr. Kipps tries to find out more about the ghost, all he gets are the references to "women's tales" and "all that nonsense" (Mallatratt, 33-35). As Sam Daily explains to Mr. Kipps, people of Crythin Gifford "don't speak of it. . . . Those who have suffered worst say least" (Mallatratt, 46).

Mr. Kipps is the one to break this cycle of silence, but in order to tell the story he needs an audience who will listen, pay attention, and sympathize. He is going "to speak" his story "For those who need to know" (Mallatratt, 4). While Mr. Kipps limits the audience to his "family, only," the playwright extends it to include everyone who is willing to bring to that performance the powers of imagination and sympathy. ■

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The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)

The Bard certainly merits a celebration—and a good roasting.

I was thirteen years old when an actor first admonished me to never say the name Macbeth in a theatre unless I was performing it. “If you do,” he said, “something unspeakably terrible will happen.” I don’t know if the great curse extends to *reading* the name in a theater, but just to be safe, I caution you not to read this outloud. If you do, it’s at your own risk; I accept no responsibility for the consequences. Of course, none of the other, much older, actors could tell me exactly what would happen, but they each knew someone who knew someone to whom something unspeakably terrible had happened. Naturally, my thirteen-year old self bought it, and for years I refused to utter the name in a theatre. Heck, just reading the script in my bedroom for my ninth grade English class gave me the willies.

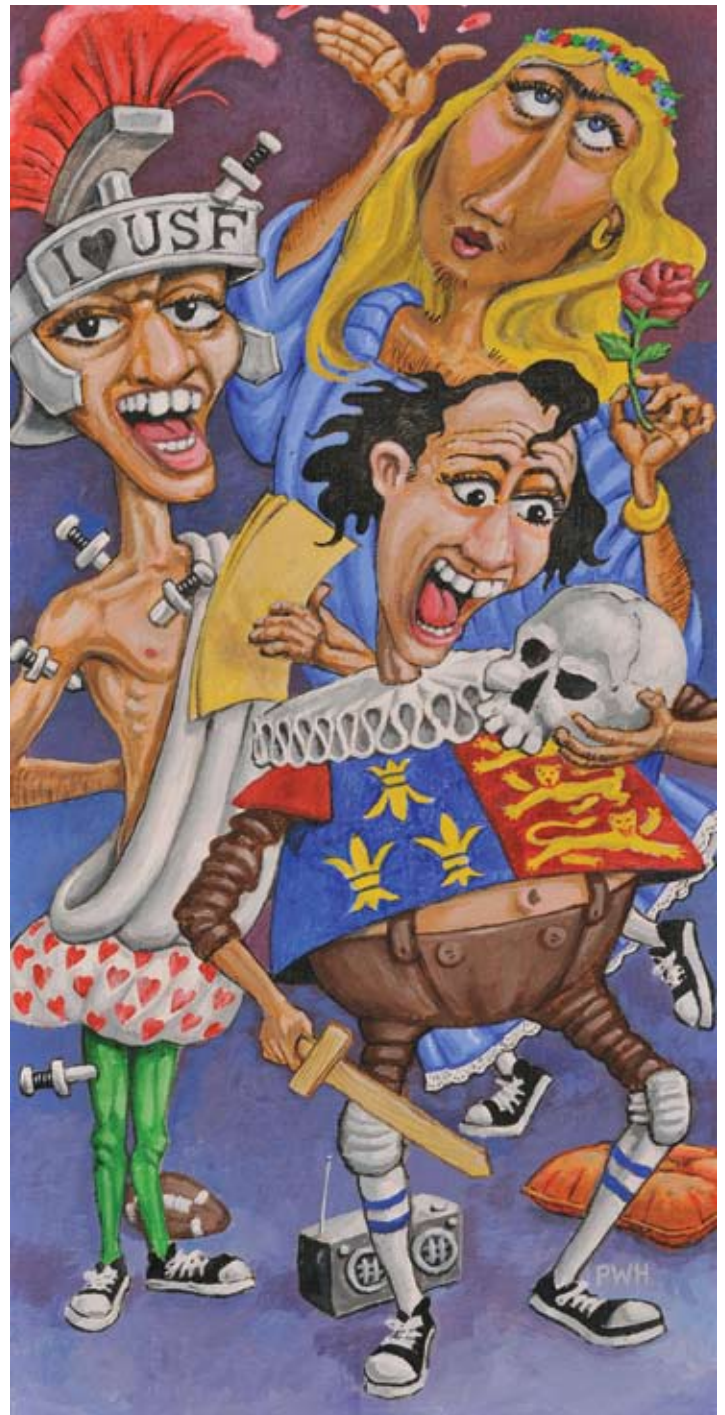
A few years later, I was a student in an acting program performing what I thought was a brilliant monologue of Iago from *Othello* when the acting coach stopped me in mid-emote. “No, no, no!” he said. “You’ve completely obliterated the meter. Shakespeare wrote in iambic pentameter for a reason! Here, watch.” He proceeded to perform the same monologue, and, when he finished, he asked, “Do you hear the difference?” Another student, heaven bless him, said, “No, yours sounded exactly like his.” The coach stormed out and didn’t return for a week.

With experiences like these, I grew to really hate acting Shakespeare. I felt the plays were so steeped in convention and tradition they weren’t any *fun*. Of course, a single season at the Utah Shakespearean Festival cured me of that. Certainly the plays were entertaining, but a chance conversation with Festival founder Fred C. Adams opened my eyes to this fact: it has now been some 400 years since Shakespeare lived, and, whether we love him or hate him, we’re still talking about him. We still honor the traditions, and study the conventions, and debate the relevancy. That’s quite a legacy, and

Continued on page 38

Article by Don Leavitt

Illustration by Philip W. Hermansen



2009 Season Calendar

Plays, orientations, greenshows, backstage tours, seminars, a new play series, and more



Melinda Pfundstein (left) as Roxane and Brian Vaughn as Cyrano in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, 2007.

Evening Performances of *The Comedy of Errors*, *Henry V*, and *As You Like It* are in the Adams Shakespearean Theatre (inclement weather, Auditorium Theatre); *Foxfire*, *Private Lives*, and *The Secret Garden* are in the Randall L. Jones Theatre.

Matinee Performances of *The Comedy of Errors* are in the Auditorium Theatre; *Foxfire*, *Private Lives*, and *The Secret Garden* are in the Randall L. Jones Theatre.

All Performances of *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* and *The Woman in Black* are in the Randall L. Jones Theatre.

Backstage Tours begin in the Randall L. Jones Theatre lobby Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 10:15 a.m. July 14 to August 29 and Thursdays and Saturdays at 11 a.m. September 26 to October 17.

The Greenshow is performed in the courtyard surrounding the Adams Shakespearean Theatre Mondays through Saturdays at 7 p.m. June 29 to August 29.

The New American Playwrights Project presents plays August 13–14, 20–21, and 25–28. They begin at 10 a.m. in the Auditorium Theatre

Literary Seminars are in the Seminar Grove (inclement weather, the Adams Shakespearean Theatre) the day after each play beginning at 9 a.m. for the Adams Shakespearean Theatre plays and 10 a.m. for the Randall L. Jones Theatre plays.

Props Seminars are in the Auditorium Theatre at 11 a.m. Mondays and Thursdays July 13 to August 27 and in the Randall Theatre Thursdays and Saturdays September 24 to October 17.

Costume Seminars are in the Auditorium Theatre at 11 a.m. Tuesdays and Fridays July 14 to August 28.

Actors Seminars are in the Seminar Grove at 11 a.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays July 11 to August 29 and on the Randall Theatre lawn Wednesdays and Fridays from September 23 to October 16.

Play Orientations begin at 1 p.m. for matinee performances and 6:45 p.m. for evening performances Monday through Saturday in the Auditorium Theatre from June 29 to August 29 and at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays on the lawn of the Randall L. Jones Theatre (inclement weather, Auditorium Theatre) from September 18 to October 17.

June 29 *The Comedy of Errors* (preview), 8 p.m.

6 *Foxfire*, (preview) 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, (opening) 8 p.m.

13 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

20 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

27 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

3 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

10 *Foxfire*, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

17 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

24 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.

30 *Henry V* (preview), 8 p.m.

7 *Private Lives*, (preview) 2 p.m.
Henry V, (opening) 8 p.m.

14 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

21 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

28 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

4 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

11 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

18 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

25 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

22 *Tuesdays with Morrie* (preview), 7:30 p.m.

29 *The Complete Works . . .* (Student Matinee), 2 p.m.
Tuesdays with Morrie, 7:30 p.m.

6 *The Complete Works . . .* (Student Matinee), 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black, 7:30 p.m.

13 *The Complete Works . . .* (Student Matinee), 2 p.m.
Tuesdays with Morrie, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

July 1 *As You Like It* (preview), 8 p.m.

8 *The Secret Garden*, (preview) 2 p.m.
As You Like It, (opening) 8 p.m.

15 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

22 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

29 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

5 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

12 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

19 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

26 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

23 *The Complete Works . . .* (preview), 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black (preview), 7:30 p.m.

30 *The Complete Works . . .*, 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black, 7:30 p.m.

7 *Tuesdays with Morrie*, 2 p.m.
The Complete Works . . ., 7:30 p.m.

14 *The Complete Works . . .*, 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

2 *Foxfire* (preview), 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, (preview) 8 p.m.

9 *The Secret Garden*, (opening) 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.

16 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

23 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

30 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

6 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
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27 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

24 *Tuesdays with Morrie* (preview), 2 p.m.
The Complete Works . . . (opening), 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 1 *Tuesdays with Morrie*, 2 p.m.
The Complete Works . . ., 7:30 p.m.

8 *The Woman in Black*, 2 p.m.
Tuesdays with Morrie, 7:30 p.m.

15 *Tuesdays with Morrie*, 2 p.m.
The Complete Works . . ., 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

3 *Private Lives* (preview), 2 p.m.
Henry V, (preview) 8 p.m.

10 *Foxfire*, (opening) 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.

17 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

24 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

31 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

7 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

14 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

21 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

28 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

Sep. 18 *Tuesdays with Morrie* (preview), 7:30 p.m.

25 *The Woman in Black* (opening), 2 p.m.
Tuesdays with Morrie (opening), 7:30 p.m.

2 *The Woman in Black*, 2 p.m.
Tuesdays with Morrie, 7:30 p.m.

9 *The Complete Works . . .*, 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black, 7:30 p.m.

16 *The Woman in Black*, 2 p.m.
Tuesdays with Morrie, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY

4 *The Secret Garden* (preview), 2 p.m.
As You Like It (preview), 8 p.m.

11 *Private Lives*, (opening) 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

18 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

25 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

Aug. 1 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

8 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

15 *The Secret Garden*, 2 p.m.
Henry V, 8 p.m.
Private Lives, 8 p.m.

22 *Private Lives*, 2 p.m.
The Comedy of Errors, 8 p.m.
Foxfire, 8 p.m.

29 *The Comedy of Errors*, 2 p.m.
Foxfire, 2 p.m.
As You Like It, 8 p.m.
The Secret Garden, 8 p.m.

19 *The Complete Works . . .* (preview), 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black (preview), 7:30 p.m.

26 *The Complete Works . . .*, 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black, 7:30 p.m.

3 *The Complete Works . . .*, 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black, 7:30 p.m.

10 *Tuesdays with Morrie*, 2 p.m.
The Complete Works . . ., 7:30 p.m.

17 *The Complete Works . . .*, 2 p.m.
The Woman in Black, 7:30 p.m.

Continued from page 35

it's exactly that longevity that deserves to be celebrated. In short, Shakespeare merits a good roasting.

If celebrity roasts had been all the rage in Elizabethan England, I'm quite sure that a roast of the Bard would have looked a lot like *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*. Inventive, funny, and at times wildly irreverent, "Complete Works" is both a poke-in-the-ribs and a tribute, skewering not just Shakespeare but also the conventions and traditions associated with the world's most famous playwright. Like any good roast, there's nothing mean-

spirited about it; it mocks, yes, but it does so with respect. When you watch "Complete Works," you get the distinct feeling that the actors really like Shakespeare.

And you have to see "Complete Works." It is not a play you want to sit and read, because, to be perfectly honest, it just isn't that funny on paper. In fact, if you read the play, you'll find that the funniest stuff is in the footnotes; the actor part of me kept asking, "How do you act a footnote?" No, the magic comes almost entirely from the performances of the three actors and the enthusiasm that each brings to the production.

It's a fairly obvious conceit—cram all of Shakespeare's plays into a single, two-hour performance (I wonder how many modern playwrights have said to themselves, "Why didn't I think of that?"). To be technically accurate, not all of the plays actually get performed, so if you just love *Coriolanus* and have come expecting to see it done in two minutes, you're going to be disappointed. Several plays are only mentioned by name, while many others are lumped together in group scenes that exploit the formulas and conventions and devices that Shakespeare used over and over again. However, the few individual plays that do get spotlighted are so hilarious, you honestly won't notice that *Coriolanus* isn't among them.

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) is the product of the Reduced Shakespeare Company and its three founding members, Jess Winfield (née Borgeson), Adam Long, and Daniel Singer. According to publicity materials, the company began as a "pass-the-hat" act at California Renaissance fairs, performing twenty-minute versions of *Hamlet* in settings similar to the Festival's *The Greenshow*. A one-hour version of "The Complete Works" premiered in 1987, and, since then, the little company has become an entertainment empire, with international tours, DVDs, a syndicated radio show, podcasts, and a stable of "complete" abridgments of everything from American history to the Bible. Although each of the original three founders have moved on to bigger and better things, the company continues to thrive, and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* lives on through touring companies and countless regional, community, and festival performances.

"The Complete Works" is not a Cliffs Notes version of Shakespeare; it contains almost no literary or educational value whatsoever. As a result, there may be some people who will snobbishly turn their noses up at what they consider a mockery of greatness. One exceptionally intelligent acquaintance went so far as to call "The Complete Works" "a slap in the face of the greatest dramatist that ever lived." Wow. I doubt even Shakespeare took Shakespeare that seriously. That view misses the central point that this play is a tribute and that Shakespeare can be outrageously fun. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* reminds us that, above all, theatre is supposed to be entertaining. When traditions and conventions get in the way of entertainment, then the result is something unspeakably terrible for us all. ■

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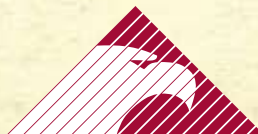
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