

MIDSUMMER MAGAZINE

The Magazine of the Utah Shakespeare Festival



Summer/Fall 2011

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Cover Photo: Kymberly Mellen (left) as Beatrice and David Ivers
 as Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*, 2010. Photo by Karl Hugh.

You can contact *Midsummer Magazine* at 435-586-1972 or bclee@me.com.
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Fifty Years Is a Feat
To Be Noted

Wishing the Festival a Successful Fiftieth Season

By Bruce C. Lee
Publisher and Editor

In 1962, America's young space program launched Ranger 3 to study the Moon, Johnny Carson took over as the host of NBC's *Tonight Show*, and Richard M. Nixon lost the California governor's race, stating in his concession speech that "you won't have Dick Nixon to kick around any more." However, Ranger 3 missed the Moon by 22,000 miles, Johnny Carson hosted the popular talk show for thirty years then retired, and a world witnessed the spectacular rise and tragic fall of Nixon.

Yet, 1962 was also the year the fledgling Utah Shakespeare Festival produced its first three plays: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. Although it started small and was basically unnoticed outside Utah, the Festival had staying power. Now celebrating its fiftieth year, a major feat for any non-profit organization, the Festival is known across the country and is admired by the theatre world. It has earned numerous awards, including the much-coveted Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre; and has nurtured a base of loyal, almost fanatical, playgoers who return year after year to the beautiful scenery of southern Utah and the timeless stories created on the Festival stages.

It is a feat to be noted and to be proud of. Fred C. Adams, and his late-wife Barbara, were the founding force behind the Festival, and Fred still is part of the vision behind this still-growing theatre company. Along the way, literally thousands of artists have worked onstage and behind the scenes to create the magic that has become known as "The Festival Experience."

Thus, I hope the world will join with me in wishing the Festival, and everyone associated with it, a happy, prosperous, and successful fiftieth season. Well done, and thanks for letting me ride along. ■



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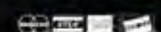
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Golden
Anniversary



Utah Shakespeare Festival

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for long-term patrons
of the Festival and for those
attending for the first time.

Excitement, Pride Highlight Landmark Year

By Leonard Colby

Fiftieth anniversaries aren't all that common in this rapidly changing world, and in the world of non-profit theatre, they are extremely rare. Thus, it is with a great deal of pride and anticipation that the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespeare Festival is planning a host of festivities for its golden anniversary in 2011.

The anniversary celebration will include eight exciting and compelling plays and a host of activities, exhibits, and parties in commemoration of this milestone. (See the related story on page 9.)

Continued on page 8

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Continued from page 6

“We are very excited about plans for our fiftieth anniversary,” said R. Scott Phillips, Festival executive director. “We plan on celebrating this landmark year throughout the region with many different events and parties.”

Plans are still being finalized for many of the anniversary events, but they include a reunion of cast members from the first season

in 1962, a community-wide party commemorating Shakespeare’s birthday, a traveling exhibit of photos depicting the history of the Festival, special post-play entertainment throughout opening week, a vintage car show, and a beautiful coffee-table book of the Festival’s first fifty years.

The eight plays being presented from June 23 to October 22 will have something to please every taste and will

offer the perfect celebration for long-term patrons of the Festival and for those attending for the first time.

Plays in the Adams Shakespearean Theatre include three crowd favorites by William Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* will kick off the season. This magical comedy was directed in 1964 by Festival Founder Fred C. Adams, who will return to direct this season’s production. *Richard III*, the second play in the Adams Theatre, has long been one of Shakespeare’s most in-demand histories. This haunting play will be overseen by long-time Festival director Kathleen F. Conlin. The final play in the Adams Theatre will be the timeless love story of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by one of two newly appointed Festival artistic directors, David Ivers. Plays in the Adams Theatre will run from June 23 to September 3.

Plays in the Randall L. Jones Theatre will kick off with the family musical Meredith Willson’s *The Music Man*, which will be directed by Brad Carroll, the composer for *Lend Me a Tenor: The Musical*, which premiered at the Festival and recently opened in England. Next will be *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams. This classic American drama was featured in the first season of the Randall L. Jones Theatre in 1989 and returns this year, directed by another long-time Festival director J. R. Sullivan. These two plays will run from June 23 to September 3.

The third play opening in the Randall Theatre the first week of the Festival will enjoy an extended run through October 29. *Noises Off!*, written by Michael Frayn and directed by Jeff Steitzer, is a hilarious send-up of all things theatrical.

The final two plays of the 2011 season will run from September 23 to October 29. First will be the beautiful Shakespearean romance *The Winter’s Tale*, directed by Laura Gordon, who will be making her first Festival appearance. Rounding out the celebration will be the thrilling murder mystery *Dial M for Murder* by Frederick Knott. This delightful whodunit will be directed by Brian Vaughn, also recently announced as Festival artistic director. ■

A Time to Celebrate

A fiftieth anniversary is certainly a time to celebrate. A time to party and to remember the past five decades. The Utah Shakespeare Festival this year will be doing just that with a number of exhibits, activities, and other events. You won’t want to miss any of them.

Exhibits

June 23–August 30, The Costume Designers’ Art.

This exhibition features various costumes and artwork highlighting the work of the Festival’s amazing costume artists and technicians over the past fifty years. Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery, Southern Utah University. Open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Admission is free.

June 23–October 22, Anatomy of a Season Exhibit.

Explore the different elements that all must come together for every production at the Festival. Iron County Visitors’ Center (581 North Main Street). Open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Admission is free.

June 23–October 22, The Past is Prologue Exhibit.

Follow the history of the Festival in posters and other publications from 1962 to the present day. Frontier Homestead State Park Museum (635 North Main Street). Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Admission to the entire park is \$3 per person.

Celebrate
50 Years

50
YEARS

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to celebrate. A time
to party and to remember
the past five decades.

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June 23–August, More Precious than Gold: The Works of William Shakespeare. A rare first folio edition of Shakespeare’s work is on loan from the Folger Shakespeare Library. You won’t want to miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Gerald R. Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University. Open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Admission is free.

June 23–August, We Are Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made On. This traveling photo exhibit celebrates fifty years of the Festival as seen through the eyes of its company photographers. Gerald R. Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University. Open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Admission is free.

June 9–September 3, Festival Posters and Souvenir Programs. This exhibit features Festival posters and souvenir programs through the years. Cedar City Library (303 North 100 East). Open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Admission is free.

June 23–September 3, Golden Dreams. This popular exhibit celebrates fifty golden years at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Auditorium Theatre Lobby. Admission is free.

Events

June 30–July 6, Opening Night Celebrations. Special entertainment will be featured after each of the six opening night performances. Each evening will be different; you won’t want to miss any of them. Outside the Adams and Randall theatres immediately following each evening’s show.

July 5–October 21, The Past Is Prologue Festival Anniversary Tour. Get a little more insight and have a lot more fun by seeing five of the exhibits exploring the Festival’s fifty years on this guided two-hour tour. Tour begins at Frontier Homestead State Park.

10 a.m. to 12 noon, Tuesdays and Fridays, July 5 through September 2. Fridays, September 9 through October 21. \$10 per person (includes all admissions). Reservations required at the Festival ticket office (435-586-7878).

July 16, Concours d’Elegance Vintage Car Show. This celebration of the automobile will feature beautiful and stylish cars from the past fifty years. Randall L. Jones Theatre Lawn, Cedar City, Utah

August 13, Beach Party from 1961. Celebrate with us as we thank our community for fifty years of support and success. Enjoy a beach, swimming, hot dogs, and music from the early 1960s. Aquatic Center, Cedar City, Utah

August 19, Second Annual Bardway Baby. Festival actors perform musical selections from hit Broadway shows in a concert setting. Auditorium Theatre at 11 p.m. Tickets for \$25 may be purchased at Festival ticket office, 435-586-7878. ■

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Dreaming with Shakespeare

By Cheryl Hogue Smith

One of the best-known and most loved lines in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is “Lord, what fools these mortals be!” (3.2.115), which is spoken, of course, by Puck just after Oberon squeezes the juice of the love-in-idleness flower onto Demetrius’s sleeping eyes. A few lines later, Demetrius awakens to his “goddess,” Helena (3.2.137), which furthers the misadventures of the four lovers that Hermia earlier foreshadowed when she asked if “true lovers have been ever crossed” (1.1.150). Because Puck’s famous line is so amusing and entertaining, the line directly before it can easily be overlooked: “Shall we their fond pageant see?” (3.2.114). Yet this line is at least important as the other, because it alerts us to the many wonderful “play-within-the-play” moments that punctuate the script. And these meta-performances are crucial because they help create the dream that audiences experience.

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The first of these is presented by the rude mechanicals, who provide an added comedic element with their play: “The most lamentable comedy and most cruel tragedy of *Pyramus and Thisbe*” (the content of which is also the source material for *Romeo and Juliet*). The mechanicals are chosen to perform at Theseus’s wedding, and their amateurish rendition delights the viewers both on and off the stage. In other words, the audience of Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers and the audience in the theatre all simultaneously applaud what Puck might call “their fond pageant.”

Yet Puck’s line was not spoken about the rude mechanicals, but about the four lovers, which is an indication that Puck sees the lovers’ antics as no less farcical than the clumsy *Pyramus and Thisbe* and even more suitable for his own amusement. Then, when we realize that Puck and Oberon act as an audience for Hermia, Lysander, Helena, and Demetrius’s “pageant,” we begin to question what is reality and what is theatre, which adds to our sense of participating in a dream that is taking place onstage.

The “performance” by the lovers is much more complicated than that presented by the rude mechanicals, however. The misadventures of the lovers are brought about by Oberon’s decision to meddle because he feels sorry for Helena. As audience members, we are delighted to see Oberon “direct” this play, especially since his decision to enchant Demetrius is ultimately what leads Theseus to resolve the central conflict that Egeus has created.

Oberon also acts as director for yet another “fond pageant”—that involving Titania and Bottom—designed to distract the fairy queen long enough to steal her changeling boy. As Oberon’s “stage manager,” Puck takes creative license by transforming Bottom into an ass. Together, Oberon and Puck enjoy the play they have created, but they also allow the theatre audience to revel in their inspired production.

In fact, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* contains three “directors”: Quince, Oberon, and Theseus. Audiences learn immediately that Quince is the director of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, yet the roles of Oberon and Theseus are more subtle. Theseus’s command that Hermia had to choose between dying or marrying Demetrius sets the four lovers’ play in motion since this is what drives the lovers into the forest. In some ways, the duke of Athens and the fairy king work in tandem to design the lover’s pageant, for Theseus both creates the dramatic conflict and resolution that encloses the action of the play that Oberon directs. Shakespeare warns us that “the course of true love never did run smooth” (1.1.135). So if the love between Hermia and Lysander and between Helena and Demetrius is in fact true, their courses cannot run smoothly. The interference of Oberon and Theseus ensures that it won’t.

Shakespeare shows us that Theseus and Oberon have much more in common, though, than their roles as directors and rulers: They both defeated their wives. We know that Theseus, for example, is marrying the queen of the Amazons because he conquered her in war, and their marriage is what frames Shakespeare’s play. Oberon wants the changeling boy, and that desire sets up the two pageants in the forest. Because Oberon wanted to enchant Titania, he already had Cupid’s flower with which to anoint Demetrius. Both Theseus and Oberon seem to have skewed ideas about love, which may be why each is arrogant enough to decide who should love whom. No wonder the parts of Oberon/Theseus and Hippolyta/Titania are so often doubled onstage: The characters are more alike than simply being rulers or wives of their respective kingdoms.

The various “pageants” within this play complicate the borders between what is real and what is imaginary, constantly adding different layers to a dream in which we are all participants. And as we watch the action unfold onstage, we also become “actors” in

yet another performance: Shakespeare anoints our eyes so we become part of a dream within a dream within a dream—anticipating in this Renaissance play a future genre of popular films like *Inception* or *The Matrix*. Yet Shakespeare uses no special effects to create his dreamlike structure of nested-performances, just brilliant words performed by brilliant actors.

In the end, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is about lovers and our dreams

of love, in their endless variety of permutations. Shakespeare ensures that we are one half of a last set of lovers in the play, as we are seduced by the magic of the playwright himself. “The course of true love never did run smooth” (1.1.135) is an adage we willingly accept as we gladly enact our parts as the foolish mortals who are wide awake, participating in this lovely play which embraces all of us within its dream-like atmosphere. ■

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“I should wish
for thee to help me
curse that bottled
spider, that foul
bunch-back'd toad.”



The Controversy Is Still Alive

By Ace G. Pilkington

The controversy over Richard III is still alive and as well (or ill) as it has ever been. The king's supporters produce books, and the Richard III Society has its own journal called *The Ricardian*. However, special pleading (and a special fondness for their subject) will not alter the issues or wipe away the facts. I first wrote about Richard III seventeen years ago (for *Midsummer Magazine*), and the questions and their answers have changed so little that I have been able to borrow from that essay now and again for this one.

I pointed out then that recent re-evaluations had included endorsements for the historical accuracy of Thomas More and William Shakespeare. Thus, Allison Weir wrote in *The Princes in the Tower*, “It seems highly likely that More’s account came very near to the truth” (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992, 169). And for Desmond Seward, who, in the course of a life-long fascination, moved from a belief in Richard’s complete innocence to a firm conviction of his guilt, “Shakespeare was nearer the truth than some of the King’s latter-day defenders” (*Richard III: England’s Black Legend* [New York: Franklin Watts, 1984], 15). Far from being discredited or even successfully challenged, Seward went on to do an updated version of his book in 1997. John Julius Norwich, in his magisterial *Shakespeare’s Kings*, echoes the endorsements, saying of More’s account, “Despite repeated attempts by the highly articulate defenders of Richard to prove it false it still carries more conviction than any other” (London: Viking, 1999, 334). And, in a footnote, Norwich refers “readers avid for more information” to the revised edition of Desmond Seward’s book.

I am certainly not claiming that every detail in More’s biography or Shakespeare’s play is historically accurate. And I would even go so far as to agree with the Richard III Society (in one of its more plaintive and less partisan complaints) that Richard III was no worse than most other rulers. In this I am disagreeing with Desmond Seward, himself, who says, “He was the most terrifying man ever to occupy the English throne, not excepting his great-nephew Henry VIII” (*Richard III: England’s Black Legend* [London: Penguin Books, 1997], 1).

The worst of Richard III’s crimes is usually held to be the murder of his young nephews. Of course, Richard II ordered the murder of an uncle, King John eliminated his sixteen-year-old nephew Arthur, and Henry VIII executed the Marquess of Exeter’s twelve-year-old son for treason (*In the*

Lion’s Court [New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2001], 435-6). In addition, Henry VIII infamously had two of his wives beheaded, the younger of whom was, in all probability, fifteen when he married her and seventeen when she died (Alison Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* [New York: Ballantine Books, 1991], 413-14). And yet to put matters in perspective (or at least in the context of Henry’s royal contemporaries), the *Cambridge Biographical Dictionary* declares, “In point of personal morals he was pure compared with Francis or James V of Scotland; even in the shedding of blood he was merciful compared with Francis” (Magnus Magnusson, ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], 696).

Still, there are some of Richard III’s supporters who will not be satisfied with anything less than complete exoneration. He must be guiltless of his nephew’s murders, an innocent victim of vile propaganda. In 1956, Winston Churchill pointed out the major flaw in this position, “It is contended by the defenders of King Richard that the Tudor version of these events has prevailed. But the English people who lived at the time and learned of the events day by day formed their convictions two years before the Tudors gained power. . . . Richard III held the authority of government. He told his own story . . . and he was spontaneously and almost universally disbelieved. Indeed, no fact stands forth more unchallengeable than that the overwhelming majority of the nation was convinced that Richard had used his power . . . to usurp the crown and that the princes had disappeared in the Tower.” (*A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, I [New York: Dodd, Mead & Company], 486).

In his 1976 *The Wars of the Roses*, Charles Ross explains Richard’s problems in establishing that power, “It took time to live down the legacy of suspicion and mistrust generated by the violence of his usurpation. Even in that ruthless age, many

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men were appalled by what they clearly believed to have been his crime against the princes” (London: Thames and Hudson, 100). In 1993, Michael Bennett, though he was not willing to declare Richard’s guilt to be incontrovertible, was sure that it was not the Tudors who first accused him, “What is clear is that over the course of the summer the populace of London, many of whom after all must have worked in or supplied the Tower, came to believe that they [the princes] were no longer alive” (*The Battle of Bosworth* [New York: St. Martin’s Press], 45). Writing in 2005, Nigel Saul was even more certain of Richard’s culpability, “Yet, for all his efforts, Richard failed in his attempts to present a positive image. For one insuperable obstacle stood in his way—his association with the murder of the princes” (*The Three Richards* [London: Hambledon and London], 220). Saul piles source upon source, from the *Great Chronicle* of London to the *Bristol Kalendar*, from an Italian visitor named Mancini to a litany of English voices including the Crowland chronicler. The rising tide of rumor was inescapable, its truth effectively irrefutable. As early as 1484, “The chancellor of France, Guillaume de Rochefort, reminded his audience how Edward IV’s sons had been murdered and his crown seized by the murderer” (221).

Nor have Richard’s defenders provided a convincing refutation to this day. In his 2010 book *The Last Days of Richard III*, John Ashdown-Hill suggests that in the future it may be possible to prove whether the DNA of the skeletons in the tower is, in fact, the DNA of the princes (or at least of Richard and his family.) Ashdown-Hill, who is a member of the Richard III Society and a frequent contributor to the *Ricardian*, says, “It would be good to be able to shed light on this issue if possible—if only in the hope of finally closing the debate” (Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: The History Press, 2010,125). Unfortunately, the only debate such a test could close is

the one about whether the skeletons are those of the princes. It could not prove Richard guilty beyond the shadow of any doubt, and it certainly could not exonerate him. The ultimate question is why the princes were never seen again, not where they were buried.

It was a question Richard desperately needed to answer, and, indeed, as time went on, his need to establish his innocence became greater rather than less. Not only the disaffection of the English populace but also the threat of Henry Tudor would have been sensibly reduced if the two boys had been alive and visible. The earl of Richmond’s royal ambitions could scarcely have continued alongside two surviving sons of Edward IV, no matter how many stories of their bastardy Richard III had spread or how many acts of Parliament he had had passed. And Ricardian theories that Henry VII was guilty of the princes’ deaths come up against the inescapable fact that when Richard might have saved himself by producing living nephews, he did not. It is hard to escape the conclusion that he could not. Where exactly their bodies ended up will not put these doubts to rest or weaken this incredibly strong circumstantial case.

Ultimately (and ironically in light of the abuse that has been heaped on him by Richard’s defenders), Shakespeare may have created a more sympathetic character than the real Richard. After all, Shakespeare’s villain has a long history of abuse and the personal horror of his deformity to drive him to atrocities. He also has a nephew who would try almost anyone’s patience. The historical Richard—handsome, courageous, and successful—was pushed to crime by nothing more complex than ambition and opportunity. His historical failure has little of the grandeur Shakespeare gave his theatrical incarnation, and his fanatical supporters would be fewer and less fervent without the great, fulminating, fascinating shadow Shakespeare threw across all our imaginations. ■

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A Blue Rose of Tennessee

By Lawrence Henley

Preeminent twentieth century American writer and Pulitzer Prize winner Tennessee Williams did it all. He wrote everything from poetry to short stories, novels to screenplays, and, best of all, dramatic art that is the match of any from the mid-century era. His masterpieces are revived with frequency: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947); *Summer and Smoke* (1948); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), and, most of all, the subject of this article: *The Glass Menagerie*. Through these works Tennessee Williams became our antebellum laureate.

The Glass Menagerie is the first major theatrical work of Williams's storied career, a patently autobiographical piece that his brother Dakin once called “a virtually literal rendering of our family life at 6254 Enright Avenue in St. Louis, even though the physical setting is that of an earlier apartment.” A sad elegy to his shattered sister, it is memory play that ushered in a new style critics labeled “Southern Gothic.”

The colorful life of Thomas Lanier Williams (for this article “Tom”) began in Columbus, Mississippi on March 26, 1911. His father was a gambler and alcoholic. Promoted to regional sales manager with the International Shoe firm, Cornelius Williams moved his family from bucolic Clarksdale, Mississippi to St. Louis, Missouri, a class-conscious city that his son Tom grew to despise. Although Cornelius was charming as a salesman, he was callous and insensitive to his wife and children, berating Tom, in particular, for his love of poetry and calling him a “sissy” and “Miss Nancy.”

Tom's mother, Edwina Dakin Williams, was fortunate enough to grow up as a “Southern Belle” from a venerable family, and yet unfortunate enough to marry Cornelius, a man incapable of providing her with the kind of affluence and social life she was raised in. Forever reliving her idyllic youth, Edwina was highly responsible for the classic Tennessee Williams characters Amanda Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* and Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Amanda, the penultimate Williams diva, has been played by a legion of great actresses: first Laurette Taylor, followed by Katherine Hepburn, Julie Harris, and countless others. With obvious sarcasm, Tennessee Williams publicly referred to his mother as “Miss Edwina.”

The Williams siblings grew up believing there was little they could accomplish that would be fully appreciated by their father, and there was rarely enough household money for anything more than the necessities. Mercifully, Tom's maternal grand-

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parents, Reverend Walter and Rosina "Rose" Dakin, doted on their grandkids, tirelessly providing love, attention, travel money, and funding for higher education that his fundamentally dysfunctional parents never could.

Tom Williams was especially close to his lovely, yet irreparably fragile older sister, Rose Isabel Williams. Her tragic inability to survive adulthood became the most resonant theme in *The Glass Menagerie*, haunting Tom all through his life. In *The Glass Menagerie*, Rose is immortalized in the fragile Laura Wingfield, perhaps the saddest, most touching character in all of twentieth century theatrical literature.

Tom loved his only sister to a slightly unhealthy degree, growing somewhat jealous and deserted when she began to date. Like Laura, Rose was attractive, but contrastingly not without "gentlemen callers." Sadly, her affliction was a severe lack of confidence compounded by mental illness, diagnosed as Dementia Praecox

(a form of schizophrenia). At times irrational, delusional, and uncontrollably violent, by the age of twenty-eight her condition deteriorated alarmingly. Her parents and doctors subjected her to experimental drugs and shock treatments, all of which failed. Subsequently, Rose's sense of identity and reality were permanently disconnected by a prefrontal lobotomy. Now considered barbaric, in the late 1930s this experimental brain operation was viewed as the last hope for desperate families, most notably the Kennedys of Massachusetts.

Flummoxed and angered by the tragic results of Rose's surgery, Tom never forgave his parents for approving it. Nomadic in his adulthood, he completed graduate studies at the University of Iowa, and began living a gypsy life while perfecting his craft. Williams drifted from St. Louis to the French Quarter in New Orleans, New York (with The Group Theatre), and then to Southern California to write

screenplays for MGM. As with several other plays, he first experimented with *The Glass Menagerie's* underlying theme in a short story, 1943's *Portrait of a Girl in Glass*. In 1944, the play's working title became *The Gentleman Caller*.

In *The Glass Menagerie*, Laura, Amanda, and Tom Wingfield correlate well with their true- to-life counterparts. Rose and Laura share a gradual retreat from reality, paralyzed by an acute phobia of work, social pursuits, and close relationships. For Rose, fears and fantasies intersected with paranoia, the outward manifestation of which was a terrible stomach condition. Tenaciously, she insisted someone was trying to poison her and also accused her father of sexual abuse. Tennessee Williams believed that Rose, unmarried at twenty-eight, was simply a victim of sexual frustration, requiring treatment not readily available in Missouri.

In *The Glass Menagerie*, The Wingfields are a family abandoned. Amanda's husband, a telephone line-

man, failed to leave his new number or forwarding address. Forced into the breadwinner role, Tom suppresses a burning passion to become a writer in order to support his mother and sister. Desperate for adventure, he flees the Wingfield apartment nightly for the local movie palace, returning in the wee hours of the morning, usually reeking of alcohol.

Laura Wingfield is pretty, but utterly devoid of confidence, the obvious cause being a childhood deformity that left her with one leg shorter than the other. Her secret love for a handsome, popular high school classmate who, in the casual sense, "liked her" went unrequited. No suitors followed, and now Laura's chronic shyness and sense of inferiority keep her shut in the apartment where she obsesses on the only things of beauty in her life: her father's music collection and a menagerie of beautiful glass animal figurines she constantly polishes, preens, and admires.

Both Amanda and her daughter are, in a sense, lost in dreams. Amanda, fractured by the loss of her husband and the alienation of her children, chooses to live in the past. By contrast, Laura has become incapable of living in the present, and Tom can no longer deal with the claustrophobic circumstance of being trapped between two unstable, incongruous women. Searching for escape, each night he steps out to smoke on the neon-splashed fire escape, planning his exit.

Sensing a second abandonment, Amanda sees that the only hope is either to find a career for Laura, or a marriage. Like Rose Williams, Laura's stenography course at the Rubicam business school is disastrous. The pressures and failures were mortifying, and her weak stomach emptied in front of the class. Dropping out and telling no one, she spends truant days at the Forest Park museum, infuriating her mother.

Forced now to find a husband for Laura, Amanda presses Tom to bring home a prospect from the shoe factory where he works. Tom relents, with the stunning surprise being that Laura's "gentleman caller" is none other than her high school crush! Despite her nerves and attempts to hide, the flirtatious Jim O'Connor is quite taken with Laura. Blushingly, she reminds him of the forgotten pet name he gave her in high school, "Blue Roses." Jim's charm disarms Laura, who blossoms out of her crippling shyness.

By candlelight, a dance is danced and a tender kiss is shared. But a tragic assumption has been made, and a secret left unrevealed. There can be no love affair twixt Jim and Laura. By careless accident, Jim dismembers the horn from Laura's favorite glass animal, the unicorn. The fairytale atmosphere is soon vanquished. Learning the truth about Mr. O'Connor, this rose will be forever blue, a life shattered as easily as a glass ornament. ■

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Romeo and Juliet



“What’s in a name.
That which we call a rose
by any other name
would smell as sweet.”

A Play Filled with Opposites

By Michael Flachmann

From the opening prologue, which introduces “Two households, both alike in dignity,” to the heart-breaking final scene where the rival families flood into the tomb, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* is filled with opposites. Like many of the author’s early plays, in fact, it relies heavily on contrasts in language, characterization, and themes to structure its tragic message.

As early as the first scene, for example, when Romeo surveys the remnants of the brawl between the Capulets and the Montagues, he introduces the linguistic oxymorons that inform the play throughout:

“Here’s much to do with hate, but more with love. / Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate, / O anything, of nothing first create! / O heavy lightness, serious vanity, / Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms, / Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health, / Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is! / This love feel I, that feel no love in this” (1.1.174–181).

Later, when he sees Juliet for the first time at the ball, she seems like “a rich jewel in an Ethiope’s ear; / Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!” (1.5.47–48). Similarly, Juliet employs contrasting images to make sense of her sudden infatuation with Romeo. Upon learning from the Nurse that he is a rival Montague, she exclaims in anguish, “My only love, sprung from my only hate! / Too early seen unknown, and known too late! / Prodigious birth of love it is to me / That I must love a loathed enemy” (1.5.137–140).

Juliet’s most notable string of oxymorons, however, occurs after her marriage and the fatal duel during which her new husband avenges Mercutio’s death by killing Tybalt. When the Nurse reports what Romeo has done, Juliet reviles him as a “serpent heart, hid with a flow’ring face!” and asks, “Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave? / Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical! / Dove-feathered raven!

wolvish-ravens lamb! / Despised substance of divinest show! / Just opposite to what thou justly seemest: / A damned saint, an honorable villain!” (3.2.73–79).

These polar opposites, so prominent here and elsewhere in the language of the script, are similarly apparent in the play’s characterization, which juxtaposes not only two noble families, but also the many distinct personalities within them. Hotheads, like Tybalt and Mercutio, are contrasted with peacemakers, like the Prince and Benvolio. A parallel schism exists between the “old guard,” including the elder Capulets and Montagues, and the younger members of their clans who want to establish themselves as individuals distinct from their parents by taking the feud to even more dangerous and deadly levels. Further, each side’s extended entourage of retainers, servants, and friends is contrasted against the inner family circle whose colors, like

rival gangs, they wear proudly, while the secular world of wealth and privilege is distinguished from clerics like Friar Laurence and Friar John, whose religious values seem frail and powerless against the intense hatred of the play. Finally, the more “serious” characters are set into relief by the comic brilliance of Mercutio, the Nurse, Peter, and the Musicians, whose principal purpose is to provide brief refuge from the unrelenting fatalism of the play, therefore allowing Shakespeare to draw us deeper into the lovers’ tragedy.

These contrasts in characterization are also echoed in many of the play’s major themes, which display such opposites as day/night, sun/moon, dark/light, public/private, comedy/tragedy, poetry/prose, love/honor, and fate/free will. In addition, the brevity of young love is set against the ancient and protracted feud, just as the omnipresent crowd scenes are infiltrated by the isolation of the lovers,

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wherein fully one-ninth of the lines are between Romeo and Juliet alone on stage. Thus Shakespeare forges meaning in the play through a kind of Hegelian dialectic, whereby the natural tension between two extremes creates its own implied synthesis. Like the “infant rind” of Friar Lawrence’s “weak flower,” within which “Poison hath residence, and medicine power” (2.3.22–23), many themes in the play contain their own contradictory DNA. The violent clash between the Capulets and the Montagues, for instance, begs us to consider a world enlightened by harmony, while the opposition between fate and free will produces a new metaphysics through which we can chart our own destiny within the scope of God’s divine plan for us.

While most of these oxymorons relate to each other in conventional ways, ricocheting from one predictable extreme to the other, Shakespeare’s depiction of the theme of youth vs. maturity is ironic within the broader context of the script, thereby inviting

us to respond more optimistically to the dark fatalism of the play’s conclusion. Tutored by tradition, we expect the adults in the play to behave wisely and the adolescent characters to lack restraint, yet just the reverse is true: Romeo and Juliet are a beacon of wisdom within the sea of immaturity that surrounds them. The difference, Shakespeare implies, is the ennobling power of love, which allows them to transcend their age and resist the hatred within which they have been immersed since birth. Their pure and selfless devotion to each other stands in stark contrast to the bitter feud and distinguishes them as exceptionally caring, admirable, and mature people in a play where tribal elders seldom act their age.

This ironic contrast leads to the final and most powerful oxymoron in the play, which involves Shakespeare’s co-mingling of joy through sadness and spiritual uplift within the depths of tragedy. We feel sorrow for the death of innocence in the script, but

immense happiness that the love portrayed by Romeo and Juliet could exist within its tragic context. The playwright’s success in combining the opposite extremes of triumph and despair means the audience is left with the dual perspective of defeat on the physical level and victory in the spiritual realm, which brilliantly anticipates many of Shakespeare’s later plays, like *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Just as Juliet’s dead body makes the tomb “a feasting presence full of light” for Romeo (5.3.86), so too does the magical radiance of the lovers’ relationship shine through the pessimism of the play’s tragic conclusion. This wonderful paradox, celebrated every time we watch a production of the script, brings audiences back to the play even though we know it will forever end in disappointment. The love between Romeo and Juliet—mature, courageous, enduring, transcendent, and filled with joy—will always give us the solace we need to endure their untimely deaths. ■

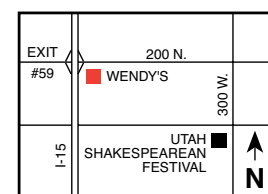
The Music Man



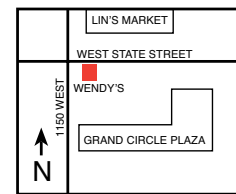
“I always think there’s a band, kid.”

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Selling a Dream

By Christine Frezza

Like its predecessor, *Our Town*, *The Music Man* recalls the golden days of innocence in small-town America. It’s no wonder that the show is one of the most often performed plays in America, since the audiences who keep coming to see it rejoice in its story of a simpler time, when life was certain and the future looked bright. Playwright Meredith Willson himself considered the show a tribute to his fellow Iowans, claiming to be inspired by his boyhood in Mason City, Iowa, but the play also has a Utah connection; the heroine, Marian the librarian, is based on “Marian Seeley of Provo, Utah, who met Willson [in California] during World War II, when Seeley was a medical records librarian” (“A Pair of Marians,” *American Libraries* [March 2005], 12).

Into the idyllic town of River City arrives what looks to be a snake—Harold Hill, a travelling salesman, intent on fooling the town and its citizens. In contemporary comedy, he would get away with his plan, and the town would be bereft of its savings and its innocence; in classic comedy, he would be found out and banished; but in this romantic and heartwarming musical, the town embraces him, and the stranger, as well as the society, is changed.

Kimberly Fairbrother Canton thinks that Harold Hill (and the show itself) appeals to the “middlebrow” of America: “for Eurocentric cultural forms, of which opera is but one example, were increasingly designated as Art with a capital ‘A,’ which, to use Harold Hill’s logic, does not rhyme with P, that stands for popular.” (“Who’s Selling Here?” Modern Drama [vol. 51, no. 1, spring 2008], 42). Mr. Hill (though he’s not aware of this) has come to bridge the gulf

between Marian, the librarian and the rest of River City’s community, by offering them something they can both agree on—the universal language of music.

Willson works his magic on us, the audience, by offering the attraction of a romance between Harold and Marian (made possible by Harold’s encouragement of her younger brother) and by creating the magic through wonderful, beautiful, memorable tunes, crafted with incredible imagination and skill. (That Willson should be able to produce not only one, but two musicals which have been so long-lasting—he is also the author of *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*—is truly enviable.)

The music of *The Music Man* also calls to mind immediately the special kind of patriotism associated with America and Fourth of July parades, rousing, full-blooded military marches, celebrating those who serve and those who have served. In

the songs “Trouble,” “Wells Fargo Wagon,” and “76 Trombones,” Willson’s career as solo flautist with John Philip Sousa’s band helped him capture the essence of that unmistakable sound (Meredith Willson, *And There I Stood with My Piccolo* [New York: Doubleday, 1948], 412). His training at Juilliard and his subsequent career as flute and piccolo player with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra show in his tender ballad, Goodnight My Someone”, and the rhythmic complexity of “Gary, Indiana,” with its descending, shifting emphases (“Ga-ry, In-di-A-na-; Ga-ry, IN-di-a-na; Ga-ry, In-di-A-na”). He pushes us further into the America of 1912 with barber-shop quartets, and by composing four songs which can be sung separately or together. “Lida Rose” and “Will I Ever Tell You,” sung first separately and then simultaneously, are examples of Broadway counterpoint—songs with separate lyrics and separate melodies that harmonize and are designed to be

sung together. Similarly, “Goodnight, My Someone” is the same tune, in waltz time, as the march-tempo “Seventy-Six Trombones”. (*Music Man*, <http://www.wikipedia.org>)

Perhaps Willson is trying to keep his audience in a realistic frame of mind, when he makes the seller of such sweet music a con man. Is the play as romantic as it appears? Scott Miller comments: “[Hill fools] an innocent young woman merely to keep her from mucking up his plan to swindle the honest, hardworking people of a small Midwestern town” (Miller, *Deconstructing Harold Hill: An Insider’s Guide to Musical Theatre* [Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000] 73), and Kimberly Canton questions the values of the town itself: “The townspeople are petty, argumentative, and inhospitable” (Canton, 44). Harold Hill’s arrival in River City, however, becomes a life-changing experience, not only for him, but for the whole town.

The idea of a sophisticated man trying to fool an innocent girl and instead falling in love with her has been used with great success in many musicals—*My Fair Lady*, *Carousel*, *Brigadoon*, *The Sound of Music* are just a few examples. But *The Music Man* is more complicated than these stories: Marian is treated with suspicion by the town ladies, scandalizing them by promoting elitist literature (“Chaucer! Rabelais! Balzac!”) which puts her at odds with the community. In convincing her of his vision, Hill has to avoid her intellect and combine her desires with his—he charms her young brother, Winthrop, out of his shyness by giving him a cornet to play.

Each of the three sides of this controversy comes closer to agreeing with each other; the ladies who disapprove of Marian’s books are convinced by Harold to read a few themselves and find the writing enjoyable, Marian accepts the possibility of love, and so does Harold (reflected in their acci-

dental duet of “76 Trombones” and “Goodnight, My Someone”). The insertion of several barber-shop quartets throughout the journey to mutual acceptance further underscores the desired-for “harmony” of the warring parties.

After a few necessary, suspense-building skirmishes, the show climaxes in an actual performance by the school band of a classical piece: Beethoven’s “Minuet in G.” They do not play it well, but the townspeople have the grace and courage to recognize the efforts of the young musicians as real progress towards a brighter future. “Think, men, think!” Harold Hill exhorts his players, like a contemporary Pied Piper, while the town applauds, confident that their Iowan stubbornness has been upheld by their future leaders.)

The Music Man ends with this genuine miracle, that romantic fantasy can embrace actual reality and produce a happy ending after all. ■

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Banging Doors, Innuendo, and Sardines

By Olga A. Pilkington

Michael Frayn's *Noises Off!* is a farce complete with multiple doors, sexual innuendos, and, of course, sardines. It is a hilarious play that has left many an audience intoxicated with laughter. In fact, Denise Worrell likens the effect on a Broadway audience to that of an explosion, "Crowds stream out of Broadway's Brooks Atkinson Theater limp and disheveled, gasping for breath and wiping their eyes. Much as they may appear to be fleeing tear gas or a smoke bomb, these people are in fact the happy victims of a very different kind of explosion. They have just spent more than two hours howling and guffawing at *Noises Off!*" (http://anoisewithin.org/docs/ANWStudyGuide_NoisesOff-1.pdf).

Perhaps because *Noises Off!* has been such a funny play, it is almost never taken seriously. At most, some critics call it "highly intelligent and clever fluff" (Nancy Stetson, http://fortmyers.floridaweekly.com/news/2010-11-03/Arts_%28and%29_Entertainment_News/Noises_Off_Sardines_slamming_doors_and_madcap_merr.html). But it is not all fluff. Its roots are in satire and philosophy—two subjects that Michael Frayn has mastered and uses throughout his writing. The "first seeds of *Noises Off!*," as Frayn describes them, appeared when he was writing "columns in the *Guardian* and the *Observer*" (Frayn, *Stage Directions*, [London: Faber & Faber, 2008], location 87–93 Kindle Edition). Frayn was

openly mocking the theatrical world and "everything about it—the conventions upon which it depended, the fashionable plays of the day, and the embarrassed anticipation aroused in an audience that the actors would forget their lines or drop their props" (Frayn, *Stage Directions*, location 87–93). Thus, *Noises Off!* is not simply a farce, but also a satire. It mocks not only the actors and their expectations and fears, but also the audience members for their desire to stick their noses not just backstage but behind the closed dressingroom doors as well.

Noises Off! is full of laughter for the audience, but it is far from funny for the actors—both for the ones portrayed in the play and for those actually performing. The ones portrayed in the play suffer from fear of the "unlearned and unrehearsed—the great dark chaos behind the set, inside the heart and brain" (Frayn, *Stage Directions*, location 244–49). For the actual performers, the roles might seem unsophisticated. However, they are very demanding both physically and mentally. As the playwright himself concluded upon finishing the first draft, "I didn't know if actors would even be able to perform it" (Frayn cited in Worrell).

From the moment of its conception, *Noises Off!* has been teetering on the edge of two worlds—the world of possibility and the world of fact, the world of seeming and the world of reality. It was born out of criticism for the very thing that gave it life—*theatre*. In *Stage Directions*, Frayn confesses to being preoccupied with a philosophical dilemma of existence and reality: "The world plainly exists independently of us—and yet it equally plainly exists only through our consciousness of it" (location 249–54). In other words, he has always been fascinated by the duality of existence. *Noises Off!* is no stranger to this duality. In fact, it is its embodiment. *Noises Off!* is not a simple farce; it is not a neat little comedy that hinges on the number of opened and closed doors. It is a Japanese puzzle box that reveals its secrets only when all the right pieces are identified and shifted in a particular

order. *Nothing On* (the play performed within *Noises Off!*) is an imaginary play for an imaginary audience. Only both the play and the stage are real. *Noises Off!* is a real play about the production of an imaginary play. But the reality here is doubtful; after all, it is only a theatre performance. It does not exist behind the final curtain. The characters in it also exist only for the duration of the performance and under the audience's strict supervision, yet the actors are real people with lives that continue even when none of us are watching.

Once we realize all the complexities and demands of this little farce, it is hardly fair to call it "fluff." After all, why should comic be synonymous with unimportant? Can't we have an evening of side-splitting laughter with a philosophical afterthought?

But satire and philosophy aside, Frayn intended *Noises Off!* as a funny play. His characters are helpless in their attempts to remedy the far-gone tour of *Nothing On*. They are hopeless in trying to resolve the love triangles and tangles they've concocted in the process. They are endearing while showing us how difficult it can be to perform. They are drawn from life, and they are laughter. And the infamous sardines that seem a silly little prop are not just a source of amusement, but a nod to reality as well. In his autobiography, Frayn mentions them as among his favorite childhood memories (*My Father's Fortune: A Life*, [New York: Metropolitan Books, 2011]).

For Michael Frayn, life is laughter. "A recent history of the 'satire boom' of the 1960s in Britain locates Frayn at the heart of it" (Merritt Moseley, *Understanding Michael Frayn*, [Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2006], 2). However, laughing at reality and its problems is not as effortless as it might seem. Frayn admits, "I found *Noises Off!* . . . difficult, because of its complexities" (David Smith, "Difficult Stage," *New Statesman* 135:4791, May 8, 2006, 42). But perhaps it is these difficult comparisons and different complexities that make it so realistic and so funny. *Noises Off!* is a dramatic work that plays with reality and laughs at itself. ■

Noises Off!

"On we bloodily
stagger. . . . Let me
rephrase that.
On we blindly stumble."

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The Winter's Tale

“O, she’s warm.
If this be magic,
let it be an art lawful
as eating.”



A Sad Tale’s Best for Winter

By Diana Major Spencer

This is the saddest tale of all—*The Winter’s Tale*. Mamilius—best of all young princes but, sadly, doomed—tells his mother, Hermione, “A sad tale’s best for winter” (2.1.25; all line references are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Houghton Mifflin, 1974), at the very moment the welcoming, warm, and generous court of Sicilia plunges disastrously into a bitter cold, black netherworld. The final line of Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind” asks, “If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?” Sixteen years’ winter seems excessive, perhaps, yet Shakespeare needed the innocent young love of the next generation to resolve the bitterness.

It’s a strange tale, too, strung with familiar episodes from Homer and Ovid, as well as the Bard’s own earlier plays. A scene between Camillo and Archidamus, gentlemen cohorts of the respective kings, discussing the lifelong devoted friendship of the kings, the magnificence of Sicilia, and the promise of Prince Mamilius, ironically precedes

the sudden jealousy of Leontes and its consequences. Polixenes plans to return home to Bohemia after a nine-month visit and resists the efforts of his boyhood friend to delay his departure. Leontes invites Hermione, his pregnant queen, to lend her persuasion, which she does—successfully. Then, as the gracious hostess she has promised to be, she engages Polixenes in happy tales of his boyhood with her husband.

Alas, Leontes notes them “paddling palms” (1.2.115) and “virginalling / Upon his palm” (1.2.125-26), evoking the wharf on Cyprus where Desdemona and Claudio provide similar “ocular proof” of betrayal in *Othello*. (The virginal, an Elizabethan keyboard instrument that denotes the movement of Hermione’s fingers, necessarily carries connotations of sexual purity and fidelity.) Leontes, as furious, deranged, and stubbornly persistent as Othello, rebukes his queen, removes their son from her presence, and commits her to prison pending trial for

treason, meanwhile having “dispatch’d in post / To sacred Delphos, to Apollo’s temple, / Cleomines and Dion, [who] from the oracle / . . . will bring . . . spiritual counsel” (2.1.182-86). Thus, Shakespeare hurtles us from the early seventeenth-century to Homeric Greece and the most famous source of wisdom in Greek history and literature, recorded by poets, philosophers, historians, playwrights, and stone-carvers.

In prison, Hermione delivers a daughter, whom Paulina, a lady of the court, presents to Leontes to soften his heart. Infuriated, Leontes refuses the “bastard” (2.3.74), vilifies Paulina’s audacity, and condemns Antigonus, her husband, as “traitor” for “set[ting her] on” (131). “Shall I live on,” he rages, “to see this bastard kneel and call me father?” (155-56)—ironically predicting a precious future moment—then commands Antigonus to deposit the baby “some place / Where chance may nurse or end it” (182-83). Antigonus, like the herdsman in *Oedipus Rex*,

carries the infant to what we hope is a happy rescue and good life.

Continuing his self-destructive frenzy, Leontes arraigns Hermione for “high treason, . . . adultery . . . and conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of . . . thy royal husband” (3.1.14-17). Neither the patient dignity of Hermione nor the exonerating oracle from Delphi can budge his obstinacy, but news of Mamilius’s death brings on a panicky bout of contrition from Leontes as Hermione swoons and is carried away. Any compassion that might have ensued is pre-empted as Paulina returns with news that Hermione, too, has died.

The final blows of winter descend near the stormy shore of Shakespeare’s Bohemia. Antigonus names the child Perdita (“Little Lost Girl”), leaves her with a blessing—“Blossom, speed thee well!” (3.3.46)—then encounters a vicious death in the jaws of a bear as his Sicilian shipmates churn to the depths of the stormy sea. Since a brief opening



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scene extolling the blessings and marvels of the lifelong devotion of two brother-like kings, we have witnessed the relentless destruction of everything good, true, and beautiful through the psychic indigestion of a willful, warped misconstruer, who now blubbers about the loss of his queen and son. We are desperate for an intermission, only slightly heartened by Perdita's rescue by a shepherd and his son, who are kind enough to bury Antigonus's remains.

Thus ends the tragic part of the tragi-comedy. "Blossom" indeed speeds well. Time, as Chorus, bridges sixteen years in rhyming couplets, transporting us from wintry Sicilia to "fair Bohemia, . . . a son o' th' King's, which Florizel / I now name to you, . . . [and] Perdita, now grown in grace" (4.1.21-24). Proserpina, the Latin goddess of springtime invoked by Perdita (4.4.116), restores warmth, color, and abundance to the earth as she returns from her annual sojourn in Hades. *A Winter's Tale* is now *A Springtime Tale*, replete with all the features of comedy: disguise, wordplay, rustics, rascals, thwarted young love,

frowning parents, singing, and dancing. Costumed for the sheep-shearing and seeming the goddess Flora to Prince Florizel, Perdita distributes flowers and herbs among the guests in an idyllic version of Ophelia's sorrowful mad scene in *Hamlet*. Disguised, King Polixenes and Lord Camillo (formerly of Sicilia) observe the wayward prince and "the prettiest low-born lass that ever / Ran on the green-sord" (4.4.124-25).

As happens in comedies, parental objections threaten the union ("S/he's not worthy of MY kid!"), and—like Pyramus and Thisbe, Hermia and Lysander, Romeo and Juliet, and countless others—the young couple runs away, catalyzing a most remarkable series of miracles. The homesick Camillo sees an opportunity to "frame [Florizel's going] . . . to serve my turn, / [and] Purchase the sight again of dear Sicilia / And that unhappy king, my master, whom / I so much thirst to see" (4.4.508-12). Autolycus, the opportunistic rascal who mocks and swindles the rustics—being "litter'd under Mercury" (the god of thieves)

and surviving as "a snapper-up of unconsider'd trifles" (4.3.24-25)—smuggles the Shepherd and his son aboard the Sicilia-bound ship, carrying notes and artifacts found with Perdita, that will prove their innocence of any familial connection to the foundling they rescued from the bear and foul weather.

A grand concoction of tragedy, comedy, mythology, retreat themes and motifs— and a happy ending!—the return to Sicilia triggers the culmination of the redemptive myth of Proserpina, whose mother, Ceres, bargained with Pluto for an annual reunion with her daughter and subsequent spring and summer. Now add the further amazement of a Galatea, the statue fashioned by Pygmalion and brought to life by Aphrodite, the goddess of Love, to reward Pygmalion's devotion.

Does it matter that our "willing suspension of disbelief" is so taxed? Not if you hope for atonement, redemption, reconciliation, miracles, and the profound, truth-bearing nature of old tales. ■

Dial M for Murder



The Perfect Murder Mystery

By Kelli Allred, Ph.D.

Everyone loves a good mystery, particularly American playgoers. As early as the 1890s detective plays were scoring major successes in the Broadway theatre, and detectives had already begun using fingerprinting to solve crimes. Broadway in the 1930s gave rise to a new wave of mystery melodramas that continued until the 1950s, when a new generation of playwrights exploited this genre. Frederick Knott was one British playwright who immigrated to America in order to refine his craft. Knott (1916-2002) was born in China to English missionaries. He earned a law degree from Cambridge University in England and served as a major in the British army during WWII (*Cabners Business Information*, 2003). Knott wrote only three plays in his lifetime, all of which focus on women who become potential victims of sinister plots. In addition to *Dial M for Murder*, he wrote *Write Me a Murder* (1961) and *Wait Until Dark* (1966). A master of psychological thrillers, Knott understood the psyche of both actor and audience. Each of these thrillers enjoyed successful runs on stage and became standards among regional theaters and touring productions worldwide.

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The murder mystery began in nineteenth century England. Referred to as penny dreadfuls, these novels were quickly adapted for the stage as melodrama. Playwrights later followed a format established by R. Austin Freeman in "The Art of the Detective Story" (*Nineteenth Century and After* 95, 1924), which states that the indispensable elements of a detective story are, first, no important information is left out, and, second, reasoning must be free of fallacies. New York thrillers were built

around another formula: a single setting where a murder has been committed, and where suspicion falls on several characters before the detective reveals the true murderer, "often through some psychological entrapment" (Ibid). Another stylistic invention crept into these plays in the 1930s, when a character is murdered on stage, in full view of the audience. But live theater was not the only milieu to embrace murder mysteries; the film industry built its pioneering efforts on crime melodramas.

According to theorist Rosemary Herbert, "The theme of revenge is vital in both the stage drama and in the mystery, and the solution to the latter is dependent upon understanding the movement of the actors on and off-stage throughout the progress of the production." The single setting in *Dial M for Murder* demands such movements by characters who, indeed, are motivated by revenge and justice.

Mystery writers often use theft as "a central criminal act that must be solved by a detective. Theft may also be used to complicate, confuse, or motivate other crimes such as murder" (Begna, Kate. "Theft." *The Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing*. Oxford University Press, 1999). This presents a double challenge to the detective who must reconstruct the hidden reality of the crime—the questions of who committed it, how, and why. The other job of the detective in a mystery is to restore the state of innocence when it has been disrupted by murder. The detective—or sleuth—ought to be either an official agent or a person of exceptional integrity. While the Inspector in *Dial M for Murder* initially investigates the murder, Max and Margot assist him in eventually solving the real crime.

The play is set in an upper class, 1950s London flat, replete with overstuffed furnishings, fresh flowers, a glowing fireplace, a well-used liquor cabinet, a writing desk, and French doors leading to a garden patio. In addition to the apartment's front and patio doors, the set includes two other doors that lead offstage to a bedroom and a kitchen. The stage properties provide pivotal action throughout the play: latchkeys, a woman's handbag, letters, nylon stockings, trophies, briefcases, a sewing basket, cash, scissors, and the telephone to which the play's title refers. Each of these stage props is actually a clue that contributes to the plot and the eventual solution to "the perfect murder."

In *Dial M for Murder*, as in *Wait until Dark*, Frederick Knott devises a storyline

wherein the flawed female hero is the victim of the plot; however, the heightened interest of the play comes from the false accusation of murder "masterfully arranged by a fiendishly vengeful criminal" (Gassner, John. "Broadway in Review." *Educational Theatre Journal*, May, 1966, p 171. Johns Hopkins U.P.). From the opening scene of the play, the audience members will identify entirely with the villain.

Act One opens to introduce former tennis pro Tony Wendice with his wife Margot, in apparent domestic bliss; however, that illusion is quickly shattered when mystery writer Max Halliday arrives. Cynical and jaded, Max comes from America to continue his affair with Margot, but she ends it. Tony, believing the affair to be ongoing, sends the two out for the evening and sets in motion a chain of events that will soon be out of his control. At one point, Tony actually solicits Max's help in writing the "perfect murder." Margo overhears the conversation and asks Max, "Do you really believe in the perfect murder?" Max laughs and dismisses both Tony's request for help and Margot's curiosity. It soon becomes clear to the audience that Margot and a Captain Swann have become pawns—victims of Tony's plotting.

Tony and Margot start out as the only characters possessing latchkeys to the front door of their flat, but by the end of Act One, their world has turned upside down: their latchkeys have changed hands, a stolen love letter ends up in the hands of a stranger, and a body lies dead in the couple's London flat. Margot's stockings have been stuffed into a variety of locations, and her handbag has been compromised. In spite of his charm, Tony reveals his true sociopathic vein when he listens on the other end of the phone as his wife is being strangled in their apartment. He is so diabolical as to backtrack and redesign the entire evening after his initial plans go awry.

At least two Hollywood treatments of Knott's story make the plotline seem familiar to most audiences. The

1960 thriller *Midnight Lace*, starring Rex Harrison and Doris Day, tells the story of a husband who plots to drive his wife crazy so that her death will look like a suicide. Contemporary audiences may recognize that some of the plot from *Dial M for Murder* served as the inspiration for the 1998 cinematic thriller, *A Perfect Murder* starring Michael Douglas and Gwyneth Paltrow. *A Perfect Murder* follows Knott's plotline closely: an older husband is desperate for his wealthy wife's money. Emotionally

marooned by her husband, she seeks warmth in the arms of a young lover. Keys are exchanged, large sums of money are paid out, and the husband's best laid plans falter. In all three of these murder mysteries, the diabolical husband almost gets away with murder. "Almost" provides the satisfying theatre experience audiences love. The dénouement is nearly exhausting, but necessary to unravel the intricate details Frederick Knott provides in *Dial M for Murder*. ■

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2011 Season Calendar



Evening Performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Richard III* are in the Adams Shakespearean Theatre (inclement weather, Auditorium Theatre); *The Music Man*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *Noises Off!* are in the Randall L. Jones Theatre.

Matinee Performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are in the Auditorium Theatre.

All Performances of *The Music Man*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Noises Off!*, *The Winter's Tale*, and

Dial M for Murder 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. from July 6 to September 3 and Thursdays and Saturdays at 10:15 a.m. from September 29 to October 22.

Repertory Magic begins in the Randall L. Jones Theatre lobby Mondays and Thursdays at approximately 4:45 p.m. from July 7 to September 1 and Fridays at approximately 4:30 p.m. from September 30 to October 21.

The Greenshow is performed in the courtyard surrounding the Adams Shakespearean Theatre Mondays through Saturdays at 7 p.m. from June 23 to September 3.

The New American Playwrights Project presents plays August 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26, and 31 and September 1 and 2 at 10 a.m. All are 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. One hour is devoted to the plays in the Adams Theatre and one hour to plays in the Randall Theatre.

Props Seminars are in the Randall Theatre at 11 a.m. Mondays and Thursdays from July 11 to September 1 and Wednesdays and Fridays at 11 a.m. from September 23 to October 21.

Costume Seminars are in the Randall Theatre at 11 a.m. Tuesdays and Fridays July 12 to September 2.

Actor Seminars are in the Seminar Grove at 11 a.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays from July 2 to September 3 and on the Randall Theatre lawn Thursdays and Saturdays from September 24 to October 22.

Play Orientations begin in the Auditorium Theatre at 1 p.m. for matinee performances and 6:45 p.m. for evening performances June 23 to September 3 and at 1:30 and 7 p.m. on the lawn of the Randall L. Jones Theatre from September 9 to October 22. ■

MONDAY

27 *The Glass Menagerie* (preview), 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream (preview), 8 p.m.

4 *The Music Man* (opening), 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.

11 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

18 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

25 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

Aug. 1 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

8 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

15 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

22 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

29 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.

TUESDAY

28 *Noises Off!* (preview), 2 p.m.
Richard III (preview), 8 p.m.

5 *The Glass Menagerie* (opening), 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.

12 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

19 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

26 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

2 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

9 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

16 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

23 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

30 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

27 *Noises Off!*, 7:30 p.m.

4 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
Dial M for Murder, 7:30 p.m.

11 *The Winter's Tale*, 2 p.m.
Dial M for Murder, 7:30 p.m.

18 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
The Winter's Tale, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

29 *The Music Man* (preview), 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet (preview), 8 p.m.

6 *Noises Off!* (opening), 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

13 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

20 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

27 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

3 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

10 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

17 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

24 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

31 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

28 *Dial M for Murder* (opening), 2 p.m.
The Winter's Tale (opening), 7:30 p.m.

5 *The Winter's Tale*, 2 p.m.
Noises Off!, 7:30 p.m.

12 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
The Winter's Tale, 7:30 p.m.

19 *Dial M for Murder*, 2 p.m.
Noises Off!, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

June 23 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (pre), 8 p.m.

30 *The Glass Menagerie* (preview), 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream (opening), 8 p.m.

7 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

14 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

21 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

28 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

4 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

11 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

18 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

25 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

Sept. 1 *The Music Man*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

29 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
Dial M for Murder, 7:30 p.m.

6 *Dial M for Murder*, 2 p.m.
The Winter's Tale, 7:30 p.m.

13 *Dial M for Murder*, 2 p.m.
Noises Off!, 7:30 p.m.

20 *The Winter's Tale*, 2 p.m.
Dial M for Murder, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

24 *Richard III* (preview), 8 p.m.

July 1 *Noises Off!* (preview), 2 p.m.
Richard III (opening), 8 p.m.

8 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Richard III, 8 p.m.
Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

15 *The Glass Menagerie*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

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The Music Man, 8 p.m.

2 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

9 *Noises Off!*, 7:30 p.m.

16 *Noises Off!*, 7:30 p.m.

23 *Dial M for Murder* (preview), 2 p.m.
Noises Off!, 7:30 p.m.

30 *The Winter's Tale*, 2 p.m.
Noises Off!, 7:30 p.m.

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Dial M for Murder, 7:30 p.m.

14 *The Winter's Tale*, 2 p.m.
Dial M for Murder, 7:30 p.m.

21 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
The Winter's Tale, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY

25 *Romeo and Juliet* (preview), 8 p.m.

2 *The Music Man* (preview), 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet (opening), 8 p.m.

9 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet, 8 p.m.
The Music Man, 8 p.m.

16 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 8 p.m.
The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m.

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Noises Off!, 8 p.m.

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Dial M for Murder (preview), 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 1 *Dial M for Murder*, 2 p.m.
The Winter's Tale, 7:30 p.m.

8 *The Winter's Tale*, 2 p.m.
Noises Off!, 7:30 p.m.

15 *Noises Off!*, 2 p.m.
The Winter's Tale, 7:30 p.m.

22 *Dial M for Murder*, 2 p.m.
Noises Off!, 7:30 p.m.

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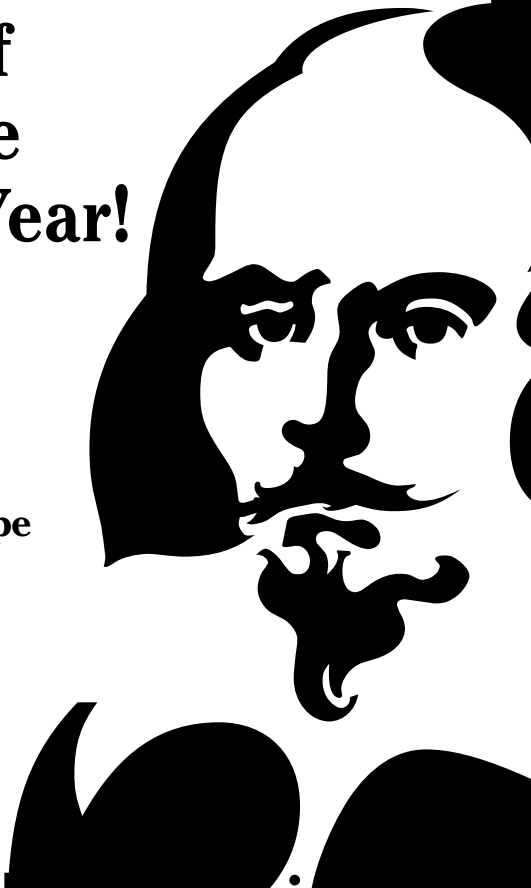
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Getting tickets to the Utah Shakespeare Festival is easy—and great seats are always available.

First, you can order via the internet: Visit our interactive Ticket Office site at www.bard.org, and place your order electronically anytime, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day.

Second, you can order by telephone: Call 800-PLAYTIX (800-752-9849) or 435-586-7878.

Third, during the season, you can order in person: Visit the Ticket Office windows in the Randall L. Jones and Auditorium theatres near the corner of 300 West and Center streets in Cedar City.

Fourth, you can order your tickets by mail: Write down your dates, seating preferences, and plays, and then mail them, along with payment in full, to Ticket Office, Utah Shakespeare Festival, 351 W. Center Street, Cedar City, UT 84720.

Ticket Office hours are as follows:

Through June 25: Mondays through Fridays; telephone service only, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

June 23 to September 3: Mondays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

September 6 to October 22: Mondays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Remember the Online Ticket Office is always open at www.bard.org.

The Utah Shakespeare Festival offers various discounts to groups, schools, senior citizens, etc. For information call the Ticket Office.

All plays, times, and prices are subject to change without notice.



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You'll Want to Try Our Redesigned Back-Nine

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Cedar Ridge Golf Course is just a few minutes away. You'll find it nestled against Cedar City's red hills at 200 East 900 North, just off Main Street across from the city cemetery. Any questions you might have can be answered by calling the pro shop at 435-586-2970.

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