



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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SHAKESPEARE IN THE 1970s? GROOVY BABY!

Phoenix Theatre's trippy take on classic gender-bending comedy

2010/2011 Season

3 TWELFTH NIGHT, or WHAT YOU WILL

February 24 – March 5, 2011

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Linda Hardy

Set Designer: Allan Stichbury

Music & Associate Director: Jeffrey Pufahl

Costume Designer: Cat Haywood

Lighting Designer: Kerem Çetinel

Movement Director: Kaz Piesowocki

Text Coach: Fran Gebhard

Stage Manager: Courtney Butler

Get groovy with this psychedelic 1970s spin on Shakespeare's classic gender-bending comedy about love, deception and "what you will".

Free PreShow Lecture: February 25 at 7pm
with Linda Hardy and the play's designers
discussing the concept of setting *Twelfth Night*
in 1970s London.

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March 17 – 26, 2011

By Daniel Maclvor

Guest directed by David Ferry

WORLD PREMIERE

*Over the course of a single, life-changing day,
a group of twenty-somethings become
interconnected through a bar called Inside.*

Phoenix Theatre

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"If music be the food of love, play on." This classic opening line of *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* – on at the Phoenix Theatre at the University of Victoria from February 24–March 5, 2011 – fueled director Linda Hardy's idea to set this delightful, gender-bending Shakespearean comedy in a time of free love, flower power and great music – 1970.

Commissioned by Queen Elizabeth for Twelfth Night celebrations in 1600 to entertain her chief guest, Duke Orsino of Tuscany, the play was written, rehearsed and performed by Shakespeare and his company in 10 days. The request was for a play full of music, dance, love and jest, with the butt of the joke on her master of finance, Sir William Knollys, a married man of 50 who was in love with one of her ladies in waiting – Mary Fitton. Hence the joke in the name of Malvolio itself which means "I want Mol." Twelfth Night was a time when such jokes could be played and were to be taken as a gentle correction for people who had grown too big for themselves. Also reflected in the play is the ancient English tradition that permitted women to reverse their roles during a leap year: the ladies not only woo, they propose! By setting the play in a thinly veiled Brighton by the sea in 1970, Hardy is able to take advantage of the themes of self-deception in love, love's delusions, and love's power – which was so much a part of that era. Most importantly, the pulling of Malvolio off his pedestal fits well with the 70s' irreverence for arrogance and power in society and politics. On the edges of *Twelfth Night*, there is a war that only serves to heighten our appreciation of love, loss and the brevity of youth. So too, one cannot remember the 70s and all its silliness, without remembering its pain.

The play tells the story of Viola, a beautiful young woman, shipwrecked and bereft of her brother. Out of self-preservation, she takes on the role of a Swami (There was one around every corner in 1970!) and goes to the Duke of Orsino's court to serve him. Orsino is in love with his neighbour, the Countess Olivia, and employs Viola (now calling herself Cesario) to woo his lady. Olivia falls in love with Cesario, who now looks just like Viola's shipwrecked brother, Sebastian! Mistaken identity, jealousy and the pursuit of love result in a deliriously funny pandemonium.

Hardy brings together a creative team to realize the colourful, psychedelia of the summer of love. Set designer Allan Stichbury creates a dynamic, geometric space that enables playful transitions between locations, from shipwrecks to gardens to bomb shelters. Cat Haywood's groovy costumes channel everyone from Carnaby Street swingers to the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Kerem Çetinel continues the mind-altering theme with a psychedelic lighting design. Movement Director Kaz Piesowocki coordinates fight scenes using unconventional weaponry. Fran Gebhard is assisting as text coach and 4th year student, Courtney Butler is the stage manager. The play features a cast of 22 students from across the theatre program.

"Music was an integral part of the 70's scene and we are working to recreate that atmosphere on stage," says Hardy. *"Music Director and Associate Director Jeffrey Pufahl is working closely with our students to perform live music during the show."*

Jeffrey Pufahl is an MFA Directing candidate in the department. For *Twelfth Night* he, with his partner Leora Joy Godden, co-composed original music and adaptations that merge Shakespeare's lyrics in the play with inspirations from the Beatles and Simon and Garfunkel.

Everyone is welcome to attend a **FREE preshow lecture** on **Friday, February 25 at 7pm** about the concept of setting *Twelfth Night* in 1970's London with director Linda Hardy and the play's designers. More information is available online at phoenixtheatres.ca or by calling **250-721-8000**. The performance schedule for *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* is as follows:

Public Preview Performances 8pm: February 22 & 23

Evening Performances 8pm: February 24 (Opening Night), 25, 26, 28, March 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Matinee Performances 2pm: Saturday, March 5

Single Tickets: \$15 Student / \$18 Senior / \$22 Adult or Weekend 8pm (Previews \$6.00, available after 5pm)

Phoenix Box Office opens February 15 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.