**Twelfth Night**

**M.S.U. Theatre Department**

**Lesson Plan Ideas for Teachers**

**Pre- performance questions**

* Ask which of your students have been involved in some type of theatre activities in or out of school. They could help lead the discussion.
* Give students background information about the play and about William Shakespeare. For example: Twelfth Night, or What You Will is a romantic comedy by William Shakespeare, believed to have been written around 1601–1602 as a Twelfth Night's entertainment for the close of the Christmas season.

Ask students to make predictions.

* What will the set look like?
* What will the costumes look like? Artistic students could sketch costumes. You could tell them that the costumes for this performance represent the time period from 1890-1930.
* What will the language sound like?

The Folger library has a website full of excellent student and teacher resources for Twelfth Night: <https://www.folger.edu/twelfth-night>

**Post-performance**

**Discussion questions:**

* Look at the predictions you made before seeing the performance. How many of your predictions were accurate?
* What surprised you about the performance?
* How did the set, lighting and acting help to convey the themes of the play?
* What makes live theatre different from the experience of watching a movie or reading a book?
* Keeping in mind that the actors are M.S.U. students, and they are in the process of learning, what feedback would you give them?
* Did you think the sword fighting scenes were realistic? Why or why not?
* How does the music contribute to the mood and tone of the play?
* There are examples of bullying and gender stereotypes in the play. How did you feel about the way Malvolio was treated? Was this O.K. because it was a comedy? Do you see this type of humor in comedies today?
* Viola pretends to be a man. How does she justify the deception? It all turns out O.K. at the end of the play, but is it fair to pretend to be someone you’re not? Could this be hurtful to others? To yourself?

**Possible activities**

* Before viewing the performance, students read theatre reviews from newspapers and magazines to get an idea of what theatre reviewers write about. (set, lighting, acting, character development, etc.) They could take notes during the play, and then write reviews after the performance.
* You could use Ben Brantley’s review of a performance of Twelfth Night that was performed in Central Park in July of 2018: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/31/theater/review-twelfth-night-shakespeare-in-the-park-shaina-taub.html>
* Students write feedback they would give to the actors and director, listing what they liked about the performance and what might be improved.
* The play is packed with ideas and themes. Ask students to list some of them. For example: Deception, Revenge, Bullying, Gender, Sexual Identity, etc. Divide students into 5 groups, giving each group one of these ideas, and have them come up with examples of these ideas within the play.

* If Students enjoyed the play, they might like the 2006 movie, *She’s the Man*, a Twelfth Night Adaptation.