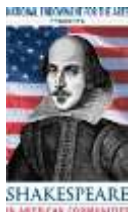


**Theater at Monmouth
2016 Shakespeare in Maine Communities Tour
Teacher Resource Guide**



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FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE



Ralph Fiennes as Prospero in Haymarket Theatre's *The Tempest* directed by Trevor Nunn.

This season, Theater at Monmouth's *Shakespeare in Maine Communities* Tour brings classic literature to students across Maine with an 80-minute version of *The Tempest*. The text was adapted to streamline the plot and help students connect more strongly to Shakespeare's verse, themes, and relevance to a modern audience. *Shakespeare in Maine Communities'* workshops and extended residencies offer students the opportunity to study, explore, and view classic literature through performance.

TAM's Education Tours and complimentary programming challenge learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions, and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern world.

Teacher Resource Guide articles and activities were developed to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production; Common Core-aligned activities are included to explore the plays in the classroom before and after the performance.

The best way to appreciate Shakespeare is to do Shakespeare. That means getting students up on their feet and physically, expressively, and vocally exploring his words. Using performance-based activities will help students to build a richer understanding of the text and identify with the characters and conflicts in the plays.

Thank you for taking some of your classroom time to teach your students about *The Tempest*! If you need more information to support your preparation for the production, please call 207.933.2952 or email boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org.

Enjoy the show!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dawn McAndrews".

Dawn McAndrews
Producing Artistic Director
Theater at Monmouth

Full Fathom Five!

A synopsis of what happens in the play



A terrible storm at sea engulfs a ship carrying Alonso, the King of Naples, Antonio, the current Duke of Milan, and other lords. The magician Prospero and his daughter Miranda watch from an island nearby. After assuring her that he will bring the men safely to shore, Prospero tells Miranda the story of their past—when he was the rightful Duke of Milan. Exiled by his scheming brother Antonio and with the help of the lord Gonzalo they escaped to this magical island. Twelve years later, a happy accident has brought Alonso’s court to Prospero’s island; affording Prospero a chance to exact revenge.

Prospero has lived like royalty on his island attended by Ariel, “a delicate spirit” of the island whom Prospero has promised freedom, and Caliban, a native of the island whom Prospero has tasked with hard labor. Ariel brings Alonso’s son Prince Ferdinand ashore, separated from the others. Miranda and Ferdinand fall instantly in love. The king’s party lands elsewhere on the island. Believing Ferdinand drowned, Alonso bemoans his loss of his son. Ariel enters, invisible, and puts all the men to sleep except Antonio and Sebastian, Alonso’s brother. Antonio urges Sebastian to kill the sleeping Alonso, to become king much as Antonio became duke. Ariel wakes Alonso and Gonzalo in time to see them draw swords, and the conspirators pretend they heard wild beasts.

Meanwhile, Caliban meets Stephano and Trinculo, a drunkard servant and jester to the king who have also survived the shipwreck. Stephano gives Caliban liquor, and Caliban promises to serve him if he will kill Prospero. Elsewhere on the island, Alonso and the lords hear strange music, and see a magnificent banquet set for them. Marveling, they sit down to eat, but suddenly Ariel reveals himself and dooms them all to death. Ferdinand and Miranda agree to wed, and Prospero presents a masque blessing their nuptials. The celebration ends abruptly, however, as Prospero remembers Caliban’s plot against his life. By his command Ariel has led Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban in a wild goose chase all over the island. When they arrive to kill Prospero, Ariel distracts Trinculo and Stephano, while Prospero summons spirits in the shape of vicious dogs that chase all three away.

Prospero dons his enchanted robes and determines to abandon his magical powers. Ariel brings the shipwrecked lords before him. After forgiving Antonio and reclaiming his dukedom, Prospero reveals Ferdinand and Miranda. Thrilled to see his son alive, Alonso blesses the marriage and begs Prospero’s forgiveness. Ariel enters with the shipwrecked sailors, who report amazedly that their ship lies at harbor, undamaged. Ariel then brings in Caliban, disgusted by his own foolery in believing the fools, Stephano and Trinculo, to be gods. As all prepare to set out for Italy, Prospero keeps his word and sets Ariel free and leaves Caliban master of the island.

WHO'S WHO IN THE PLAY

There are eight actors in TAM's 80-minute production of *The Tempest*. To play all the roles written by Shakespeare, some of the actors will need to double—a convention also used in Shakespeare's time. Here's how the doubling works:



Erica Murphy: Ariel / Master of the Ship

An airy spirit of the island. Released from a tree jail by Prospero into another kind of bondage as Prospero's servant. Perhaps the source of all magic on the island. Conjures illusions, controls spirits, and whips up a pretty sensational storm.



Christopher Holt: Prospero

The exiled Duke of Milan, father of Miranda, and brother of Antonio. A great master of the arts and books, he has harnessed magical powers through his readings. Tired of his island isolation, he creates a storm to bring himself and Miranda home.



Ardarius Blakely: Caliban / Boatswain / Juno

An original inhabitant of the island, now unwilling servant to Prospero. His mother Sycorax is the Witch who trapped Ariel in the tree. Juno is a spirit conjured by Ariel to bless the betrothal of Miranda and Ferdinand.



Alexandra Linn: Alonso / Ceres

The King of Naples and father of Ferdinand. Alonso plotted with Antonio against Prospero to usurp the crown. Ceres is a spirit conjured by Ariel to bless the betrothal of Miranda and Ferdinand.



Hannah Daly: Miranda

The teenage daughter of Prospero. Miranda has lived in solitude with her father on an island for 12 years. She's never seen another like herself until she encounters Ferdinand and falls in love.



Oliver Archibald: Ferdinand / Sebastian

Son and heir of Alonso, King of Naples. Falls in love with Miranda. Sebastian is King Alonso's brother; who is persuaded by Antonio to kill his brother and take the crown.



Heather Irish: Gonzalo / Trinculo / Iris

Gonzalo is servant to Alonso and friend to Prospero; helped Prospero and Miranda escape. Trinculo is jester to Alonso and friend to Stephano; fond of sack. Iris is a messenger spirit who sends for Ceres and June to bless the betrothal.



Michael Dix Thomas: Antonio / Stephano

Prospero's brother; exiled Prospero and took over as Duke of Milan twelve years before the play begins. Stephano is butler to Alonso and friend to Trinculo; fond of sack.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Dating and Sources for *The Tempest*



The Tempest is considered to have been written in 1610–11. Since Shakespeare died in 1616, and his authorship of slightly later plays like *Two Noble Kinsmen* is thought to be co-written with others, *The Tempest* is considered Shakespeare's last solo work. The first recorded performance of *The Tempest* was performed for King James on "Hallowmas nyght". In its original, the play is set in the Mediterranean Sea. According to clues in the text, the most likely setting for the island would be off the coast of Sicily. Its primary source is a detailed account of the shipwreck of the Sea-Venture, lost in Bermuda in 1609 on its way to Virginia.

Making Meaning in *The Tempest*

Since this is considered Shakespeare's last play, Prospero's magical command of the island is often read as Shakespeare's command over his "theatrical" art. Many scholars believe this is the playwright announcing his retirement. Shakespeare would have had access to documents relating to the exploration of the new world. Two of these in particular: *A True Repertory of the Wreck and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight, William Strachey* (1610) and *Discovery of the Bermudas otherwise Called the "Isle of Devils," Silvester Jourdain* (1610) are regarded as possible sources of influence for *The Tempest*. If these two sources did influence Shakespeare, then Prospero's Isle may have been Bermuda.

The Tempest in Performance

Restoration audiences first saw the play in the adapted form produced by William Davenant in 1667. Retitled *The Enchanted Isle*, it retained less than a third of Shakespeare's text, introduced new characters to increase the love interest, and added music and dance. This pleased audiences, as the additions continued to be included until the 19th century. Thomas Shadwell's 1674 version was staged with elaborate spectacle, earning large box office revenues for 150 years. David Garrick's 1757 version drew audiences to Drury Lane, where it remained in the repertory for the next 20 years. It was not until William Charles Macready's production at Covent Garden in 1838 that the Restoration additions to the text were banished. The running time of Charles Kean's 1857 production at the Princess's Theatre was five hours, even though the text was heavily cut. Throughout the last third of the nineteenth century, the focus shifted onto Caliban, who was presented as a more human creature struggling to be free of his brutish instincts.

Original Staging and Contemporary Conceptualizations

In 1897, the Elizabethan Stage Society, under the direction of William Poel, produced *The Tempest* in stage conditions corresponding closely to those of the original production. The aim of the Society was to return to the "authenticity" of the Elizabethan thrust stage and swift, fluid stage action. Poel commissioned Arnold Dolmetsch, the founder of the early music movement in Britain, to arrange music from early sources to be played on authentic Renaissance-style instruments.



A seminal production of *The Tempest* was produced in 1970, at the Mermaid Theatre, which interpreted the play from the perspective of colonialism. Two West Indian actors, Norman Beaton and Rudolph Walker, were cast as Ariel and Caliban. Ariel was an educated slave, planning to take control when the colonialists left, while Caliban was an uneducated field slave. In the brief moments between the departure of the Europeans and the final curtain, Ariel picked up Prospero's broken staff and pointed it menacingly at Caliban.

Elizabethans and the Dark Arts

Shakespeare's audiences, regardless of social class, believed in magic. The three main forms of magic that were practiced were astrology, alchemy, and sorcery. They also believed in mythical creatures like ghosts and fairies and deeply feared witchcraft. These beliefs are reflected in many of Shakespeare's plays, but are central to *The Tempest*. Prospero is a sorcerer who commands the spirit Ariel and the child of an evil witch, Caliban. Many scholars believe that the character of Prospero is based on a famous astronomer, John Dee, who was a friend and advisor to Queen Elizabeth. John Dee was an accomplished mathematician, astronomer, and navigator who trained many captains in the English Navy. Dee went on to study astrology and alchemy and eventually believed he had discovered the language of angels.

Astrology was the most widely practiced form of magic by Elizabethans. According to Joseph Papp and Elizabeth Kirkland, in *Superstition, Folklore, and Astrology in Shakespeare's Time*, "Consulting the stars—courtesy of the local stargazer in a village or a fancier private practitioner in London—helped confused Elizabethans determine what specific course of action to take. An astrologer who knew the position of the stars and planets at the exact moment a crucial question was asked could then provide answers to all sorts of personal queries—when to get married, when to look for a job, and even that rare dilemma of when to take a bath. Failing to act at the moment dictated by the heavens was invariably catastrophic. Sir Walter Raleigh, the Earl of Essex, and the Earl of Leicester conferred at length with John Dee to ascertain the most auspicious day and hour for Queen Elizabeth's coronation.



Ariel, the airy spirit, trapped in a tree by the witch, Sycorax



Prospero using his art to create the storm.

Alchemy was the practice of turning lead and other metals into silver or gold. Some alchemists also sought to find a potion for immortality. Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's right-hand minister, even invested some money in a corporation run by an astrologer-chemist who promised to turn iron into copper, generating huge profits to the investors. Sorcery, which was the more controversial practice of the times, sought to raise and control spirits through spells, charms, and rituals.

Witchcraft was considered a "dark art" and feared by all classes of people in Shakespeare's time. When terrible things happened that they could not explain, such as death or disease, miscarriages or a bad harvest, they blamed witchcraft. Queen Elizabeth's own mother Anne Boleyn was convicted and put to death for witchcraft. Papp and Kirkland highlight Shakespeare's references to these fears: "Many Elizabethans were afraid witches had fearful powers over the elements; like 'the foul witch Sycorax' of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, they had the power to 'control the moon, make flows and ebbs,' manipulating the winds and rains to bring bad weather. Cursing and uttering evil charms were probably the most common ways these witches operated. Caliban and Prospero have a cursing contest in *The Tempest*: the monster cries, 'All the charms Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!' and Prospero, in turn, issues equally dire threats: 'If thou neglect's, or dost unwillingly What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps, Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar That beasts shall tremble at thy din.'"

Prospero and Privilege

There are multiple historical and literary contexts through which to understand the character of Caliban, but no single interpretation can be verified as Shakespeare's definitive inspiration. Caliban may have been inspired by a cave-dwelling cyclops from ancient poems like Homer's *Odyssey* or Virgil's *Aeneid*. Caliban might also come from any number of wild men or monsters depicted in English literature.



Djimon Hounsou as Caliban in the Julie Taymor film.

Although Caliban is described as “a savage and deformed slave,” in Shakespeare's day, “savage” meant wild and uncivilized by upper-class standards. “Savage” was a term used by Shakespeare to describe many of his characters and does not tell us anything about Caliban's physical appearance or moral character. *The Tempest* details that Caliban is enslaved to Prospero, but is not specific about his “deformity.” The many animal names and images given to Caliban have led many to misinterpret him, but the text reveals that he is clearly human.

Shakespeare writes that Caliban is the son of Sycorax (a woman with some magical power from Algiers, a city on the coast of Northern Africa), the last inhabitant of the island before Prospero and



Ben Wishaw as Ariel

Miranda arrive, but Shakespeare also conflates many geographical locations throughout the play. Most likely, the name “Caliban” means he is a native of the New World (the Americas and Caribbean), which had recently been discovered and written about by English travelers facing actual shipwrecks in the early 1600s (leading some critics to believe that Caliban is potentially Native American). Whatever his actual ethnicity, Stephano and Trinculo's response to Caliban is typical of an Elizabethan response to anything foreign; Elizabethans were interested in capturing and taming unknown creatures to put them on display and make a profit from them.

Shakespeare was English—scholars view *The Tempest* as being told from a European perspective. Postcolonial theorists believe it is dangerous today to interpret texts without understanding the inherent bias against native peoples and their long history of oppression. These theorists assert that we must remember that many stories are told from the conqueror's perspective, which for us is mostly Western or European. Prospero colonizes and takes ownership of an island, even though Ariel, Caliban, and others were living there first.

Discussion Questions

1. How does our postcolonial understanding of the world influence our response to the relationship between Prospero and Caliban? Does Prospero have a right to rule the island?
2. How does viewing the play through the lens of privilege influence our response to the relationship between Trinculo, Stephano, and Caliban?
3. What are the differences and similarities between Ariel and Caliban? How is the agency afforded each different? What might Shakespeare be communicating with these two enslaved characters?
4. What will Caliban's life be like on the island after the play is over?

Shakespeare's Most Musical Play

By James David Jacobs, WGBH

The Tempest was written and premiered four centuries ago in 1611. It's the last play that Shakespeare wrote without collaboration. And it's one of only two plays he wrote which is not an adaptation of an existing story or history. (The other one is *Love's Labours Lost*.)

It is truly an original work, one that stands at the crossroads of theatrical history: between the Renaissance and the Baroque, between the Elizabethan theatre of the imagination and the Jacobean spectacle, between the primacy of the word and the primacy of sensory entertainment. The common link between all of these is music. It's no coincidence that at the same time these upheavals were taking place in England, the art form known as opera was being born in Italy—the first operatic masterpiece, Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, premiered in 1607.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the play is how aware it is of its own historical position, how consciously Shakespeare bids farewell to past trends and welcomes new ones, reinventing himself even at the end of his career. This is particularly evident in his use of music and sound cues, which are integrated into the text in an unprecedented way.

*Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
That if I then wak'd after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that when I wak'd
I cried to dream again.* —Caliban, Act III scene ii

At just over 2,000 lines, *The Tempest* is one of Shakespeare's shortest plays on the page (only *The Comedy of Errors* has fewer lines), but that doesn't mean it's necessarily the shortest in performance. There are many places where the music takes over, and whole scenes are performed in mime and dance, or, most remarkably, with the characters themselves just standing there listening to the music. We have a better idea of what the music in the original production sounded like than we do for any other Shakespeare play. That's thanks to surviving settings by the composer and lutenist Robert Johnson of two songs from the play ("Full Fathom Five" and "Where the Bee Sucks").

Since this play was written to be played indoors for a court theatre, there were possibilities for more subtlety in the scoring than would be possible at an outdoor theater, and we can be sure Shakespeare took advantage of that; you certainly couldn't hear a solo lute, or a viol consort, at the Globe.

While many of Shakespeare's plays have inspired musical settings through the years, what's unique about *The Tempest* is how few changes are necessary to make the play adaptable to music of many centuries, not to mention film. Many of the settings of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, could just as easily refer to the older tragic love stories Shakespeare himself drew on when writing that play. But *The Tempest* is truly a world Shakespeare himself created, and it is no coincidence that it is the least dated of Shakespeare's plays, the one that requires the least translation for a modern audience.

And one of the main reasons for this is that it is the play in which he puts the most trust in the power of music.

The Age of Exploration

As noted in the Arden edition of *The Tempest*, despite its “unique panoply of visual wonders, very little happens” in this little play and yet it serves as an emblem for the age of discovery in which Shakespeare was living, a period of geographic, political, and artistic resurgence.

The following is excerpted from Alden T. Vaughan, “Shakespeare Discovers America, America Discovers Shakespeare,” *Shakespeare in American Life Exhibition Catalog*. Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007.



The story of the *Sea Venture*'s wreck on the Bermuda Islands has often been told, but it bears a brief summary here because it opened Shakespeare's works to the influences of English colonization and, perhaps more important, because it undergirds the theory—espoused intermittently since the late nineteenth century—that Shakespeare set *The Tempest* on Bermuda and intended the characters to reflect early American persons and events. Bermuda, to this day, reminds visitors of its reputed *Tempest* connections with venues like Prospero's Cave (a night club), Caliban's Bar, and the Ariel Sands Beach Club.

The five hundred potential colonists in nine ships that departed England in early June 1609 expected to sail north of Bermuda on their westward route from the Canary Islands to Virginia. When they were several days short of their destination, a massive hurricane scattered the fleet. One vessel sank; seven ships straggled into Jamestown, weeks overdue. The flagship *Sea Venture*, carrying the fleet's admiral, Sir George Somers, and Virginia's new governor, Sir Thomas Gates, never arrived at Jamestown and was presumed to have been lost.

News of the tragedy reached England when the surviving ships headed home from Jamestown, “laden with nothing but bad reports and letters of discouragement.” England's only American colony, readers learned, was beset by Indians, ravaged by sickness, on the verge of starvation, and shorn of legitimate leadership. Its “headless and unbridled multitude,” lamented the Virginia Company of London (the colony's supervisory body), had succumbed to “disorder and riot.” Company spokesmen blamed everything, directly or indirectly, on “the *Tempest*.”

Against all expectations, the *Sea Venture* had weathered the storm—barely. Among the survivors, William Strachey described the experience most vividly in a very long letter (twenty-two folio pages when finally printed), written in Virginia to an unnamed lady in England. For three days and four nights, Strachey remembered, all hands—crew and passengers, noblemen and commoners—pumped, bailed, cast trunks and barrels overboard, and jettisoned much of the ship's rigging, while sailors, lighting their way with candles, stuffed the leaking hull with whatever came to hand, even beef from the ship's larder. Many distraught souls, resigned to a watery death, bid their friends farewell or took refuge in drink. But “it pleased God,” another survivor gratefully recalled, to push the *Sea Venture* within three-quarters of a mile of Bermuda, where it “fast lodged and locked” between coral boulders. All 150 passengers and crew rode the ship's boats to solid land. No humans, European or aboriginal, inhabited the Bermuda archipelago when the *Sea Venture* fortuitously arrived. During the previous century, ships of many nations had crashed on its reefs, and a few survivors had lived to describe the “Isle of Devils,” but the most tangible signs of those accidental visits were the wild hogs whose ancestors swam ashore from shipwrecked

vessels. Yet Bermuda was, as the *Sea Venture*'s passengers quickly realized, an island paradise strategically located for transatlantic commerce or piracy and free for the taking. Instead of the reputed devils and malicious spirits, the English encountered docile and abundant birds, fish, tortoises, and the immigrant hogs; fruits and berries were ubiquitous. The climate was salubrious, the environment healthy. During the next nine months, Admiral Somers supervised the construction of two seaworthy vessels from Bermuda cedar and the *Sea Venture*'s salvageable timbers and tackle.



Leading explorers to the New World, from a cartography book by Dr. John Dee, famous magus and advisor.

Not everyone pitched in. Some men preferred a life of ease on Bermuda to the imagined perils of Virginia and refused to build the ships. Other men objected to cutting and carrying cedar logs, still others resented Gates and Somers's firm authority, and a few cast covetous eyes on the survivors' valuable goods. Strachey's letter bristles with charges of "conspiracy," "Mutinie," "Rebellion," and "bloody issues and mischiefes." By the time the *Sea Venture*'s passengers and crew sailed to Jamestown in the newly completed *Deliverance* and *Patience* in May 1610, one man had been executed, one (maybe two) had been murdered, and two men who hid from harsh punishment were left behind.

The Virginia Colony, Strachey discovered on arrival, was comparably chaotic. "[W]e found the Pallisadoes torne downe,...the Gates from off the hinges, and emptie houses...burnt" for firewood. Outside the fort, "the *Indian[s]* killed as fast...if our men stirred but beyond the bounds of their blockhouse, as Famine and Pestilence did

within." With only sixty men and women surviving from the several hundred who had reached Jamestown since 1607, Gates and the disheveled remnant abandoned the colony; only the unexpected arrival of fresh settlers and supplies under a new governor, Francis West, Lord De La Warr, saved the day. With order largely restored, Sir Thomas Gates left for England in early September 1610, carrying Strachey's letter. It was too candid for the Virginia Company of London to permit publication, but the manuscript fascinated many readers, including William Shakespeare.

The Tempest (completed in late 1610 or early 1611) borrowed some of Strachey's words, phrases, and themes, as well as touches from Silvester Jourdain's less revealing pamphlet (1610), and many other—mostly non-American—texts and ideas. In 1613, Shakespeare and John Fletcher would take a leaf from Ben Jonson's *Epicoene* by invoking an Indian from England's colonial sphere. A muscular captive named Epenow, displayed frequently in London "as a wonder," almost surely inspired *Henry VIII's* porter to smirk: "have wee some strange Indian with the great *Toole*, come to Court, the women so besiege us?" (5.3) English America had entered Shakespeare's literary source book.

COLLABORATING ON DESIGN CONCEPT

This activity will provide your students with insight into theatrical design and practical experience in the creative process that stage designers use when establishing the world of a play.

Essential Question: How can we communicate the specific world of a play to an audience using characterization and analysis of the text?

Objectives:

- Examine the plot, characters, and themes of the play
- Explore *what happens in the play* and *what the play is about* to inform design choices
- Analyze design choices based on playwright's intentions and relevancy to a modern audience

Overview: The job of theatrical designers is to support the director's vision and interpret the playwright's intentions by using costumes, sets, lights, and sound to create the world of the play for a modern audience. Each designer's work should:

- Evoke the mood and tone of the production
- Specify the time and place
- Clarify relationships between characters

Designers read the play many times searching for clues contained in the text about the look and feel of the play. They research the period in which the play was written as well as analyzing the plot and characters for visual motifs. The design team meets with the director to brainstorm a specific concept or approach to the play. The designers collaborate to ensure that all of the elements come together in a cohesive manner.

Activity:

1. Divide students into teams of five with each member assuming the role of one of the artistic team for the production: director, sets, costumes, lights, and sound. Ask students to discuss the plot, character, time and place, and overall concept for the production.
 - a. Determine the mood of the production from beginning to end. How might it influence the design?
 - b. Decide where to set *The Tempest* to make it the most relevant for your audience? (Coaching) Remind students that the concept must work for the entire play—not just certain scenes.
 - c. What images or motifs occur repeatedly throughout the play? How would you show these onstage? What are the different locations of the play?
2. Once a setting is decided, ask each group to research the time period in order to be as authentic as possible in creating the world of the play.
3. Each member of the team should produce a creative representation of their design (a poster, sound clips, a collage, fabric swatches, and so on).
4. Ask each group member to write a design/director statement in support of the concept, including the historical research that supports their decisions.
5. Display the concept boards as a team and have each team present their concept to the class.

Reflection: After students see the production, ask them to reflect on the design choices made by the TAM team. Compare and contrast TAM's production concept with the students' vision for the play. How were the designer choices similar or different? How did they serve the play?

ON SHAKESPEARE

No man's life has been the subject of more speculation than William Shakespeare's. For all his fame and celebrity, Shakespeare's personal history remains a mystery. We know a man named William Shakespeare was baptized at Stratford upon Avon on April 26, 1564, and was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on April 25, 1616. Tradition holds that he was born three days earlier, and that he died on his birthday—April 23—but this is perhaps more romantic myth than fact.

Scholars assume that Shakespeare went to grammar school, since his father was first a member of the Stratford Council and later high bailiff. A grammar school education would have meant that Shakespeare was exposed to the rudiments of Latin rhetoric, logic, and literature.

Church records tell us that banns (announcements) were published for the marriage of a William Shakespeare to an Ann Whatley in 1582. On November 27 of the same year a marriage license was granted to 18 year old William and 26 year old Anne Hathaway. A daughter, Susanna, was born to the couple six months later. Twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born soon after. We know that Hamnet died in childhood on August 11, 1596. We don't know how the young Shakespeare came to travel to London or how he first came to the stage.



William Shakespeare

Whatever the facts may be, it is clear that in the years between 1582 and 1592, William Shakespeare became involved in the London theatre scene as an actor and playwright. By 1594, Shakespeare was listed as a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, one of the most popular acting companies in London. He was a member of this company for the rest of his career, which lasted until 1611. When James I came to the throne in 1603, he issued a royal license to Shakespeare and his fellow players, inviting them to call themselves the King's Men. In 1608, the King's Men leased the Blackfriar's Theatre in London. This theatre, which had artificial lighting and was probably heated, served as their winter playhouse. The famous Globe Theatre was their summer performance space.

In 1616 Shakespeare's daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney, the son of a neighbor in Stratford. Her father revised his will six weeks later; within a month he had died. The revised version of William Shakespeare's will bequeathed his house and all the goods to his daughter Susanna and her husband Dr. John Hall, leaving Judith and Thomas only a small sum of money; his wife, who survived him, received the couple's second best bed.

In the years since Shakespeare's death, he has risen from obscurity to the most read, adapted, and translated writer of all time. In the 1800s, his plays were so popular that many refused to believe that an actor from Stratford had written them. To this day some believe that Sir Francis Bacon or Edward De Vere, the Earl of Oxford, was the author. Still others prefer to believe that Walter Raleigh or Christopher Marlowe penned the lines attributed to Shakespeare. While most people are content to believe that genius can spring up in any social class or setting, the gap between the known facts and the myths that surround Shakespeare's life leaves ample room for speculation.

ON ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND



Portrait of Queen Elizabeth by George Gower

The age of Shakespeare was a great time in English history. During the reign of Elizabeth I (1558—1603), England emerged as the leading naval and commercial power of the Western world, consolidating this position with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. During this time, Elizabeth I firmly established the Church of England (begun by her father Henry VIII after a dispute with the Pope). London in the 16th century underwent a dramatic transformation; the population grew 400% between 1500 and 1600, swelling to nearly 200,000 people in the city proper and outlying region by the time an emerging artist from Stratford came to town. A rising merchant middle class was carving out a productive livelihood, and the economy was booming.

During Shakespeare's lifetime, England also experienced a tremendous cultural revival. This so-called English Renaissance found expression in architecture, music, literature, and drama. Shakespeare both drew inspiration from high and popular culture of the English Renaissance. Popular entertainment during the 16th century tended to be boisterous and often violent. Many men, women, and children attended public executions of criminals that took place on a regular basis, and persons of all social classes and genders attended theatre performances. The trade of bookmaking flourished during the period as public education fueled the appetite for great works in print.

During the years 1590-1593, England suffered from an outbreak of terrible proportions; the bubonic plague or "Black Death" claimed so many lives that English society stood on the verge of collapse. Many businesses, including theatres, closed, in part to keep people from spreading the disease and in part because of the labor shortage that resulted from such widespread illness and death. Once the epidemic subsided, the theatres reopened and quickly regained their former popularity.

This explosion of commerce and culture lasted throughout Elizabeth's reign and into that of her successor, James I. James' rule brought many changes to English life; the two most pivotal were a bankrupt economy and an intense dissatisfaction from a minority religious group—the Puritans. In September 1642, the Puritan Parliament issued an edict that forbade all stage plays and closed the theatres; an act that effectively brought to a close the Elizabethan Renaissance. Theatres rapidly fell into disrepair and neglect until the Restoration in 1660.

In writing his plays and sonnets, William Shakespeare drew ideas from many different sources. His eye for detail and his understanding of human nature enabled him to create some of the most enduring works of drama and poetry ever produced. But his work also provides an insightful commentary on 16th-century English values, life, history, and thought.



PERFORMANCES IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

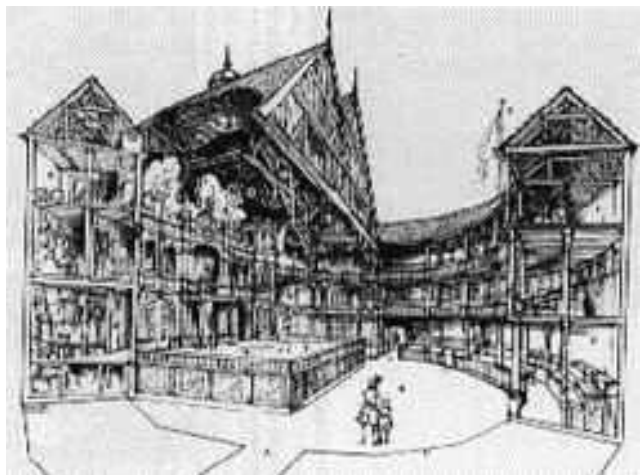


In Shakespeare's day theatre was the most popular form of entertainment. The theatre district was located in Bankside, just outside of London across the Thames. Bankside was a seedy part of town known for its taverns, brothels, gambling houses, and bear baiting arenas. Playhouses were built to accommodate an audience of almost 3,000 people sitting in boxes, benches on the stage, or standing in the pit directly in front of the actors. As there was no electricity for lighting, performances started at 2:00pm to make the most of daylight.

All classes came to the theatre; in one audience you could see nobleman, court dandies, and young apprentices. To pack the audiences, playhouses undersold all other popular entertainment—which included bear baiting arenas. A day at the Elizabethan theatre cost just one penny—

equivalent to the price of a movie ticket today. For twopence or threepence more a patron could purchase a seat in the gallery and rent a cushion.

In a typical season a theatre company might play six days a week, forty-nine weeks a year, and perform more than forty plays, over half of them brand new. Shakespeare's company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men (renamed The King's Men after James I took the throne), was considered the most talented company of the time. Acting was not a well-respected profession at this time, and women were not allowed to perform on stage; boys performed all female parts, including Juliet and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. In a day when acting paid enough for the average actor to just get by, the Lord Chamberlain's Men did so well one or two company members became prosperous middle-class citizens. Shakespeare was writing for the stage in an exciting time where theatre was a fast paced popular form of entertainment attended by courtiers and whores, lawyers and cutpurses, tradesmen, and servants.



VERSE AND PROSE

Iambic Pentameter

Shakespeare wrote much of his dialogue in a form of poetry, following the rules regarding rhythm and meter that were commonly used in his time. The form he used is called iambic pentameter [call out]. “Iambic” means a line of iambs; iambs are two syllables together, the first one is unstressed and the second is stressed. For instance, say the word ‘today’—notice how the ‘day’ seems stronger than the ‘to’? Try reversing the stresses and see how it sounds. “Pentameter” refers to the number of iambs in the line. Penta is the Greek word for five—think about the Pentagon and how many sides it has—so there are five iambs in each line.

So iambic pentameter feels like a heartbeat: Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**. An actor uses scansion to interpret the meter of a piece of verse. It can tell the reader, the actor, and the audience important information about the character.

ROMEO

But **soft**, what **light** through **yonder window breaks**?

Actors use the notation “u” for unstressed syllables and “/” for stressed:

u / u / u / u / u /
But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

Actors use the meter as a clue to discover what Shakespeare's characters are feeling. The stressed words are usually the most important (or “operative”) words in a verse line. But sometimes the iambic pentameter lines are “irregular” (meaning they don't have 10 unstressed and stressed syllables) giving the actor another clue. For example, from *Hamlet*:

HAMLET

To be, or not to be: that is the question,

u / u / u / u / u / u
To **be**, or **not** to **be**: that **is** the **question**,

Shakespeare could easily have had the line end with “quest” instead of “question” making it a regular line of verse. However, to show Hamlet's state of questioning and imbalance Shakespeare gives the actor a line with an extra beat—11 syllables—to emphasize how he is feeling. This is called a feminine ending (because it ends unstressed and is therefore weaker). An actor might also choose to flip the stresses after the full stop in the center of the line (called a caesura), creating a trochee (a stressed/unstressed foot).

Prose

Shakespeare wrote his plays using two styles—verse and prose. Verse, the style used most by Shakespeare, is text written with a meter or rhythm. Prose is text written without meter or rhythm. Prose is a more common form of speech, sounds more natural, and does not follow the rules or form of poetry. Prose is most often found in the comedies where servants or lower classes (or character's talking about “lewd” subjects) speak in prose. Shakespeare often uses the switch from verse to prose (or back) to indicate a change in emotion or mood within a scene. In *Romeo and Juliet* Mercutio switches from verse to prose and back again in the scene where he is killed. Shakespeare's shift from verse to prose provides a new and different way to convey not only wit and humor but also great depth of feeling and character.

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

1. Line at a Time

Using a section of the text, type each line on a separate slip of paper and distribute so each student has one line. Working independently students walk around the room reading their line aloud, experimenting with different inflections or ways of speaking. Regroup in a circle and ask each student to read her/his line aloud. Discuss questions about language or word choice. Ask students:

- What might this play be about, based on the lines you heard?
- What images came to mind when reading or hearing the line(s)?
- What type of person do you imagine spoke the line(s)?

2. Stormy Weather

It's no surprise that a play named *The Tempest* opens in the middle of a huge storm at sea. But how can a director and a team of designers create that storm onstage? Ask students to brainstorm different ways to present the storm and shipwreck onstage. Then break the class into three groups and assign each a budget—one group has a high school drama club budget, one has a regional theatre budget, and one has a Broadway theatre budget. Each group should develop a concept or proposal for the storm scene, complete with lights, set, sound, props and costumes, considering their respective budgets. Have each group present their ideas to the class. Discuss how realistically each group staged the storm.

3. They Say that Falling in Love is Wonderful

Miranda and Ferdinand are instantly captivated by one another. It is the first time that Miranda has seen another man. Is it love at first sight? Divide the class into two groups and have them sit across the room from each other. Pair each student with someone on the opposite side and remind them to keep it a secret! It is okay if more than one person is paired with another. Instruct the students to imagine themselves asleep in their beds. Begin playing a sickly-sweet love song (*Endless Love* works very well). In slow motion, have the students wake up and begin their morning routines. On your cue, they should make eye contact with the object of their love and physicalize (in slow motion!) their response to this love at first sight. After each pair has gone, discuss how do we show love and the actions we use get someone to notice us.

4. Be the Foley Artist

The Tempest is one of Shakespeare's most sound-heavy plays. Have students reread Caliban's speech at III.ii.132, "Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises." Then ask students to pick out as many references to sound as they can find, both in the text, and in the stage directions. Creating a sound design for a play or movie is an important part of telling the story. What kinds of sounds exist on the island in *The Tempest*? Ask students to create a sound design for a moment in the play, using music, voices, or found items (recorded or live) to create the sound. How does sound help to tell the story?

5. Islanders in Visual Art

Shakespeare has left much room for interpretation in how Ariel and Caliban can be portrayed. 19th-century artists inspired by Shakespeare put scenes of his play on canvas. Visit this site and view paintings depicting Ariel or Caliban from *The Tempest*.

(http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/TempestPaintings.html)

Have students compare expectations of these characters with the artists' rendering. Keep these images in mind when attending the production and compare all interpretations.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

1. A Whole New World

Shakespeare drew inspiration for *The Tempest* from real accounts of a crew headed to Jamestown, Virginia, that crashed on the island of Bermuda and then reappeared almost a year later. Have students research the Jamestown colony and the shipwreck of the Sea Adventure and then discuss how the real life events may have inspired Shakespeare. How did Shakespeare alter the story to create *The Tempest*?

2. Is Seeing Believing

Stranded on a mysterious island and thoroughly drunk, Stephano the butler believes he sees a great beast that in reality is nothing more than Caliban and Trinculo hiding together. This is an island that Prospero claims to be inhabited by spirits. His most trusted servant is a spirit that no other character ever sees. The only time spirits are witnessed by characters other than Prospero is in the wedding masque for Ferdinand and Miranda. This scene is not always included in productions of the play. If you were the director, would you choose to stage the masque? Is the island really magic or are we seeing a distorted image of a stranded soul?

3. (Re)Making History in Modern Times

Shakespeare's plays are continually adapted into other media. Robert Browning's 1864 poem *Caliban upon Setebos*, Franz Marc's 1914 painting *Caliban*, and the 1956 sci-fi film *Forbidden Planet* are all based on *The Tempest*. Screen the film (or another film adaptation of the play), view the painting, or read a selection of Browning's poem (or all three!). Discuss how artists transform ideas from literature into their own original work. Have students create their own work of art based on *The Tempest*. Possibilities include a drawing, a poem, a short story, a video of a scene, or a piece of music. Work can be shared and displayed as students discuss their responses to the play. Create a class webpage, post the artworks, and share with TAM.

4. Slaves and Servants

In *The Tempest*, Ariel and Caliban both serve Prospero and Miranda. In the Folio version of the play, Caliban is described as a "savage and deformed slave." Given that Ariel and Caliban are "natives" of the island, what contemporary issues does their relationship to Prospero bring up? What responsibilities does a director have in staging *The Tempest* for a modern audience? Discuss how TAM's production emphasized issues of privilege and the parallels of Prospero being usurped and then usurping the original inhabitants of the island.

5. It Makes You Think

Encourage your students to reflect on the play in any and all of the following ways:

- Write a scene in response to the play, perhaps on the boat back to Italy.
- Write a review of the production.
- Write a theatrical adaptation of another piece of literature, perhaps a sonnet.
- Create a set design for the world of the play.
- Sketch favorite images from the production.
- Design a poster for a production of *The Tempest*.
- Create a collage of images in response to the play.

We would love to read student writings or view the artwork they create in response to the play. Please send to: Theater at Monmouth, P.O. Box 385, Monmouth, ME 04259.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Books on Shakespeare and *The Tempest*

- Asimov, Isaac. *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare*. Doubleday, 1978
- Cahn, Victor L. *The Plays of Shakespeare: A Thematic Guide*. Greenwood Press, 2001
- Gibson, Janet and Rex Gibson. *Discovering Shakespeare's Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1999
- McDonald, Russ. *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*, St. Martin's Press, 1996
- Macfarlane, Alan. "Civility and the Decline of Magic," *Civil Histories: Essays in Honour of Sir Keith Thomas*. Oxford University Press, 2000
- Borchardt, Frank. "The Magus as Renaissance Man" *16th Century Journal XXI*, 1990
- Bronowski, Jacob. "Black Magic and White Magic" *Black and White Magic* 2001.
- The World Treasury of Physics, Astronomy, and Mathematics. 2005.

The Tempest on DVD

- 2015 *Shakespeare's Globe on Screen*. Directed by Jeremy Herrin. Roger Allam as Prospero
- 2012 *Stratford Shakespeare Festival*. Directed by Des McAnuff. Christopher Plummer as Prospero
- 2011 *Touchstone Features*. Directed by Julie Taymor. Helen Mirren as Prospero
- 1960 *Made for TV*. Directed by George Schaefer. Roddy McDowell as Ariel, Richard Burton as Caliban, Maurice Evans as Prospero.

Books on Teaching Shakespeare

- Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge University Press, 1998
- Reynolds, P. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Oxford University Press, 1992
- Rosenblum, Joseph. *A Reader's Guide to Shakespeare*. Salem Press, Inc., 1998

Websites

- PBS's *In Search of Shakespeare* <http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/>
- Folger Shakespeare Library <http://www.folger.edu>
- MIT Shakespeare: Complete Works, <http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/>

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy addressed in the Guide: Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
 - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas, and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
 - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
 - Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
 - Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.