

# Twelfth Night

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Jim Holmes     Music Director Kenny Hayes



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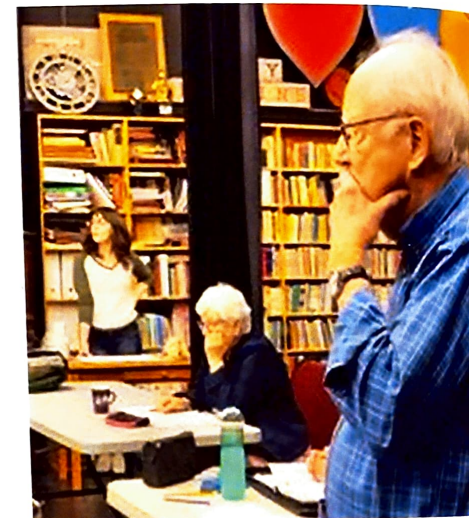
### CAST

ORSINO	Ian Gillies
SEBASTIAN	Nicholas Maillet
ANTONIO	Roy Van Hooydonk
A SEA CAPTAIN	Greg Winklemaier
VALENTINE	Ravneek Kaur
CURIO	Alan Wong
SIR TOBY BELCH	Dale MacEachern
SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK	Brian McManus
MALVOLIO	Barry Daley
FABIENNE	Kim Strauss
FESTE	Kenny Hayes
OLIVIA	Emily Walsh
VIOLA	Abbey Sugars-Keen
MARIA	Mary Ellen Vice
SERVANT TO OLIVIA	Julie Melnyk
FIRST OFFICER	Harold Swaffield
SECOND OFFICER	Iiona Henkelman
A PRIEST	Greg Winklemaier



### THE BAND

Tanya Chang  
Joe MacGillivray  
Beth MacGillivray  
Alan Wong







# TWELFTH NIGHT



FIRST PERSON

# I relish the community in community theatre

ELIZABETH NASH

CONTRIBUTED TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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ILLUSTRATION BY MARLEY ALLEN-ASH

*First Person* is a daily personal piece submitted by readers. Have a story to tell? See our guidelines at [tgam.ca/essayguide](https://tgam.ca/essayguide).

For many years, the only physical contact I had with other people came from being pushed against strangers on the bus or shaking a perfunctory hand at

work. I had long since moved away from home, and my boyfriend and I were long-distance.

In the wake of the pandemic and the isolation it brought, I decided to volunteer with my local community theatre. I had all the skills of a warm body but my interest was enough to land me in the makeup room. I quickly learned that any concept of personal space would soon disappear.

When I told my friends that I was officially a makeup artist, I was met with dead silence before being asked, "Are you serious?" When I had put on eyeliner in the past, I either looked like a raccoon or gave up after almost poking out my eye; there was no middle ground. Now I was being trusted as a "professional."

I was recruited to help with *Twelfth Night*, which featured a cast of more than 20 actors. On my first night, I immediately forgot the tutorials I'd received as I approached my victim in the makeup chair. Was it possible to kill someone with a tube of mascara? I would soon find out.

I dabbed my first sponge and stepped toward the actor, and then stopped. I'd been ready to laugh and make jokes, but I was suddenly struck by the poignancy of the moment.

I could see his laugh lines, his wrinkles, his scars, his beauty, everything he noted in the mirror in the morning. Here I was, erasing all that made him an individual and turning him into his character. I had been told to project confidence because the last thing an actor needs is a nervous makeup artist, so I approached the actor with renewed enthusiasm and pretended that I was used to such private moments.

Of course, there were times when I had to focus less on the person in the makeup chair and more on quelling my panic. One night I was liberally applying blush to the cheeks of a gentleman who had salt-and-pepper sideburns. By the time I turned his chair to see the results in the full light of

the mirror, I realized his sideburns were now a bright neon pink. “Project confidence,” I thought to myself. As I fixed this mistake I was suddenly acquainted with every hair and every mole.

“Theatre is intimate,” the actor who played Antonio told me later in the show’s run. The previous night, I’d seen him brandishing a fencing sword onstage, full of swagger and confidence. In the makeup room, he was soft-spoken and kind, and he went on to tell me about his experience being a background extra in a Hallmark Christmas movie. (When I mentioned this to a second actor, he pulled out his phone, and showed me a five-second clip of his own appearance in a Hallmark Christmas movie.)

Throughout the performances of *Twelfth Night*, I continued chatting with most of the actors. The discussions ranged from illnesses to the birth of grandchildren to funerals to trivia facts about Vikings. Our proximity jump-started these discussions; it was hard to be shy when I was examining someone’s eyebrow from every possible angle.

In previous years I was grateful for the physical distancing guidelines that kept me safe during the pandemic, and now I was grateful that I could work so closely with the actors and learn about their lives offstage.

In *As You Like It*, the character Orlando says, “I do desire we may be better strangers.” Shakespeare meant this as an insult, that it would be better to be strangers than friends. But I’ve been mulling over this statement and thinking about it in a different context. Could I be a “better stranger” in my own life? I may not know the stories of everyone around me – the person beside me in an elevator, or in front of me in line, or opposite me on the train – but I am more aware of their physical presence and the opportunity to share the same space. Perhaps I can be a “better stranger” by listening more; if I can make someone’s day a bit easier just by listening to what they have to say, then one day I may make the leap from being a stranger into being a friend.

In the end, I managed to last until *Twelfth Night* closed without being fired from my volunteer role, and thankfully I hadn't poked anyone's eye. When I was asked if I would be interested in coming back again, I enthusiastically told the team to sign me up.

My hand still shakes when applying eyeliner, but these days I'm curious to know more about the people around me, whether they are backstage or walking down the street. I don't think I'll start any unwanted conversations, but when the opportunity arises, I'm ready to listen and learn about the stories that are waiting to be told.

*Elizabeth Nash lives in Ottawa.*

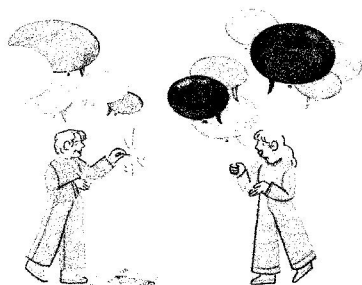
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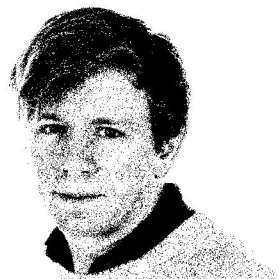
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KELLY NESTRUCK

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