**Twelfth Night**

**by William Shakespeare**

**Audio Description Introduction**

**to the streamed performance by**

**the Lir, National Academy of Dramatic Art, June 2021**

Welcome to the audio description introduction to **Twelfth Night** by William Shakespeare, presented by the Lir Academy.

The play is directed by Davey Kelleher. Set Design is by Pai Rathaya, Costume Design by Sarah Foley and Lighting Design by Paul Keogan. Sound Design is by Denis Clohessy.

The performance lasts for approximately two hours and forty-five minutes with one fifteen-minute interval. This interval will later be cut from non-live streams.

**ABOUT THE PLAY**

Separated at sea and thinking each other lost forever, twins take on new identities in their adopted home of Illyria.

One steps through the looking glass and becomes a man who falls in love with another man, while wanted by a different woman. Meanwhile, the other follows a similar path...

Together but separately, they enter a world of performance and sexual politics, where truth, illusion and the boundaries of identity are put to the test. Come and immerse yourself in the deliciously duplicitous trickery at work in this playful tale of transformation.

**Twelfth Night** will be live-streamed on the 23rd of June 2021 at 7.30pm, with a recording available to book from the 24th of June to the 1st of July. Once booked, the link remains active to view until the 8th of July.

Details about the performances and how to book, can be found online at [www.thelir.ie](http://www.thelir.ie), or by calling the Lir Box Office at (01) 896 2559.

**ABOUT THE SET**

This play is set in a cabaret style, with a central playing space, and the audience seated at small round wooden tables dotted around the perimeter. Each table has a small lamp, with lace and tassel lampshade, and dark red tablecloth – a couple of bentwood chairs set on either side.

The auditorium is rectangular. At one narrow end is a wall covered with a distressed mirror effect. Directly in front of this is a large raised platform, a circular stage fixed in place, painted white with steps leading up to it. At the far end of the auditorium, to one side, is a raised arc platform with a set of heavy red curtains, providing an entrance into the space. Between these two ends there is an area of wooden flooring – black and white checkerboard – that has been teased out at the corners to create a swirling, amorphous shape, where each black and white tile has been elongated, twisted and misshapen.

Set on this checkered floor is a second smaller circular podium which can be wheeled about, and is used as a stage, a chair and a table, as needs be.

On the periphery, set between the audience tables, are three wooden doorframes on casters, with LED strip lighting attached to the frame. They too can be moved about, and are set in place to represent doorways and entrances, and also used later, with all three surrounding the smaller podium, to create a claustrophobic jail cell.

Set against the walls of the auditorium, at regular intervals behind the audience, are seven dressing tables, each lit with low wattage bulbs, and several coat racks. When not onstage, the actors return to these tables to change their costumes, fix their hair and make-up and gather their props. Along with the props and costumes, the tables are dressed with trinket boxes and crystal wine glasses.

The lighting in this production befits the cabaret style. The audience table lamps and dressing table bulbs remain lit, albeit at a low level, throughout. Spotlights pick out different scenes and highlight the actors. Looming high over our heads in the auditorium are five giant paper globe lampshades, like paper moons in a dark sky.

Music is played live by the cast throughout this performance, with a piano set by the mirrored wall, and various instruments at the dressing tables. Occasionally, a radio is heard – an old-fashioned mid-century radio, perched on top of the piano.

From time to time, an old silver micrphone on a stand is brought out by one of the actors.

**ABOUT THE CAST AND COSTUMES**

**Orsino, the duke of Illyria**, is played by Benedict Landsbert-Noon. A young man with brown hair, neatly parted at the side, and trimmed beard, Orsino has a serious face and carries himself in a sedate manner. He wears a headpiece of rolled curls, with fabric roses in navy, cream and grey silk clustered over his left ear. On his right cheek is painted a small, red heart. A single curl of his fringe rests on his forehead.

Orsino wears an antique gold silk shirt, with pale mint green and gold brocade knee breeches and matching frock coat. The collar and lapels of his coat are decorated with a cascade of fabric roses that match his headpiece. He wears flat pale gold slip-on shoes.

The same actor also appears as **Sir Toby Belch**, kinsman to the countess Olivia. Sir Toby wears a hairband with fabric animal ears attached, a blush pink fluffy coat, cream long-johns rolled up to the knee, and loose-fitting tan brogues. He strides about, bare-chested, his movements loose and a little debauched, his voice loud and imperious.

In the musical interludes, this actor plays the guitar.

**Olivia**, a countess in Illyria, is played by Honi Cooke. She is a petite young woman, with porcelain complexion and fair hair pinned back, with soft curls framing her face. She wears a Victorian black damask dress with ruffled hem, high collar, and full-length sleeves. When visitors arrive at her household, she puts on a broad-brimmed hat with lilac netting piled on top, and a long black lace veil that falls to the floor, with several strands of sequinned ribbon catching the light. She appears decisive, and firm of voice, but just as quickly second-guesses herself with a private huff, or clenched fist.

Cathal Ryan plays Sir Toby’s companion **Sir Andrew Aguecheek**. A tall man, with wild curly red hair and full beard, Sir Andrew totters about in purple glitter mid-heeled shoes, with flamboyant antique gold silk trousers with an all-over geometric pattern in dark green and russet. He teams this with a mustard-yellow silk shirt, salmon-pink silk frock coat and white Jacobean ruff collar. Sir Andrew wears a hairpiece of curled ringlets and coloured feathers tousled through his own hair. He is loud and giggling, and moves about with flourishes of his carved walking stick.

He also appears as **Antonio**, a sea captain responsible for rescuing one of the other characters. Antonio appears in a simple blue cotton jacket, bare chest revealing many nautical tattoos, and blue cotton wide-leg trousers. He speaks with a low and serious voice, with a slightly more rural accent.

Olivia’s waiting woman, **Maria**, is played by Julie Crowe. She is pale, with long, dark brown wavy hair and wears smoky eye make-up. She wears a black silk, pleated turban with a glittering brooch above the forehead, and a long, chunky necklace of embossed coins and chains around her neck. Maria wears a black dress with tiered skirt, black tights and black mid-heel shoes. She has a tan leather belt at the waist, and covers her ensemble with a claret red burnout velvet kimono with fringed edging. Maria carries with her a small velvet coin bag, and wears multiple rings on her fingers.

The steward of Olivia’s household, **Malvolia**, is played by Chloe O’Reilly. A short woman with light brown hair, slickly pulled back into a low ponytail, Malvolia wears no make-up. Her uniform consists of a rust-brown cotton shirt and trousers, with a heavy, dark brown apron and thick brown leather belt. Over this she wears a black full-length leather overcoat and black knee-high boots. Her voice and mannerisms are clipped, and precise.

Later, the same actor appears as a police officer, donning a uniform jacket, cap, and moustache, and as a priest, wearing a black biretta and vestments. In the musical interludes, this actor plays the violin.

**Feste,** played by Taylor McClaine, is Olivia’s jester, or fool. They wear a tunic and wide trousers in heavy white cotton, with an all-over repeated motif of an eye stitched in rough black thread, even on their lace-up canvas boots and cone-shaped hat. Feste has a pale complexion and short, neat red hair, and plays the ukulele and sings throughout.

The same actor also appears at other times as a sea captain, and a police officer, quickly changing into the relevant uniforms.

**Viola**, played by Shona Gibson, is tall, with long fair hair which she quickly ties back in a bun upon her arrival in Illyria. She is fresh-faced with fair complexion. When she first appears, she wears a white cotton sailor’s tunic with large flap collar, dark blue denim shorts to the knees, short white socks and white canvas deck shoes, and a khaki peaked cap.

Later, she wears a plain white shirt, and frock coat of sky-blue, with glittering silver thread coiled all over, and a navy ruffled collar, with the same shorts and canvas shoes. In the musical interludes, this actor plays the saxophone.

**Sebastian**, her twin brother, is played by Liam Bixby. He is slight, with fair hair, and wears a similar white sailor’s tunic, with navy trousers and canvas shoes. He later wears a navy frock coat, with sky-blue ruffled collar.

The same actor also appears as **Curio**, a servant to Orsino. Curio wears the same feathered hair ornaments as the Count, with a heart drawn on one cheek, a pale blue ruffled silk shirt, and cream breeches with gold floral pattern with matching shoes.

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Thank you.

