

Twelfth Night Mainstage Performance Project Overview Narrative

I have been directing *Twelfth Night* since the beginning of the spring semester as part of Shakespeare on the Lawn, a student theater CIO at the University. Unfortunately, COVID-19 got in the way of our plans to perform in April 2020. With only four more weeks until our planned opening, we received information that we would not be returning to Grounds and, therefore, we could not put on the play. Canceling the show entirely, which some student theater CIOs have had to do due to rights restrictions, was unthinkable to me. Denying my cast and crew the opportunity to present all their hard work would be the worst way to handle an already disappointing situation, so I made plans to postpone the show until the fall semester. Shakespeare on the Lawn, however, had already made plans for the fall mainstage show, and the organization is not currently in the financial position to support two mainstage shows in one semester.

Although I loved the project before the pandemic, it has evolved into something more symbolic for me, my cast, and my crew. This play now represents the resilience of artists, even in the face of great tragedy. It represents our dedication to an art form that we love and that we trust with our stories. We may have lost our first performance date, but that will not stop us from reminding audiences of their worth and cheering them up with this classic comedy. The objective of the project is to have a full weekend of a mainstage production (i.e. not in a lecture hall) of *Twelfth Night* so that we can reach a larger audience and so that we can retain the technical work that has already been put into this production.

The project reimagines Shakespeare's comedy as taking place not exactly in the American 1950s, but in the idealized, imagined version of the decade that '50s advertisements and media so desperately desired. The original text of *Twelfth Night* includes themes of gender roles, love, and sexuality, all of which the 1950s media aesthetic exaggerates, presenting strict gender roles and heteronormativity as the idealized American life. Viola cross dresses as male Cesario, breaking these intensely prescribed gender roles and introducing to Illyria a revolutionary understanding of gender and sexuality. By adapting to meet this aesthetic that has already solidified itself so deeply in the American psyche, the breaking of gender roles and restrictions on sexuality will appear more exaggerated to the audience that has grown up understanding the strict ideals of the decade. This play elaborates on many topics relevant to college students — moving into a new stage of life, rectifying misunderstandings, and self-discovery, among other examples — and by applying a well-known aesthetic to the piece, we will make the Shakespearean text more accessible to a modern collegiate audience.

For this project, I already have a cast and a technical crew ready, with only a few recently opened spots as a result of fourth-year students' graduation. In order to present this show most effectively, I need access to lighting equipment, sound equipment, set supplies, and a space in which to perform. Ideally, we will perform in the Student Activities Building or Newcomb Theatre. Rentals for those spaces have not yet opened; however, our goal is to secure them as soon as possible. My biggest concern for this project is securing a performance space that works well with the physical work we've already done on the play, as many other performing arts groups have lost their shows from spring semester and spaces will therefore be in high demand. Should the SAB and Newcomb Theatre not be available at reasonable times, I am open to performing in the O'Hill Forum or renting out a space that is not available for free for UVA organizations, such as Old Cabell Hall. I will also work with my faculty mentor to locate alternate spaces should all my preferred spaces be unavailable.

In order to create an outcome report, I will use both my personal notes from rehearsal and my stage manager's official rehearsal reports to create a summary of the project from start (i.e. picking up after our forced hiatus) to finish. I will also be sure to record the process via photo and video to create a more dynamic presentation at the Miller Arts Scholars Showcase Presentation. This presentation will include a recorded scene from the final with a brief explanation of its technical and artistic significance to my initial objective of encouraging self-discovery and self-expression.

Project Timeline

SUMMER:

May 15: Earliest possible time to reserve spaces. (This could change based on how the University administration addresses COVID-19 in the coming months.)

Present – Aug. 17: Interview and audition candidates for cast and crew replacements (possibly remotely, depending on CDC regulations). Have space and date for performance finalized.

Aug. 18: One week before fall semester classes begin. Have all replacement cast and crew members finalized. Remind actors to review lines and blocking before first rehearsal.

FALL:

Aug. 25 – Aug. 27: Rehearsals (typically 7-10 p. m., Monday – Thursday) begin. This first week will focus on getting the show back on its feet: reviewing blocking and lines, adapting to our new performance space (if our final space changes our initial set plans), meeting new team members.

Aug. 31 – Sept. 3: Stumble-thru and necessary scene work, spending extra attention on scenes with new actors. Finalize stage combat (i.e. at show speed). End week with a full run-thru.

Sept. 7 – Sept. 10: Scene work and act-long run-thrus. End week with a full run-thru.

Sept. 14 – Sept. 17: Earliest move-in date for tech (most likely move-in date if in the Student Activities Building). Scene cleaning and act-long run-thrus. End week with a full run-thru.

Sept. 19: Cue to cue if in SAB

Sept. 20 – Sept. 23: Tech and Dress Rehearsal Week if in SAB

Sept. 24 – Sept. 26: Performances if in SAB

Sept. 27: Move-out of the SAB*

SPRING:

Oct. 5 – March 26, 2021: Assembling report and presentation for Miller Arts Scholars Showcase Presentation. Editing footage and photography. Summarizing rehearsal reports into a comprehensive narrative of the project.

First week of April, 2021: Outcome report and presentation for Miller Arts Scholars Showcase Presentation.

* I'm using the SAB as a guide because it's the performance space the organization has used the most and because the possible performance date for that space is the clearest.

Budget

Lighting Equipment Rental from UVA Drama Dept.	\$1,080.00 [†]
Gel Filters (10 @ \$7.37 each)	\$73.70
Zip Ties (3 @ \$11.58 each)	\$34.74
Gobos (5 @ \$13.69 each)	\$68.45
Sound Equipment Rental from First Year Players	\$200.00 [‡]
Professional Grade Gaffer's Tape (12 @ \$17.60 each)	\$211.20
Black Tie Line, 600 ft. (3 @ \$25.80 each)	\$77.40
25 ft. XLR Cables (6 @ \$10.52 each)	\$63.12
50 ft. XLR Cables (4 @ \$15.78 each)	\$63.12
10 ft. XLR Cables (6 @ \$7.36 each)	\$44.16
6 ft. XLR Cables (4 @ \$6.31 each)	\$25.24
Plywood: 2"x4"x8' (10 @ \$3.57 each)	\$35.70
5mm Plywood: 4'x8' (3 @ \$16.76 each)	\$50.28
Trim Nails, 255 ct (2 @ \$6.30 each)	\$12.60
Latex Paint, Tintable (8 @ \$15.77 each)	\$126.16
Primer (4 @ \$18.62 each)	\$74.48
Paint Brushes (5 @ \$9.45 each)	\$47.25
Paint Roller	\$9.98
Detail Brushes (3 @ \$9.47 each)	\$28.41
Painters Tape (3 @ \$8.40 each)	\$25.20
Scissors (4 @ \$17.36 each)	\$69.44
Screws	\$9.97
Matte Finish (4 @ \$9.99 each)	\$39.96
Hot Glue Sticks (3 @ \$8.93 each)	\$26.79
Fake Flowers	\$6.90
Penske Rental Truck	\$140.00
Storage Unit Rental (Aug. – Sept.)	\$350.00
TOTAL	\$2994.25

[†] Estimate amount based on recent Shakespeare on the Lawn productions

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