

STUDY GUIDE OBJECTIVES

This study guide serves as a classroom tool for teachers and students, and addresses the following standards:

COMMON CORE STANDARDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading Literature: *Key Ideas and Details*

- **Grades 9-10:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **Grades 9-10:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Reading Literature: *Craft and Structure*

- **Grades 9-10:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful (include Shakespeare as well as other authors).
- **Grades 9-10:** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- **Grades 11-12:** Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Reading Literature: *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- **Grade 9-10:** Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).
- **Grades 11-12:** Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text (include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist).

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS FOR THEATRE

Theatre/Creating

- **TH:Cr1.1.HSI-a.** Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Cr1.1.HSII-a.** Investigate historical and cultural conventions and their impact on the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Cr1.1.HSII-b.** Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Responding

- **TH:Re7.1.HSI-a.** Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.
- **TH:Re8.1.HSI-b.** Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Re8.1.HSI-c.** Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Re9.1.HSI-b.** Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Connecting

- **TH:Cn11.2.HSI-b.** Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.

GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDING THE THEATRE

Attending live theatre is a unique experience with many valuable educational and social benefits. To ensure that all audience members are able to enjoy the performance, please take a few minutes to discuss the following audience etiquette topics with your students before you come to Hartford Stage.

- How is attending the theatre similar to and different from going to the movies? What behaviors are and are not appropriate when seeing a play? Why?
 - › Remind students that because the performance is live, the audience can affect what kind of performance the actors give. No two audiences are exactly the same and no two performances are exactly the same—this is part of what makes theatre so special! Students' behavior should reflect the level of performance they wish to see.
- Theatre should be an enjoyable experience for the audience. Audience members are more than welcome to applaud when appropriate and laugh at the funny moments. Talking and calling out during the performance, however, are not allowed. Why might this be?
 - › Be sure to mention that not only would the people seated around them be able to hear their conversation, but the actors on stage could hear them, too. Theatres are constructed to carry sound efficiently!
- Any noise or light can be a distraction, so please remind students to make sure their cell phones are turned off. Texting, photography, and video recording are prohibited. Food and gum should not be taken into the theatre.
- Students should sit with their group as seated by the Front of House staff and should not leave their seats once the performance has begun. If possible, restrooms should be used only during intermission.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS PLOT SYNOPSIS

In the city of Ephesus, Duke Solinus leads Aegeon, a middle-aged merchant trader, to his execution. Aegeon is from the city of Syracuse, Ephesus' economic rival. By law, any Syracusan caught in Ephesus must pay a fine of one thousand marks or face execution, and Aegeon cannot pay. When the Duke asks why Aegeon came to Syracuse, Aegeon tells of his journey.

25 years ago, Aegeon prospered as a trader in Syracuse. While his wife Aemilia was expecting a child, the two had to travel to a nearby city for business. While there, Aemilia gave birth to identical twin sons, both named Antipholus. At the same time, another woman gave birth to identical twin sons, both named Dromio, and Aegeon purchased the twins as servants to his sons. Tragedy struck upon their return journey; a storm tore their ship apart and Aegeon and two of the children—one Antipholus and one Dromio—were separated from Aemilia and the other two children. Aegeon and Aemilia never saw each other again. Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse were raised by Aegeon. When Antipholus of Syracuse became an adult, he and his Dromio left Syracuse to search for the missing half of their family. Aegeon followed, and eventually ended up in Ephesus, despite the threat of execution.

The Duke finds this story deeply moving, and thereupon grants Aegeon one day of freedom, allowing him time to attempt to raise the one thousand marks necessary to avoid his execution. Although the task seems futile, Aegeon sets about Ephesus, searching for help.

Meanwhile, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse arrive in Ephesus, where, unbeknownst to them, both of their twin brothers live. Complications ensue as their identities are mistaken for one another and messages are mixed. Though the people of Ephesus see both Antipholuses and Dromios throughout the day (but assume, of course, that they're only seeing one Antipholus and one Dromio), neither Antipholus nor Dromio ever run into their own twin, and so they cannot understand the madness that seems to be happening all around them.

By the end of the day, Antipholus of Syracuse falls in love with his twin's wife's sister (who thinks he is Antipholus of Ephesus, her sister's husband, gone mad). Antipholus of Ephesus is sent to jail for stealing a gold chain (which was given to the other Antipholus) and, on account of his strange behavior, sent to a would-be sorcerer to be exorcised. Everyone accuses everyone else of witchcraft and lunacy.

Aegeon fails to find the funds for his release, and the Duke leads him to his execution. Antipholus of Ephesus appears and asks the Duke for justice against his wife, who he thinks has locked him out of his own house (because she assumed Antipholus of Syracuse to be her husband).

When Aegeon sees Antipholus of Ephesus, he greets him happily as his son, to which Antipholus responds that he never knew his father and has lived in Ephesus forever. Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse enter with an Abbess (who is revealed to be Aemilia, Aegeon's long-lost wife). All of the tangles are resolved, and the Duke pardons Aegeon's life. The company retires inside the Abbey for a celebratory feast.



Boats on the Aegean Sea.
Photo by Mstyslav Chernov.

**BETWEEN
205 BCE-184 BCE**

Plautus writes *Menaechmi*, from which Shakespeare draws the main storyline for *The Comedy of Errors*.

APRIL 23, 1564

William Shakespeare is born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, to John Shakespeare, an established glove maker and Mary Arden, a leather dresser.

1576

London creates its first permanent theatre, The Theatre, which forms a new appreciation for theatre in the city.

1582

William Shakespeare, at 18 years old, marries 26-year-old Anne Hathaway in Warwickshire.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

AEGEON: A merchant, father to the Antipholuses, and husband to Aemilia. Aegeon follows Antipholus of Syracuse to the city of Ephesus. As he is from Ephesus' rival city of Syracuse, he must either pay one thousand marks (money) or be sentenced to death for trespassing in the city of Ephesus.

DUKE SOLINUS: The Duke of Ephesus, who takes pity on Aegeon after hearing his sad story, and allows him a day to collect the thousand marks bail.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: Raised in Syracuse by Aegeon, this Antipholus had set out to find his twin brother, and ends up in Ephesus.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: Raised in Syracuse, this Dromio is Antipholus of Syracuse's servant. He has traveled with his master to Ephesus.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS: Raised in Ephesus, this Antipholus is a well-known person in town. He is married to Adriana.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS: Raised in Ephesus, this Dromio is Antipholus of Ephesus' servant. He is married to Nell.

ADRIANA: Wife to Antipholus of Ephesus. She suspects that her husband is unfaithful to her when he starts behaving strangely and says he has no wife (this turns out to be Antipholus of Syracuse, not her husband).

LUCIANA: Adriana's sister. Antipholus of Syracuse falls in love with her, but she rejects his advances thinking that he is her sister's husband.

ANGELO: A goldsmith. He makes a gold chain for Antipholus of Ephesus which ends up in the hands of Antipholus of Syracuse. He demands payment, and when he doesn't get it he has Antipholus of Ephesus arrested.

NELL: A kitchen maid in Antipholus of Ephesus' house. She is married to Dromio of Ephesus. She is unattractive, and many jokes are made at her expense.

COURTESAN: A prostitute. When Antipholus of Ephesus is locked out of his own house by his wife, he decides to have dinner with the Courtesan and offers to give her the gold chain he ordered for his wife.

DOCTOR PINCH: A conjurer, sorcerer, and would-be exorcist. Adriana is convinced, due to the confusing events of the day, that her husband is cursed or possessed by some evil spirit. She hires Doctor Pinch to try to exorcise her husband.

AEMILIA: Aegeon's long-lost wife. She has been living in Ephesus as an abbess since being separated from the rest of her family by the shipwreck.



Above: Antipholus of Ephesus. Below: Courtesan. Costume designs by Fabio Toblini.



1589-1594

1594

JANUARY 1585

Shakespeare's wife Anne has twins, named Hamnet and Judith.

Shakespeare writes many of his early plays, including *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Henry VI Parts 1 and 3*, *King John*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Titus Andronicus*.

1593

Shakespeare writes the poem *Venus and Adonis*, and the play *Richard III*.

Shakespeare establishes himself as both an actor and playwright for the newly created acting company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men.

Language in *The Comedy of Errors*: The Mechanics of Funny Lines

By Aurelia Clunie

For over four hundred years, the language of Shakespeare's plays has moved audiences, inspired actors, and baffled many. Shakespeare's language can be confusing at first, but can also be decoded and spoken by all. With a little work, everyone from third grade students to seasoned actors like Patrick Stewart can perform Shakespeare's text with confidence.

Iambic Pentameter

Shakespeare did much of his writing in a form called iambic pentameter, in which each line of text has ten alternately stressed syllables (five pairs, or feet). There are five iambs in each line.

A full line of iambic pentameter has the rhythm:

da-**DUM** da-**DUM** da-**DUM** da-**DUM** da-**DUM**

Or, for example:

but **soft** what **light** through **yonder window breaks**
(Romeo, 2.2, *Romeo and Juliet*)

Are **you** a **god** would **you** create me **new**?
(Antipholus of Syracuse, 3.2, *The Comedy of Errors*)

Sometimes the verses in Shakespeare's plays rhyme; however, Shakespeare often used blank (unrhymed) verse, as he does in much of *The Comedy of Errors*. For example:

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

In Ephesus I am but two hours old,
As strange unto your town as to your talk;
(2.2)

Notice how "hours" can be compressed into one syllable to fit the rhythm. Some say this rhythm echoes the human heartbeat and is a naturally spoken rhythm in English. Actors generally do not speak it in a sing-song fashion, emphasizing the rhythm or meter, but are aware of it and allow it to influence which words are stressed in the context of a scene.

However, much like life, blank verse is not perfect. Sometimes Shakespeare's lines do have extra syllables, or are short some syllables. Sometimes the emphasis changes. Many scholars and actors believe variation in blank verse offers insight into a character's state of mind, emotional state, or reaction to what is happening onstage:

ADRIANA

How comes it now, my husband, O how comes **it**,
That thou art thus estranged from thyself?
(2.2)

METER = the arrangement of a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables to create rhythm in a verse.

FOOT = the basic unit of meter.

IAMB = a metrical foot consisting of one unstressed followed by one stressed syllable.

PROSE = text written in common language that resembles everyday speech; has irregular rhythm and lacks metrical structure.

VERSE = text (song, poetry, or dramatic text) written in metrical lines; it may rhyme.

BLANK VERSE = text (song, poetry, or dramatic text) written in iambic pentameter that does not rhyme.

1594, continued

Shakespeare writes *Romeo and Juliet* and *Love's Labour's Lost*.

1595

Shakespeare writes *Richard II* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

1596

Shakespeare writes *The Merchant of Venice* and *Henry IV, Part I*.

1597

Shakespeare completes *Henry IV, Part 2*.

1598

Shakespeare completes the play *Much Ado About Nothing*.

1599

Shakespeare writes *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Henry V*.

1600-1603

In three years, Shakespeare completes the following plays: *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Othello*.

Here, Adriana, Antipholus of Ephesus' wife, sees Antipholus of Syracuse and is appalled that he does not recognize her. The first line has an extra—eleventh—syllable and may denote her surprise or outrage at the way her assumed husband treats her. It is sandwiched inside a long, regular, iambic pentameter monologue. Right away, her text switches back to ten-syllable iambic pentameter as she attempts to remind Antipholus of “who he really is.”

Prose

Prose is another tool Shakespeare used to communicate information about a character's class or state of mind. Prose does not follow a specific rhyme scheme or rhythm. Instead, it sounds like everyday speech. Sometimes characters switch into prose when they are emotionally shaken or behaving unlike themselves. In many of his plays, lower class characters speak in prose, while upper class characters speak in verse. However, this is not a hard and fast rule. Here, Antipholus of Syracuse and his servant, Dromio, both speak in prose about the large woman who claims to be Dromio's wife. Dromio is distraught and drags Antipholus into a base conversation about her appearance:

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

What's her name?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Nell, sir. But her name and three quarters, that's an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from hip to hip.

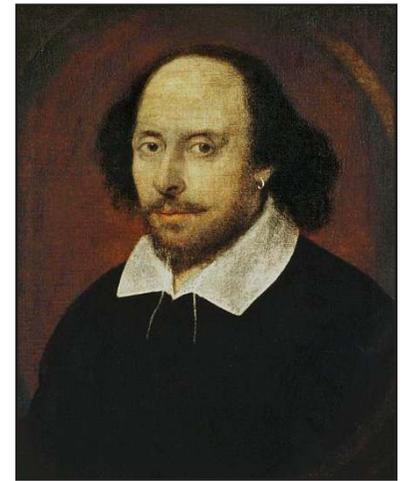
ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Then she bears some breadth?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip. She is spherical, like a globe. I could find out countries in her.

(3.2)



Portrait of William Shakespeare.

Verse

Verse is written in iambic pentameter, but also has a rhyme scheme. In many of Shakespeare's plays, royal and magical characters speak in verse. However, in *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare often uses verse for comic effect. Here, Antipholus of Syracuse falls in love with Adriana's sister, Luciana. While he attempts to woo her, Luciana, believing he is his twin, scolds him for his advances toward her:

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

It **is** **thys**self, mine **own** self's **better** **part**,
Mine **eye's** clear **eye**, my **dear** heart's **dearer** **heart**,
My **food**, my **fortune** **and** my **sweet** hope's **aim**,
My **sole** earth's **heaven** **and** my **heaven's** **claim**.

LUCIANA

All **this** my **sister** **is** or **else** should **be**.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Call **thys**self **sister**, **sweet**, for I am **thee**.
Thee **will** I **love** and **with** thee **lead** my **life**:
Thou **hast** no **husband** **yet** nor I no **wife**.
Give **me** thy **hand**.

1604-1605

Shakespeare completes the play *Measure For Measure*.

1604-1606

Shakespeare writes *Timon of Athens* and *King Lear*.

1606-1608

Throughout two years, Shakespeare writes *Macbeth*, *Pericles*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*.

1609

Shakespeare writes *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* in one year.

1610-1611

Shakespeare completes *The Tempest*.

1616

William Shakespeare dies of old age and illness.

1623

The First Folio of Shakespeare's work is published by fellow actors John Heminges and Henry Condell.

LUCIANA

O, **soft**, air! **Hold** you **still**:
I'll **fetch** my **sister**, **to** get **her** good **will**.
(3.2)

Throughout *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare switches between verse, blank verse, and prose for comic effect. He also uses a variety of literary devices in characters' dialogue to add to the comedy and clarify the relationships and situations between the characters.

Be on the lookout for these other literary devices:

Rhyme

Similar sounds at the ends of words.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

What patch is made our porter? My master stays in the street.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Let him walk from whence he came, lest he catch cold on's feet.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Who talks within there? Ho, open the door!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Right, sir; I'll tell you when, and you tell me wherefore.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Wherefore? For my dinner: I have not dined to-day.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Nor to-day here you must not; come again when you may.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

What art thou that keepest me out from the house I owe?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

The porter for this time, sir, and my name is Dromio.
(3.1)

Homonyms/Homophones

Words that have the same spellings but have different meanings/words that sound the same but are spelled differently. Also called a "play on words."

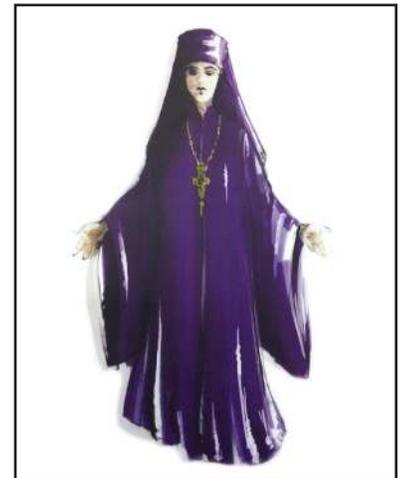
DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

I have some **marks** upon my pate,
Some of my mistress' **marks** upon my shoulders,
But not a thousand **marks** between you both.
(1.2)

marks = bruises from being beaten / marks = denomination of money



Above: Adriana. Below: Abbess.
Costume designs by Fabio Toblini.



1938

The Boys from Syracuse, a musical adaptation inspired by *The Comedy of Errors*, is first performed.

1988

Big Business premieres, a film inspired by *The Comedy of Errors*, with two sets of female twins.

1999

The Bomb-itty of Errors, a hip-hop retelling of *The Comedy of Errors*, is first performed.

2005

Darko Tresnjak directs *The Comedy of Errors* at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, CA.

Allusion

An expression that calls something to mind without mentioning it explicitly; an indirect or passing reference, often to the Bible, mythology, or historical literature.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note.
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears:
Sing, siren, for thyself and I will dote:
Spread o're the silver waves thy golden hairs,
And as a bed I'll take them and there lie,
And in that glorious supposition think
He gains by death that hath such means to die.
Let Love, being light, be drowned if she sink!
(3.2)

Lists

Shakespeare uses lists to build a character's argument and/or emotional state.

ADRIANA

The times was once when thou unurged wouldst vow
That never words were music to thine ear,
That never object pleasing to in thine eye,
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,
That never meat sweet-savor'd in they taste,
Unless I **spake**, or **look'd**, or **touch'd**, or **carved** to thee.
(2.2)

Simile

Comparing two unlike thing using "like" or "as."

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Am I so round with you as you with me,
That **like** a football you do spurn me thus?
You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither.
If I last in this service, you must case me in leather.
(2.1)



Portrait of Shakespeare at work.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Read the scene on the next page. Write in your own words what the characters say to each other. Then, identify which literary devices you notice. Highlight or underline the following in different colors.
 - Most important verb in each line
 - Rhyme
 - Repetition of words or phrases
 - Imagery, simile, or metaphor
 - Use of lists
- How might an actor or actress perform this rich language to express what Antipholus and Dromio are feeling and doing onstage? Use specific examples from this scene.

ACT 2, SCENE 2. A street in Ephesus.

Enter DROMIO OF EPHEBUS.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

What now? How chance thou art return'd so soon?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Return'd so soon! Rather approach'd too late.
The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit.
The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell.
My mistress made it one upon my cheek.
She is so hot because the meat is cold.
The meat is cold because you come not home.
You come not home because you have no stomach.

You have no stomach having broke your fast.
But we that know what 'tis to fast and pray
Are penitent for your default to-day.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season.
Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

To me, sir? Why, you have no gold to me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,
And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

My charge was but to fetch you from the mart
Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner.
My mistress and her sister stay for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Now, as I am a Christian, answer me:
In what safe place you have bestow'd my money,
Or I shall break that merry sponce of yours
That stands on tricks when I am undisposed.
Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

I have some marks of yours upon my pate,
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,
But not a thousand marks between you both.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Thy mistress' marks? what mistress, slave, hast thou?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Your worship's wife, my mistress at the Phoenix,
She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face?
There, take you that and that and that, sir knave.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

What mean you, sir? for God's sake, hold your hands!
Nay, and you will not sir, I'll take my heels.

DROMIO exits.

THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

The History of Bollywood

By Erin Rose

Hollywood, California, has long been the most famous capital of the film industry. Just the name calls to mind glamorous stars and big budget movie sets. However, amidst all that splendor and pizzazz, people tend to forget about the world's other film capital: India. The Indian film industry, commonly called "Bollywood," has its roots in Mumbai, the city formerly known as Bombay, India. The name comes from the combination of the words Bombay and Hollywood. Many Indians actually take issue with the name, because they feel it implies that Bollywood is a lesser version of Hollywood. In fact, Bollywood consistently comes out on top in terms of numbers of films produced (1,602 Bollywood films were produced in 2012 vs. 476 Hollywood films) and total ticket sales (\$2.6 billion in India to \$1.36 billion in the U.S.). So while it is lesser known in the United States, the Bollywood film industry is a leading player in the international film market.

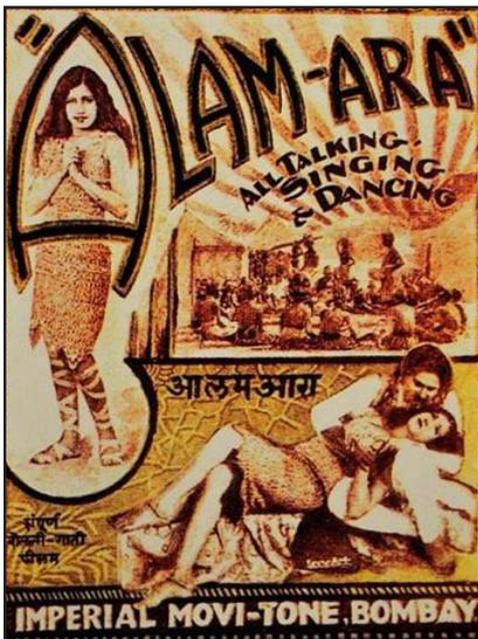
Even for those who have never actually seen a film from India, the word Bollywood immediately conjures up images of sumptuous, brightly colored productions shot in exotic locales featuring beautiful stars partaking in impressively choreographed song and dance numbers. Its distinctive style has influenced American films such as Baz Luhrman's *Moulin Rouge* and popular music like Selena Gomez's 2013 hit "Come and Get It." Bollywood musical numbers have recently popped up in several television shows, including *New Girl*, *Limitless*, *Psych*, and *Smash*. They also feature prominently in this production of *The Comedy of Errors*. But just what is Bollywood, exactly?

MASALA, a culinary term that means "spicy mixture," describes the type of film for which Bollywood became most famous: a mixture of genres including action, comedy, romance and melodrama, punctuated by 4-10 song and dance numbers.

Indian cinema traces its roots back to 1889, when portrait photographer Harischandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar screened the first short film. Entitled *The Wrestlers*, the film was simply a recording of a local wrestling match. The first-ever Indian feature film, the silent movie *Raja Harishchandra*, was released in 1913. From 1913 to 1930, most Indian films were either mythological or historical in nature. As imports from Hollywood (particularly action films) became increasingly popular, Indian producers took note. 1931 marked the release of the first Indian "talkie" film, which heralded the beginning of the Bollywood era. *Alam Ara* told the story of a young woman, the handsome prince she loved, and the wicked queen determined to claim the throne for herself. The film, which was described as a love story with "more singing and less talking," was a smashing success. On March 14, 1931, the night of its premiere at the Majestic Cinema in Bombay, the crowds were so large that emergency police aid had to be brought in to control them.

With the success of *Alam Ara*, the Bollywood film industry began to grow exponentially. In Andrew Grant's article *History of Bollywood Cinema from 1913 to the Present*, Grant states that "color films soon began to appear, as did early efforts in animation. Giant movie palaces were built, and there was a noticeable shift in audience makeup, namely in a significant growth in working-class attendees, who in the silent era accounted for only a small percentage of tickets sold." Even with mandated budgetary cutbacks during World War II, ticket sales continued to rise each year.

From the late 1940s through the 1950s, as India struggled for independence from the UK, France, and Portugal, cinematic themes began to include social issues relevant to the time. Some of the histories and mythological stories of the past were gradually replaced with films that turned a critical eye on such social practices as the dowry system, polygamy, and prostitution. These films also often focused more on the lives of the lower classes, who until then had been mostly ignored as cinematic subjects. These films shone in stark contrast to the more mainstream productions, which still provided largely escapist fare.



Promotional Poster for the 1931 film *Alam Ara*.

It is these more commercial films that lay the groundwork for what became known as Masala films. In her article, *Bollywood for Beginners*, Jennifer Hopfinger says that the goal of the Masala film "is to appeal to as many people as possible. That way there's something for everyone in every film—the grandparents, the parents, the teenagers, the little kids—because Indians often go to the movies as a family."

Most Masala films in Bollywood also include musical numbers. Unlike musical numbers in American musical theatre, which generally attempt to incorporate singing and dancing as realistically as possible into the action of the play, Bollywood musical numbers are deliberately unrealistic in order to signify to the audience that they are not literal. They joyfully embrace the fact that the characters are suddenly bursting into song mid-scene. In our production of *The Comedy of Errors*, you will see this occur when the character of Doctor Pinch performs an exorcism—his magic sending the entire population of Ephesus into an energetic Bollywood-style musical number. That musical interlude, along with the pantomime,

puppets, acrobatics, and broad comedy featured in this production, help to create a vibrant show full of joy and pageantry—exactly the type of feeling one would get from viewing a Masala film. Manmohan Desai, a Bollywood director who is considered to be the father of the Masala film, described his approach to filmmaking this way: "I want people to forget their misery. I want to take them into a dream world where

there is no poverty, where there are no beggars, where fate is kind and god is busy looking after his flock.”

The fantasy-fueled musical numbers and lush imagery of Bollywood have begun to transition into the American theatre world, as well. In 2004, the musical *Bombay Dreams* opened on Broadway and ran for 284 performances. And in May 2017, California’s Berkeley Repertory Theatre will premiere the new musical *Monsoon Wedding*, based on the hit Bollywood film of the same name. The film’s director, acclaimed Indian director Mira Nair, will also helm the stage version, which is eyeing an eventual Broadway transfer. With these vibrant productions, and the success of such recent Bollywood/Hollywood crossover films as *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, Bollywood may finally be getting their share of the Hollywood spotlight as well.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Bollywood films feature musical numbers that offer a break from reality and express the characters’ innermost thoughts at that moment in the story. Select a favorite non-musical film and describe three moments in which you would insert a musical number. What type of musical number would it be? What is the character trying to express through song?
- A Masala film is described as a “spicy mixture,” which includes elements of action, comedy, romance, and melodrama. There is something in the film for the whole family—from children to grandparents. What Hollywood films can you think of that also fit this description?
- Why do you think the director chose to utilize the Bollywood style in this production of *The Comedy of Errors*? What similarities are there between the play and Bollywood films?



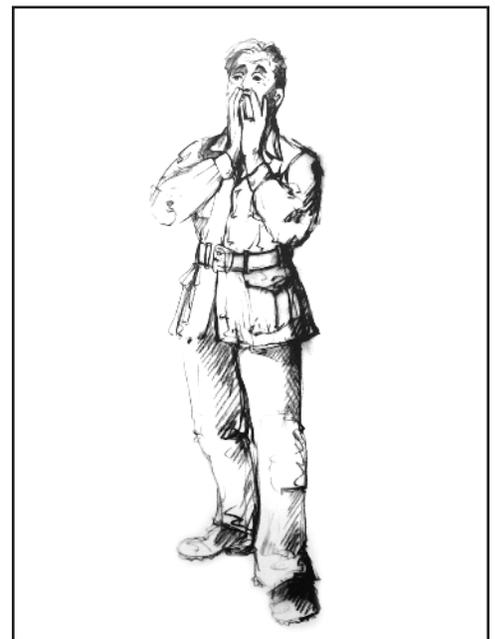
Buildings of Santorini Island. Photo by Mstyslav Chernov.

Cool Story, Tell It Again: Modern Adaptations of Shakespeare’s Plays

By Ishaar Gupta

In *The Art of Movies*, Nicolae Sfetcu states that “William Shakespeare has been called the most popular screenwriter in Hollywood.” Indeed, one of the interesting aspects of Shakespeare’s long legacy is how often his work is adapted. Throughout history, filmmakers, composers, choreographers, and animators have created a wide array of interpretations of the Bard’s work. Some of these adaptations follow the source material very closely; others modernize the dialogue, characters, and settings, but keep the general story intact.

While prevalent in modern Hollywood and Broadway, it is far from a new concept. Throughout the 1800s, famed Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi adapted many of Shakespeare’s works to the opera stage, including historically significant productions of *Macbeth* (*Macbeth*, 1847), *Othello* (*Otello*, 1887), and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (*Falstaff*, 1893). Hundreds of years later, in 1957, *Romeo and Juliet* traveled to a stage in Manhattan and became Leonard Bernstein’s *West Side Story*, a show that altered the trajectory of modern musical theatre forever. On the silver screen, Shakespeare’s stories began changing even more: *The Taming of the Shrew* traveled to an American high school with Julia Stiles and Heath Ledger taking the leads in *10 Things I Hate About You*. *Twelfth Night* had a similar treatment in *She’s the Man*, starring Amanda Bynes. And at Disney Studios in 1994, *Hamlet* traveled to a kingdom of lions in Africa, becoming *The Lion King*. While adapted significantly less than some of Shakespeare’s other standards, *The Comedy of Errors* has had its fair share of interpretations by various directors and writers. These adaptations have put their unique twists on Shakespeare’s work, expanding the story to tackle themes not originally addressed by Shakespeare.



Aegeon. Costume design by Fabio Toblini.

The breakthrough interpretation of *The Comedy of Errors* came in 1938, when composer Richard Rodgers and lyricist Lorenz Hart brought the swing and contemporary rhythms of the 1930s to the play with *The Boys from Syracuse*. Premiering on Broadway with several subsequent productions off-Broadway and in the West End, the musical originated several well-known show tunes such as “Falling in Love with Love,”

and “This Can’t Be Love.” The former, a waltz, was later recorded by singer Frank Sinatra, jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery, and Broadway star Bernadette Peters in another Rodgers musical, *Cinderella*, in 1997. The latter, sung by Antipholus of Syracuse and Luciana, parodied common depictions of love. Rodgers and Hart brought a new twist to the old farce, adding the lighthearted joy of 1930s musical theatre to Shakespeare’s comedy, and building up the love element between Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana, while poking fun at something similar between Antipholus of Syracuse and Luciana. Two years after its premiere, director A. Edward Sutherland brought the musical to the silver screen, starring Allan Jones as the two Antipholuses, Irene Hervey as Adriana, and Joe Penner as the two Dromios.



Promotional Poster for the 1940 film version of *The Boys from Syracuse*.

In 1999, show tunes would again be set to *The Comedy of Errors*, but this time with a DJ. *The Bomb-itty of Errors* is a modern adaptation written by Jordan Allen-Dutton, Jason Catalano, GQ, and Eric Weiner, with music by J.A.Q., and directed by Andy Goldberg. Its creators refer to it as a musical “add-rap-tation” of the original play. First created as a senior project at New York University, it subsequently went to an off-Broadway run, and a winning stand at the HBO U.S. Comedy Arts Festival. Reviews called it a “thrill,” (*Entertainment Weekly*) “slick and inventive,” (*Edinburgh Evening News*) and “nothing short of brilliant” (MTV). The show was credited with giving the farce a “Generation-Y rejuvenation,” modernizing the tale through hip-hop the same way Rodgers and Hart adapted it

with 1930s swing. *The Bomb-itty of Errors* remains a popular production for community theatres and school drama clubs.

The silver screen again would see an adaptation of the farce with 1988’s *Big Business*, directed by Jim Abrahams and starring Bette Midler and Lily Tomlin as the two sets of identical twins. While remaining faithful to the original storyline, the film changed the lead sets of twins from male to female, modernized the story to take place in America during the 1980s, and added an element of economics, with one set of twins ending up in a wealthy urban family and the other in a poor rural family.

While too early in Shakespeare’s repertoire to contain the same thematic depth as some of his other work, *The Comedy of Errors* thrives on its slapstick, mistaken identity, puns, and wordplay resulting in a thoroughly entertaining farce. While adaptations have varied its settings and themes, these elements of comedy have remained intact.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What other Shakespeare adaptations can you think of, either on screen or on stage? How does adaptation enhance or take away from Shakespeare’s original work?
- How does this production of *The Comedy of Errors* at Hartford Stage modernize or change the tale? Why do you think the director made these choices?

Like Brother and Brother: Twins in Literature

By Samantha Reser

The subject of twins has fascinated authors and playwrights for centuries, and Shakespeare is no exception. Shakespeare has two popular plays that center around twins: *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*. In both plays, the separation of twins is a central plot line.

One source of inspiration for Shakespeare’s writing about twins was likely his own family. He and his wife gave birth to a set of fraternal male and female twins in 1585; *The Comedy of Errors* premiered in 1594, and *Twelfth Night* likely premiered in 1601 or 1602. Particularly in *Twelfth Night*, it is reasonable to assume that he based the mannerisms of Viola and Sebastian on what he saw in his own life—or the memory of what he saw,

since his son passed away in 1596.

Shakespeare was likely also influenced by Greek literature, which features twins throughout its mythology. There are many sets of twins in Greek mythology, such as Apollo and Artemis and Castor and Pollux (the Gemini twins). These twins often represent a form of duality; Apollo is the god of the sun while Artemis is the goddess of the moon, and Castor is a mortal while Pollux is divine. Another myth originating in Greece claims that humans began as two-headed, four-armed and four-legged creatures. The title of the myth is “The Twin Flames.” In the myth, the god Zeus became angry at humanity and split the humans in two, leaving each with one head, two arms, and two legs. Humans were then fated to roam the Earth until they were able to find their “other half.” This myth is often applied to the concept of soulmates, and implies that each person is destined to find their other half.

In *The Comedy of Errors*, neither set of twins knows the others exist, and the crux of the play balances on the question of when they will finally meet. Aegeon informs the audience of both pairs of twins’ likenesses early on, which sets the plot in motion:

There she had not been long, but she became
A joyful mother of two goodly sons;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other,
As one could not be distinguish’d but by names.
That very hour, and in the self-same inn,
A meaner woman was delivered
Of such a burden, male twins, both alike.
(1.1)



Bells of the Blue Domed Church in Firostefani, Santorini island. Photo by Mstyslav Chernov.

He then tells of how he and his wife were separated during a storm, each with one half of the twin pairs. Years later, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse arrive in Ephesus and are repeatedly mistaken for Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus, and vice versa. The first time either set of twins come in contact with one another is through a door, so the twins are unable to see one another:

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

What art thou that keepest me out from the house I owe?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] The porter for this time sir, and my name is Dromio.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

O villain! thou hast stolen both mine office and my name.
(3.1)

In typical Shakespearean style, the moment of the twins meeting each other and the full explanation of their stories is kept until the very end of the play.

Shakespeare uses similar tropes in his play *Twelfth Night*, which premiered nearly ten years after *The Comedy of Errors*. The twins in *Twelfth Night* are fraternal male and female, but look enough alike that Viola can pose as Sebastian (or a similar version of him named Cesario). Viola believes that Sebastian is dead, but the audience soon understands that he is merely separated from Viola. The end of *Twelfth Night* reveals that both twins are alive, and Sebastian is able to step into his sister’s shoes to marry Olivia, who has fallen in love with Viola in her male persona. Through this, Shakespeare utilizes the common trope that implies twins can be interchangeable for one another, at least until they get caught.



Theatrical poster for an 1879 production of *The Comedy of Errors*, starring Robson and Crane.

The use of twins, look-alikes, and doubles in literature remains popular even today. Mark Twain wrote *The Prince and the Pauper*, which is a story of two men who look alike and trade identities for a time, but then get into trouble when the pauper is made king and the prince cannot properly claim his throne. Both movie versions of *The Parent Trap* tell of identical twin sisters, separated at birth just like the Antipholuses and the Dromios, meeting each other at camp and then switching identities in order to reunite their parents. Even the trope of twins as two halves of one whole is common among modern authors. An excellent example of this is Fred and George in the *Harry Potter* series; the two often finish each other’s thoughts and sentences.

Casting twins in a story opens up the potential for unique complications, which is likely why Shakespeare based not one, but two stories around twins. In both, the twins are fated to reunite:

We came into this world like brother and brother;
And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.
(Dromio of Ephesus, 5.4)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Can you think of any other examples of twins in literature? How are their stories similar to or different than those in *The Comedy of Errors*?
- In the production history of *The Comedy of Errors*, directors have cast the twin characters on a spectrum, ranging from actually casting identical twins to deliberately casting actors who look nothing like each other, even using actors of different genders or races. Which form of casting do you think is more effective, and why?

Commedia of Errors: Italian Comedy's Influence

By Krista DeVellis

The Comedy of Errors, one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, uses both high (Commedia Erudita) and low (Commedia dell'Arte) Italian comedy. Commedia Erudita, with humor based in wit and wordplay, was commonly performed in Shakespeare's time at court amongst aristocrats. It held an air of tradition and was based in classical influence from ancient Roman poets and playwrights. Commedia dell'Arte, on the other hand, had humor based in buffoonery and slapstick. Commedia dell'Arte would often be improvised with minimal supplies in marketplaces and town squares. It introduced many stock characters and comedy tropes that writers use to this day. In *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare draws influence from both of these types of Italian comedy.

In his youth in Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare studied Latin, and would have become familiar with plays from Roman playwrights. Shakespeare's main source of inspiration for *The Comedy of Errors* is a play called *Menaechmi* written between 205 and 184 BCE by the Roman playwright Plautus. Both stories revolve around a pair of twins who were separated when they were very young, and the troubles caused years later due to their being mistaken for one another. Shakespeare added a few characters and plot devices to this framework for his version of the tale, including a second set of twins, the Dromios. Beyond the plot, Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* mimics Plautus' *Menaechmi* in several ways that uphold the standards of Commedia Erudita. Both playwrights follow Aristotle's three unities within these plays. This means that all the events of the play take place within a day, within one location, and have one central line of action. Both plays introduce all necessary background information within the first moments of the play. *Menaechmi* begins, as many of Plautus' comedies do, with a direct-address prologue to the audience. Similarly, *The Comedy of Errors* begins with Aegeon's woeful explanation of his plight to the Duke. Lastly, many of the verbal jokes in *The Comedy of Errors* are influenced by Commedia Erudita's style of humor. In *The Comedy of Errors*, the Dromio twins often play with the words in their masters' commands. Take, for example, the following interaction when Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus are locked out of their own house:

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Here's too much 'out upon thee!' I pray thee,
let me in.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

[Within] Ay, when fowls have no feathers and fish have no fin.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Well, I'll break in: go borrow me a crow.

ARISTOTLE'S UNITIES

From his *Poetics*, Aristotle's Unities state that a play should have a single line of action (unity of action), occur in a single location (unity of place), and take place in a single day (unity of time). *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Tempest* are Shakespeare's only plays that follow all three.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

A crow without feather? Master, mean you so?
For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather;
If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Go get thee gone; fetch me an iron crow.
(3.1)

Here, Dromio of Syracuse is guarding the gate and says he will not let them in until birds have no feathers (much like today's phrase "when pigs fly"). Antipholus of Ephesus asks his Dromio to get him a crow bar to pry open the door, but only uses the word "crow," so Dromio of Ephesus jokes that they are going to de-feather a crow in order to get inside the house.

In updating the old *Menaechmi* tale, Shakespeare added the less refined humor practices of Commedia dell'Arte to *The Comedy of Errors*. This is particularly apparent in the relationships between the Antipholuses and the Dromios. A central part of Commedia dell'Arte is the distinction between classes, especially between masters and their servants. A common comic motif is that servants are frequently injured, whether it is from their masters' beatings or from their own ridiculous antics; suffering pain only briefly, they would bounce back to whatever silly task they might be trying to accomplish. Commedia dell'Arte laid the groundwork for slapstick humor, paving the way for modern day cartoons, as well as physical comedy actors like Charlie Chaplin, The Marx Brothers, and Jim Carrey.

In the following excerpt, Antipholus of Syracuse beats Dromio of Syracuse for Dromio of Ephesus' actions. The servant's reaction to this seemingly senseless violence is a sarcastic quip:

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,
When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme
nor reason?
Well, sir, I thank you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Thank me, sir, for what?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.
(2.2)

Another thing Shakespeare included from Commedia dell'Arte in *The Comedy of Errors* are lozzi. Lozzi are physical gags or prop jokes within a Commedia dell'Arte performance. Whenever the Dromios are beaten in the play, it is intended to be physically comic (much like cartoons today). Prop lozzi also play an important role in the play. Items such as the gold chain, a rope, and varying sums of money are switched up between the Syracusans and the Ephesians. This causes much strife for the characters, but much humor for the audience who sees all sides of the mix-ups. In the following excerpt, Antipholus of Ephesus has been arrested and has mistakenly sent Dromio of Syracuse to fetch his bail. When Dromio of Ephesus enters the scene, he knows nothing of Antipholus' bail, and is simply delivering a length of rope that he was sent for previously. This results in Antipholus of Ephesus getting mad and beating his servant with the rope for his seeming idiocy:

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

...Here comes my man; I think he brings the money.
How now, sir! have you that I sent you for?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

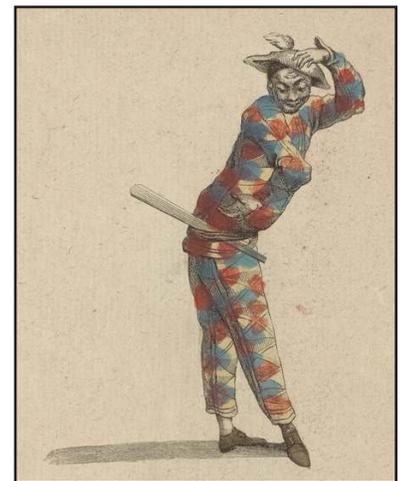
Here's that, I warrant you, will pay them all.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

But where's the money?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.



Above and below: prints from the 1700s of the servant character Arlecchino (Harlequin).



ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

To a rope's-end,
sir; and to that end am I returned.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

And to that end, sir, I will welcome you.
(4.4)



A painting by Jan Miel that depicts a troupe of Commedia dell'Arte actors performing upon a wagon.

Due to Shakespeare's skillful combination of high and low comedy, all audiences can find humor in *The Comedy of Errors*. Whether they are laughing at a witty joke inspired by Commedia Erudita, or at a well-executed slapstick fall inspired by Commedia dell'Arte, this play continues to this day to inspire laughter for its audiences.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What do you find funny? Do you prefer puns, slapstick, or other types of humor? Talk about some of your favorite comedy plays, TV shows, and movies. What is funny about them?
- How does humor change within different groups? Do you have different jokes with your siblings, friends, parents, or teachers? Are there things that you used to laugh at that you don't find funny anymore, or vice versa?

Behind the Scenes With Erin Keller, Props Manager

Interviewed By Krista DeVellis



Props Manager Erin Keller, posing with a prop statue that she made for Hartford Stage's 2015 production of *Kiss Me, Kate*.

Q: What do you do at Hartford Stage?

I run the props department, which means I talk with the artistic and design teams and make decisions on how things will be made for the shows. My job a lot of the time is to keep my staff busy, delegating projects. I build things less than I used to, but I still try to assign myself at least one thing to make per production.

Q: What are props?

I like to use this example: imagine you are moving. Anything that you put in the moving truck, besides your clothes, would be considered props. It can include almost any object, and it gets even more complex when the plays are more magical and less realistic.

Q: How did you get into props?

I had never considered myself an artist growing up. I took a drawing class once, and when I wasn't instantly good at it, I just kind of gave up. In college I studied Stage Management for my undergraduate

degree, but when I graduated I wasn't finding stage management jobs. After college, I took a props job and fell in love with it. It was creative and artsy, but in a completely different way than I thought. I eventually did get some stage management jobs, but found myself wanting to return to props, so I did.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

I'd say my favorite part of my job is the creative problem-solving that comes with it. For example, one time I was working on a show where the bed had to be vertical, almost like mimicking an aerial shot in film, and we had to figure out how to make it look like a normal bed and work with this vertical gravity. Sometimes, physics doesn't really apply in theatre. Theatre doesn't need to make sense for the magic to happen for an audience. But it was our job to make it look as natural as possible, so there was a lot of trial and error with magnets and Velcro.

Q: What is most challenging about your job?

There are always a lot of balls in the air. Between the director, artistic staff, set designer, costume designer, and my own staff, there are a lot of people to communicate with. Often things can change quickly. It's very important to make sure that everyone has the same information, and everybody is on the same page. We have a weekly production meeting, which helps, but otherwise people have very different schedules, so a lot of communication is through email, phone, and occasionally urgent texts.

Q: What is your process like usually?

About eight weeks before tech, I'll send out my initial props list based on what is in the script. About six weeks before tech, I'll get preliminary information from the set designer about the direction of the show. From there I will do a budget to the best of my knowledge. Then there are a lot of phone calls, spreadsheets, and emails sent back and forth. Before actors arrive, we collect props they can rehearse with. This is cheaper than trying to make or buy all of the real props, since many choices and changes can still be made during the rehearsal process. During rehearsal is our busiest time, as we are starting to build and buy the final props for the show, while still receiving notes from the rehearsal room to add, subtract, or repair certain items.

Q: Is there anything special about the props for *The Comedy of Errors*?

A lot! There's a lot of physical comedy in this show, so many things (like frying pans and fish) need to be made of rubber and foam so that the actors are safe. We also have to interpret how comedic we can make certain props. For example, we've been discussing one character eating chicken. But do we have them eat a drumstick? What about a very large drumstick? Or perhaps they are just chewing on a whole, roast chicken? We have to try to determine what will look the funniest on stage, and go with that.

Q: How many people will work on props for *The Comedy of Errors*?

Between myself, my assistant props manager, our apprentice, and one or two overhired staff, there will be about four or five of us.

Q: Have you worked on many other Shakespeare productions?

I've done a lot more Shakespeare since I started working with Hartford Stage. A fun fact, though, is that *The Comedy of Errors* will be my first Shakespearean comedy as a Props Manager. I've done tragedies like *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* so many times. I'm excited to experience a little levity in Shakespeare.

Q: Do you have any favorite tools in the shop?

My favorite power tool is probably the band saw. It's a bit more delicate than other saws, and you can get a lot more precision and detail. I also think the port-a-band (portable band saw) is severely underrated. What's fun about working in the shop is that you have an arsenal of tools to use, so when you have those odd requests, or you have to make something you've never made, you can try different things. You always want to read your safety manuals and make sure you're not using things in an unsafe way, but you can get creative.

Q: Do you have any favorite projects you've worked on?

Once I was involved in a production of *Pinocchio*, based on the original book. It was a workshop production, and there wasn't much money in the budget, so the director kept saying "well, we can make that out of cardboard. We'll just make it out of cardboard." So I thought; what if we just make this a choice? Why not make everything out of cardboard and paper? I took a problem, and turned it into an aesthetic choice.

Q: Do you have any advice for students interested in props?

Give it a try! The great thing about props is that it has such a wide range of skill sets. If you're interested in cars and motors, woodworking, crafts, shopping, painting, or anything else, there's something you could do for props. You can ask yourself: what skills in the world interest me, and how do I cultivate that? There are so many community theatres and organizations that would be happy to hear from you if you reach out with an interest to learn and create.



Six-foot diameter steel chandelier made for Hartford Stage's 2014 production of *Hamlet*. Even the candles were hand sculpted to look realistic.



SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Mirror, Mirror

“Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother.” —*The Comedy of Errors*, 5.1

Separate the class into pairs, and have each pair face their partner. Each pair will decide who will lead the action first. Have the leader create their own movements, and the follower mirror their movements as best they can. Begin with simple gestures, and then move onto more complicated moves. Then have the pairs switch who will be the leader and who will be the follower.

Costume Design

When designing a production of *The Comedy of Errors*, the costume designer has a tricky problem to solve; both sets of twins are mistaken for their brothers, but it is important for the audience to be able to tell them apart. How would you solve this problem? Create costume designs for the Antipholuses and the Dromios, considering the following questions: if you had to direct the show, would you cast actors that look similar? Would you put them in identical costumes? How might you help the audience tell the difference?

Write Your Own Adaptation

Read the article on modern adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays. Start by thinking about ideas for your own contemporary adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors*. Write down your thoughts on the characters, setting, and any changes you might want to make. In what setting and time period would you place the story? Research this setting and time period with articles, books, or online sources. Would you make any changes to the plot or casting? Think about why these changes are important to your version of the story. Once you’ve planned out these details, write a ten-minute version of your adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors*.

This Is A What?

In *The Comedy of Errors*, a lot of confusion for the characters comes from objects getting mixed up between mistaken identities. These items include: a gold chain, a rope, and a coin purse. With a large group, sit in a close circle. A simple object (such as a pencil) is passed around the circle by the leader, who starts by showing it to the first person while saying, “This is a gold chain.” The person replies in a startled manner, “A what?” “A gold chain,” says the leader. The first person takes the pencil (or other object), turns to the second person, and shows them the pencil, repeating, “This is a gold chain.” When the second person replies, “A what?” the first person turns back to the leader and asks again, “A what?” The leader once more informs the first person that it is “A gold chain,” which the first person repeats to the second and passes the pencil. The second person shows the pencil to the third person in the same “This is a gold chain” manner, with the “A what?” response; the pencil and “A what?” travels back to the leader, who gives the “A gold chain” response, which, along with the pencil, travels back to the last person to hold the pencil.

The gold chain proceeds around the circle in this back-and-forth fashion. After about the fifth person, the leader sends another object (such as a ball) in the other direction in the same way, announcing “This is a rope.” The fun really begins when the two objects meet and cross. If the group wants a challenge, add a third object (such as a marker) once the gold chain and the rope are circling, and announce “This is a coin purse.”



Above: Luciana. Below: Dromio of Syracuse.
Costume designs by Fabio Toblini.



Alert the Media!

Adapted from the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

If Ephesus had a cable news network, it would have featured 24-hour coverage of the events in this play: riots in the streets, unwelcome foreigners, a scheduled afternoon execution, not to mention a gossip column full of intrigue centered around one of the town's most notable citizens, Antipholus. He is seen gallivanting with a courtesan, raging outside his home, getting arrested for refusing to pay a debt, and he is eventually believed to be possessed and put under the care of Doctor Pinch. Then, of course, there is the reunion of a long-lost family, and the revelation about the mysterious Abbess. Assign these and other big events of the play to members of the class and create appropriate television or newspaper coverage.

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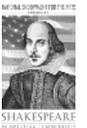


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