

Shakespeare for the rest of us:

The Merry Wives of Windsor

by William Shakespeare



The Bard's saucy comedy in plain English!



A Note from the Chair

Dr. Cynthia Allan

Department of Communication

Welcome to the 2015-2016 season of the Pittsburg State Theatre! This is our first full season in the wonderful Dotty and Bill Miller Theater here at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts. The facility is a wonderful and intimate space for live performance. We look forward to many wonderful years in our new theatre "home" here at Pitt State. Our first production, last spring's *Eurydice*, was a rousing success and allowed us to stretch our wings in ways we have not had before.

It also gives me great pleasure to take this opportunity to thank the alumni of the Pitt State theatre program. The excellent productions created by scores of previous students are, in part, what helped cement the support and belief in the theatre program and the need for a real performing arts center. Whether you currently work in the theatre profession or not, your dedication to Pitt State Theatre while a student is appreciated and respected. You are the legacy of this program and you set the bar high. We honor you and thank you. Our alumni reunion last spring was a great success and we plan to have more on a regular basis.

The 2015/16 season begins October 22-25 with *Charlotte's Web*, the beloved tale of friendship, loyalty, and determination that will enchant the entire family. Directed by Megan Westhoff, this production is sure to be a hit.

Then, on December 3-4, we continue our tradition of *Theatre Unplugged* with the student-directed one-act plays produced in the Studio Theatre (entrance on Joplin Street). The Studio Theatre remains the venue we will use for the majority of student productions. Also included in this year's offering is an original script by graduate student, Marisa Hunn.

In the spring of 2016, Gil Cooper directs the raunchy and bawdy Shakespeare comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, from February 25-28. This classic comedy is bound to help you shake off those winter blues! Finally, on April 21-24, Caitie Almond directs Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things*, a scathing contemporary drama about two students at a small Midwestern college. Hmm...sound familiar? You definitely don't want to miss this one!

Finally, I want to remind our patrons that the move to a new space means new opportunities for PSU Theatre. One of these opportunities is the chance to offer more performances and we are pleased to announce the addition of Saturday matinees for each of our productions. This now provides 3 evening and 2 matinee productions. We hope you join us whatever time is convenient for you!

I am sure the faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Communication and PSU Theatre join me in expressing our gratitude for your support and our sincere hopes that you enjoy the 2015/16 season.

Regards,
Dr. Cynthia Allan

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Director's Notes

Gil Cooper

My first stage experience with Shakespeare was when I was twelve and I was cast as an extra in the community theatre's production of *Romeo and Juliet*. It was cool, I got to be in a sword fight. That may have cemented a love of Shakespeare for me and a desire to share his works with others. Shakespeare said "All the world is a stage" but how does an audience today share the stage when his language is four centuries old? During Shakespeare's time, his plays were highly popular because they easily connected with everyone from street vendor to nobleman. We as a contemporary audience deserve that connection too.

It was that type of thinking which led me to choose *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a comedy, and specifically a blended, plain English translation of the play. About thirty to forty percent of the language you will hear in this performance is the original script. It is blended with a plain English translation to help today's audience connect to the play as easily as those who stood on the public floor of the Globe Theater over 400 years ago.

Building on the idea of sharing a similar experience to Shakespeare's audiences, we decided to place the play in traditional setting, traditional costumes (see Scenic and Costume Designers' notes) and use a more historically accurate style of acting. This means the actors perform in costumes radically different than they normally wear, on a thrust stage which places them out amongst the audience, and using an acting style that is presentational rather than realistic. The actors had to learn to move differently, they had to break old acting habits of thinking the audience is only looking through the "fourth wall," and they had to broaden their performance to make it bigger and more actively engaging with the people sitting all around them.

I am extremely proud of the time, effort, and talent the actors, designers, crew members, and staff have placed into this production. They have all worked hard to bring Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to life in a way that connects to you. "All the world is a stage" and we welcome you to ours.



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Costume Designer's Notes

Lisa Quinteros



The costumes for Merry Wives are based on the traditional Elizabethan dress of Shakespeare's time. Elizabethan dress is a period of dress which changed the body form of a human into something it totally wasn't, with thick padding and farthingale hipped dresses, (they looked like you were standing

in the middle of a round table...) codpieces, padded "pumpkin" pants creating excessive weight at the hips and rear, and tight doublets, creating a long, pointed waist, and for women a really flattened bust. Cartwheel ruffs were placed around the neck, making it seem like the head was on a platter. Shoulder rolls and flanges made shoulders wide, puffy, and heavy-looking. Jackets or capes with sleeves that were useless, some hung sideways... or hung low to the ground, two feet longer than the actual arm. Many clothes were slashed open or cut through in designs and lines to show another layer underneath.

Sometimes there is no accounting for fashion... but in Elizabethan England, accounting was just the thing! The merchant classes were making money as new explorations and industry flourished. Fabrics became richer, trims and laces extravagant, and layers upon layers of garments to show the wealth they possessed. The royal court implemented sumptuary laws, edicts that gave rights to certain cloths and trims, furs and colors to different classes, as a method of separating and identifying the merchants from nobles and the royal court. The Queen herself was a fashionista, with a closet with over 500 expensive gowns dripping with all manner of fur, embroidery, fabrics and jeweled décor. Despite the laws, citizens still enjoyed a wide variety of color, style and pomp, and loved to look good. Most tried to push the limit (there were no fashion police...) and if you did get reported, you paid a hefty fine.

These costumes still have a unique beauty, fascinating today, perhaps just because these styles are so foreign to us now. While I have broken a few of those laws here and there in the design, and elected to edit a few, I have tried to stay true to the ideas of those lines and elements which so defined the later 1500's in Europe. Much thanks to my group of sewers, milliners, and creative Renaissance-thinking-how-do-we-make-this-complicated-stuff-work crew. (I am also grateful for zippers, snaps, hot glue, and Velcro... :)

We hope you enjoy your evening at our Globe!



Scenic and Lighting Designer's Notes

Linden Little

The evolution of this design started as an attempt to create a historically accurate recreation of Shakespeare's Globe theatre, but quickly moved into an exploration of Elizabethan textures.

If Shakespeare were to walk into the Miller Theater tonight he would recognize the physical layout of the space. What would stand out to him would be the wooden paneling and ornamentation. This was first introduced into homes of the Elizabethan era and had not yet made its way onto the stage which was largely thought to have been painted.

The addition of the Damask curtains is a detail pulled from period paintings and adds a richness and warmth to the environment. The contrasting wood colors is a technique borrowed from the inlaid boxes and small furnishings of the era and would not have been presented on such a large scale. The balcony arches have been augmented from the original rectangular shape to the Tudor or four centered arch. This arch was pervasive in buildings throughout the era.

These details, while not historically accurate in execution, create a broad image of the visual culture of Elizabethan England and hopefully evoke a sense of the age in our contemporary audience.



The Merry Wives of Windsor

by William Shakespeare

Directed by Gil Cooper

Scenic and Lighting Design by Linden Little

Costume Design by Lisa Quinteros

Make-up and Hair Design by Megan Reed

Sir John Falstaff, an impoverished knight..... Austin VanBecelaere*

Falstaff's Followers

Pistol Colin Terry

Nym..... Jaley Hoyt

Bardolf Alexander Warstler

Robin, Falstaff's page Amanda Longpine

Mistress Alice Ford Breezi Hancock*

Master Francis Ford, her husband Michael Fienen

John, their servant Kolleen Gladden

Robert, their servantMelissa Long

Mistress Margaret (Meg) Page Megan Reed*

Master George Page, her husband..... Jefferson Holmes

Anne (Nan) Page, their daughter Petra Grieshaber

William Page, their son Jaley Hoyt

Master Robert Shallow, justice of the peace Thaddeus Cook

Abraham Slender, his nephew, suitor to Anne Page Krista Hightower

Simple, servant to Slender Bobbi Jo Smith*

Doctor Caius, a French doctor, suitor to Anne PageLong Xiao

Mistress Quickley, his hard working housekeeper Jeanine Kunshek*

John Rugby, his servant Stephen Reida

Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh Parson.....Logan Qualls*

Host of the Garter Inn Stephen Teller

Fenton, a gentleman, suitor to Anne Page.....Brandon Norton

Fairies..... Kolleen Gladden, Payton Boswell,

.....Corin Cooper, Jaley Hoyt, Melissa Long

Location: Places in and around the town of Windsor

There will be a 10 minute intermission

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No flash photography or video recording is permitted during the performance.

Please make sure ALL cell phones are turned off. For the comfort of other audiences members,
please take crying or fussy children to the lobby.

Production Staff

Technical Director	Linden Little
Stage Manager	Lindsey Viets*
Assistant Stage Manager	Catherine Duncan*
Music Supervisor	Kathryn Parke
Properties Managers	Ila Phelps* Katlyn Weve
Light Board Operator	Caitie Almond*
Sound Board Operator	Olivia Roland
Costume Construction	Barbara Davis, Megan Reed*, Lindsey Viets* Jeanine Kunshek*, Courtney Blankenship Ryan Urban*, Corin Cooper, Jaley Hoyt,
Make-up and Hair Crew	Courtney Blankenship, Breezi Hancock*, Krista Hightower, Alex Chesney
Scenic Construction	COMM 663 Design for Performance Class, Caitie Almond*, Colin Terry, Megan Reed*, Alex Hermanson, Amanda Longpine, Olivia Roland, Breezi Hancock*
House Managers.....	Jocelyn Donegan* Grace Hendrickson

Theatre Staff

PR/Advertising Manager.....	Jeanine Kunshek*
Poster/Program Art.....	April Huninghake
Production Photographer	Paige Bowman

* indicates members of Alpha Psi Omega, Theatre Honor Society



Special and Sincere Thanks to:

Our family and friends for your support and encouragement throughout the production process.

Additional Thanks to:

Michael Fienen, Photo Contributor

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Scholar Notes

Dr. Stephen Teller

Shakespeare introduced the braggart warrior Falstaff and his circle including the red-nosed Bardolph and the loquacious Mistress Quickly in *Henry IV, Part One*. In *Henry IV, Part Two* he added the bombastic Pistol, Falstaff's witty page, and the elderly foolish justice Shallow. Around 1600 Shakespeare recycled these six characters into a comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, possibly based on an earlier play which has not survived. This is his only comedy set in England, his only non-history play with recycled characters, his only play written mostly in prose. It has two major plots, Falstaff's wooing and Ann Page's suitors.

The story that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written in haste because Queen Elizabeth demanded a play showing Falstaff in love is probably untrue, but it does show signs of being hurriedly written. It has plot threads that are not followed up on: Justice Shallow's complaints against Falstaff are forgotten after the first scene; Parson Evans' and Dr. Caius' revenge against the Host are never clearly resolved. And there are scenes that have little connection to the plot: William Page's being quizzed on his Latin studies. However, despite a few structural failings it was one of Shakespeare's most accessible and popular plays in part because of the lovable Falstaff and in part because it is a very middle-class play; the highest ranked character in the play is only a knight (Falstaff) and he is the victim of well-deserved pranks.



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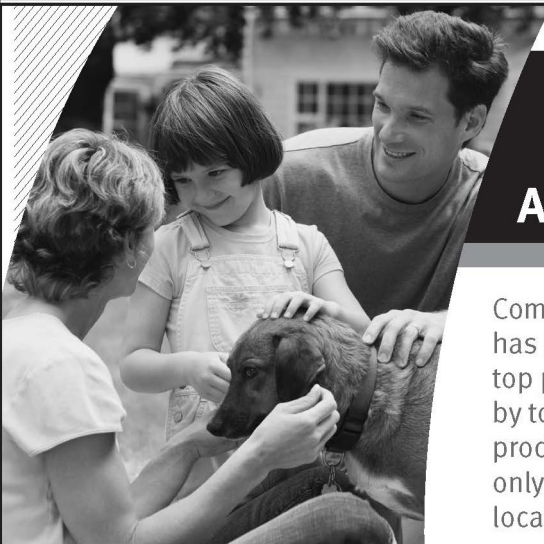
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