

theatre:
CALGARY

Stafford Arima, Artistic Director

PLAY GUIDE



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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome educators!

Theatre Calgary's 2023-2024 Play Guides are intended to support your students' experience at Theatre Calgary this season. We encourage you to use some or all of these materials to provide context for your students before, during, and after their visit to Theatre Calgary. While not mandatory for students to enjoy the production, opportunities to connect art to personal life can deepen understanding and appreciation.

With that in mind, each guide provides you and your students with a range of contextual material. You will find background information on the play and playwright; social, linguistic, and historical context; expectations for the theatre; activities for you to lead in the classroom; and reflection questions to guide discussions. You'll find activities that connect to current events, are interdisciplinary, can be tied into your curriculum, and can be facilitated for various lengths of time.

Pages marked with a ★ can be photocopied and distributed to students.

We hope that you and your students enjoy your experience at Theatre Calgary this year!

ABOUT THE PLAY

SUMMARY.

It's 1960 in Vancouver's Kitsilano neighborhood. Dame Frances, a powerful business owner, has taken control of the family firm and forced her sister, Dame Senior, to leave town. She permits her niece, Rosalind, to stay because of Rosalind's close friendship with her own daughter, Celia.

The action begins at a wrestling match, based on Vancouver's All-Star Wrestling, popular in the '60's. Oliver de Boys, who manages a champion wrestler named Charles, argues with his younger brother Orlando. Orlando is angry that Oliver has mistreated him and held back his inheritance since their father died. Orlando decides to wrestle for his fortune. At the match, he meets Rosalind, and, in true Shakespearean fashion, they fall instantly in love.

After the bout, Dame Frances orders Rosalind to leave Vancouver, as she no longer trusts her. Rosalind and Celia decide to run away together to the Okanagan forest, like many others at this time, who want to "get back to the land." Rosalind disguises herself as a young man, Ganymede, and Celia becomes Aliena, his sister. Touchstone, a family employee, goes with them.

STORY WHOOSH

is an interactive storytelling technique that enables any kind of plot to come alive, even without participants having prior knowledge.

- The teacher facilitates the shared storytelling by bringing individuals and groups in and out of the action.
- As soon as characters, objects, places, or events in the story (i.e., servants, bad thoughts, ships, etc.) are mentioned, the first students step into the circle and make a shape or pose that represents what has been narrated.
- At any time the teacher can say "Whoosh!," and students quickly return to their 'places' in a circle.
- Continue the story around the group, so that different students get to play various characters and everyone gets a chance to try several roles, regardless of gender.

Meanwhile, Adam, a longtime de Boys employee, warns Orlando that Oliver plans to have him killed. They also escape to the Okanagan.

In the forest, Ganymede (Rosalind) and Aliena (Celia) meet Silvius and Corin, two local farmers, and arrange to buy a farm.

Nearby, Orlando and Adam stumble upon Dame Senior, the exiled sister of Dame Frances, and her companions, who take them in.

Orlando leaves love notes about Rosalind throughout the forest. He meets Ganymede (Rosalind), who proposes that Orlando treat “him” as Rosalind, so he can practice his wooing. Elsewhere, Silvius pines for another farmer, Phoebe, while Touchstone meets Audrey, and they pair up.

In Vancouver, Dame Frances is furious that the girls and Orlando have disappeared. She demands that Oliver bring his brother back or else she will ruin him. But when Oliver shows up at the young women’s farm, he announces he has reconciled with his brother after Orlando saved him from a mountain lion. Oliver and Aliena (Celia) fall in love.

Orlando grows tired of Ganymede’s game and believes his love for Rosalind is hopeless. Other relationships are also growing more complicated: Silvius is still in love with Phoebe, but she’s smitten with Ganymede. Claiming he can work magic, Ganymede invites everyone to gather the next morning, when he will appear as Rosalind once again, and all will be resolved.

BARD ON THE BEACH’S AS YOU LIKE IT

The Beatles Playlist

Money, That’s What I Want | ELEANOR & ENSEMBLE

We Can Work It Out | CELIA & ROSALIND

She Loves You | TOUCHSTONE

I Want to Hold Your Hand | ORLANDO & ROSALIND

Help! | ROSALIND, CELIA, TOUCHSTONE, ORLANDO, & DAME SENIOR

I Saw Her Standing There | SILVIUS

While My Guitar Gently Weeps | AMIENS & LORDS

I Am the Walrus | JAQUES & LORDS

The Fool on the Hill | JAQUES

Let it Be | DAME SENIOR & LORDS

Do You Want to Know a Secret? | ORLANDO

Eight Days a Week | ROSALIND

Eight Days a Week/I Want to Hold Your Hand (Reprise) | ROSALIND & ORLANDO

When I’m Sixty-Four | TOUCHSTONE & AUDREY

You’ve Got to Hide Your Love Away | ROSALIND & CELIA

Love Me Do | SILVIUS

Something | PHOEBE

Can’t Buy Me Love | ORLANDO & ROSALIND

Got To Get You Into My Life | ENSEMBLE

Helter Skelter | TOUCHSTONE

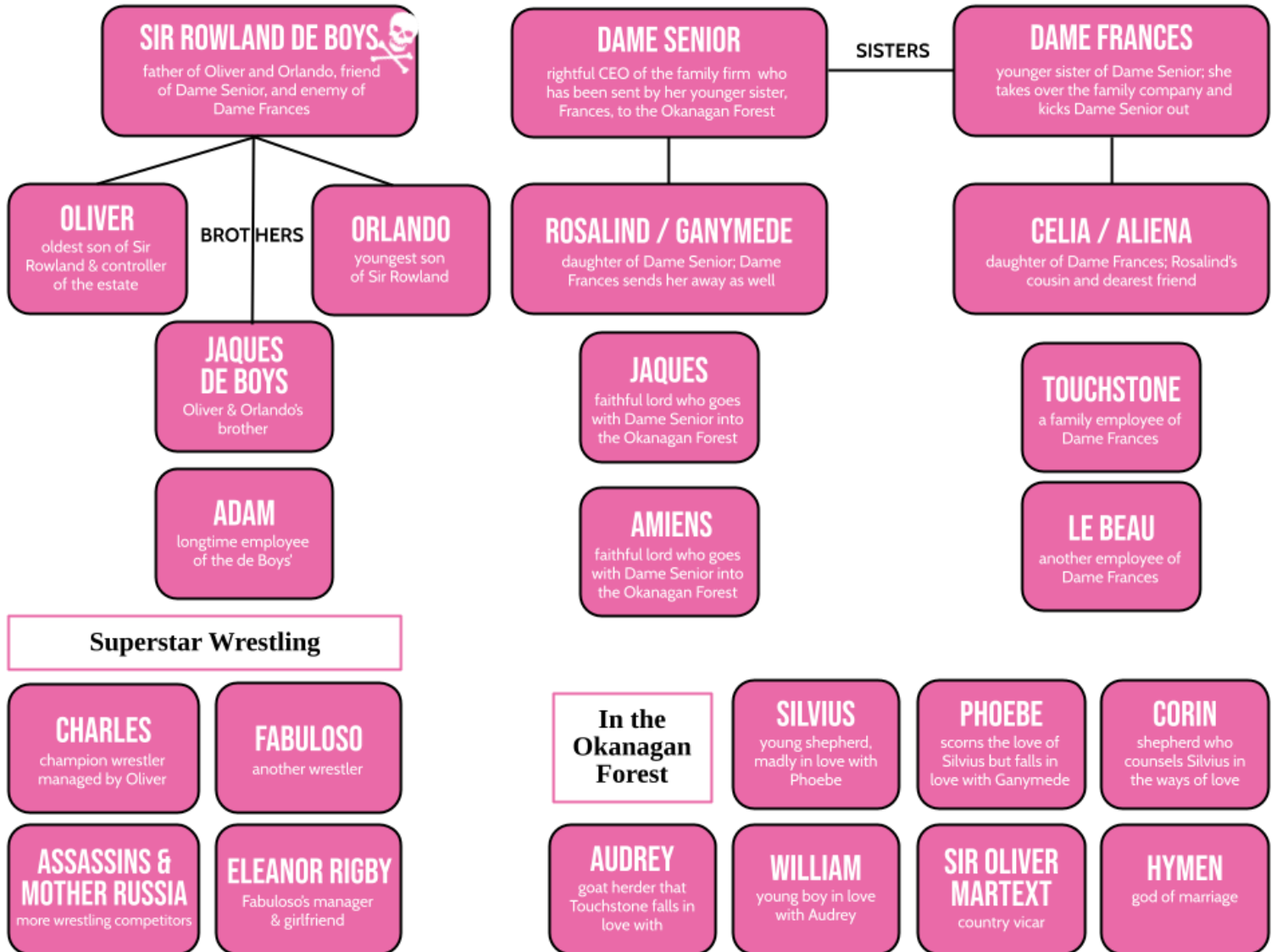
Good Day Sunshine | CELIA & OLIVER

Here Comes the Sun | ENSEMBLE

Across the Universe | HYMEN & ENSEMBLE

All You Need is Love | ENSEMBLE

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN.



HISTORICAL + SOCIAL CONTEXT.



5 SHAKESPEARE PLAYS

WITH CONTEMPORARY FILM ADAPTATIONS

- 1 *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), directed by Baz Luhrmann
- 2 *Ten Things I Hate About You* (1999) based on *The Taming of the Shrew*
- 3 *She's the Man* (2006) based on *Twelfth Night*
- 4 *Much Ado About Nothing* (2012), directed by Joss Whedon
- 5 *The King* (2019) based on Shakespeare's *Henry* plays

WHO ARE THE BEATLES?



Daily Mirror/Mirrorpix, via Getty Images

Four musicians from Liverpool, England, the Beatles generated a phenomenal run of gold records that endured long after the rock group broke up. Known as the Fab Four, the band's fresh-faced appeal inspired a worldwide frenzy of fandom in the 1960s called Beatlemania. Their music was rooted in American rock and roll and featured harmonic vocals, melodic guitar, and a driving backbeat that influenced scores

of young musicians and revolutionized pop music. As musicians, composers, and entertainers, the Beatles bridged generation gaps and language barriers. They reshaped rock music and experienced unparalleled international success.

WHY THE BEATLES?

Director and creator Daryl Cloran speaks to the alignment of the Beatles' songbook with the words and story of William Shakespeare.

We are telling this story with "a little help from our friends," the Beatles. The Fab Four's songs integrate perfectly into this story...The Bard's story comes alive through song, particularly as the characters find themselves in the woods, where emotions can no longer be contained by words alone.

Orlando's love letters become love songs. Amiens and the lords sing as they refine their philosophy about life and love. Even the evolution of the Beatles' songwriting is perfect for the story arc of the play. The early Beatles songs are naive and youthful, which is where the young lovers start. But as we meet the thinkers in the forest and life becomes more complicated, we are able to transition into the Beatles' later, more spiritual and philosophical songwriting. Shakespeare, Vancouver, the 1960s, and the Beatles are a perfect combination.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE THEATRE



An open mind.

Let the performance surprise you! Stay open to what can happen. Look for moments of theatrical magic (how did they change that costume so quickly?) and unexpected dialogue.

Assigned seats.

Every seat in the theatre offers a unique perspective on the action. Appreciate what you can see from your seat that someone else might not.

Live actors.

The performers on stage can see you, hear you, and feel your energy. And actors love student audiences! Laugh when something is funny! Gasp when you're surprised! Applaud when you're impressed! The actors thrive on audience reactions.

A break from reality.

Theatre-makers ask the audience to "suspend their disbelief." If someone on stage says the red ribbon is blood, then it is! If an actor takes flight, then imagine you can't see the strings. This is what the actors ask of the audience. Embrace the magic of theatre.

Questions.

Listen carefully to the story being told. If you have a question, keep your voice to a whisper so it doesn't disturb others. (See the call out on Q + As to help you form great questions for the team behind the show.) Let yourself be challenged by the content. What new ideas or perspectives are you hearing?

Disconnection.

Put your phone away and immerse yourself in the technology of the theatre. The sounds and lights from your device are distracting to the actors, fellow audience members, and you! Plus, the law says that photos and videos aren't allowed, anyway.

PREPARING Q'S FOR A Q + A

While you watch the show, consider how the creative team (see pg. 9) brings the story to life on stage for you.

Consider questions about the process:

- How did the lighting / set / costume / sound designer...
- What made the director choose to...
- How did the playwright decide to...

Ask questions about the story:

- Why did [character] make the decision to...
- Can you explain how...
- Why didn't _____ happen?

Learn more about each job:

- Why did you decide to become a...
- What do I need to do to become a...
- What has been your favorite...



THEATRE TEAM TALKBACK

Theatre is a 'team sport,' and it's not the actors alone who bring a production to life. After your show, you'll have a chance to ask questions of the creative team. Here are some of the folks you might expect to speak with:

The Playwright writes the script, sometimes from an original idea, and sometimes adapted from a book or story—decides what the characters say and, often, gives the designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The Director creates the vision for the production, how it will look on stage, and works closely with the actors, costume, set, and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

The Actors use their bodies and voices to bring the playwright's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The Designers imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes, and sound that will compliment and tell the playwright's story in a way that matches the director's vision.

The Stage Manager assists the director during rehearsals by taking detailed notes and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. They run the show during each performance by making sure the actors' entrances and exits and the lights and sound all run smoothly.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

IF YOU HAVE 15 MINUTES...

Trippingly on the Tongue

This activity allows students to practise speaking Shakespeare's words using quotes from As You Like It.

Focus Question. What is it like to speak and understand Shakespeare's words?

Objective. Students will be able to speak and interpret Shakespeare's language.

Procedure.

- 1 Precut the [attached Shakespeare quotes](#). Have enough copies ready for students to work individually or in pairs.
- 2 Share the [Shakespearean English 101](#) slide deck with your class, introducing some Shakespearean basics.
- 3 Together read aloud the quote on Slide 3. Discuss: *What does this mean? How do you know? How are we able to translate what Shakespeare is saying, even if we don't understand every word?*
- 4 Distribute the quotes to students (or pairs of students). Have each of them read aloud their quote and discuss what it means. *How do they know?*
- 5 If time, have students share their quotes aloud with the class.

IF YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES...

Love Songalogues

In Shakespeare's original As You Like It, Orlando flits about the forest posting love notes to Rosalind on trees, but Bard on the Beach's version at Theatre Calgary replaces love letters with love songs. This activity poses, "What would love songs sound like if spoken like poetry?"

Focus Question. How do we speak song lyrics like speeches?

Objective. Students will be able to practise speaking song lyrics as speeches, like Shakespeare's verse.

Procedure.

- 1 Distribute the [Beatles song lyrics](#) that appear in Theatre Calgary's production of *As You Like It*.
- 2 Review the first song, *Something*—sung by Phoebe, speaking of Ganymede—together as a class. Ask students to take turns reading the song lyrics aloud as if they were speaking a monologue (or speech), not singing a song.

Encourage them to read with an emphasis on sentences, rather than line breaks.

Example: Something in the way he moves attracts me like no other lover.
- 3 Allow students to choose one of the three songs: *Something*, *Do You Want to Know a Secret*, or *Eight Days a Week* to practise as a songalogue—a speech.
- 4 Ask volunteers to share each song—even multiple interpretations of the same song. Discuss: *What choices did performers make that made each delivery different? How is this similar to interpreting Shakespeare's text?*

EXTENSION: Play the songs after students have practised speaking the lyrics. Discuss: *How does their speech capture the same spirit of the song? How was it different? What is able to be communicated with music that is lost when spoken? And vice versa?*

IF YOU HAVE AN HOUR...

Gender Roles Throughout Time

In Shakespeare's time, there were very definite ideas about the role of gender in society. Bard on the Beach's co-production with Theatre Calgary reimagines these roles in a contemporary context. This activity will give students a glimpse into the evolving role gender has played across several time periods and challenge them to define what that looks like today.

Focus Question. How have the roles and expectations of gender changed since Shakespeare's day?

Objective. Students will be able to articulate the historical evolution of gender's role in society.

Procedure.

- 1 Use the [attached slides](#) to launch a discussion and exploration into gender roles.
- 2 Divide students into small groups, assigning a quote from each of the Gender Roles in Elizabethan England slides. Ask students to read and discuss their quote. As with understanding Shakespeare, even if they can't understand every word, *what is the big idea?* Have each group embody a frozen image that communicates their quote. Encourage them to think abstractly, not literally.
- 3 Read aloud the quote while the tableaux is shared with the class and discuss: *How are groups communicating the gender expectations in Elizabethan England? For performers, what did you have to consider when creating this image?*
- 4 Return to small groups, and assign each team one of the guidelines from the "Good Wife's Guide" from 1955. Have them create a tableau as if they were staging the photo or illustration alongside the guideline in the magazine.
- 5 Share the tableaux with the class along with the quote, and discuss: *What are you seeing in this image? What feels familiar? What doesn't? For performers, how did it feel to play that character in your tableau? How did it feel to create the scene?*
- 6 Return to small groups, and have students draft their own guide for gender roles today.
 - What would those guidelines look like?
 - What would they be called?
 - Who would they apply to?
 - How has our understanding of gender changed, and what does that mean for expectations?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION + DISCUSSION

A theatrical experience is not complete without reflection. What is the audience talking about when they leave the theatre? Here are some questions to pose to your students following their experience with *As You Like It* at Theatre Calgary.

- 1 Sitcoms and movies are full of romantic entanglements and frustrating situations like in *As You Like It*. Why do we, as viewers, like to watch this? Why do we find it funny?
- 2 What do you think the definition of love is? What do you think Shakespeare's definition of love is?
- 3 Do you think the 'ideal' lifestyle would be lived in a big city or out in the country? Why? What is lost in each? What is gained?
- 4 Have you ever felt like you needed to pretend to be someone else to get what you wanted? Were you successful? How did it feel to be in that position? What did you learn from that experience?
- 5 What are the love songs that you connect to? What draws you to them?

BONUS: If you've read the original play, how did this interpretation change your understanding of the story, characters, and themes?

THEATRE CALGARY PLAY GUIDES DEVELOPED BY

Aliza Sarian

www.alizasarian.com



Please provide feedback on your experience with this Play Guide by following this QR code to complete a brief survey.