

The Compleat Works of Willm Shkspere

ABRIDGED

By Jesse Borgeson,
Adam Long
and Daniel Singer
Directed by Sean Grañey

37 plays, 97 minutes -
hundreds of laughs!

Macbeth
A Winter's Tale
Othello
The Measure for Measure
The Tempest
Titus Andronicus
Hamlet
Two Gentlemen of Verona
Comedy of Errors
Midnight's Dream
Twelfth Night
As You Like It



**Study
Guide**

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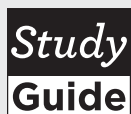


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**MILWAUKEE REPERTORY
THEATER**
108 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI • 53202



THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED) STUDY GUIDE

Milwaukee Repertory Theater presents
The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)

January 13 – March 11, 2012

Stackner Cabaret

By Jesse Borgeson, Adam Long and Daniel Singer

Directed by Sean Graney

“I first saw this piece a few years ago in London’s West End where it played for a record-breaking nine years. I was very excited about the idea of bringing it to the Stackner Cabaret, which I thought was just the right venue for such a brilliant, entertaining piece of work. It is perfect for families and a great way to see and experience Shakespeare perhaps for the first time.”

-Mark Clements, *Artistic Director*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 3	Synopsis
Page 4	The Reduced Shakespeare Company
Page 5	William Shakespeare
Page 6	Characters
Page 7	Shakespeare’s Language
Page 8	Shakespearean Comedy
Page 9	Words, Words, Words
Page 10	Classroom Activities
Page 11	Educational Standards
Page 12	Visiting The Rep

THE SYNOPSIS

Three unemployed roommates, Ernie, Joe and Gerry, stage all of Shakespeare's plays in their kitchen – in only 97 minutes!

Romeo and Juliet: Ernie and Joe perform all of the roles including Romeo, Juliet, the Nurse, Tybalt, and Friar Lawrence. Gerry narrates with rhymes he makes up.

Titus Andronicus: Because people modernize Shakespeare so often, the actors turn *Titus Andronicus* into a cooking show.

Othello: Joe, Gerry and Ernie rap the story of *Othello*. “A punk named Iago who made himself a menace/Cos he didn’t like Othello, the Moor of Venice.”

The Comedies: Agreeing that all of Shakespeare's comedies basically follow the same plot, the actors relay sixteen comedies as one story. “Why write sixteen comedies when you could have written just one?”

Macbeth: The actors perform *Macbeth*, “The Scottish Play” in Scottish accents.

Julius Caesar: In fewer than 10 lines, Ernie (playing Caesar) is murdered and the actors check the play off their list.

Antony and Cleopatra: Joe plays Cleopatra getting bitten by a snake and vomits all over the theater. Gerry and Ernie try to convince Adam that not all of Shakespeare's tragic heroines vomit before they die.

Two Noble Kinsmen: They confuse it for “Chernobyl Kinsmen,” which Joe thinks is about the nuclear crisis in the Soviet Union.

Troilus and Cressida: Gerry wants to do a scholarly version of the play, but Ernie and Joe decide to perform the play as an interpretive dance.



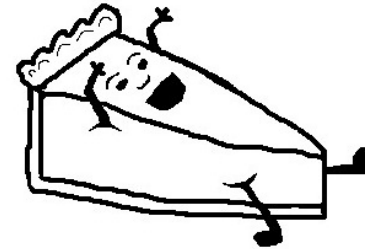
Twenty-five!...Forty-two...Richard the Third...Henry the Sixth, Part One! Two! Three! HUP!

The Histories: Joe wants to make Shakespeare exciting so they do all the History plays as a football game. “With all those kings and queens killing each other off, and the throne passing from one generation to the next. It’s exactly like playing football, but you do it with a crown.”

Hamlet: The actors realize they’ve missed *Hamlet* – but Joe doesn’t want to do it because it’s too long and he runs out of the theater. They take an intermission to find Joe and bring him back.

The Sonnets: Ernie comes onstage to say that Gerry found Joe at the airport and will return soon. Meanwhile, he covers Shakespeare's sonnets by passing one to the audience to read.

Hamlet (continued): Gerry and Joe return and Joe still doesn’t want to do the play, but they do *Hamlet*. When they finish, they realize they have a few more minutes so they re-enact the highlights. Then they do *Hamlet* a third time, even faster. Finally, they do *Hamlet* again, but backwards, to finish the play.



Yum yum. Eat me!

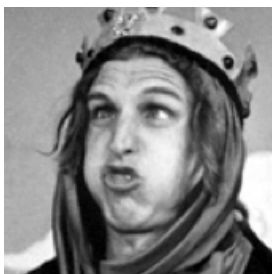
THE REDUCED SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

The Reduced Shakespeare Company (RSC) began in 1981 performing a twenty-minute version of *Hamlet* at Renaissance Faires outside of San Francisco. In 1983, they added a short *Romeo and Juliet* to their repertoire. Wanting to perform at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1987, the RSC created an hour-long *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* that fit the length requirements for the festival.

The play was a hit at Edinburgh and has since been performed all over the world – including a nine-year run at the Criterion Theater in London.

Today, the original three members are not with the Reduced Shakespeare Company but the company continues to produce “reductions” of important stories.

ABOUT THE CREATORS:



Adam Long began his professional life as an accountant for an anti-nuclear political action committee by day and bassist for an acoustic punk band by night. Then he put on a skirt and wig and became a founding member of the Reduced Shakespeare Company. Adam toured with the RSC, spent five years following The Grateful Dead, performed stand-up comedy in Canada, became a Buddhist, and finally settled in England where he lives in London with wife Alex, son Joe, daughter Tilly, friend John, four guinea pigs, a fish, two tortoises, a cat and a small grey rabbit, Willard.



Daniel Singer is a native Californian, trained in London for a career as a theatrical impresario. Following the creation of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, Daniel hung up his doublet-and-hose to design theme park attractions for Walt Disney Imagineering. He’s particularly proud of his work on Disneyland’s Toontown. After 12 years as an Imagineer, Daniel left Disney to become a freelance bohemian; these days he restores old houses, sculpts, gardens and continues to write plays in hopes of another hit.



Jesse Borgeson is an original member of the RSC, co-author of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, and performed with the troupe from its founding in 1981 until 1992, when he realized he’d played the role of Hamlet more times than John Gielgud and Laurence Olivier combined and suddenly felt very old. He left to write and produce animated television for the Walt Disney Company, which made him feel young again, until he’d been there for ten years, at which point he felt old again. He now lives in Hollywood with his wife (original RSC costume goddess) Sa, and is working on his second novel . . . which makes him feel like he’s in his forties.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



I'm Mr. William Wobbly-Dagger...Get it? Shakes-speare! I'm SO funny...har har har.

We don't know much about William Shakespeare. We do know he was born before April 26th, 1564 (the church records show his baptism on that date), in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, and that he died in the same town on April 23rd, 1623.

We can assume that he attended grammar school in Stratford where he would have studied Latin and read classical authors.

Not much is known about Shakespeare between leaving school in 1578 and being mentioned in a pamphlet in 1592. He married Ann Hathway in Stratford in 1582, and the couple had three children – Susanna, Hamnet and Judith.

We know that Shakespeare was a playwright in London by 1592 when he was attacked as an “upstart crow” in a pamphlet by poet and playwright Robert Greene.

In 1594, Shakespeare was the principal writer for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, an acting troupe in London. Shakespeare's plays were performed exclusively by the troupe, made up entirely of men. The Lord Chamberlain's Men built their own theater in 1599, the Globe Theater, on the south bank of the Thames outside London.

With Queen Elizabeth I's death and King James I's ascension to the throne, Shakespeare's company was awarded a royal patent and became the King's Men.

He retired to Stratford around 1613 and died in 1616 at the age of 52. In 1623, two of Shakespeare's colleagues printed his plays into what is now referred to as the First Folio. His surviving work includes 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and other writings.



**Note: Shakespeare did not actually invade Poland in 1939 as the script mentions, nor did he precipitate World War II. Moral of the day: Do not take everything the script says as truth!*

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare

The Tragedies:

Antony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus
Hamlet
Julius Caesar
King Lear
Macbeth
Othello
Romeo and Juliet
Timon of Athens
Titus Andronicus

The Comedies:

All's Well That Ends Well
As You Like It
The Comedy of Errors
Cymbeline
Love's Labours Lost
Measure for Measure
The Merry Wives of Windsor
The Merchant of Venice
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Much Ado About Nothing
Pericles, Prince of Tyre
Taming of the Shrew
The Tempest
Troilus and Cressida
Twelfth Night
Two Gentlemen of Verona
Two Noble Kinsman
Winter's Tale

The Histories:

Henry IV, part 1
Henry IV, part 2
Henry V
Henry VI, part 1
Henry VI, part 2
Henry VI, part 3
Henry VIII
King John
Richard II
Richard III

CHARACTERS

There are three actors in the play. In the script, they are listed as the names of the creators who originated the roles. The script notes that the production should use the current actors names instead. The three actors play themselves throughout the play as well as the characters in all 37 of Shakespeare's plays.



Gerard (Gerry) Neugent

Titus Andronicus, Macbeth, Mark Antony, King John, Hamlet

Gerard Neugent hath been trodding the boards for nigh on twenty longeth years. His career hadst start'd as a youngish lad of nine in a royal playhouse of des Moines production of *Thine Wizard of Ozeth*. He played a flying monkey with orangeth wings to rave reviews. Although he flew, yea truly, his takeoff was often flawed as hith flying cord twisted him in yon circles to the delight of many a munchkin dame. Legend tells however of a two year old "little Gerry" attempting to portray president James Carter to the piteous guffaws of his familieth. He doth love his job and encourages all to "go to't and pursueth thine dreams."



Ernie Gonzalez

Sampson, The Prince, Romeo, Nurse, Friar Laurence, The Rapist, The Witch, Julius Caesar, Richard II, King Lear, Richard III, Horatio, Polonius, Laertes

Ernie Gonzalez is Mexican. His personal motto is, "remember, there is an 'I Can', in Mexican." His other life motto is, "everything is better with cheese." Ernie began his acting career at a young age in the family living room. He would set up elaborate stunt shows using almost everything in his living room and invite the entire neighborhood to watch. His mother was not pleased with this at all. Ernie's favorite pastime is to play the "poop game". What you do is change a word from a song, book, or movie title to "poop". For example, Good Poop Hunting, The Wizard of Poop, The Girl with the Poop Tattoo, or Poop Wars: Espisode III- Revenge of the Poop. Ernie would like to encourage you to try putting cheese on you popcorn sometime, it's awesome.



Joe Dempsey

Benvolio, Juliet, Tybalt, Lavinia, Othello, Macduff, The Soothsayer, Cleopatra, Henry VI, Bernardo, Ghost of Hamlet's Father, Ophelia, Claudius, Gertrude

Joe Dempsey lives and acts in Chicago, works and plays in Milwaukee, and showers and shaves in Wauwautosa. That said, he is thrilled to be part of this show with his two old friends, Ernie and Gerry, both of whom he met only last month. Joe has been in some plays you've never heard of, some movies you will never see, and some TV shows that you can no longer Tivo. Joe would like to remind all the kids out there to keep reaching for their dreams unless they are way up high on a shelf and you need to be on your tippy toes on a chair. Then you're just asking for trouble.

SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) often uses Shakespeare's real language, frequently uses shortened language and sometimes uses completely made up Shakespeare language.

As you watch *The Complete Works*, see if you can figure out when the actor's are using Shakespeare's original language and when they are making it up.

Below are actual quotes from Shakespeare's plays. Match the quote to the play it is from.



No one asked me whether I wanted to be or not to be.

Quote

1. Hark, villains! I will grind your bones to dust
And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,
And of the paste a coffin I will rear
And make two pasties of your shameful heads.
2. O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
3. Double, double, toil and trouble
4. O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew
5. Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then, must you speak
Of one that lov'd not wisely but too well;
6. Beware the Ides of March
7. All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances
And one man in his time plays many parts.
8. Know that we have divided/In three our kingdom
9. A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!

Play

- a *Julius Caesar*
- b *Macbeth*
- c *Othello*
- d *Romeo and Juliet*
- e *Hamlet*
- f *Titus Andronicus*
- g *Richard III*
- h *King Lear*
- i *As You Like It*

(Answer Key on page 10)

SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY

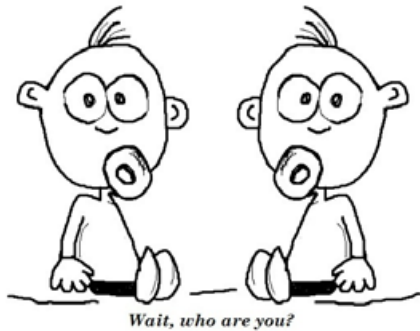
*The Comedy of Two Well-Measured Gentlemen Lost in the Merry Wives of Venice
on a Midsummer's Twelfth Night in Winter*

OR

Cymbeline Taming Pericles the Merchant in the Tempest of Love As Much As You Like It For Nothing

OR

The Love Boat Goes to Verona



These are the titles the actors come up with in the play as they decide to morph all sixteen plays into one. They decide this is possible because Shakespeare reused many comedic devices throughout his comedies. As Ernie says in the play, “When it came to the Comedies, Shakespeare was a genius at borrowing and adapting plot devices from different theatrical traditions.”

Plot Devices Found in Shakespearean Comedy:

- Courtship of young lovers
- Twins and mistaken identity
- Long lost family members
- Intertwining plots... lots of them
- Clever servants
- Happy endings (often a marriage)

Attending the Theater

It's not just Shakespeare's comedies that can be funny – Shakespeare included comic moments, jokes and puns in all of his plays.

Shakespeare's plays were written for an audience of many different social classes. Groundlings were the people who only paid one penny to see a play and stood in the yard surrounding the stage. Up to 500 people could stand in the crowded yard at a time. Groundlings were known to throw fruit and nuts at characters they did not like. Gambling and prostitution were common activities in the yard – while the play was happening! Groundlings loved bawdy jokes and Shakespeare's plays are full of them in order to keep the groundlings entertained.



A sketch of the Swan Theatre from around 1595.

Modern Adaptations

Many adaptations of Shakespeare's stories have been created throughout the years. As Ernie says in the play, “One popular trend is to take Shakespeare's plays and transpose them into modern settings.” The actors then continue to perform a short version of *Titus Andronicus* as a cooking show.

Match the following adaptations to the Shakespeare play (*Answer Key on page 10*)

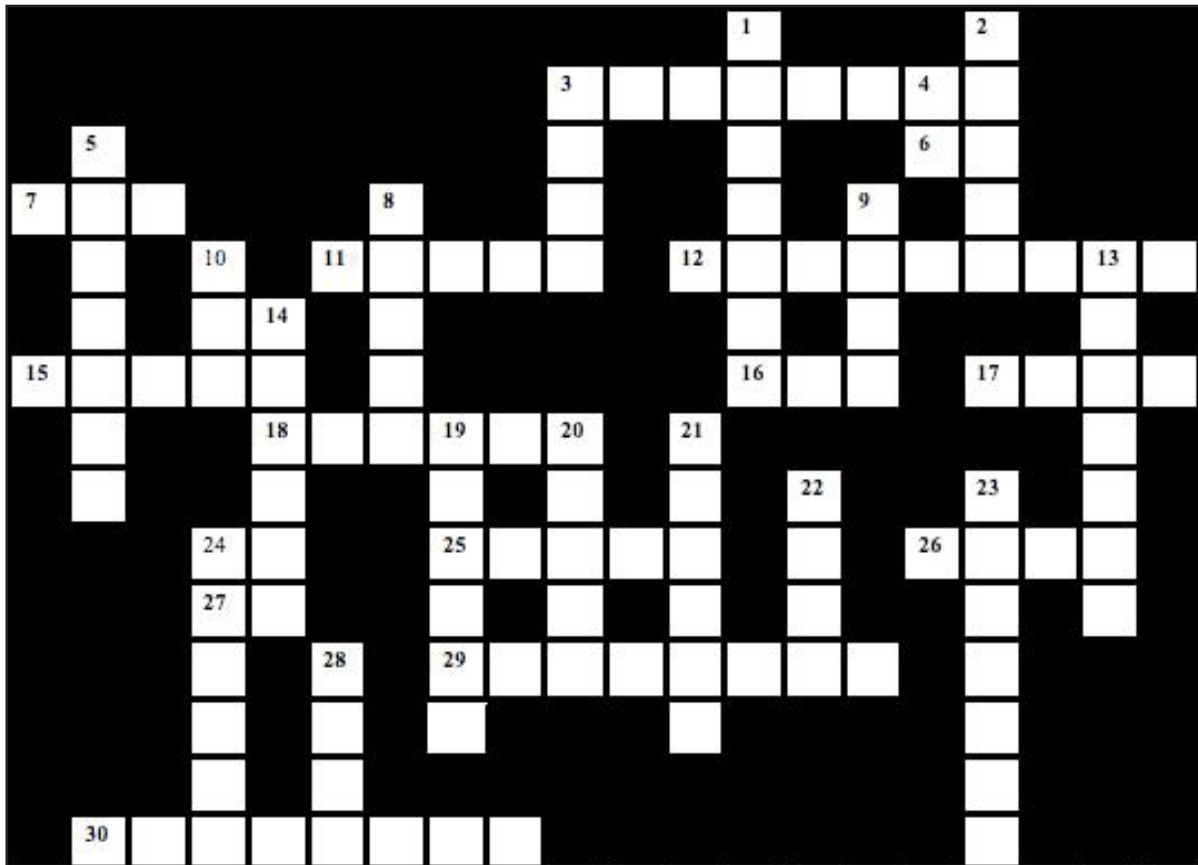
Movie

1. She's the Man
2. O
3. The Lion King
4. 10 Things I Hate About You
5. West Side Story
6. Kiss Me, Kate
7. Get Over It

Shakespeare Play

- a. *Taming of the Shrew*
- b. *Hamlet*
- c. *Twelfth Night*
- d. *Romeo & Juliet*
- e. *Taming of the Shrew*
- f. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- g. *Othello*

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS



ACROSS

3. Shakespeare's comedies usually end in ____.
6. The Globe Theatre is ____ the banks of the Thames River.
7. At the end of tragedies, characters often ____.
11. Hamlet sees the ____ of his father
12. Othello's wife
15. "Wherefore art thou ____?"
16. When Romeo asked Juliet to marry him, she said ____!
17. The first name of Shakespeare's wife
18. Juliet's cousin, killed by Romeo
24. "To ____ or not to be"
25. Richard the ____
26. A king with three daughters
27. That king says, "we have divided/____ three our kingdom"
29. The girl Romeo loves before Juliet
30. Shakespeare wrote 16 of these that we know of (including the romance plays)

DOWN

1. Shakespeare's plays are often put in three categories: History, ____ and Comedy.

2. The asp (snake) that killed Cleopatra had poisonous ____.
3. "Oh that this too too solid flesh would ____."
4. "I ____ and it is done, the bell invites me."
5. King John, Henry the V, and Richard II are all ____ plays.
8. "Do you bite your ____ at me, sir?"
9. "Beware the ____ of March"
10. "Never was a story of more ____ / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo"
13. "Get thee to a ____"
14. "Something is ____ in the state of Denmark"
19. The Lord Chamberlain's Men were a troupe of ____.
20. Twelfth Night and The Comedy of Errors both have pairs of ____.
21. Out of the three Henry VI plays, Henry VI Part 2 is in the ____.
22. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-____.
23. Hamlet is the Prince of ____.
24. "Till ____ wood remove to Dunsinane"
28. Shakespeare is sometimes called the ____.

(Answer Key on page 10)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

▣ Reducing a Story

Reducing a play, novel or movie into 1-2 minutes is challenging, but the results can be hysterical. It takes a good understanding of the major plot points to pull them out and tell the story in a short time. Below are two websites with examples of novels and movies that are reduced.

• Last Minute Book Reports

created by Adam Long (one of the creators of *Complete Works*)
http://disney.go.com/music/podcasts/today/archive_kids.html

• The 30-Second Bunnies Theatre Library

30-second parodies of movies recreated by animated bunnies
<http://www.angryalien.com/>

• **Watch and/or listen to some of these examples**, then choose a familiar movie or book and reduce it into a one-minute skit or video clip.



Be afraid, be very afraid.

▣ An Ada-rap-tation

In the play, the actors retell *Othello* through rap. Rap and poetry are closely linked together and Shakespeare's language lends itself to the rhythm of rap. In the spring of 2011, The Rep did a performance of *The Bomb-itty of Errors*, a hip hop version of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*.

• **Create a rap song** that summarizes the plot of a Shakespeare play or a scene from a play.

▣ RESOURCES

There are many resources about Shakespeare on the web. Here are a few to get you started:

• The Reduced Shakespeare Company:

<http://www.reducedshakespeare.com/productions/the-complete-works-of-william-shakespeare-abridged/>

• The Online Shakespeare Resource Center includes synopses of all of his plays:

<http://www.bardweb.net/plays/>

• The Folger Shakespeare Library's website:

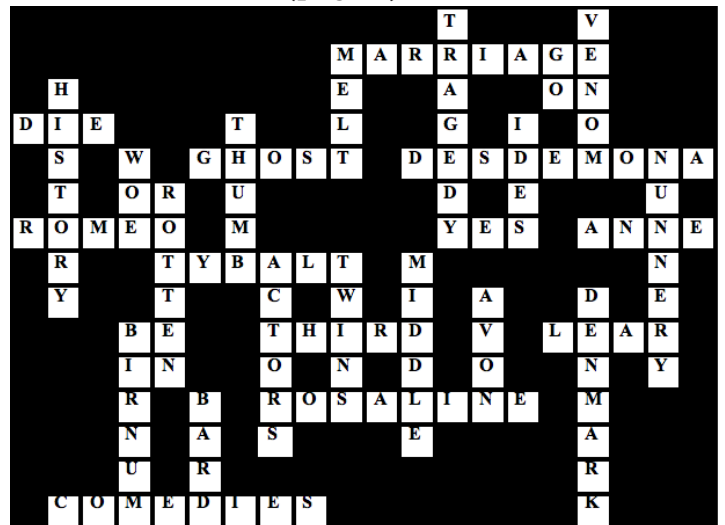
http://www.folger.edu/education/sfk_kids/

• An online version of *The Complete Works*:

<http://www.shakespeare.mit.edu/>

▣ ANSWER KEYS

Crossword Puzzle (page 9):



EDUCATION STANDARDS

CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature

R.8.2 Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

R.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

R.8.6 Analyze how differences in the point of view of the characters, and the audience or reader create such effects as suspense or humor.

R.8.7 Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

R.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced).

R.11-12.4 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 and other authors).

WISCONSIN THEATER STANDARDS

Performance

A.8.1 Attend a live theatrical performance and analyze, evaluate, and create personal meaning from the experience through small group discussion

- Say what they liked and didn't like, and why
- Explain what happened in the play and why they think the playwright made particular choices
- Explain how the technical aspects of the play helped to present the message of the play
- Explain the message of the play

A.12.2 Attend a live theatrical performance and be able to explain the personal meaning derived from the experience, and also be able to analyze, evaluate, and create meaning in a broader social and cultural context in either written or oral form

- Articulate with increased understanding what they liked and didn't like and why
- Explain what happened in the play and why they think the playwright made particular choices
- Explain what happened in the play and why they think the director and actors made particular choices
- Explain how the technical aspects of the play supported the choices of the playwright, director and actors
- Describe how the audience appeared to respond to the play
- Explain the message of the play and its meaning to individuals and to society

E.8.4 Analyze a play and determine appropriate set, lighting, costume, and make-up requirements

E.12.5 Demonstrate in written or oral form, an increased understanding of the importance of one aspect of theater management in the successful promotion of theater production.



Richard Halverson in The Rep's *Twelfth Night*.



Lolly Mozersky, Kama Lee, Laura Gordon, Hollis Resnik in The Rep's *Love's Labor's Lost*.

VISITING THE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.



Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. The large space is the main hub for the businesses that share this building: The Rep, Associated Bank, an office tower, the Pabst Theater and the Intercontinental Hotel. In the central rotunda, to the right of the large staircase, is an escalator to The Rep's Stackner Cabaret. The Cabaret is designed as a restaurant and theater. The audience will be seated at tables to watch the production. Before evening performances, the Stackner Cabaret kitchen is open for dinner before the play. Restrooms are in the lobby area of the theater. There will be a lobby sign with the running time of the play.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Attending the theater can be a fun experience for everyone if you observe a few simple courtesies:

- Turn off and put away all electronic devices prior to entering the theater (cell phones, iPods, games).
- Taking photographs and video recording in the theater is strictly prohibited.
- Do not place your feet on the seat in front of you.
- The actors onstage can see and hear the audience just as well as you can see and hear them. Please refrain from talking or moving around during the performance as it can be distracting to the actors as well as to other audience members.
- Feel free to respond to the action of the play through appropriate laughter and applause. The actors enjoy this type of communication from the audience!
- Have fun! Attending theater should be an enjoyable experience.

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