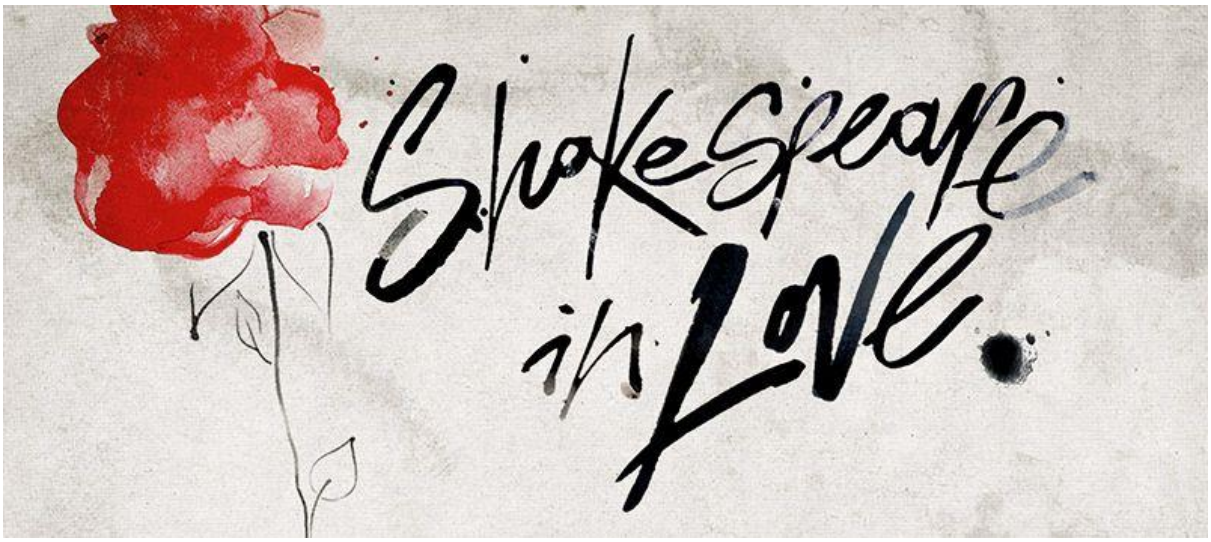
SENIOR SHOW 2022

Lower and Upper Sixth



AUDITION PACK

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DIRECTOR: M. PRICE

ABOUT *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE*

Shakespeare in Love, based on the award winning film screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, was adapted for the stage by Lee Hall. It depicts a fictional love affair involving playwright William Shakespeare and Viola de Lesseps while Shakespeare was writing *Romeo and Juliet*. Several characters are based on historical figures, and many of the characters, lines, and plot devices allude to Shakespeare's plays.

SYNOPSIS

In 1593 London, William Shakespeare is a sometime player in the Lord Chamberlain's Men and playwright for Philip Henslowe, owner of The Rose Theatre. Shakespeare is suffering from writer's block over his new comedy, *Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter*, but a desperate Henslowe, in debt to ruthless moneylender Fennyman, begins auditions anyway. Viola de Lesseps, daughter of a wealthy merchant, who has seen Shakespeare's plays at court, disguises herself as a man named Thomas Kent to audition. Kent gains Shakespeare's interest with a speech from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, but runs away when Shakespeare questions her. He pursues Kent to Viola's house and leaves a note with her nurse, asking Kent to begin rehearsals at the Rose.

Shakespeare sneaks into a ball at the house, where Viola's parents arrange her betrothal to Lord Wessex, an aristocrat in need of money. Dancing with Viola, Shakespeare is struck speechless. After introducing himself as Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare is ejected by Wessex, who threatens to kill him. Shakespeare finds Viola on her balcony, where they confess their mutual attraction before he is discovered by her nurse and flees. Inspired by Viola, Shakespeare quickly transforms the play into what will become *Romeo and Juliet*. As rehearsals begin, with Thomas Kent as Romeo, Shakespeare discovers Viola's true identity, and they begin a secret affair.

News arrives that Marlowe has been murdered. A guilt-ridden Shakespeare assumes Wessex had Marlowe killed, believing him to be Viola's lover, while Viola believes Shakespeare to be the victim. Shakespeare appears at her church, allaying Viola's fears and terrifying Wessex, who believes he is a ghost. Viola confesses her love for Shakespeare, but both recognize she cannot escape her duty to marry Wessex.

After a young John Webster discovers their secret, Viola's identity becomes exposed, leaving Shakespeare without a stage or a lead actor, until Burbage offers his theatre and the heartbroken Shakespeare takes the role of Romeo. Following her wedding, Viola learns the play will be performed that day, and runs away to the Curtain. She overhears that the boy playing Juliet cannot perform, his voice having broken, and Henslowe asks her to replace him. She plays Juliet to Shakespeare's Romeo to an enthralled audience.

Just after the play has concluded, Tilney arrives to arrest everyone for indecency due to Viola's presence, but the Queen reveals herself in attendance and restrains him, pretending that Kent is a man with a "remarkable resemblance" to a woman. Powerless to end a lawful marriage, she orders Viola to sail with Wessex to Virginia.

Viola and Shakespeare say their goodbyes, and he vows to immortalise her, as he imagines the beginning of *Twelfth Night*, in character as a castaway disguised as a man after a voyage to a strange land.

REVIEW

"I've often attacked our modern mania for turning movies into plays. But, in the case of Shakespeare in Love, the transformation is fully justified. Even more than the original screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, Lee Hall's new version is a love letter to theatre itself, and one that celebrates the way magic and mystery are born out of chaos and confusion." – *Michael Billington, The Guardian, 24 July 2014*

The full play script is available on Drama Online and you can watch the movie with an Amazon Prime subscription.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: LEE HALL

Lee Hall (born 20 September 1966) is an English playwright, television writer, screenwriter, and lyricist. He is best known for writing the screenplay for the film *Billy Elliot* (2000) and the book and lyrics for its adaptation as a stage musical of the same name. In addition, he wrote the play *The Pitmen Painters* (2007), and the screenplay for the film *Rocketman* (2019).

Hall's most commercially successful work is *Billy Elliot*, the story of a North Eastern English boy who, in the face of opposition from his family and community, aspires to be a ballet dancer. The inspiration for the screenplay was drawn, in part, from the A. J. Cronin novel *The Stars Look Down*, which is also set in an English coal mining community during a strike, and similarly tells the story of a miner's son who goes against the grain. Initially a 2000 film directed by Stephen Daldry, for which Hall wrote the screenplay, and for which he received an Academy Award nomination, *Billy Elliot* was later turned into a stage musical, with music by Elton John and lyrics by Hall. It enjoyed a long run in the West End and opened on Broadway in 2008. It won Hall the 2009 Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical.

Hall's play, *The Pitmen Painters*, inspired by art critic William Feaver's book on the Ashington Group, premiered at the refurbished Live Theatre in Newcastle upon Tyne in 2007. It tells of a group of miners from Ashington, Northumberland, who decide to learn about art and begin to paint. The production later transferred to the National Theatre in London and opened on Broadway in September 2010. It won the 2008 Evening Standard Award for Best Play.

CHARACTERS

While many of the characters in this play are male traditionally, many characters will be blind cast and could be played as female/ gender non-specific – bear this in mind when it comes to auditioning.

Playwrights:

Will Shakespeare – poet, playwright, a hopeless romantic

Kit Marlowe – colleague, friend, competitor and inspiration to Will

Theatre men:

Henslowe – Owner and manager of the Rose Theatre

Fennyman – producer (the money)

Lambert – Fennyman's henchman

Frees – Fennyman's henchman

Ralph – novice actor, plays Nurse and Petruchio

Nol – novice actor, plays Benvolio and Samson

Robin – novice actor, plays lady Capulet

Adam – novice actor, plays Gregory, Benvolio and Servingman

John Webster – street urchin, aspires to be a player/ playwright

Wabash – novice actor, Henslowe's stammering tailor

Ned Alleyn – the lead actor of the Admiral's Men, plays Mercutio

Sam – actor, plays Juliet

Peter – actor, plays Tybalt

Burbage – The lead actor and owner of the Curtain Theatre

Mistress Quickly – wardrobe mistress

The Court:

Queen Elizabeth I

Edmund Tilney – the Lord Chamberlain

Viola de Lesseps – disguises herself as Thomas Kent, our romantic lead

Nurse – servant to Viola

Sir Robert de Lesseps – Viola's father

Lord Wessex – betrothed to Viola

Catling – guard at De Lesseps Hall

Boatman

Ensemble (10-15):

To play (among other things):

Tavern waiter

Tavern barman

Molly – barmaid

Kate – barmaid

Other actors (including those playing Proteus, Valentine and Abraham)

Tavern goers

Burbage's Heavies

Guards at De Lesseps Hall

Musicians – there may be the opportunity for actor-musician roles, so do enquire about that if that is something that might interest you.

KEY DATES

Auditions:

- Tuesday 28th June 2022 - 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Rehearsals:

From September 2022:

- Tuesdays – 6:00 – 9:00pm (supper break 7:00-7:20)
- Thursdays – 6:00 – 9:00pm (supper break 7:00-7:20)

A more specific rehearsal schedule will be sent to you in due course, should you be successful at the audition. Schedules will get busier as we approach production week.

Tech/ Dress/ Significant Rehearsals:

- Sunday 9th October 3:00-9:00pm
- Sunday 6th November (early return from half term) 2:00 – 9:00pm
- Tuesday 15th November (Tech 1)
- Thursday 17th November (Tech 2)
- Sunday 20th November (Full tech & Dress 1) 2:00 – 9:00pm
- Monday 21st November (Dress 2) 6.30 – 10pm

Performances:

- Tuesday 22nd November 2022, 7.30pm
- Wednesday 23rd November 2022, 7.30pm
- Thursday 24th November 2022, 7.30pm

AUDITIONS

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Open auditions	Everyone	Tuesday 28th June 6:00-9:00
(Potential) call-backs	*Invited*	*Thursday 30th June 7:00-9:00*

Each audition piece is a duologue. You may find a partner to practice with and pick **one** side that suits you, but this is not required and you can come and work with someone in the audition itself.

Think about what character will suit you best – will you be a star crossed lover, poet, comical player or royalty? I will be looking at interpretation of character, so prepare well and bring originality to the roles.

Acting side 1: Viola and Nurse

Viola
But how can one care for Silvia while she is – by the order of the Lord Chamberlain – played by a pipsqueak boy in petticoats!

Nurse
I liked the dog.

Viola
Stage love will never be real love until we women can be on stage ourselves. Yet when can we see another?

Nurse
When the Queen commands it.

Viola
But at the playhouse.

Nurse
Playhouses are not for well-born ladies.

Viola
I am not so well-born.

Nurse
Well-monied is the same as well-born and well-married better than both. Lord Wessex was looking at you tonight.

Viola
All the men at Court are without poetry. If they look at me they see my father's fortune. I will have poetry in my life. And adventure. And love. Love above all.

Nurse
Like Valentine and Silvia?

Viola
No – not the artful postures of love, but the love that overthrows life. Unbiddable, ungovernable, like a riot in the heart, and nothing to be done, come ruin or rapture. Love like there has never been in a play. I will have love or I will end my days –

Nurse
As a nurse?

Viola
But I would be Valentine and Silvia too somehow. Good Nurse, God save you and goodnight. I would stay asleep my whole life if I could dream myself into a company of players.

Acting side 2: Ralph and Henslowe

Ralph
Ah Mr Henslowe. How goes it, sir?

Henslowe
Very well. Very well, Ralph, my good man. Some food and drink.

Ralph
Well, the special today is a pig's foot marinated in juniper berry vinegar served with a buckwheat pancake and a burdock salad.

Henslowe
I'll have a pie and pint. And have one for yourself, Master Ralph.

Ralph
Did I hear you have a play, Mr Henslowe?

Henslowe
Shakespeare is writing as we speak.

Ralph
Is there anything for me?

Henslowe
You're a perfect Pirate King, Ralph, but I hear you are a drunken sot.

Ralph
Never when I'm working. What about the money?

Henslowe
It won't cost you a penny. We will all share the profits. Auditions this afternoon.

Ralph
Auditions? Where are your usual men?

Henslowe
With Ned Alleyn in the provinces. God knows when they will return. We cannot delay. Auditions round the back in five minutes. If you are not there, Will, I will cast it myself. Ralph, bring the pie round.

Acting side 3: Will and Viola/Kent

Will
Oh Thomas, I am undone, my strings are cut – I'm a puppet in a box. She tells me to keep away. She is to marry Lord Wessex.

Viola/Kent
If you love her you must do as she asks.

Will
And break her heart and mine?

Viola/Kent
It's only yours you can know.

Will
She loves me, Thomas!

Viola/Kent
Does she say so?

Will
No. And yet she does where the ink has run with tears. Was she weeping when she gave you this?

Viola/Kent
I … her letter came to me by the nurse.

Will
Your aunt?

Viola/Kent
Yes, my aunt. Perhaps she wept a little. Tell me how you love her, Will.

Will
Like a sickness and its cure together.

Viola/Kent
Yes, like rain and sun, like cold and heat. (*Collecting herself.*)Is your lady beautiful? Since I came to visit from the country, I have not seen her close. Tell me, is she beautiful?

Will
Oh, Thomas, if I could write the beauty of her eyes! I was born to look in them and know myself.

Viola/Kent

And her lips?

Will
Oh, Thomas, her lips! The early morning rose would wither on the branch, if it could feel envy!

Viola/Kent
And her voice? Like lark song?

Will
Deeper, softer. None of your twittering larks! I would banish nightingales from her garden before they interrupt her song.

Viola/Kent
She sings too.

Will
Constantly. Without doubt. And plays the lute, she has a natural ear.

Viola/Kent
I think the lady is wise to keep your love at a distance. For what lady could live up to it close to, when her eyes and lips and voice may be no more beautiful than mine? Besides, can a lady born to wealth and noble marriage love happily with a Bankside poet and player?

Will
Yes, by God! Love knows nothing of rank or riverbank! It will spark between a queen and the poor vagabond who plays the king, and their love should be minded by each, for love denied blights the soul we owe to God! So tell My Lady, William Shakespeare waits for her in the garden.

Acting side 4: Will and Marlowe

Marlowe
What is next?

Will
A new play. For Twelfth Night.

Marlowe
Good title.

Will
Really?

Marlowe
And the comedy?

Will
Comedy! What will my hero be but the saddest wretch in the kingdom, sick with love?

Marlowe
Good start. Let him be … a duke.

Will
Orsino.

Marlowe
Good name. And your heroine?

Will
Sold in marriage and halfway to America! And so my story begins at sea … a perilous voyage to an unknown land … a shipwreck –

Marlowe
A shipwreck is good.

Will
The wild waters roar and heave … the brave vessel is dashed all to pieces and all the hapless souls are drowned –

Marlowe
A comedy?

Will
– save one. A woman whose soul is greater than the ocean and her spirit stronger than the sea's embrace. Not for her a watery end but a new life beginning on a stranger shore, the province of the duke, Orsino.

Marlowe
And then –

Will
Fearful of her virtue she comes to him dressed as a boy.

Marlowe
Thus unable to declare her love. Funny.

Will
No, the comedy is with the clapped-out veterans and cross-gartered prigs who rule the household. Viola is the spirit of freedom, of true love trying against all bounds to be out.

Marlowe
But how will it end?

Will
Happily.

Marlowe
But how?

Will
I don't know. It's a mystery.

Acting side 5: Viola, and Queen Elizabeth1 *(Tilney's line can be read in)*

Viola
Your Highness.

Queen
Stand up straight, girl.
I have seen you. You are the one who comes to all the plays … at Whitehall, at Richmond.

Viola
Your Majesty.

Queen
What do you love so much?

Viola
Your Majesty …?

Queen
Speak out! I know who I am. Do you love stories of kings and queens? Feats of arms? Or is it courtly love?

Viola
I love theatre. To have stories acted for me by a company of fellows is indeed –

Queen
They are not acted for you, they are acted for me. And …?

Viola
I love poetry above all.

Queen
Above Lord Wessex? My Lord, when you cannot find your wife you had better look for her at the playhouse.

Tilney
Hardly a place for a young lady of breeding, Your Majesty.

Queen
Oh, I am all for the theatre, Mr Tilney. But playwrights teach nothing about love, they make it pretty, they make it comical, or they make it lust. They cannot make it true.

Viola
Oh, but they can.