



First Encounters with Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night*

Handbook for schools

We are delighted that you will be hosting performances of this year's First Encounters with Shakespeare production of *Twelfth Night*. This handbook contains all the information you need in order to prepare for the performance(s) in your school. Please read the information carefully. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch with Ian Wainwright (Learning and National Partnerships) or Sarah Katy Davies (Producers) whose contact details are given at the end of this guide.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

This production is directed by Robin Belfield and is being created in collaboration with our Regional Theatre Partners and our Associate Schools. The Associate Director is Nicky Cox who will be working with a team of four 'Creative Associates' from four different theatres: Becky Salt (New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme), Mykey Young (The Grand Theatre, Blackpool), Nicole Joseph (The Bradford Alhambra Theatre) and Ellie Warr (RSC). The designer is Georgie White (not to be confused with Georgia White who many of you will know!) and the Stage Managers are Cath Booth (Company Stage Manager), and Tabitha Sylvester-Kilroy (Assistant Stage Manager).

But the creative team extends beyond those mentioned above. Over the years we have found that the more involved students are in the production, the more engaged they are and therefore we would like to invite you and your students to get involved in the following ways:

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Classroom preparation

We are inviting our Associate Schools to make Festival bunting to be part of the set. We will send lengths of cord of the correct length with clips attached onto which the individual pieces of bunting can be attached. These will be essential elements of the set that will help us create the festive world of the play.

Georgie White, the designer, has created a full design brief and technical specification for your students to follow. You will find this in the appendix at the back of this handbook.

Young Performers

We are offering the opportunity for 10 young people to perform in the production when it visits your school. They will play the sailors at the start of the play, setting the scene for the whole performance.

To facilitate this element of the production we have a team of Creative Associate theatre practitioners working on the production, one of whom will travel to your school to work with and prepare those young people before the production visits (max of two visits).

The 10 performers use the text of the sea captain from the beginning of the play (Act 1, Scene 2), dividing it between them and will be an essential part of the production delivering key elements of the story.

Costume wise we are asking the 10 young people playing the sailors to be dressed in old blue denim. There is a brief for this in the appendix.

We will also need young sailors when the show performs at the Associate Regional Theatres. The Creative Associates will liaise with lead teachers about the most appropriate group(s) of young people to do this.

Next Generation Backstage students

We would like to provide your students with an opportunity to work alongside the creative team whilst they are in your school/theatre. If you have students that have taken part in Next Generation Backstage in Stratford, then this could be a wonderful opportunity for them to put into practice what they learnt during that experience. If not, then this might be a great chance for them to explore a new aspect of making theatre. Please nominate some young people for the following roles:

- Stage Management / Stage Crew (up to 4 places) – to assist the Stage Management team.
- Wardrobe Assistant (up to 2 places) – to assist the Wardrobe Manager.
- Lighting Technicians (up to 2 places) – Sound and Lighting when the show is playing in a theatre or if your school has a lighting rig

We have created mini job descriptions in order to help with the recruitment of the young people. These will be emailed to you. Please ensure the young people selected are genuinely interested in the above roles and can be available on the day of the performance(s) in your school and/or theatre. More information will be provided closer to the time, regarding what the young people will be doing and when they need to be available.

Shakespeare Ambassadors

We would also love Shakespeare Ambassadors to be involved as Front-of-House assistants, in helping with marketing the production and in helping to collect feedback from audiences. This will involve your Ambassadors (or other students if you don't have Ambassadors) in the following:

- A half-hour online meeting with the RSC Learning & National Partnerships Marketing Manager in June, to discuss ways in which to market the production to their school and/or local community. This meeting will be held on Zoom and a teacher must be present at all times.
- Greeting the company and creative team when they arrive in your school, and helping to show them around.

- Greeting audiences' pre-performance and taking or seeing tickets on the doors.
- Interviewing one audience member each pre-performance (asking three questions) and the same audience member post-performance. Ambassadors will be given a voice recorder in order to capture the interview and ask the audience member to sign permission for their feedback to be used for marketing purposes. This will all be explained in detail during the half-hour online meeting.

The role of the Ambassadors is key in helping us collect invaluable audience feedback to help us understand how many audience members have seen a theatre production or Shakespeare before and help us to develop the production for future years.

Q&A sessions about a career in costume

As part of the production's visit to your school, our Wardrobe Manager would be available to give a short talk to students in your school/theatre. This would be for up to 30 minutes and would involve a talk about their role and how they got into theatre, with time for questions at the end. We ask that you provide a room and between 10 and 25 young people to participate. The young people must be accompanied by a teacher at all times.

If you would like to take up this opportunity, please register your interest by emailing first.encounters@rsc.org.uk

PREPARING STUDENTS TO SEE THE SHOW

As you will know, young people's experience of watching a Shakespeare production is greatly enhanced when they have done some preparation beforehand. Even if this is learning about the first scene, a small amount of preparation can make a huge difference. To support this, the RSC will be creating a Teacher Pack with activities based on this specific production.

If you would like to start your exploration of the play, there are many resources on our Shakespeare Learning Zone which can be found on the RSC website here: www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeare-learning-zone/twelfth-night

HOSTING THE PERFORMANCE

To help us make the experience as positive as possible for students, teachers and actors alike, please read through the following guidance carefully to ensure everything is in place for a smooth running of the day:

Looking after the company

- Please ensure there is an assigned member of staff and/or Shakespeare Ambassadors available to meet the RSC team on arrival at school, and that they are available throughout our time with you.
- Ensure we have quick and early access to the school caretaker (or site staff) as necessary.
- Please make sure we have exclusive use of changing rooms which are lockable or provide locker facilities for the company to store valuables. This space should be appropriately private and not shared with young people. Please make sure these spaces are clean and tidy and that the key or code can be given to the stage manager for the day.
- Ensure facility to make tea, coffee and access to water is available throughout the day. *(Please do not provide individual plastic bottles of water as we are trying to maintain a strong sense of environmental consciousness through the tour.)*
- Provide the stage manager with the Wi-Fi password on arrival.

Preparing the performance space

- Please ensure the performance space is exclusively available to the RSC from the arrival time until the get-out time.
- As necessary, make other staff, students, caretakers, catering staff etc. aware of the performance and its exclusive use of the space.
- Inform us in advance of any special needs amongst the audience members that we should be aware of.
- Please ensure there is space to park our van as near the get-in doors as possible for unloading. Ideally, the van should remain here during the show, if it cannot, there should be a reserved space to park it in.

- Make sure there is clear access for the get-in and get-out, allowing us to unload and load the van.
- If possible, bells should be silenced in the performance space during the whole performance including any pre or post show events.
- Keep the performance space clear, and clutter free; the action of the play will happen all around the space. Please do not set out any chairs before we arrive.
- We will mark the stage and audience space on the floor with coloured tape so please remove any other tape marks that might already be on the floor. We will check with you at the recce about using tape on your floor.
- We will perform under normal fluorescent lighting. Please check in advance that none of the tubes are flickering.
- At the recce in advance of the show, we will discuss the seating arrangements and a seating plan will be sent to you after the recce.

Staging and audience numbers

- It's unlikely we will use the stage even if your hall / studio has one. However, it might be suitable as a changing space or you could seat some of your audience on the stage. We will discuss this with you at the recce.
- The maximum audience capacity is 200 (unless you have a raked stage and we have agreed a larger capacity at the recce). This has been based on many years' experience and aims to ensure that all members of the audience have good sight-lines and therefore a good experience. We will send you a seating plan after the recce.

During the performance

- If at all possible, student groups should not bring bags and coats into the hall.
- Students must be in the performance space by the time the performance is scheduled to begin. This may mean gathering students together 10 minutes before the start time to ensure we begin on time. We recommend that you discuss with the relevant teachers the best way to manage bringing students into the hall prior to the event to ensure a smooth process. You may wish to

use any Shakespeare Ambassadors and/or Next Generation: Backstage students (Front of House) to assist with this.

- Once the students enter the performance space it is to be treated as a theatre, so there should be no announcements and introductions by members of staff are not necessary.
- No photos can be taken during the performance.
- Photos are allowed post-show, but please restrict to one person using a camera without a flash and discuss this with the Stage Manager before the show.
- Please note that we expect students to react to the play. We don't expect silent audiences who are on their 'best behaviour' for the RSC!
- Any members of staff who watch the performance should do so from the beginning to the end. Please brief teachers before the show and ensure that they know not to use electronic devices throughout the performance. We want teachers present to be able to focus on and enjoy the performance as much as, and setting an example for, the students.

Talking to the press about the production

Jo Hammond from the RSC's Press Office will lead on communications for the tour. Jo can be contacted at jo.hammond@rsc.org.uk

Hosting the FE production of Twelfth Night is a great opportunity to engage with local media, but experience suggests this is more effective, when done locally by schools and theatres themselves. We also recognise that many of you already have well established contacts with your local media.

Jo will focus on possible national media coverage whilst being available to support those partner schools and theatres that would benefit from our support.

Activity

Jo will develop an announcement press release for national education/arts media, as well as work to secure journalist attendance at our guest performance and national coverage focussing on the participation and environmental aspects of the tour.

In terms of support for schools and theatres, many of you will have experience in liaising with your local media already, but for those that don't and would like some support, please do contact Jo at jo.hammond@rsc.org.uk.

Jo will also create a toolkit which can be adapted by theatres and schools should they wish and will include the following:

- A template press release that can be adapted to include information relevant to your local media.
- A short 'how to' guide for contacting local media, issuing a press release, making arrangements for interviews/photocalls and getting the right permissions in place.

This will be shared with partner theatres and schools well in advance of the start of the tour.

Please do not hesitate to contact Jo and we would be grateful if you could keep her informed of any media requests. ***If any media requests involve members of the RSC company (ie, they want to interview actors/director/members of the company), please refer these requests directly to Jo***, who can then liaise with the company manager and/or actors.

A note about photography:

Some schools like to invite their local paper in to take a photo. We don't allow photographers in during a performance, but it is usually possible to set something up before or after the show. Please contact Jo before setting anything up with your local paper.

Please refer to the toolkit or do get in touch with Jo if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything with her.

Marketing support

A detailed marketing pack will be sent out separately but below is an outline of the support we will provide:

What the RSC will provide:

- Recyclable banner promoting the public performances to be displayed outside your school
- Copy for letters or emails to parents or other schools
- Rehearsal and production images
- A section on the RSC website with full details of the tour, plus photographs, reviews and information about the story
- A banner display stand brought by the Company to be displayed prior to the performance.
- Social media assets including images and gifs.
- Posters and flyers to be discussed on a school by school basis

Marketing that the RSC will do on your behalf:

- An email to the people in your local area who have signed up to receive RSC emails, featuring details of all the performances in your local area which are open to the public, including those at local schools as appropriate.
- A campaign through the RSC's social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, including campaigns tailored to each area.
- Online advertising in your area
- Additional advertising, distribution and other promotional activity to be discussed regionally.

Additional marketing support available:

- We would be happy to create adverts for school newsletters – all we need is the size required
- We can supply images in a range of sizes to fit with your existing website or email templates

The marketing contact is Natasha Goodge - see last page for contact details. Please let Natasha know your ticket prices ASAP so that she can create marketing materials for you in good time.

Photo / media permission

During this event, a photographer contracted by the RSC may take photos to use as a project record or in publicity to promote the production. These pictures may be sent to the media with a press release, used for our own publicity or on our website. Photographs will be stored in a secure location and only authorised staff will have access to them. All information provided will be treated in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR regulations.

If we do decide to record the event in your school, we will provide a photo and media consent form and we would ask for your help in distributing this to the students and schools involved, collecting and returning to the RSC.

Venue recce

We will need to carry out a recce of any new venues. Ian Wainwright will be in touch to arrange a convenient time. This is our opportunity to get to know your school or venue and address any challenges prior to the tour. Recces may be in person or online. After a recce, we will send you the notes on what we agreed during our visit, which will include a schedule for the performance day. We will also send you a suggested seating plan of your performance space to agree on the layout and capacity.

After the performance

We will need to know how many people saw each performance and the make-up of the audience. Our Company Stage Manager will collect this data on the performance day but please have to hand:

- Names of the schools attending;
- Number of teachers;
- Number of students and their year groups.

APPENDIX

THE CREATIVE BRIEF

Festival bunting: Creative Brief

We are excited to invite students from our Associate schools to provide 4 lengths of bunting which make up a key element of the Twelfth Night set. We are striving for this design to be as environmentally friendly as possible, and therefore we are asking that material to make the bunting is **entirely reclaimed or recycled**. It may be that your students organise a collection of old clothes or scraps with which to make fabric strips. We would like this to be an exercise that encourages community engagement and opens up conversations about how to best reduce our carbon footprint.

Below is an outline of the technical requirements, some notes on the design and key examples of the style and colours of bunting we require.

Whilst we encourage the students to follow the guidelines as closely as possible and think about how the setting of the play will impact their design, we would like to stress that the most important aspect of these bunting lengths is that they are made from entirely reclaimed or recycled materials. Therefore, if some specific colours or materials are not easily collected the students should feel free to use what is most available and add their own creative flair.

It's important to note that the company will not carry spare or extra bunting with them on tour, so this element of the set will be added by our Associate School partners. If you think you might struggle to create this with your students, please do contact us as soon as possible and we will discuss suitable alternatives.

Technical Specification

We will send you 4 pre-cut lengths of rope with loops tied at the end, which will hook onto parts of the set. Once you have collected your material you can cut it into strips to tie onto the rope, there should be no need to sew anything! It would be great if you can fill the full length of the ropes but don't worry if you can't, just space out what you have as evenly as you can. The length of the fabric strips is up to you but please make sure the fabric doesn't hang any more than 25cm below the rope.

Please follow this link for a simple tutorial on how to make rag bunting. You do not have to make it using this method or type of material.

<https://upcyclenystuff.com/easy-no-sew-rag-bunting/>

If you have extra material then why not make more bunting to decorate your hall or classrooms with? After the show we will take the bunting from all the schools we are visiting back to Stratford to decorate The Other Place (our studio theatre), where our final performances will take place.

Design notes

Setting

The inspiration for the setting of this production of Twelfth night comes from the Caribbean Islands which are an area of the world that are being particularly hit by the destructive effects of the climate crisis. Caribbean culture also has amazing examples of extravagant carnivals and festivals, and we would like our bunting to inspired by these kinds of celebrations. We therefore ask that the bunting is not the traditional 'British' triangular shape. Instead, you can be as creative as you like with the shape of your bunting, or simply use the strips or rag as mentioned above. The most important thing is that whatever shape, size and colour your bunting is made from recycled or reclaimed materials. Please see the images bellow for inspiration or search for more examples of rag bunting.

Period

The show has a contemporary feel in the sense that it sits in the world of the 20th century. However, we would like to avoid any reference to modern culture and we ask that your bunting does not show any brands or logos.

Colours

We have provided a loose colour scheme (below) that you may choose to follow that will fit in with the set and costume design. However, please do not feel restricted to follow this too closely if these colours are not available, or you may feel that there your school / region has specific colours you'd like to use!

Bunting Colour Scheme



Bunting examples

Sailor Costume Brief

We would like the young people who will be performing in this production to be costumed to fit in with the other actors. The young people will be playing sailors who arrive shipwrecked alongside Voila. We will be providing some additional costume elements and accessories, but we will need the young people to put together their own base costumes. Here are some guidelines as to what would be most appropriate to wear, and some alternatives if these cannot be found.

Voila, Sebastian and Antonio are our three shipwrecked characters and will be dressed in washed denim, blues, and off whites. Denim dates back to the 16th century where it was originally worn by merchant sailors. Since then, it has developed into the popular jeans and jackets we wear today and is in many people's wardrobes.

We would like our sailors to be dressed in as much blue denim as possible. Please do not buy any new items for this costume as our sailors are shipwrecked and therefore the more worn and the older denim, the better. If you don't have any denim, then other clothing in blue and grey colours are the next best option. For shoes we would ideally like black lace up boots but again, other boots or black shoes are more than acceptable.

Do's (Best options at the top, alternatives further down the list)

- Distressed or old blue denim jeans, blue denim shirt, blue denim jacket, black lace up boots
- Denim dungarees, denim, grey or blue top, black boots
- Dark blue shirt with buttons, blue or grey trousers, black boots
- Blue, grey or white t-shirt, blue or grey bottoms, black shoes

Any combination of these would be ideal. If none can be found, please dress in plain dark colours.

Don't

- No logos, patterns, embroidery or colours
- Only long leg trousers, no shorts
- No skirts or dresses

It may be that you conduct an old denim collection at your school alongside the bunting fabric collection. Any denim that is not worn by the performers then might be able to be cut up and added to the festival bunting.

Although the design of this is still in development, we will be providing some fishing netting accessories (similar to the one shown in the image below) and are aiming to have a few spare denim items.

Please refer to the colour scheme and inspiration images below to see what kind of look we are aspiring towards.







Sebastian



Antonio



Cesario



Contact Details

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