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*Twelfth Night*

As a freshman at Longwood University *Twelfth Night* was in fact the first theatre production I have seen since arriving at school. In the past I have not gone to many productions put on through my high school, or local theatres. The only productions I have seen are musicals that were performed on Broadway, so of course those performances are the best of the best and thus I was expecting too much from Longwood’s theatre. Having said that, I do believe there were good aspects to *Twelfth Night* for example, the opening and the closing of the show. The beginning of the show really got my hopes up for the rest of the production, however, after the beginning I found myself slowly losing interest in what was going on.

Although I did not necessarily love the production as a whole, I do in fact believe the setting was constantly accurate for what was happening on stage. An example of Longwood making do with funds and still accomplishing the goal was when Viola washed up on shore, and in the background the projector was showing waves, and there were wave sounds in order to get the audience to imagine Viola washing up on a real shore after stormy travel. Another scene I thought was a nice touch was when the projector showed the garden area along with an arch/gate where Malvolio was walking “prancing” through when he believe Olivia was in love with him. The scenic design did in fact allow the actors to be visible to the audience. An example when the actors were using the set design was when Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and one of Olivia’s servants were “hiding” around the garden arch/gate while Malvolio was giddy about Olivia, and reading aloud the forged note from Olivia. The actors in this scene were giving off the idea they were supposed to be hidden, and out of sight from Malvolio, but yet the audience could still see them, and the actor’s actions to what Malvolio was saying. Although the scenic design suited the needs of the actors, and allowed the audience to envision what was going on it felt as though during some scenes there wasn’t much scenic design other than the projector screen. This then caused the audience to have to imagine his/her own view of what should be displayed during this scene when in fact the whole point of a production is to provide those visual elements to the audience. The visual elements did not enhance the action of the play nor did they hinder them, I believe the elements provided a visual cue to the audience, but there was not much more than one set element on stage at once. I do not feel as though the scenery exemplified the time period as well as the clothing did in *Twelfth Night.* Once again I feel as though the scenery used was simple such as using a chair on stage in order to add elements to what was going on, but did not in fact enhance or help the scenery.

Looking back on the production of *Twelfth Night* the lighting of the play was very well done. I could see the actors I needed to see at all times, and the actors the audience was not supposed to be focused on were not as apparently lit. The lighting did set the mood for most scenes. The times when the audience was suppose to take things light and laugh such as when Malvolio was reading Olivia’s letter to him the lighting was bright and well lit. Other times when things were more serious such as when Malvolio was imprisoned due to Olivia believing he had gone mad was a darker light on stage setting the serious tone. There were in fact some cool lighting elements when Viola and Sebastian washed up on shore after the storm. The lighting was going up and down between darker and lighter to give the audience the stormy feel along with the sound effects. The scene in act two when Malvolio was confined was accomplished by displaying Malvolio on a wooden block so he was center of attention, however, he was slighting to the side and back a bit. The lighting during this scene was darker in order to give the serious tone. As Malvolio stood on the block, Olivia’s fool, Feste, came in acting as though she was someone she was not (a man), and then went back to showing Malvolio herself where he then asked her to send a message to Olivia. During this whole scene the lighting was dim, and did not fluctuate at all. Throughout the entire production the lighting was consistent and dead on, and had no issues.

The costumes overall supported to play, as well as the time period. However, the women’s costumes were much more time period appropriate and costume like than the men. Costumes in certain scenes really did support the play. A couple costumes that stand out in my mind were Olivia’s pajamas when she was mourning they really fit the scene, and both of Malvolio’s costumes the one that he wore in the beginning when he was serving Olivia, and the second when he believed Olivia was in love with him. That costume certainly got a good laugh from the audience. I believe the choice of colors was very well done for each character. I believe Olivia’s costume colors were very well done they were colorful even the pajamas and expressed her vibrant personality through them. Another character’s costume was Feste’s all white jumpsuit she wore the entire play. Although this costume was simple it completely suited Feste as a performer it was plain and showed she was a fool. Another costume that well informed a character was Orsino’s all white attire. He wore white pants with a white V-neck sweater. This attire made him look not only wealthy, but also well dressed. All of the costumes were well executed, and was clear thought went into how to make these characters look as close to time period as possible. The costumes throughout *Twelfth Night* were very well done, and allowed the viewers to feel as though they were being taken back to Shakespeare’s time.

My overall opinion of twelfth night is very torn. I do believe the costumes and lighting were very well done. I am also a very big fan of the story line, and enjoyed that I could relate what was going on back to the movie *She’s the Man.* However, I just was not a fan of the overall acting/performance. The opening song got me very excited for the rest of the production, and I honestly felt myself let down for the rest of the production. Although I would have preferred a more modern play, I do think it was a good idea to have it set in the 1920’s. I say this because it provides education, and keeps a sense of originality by doing so. I believe in a way it was a success because Longwood seemed to have had a decent turn out, as well as the production was able to take place in Jarman.