

AS YOU LIKE IT

*Adapted by C. Michael Perry
With music by C. Michael Perry*

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STORY OF THE PLAY

This delightful adaptation updates the action to 20th century New Orleans Mardi Gras celebration! It has been edited for time and archaic expressions, but otherwise the language is the same. The through-line is still very evident as Shakespeare's comment on the classes and pastoralism. Original music, New Orleans jazz style, was added to Shakespeare's poems.

About 2 hours.

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

(Please see score at end of script)

"Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind" (Act II, Sc. 1) was sung by all and accompanied by Amiens on the guitar. It was very effective. Others could join in with him on guitar and voice. The style of the song was very folksy.

"Freeze, Freeze" (Act II, Sc. 6) was sung as a solo with accompaniment by Amiens. Very simple and plaintive.

"Sweet Lovers Love the Spring" (Act II, Sc. 3) is a bawdy song done by Audrey in the style of a lowdown blues song. Guitar and other instruments can accompany her.

"God of Every Town" (Act V, Sc. 3) was used in the final scene as a gospel number belted out by Hymen. (Jazzy version also included.) The company joined in on the second verse. If using an electronic organ, use with full pedals to get the gospel sound. Drums and bass could be added.

For a finale you may wish to use "When the Saints Go Marching In" sung by the company. Rights must be obtained prior to the use of this song. (Score not included.)

COSTUMES

The costumes should be modern day but still very much in the style of Shakespeare comedy. The production started out all in shades of black, white and gray which delineated the forces at work. Duke Frederick and his people were in black, Orlando and his people in white and the others in gray. This made the first Mardi Gras scene (the promenade and wrestling scene) starkly interesting because there were frills and ribbons and all sorts of finery but all in black, white or gray.

The forester scene (Act II) where we meet Duke Senior was done in forest and earth colors. The motif continued throughout the play in the forest with each scene progressing to be more colorful.

By the end of the play all were in wild and dazzling colors for the final Mardi Gras (wedding) scene.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Flexible cast of about 30*)

ROSALIND: Daughter of Duke Senior.

CELIA: Daughter of Duke Frederick.

ORLANDO: Youngest Son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

OLIVER: Oldest Son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

TOUCHSTONE: A clown, a fool.

DUKE SENIOR: Living in banishment. Rosalind's Father.

DUKE FREDERICK: Brother of Duke Senior and usurper of his dominions. Celia's father.

AMIENS: Lord attending on Duke Senior. Sings and plays guitar.

JAQUES: Lord attending on Duke Senior. A melancholy philosopher trying to be a fool.

CORIN: An old shepherd. Father to Audrey.

SILVIUS: A shepherd in love with Phebe.

PHEBE: A shepherdess in love with Ganymede, not Silvius.

LE BEAU: Courtier attending on Duke Frederick.

EVE: Old Servant of Oliver. Loyal to Orlando and Orlando's father.

AUDREY: A country wench.

CHARLES: A wrestler serving Duke Frederick.

WILLIAM: A country fellow, in love with Audrey.

SIR OLIVER MARTEXT: A vicar.

JAQUES DE BOYS: Middle Son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

HYSPERIA: servant to Frederick. A non-speaking role.

DENISE: Servant of Oliver.

HYMEN:

FIRST FORESTER: Lord to Duke Senior.

SECOND FORESTER: Lord to Duke Senior.

FIRST LORD TO DUKE FREDERICK

SECOND LORD TO DUKE FREDERICK

TWO FORESTERS (one should be able to play guitar)

TWO SOLDIERS WITH JACQUES DE BOYS

NOTES: Other students who play instruments can be used in the final scene to accompany the song. Shakespeare's original characters of Adam and Dennis have been changed to Eve and Denise to help balance the male/female ratio.

SCENE SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Scene 1. Orchard of Oliver's house. New Orleans, Louisiana. Shrove Tuesday.

Scene 2. Lawn before the Duke's palace. Mardi Gras Celebration.

Scene 3. A room in the palace.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Forest of Arden. The bayou, early Summer.

Scene 2. A room in the palace.

Scene 3. Before Oliver's house.

Scene 4. The Forest of Arden.

Scene 5. The Forest of Arden.

Scene 6. The Forest of Arden. A table set out.

ACT III

Scene 1. A room in the palace. The Fall.

Scene 2. The Forest of Arden.

Scene 3. The Forest of Arden.

Scene 4. The Forest of Arden.

Scene 5. The Forest of Arden.

ACT IV

Scene 1. The Forest of Arden. Early Spring of the following year.

Scene 2. The Forest of Arden.

ACT V

Scene 1. The Forest of Arden. Late Spring. Shrove Tuesday. Mardi Gras.

Scene 2. The Forest of Arden.

Scene 3. The Forest of Arden.

As if you couldn't tell from the scene synopsis, the location is updated (but not the language) to New Orleans, Louisiana and the nearby Bayou. While originally set in France, we wanted to keep as true to the original but update for our audience. We choose Louisiana because of the French influence there. We choose New Orleans and the Bayou because of the similarity between the Court of France and the forest of the Ardennes, which was the Shakespeare setting.

ACT I, Scene 1

(Orchard of Oliver's house. New Orleans, Louisiana, on Shrove Tuesday. Enter ORLANDO and EVE.)

ORLANDO: As I remember, Eve, it was upon this fashion bequeath'd me by will but poor a thousand crowns, and, as thou say'st, charged my brother, on his blessing, to breed me well: and there begins my sadness. He stays me here at home unkept; for call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth, that differs not from the stalling of an ox? He lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother, and, as much as in him lies, mines my gentility with my education. This is it, Eve, that grieves me; and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude: I will no longer endure it.

EVE: Yonder comes my master, your brother.

ORLANDO: Go apart, Eve, and thou shalt hear how he will shake me up.

(Enter OLIVER.)

OLIVER: Now, sir! what make you here?

ORLANDO: Nothing: I am not taught to make anything.

OLIVER: What mar you then, sir?

ORLANDO: Marry, sir, I am helping you to mar that which God made, a poor unworthy brother of yours, with idleness.

OLIVER: Marry, sir, be better employ'd, and be naught awhile.

ORLANDO: Shall I keep your hogs, and eat husks with them?

OLIVER: Know you where you are, sir?

ORLANDO: O, sir, very well: here in your orchard.

OLIVER: Know you before whom, sir?

ORLANDO: I know you are my eldest brother; and, in the gentle condition of blood, you should so know me. I have as much of my father in me as you.

OLIVER: What, boy!

ORLANDO: Come, come, elder brother, you are too young in this.

OLIVER: Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?

ORLANDO: I am no villain; I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys; and he is thrice a villain that says such a father begot villains.

Wert thou not my brother, I would not take this hand from thy throat till this other had pull'd out thy tongue for saying so.

EVE: Sweet masters, be patient: for your father's remembrance, be at accord.

OLIVER: Let me go, I say.

ORLANDO: I will not, till I please: you shall hear me. My father charged you in his will to give me good education: you have train'd me like a peasant. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it: therefore allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament; with that I will go buy my fortunes.

OLIVER: And what wilt thou do? beg, when that is spent? Well, sir, get you in: I will not long be troubled with you; you shall have some part of your will: I pray you, leave me.

ORLANDO: I will no further offend you than becomes me for my good.

(EVE helps OLIVER to stand.)

OLIVER: Get you with him, you old dog.

EVE: Is "old dog" my reward? Most true, I have lost my teeth in your service. - God be with my old master! He would not have spoke such a word.

(Exeunt ORLANDO and EVE.)

OLIVER: Is it even so? begin you to grow upon me? I will physic your rankness, and yet give no thousand crowns neither. *(KNOCKS on the door)* Holla, Denise!

(Enter DENISE.)

DENISE: Calls your worship?

OLIVER: Was not Charles, the duke's wrestler, here to speak with me?

DENISE: So please you, he is here at the door.

OLIVER: Call him in. *(Exit DENISE.)*

(Enter CHARLES.)

CHARLES: Good morrow to your worship.

OLIVER: Good morrow, Monsieur Charles.-

What's the new news at the new court?

CHARLES: There's no news at the court, sir, but the old news: that is, the old duke is banish'd by his younger brother the new duke; and three or four loving lords have put themselves into voluntary exile with him, whose lands and revenues enrich the new duke;

OLIVER: Where will the old duke live?

CHARLES: They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England.

End of Freeview

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