

OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL 2002 SEASON

by Michael W. Shurgot

Perhaps to celebrate the opening of The New Theatre, a theatre-in-the-round that replaced the smaller Black Swan, the 2002 Festival produced five Shakespearean plays, as opposed to its usual four: *Macbeth* in The New Theatre, *Titus Andronicus* on the Elizabethan Stage, and *Julius Caesar* in the indoor Angus Bowman theatre; and *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* on the Elizabethan stage. The five plays produced a wide range of interpretations, directors' concepts, and theatrical skill, ranging from a stunning *Julius Caesar* to a dismal *Macbeth*.¹

Libby Appel's *Macbeth* was the least convincing production of a Shakespearean play by a professional company I have ever seen. Assuming that Appel and scenic designer Richard Hay thought that this inaugural production in their new theatre would intrigue spectators with the theatre's technical possibilities, one wonders how they could have erred so badly. The heavily cut production, lasting less than two hours with no intermission, was plagued by silly performance choices; a set that became a liability and inept casting. One wonders where Appel's head was in all of this; did she want to produce *Macbeth*, or show how clever and "new" she could be?

The principal feature of the set was a pool of blood in the middle of the round stage, perhaps symbolizing one of the bloodier circles of Dante's hell. As the Macbeths waded further and deeper into their bloody world, and as murder spread among the characters of the play, from the fighting soldiers in 1.1 to the final combat between Macbeth and Macduff, this "blood" was spread around the stage; one character's murder of another was signaled by the killer's dipping his hands into the bloody pool and flipping the liquid onto his victim's clothing. As the Macbeths murdered their way through this minimalist staging, they wiped their hands on their initially white cloaks, thus signaling visually that their victims' blood was not only on their hands but also on their garments. While this image worked well to symbolize the stain of murder, the "blood" was a sticky substance the color and texture of raspberry jam. Therefore, as more blood was spilled on stage, the actors' leather boots, especially Macbeth's, squeaked as they pranced around the circle of blood, resulting in an annoying and finally ridiculous noise that generated giggling among spectators and detracted from any sense of seriousness the actors might have generated for their roles. As characters covered distances by running around in circles, the trail of blood expanded around the outer rim of the stage, so that by the end of the play no character could move anywhere on stage without walking in this raspberry blood. Eventually the sticking noise became so loud that one had trouble hearing the actors speak their lines, especially the three women playing multiple parts. While the symbolism here was effective—Scotland is soaked in blood—the noise became the principal audio feature of this production.

Unfortunately, these actors could generate little seriousness, and the play suffered terribly from indefensible casting decisions. Six actors played all roles, with G. Valmont Thomas as Macbeth, BW Gonzalez as Lady Macbeth, and Jeffrey King as Banquo, the only actors playing a single part. All the other roles were played by three

women, and herein lay one of the two major casting errors of the production. Gender-blind casting works only if the actor playing an opposite gender can be convincing in that role. But Appel cast Suzanne Irving, a slight, thin woman as Duncan, and on stage she was simply unconvincing as a male character. Further, Julie Oda, who stands at 4'8" tall, was perhaps acceptable as Fleance and Macduff's young son, but as Seyton and the "Old Man" she strained credibility. As Seyton she looked like Macbeth's kid trying to help her father put on his armor. While the Ashland Festival is to be commended for promoting gender-blind casting, Abbey's choices made this production silly, as evidenced by the spectators' obvious restlessness, inattentiveness, and lack of applause at the end.

The second major mistake was casting G. Valmont Thomas as Macbeth. Thomas is an energetic actor who has played several comic roles well, including Feste and a Mistress Quickly in drag. But as Macbeth he was ridiculous. He conveyed no inner tension or imaginative power in Macbeth's soliloquies, which became mere recitations of a string of unconnected images; he simply had no idea what he was saying. He in fact treated Macbeth as a comic role; he laughed at inappropriate times, and his principal reaction to bad news was to open his eyes wide and grin, as if he were playing an actor trying to make *Macbeth* into a farce, rather than an actor supposedly inhabiting a tragic role that he actually understands. Macbeth senses the absurdity of his existence in his final soliloquy, the "petty pace" of his few remaining moments, but the actor has to earn that insight by traveling through Macbeth's tortured imagination and steely determination to wade further across the river of blood. For Thomas, there was no such journey, only wide-eyed grinning at every step of this tedious production. In her note to the production, Appel states that she was "deeply interested in the mind of the murderer," especially after the violence of September 2001. If this statement is true, one must wonder why she cast an actor who could not convey to spectators any sense of how Macbeth's murderous mind might have worked.

For director James Edmondson, *Titus Andronicus* is a "waking nightmare" that is frighteningly contemporary: "If you kill our children, we will kill your children." In his director's note Edmondson quotes this statement from a father in the Middle East interviewed on ABC News in March 2002. Believing that Shakespeare's Rome is primarily a mythic rather than an historic place, Edmondson set the play in its "imagined antiquity" that served as "both a specific and universal setting for the play." The set was a set of huge iron grids that divided the stage into left and right "camps," suggesting the warring cultures and armies of the play. Down stage left sat a huge head, watching. Is this the bust of Titus? One of his sons? Aaron? Revenge? The ominous face of Death itself? Or likely, all of the above? Thus the specific and the universal coexisted in this historically based yet frighteningly current tale of revenge and death.

William Langan as Titus was poised and resolute in his decisions and actions. He buried or killed his own sons, killed Tamora's, and supported Saturninus's bid for power with equal dispassion, suggesting early his fanatical devotion to rule and custom in the Rome of his imagination. The Goths, wearing filthy rags, epitomized the barbarity that Titus's adhesion to rule and formality had kept from the gates of Rome.

Aaron, Tamora, and her two surviving sons embodied the diseased sexual lust that also threatened Rome's civility. Demetrius and Chiron were tall, brawny thugs who tore holes in their mother's wedding shawl as they contemplated raping Lavinia, and Aaron and Tamora were simply all over each other's bodies as they plotted their return to power. Tamora stroked Aaron's crotch as he gave her the letter for Titus. The rape of Lavinia, played by diminutive Julie Oda, was physically horrifying, partly because Oda is so small and her attackers were so large. After hurling Bassanius violently into the pit, Chiron and Demetrius attacked and groped Lavinia savagely; Tamora aided her sons by cutting off Lavinia's dress, exposing to destruction the sexuality she had

moments ago used so effectively to seduce Aaron. Against such barbarity, Titus' reliance on reason and honor was helpless.

The sequence from 2.4 through 3.2 was chilling. After the rape, Lavinia reentered wrapped in white, blood-soaked rags, a brutal image of violated innocence. Mark Murphey as Marcus struggled desperately to make sense of what he saw while clearly articulating his long, uncut speech in 2.4, as if clear pronunciation and measured phrases could summon a verbal order onto the chaos he saw before him. When Lavinia gestured as if to speak, blood poured from her mouth. After Marcus's speech to Lavinia at the end of 2.4, he exited, but Lavinia remained on stage for the beginning of 3.1, a symbol of the terror created by the raw, pitiless pursuit of power now emerging. Wearing death masks, the Tribunes led Titus's bound sons across the stage, suggesting the rise to power of contemporary political terror. Then, as Titus cradled his bleeding daughter in his arms, Oda and Langan created a haunting *Pieta*, not so much an image of innocent suffering as of unimaginable horror. The presentation of his sons' heads to Titus was a horrible spectacle: Cradling his sons' heads with his mutilated, bleeding stump, Titus wept himself into madness. He fanatically attacked Marcus for killing the fly, attempting to hold it in his hands, as if its life were as precious as that of his murdered sons.

As Lavinia, dressed in a new white shawl, etched the names of her attackers with a stick she held between her stubs and in her mouth, soldiers carried behind her the bodies of her headless brothers, a visual image of her vision of the unmitigated terror that Tamora, Aaron, and ultimately Saturninus had unleashed. The emotional violence was also pronounced. After coolly killing the nurse who brought him his son, Derrick Lee Weeden as Aaron pleaded for his son's life as passionately as he pursued the death of others, and Ray Porter as Saturninus exhibited an insane anger at Titus's arrow attack. Langan played Titus as gleefully mad as he shot his arrows and letters over Saturninus's house and up to the gods, convincing Marcus to humor him as the only relief from an overwhelming insanity.

Tamora's "disguise" for Revenge was a grotesque, hideous bug, and Chiron as Rape sported a huge phallus. Titus's ritualistic cutting of the sons' throats, whose blood Lavinia carefully caught in a large pan held firmly between her wrapped limbs, emphasized the symbolic presentation of monstrous evil. Saturninus entered the final banquet scene wearing large horns, symbols of his own animal nature and his having been cuckolded by the murderous Tamora. Titus's killing of Tamora's sons, like his killing of his own daughter, became a cleverly planned, hideous exhibition of hatred and revenge cloaked in madness: "If you kill our children, we will kill your children." In the world of this play, there is no room for innocence.

The gem of this season was Laird Williamson's *Julius Caesar*. The production featured superb ensemble acting by Derrick Lee Weeden as Brutus, Mary Murphey as Cassius, and Dan Donohue's brilliant Mark Antony. Williamson's staging recalled pre-WWII Europe, perhaps Italy in the '30's, with the fascist uniforms of Mussolini and Hitler dominating the costumes. Equally compelling was the set, which featured several huge, movable rectangular blocks composed of crumbled iron machines and weapons, suggesting perhaps the recycled detritus and waste of previous civilizations and their wars. This suggestion was enhanced by the leather prostheses worn by many soldiers in the opening scene; while several wore fabricated arms and legs, one soldier wore a prosthesis over the right side of his face, an ugly reminder of battle amid randomly exploding weapons. Christine Williams doubled as the Soothsayer and the seductively-dressed—and in Act V barely dressed—Ate, who moved among the warriors on stage, collecting dog tags from fallen soldiers as souvenirs of her successful seduction of great men into hideous battle. Ate thus became the alter ego of

Shakespeare's soothsayer who warns of evil deeds, then gleefully collects name tags from the dead who testify to not only her truth-telling but also her deadly charm.

The politics of Caesar's rule were clearly evident in 1.2. Barricades marked the course that Antony ran to cheers from Caesar and Calphurnia, perhaps suggesting Hitler's 1930's Olympics in Berlin. Attendant soldiers and security men in heavy dark coats carried cameras and scrutinized Cassius and Brutus. After Caesar's exit, Cassius and Brutus clearly established their characters' relationship. Murphey, tall and slender, spoke quickly and gestured constantly, referring to notes he had written down during Caesar's initial appearance; Weeden, stately and muscular, moved slowly and seemed to absorb into his large frame, rather than hear, Cassius's pleading. Throughout the play, especially in acts IV and V, Cassius's realization that Brutus was essential to his enterprise was superbly realized not only by the obvious physical differences between them, but also in their speech patterns and movements.

The storm of 1.3 raged over a stage filled with broken barricades and red flyers bearing Caesar's picture and calling for his "election" as his supporters with megaphones exited after their rally. Ate, holding an umbrella, oversaw the developing conspiracy. In Brutus's soliloquy in 2.1, Weeden's superbly articulated diction and balanced phrasing evoked Brutus's dilemma; he moved seamlessly through his character's complex psychomachia to capture a noble and passionate mind torn between equally demanding convictions. Cassius brought to the conspirators' meeting a case of long-handled knives from which each conspirator drew a weapon. As Cassius urged the killing of Antony, the initial contest between him and Brutus deepened. Murphey's cat-like Cassius spoke and moved rapidly, cognizant that while he had orchestrated this conspiracy, Brutus was nonetheless vital to its success, and thus to Cassius's self esteem and status as its leader. From this moment on, Cassius spoke with a nervous energy that inhabited Murphey's bones, while Weeden spoke and moved with the assurance of a man who grasped his own necessity and knew that his arguments would always be superior to Cassius's. The interplay between these actors was thrilling throughout, indicating just how cogently Williamson had cast them for their respective roles. Portia, obviously pregnant, could not move Brutus from his conviction, though his anguished "O ye gods! / Render me worthy of this noble wife" (2.1.303-04), revealed his sense of the personal loss his convictions were apt to cause.

Casting Robynn Rodriguez as Decius Brutus made "his" persuasion of Caesar to come to the Senate visually complex. While Williamson may not have intended any sexual symbolism, Caesar's being persuaded by an attractive woman to attend the Senate suggested that his vanity was more than political, as if some sexual rivalry existed between Calphurnia and Decius. The murder itself was, as Brutus foretold, ritualistic, with each conspirator in succession stabbing Caesar as he clung to a central podium that dripped with blood when the killing was done. Led by Cassius, they raised their bloodied hands and cried "Freedom! Freedom!" to the spectators, who thus became the supposed benefactors of the murder. As Caesar fell, a spotlight shone on Ate standing behind the podium, as if she were to speak, surveying her growing bounty. As Antony, dressed formally in suit and tie, walked to the podium Cassius behind him raised his knife to kill him, to be stopped only by Brutus's strong hand; the rift between them had been opened. Before his speech on the "bleeding piece of earth," Antony walked among the conspirators, shaking their bloody hands until he shared symbolically and visually in Caesar's death. Antony did what he had to do at this moment simply to save his skin, but he certainly grasped the opportunity that Caesar's murder had presented to him. Donohue's performance of the funeral oration would reveal a shrewd and vicious politician so tragically misjudged by Brutus. Ate dipped

her hand in Caesar's body, and symbolically lifted his spirit as Antony watched, anticipating the chaos he was about to unleash.

After the intermission, Antony and Brutus entered to shouts coming from Plebians massed around the theatre's semi-circular auditorium; spectators thus demanded "satisfaction," and Williamson's staging and Donohue's performance of the funeral oration meshed brilliantly. Caesar's casket lay down center stage, surrounded by armed guards wearing shirts bearing Brutus's picture. As Brutus spoke, Antony stood behind him staring at the casket. Whereas Brutus spoke confidently and without pause, as might a preacher his sermon, Donohue's emotional range matched superbly his sense of his audience's growing unease. He began to choke on his words, sighing deeply and then stopping to compose himself; he actually teared as he spoke of Caesar's will, as one personally hurt by the killing of so gracious a man. Donohue reacted not only to the planted Plebians but also to the actual theatre audience; spectators' rapt attention to his acting skill, evident in his increasingly passionate oration and complete immersion in the role he was "playing," created the theatrical ideal: the illusion of "reality," the complete suspension of disbelief. Donohue the actor melded completely into his character as he achieved an astonishing level of naturalism; the pauses in his deliverance seemed not only scripted as part of his ploy to arouse the Plebians, but also as reactions to an inner awareness of his oratorical skill: an actor's reflections upon his art *even as he employed it*. To the Plebians' shouts of "Come Down," Antony walked from behind the podium and opened Caesar's casket, pointing to the grisly wounds as he held up the bloodied mantle at 1.170: "You all do know the mantle." Donohue's pace and volume increased as he sensed victory; his "I am no orator, as Brutus is; / But (as you know me all), a plain blunt man / That love my friend For I have neither [wit], nor words, nor worth, / Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech / To stir men's blood" (3.2.217-19; 221-23) produced exactly the desired result. Spectators did not need the loud denials of the Plebians; their own muted laughter as they recognized Antony's ironic skill produced yet another pause and an obvious smirk on Donohue's face, as if recognizing instantaneously not only his character's skill at convincing the scripted Plebians, but also his own as an actor fulfilling brilliantly our sense of the Greek word for actor: hypocrite. For, as the remainder of the play revealed, Antony was here as hypocritical as any scheming politician could be.

Thugs wearing grotesque clown faces and jackets bearing Antony's image gleefully murdered Cinna, a slight, defenseless man. The rein of terror had begun. As Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, dressed in fascist military garb, discussed "These many then shall die, their names are prick'd" (4.1.1), Antony casually knocked over numerous chess pieces. Body bags suddenly dropped from the ceiling all around the theatre; this triumvirate now ruled us, and some of the "prick'd" would symbolically come from among the spectators. Into the power vacuum created by Brutus and Cassius had stepped a man who crystallized the central tragedy of this play: Brutus's compound misjudgments of Antony, and Cassius's error in bowing to Brutus's leadership. In their tense meeting in 4.2, these character faults were again evident. Wearing British bomber jackets, they stood apart. Murphey paced constantly and argued fervently his war plan; sitting calmly at the edge of a small table, Weeden's resonant baritone voice crushed Cassius. Indeed, Weeden's physical stature and powerful voice magnified his ironic errors. During the final battle, which featured machine gun fire, soldiers in gas masks, and horrible noise, Ate, scantily dressed, watched men die and then darted on stage to grab their dog tags. Camera flashes recorded every hand-to-hand fight. Brutus sustained an injury to his eyes; he had failed to "see," and thus had misconstrued, everything. Antony knelt over his disfigured body to praise him, but

given his performance over Caesar's coffin, one wondered how much Donohue meant us to believe in his praise of this "most noble Roman."

Penny Metropulos set her *As You Like It* in early 20th Century Europe. Duke Frederick and his militaristic court wore expensive clothes and ordered people about sharply. These aristocrats wore their finery everywhere, even in Arden, where motley dressed—and brained—Touchstone lorded over the shepherds in a plaid coat, sporty hanky, baggy pants, and high boots, suggesting either a lost golfer looking for the 18th green or a comic equestrian; or both. Metropulos staged the exile of Duke Senior from this court, with a silent Rosalind watching, to stress the sense of loss wrecking Frederick's court. Charles, played by the muscular Adrian Roberts, proved no contest for Orlando, who slammed both Charles and his better dressed but less physical brother before leaving. Duke Frederick spied on Rosalind and Celia talking, perhaps suggesting why Celia decides to accompany Rosalind to Arden; she realizes clearly her father's tyranny and treachery. For the play's Adam, Metropulos substituted Dee Maaske, who became "Adda," an elderly female companion who returned in act V as Hymen, one of the less successful ideas in this generally satisfying production.

Except for a few exciting props, Metropulos wisely kept her stage mostly bare, relying on her actors to create the comedy from Shakespeare's words. Dan Donohue's theatrical versatility was evident in his hilarious Touchstone. In 3.2 he and Josiah Phillips as Corin lay around the forest, chewing cattails and debating the relative values of court vs. country. Every time Corin, in traditional shepherd attire, shifted his posture or gestured, Touchstone, outlandishly dressed and out of place, imitated him. What was natural and habitual to Phillips, Donohue turned into a clown's efforts to "keep up." The humor lay in Donohue's efforts to seem naturally "pastoral" while belittling Corin's lifestyle. Feeling superior, Touchstone pursued Audrey shamelessly, pushing her around stage in a wheelbarrow and delighting in her sluttish ways and sloppy, revealing, dress; no virtue here, only his desire for multiple rolls in the hay. Touchstone dismissed William by threatening to kill him at least nine substantial ways: as William, hat in hand, stood stage left gazing incomprehensively at his adversary, Touchstone pantomimed various executions, including cutting his throat, strangling him, drowning him, kicking him into the audience, and attaching dynamite to him, unrolling the wire to center stage, and then pushing the plunger to blow him sky-high. As he finally got the message that he was banished by this courtly fool, William simply, and sadly, exited stage left, head down, hat still in hand. Touchstone gloated; spectators roared. It was one of the funniest sequences I have ever seen.

Kevin Kenerly as Orlando announced his devotion for Rosalind by tacking large sheets of love poems all over the stage facade, and then, not content with this effort, he unfurled from up stage left a long banner with "Rosalind" emblazoned in large red letters. Here was an ardent lover indeed! Deidrie Henry's Rosalind was quite worried about Orlando's exuberance, though her passionate swoon on "O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love!" (4.2.197-98) betrayed a woman desperate for the emotional and physical love of a man she wished she could trust. But getting to that trust was difficult, partly because she had seen the exile of her father, and she knew the treachery of the court she had fled. Metropulos's staging this unscripted scene grounded Rosalind's fear of the men from this court, regardless of their parentage.

Henry's and Kenerly's scenes together in Acts III and IV were humorous but also tense. Rosalind was furious at Orlando's lateness, chastised him deeply for lacking the signs of a true lover, and wanted Celia to confirm her fear that Orlando was not "really" in love. Orlando never lost his youthful excess and initially treated Ganymede's "instruction" as a game to pass the time, while Henry's Rosalind, deeply suspicious of men yet obviously in love, clearly communicated Rosalind's dilemma. Henry's per-

formance made sense of Rosalind's unseen visit to her father's camp; Orlando, like her father, is a political outcast living in a forest with no discernable future, and the court just outside this pastoral retreat is run by a fratricidal tyrant. Whence love in such a place and time? While this was certainly not a "dark" interpretation of this generally sunlit romantic comedy, Metropulos and Henry created a complex Rosalind trapped between her own passionate sexuality and a sense of "real politics."

In this context Richard Howard's Jaques assumed a more complex role also. His seven ages speech, addressed to his mates assembled in a circle, was a history lesson to Duke Senior's entourage and a sermon justifying their finding joy in exile from the "envious court." One sensed that this early 20th century Jaques had been reading Montaigne and was familiar with Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *Timon*. Only in his encounters with Rosalind and Orlando did he falter, and in this production this structural feature of the play, his separate meetings with them in 3.2 (Orlando, watched by Rosalind and Celia), and 4.1 (briefly with Rosalind) emphasized that only love could overrule Jaques's dismissive melancholy. As distressed by her dilemma as she was, Rosalind emphatically preferred a dilemma with possibilities to being a post. Having dismissed Jaques, Rosalind embraced this dilemma passionately. She was wonderfully playful and erotic in the following scene, obviously punning on "too much of a good thing" (4.2.115-16), posing seductively to the bewildered Orlando, and sighing deeply when he uttered his "forever and a day" speeches, hearing again his youthful naiveté and realizing that she must still instruct him about women's moods, changeableness, and above all a woman's wit. After watching Phebe reject Silvius, hearing of Jaques's travels to seek out melancholy, and yet aware of her father's exile, Henry toyed with the submission that Rosalind desired. Her "Therefore beware my censure, and keep your promise" (4.2.187-88) was playful yet stern: Henry caught perfectly in her voice and gestures Rosalind's desperate wish to unleash her passions tempered by the memory of her father and Orlando's earlier perfidy.

As in most productions of this play, Metropulos played with Rosalind's disguise as long as she could; and, as in most productions, Oliver discovered Ganymede's "secret" identity in 4.3 during his narration of his peril and rescue by Orlando. As Oliver helped Rosalind up after her swoon on hearing of Orlando's brave, selfless act, Oliver grabbed Ganymede from behind on "Be of good cheer, youth. You a man? You lack a man's heart" (4.3.166). While often Oliver discovers Rosalind's breasts on "heart" and then immediately lets go, here Jos Viramontes held Henry's ample bosom for a few seconds as they both stood there stunned by his "discovery." Oliver thus grasped what Henry's male costume imperfectly disguised; the longer he held her breasts, the harder spectators laughed at the actors' mutual surprise and their own willing acceptance of what they knew all along was a theatrical game.

Donohue's hilarious presentation of the seven degrees of the lie, all rubber necked, armed, and legged, the last vestige of flamboyant pretension in this play, should have been an ironic prelude to Hymen's descent. But here was a falling off. Like its distant cousin *The Winter's Tale*, *As You Like It* demands the supernatural. Hymen's words are explicit: "Good Duke, receive thy daughter; Hymen from heaven brought her" (5.4.110-11). Hymen descends because love has wrought order: "things made even / Atone together" (108-09). Given her attention to so many details of this play, Metropulos's substituting Adda, Orlando's female servant, for Hymen unaccountably robbed this production of the scripted hint of supernatural blessing for the marriages. What should have been a potent symbolic moment was simply flat. Perhaps Metropulos judged that so strong a Rosalind did not need Hymen to bless her marriage, but surely one point of this play is that regardless of one's strength of character, love can wreck havoc in one's life; and if we are willing to trust another equally imperfect human being, as Rosalind finally trusts Orlando after he saves Oliver's life, then

the gods may bless our faith in one another. The scripted end of *As You Like It* presents its theatre audience with that image, and spectators should not be denied that vision, and that hope. Theatre, after all, is one place where such visions come alive.

Like *Julius Caesar*, *The Winter's Tale* was driven by a director's "concept" that was either loved or hated by spectators. (I heard both opinions strongly expressed when exiting both plays.) Part one, Sicilia, was a staid, elegant, wealthy late 19th century European court. The opening scene was lush and bounteous; a huge Christmas tree stood center stage on a large, bright red carpet surrounded by numerous gifts. Everyone wore fashionable attire, the men in tuxedos, the women in evening gowns adorned with furs and sparkling jewelry. Until Leontes's jealous rage, all was orderly and beautiful.

The bridge to Bohemia was fantastic: to The Byrds' sixtyish "For every thing, turn, turn, turn, there is a season, turn, turn, turn," a space capsule, ala the moon landing of 1969, descended to the lunar stage, and out stepped his highness Alfred Einstein in a space suit to recite Time's soliloquy about the passing thereof. Then, to the rocking lyrics of Sly and the Family Stone's "Groovin, on a Sunday afternoon," the curtain rose on a hippie commune in Bohemia, where Florizel, Perdita and the locals pranced around in bell-bottoms and tie-dyed shirts. Autolycus, a fantastic blend of Elvis, Liberace, and BB King, sporting a huge Afro, dark glasses, and outrageously motley garb (black and red striped pants, yellow coat, white boots) entered in a riotously painted Love-Bug convertible (top down, of course) and wowed the shepherds with 45's and LP's of ballads sung by 60's rock stars like Jimi Hendrix and The Rolling Stones. Pure, 100% high camp! Director Michael Donald Edwards stretched his spectators' tolerance and imagination mightily with this montage, and purists might protest that his "concept" made the play impossible to believe. However, given the overt theatricality of Shakespeare's last plays, the plasticity of time, and the generational conflict that Shakespeare examines intensely in this play for probably the final, well, time (assuming *Winter's Tale* was his penultimate play), Edwards' approach worked remarkably well. He reminded spectators that they were, after all, in a theatre, and testing their ability to accept Einstein's heavenly descent and the sudden explosion of 60's hippie culture from the back of the stage prepared them for the play's final miracle: the statue coming to life, a miracle possible only in the theatre where, Paulina reminds us, "It is required / [we] do awake [our] faith." The logic of this play is that the greater the theatrical emphasis on the gap in time and generations, the greater the possibility that the play's final scene, one of the most moving in all drama, will convince spectators that faith and penance have "really" brought Hermione back to life. Hence the magical possibilities of theatre.

John Pribyl's Leontes fell quickly to his "dream" of his wife's actions; his soliloquy at 1.2.185 ff, "Gone already!" was a statement of sexual anguish, not a debate about the possibility of his cuckoldry. On his "And arms her with the boldness of a wife / To her allowing husband" (ll. 184-85) Hermione provocatively removed her long black gloves, a staple of Gypsy Rose Lee's "entertainment," as she exited with Polixenes to the garden. Leontes's "And many a man there is" (l. 192), spoken down stage to the audience, was the statement of a man absolutely convinced of his wife's infidelity, not the questioning of a man merely unsure of her intentions. Pribyl cradled his son lovingly, looking into his eyes for signs of his paternity. His growing anger at Camillo, especially his repeated "Satisfy / Th' entreaties of your mistress? Satisfy?" (ll. 233-34) heralded his mad ravings on "Is whispering nothing?" (ll. 284-96). Pribyl spit out the short sentences rapidly, each rhetorical question building in volume and rage; the oft repeated "nothing" marked like pegs his rapidly developing dementia, so that Camillo's response "Good my lord, be cured / Of this diseased opinion, and betimes, / For 'tis most dangerous" (ll. 297-99) was not a warning, but a description of Leontes's deteri-

orating mind. On "I have drunk, and seen the spider," (l.145), Pribyl hurled the Christmas tree to the stage, shattering the festive mood and with it his own mind. Demetra Pittman as Paulina kept her promise to Hermione not to be "honey-mouthed" with Leontes. She scolded him furiously, and when she defiantly placed the basket containing Perdita on Leontes's desk in 2.3, she boldly endangered the child's life. Until Antigonus took up the basket at l. 183, "Come on, poor babe," Leontes several times verged on pushing the basket off his desk. This staging emphasized both Paulina's huge risk with the child and the extent of Leontes's madness.

Hermione entered the trial scene in a plain white smock. Behind her stood a large mirror, reflecting her innocence outward into the theatre. Her speech at ll.59ff, in which she protests sincerely that she loved Polixenes "as in honor he required," indicated a complete unawareness of the provocative effect of removing her gloves as she left for the "garden" with Polixenes. While this staging suggested that Hermione perhaps should have realized the potential effect of her glove removal, Catherine Lynn Davis's anguished yet resolute appeal to Leontes erased any trace of guilt on her part. His defiance after hearing Apollo's decree provoked heavenly rage, as lightning filled the stage. After the news of his son's and wife's deaths, Leontes fell to his knees and groveled, like a wounded animal, in futile circles on the red carpet. Paulina knelt with him, holding what she realized has become an emotionally damaged child. A bellowing cape and a roaring bear devouring Antigonus culminated the play's business with "things dying," while the shepherds' intoxicated joy at finding the "fairy gold" introduced the "things new born."

Given Pribyl's vivid portrait of Leontes's destructive violence, the symbolic "descent" upon the stage of a spaceman come to tell us of a "new time" and to introduce a truly "counter" culture of peace and love was remarkable apt. In *Einstein's Dreams* (Pantheon, 1993), Alan Lightman imagines human events happening in wildly different time "signatures," all the product of Einstein's dreams of time's relativity: "Suppose time is a circle, bending back on itself" (p. 8); "In this world, time is like a flow of water, occasionally displaced by a bit of debris, a passing breeze" (p. 13); "In this world, there are two times. There is mechanical time and there is body time" (p. 23). Etc. Well, suppose in this world (the theatre!), sixteen years can pass in sixteen minutes, while spectators were getting wine or coffee. Lightman's novel is eminently post-modern, but this production of Shakespeare's play, with Einstein as its master of ceremony, only showed again that what's new is old.

Edwards humorously depicted the older generations' efforts to be accepted into this hippie love culture. Amid the general hurly-burly of the country copulates and Autolycus's outrageous antics, Polixenes and Camillo entered 4.4 as if straight from a Grateful Dead concert. Polixenes was a hysterical Jerry Garcia clone, with a huge mop of tangled hair, Garcia's trademark narrow sunglasses, a tie-died shirt hanging over his potbelly, floppy clown pants, and layers of beads. He and Camillo, also in dark glasses, beads, and motley, wore parti-colored capes painted with moons and stars. During the festivities, before they reveal themselves to Perdita and Florizel, Polixenes and Camillo stood up stage right looking totally out of place and therefore hysterical; they just stood there like twin posts, wanting to be recognized but fearful thereof. What would they say? "Like, love comes from the moon and stars, man." Edwards used costumes, blocking, and above all silence to evoke marvelous humor.

Bohemia's motley metamorphosed into stately red and white for the final scenes in Sicilia. Hermione rose from beneath the stage, as if from death. Seated in profile, facing stage right, she seemed a classical deity carved in marble for a temple. Paulina urged Leontes to awake his faith, and Catherine Lynn Davis came to life wonderfully slowly, as if being dreamed into life. In a final tableau of forgiveness, Leontes stood between his wife and daughter, all now in white, embracing them. The second

movement of Borodin's string quartet, made popular as the love song "And This is my Beloved," graced this final scene. But not for long; as spectators exited, Borodin's lush melody morphed into The Turtles' rollicking "So Happy Together," taking us back to sunlit Bohemia and Autolycus's love-bug. The "two times" of this *Winter's Tale* fused into a joyous statement of happiness and togetherness. Jerry Garcia would have loved the whole trip.

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Notes

1. All textual references are to David Bevington, Ed. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. 4th ed. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.



Pictures from the production of *Hamlet* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.