

Asolo Repertory Theatre presents an FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training production
By **William Shakespeare** | *Adapted by Tyler Dobrowsky* | *Directed by Celine Rosenthal*

THE TEMPEST

Touring | September 25 – November 19, 2018

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EDUCATION &
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Study Guide

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Video webisodes will be created during the rehearsal process and tour; email tim_odonnell@asolo.org to be notified when a new webisode

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What To Expect



You will see Shakespeare's final play shortened into a 45-minute version created uniquely for Florida students, and performed for the very first time this fall.

Without changing the language, this is a completely re-imagined version of the story. Many of the roles have changed gender, and other characters and storylines have been cut completely, but the core of the story remains intact.

The performers are actors in their third and final year of their Masters of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) program at the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. After *The Tempest* ends its tour in November, each of these actors will perform in Asolo Repertory Theatre's 2018-19 Season in Sarasota through their graduation in the Spring of 2019.

This production is fully rehearsed and choreographed, but because it travels to one or two locations each school day, it cannot rely on complex scenery or lighting. *The Tempest* will use costume design, sound design (including music), and simple prop elements. In this way, the performance is not so different from the theatre of Shakespeare's time; plays were performed without lighting or special effects, and language, behavior, clothing and portable objects gave the audience clues about each setting.

> ASK AN ACTOR

Most performances are followed by a question and answer session with the actors. We encourage you to consider in advance what you might like to ask the actors, including questions about the play, how they interpret the characters, or their experiences rehearsing and performing Shakespeare's work. If your performance doesn't include a discussion, please submit questions to education@asolo.org

“O BRAVE NEW WORLD THAT HAS SUCH PEOPLE IN’T!”

An Introduction

IN OUR PRODUCTION, PROSPERO (PROSPERA), ALONSO (ALONSA), ARIEL, AND CALIBAN WILL ALL BE PLAYED BY WOMEN.



Title: *Miranda*
Artist: John William Waterhouse

The Tempest is believed to be the very last play that Shakespeare wrote completely on his own and yet has become one of his most popular works. The inspiration for writing *The Tempest* is unknown, but one theory is that Shakespeare knew he was about to retire as a playwright and wrote *Prospero* to be a voice to reflect on his own life and career. In the epilogue, *Prospero* says that his “art to enchant” has come to an end. But it’s obvious that the story goes much deeper than that.

Part of what draws people to the play is its songs, dances, and magic. In 1611 (when the play first premiered), witches and witchcraft were prevalent in the narrative of the known world. It was also a time of great exploration of new worlds. *The Tempest* was a play that echoed the time period in which it was written.

The Tempest is considered to be one of Shakespeare’s romance stories (though some experts argue it is a comedy and others a tragedy). Romance was all the rage in Elizabethan England, but

doesn’t represent what we consider a romance by today’s standards. These stories were a mix of comedy and drama, usually revolving around a fantasy or adventure story line. They often ended with redemption or forgiveness for the protagonist.

This touring production of *The Tempest* has been adjusted to tell the original story, by changing some dynamics between the characters. In our production, *Prospero*, *Alonso*, *Ariel*, and *Caliban* will all be played by women, causing different complexities in their relationships and stories.

With these large changes to the play, we challenge you not to watch this production with any pre-conceived notions, but rather, watch with fresh eyes. In this production, who is right in their actions and who is wrong? Who deserves redemption and who doesn’t?

Decide who is or isn’t better off for their experience at the end of the story. Decide whether or not it is truly a happy ending.

DISCUSSION

> Discuss Family Relationships

In this version of *The Tempest*, *Prospera* and *Miranda* are mother and daughter rather than father and daughter. How does that change their relationship? How does that change the dynamic of the story?

> Comedy vs. Tragedy vs. Romance

Is this play a romance, comedy, or a tragedy? Where do you think *The Tempest* falls in terms of its genre? Does that lead you to make assumptions about what kind of story is being told? What are the elements that could make it a comedy, tragedy, or romance?

> Power

Who in the story has the greatest amount of power? Who in the story uses their power for good. Who doesn’t?

The Tempest Plot Summary

This production of *The Tempest* is a 45-minute adaptation of Shakespeare's original play. The following plot summary is based on the version you are about to see.

***The Tempest* opens in the middle of a storm with a ship carrying Alonso, Queen of Naples, and her traveling crew.** On shore, Prospera and her daughter Miranda are watching as the storm envelops the ship. Prospera explains that she has created the storm with magic, and that her enemies are on the ship.



ALONSA
Queen of Naples



ANTONIO
*Current Duke of Milan
and Prospera's brother*

Prospera tells Miranda the story of how they came to the island and how she is the rightful Duchess of Milan. Her younger brother Antonio betrayed her, stole her title and land, and exiled her to the island. Prospera has now used her magic to control everyone on the island including Ariel, a spirit, and Caliban, a native of the island. Prospera has promised Ariel's freedom in return for a few more deeds. When Ferdinand, Alonso's son, is washed ashore, he is brought to Prospera where he meets and falls in love with Miranda.

On the beach, Alonso and Antonio have come ashore. Alonso fears that Ferdinand is dead and begins to grieve. Antonio considers killing Alonso while she sleeps and taking the crown.

On another part of the island, Caliban is carrying wood when she runs into two servants of Alonso, Trinculo, the jester, and Stephano, the butler. The two servants befriend Caliban and she agrees to go with them in hopes of persuading them to get rid of Prospera. Ariel, who has been listening while invisible, reports this plan back to Prospera. We see Ferdinand and Miranda profess their love to one another, with Prospera showing her approval.



STEPHANO
The Queen's Butler

TRINCULO
The Queen's Jester

Alonso and Antonio come to learn that Prospera is on the island and are brought to her in a trance by Ariel. Prospera rouses them and they beg forgiveness. Prospera forgives them and her title is restored. Ferdinand and Miranda are revealed as lovers, and Ariel brings everyone to the ship except Caliban, who agrees to stay, having regretted her conspiring with Trinculo and Stephano. Finally, Prospera asks the audience for her own release through their applause.

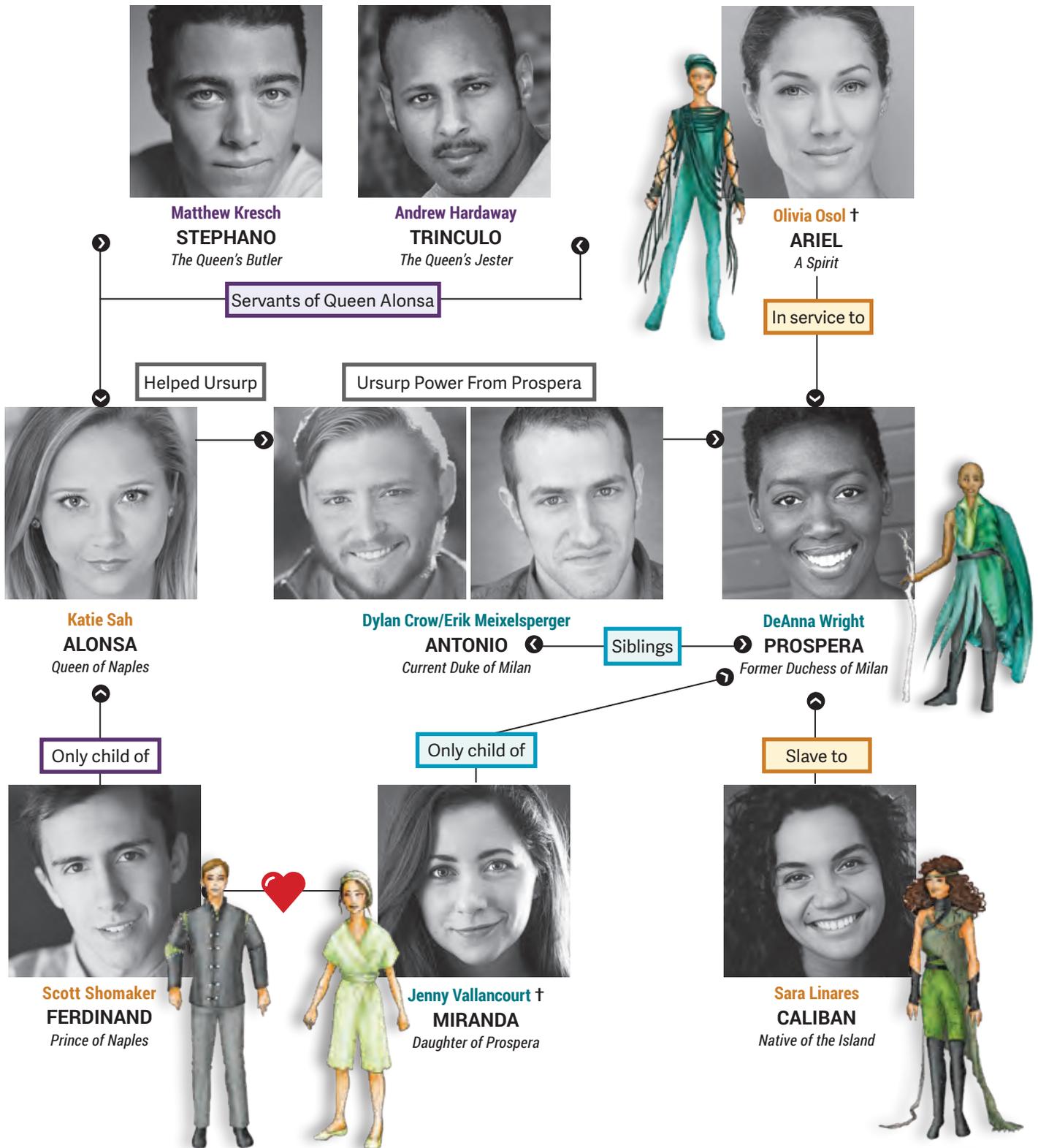
> ASK AN ACTOR

If you're playing a role as a woman but it was originally written for a man, does it change the way you think about the story? Does it change your performance?

What kind of research was helpful to you preparing for this production?

The Tempest Character Web

 Costume designs for The Tempest by Loren Shaw



† Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Books, Cloaks, But No Daggers

In *The Tempest*, magic is a key story element that affects every character. Concepts of magic and the supernatural were much different in Elizabethan times from today's. Shakespeare lived when people firmly believed that there was a way to interact with a spirit world that was controlled either by God or the Devil. Because of this, magicians were thought to be summoning either good or bad forces to help them. In Elizabethan times, only magic that was believed to be impossible would be allowed on the stage. Prospera's ability to control people was one of these exceptions.

PROSPERA'S MAGIC TOOLS

Books

Prospera brought books into exile with her, and her magic stems mostly from their contents. At the time, wise men who were looking to control spirits had books that contained spells and other writings to perform this kind of magic. These books only existed in manuscript form because of the inherent risk in printing them. Prospera's books aren't written to be seen on stage, but are referenced often as the source of many of her spells. She also uses them to control both Ariel and Caliban.

Cloak

Prospera wears a cloak through the play that is referenced as a source of her power. She takes it off twice in the play, in the beginning when she tells Miranda of how they got to the island, and again at the end of play as she says she is going to destroy her book. Cloaks were (and still are) used in fantasy stories as a symbol to represent hidden characteristics/intent. It is believed that it is part of the statement Shakespeare was looking to make with Prospera.

REFERENCES

Shakespeare Unlimited Podcast, Episode 43 "Shakespeare and Magic"
Shakespeare Quarterly, Volume 52, Number 1, Spring 2001: "Prospero's Book" by Barbara A. Mowat



DISCUSSION

> Using Magic

Why does Prospera use magic in the play? Why is it important to the story?

> Struggle

Why do you think Prospera gives up her magic at the end of the play?

> Metaphors

Do you think Prospera's magic is a metaphor for something?

Shakespeare Says Goodbye?

The Tempest is believed to be the last play Shakespeare wrote alone. Many scholars have written that two of the soliloquies delivered by Prospera are actually Shakespeare giving his own retirement speech.

Here is Prospera's speech from Act 4, Scene 1

"Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."



Shakespeare left London in 1611 and retired. He died in Stratford-on-Avon on April 23, 1616.

Here is Prospera's Epilogue Speech

"Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,
I must be here confined by you,
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
Since I have my dukedom got
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
In this bare island by your spell;
But release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands:
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please. Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your indulgence set me free."

DISCUSSION

- > Do you believe these speeches are a way of saying goodbye to a writing career? Why or why not?
- > How do these words relate to Prospera's journey in the play?
- > The epilogue of the play is outside the plot. Why do you think Shakespeare decided to include an epilogue?
- > What is the tone of these speeches? Are they happy or sad?
- > Can you rewrite these speeches in modern English?

Pages from a grimoire. Prospera's book would have been known as a grimoire, a book that a magician would use to summon spirits.

> **ASK
AN ACTOR**

Do you ever find the plots of Shakespeare's plays confusing? Is there anything you do that helps you understand and remember?

Is there any character in this play with whom you have something in common? Is there a character for whom you feel the most empathy?

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES AT ASOLO REP

Educators' Preview Night

Friday, September 28

6-8 PM | FREE

Join us to gather resources, enjoy refreshments, attend *The Tempest* in the Cook Theatre, and meet the cast with colleagues and friends. Tickets are free, but an RSVP is required: tim_odonnell@asolo.org or 941-351-9010 ext. 3307.

Family Day at *The Music Man*

Saturday, December 1

1PM Pre-show activities

2PM Matinee Performance

See this spectacular musical with friends and family. Special pre-show activities welcome the young and the young-at-heart. Family ticket packages are available through the Asolo Rep Box Office: 941-351-8000 for details.

The Crucible Student Matinees

February 19, 22, 26

10:00AM | \$10 student tickets

This American classic comes alive on the Asolo Rep stage. Includes an interactive classroom workshop prior to your performance date, and a post-show Q&A with cast members. Recommended for grades 7 and up. Request a performance at: asolarep.org/education/student_mat

Youth Pass/\$35

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