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Dramatic Publishing

WHAT YOU WILL

A Play with Music

by

JAMES ZAGER

Adapted for Young Audiences

from

“Twelfth Night” by

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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JAMES ZAGER

From "Twelfth Night" by
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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(WHAT YOU WILL)

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WHAT YOU WILL was first presented in March of 1997 as part of the Arizona State University New Plays Marathon. Directed by Victoria Holloway with staging by James Zager and stage managed by Kristen Lebl, it included the following cast:

FESTE.....	Erica Wright
VIOLA	Bronwyn Schile
SEBASTIAN.....	Ben Patch
DUKE	Alex Genova
OLIVIA.....	Tricia Smith
MALVOLIO	Steven Peña
TOBY	Johnny Nicholson
ANDREW.....	Andrew Kennedy
CURIO*	Mark Jordan
CAPTAIN*	Shay Calinawan

*These characters are now played by Feste.

The play was a 1997 AATE Unpublished Play Reading Project Award winner.

WHAT YOU WILL

A Play with Music
For 5 Men, 2 Women, 1 Narrator

CHARACTERS

FESTE the narrator, funny, hip, energetic
VIOLA a young girl, compact, determined
SEBASTIAN Viola's twin brother, brave, handsome
DUKE a rich man, into body building, babes, and buds
OLIVIA . . a beautiful model, straightforward, vain, devoted
MALVOLIO Olivia's servant, totally Elizabethan
TOBY Olivia's uncle, large, jolly, mischievous
ANDREW Toby's friend, a lovable imbecile

THE SETTING: The Duke's pad, Olivia's home, and various spots on the short road between them.

THE TIME: A gray area, somewhere between 1564 and the present.

Running time: 45 minutes
Minimal set, taped music.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Throughout the play I have made notations for music, the actual selections of which I leave to you. However, I feel that music of some sort must be a part of this play, to omit it would do its original author a grave injustice.

Costume and prop requirements are minimal, sound is provided by the boom box, and the Elizabethan use of Feste as the narrator makes other technical needs practically non-existent. You can stage the play in natural light and use a single bench for the set.

Prologue

(The stage is bare.) [Music: Driving Pop/Rock]

(In the distance we hear music, it grows louder and louder until, finally, FESTE bursts onstage carrying a boom box. He is followed by the members of the company, who are dancing, tumbling, juggling, and generally having a good time. During the following speech the company sets the first scene, and exits.)

FESTE. Welcome! Welcome, everybody! My name is Feste and I am a Fool. *(Bows.)* Today we are proud to present for your amusement: a play. Originally written by that up and coming dead playwright William Shakespeare, entitled *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*. You are probably wondering why this particular play has two names, well I'll tell you... I'm not sure. Just wanted to let you know, right off the bat, that even though I am telling this story, I don't necessarily know everything. I know a lot, but not everything. So, as long as we've got that straight, we can get started...

SCENE ONE

FESTE. Scene One: Various places in and around The Duke's pad. Enter: The Duke.

[Music: Elizabethan Ballad] *(DUKE enters carrying a large hand mirror.)*

FESTE. Orsino, "The Duke of Illyria." Totally in love with... himself!

DUKE. ... with Olivia!

FESTE. Right.

DUKE. "If music be the food of love, play on; Give me excess of it..." (*FESTE cranks it up.*) "Enough, no more!" (*FESTE turns it off.*) "'Tis not so sweet now as it was before."

FESTE. Here we go again. You see, when Duke is in love he gets kinda moody and spouts poetry all the time.

DUKE. "O spirit of love..."

FESTE. See!

DUKE. "...how quick and fresh art thou." (*FESTE coughs softly.*) "O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first..." (*FESTE coughs a little louder.*) "...Methought she purged the air of pestilence." (*FESTE falls into a coughing fit.*) Oh, you're back, Fool! Well? What news from her?

FESTE. News? What news?

DUKE. Yes. What NEWS?

FESTE. No news.

DUKE. What?!

FESTE. She wouldn't see me, she's mourning the death of her cousin.

DUKE. For how long?

FESTE. Um... Well...

DUKE. Well?!

FESTE. Seven years.

DUKE. Seven years??? (*Laughing.*) Seven years! Well, if she can love a cousin that deeply just think how much she will love me! "Away before me to sweet beds of

flow'rs; Love thoughts lie rich when canopied with bow'rs." (*DUKE exits.*) [Sound: The Sea Shore]

FESTE. Now, earlier that same day, just off the coast from the duke's place, a terrible storm had hit at sea, causing a number of ships to sink! Where is that captain's hat? Ah, here it is. (*Putting the hat on.*) Perfect! Enter: Viola.

(*VIOLA staggers on.*)

FESTE (*à la Long John Silver*). Bless my barnacles! You're alive! Here sit down. Easy now.

VIOLA. Thank you, Captain. Where are we?

FESTE. We are in Illyria.

VIOLA. And what about my brother?

FESTE (*pause*). When our ship split in half I saw, with my good eye, your brother grab a life preserver. We made it safely to land, he may have too.

VIOLA. Thank you for saying so. Do you know this place?

FESTE. Aye.

VIOLA. Yes, you. Do you know who is in charge?

FESTE. The noble Orsino, "Duke of Illyria."

VIOLA. Can you take me to him? All that I owned went down with your ship, my only hope now is to ask this "duke" for a job of some sort to hold me over until I can find my brother.

FESTE. It's too bad you are not a boy, girl.

VIOLA. Why do you say that?

FESTE. I hear that the duke is looking for a personal secretary, you fit the bill perfectly, except for one thing, he insists that the post be filled by a man.

VIOLA. A man!

FESTE. I don't think I like that look in your eye, miss.

VIOLA. Of course! It solves everything! All my life people have told me how much I look like my brother Sebastian, “practically twins,” they say.

FESTE. What are you getting at?

VIOLA. I’ll pretend to be Sebastian! If I hide my hair, and put on some boys clothes, who would know? You won’t tell anyone, will you, Captain?

FESTE. I don’t know, it sounds a bit shady to me.

VIOLA. It’s just until I find my brother. Once I get that job, I’ll use all of my free time to look for him. I promise! Please?

FESTE. Oh, all right. I’ll keep your secret, young lady ... uh...*young man!* Now go find yourself some boys clothes ... and a hat! (*VIOLA exits. Normal voice:*) Everything went just as Viola planned...

(TOBY and ANDREW enter fencing. TOBY calmly fending off the anemic attacks of ANDREW.)

TOBY. Come, Andrew, parry and lunge, block and attack, that’s it! Now you have me on the run!

ANDREW. I’ll get you yet. Aha! Take that, and that. Come on, stay put for once!

TOBY. As you wish, sir. (*TOBY stops abruptly and ANDREW slams into him, bounces off, and falls to the floor.*)

FESTE. Gentlemen, please. We’re in the middle of a show here.

ANDREW. Oh. (*To audience.*) Sorry.

TOBY. Well *we* are on the way to my niece Olivia’s house. Andrew is going to propose to her, isn’t that right, Andrew?

ANDREW. Um... I think so... I mean, yeah sure... I guess.

TOBY. A man of action.

FESTE. That's great, but I haven't gotten to that part yet so if you don't mind...

TOBY. Come along, Andrew. Lesson #4, never turn your back on your enemy.

(TOBY swats ANDREW repeatedly with his foil and chases him off. DUKE and VIOLA enter.)

FESTE. Now, where was I? Oh yes, everything went just as Viola planned. She found a hat, borrowed some clothes from the captain's son, and using her brother's name, met the duke. Duke was so impressed that he hired her... uh... *him*, on the spot. *(They shake hands. VIOLA gazes up at DUKE.)* [Sound: Glissando] Viola seems to be quite impressed herself. *(VIOLA quickly removes her hand.)*

DUKE. Sebastian, you know of my love for *(Sighs.)* Olivia. Well, I have written her a letter! And I want you to take it to her.

VIOLA. Me? No! I mean... No one would be more honored than I to deliver your letter.

DUKE. Not just deliver, I want you to recite it to her. Only you can do my heart justice.

VIOLA. But, sir, what if she refuses to see me?

DUKE. Jump up and down, stomp your foot, holler, whatever it takes.

VIOLA *(vowing)*. Whatever it takes.

DUKE. Splendid!! Now off with you.

VIOLA. Yes, sir. (*Taking the letter.*) Oh, after I read the letter, what should I say?

DUKE. "Surprise her with discourse of my dear faith; act my woes; (*Grabbing VIOLA.*) O, then unfold the passion of my love..." (*Slowly letting her go.*) Well, um... You get the idea.

VIOLA. Yes.

DUKE. Yes. Well. Good-bye. (*DUKE exits.*)

VIOLA. Good-bye. (*To audience.*) Oh boy, do I get the idea! To tell the truth I wish he didn't love Olivia. I wish he loved me. (*VIOLA exits.*)

FESTE. Interesting. Say, why don't we look in on Her Ladyship?