



The Comedy of Errors Performance Guide

This adaptation of Shakespeare's most slapstick comedy is bursting at the seams with hilarious mishaps, toe-tapping music and head-over-heels love. When two sets of twins are separated at birth they grow up in Ephesus, completely unaware their identical brothers are growing up just over in Syracuse. But an unexpected visit sets off a series of unfortunate events — brother gets mistaken for brother, servant serves the wrong master and hearts may break if they don't set the twins straight!

This performance guide includes:

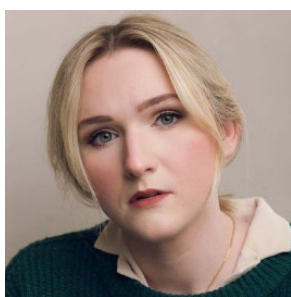
- Artist bios
- A warmup activity and discussion prompt
- Background information
- Shakespearean vocabulary & locations
- Suggested Q & A questions
- Post-show discussion questions
- EdPuzzle activity
- Related Ohio Learning Standards

BEFORE THE SHOW

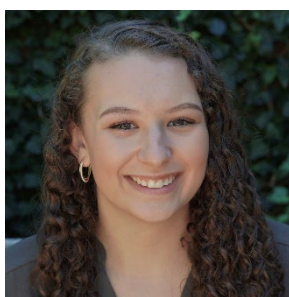
Meet the Artists

Cincinnati Shakespeare Company (CSC) is a resident ensemble theatre company bringing Shakespeare and the Classics to life for all. CSC's educational touring company brings Shakespeare's plays directly to students throughout Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. CSC engages and invites young voices to join the conversation about Shakespeare, the classics, drama, and more. Find Cincinnati Shakespeare Company at www.cincyshakes.com.

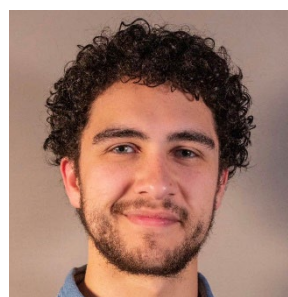
The 2023-2024 Educational Touring Company:



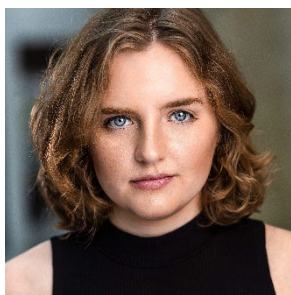
Annika Burley
ANTIPHOLUS OF
SYRACUSE / OFFICER



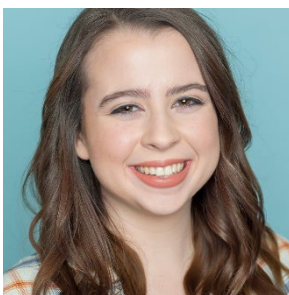
Natalie Hayslett
DROMIO OF SYRACUSE
/ DR. PINCH



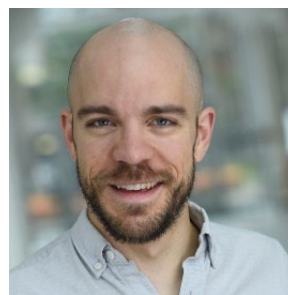
Jason Coffenberry
LUCIAN / ANGELO



Dani Grace Nissen
ANTIPHOLUS OF
EPHESUS



Sabrina Mack
DROMIO OF EPHESUS



Jacob Chapman
ADRIAN / MERCHANT

Production Note:

This production has flipped the genders of the original characters: Both sets of twins are now female, Luciana is now Lucian, and Adriana is now Adrian. Due to this casting choice, we've decided to set our comedy in BARBIELAND, where stereotypical gender roles are also flipped! You will see a few nods to the "Barbie" movie with the costumes, props and acting choices.

Classroom Warmup: The Shakespearean Insult Battle

On your own: Read the Shakespearean Insult List on page 5 of this guide. Use it to come up with 3-4 well-constructed insults. Write them down!

As a class: The battle begins! Form two lines of students. One student from each line comes up and performs their insult to the other (in their best Shakespearean accents!). The rest of the class votes on the winner. The winners of each battle continue to compete against each other tournament-style until there is an ultimate champion!

Think While You Watch



The Comedy of Errors is a **farce**, or a comedy that relies on stock characters, horseplay, and highly exaggerated, ridiculous and unlikely situations based on miscommunication. The plot moves quickly, and the characters are desperate, but the ending is happy. Farces play with social codes (what is “socially acceptable”) but not to make a point – The purpose of farce is simply to make you laugh!

What tools and techniques do the Cincy Shakes actors use to convey the idea of farce? (Think about their timing, gestures, line delivery, props, etc.)

The Comedy of Errors Synopsis

1. The Royal Shakespeare Company offers an interactive text-based plot summary here: <https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeare-learning-zone/the-comedy-of-errors/story/plot>

2. You can also watch The Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2021 cast explain the plot in just over two minutes! <https://youtu.be/ozjXZxU4DUs?si=IY8UOujTelujOotn>

Shakespearean Vocabulary

- **Bark:** A ship, vessel
- **Ducats:** A term for money
- **Flout:** To treat with contemptuous disregard
- **Glass:** Mirror
- **Jeer:** To make rude or mocking remarks
- **Jest:** Hoaxing or teasing
- **Knave:** A Shakespearean insult, foolish
- **Marks:** A term for money (also, bruises)
- **Porter:** A gate-keeper
- **Sirrah:** Sir

Locations Mentioned in *The Comedy of Errors*



- **Syracuse:** The home of Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse is located on the modern-day island of Sicily. The city was founded in 734 BCE by Greek settlers from Corinth. Cicero, a famous orator and statesman in ancient Rome, described Syracuse as the greatest and most beautiful Greek city.
- **Ephesus:** Located on the western coast of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), Ephesus is where the play takes place. It was home to one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. The temple was constructed of marble and contained 127 sixty-foot high columns and four bronze statues of Amazons.
- **Epidamnum:** Town on the coast of Illyricum (modern-day Albania) off the Adriatic Sea.

The Q & A

Artists love to answer thoughtful questions! If you are having trouble thinking of a question, here are some that are sure to be well-received.

- Which is your favorite Shakespeare role to perform?
- Who are you inspired by?
- What kind of training/education did you complete?
- What's your favorite (or least favorite) part about this work? Why?
- What advice would you have for someone wanting to follow in your footsteps?

Compose Your Question

Shakespeare Insult Kit

To create a Shakespearean insult...

Combine one word from each of the three columns below,
prefaced with "Thou":

Column 1

artless
bawdy
beslubbering
bootless
churlish
cockered
clouted
craven
currish
dankish
dissembling
droning
errant
fawning
fobbing
froward
frothy
gleeking
goatish
gorbellied
impertinent
infectious
jarring
loggerheaded
lumpish
mammering
mangled
mewling
paunchy
pribbling
puking
puny
qualling
rank
reeky
roguish
ruttish
saucy
spleeny
spongy
surly
tottering
unmuzzled
vain
venomed
villainous
warped
wayward
weedy
yeasty

Column 2

base-court
bat-fowling
beef-witted
beetle-headed
boil-brained
clapper-clawed
clay-brained
common-kissing
crook-pated
dismal-dreaming
dizzy-eyed
doghearted
dread-bolted
earth-vexing
elf-skinned
fat-kidneyed
fen-sucked
flap-mouthed
fly-bitten
folly-fallen
fool-born
full-gorged
guts-griping
half-faced
hasty-witted
hedge-born
hell-hated
idle-headed
ill-breeding
ill-nurtured
knotty-pated
milk-livered
motley-minded
onion-eyed
plume-plucked
pottle-deep
pox-marked
reeling-ripe
rough-hewn
rude-growing
rump-fed
shard-borne
sheep-biting
spur-galled
swag-bellied
tardy-gaited
tickle-brained
toad-spotted
unchin-snouted
weather-bitten

Column 3

apple-john
baggage
barnacle
bladder
boar-pig
bugbear
bum-bailey
canker-blossom
clack-dish
clotpole
coxcomb
codpiece
death-token
dewberry
flap-dragon
flax-wench
flirt-gill
foot-licker
fustilarian
giglet
gudgeon
haggard
harpy
hedge-pig
horn-beast
hugger-mugger
joithead
lewdster
lout
maggot-pie
malt-worm
mammet
measle
minnow
miscreant
moldwarp
mumble-news
nut-hook
pigeon-egg
pignut
puttock
pumpion
ratsbane
scut
skainsmate
strumpet
varlot
vassal
whey-face
wagtail

AFTER THE SHOW

Post-Show Classroom Discussion

Discuss or write a reflection: Review the “Think While You Watch” prompt. How did the actors use timing, gesture, line delivery, props, and other elements of the stage to create a convincing and entertaining farce?

Follow-up Questions

- Can you think of other examples of farce in movies or television? (The Three Stooges is only one example!)
- Did you like the change of setting to Barbieland? Did this choice enhance or take away from your experience? Why?
- Was it easy or hard to keep track of what was happening on stage? Why?
- Did the play change your expectations of Shakespeare? Why or why not?

Student Survey



Share your thoughts with Muse Machine at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8R88TWP> (or scan the QR code).

We want to hear from you!

EdPuzzle: There’s No Escaping Shakespeare



In this EdPuzzle, you’ll watch a four-minute video learn about Shakespeare’s influence on language and culture in the English speaking world.

You’ll be asked to consider and respond to five open-ended questions.

Student Link (no account or name required): <https://edpuzzle.com/open/rudecse>

Student answers are submitted anonymously to Muse Machine.

Teacher Preview Link: <https://edpuzzle.com/media/65eb5dedeb6c2c4d73794f1d>

Teachers can copy the EdPuzzle into their own account and edit the questions to better suit their class’s learning objectives. Student answers are submitted to the teacher, not to Muse.

FOR TEACHERS

Related Ohio Learning Standards

The following standards are linked to the artist's performance and/or the activities in the performance guide. Teachers may be able to make additional connections.

Drama

<i>Enduring Understandings: Critical and Creative Thinking, Literacy</i>	
Perceiving/Knowing/Creating (CE)	
6.1	Consider and discuss how the characters, events and theme of a story contribute to its meaning and storyline.
7.1	Consider and discuss the consequences of a character's actions in a theatrical production.
8.1	Analyze and discuss the conflicts and emotions of the characters in a selected dramatic work.
HS.I.1	Explain how theatrical artists create meaning to convey a playwright's intent.
HS.III.4	Compare and contrast motivations and reactions of characters confronting similar situations.
Responding/Reflecting (RE)	
6.2	Describe, analyze and evaluate the artistic choices in a dramatic production using specified criteria.
HS.1.1	Explain how a performance style communicates a message or story narrative.
HS.II.3	Compare and contrast traditional and nontraditional interpretations of a dramatic and theatrical work.

Reading Literature

CCR Anchor Standard 6	(Grade 8) Analyze how differences in the points of view and perspectives of the characters and the audience or reader create effects such as suspense or humor.
CCR Anchor Standard 7	(Grade 8) Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

Writing

CCR Anchor Standard 4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCR Anchor Standard 10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

CCR Anchor Standard 1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
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