



The Handlebards: *Twelfth Night*

Thursday 14 July, 2022 - Lyveden Manor

Synopsis:

Duke Orsino is in love with Lady Olivia, but she won't have anything to do with suitors. Viola is shipwrecked and believes her twin brother Sebastian to be dead. Meanwhile, a bunch of Olivia's servants plot to make a fool out of her pompous butler, Malvolio. There's drunkenness, frivolity and cross-dressing a plenty.

Viola and her twin brother Sebastian have been shipwrecked; each believes the other to be drowned. Viola disguises herself as a young man and, under the name of Cesario, gets a job as a servant for the Duke Orsino.

Duke Orsino is in love with Olivia, but she's mourning for her dead brother, so has rejected all his advances so far. He sends Cesario (who is really Viola) with love letters to woo Olivia on his behalf. Unfortunately for the Duke, Olivia is taken in by Cesario's disguise and falls in love with him.

Viola has secretly fallen in love with Orsino, and Orsino is confused by his feelings for his new 'male' servant. So, Viola loves Orsino, Orsino loves Olivia and Olivia loves Cesario/Viola.

Meanwhile, Olivia's butler, Malvolio, disapproves of all the other members of her household - her drunken uncle Sir Toby Belch, his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek and her servants, Maria and Feste. Fed up with Malvolio constantly spoiling their fun, they decide to play a practical joke on him. Malvolio is secretly in love with Olivia, and the others trick him into believing that these feelings are returned.

Maria forges a letter to Malvolio, supposedly from Olivia, suggesting that she loves him and he should wear yellow stockings and smile all the time. Malvolio does as the letter suggests, and Olivia thinks he has gone mad, so has him locked up. Out of the blue, Viola's brother, Sebastian - who believes his sister is dead - arrives with his friend and protector, Antonio, who rescued him from the shipwreck. Sebastian meets Olivia. She mistakes him for Cesario and asks him to marry her - he agrees.

Lots of confusion follows around the mistaken identity of Sebastian and Cesario, and exactly who is promised to whom. Eventually all is revealed, the brother and sister are reunited and the love triangle is resolved into two couples, Sebastian and Olivia, and Viola and Orsino. Finally, Olivia discovers the trick that has been played on Malvolio, and he's released from confinement.

Biographies:

George Attwell Gerhards is excited to finally get cycling round the UK with *Twelfth Night* two years after he was first due to get on the bike. His previous theatre credits include *Hansel and Gretel* (InsaneRoot Theatre); *The Wind in the Willows* (Ryedale Festival) and *To Sir, With Love* (Royal and Derngate, Northampton). He is also co-director of Paperback Theatre and Little but LIVE!- an open air arts festival in Birmingham.

Roisin Brehony has spent the last two years fixing bikes in Berlin. Due to a distinct lack of applause at the end of each fix, she has returned to the roaring world of Shakespeare. She considers herself a 10/10 actress and an 11/10 cyclist. Her only weakness is dairy. This is her second summer tour with The HandleBards (*The Tempest* 2019) and she is delighted to be back on the road with a shiny new set of cast mates.

Eddie Mann is an actor & musician from New Zealand. Since arriving 10 years ago, he has toured the UK and Europe. When not acting he's a member of funk punk outfit, Circus of Bones, who are set to release their new album this summer. Theatre includes: *Macbeth*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night* (Three Inch Fools), *Around The World In 80 Days* (York Theatre Royal), *The Merchant Of Venice* (Shakespeare's Globe). Film: *Rocketman* (Paramount Pictures). TV: *No Code* (Trivulpe Films).

Brontë Tadman trained at the Oxford School of Drama and now lives in Margate, with her fiancé Pete and Chutney the dog. Credits Include: *Wind in the Willows* (Taunton Brewhouse), *Red Skies* (Eastern Angles), *Ben Hur* (Barn Theatre), *A Christmas Carol* (Barn Theatre), *Peppa Pig's Adventure* (West End & UK Tour), *Cinderella* (Theatre Royal Winchester), *Macbeth* (Watermill Theatre), *Peter Pan* (Watermill Theatre), *Call the Midwife* (BBC), *Road to Lautrec* (BBC Radio 4).

The HandleBards began with a sense of adventure, a love of Shakespeare and a nifty little pun. Since four fearless friends (Paul Moss, Callum Cheatle, Tom Dixon and Callum Brodie) pedalled *Twelfth Night* to twenty UK venues in 2013, we have grown to become an internationally renowned theatre company, bringing our uniquely irreverent brand of Shakespeare to audiences all over the globe. Our shows have received critical acclaim from national press, regional press and audience members alike. The Stage called us "gloriously eccentric and very, very funny". The Shields Gazette found us "chaotic, clever and charming". And one young audience member confessed that we had "converted an 11 year old boy into a Shakespeare fan". We travel by bike because we care about the planet and we want to promote sustainability and healthy living. In 2014, we won the Edinburgh Fringe Sustainable Practice Award. We were nominated again in 2015, and in 2016 we were nominated for The Stage's inaugural Sustainability Award. Our take on Shakespeare is fast, funny and fearless. If you've never seen Shakespeare before, there's no better introduction. If you're a Bard buff, you've never seen it done like this...

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