Dramaturg and Director’s Note

Scholar David Bevington tells us that “Shakespeare creates in *The Tempest* a world of the imagination, a place of conflict and ultimately of magical rejuvenation.” After all, as Prospero reminds us, “We are such stuff as dreams are made on...”

The play is one of four plays written by Shakespeare in the Romance genre. The Romances, not to be confused with romantic comedies, are highly stylized dramas replete with musical entertainment that were popular among the English aristocracy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These spectacle-filled fantasies focused on the reunion and renewal of families and frequently centered around fathers who are corrected and cajoled by daughters.

Shakespeare’s romances additionally belong to the genre of masque. Masques, under James I, were courtly entertainments with extremely theatrical elements including elaborate sets, costumes, and special effects. The inclusion of masque-like elements and allusions in plays of the Elizabethan/Jacobean world were frequent. According to Charles Boyce “As in movies that contain scraps of older movies as part of the characters’ experience, the appearance of masques in plays amused their audiences with enactment of familiar – or at least notorious – pleasures while also furthering the play’s developments.” Indeed while Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is famous for its “play within the play” *The Tempest* also contains moments of “the masque within the masque.”

The challenge of this production was to communicate the play with a more recent cultural experience with which audiences might be able to relate. To focus on the beauty of Shakespeare’s language I determined that a “radio play” concept would best highlight the language and the attention to “creating” the ambient sounds of the island would help create an auditory experience for the audience, while creating a 1938 recreation of a radio production provides the visual and spectacular elements necessary in the play.

On A Personal Note…While many post-colonial scholars point to *The Tempest* as being evidence that “the English colonial project [of the sixteenth century] seems to be on Shakespeare’s mind throughout *The Tempest*,” it is the relationships between family members that most intrigues me. This includes the relationship between the aging father/duke/magician Prospero and his “family” including daughter, Miranda, and servants, Ariel and Caliban; the father, Alonso, and son, Ferdinand; and the brothers Prospero and Antonio. In each of these relationships reunion and reconciliation plays some role, but ultimately there is a realization of a new chapter, a turning point in the lives of these characters. For me, the driving force behind the play is Prospero’s realization that letting go of these family members is an important part of maturation and life both for them and for himself.

As a result this production is dedicated to my daughter, Megan. I thank her for the joy she has brought me the past nineteen years and I wish her well as she embarks on her own journey to Brave New Worlds.

---Gregory J. Thompson

**Synopsis**

Castaway on an island at sea lives the deposed Duke of Milan, Prospero and his daughter Miranda. Native to the island are Ariel and other sprites and Caliban, the child of the witch Sycorax. Prospero, a magician as well as a scholar, creates a storm that causes a ship to wreck near the Island. Onboard this ship are the people who plotted the overthrow of Prospero; King Alonzo, his court, and Prospero’s brother, Antonio. When the storm subsides, the conspirators discover themselves scattered about the island. Prospero, by his spells, contrives to separate the survivors of the wreck into three groups; Antonio, Sebastian, Gonzolo, Alonzo and; Trinculo and Stephano; and Alonzo’s son, Ferdinand. With Alonzo and Ferdinand are separated, and believe one another dead.

The three plots then alternate throughout the play. In one, Prospero works to establish a romantic relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda; the two fall immediately in love, but Prospero worries that "too light winning [may] make the prize light", and compels Ferdinand to become his servant so that his affection for Miranda will be confirmed. In another plot, Antonio and Sebastian conspire to kill Alonso and his advisor Gonzalo, so that Sebastian can become King. In the third plot, Caliban conspires with Stephano and Trinculo, two drunken crew members, whom he believes to have come from the moon, and drunkenly attempts to raise a rebellion against Prospero. Prospero manipulates the course of his enemies' path through the island, drawing them closer and closer to him. In the conclusion, all the main characters are brought together before Prospero, who forgives Alonso (as well as his own brother's betrayal, and warns Antonio and Sebastian about further attempts at betrayal) and finally uses his magic to ensure that everyone returns safely to Milan. (Or is that the end???)

**The Players Biographies**

**David Blakely** is assistant professor of communications at RSU and Director of the theatre program. He is a playwright, designer, musician, actor and father of four. He is Vice-Chair of the National Playwriting Program in Region VI the American College Theatre Festival and a member of the Dramatists Guild of America.

**Kaitlin Bryan** is a native of Oologah, Oklahoma. She has wonderful parents, Earnie and Brenda Bryan, and a caring older brother, John. She enjoys reading, sculpting, and painting. She was in choir throughout her school years, and still loves to sing. Her first theater production was last fall, where she fell in love with the stage and has wanted to be back on it ever since. She attends First Baptist Talala, and is earning a Bachelor degree in Fine Arts at Rogers State University. She plans on owning a pottery studio and possibly give lessons on wheel-throwing.

**Ray Darragh** is making his final appearance on stage as an RSU student. Ray will be graduating with a degree in Business Information Technology at the end of this semester. Last year, he made his return to the stage after a layoff of over seven years when he played Gilcrease and Soldier #1 in William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*.

**Katie Hendrickson** is a junior in Communication Arts.  This is her seventh time to appear on the RSU stage.  Her previous credits include: Alma in Writer's Cafe, Melissa in Nickel and Dimed, and Doris Eatton Travis in Kicking Up Her Heels.  Katie has also been nominated for an Irene Ryan Award and is the vice-president of the RSU Student Theatre Organization.

**Jessica Parham** is making her debut on the RSU stage in The Tempest. She hopes this just the first of many opportunities to act on the RSU stage. Jessica is a freshman that became involved with the play through David Blakely’s, Theatre Appreciation class. At RSU Jessica majors in medical biology and following her undergraduate work she plans to go to medical school. She thanks her family, Ma, Dad, and brother for coming to the performances along with her friends who are supporting her in the production.

**Colter Sharon**'s story is much like that of Guy and Tom. He discovered his passion for acting at a very early age and never ceased trying to make people laugh through various impersonations. It wasn't until Junior High that he discovered an outlet for his talents, but tragically, bad experiences there turned him away for the stage for quite awhile. It wasn't until his senior year at Owasso that he rediscovered his passion, but it wasn't until now, that he has discovered a new outlet. It was from his involvement in the successful reading of David Blakely's Lime Green Jackals that he became involved in the RSU Theater Association, and was discovered for this production. Colter is a freshman here at Rogers State University, and currently resides in Collinsville with his family.

**Leila Tennyson** is a small town girl from Foyil, Oklahoma, where she wnet to high school and was an active participant in theatre productions. Leila competed in Speech and Drama and went to State twice. Her Freshman year she took a small prose piece to State. Leila’s senior year she attended State with her Dramatic Duet partner where they preformed Billie Letts’s “Where the Heart Is” in which she played Novalee. She began her RSU academic career in the fall of 2006, and wound up once again in the dramatic realm. She preformed the roles of Margaret and Borachio in Professor Thompson’s production of “Much Ado About Nothing” in the spring of 2007. Leila is going to graduate with her Associates Degree in Liberal Arts this May.

**Very Special Thank You to…**

Joe Wiley, Frank Elwell, Jeff Gentry, Cathy Coomer, Stephen Doyle and the RSU Radio Station, Mike Mefford at Sequoyah High School, Joe Cernuto, Paul Hatley, Bonnie Paul, Tulsa Opera Inc., The Heller Theatre, The Theatre Tulsa Costume Shop, Brent Ortolani and the RSU office of Public Relations, Orval May, Connie Wall and the RSU Printshop, the many members of RSU’s student body who have helped in the running of the show.

William Shakespeare’s

The Tempest

Adapted by Gregory J. Thompson

Cast

Ray Durragh playing…. George Banks playing …. Alonso, Caliban and The Master

David Blakely playing…… “Silent Jack” Smith …….. (Master of Sound Effects)

Jessica Parham playing …. Janice Dean playing…. Ariel and Ceres

Katie Hendrickson playing…… Noveta Henderson playing…. Antonio and Juno

Katie Bryan playing …. Dorothy Trimble playing…. Sebastian

Traci Rainwater playing….. Hazel Brown playing … Gonzolo and Sebastian

Leila Tennyson playing… Jessica Tabor playing… Miranda

Josh Buehler playing…. Samuel Tabor playing… Prospero

Colter Sharon playing… Guy Hill playing… Ferdinand and Trinculo

Place: Radio Station KVON Decorah Iowa

The Time: October 30, 1938

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

The performance runs approximately 2¼ hours.

In celebration of William Shakespeare’s 444th birth please listen to KRSC 91.3 on Wed. April 23rd at 7:00 pm for a live broadcast of this production.

Crew

Director and Dramaturg Gregory J. Thompson

Set Design Kevin Hoffman

Costume Design and Construction Renée Cox

Assistant Director Kiri Martin

On Stage Sound Design David Blakely

Pre-Recorded Sound Design Gregory J. Thompson

Pre-Recorded Sound Production Josh Buehler

Stage Manager Angie Hillson

Technical Director David Blakely

Lighting Design Kevin Hoffman

Lighting Operator Kevin Hoffman

Set and Prop construction Knox Blakely, Quinn Blakely

Pre-Recorded Sound Operator Merrit Armitage

Back Stage Assistance Kiri Martin

Costume Construction Jan Cox

Poster and Program Cover Design Nicholas Michael