

Director Platt returns for a 'twelfth night'

Twelfth Night

presented by PlayMakers Repertory Co.

Wednesday, April 15 through
Sunday, May 10

8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday
2 p.m. Sunday

Paul Green Theatre

Tickets: \$12.50 students, \$17.50 adults
For information, call 962-PLAY

William Shakespeare's romantic comedy, *Twelfth Night*, completes the season schedule at PlayMakers Repertory Company (PRC).

With a plot that unfolds around a series of mistaken identities, *Twelfth Night* could very well be the prototype for every episode of *Three's Company*.

In the play, Viola and her twin brother, Sebastian, are shipwrecked in a foreign land where they meet the wealthy countess Olivia and the self-important Duke, Orsino.

Twelfth Night director, Martin Platt, is a veteran of the Shakespearian

MONDY LAMB

Theater

theater.

Here he answers a few questions about illusion, setting and the upcoming play:

OMNI: This is your fifth time directing "Twelfth Night." What do you find so exciting about this play?

Platt: I think that *Twelfth Night*, with so many different kinds of love — romantic love, illusions of romantic love, love of servant for master and all the cross themes of sexual ambiguity, like the woman disguised as the man, seems very modern and still interesting.

OMNI: There is a lot of confusion in this play, mistaken identity, mistaken love ... How do you separate the illusion from reality?

Platt: It's not much different than other plays. All you really do is play the reality of the situation at that moment.

Although the confusions are always apparent to us, to the actors they always think they know who they are talking to. They're trapped in a

through-the-looking-glass world. Especially late in the play, the characters don't quite know how they got there and don't understand why they're being mistaken for other people.

OMNI: You've set this play in a Mediterranean resort to give it a romantic, sun-lit feel. Where did this idea come from and have you ever been to the Mediterranean?

Platt: Yes I have, and it's almost as nice as Chapel Hill, but they don't speak English.

The idea really evolved when talking to the set designers. The Edwardian era was the last great romantic era before World War I changed the world. We wanted a Florence/Venice type place. Anything Italian, except we do have palm trees and pyramids so it's hard to tell where we are.

OMNI: Pyramids?

Platt: Yeah, we have a little bit of everything.

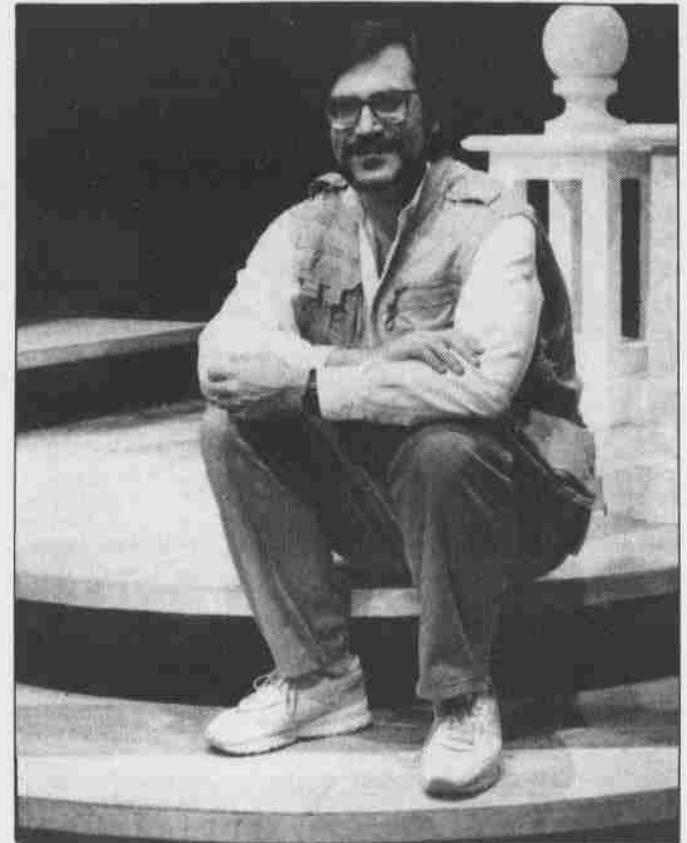
OMNI: Do you think this play is more realistic than fantastical or more fantastical than realistic?

Platt: I think it's more realistic ... in a funny way. And I think it has more to do with the director than it does with the play itself. As you get older you look at plays differently. When I did this play the first time, I was in my 20s — half a lifetime ago — and it tended to be very jokey, with a lot of slapstick.

I think as I've gotten older I've begun to realize that the kind of life and death situations in Shakespeare's comedies are much more serious. If there is one little plot turn one way it would be a tragedy rather than a comedy. It's very easy for them to switch over. When you think of it like that it's more serious.

OMNI: Is that how the play has changed for you over the years?

Platt: Yes, you realize if everyone doesn't believe that the character is angry enough to actually kill and cause serious injury then the play doesn't really make any sense. If the stakes aren't that high, why should we be



'Twelfth Night' director Martin Platt

interested? The comedy is a kind of relief that things do work out.

OMNI: What was your single most challenging moment directing this play?

Platt: I think it's coming up this weekend.

It's a peculiar challenge here at PRC because you have a lot of experienced older actors and you have graduate students who are really just opening up into their careers. One of the challenges is getting these two groups to balance out into a unified company. It's very different than directing at other places where everyone starts from about the same place.

OMNI: If you could do any play at

PRC using any actors, what play would you perform?

Long pause.

Platt: I don't know if they've done it here but something like *Beggars' Opera* which is very big — it's a classic. It's the kind of show that could blend students and professionals very well.

OMNI: But this is ideally, you don't have to use students, you can choose anyone.

Platt: Oh, but we could always use a few students.

OMNI: Well ...

Platt: OK, you'd have to do it with Kevin Kline ... and it would be fine.

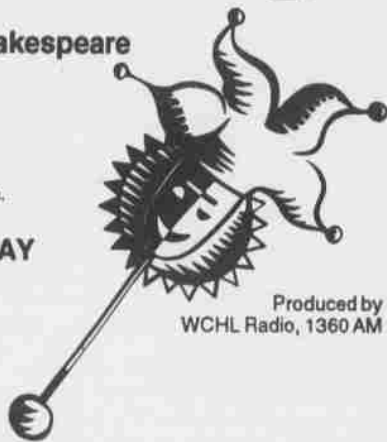
Twelfth Night

by William Shakespeare

April 15-May 10

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Tickets: 962-PLAY



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