Venture Theatre presents William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night

February 25 & 26, March 4 & 5
8:00 p.m., Assembly Hall
University of North Florida
Tickets: Fine Arts, 646-2960
Twelfth Night

directed by
Jane Elizabeth Decker

Associate Director Mary Brumbaugh
Set and Costume Design Meredith Normington
Choreography Joyce Bizot, Trina Wharton
Original Music William A. Brown

The play takes place in Illyria or Paris, in the 1890's or anytime

THE CAST

Orsino, Duke of Illyria E. Allen Tilley
Sebastian, brother of Viola James Tobin
Antonio, a sea captain, friend to Sebastian Patrick Bidelman
A Sea Captain, friend to Viola Patrick Bidelman
Valentine, gentlemen attending on the Duke Mark Gay
Curio Scott Emmons
Sir Toby Belch, uncle to Olivia Bill Caldwell
Sir Andrew Aguecheek Steve Downie
Malvolio, steward to Olivia Don Waccholz
Fabian Joe Smyth
Feste, a clown Jill Rooney
Olivia, a countess Kathleen Gay
Viola, sister of Sebastian Dale Clifford
Maria, Olivia's woman Margaret Fletcher
Duke's Attendants Joyce Bizot

Olivia's Attendants Liz Kimsey
Officers Percy Parsons

Priest Susan M. Brumbaugh
Guitarist Barbara Waccholz

Duke's Attendants Allen Harrell

Officer Percy Parsons

Priest Mark Gay

Guitarist Martha Ridgell
Production Staff

Assistant Director
Technical Director and Stage Manager
Assistant Technical Director
Photography
Publicity
Consultants

Technical Crews

Trina Wharton
Meredith Normington
Conni Rayl
Beldon S. Wall
Trina Wharton
Richard Bizot
Dale Clifford
E. Allen Tilley
Ty Anderson
Susie Brumbaugh
Barbara Caldwell
Frankie Faulk
Percy Parsons
Cleve Powell
Conni Rayl
Dee Stockton

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Twelfth Night is sponsored by the UNF Council of the Arts with funds allocated by the Student Government Association.

There will be one ten minute intermission. No smoking in the auditorium please. The opening night audience is invited to a reception sponsored by the Council of the Arts in the adjacent commons area.
SHAKESPEARE AND TWELFTH NIGHT

William Shakespeare, probably the greatest dramatist of all time, lived and worked in England between 1564 and 1616. He wrote some thirty-eight plays, although some number of those were in part by others; we still have them largely because his fellow actors published them in 1623 to preserve his memory. Shakespeare wove these plays on the basis of stories derived from a myriad of sources: mythology, legend, history, works of fiction and other plays.

Shakespeare's critical reputation in his own time did not equal that of many other dramatists, particularly Ben Jonson, and his fame peaked only in the nineteenth century. What accounts for the endurance and quality of his work? One must mention first his great ability to use the English language; no other playwright has consistently written as well, with such beauty, and such universality. Second, Shakespeare's plays appeal across time and space, not only because they are "well-written", but especially because of their continuing relevance, because they still reveal and comment upon individuals and the ways in which we do and do not interact with each other and the worlds in which we live.

In Twelfth Night, for example, Shakespeare reveals two human worlds: the world of convention and pretense, filled with gaiety and lyricism; and the world of counter-convention and rebellion, marked by plots and trickery. Twelfth Night is surely a comedy and it is also about love, but it exposes two different worlds of comedy and love. The analogy with the 1890's could hardly miss a historian of modern Europe who had read the play.

Written around 1600, Twelfth Night appeared at about the same time as As You Like It and Much Ado About Nothing. A magnificent comedy, woven of plot and sub-plots, it contains many great comic characters and has long been popular with actors and audiences alike. This company received both great challenge and great enjoyment from Twelfth Night and we hope our audiences will too.
Paris in the Belle Epoque

In 1889 the Eiffel tower rose on the banks of the Seine in preparation for the Universal Exhibition celebrating the centennial of the Great Revolution, and Paris entered one of the most tumultuous decades of its history. We remember the 1890's as the belle epoque, the era of "elegant wits and grand horizontals", the Moulin Rouge and Maxim's, aristocrats in the Bois de Bologne and demi-mondaines in Montmartre. The 1890's have become a romanticized legend.

At the time, it was more popular to view the era with pessimism. Paris entered a decade of transition and tension between traditional life and culture and a rebellion against conventional politics, art and social arrangements. Contemporaries often called the period the fin de siecle because they believed that traditional culture and civilization were dying with the last ten years of the old century.

The 1890's witnessed great social unrest, literal and figurative brawls over politics, anarchists and bombs, political extremists and threats of coups d'état. An intensely creative period in which modern art was born, the era gave birth to many public controversies in the arts. Many artists, writers, poets and journalists supported anarchists and radicals calling for a complete social transformation. One British author, writing in the early 1970's has likened the era to our own:

"Then, as now, there was widespread disillusion with the political system—especially among the young. Frustrated youthful idealists and fanatics tried their hand at urban guerilla warfare and urged the overthrow of the established social order; there were bomb-throwings, street demonstrations, manifestoes and riots; there was much talk of a gap or a conflict between the generations, and the hippies and drop-outs of today had their counterparts among the young people of the Latin Quarter of the Nineties and in the audiences who flocked to Paris's nonconformist, experimental theatres and listened to poetry in cafes and cellars. Then, as now, there was a large 'underground' press; there was an equivalent of psychedelic art, a revival of interest in occultism, mysticism and spiritualism, with attempts to create artificial paradises of the mind through the use of certain drugs. In the young Paris of the Nineties, there was much uncertainty about the future, a reaction against conventional bourgeois attitudes towards life and culture, and a
proliferation of groups and 'isms'.

The 1890's in Paris were also a period of serious high purposefulness and idealism which contrasted strongly with the frivolty and 'decadence' which gave the decade such a lurid glamour ... It was a time of passionately expressed ideas and experiments, of extreme preciosity and deliberate eccentricity as the young and creative demanded the right to think, behave, write and make art as individuals. Then as now, many of the more extreme attitudes assumed and assertions of the individual against society sprang from deep fears that humanity and the individual personality would be crushed or made anonymous by the mass structures of society and scientific development."

(Raymond Rudorff, Belle Epoque. London, 1972.)

Art and Music in the 1890's

Artists and intellectuals of the 1890's challenged not only the structure of society but the foundations and traditions of "art". Conventional painting, like conventional sculpture and architecture of the period, is little remembered today. To be good, a painting had to be realistic, picturesque, dramatic and preferably narrative; subject matter ranged from historical and military scenes to sentimental representations of domestic life. This "official" or "Salon" art was thought to embody the essence and the mountain top of French art destined to continue forever unchanged. Yet it is the fertile creative geniuses of modern art who struggled against the closed circle of official art to explore new modes of expression that we remember: Gaugin, Van Gogh, Serusier, Bonnard, Rousseau, Redon, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Pissarro, Picasso.

Poster art reached a heyday in the 1890's and colored the streets of Paris; many of the most famous modern artists of the period experimented with the medium. One of the most famous poster artists was Alphonse Mucha, remembered most frequently as the designer of posters for the celebrated actress Sara Bernhardt. Mucha's works are also often cited as examples of the style known as art nouveau, with its undulating, energy-laden asymmetrical lines, which so strongly influenced the popular and applied arts. Flowers and women with long, wavy hair dominate art nouveau as in our set which is a replica of Mucha's "Four Flowers".

Rebellion against the conventional and the static permeated and grew in all the arts. Symbolist poets like Mallarme or Verlaine and those with
a style all their own like Apollinaire, musicians like Satie and Debussy or singers like Aristide Bruant and dancers like Loie Fuller and playwrights like Alfred Jarry all rebelled against convention, experimented with new artistic forms and struggled toward new modes of self-expression.

The cast of *Twelfth Night* attempts to recreate some of these artists and intellectuals of the 1890's. We have gathered together, as they did then in cafes, cellars, night clubs and experimental theatres, to share our experiences and our works with each other and to entertain ourselves and you with a production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Our music is by Debussy, Satie, Ravel, Poulenc and Chabrier. Our costumes attempt to replicate the poster art of Mucha, Bonnard and Toulouse-Lautrec.

—J. Decker

FORTHCOMING COUNCIL OF THE ART EVENTS

Art Exhibit, Marilyn Taylor, potter
UNF Library
Feb. 28–March 18, 1977

Art Exhibit, William Henderson
UNF Library
March 28–April 15, 1977

Arts Festival '77
UNF Chorus
Civic Auditorium
April 21, 1977
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