

Play review

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Play Review The specific play is William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. This play was performed at the Coconut Grove Playhouse. The director of this production was Colleen Stovall. While Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is centuries old, this particular production was set in the 1920s. While the play retained most of the original dialogue, the costumes, settings, and some plot elements were changed to reflect this change in time setting.

While one would assume that changing Shakespeare's play to the 1920s would require major alternations to the narrative, in reality the play fit very well within this new setting. The change of setting was highly enlightening as it demonstrated the great universality of Shakespeare's works. The particular choice of the 1920s seems to be motivated both out of particular elements in the play that fit well with this time period, as well as the time period's reputation as a time of excitement during the prohibition era. In terms of specific elements one considers that alcohol is implemented in a variety of scenes within the play. For instance, Toby and Andrew are regularly drunk and this motivates some of the action in the drama. The nature of the adaptation, however, didn't play as large a factor as one might assume. To an extent it seems that this has to do with the nature of the production. Rather than being a full-scale theatrical production this play was more of a one-off reading. In these regards there were minimal sets. In terms of staging there were a variety of non-descript backdrops and the requisite bar that identified the play as occurring in the 1920s. The costumes, however, were directly influenced by the period; the men were dressed in Chicago-gangster like attire, while the women were replete in flapper wear.

In terms of lighting elements there were minimal notable occurrences. There

was a general stage light and a spotlight that was implemented for juxtaposition in a variety of scenes. Perhaps more significant at times was less the action occurring on the stage than the fact that it occurred within the specific playhouse. The Coconut Grove Playhouse has been in existence since the 1920s – the same period the play was set – and this gave the play a sort of vintage ambience that heightened the plot. In terms of acting it was clearly discernable that the production was not as extensive as other plays. While many of the actors were engaging, to a large extent their interactions lacked the unconscious and free-flowing intensity that is more indicative of productions where the actors greatly digested the lines and the nature and complexity of the play. While with some other of Shakespeare's plays this loose nature may have largely detracted from the audience experience, the nature of *Twelfth Night* as a farcical comedy meant that the free-form structure of the production worked well. To a large extent there were minimal social elements that seemed out of place in the 1920s setting. Ultimately, this adaptation demonstrated the universal nature of Shakespeare's love stories and their relevancy for the modern world.