

Essay Questions

ENGLISH QUESTIONS

1. Would Shakespeare approve or disapprove of this play and what it has done to his material?
2. Does this play teach us about Shakespeare?
3. Which of Shakespeare's plays did you learn something new about? Were there some you hadn't heard of?
4. Were there any moments of Shakespeare's language that stood out to you?
5. In the notes to the play, the playwrights suggest that 'topical references' should be updated to 'keep the show fresh and timely. Discuss the choices made in this production. ? If you were to update the script what are some current topics you could use?
6. How is humour used in this play? Describe various moments and how the humour worked?
7. How would you "reduce" the body of work of another famous author? Think of famous novelists, poets, journalists, songwriters. Could you condense the work of your favourite poet or songwriter into a single poem or song? Could you abridge a prolific novelist's life work into a single short story?
8. Many of Shakespeare's plays have been adapted, forming the basis for other plays, films, novels, etc. Find a contemporary adaptation of a Shakespeare play (e.g., Baz Luhrmann's film *Romeo and Juliet*). What is successful about it? What has the adaptation retained or dropped from Shakespeare's original?
9. If Shakespeare were alive today, what art form would he be working in? Can you think of anyone in today's world who might be viewed centuries from now as the Shakespeare of the 21st century?
10. Choose a famous Shakespeare line, either in or out of the play, and rework it in at least three different ways. How much can you change it while still retaining the same basic meaning? Try including popular slang.
11. Identify and discuss a few of the comedic devices (cross-dressing, word play, popular references) that exist in both the play and in Shakespeare's work. Think of other popular forms of comedy (a specific comedian or sitcom) and evaluate the similarities and differences in their work.
12. What moments did you enjoy in the play?
13. Who was your favourite character and why?

Essay Questions

DRAMA QUESTIONS

1. Lighting plays an important role in any production. Explain the various uses of lighting and the overall effect that each one achieved.
2. Read the section on set design and discuss the choices that were made. What did and didn't work and what would you have done differently?
3. Explain the relevance of the wagon in this production and how it was used throughout the show.
4. What are the different ways that music and sound is used in the play? What effect did this create?
5. Explain how audience participation was used in the play. How does this contribute to the overall experience for an audience? Did this participation help to increase or decrease audience's enjoyment of the performance?
6. Compare and contrast the three characters in the play and their different functions as storytellers.
7. This play was originally developed through improvisation. Discuss how this approach has affected the style and content.
8. Why do you think the playwrights specify in the notes to the play that actors performing the three roles should substitute the names depicted in the text for their own names?
9. Try to pick out the real plot twists and conventions of Shakespearean comedy from the "reduced" version. Identify which play is being spoofed in which lines of the "generic" comedy presented during the play.

DESIGN

The design for *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* utilises a wagon which houses all the props and costumes for the show and provides a performance space within the main stage space. Redesign the set and demonstrate how you would incorporate the vast array of props and costume required in the show whilst creating a multifaceted performance space.

PERFORMANCE

In small groups choose a scene from one of Shakespeare's plays and using improvisation, create a contemporary version of the scene condensed into 60 seconds!