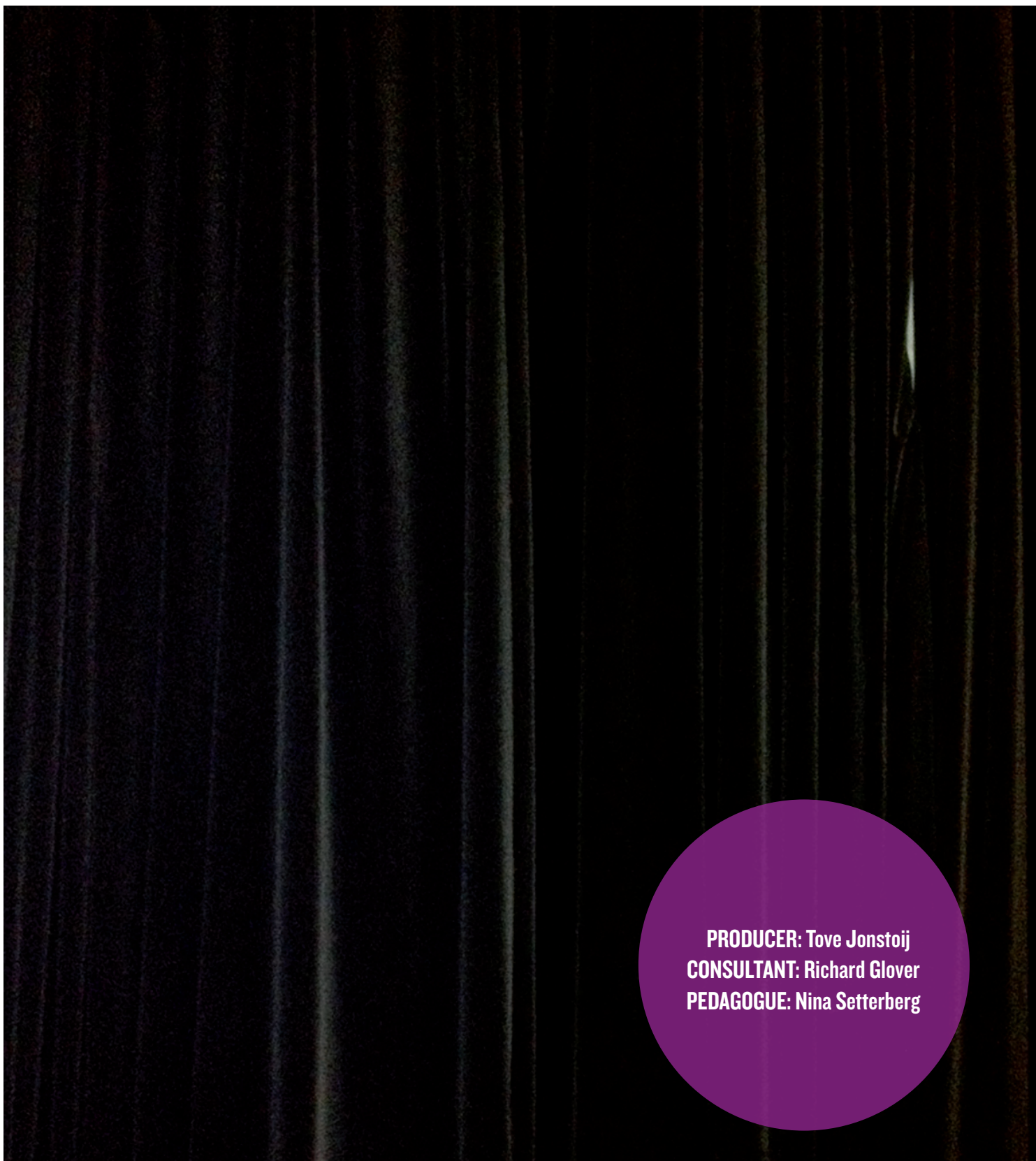




# SHAKESPEARE CLOSE-UPS

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**PRODUCER:** Tove Jonstoj  
**CONSULTANT:** Richard Glover  
**PEDAGOGUE:** Nina Setterberg

# Shakespeare close-ups

## About the programmes

Who is Hamlet? Why does he ask "To be or not to be"?  
Why does Ophelia go mad?  
Who were Romeo and Juliet and why is their love story considered to be the saddest in history?

Meet five young British actors in short drama features presenting and performing a short excerpt from some of Shakespeare's most famous plays. We all become acquainted with Miranda, Ophelia, Hamlet, Jaques and Juliet, some of Shakespeare's most famous characters.

Although the scenes were written more than 400 years ago, they are just as relevant today. They tell of emotions and situations we all can recognize. Young people are the protagonists in these scenes and they express deep emotions; love, loss of love, the fear of living and the fear of dying.

Each episode includes the young actor introducing the chosen scene, telling us of her or his personal relationship to theatre and to the character they are about to portray. Then, she or he also performs the scene.

The main characters in the five programmes are all young and we believe the themes addressed in the scenes are found in young people's experiences. We hope by choosing these main characters and scenes to open the doors for a young audience to a world of classic plays and poetry, and to inspire them to feel that they are a part of this world.

## Aim

While studying, most pupils will eventually meet the dramatic works and poems of Shakespeare. Many teachers may have their pupils enact scenes from plays, watch adaptations for the screen and work with text analysis of shorter excerpts from the dramas. This production aims to develop a deeper understanding of a selection of Shakespearian texts, as well as a sense of their timeless emotions and expressed there.

We recommend that, while working with this series, you use different interpretations of the texts. It might also be a good idea to use one or several Swedish translations of the texts in order to work with the language more fully.

*The series aims at:*

- Providing inspiration and support for reading classical texts
- Showing some ways of how to work with texts in workshops
- Showing that older texts can relate universal themes such as betrayal, love, courage
- Giving an experience of drama

Length: 5 x 8:30

1. What's in a name?
2. To be or not to be
3. How should I your true love know?
4. I am your wife, if you will marry me
5. All the world's a stage



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- Providing a possibility of identification
- Increasing the pupils' ability to analyse text, both spoken and written
- Providing a cultural knowledge
- Helping to fulfill the goals for English year 9 and upper secondary school

## Discussion arising from the close-ups

Before watching the programmes you might want to talk about Shakespeare as a playwright. Here are some suggestions:

- Shakespeare's language. We believe for instance that it is important to stress the fact that one need not understand every single word of the scenes in order to understand the meaning of them.
- What makes these themes universal?
- What is theatre like as an art form? In what sense is it different from television and film?
- Relationships in these extracts from Shakespeare's scenes.
- The classes in society reflected in the scenes.
- Gender in Shakespeare's scenes. How are men and women depicted? What do we see of the roles of men and women?
- Emotions expressed in the scenes
- The human experience expressed in the scenes
- The rhythm of the speech and the language itself in the scenes.
- Shakespeare's language and the use of silence
- What did you see? How is it different from theatre? How is it different from film?

## Links

Education resources from the Royal Shakespeare Company:

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources/bank/>

Svenska Shakespearesällskapet: <http://www.shakespearesallskapet.se/sallskapet.htm>

Shakespeare's birthday trust: <http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/about-shakespeare.html>

About Shakespeare's language: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources/shakespeares-language.aspx>

Plays from the Globe: [http://www.digitaltheatre.com/partners/details/shakespeares-globe?utm\\_source=ShakespearesGlobe&utm\\_medium=hp\\_customBlock&utm\\_campaign=GlobeOnScreen\\_DigitalTheatre](http://www.digitaltheatre.com/partners/details/shakespeares-globe?utm_source=ShakespearesGlobe&utm_medium=hp_customBlock&utm_campaign=GlobeOnScreen_DigitalTheatre)



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## Programme 1

# What's in a name?

### Act 2, scene 2

#### Romeo and Juliet

#### Naomi Ackie as Juliet

### About the play

*Romeo and Juliet* is set in the Italian town of Verona where two powerful noble families, the Montagues and the Capulets have had a long-standing feud. The servants and supporters of these two families are forever fighting each other in the streets and the townspeople suffer from the violence and killing of these gang wars. When Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet fall in love at a feast at the Capulet's house and then secretly marry their future is doomed. They become victims of the false pride and blind stupidity of their warring parents.

### About Juliet

Juliet is only thirteen when the play opens. Her mother and father are distant and show her no parental love. Their main concern is to marry their daughter off to a suitable nobleman as soon as possible. She is full of sparkling energy and though innocent in many ways and though Romeo is her first love she knows a lot about life from her devoted worldly nurse. It is Nurse who has brought her up and cared for her like a daughter. We see many of Juliet's mature qualities in the *close-up*; her courage, her outspoken honesty about her feelings, and her clear understanding of the reality of the situation she is in.

### About the scene

Juliet is at the window of her room. She has just found out the identity of the young man that she has passionately fallen in love with a little earlier. Why, she asks despairingly, does he have to be called Romeo and thus be identified as a Montague. Unknown to her Romeo has left the feast which he had attended in disguise and is now risking his life to see her. He has climbed up to Julia's window and has been listening to her unseen. He speaks out interrupting her but he will not say who he is because his name is hateful to her. She recognises him though before she has even 'drunk a hundred words' of his voice. And she is very afraid. She has found the love of her life and he is with her, but if he is discovered by any of her family they will kill him.

### To work with

- When you tell your parents that you have found the love of your life, you want them to be happy, but the love between Juliet and Romeo is not welcomed, because their families are enemies. Juliet is being torn between her family and tradition on one hand, and her love on the other. Could this happen today? Discuss in class.
- Instead of family name, could you say religion or colour of the skin or the sex of the person you love? Discuss what you think in class.
- In many film adaptations, this famous scene is told from the perspective of Romeo, listening in the dark. According to you, who is the main character in the scene?
- Can you think of different ways of changing the perspective in performing this scene in front of a camera?



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- Study paintings of the scene, which perspective has the artist chosen? How is the scene depicted? What can you tell of the characters from the painting? Try it yourself: paint the famous balcony scene.
- What about Juliet's relationship with the nurse, what was upbringing like in the old days? Who had the responsibility of raising children? Compare different classes of society in older times. Compare with nowadays. Compare Sweden today with other countries. Are there differences?
- Imagine you are one of the people around Romeo and Juliet. Write about their love and what happened with them from your point of view. Example of persons; their parents, Romeo's friends, the nurse, the priest, someone working for Romeo's father, a townsman.
- We know that the balcony scene has been depicted by artists and actors, but what about musicians? Can you find any songs about Romeo and Juliet?

## Links

Rehearsal - Claire Danes and Leonardo di Caprio : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7t-3MIT7J0&feature=related>

Filmatisering av Franco Zeffirelli 1968: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsGhZiDRYSg>

[http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/page\\_84.html](http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/page_84.html)

TV/Movies:

"Romeo + Juliet" (1996): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0117509/>

"Romeo + Juliet" (1968): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0063518/>

"Gnomeo & Juliet" (2011): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0377981/>

"West Side Story" (1961): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0055614/>

"Shakespeare in love" (1998): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0138097/>

### Did you know?

Shakespeare often based his plays on already known stories.

The story of Romeo and Juliet was probably based on Arthur Brooke's narrative poem "the Tragicall historye of Romeus and Juliet" from 1562, which Brooke had translated and paraphrased from an Italian novel by Matteo Bandello.

The tragedy of Romeo and Juliet is one of many traditional stories about couples who have died for their love. Other famous couples are;

Pyramus and Thisbe

Tristan and Isolde

Orpheus and Eurydice

Abelard and Héloïse



## Programme 2

# Hamlet

**To be or not to be**  
**Act 3, scene 1**  
**Hamlet**

### About Hamlet

Hamlet was prince of Denmark, heir to the throne of his father King Hamlet. He adored his mother and idolized his father certain of the deep love they had for each other. He was himself in love with Ophelia, a beautiful, lively, innocent young girl at the court, daughter of the King's chief minister Polonius. Hamlet was gifted and popular, a loyal friend, lover of intellectual debate, a fine swordsman - in short, he was a young man blessed in every way with a brilliant successful life ahead of him.

### About the play

When the play opens however all is changed. Hamlet is grieving at his father's sudden death. But that is not the worst, within a short time after the funeral Hamlet's mother Queen Gertrude has married the late king's brother Claudius. Hamlet detests Claudius - a brutal, powerful man, a hard drinker and a lover of the pleasures of the flesh. He is disgusted by the marriage and unable to comprehend his mother's betrayal. But worse still is to come. One night Hamlet meets the ghost of his father who tells him that he was in fact poisoned by Claudius as he slept. He then makes Hamlet swear that he will avenge his murder and kill Claudius. There is yet one more terrible blow. Ophelia, following her father's instructions has handed back Hamlet's love tokens and rejected him. His faith in women in particular and humanity in general is now totally destroyed. Hamlet's world has been shattered, what had been a paradise is now a hell.

### About the scene

Mentally Hamlet has been swinging between moods of manic fury and deep despair and physically he is virtually a prisoner at the court of Denmark where Claudius watches his every move. He is unable to obey his father's command to avenge him and he is in despair. We can see this in the calm somber mood of this monologue. He is reflecting on what his choices are in his present situation. In the first lines he is asking himself which is more honorable; to take no action and patiently bear the hardships in his life, or to take action and fight against his enemy whatever the risk. He comes to no conclusion however as he realizes that the only question that really matters to him now is not whether to act or not but whether he should take his own life or not. He longs for the peace that the sleep of death will bring him. But thinking of sleep leads him to think of dreaming and the possibility that he may suffer even more terrible nightmares in that sleep of death than in life. This, he says is the reason why we put up with all the injustices and hardships of life and not commit suicide - fear of the unknown. He does not consider here any religious or moral objections. At the end of his reflection he draws the conclusion that thinking about situations in general, not just about suicide, is what prevents us from acting. It paralyzes us. And this is true of Hamlet in the play. Throughout he moves between outbursts of passion and, as here, philosophizing about life and death. His emotions come flooding back though as he sees Ophelia praying and he remembers all the injustices and crimes that have been done and he entreats her to remember him in her prayers.

### To work with



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- What does the speech mean to you?
- Which themes found in this scene are the most interesting to you?
- Try to read the soliloquy in different ways: expressive, calm, with big changes in the expression etc. Listen to your voice, listen to the sounds of the words, use the pauses, and vary the speed. Try moving when doing the dialogue.
- Watch different performances and compare them. How do the actors treat the language, the pauses, the music of the words and the rhythm of the speech?

## Links

Royal Shakespeare company about Hamlet: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/hamlet/sources.aspx>  
Laurence Olivier playing Hamlet (1948): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ks-NbCHUns>  
David Tennant playing Hamlet (2009): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzuEKkPVeBQ&feature=related>  
Ethan Hawke playing Hamlet (2000): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YHMYkUrV7A>  
Kenneth Branagh playing Hamlet (1996):  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7740IGif65Y&NR=1&feature=endscreen>  
Jude Law playing Hamlet <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICbBJYgxnwA&feature=related>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KE3OB1rpbVc&NR=1&feature=endscreen>  
Peter Brook about Hamlet: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgjX9qw9uI>  
Samuel West about Hamlet: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-11370834>

Sparknotes: <http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/hamlet/quotes.html#explanation5>

## TV/Movies

"Hamlet" (1996): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116477/>  
"Hamlet" (1990): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099726/>  
"Hamlet" (1948): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0040416/>

### Did you know?

The earliest literary source of *Hamlet* is in the writings of Saxo Grammaticus around the year 1200. His stories are a mixture of history, folk traditions and legend. The origin of the Hamlet story was an old Norse folk tale. The hero who had to avenge his father's death was named Amleth and the story has important elements of Shakespeare's play in it.

But Shakespeare was not the first to turn Hamlet's tragedy a drama. There was actually a popular version of the play called *Hamlet* which was being played as late as 1594 only a few years before Shakespeare's drama was played at the Globe Theatre. No copy exists of the original play.

We can see from this that there is an important difference between our own age and Shakespeare's. The audience did not go to the theatre to see a new story on the stage but to see what the playwright would do with a well-known story. It was not in his plots that Shakespeare was original but the depth with which he explored human nature, relationships, society and power when he took over those stories and made them his own.



## Programme 3

# How should I your true love know?

Act 4, scene 5

Hamlet

Amy Loughton as Ophelia

### About the play

See programme 2, "To be or not to be".

### About Ophelia

Ophelia, the daughter of King Claudius' most important councillor, is an innocent young lady deeply in love with prince Hamlet and we know from a love letter that Hamlet had sent her that he was as passionately in love as she was. But Ophelia is a prisoner of her situation and cannot be allowed to decide about her own future. Brought up in a patriarchal society, she has been dominated by her powerful father Polonius and her older brother Laertes. To protect her from being seduced and disgraced by losing her virginity before marriage, they both warn Ophelia to keep her distance from Hamlet because, being the crown prince, he will not be able to choose whom he marries - however much he swears that he loves her. Finally, Polonius orders her to return all the gifts and letters Hamlet has ever given her, and to break off all communication with him. Ophelia is desperately sad but helpless and can only obey her father. Immediately following his 'To be or not to be...' soliloquy she dutifully gives back Hamlet's love tokens and rejects him. Hamlet's reaction to this rejection is extremely violent and Ophelia is deeply wounded by the furious verbal abuse that Hamlet directs at her. He cannot know that she is meekly following her father's commands and so sees her behaviour as simply as another example of women's unfaithfulness in love, no different from his mother's adultery with Claudius and her subsequent marriage to him so soon after King Hamlet's death. Apart from one other scene, where Hamlet humiliates Ophelia publicly before the whole court, we do not see Ophelia and Hamlet together again. On top of the loss of her love Ophelia's suffering is pushed to an intolerable level when her father is murdered by Hamlet. Polonius had been hiding behind a screen to spy on Hamlet who, hearing someone cry out and thinking it was Claudius, thrust his sword through the screen killing the old man.

### About the scene

In this pain-filled scene Ophelia has gone mad. Fragile and vulnerable, grief stricken and isolated her mind has broken. She has had no one to turn to. Her beloved Hamlet has cruelly humiliated her then killed her father on whom she was totally dependent. She is totally distracted and when she speaks and sings there are associations and references to her own tragic experiences. In this 'Close-up', for example, she comes before the queen and sings two songs. She begins with, 'How should I your true love know,' the second verse of a well known ballad about a lady who has been deserted by her lover just as she felt she was abandoned by her Hamlet. The next verse is a funeral elegy and shows her mind turning to the death of her father who 'to the grave did not go with /with true love showers' as he was buried hurriedly to avoid scandal. Returning again in her mind to Hamlet she next she sings a Valentine song that tells the familiar story of a lover who promises marriage to a lady in order to get her into bed and, having taken her honour, leaves her. This is what her brother and her father were afraid would happen to Ophelia, though in fact she prevented it happening, as we have seen, by ending their relationship. And what is particularly pitiful is hearing the bawdy words of the song coming from the lips of such an innocent victim as she mourns her lost love.





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## The songs

Ophelia sings two different songs: *How should I your true love know?* and *Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day*.

*How should I your true love know,...*

This is one version of a very popular song called the 'ballad of the Walsingham pilgrim'. It is in the form of a duologue with alternating question and answer. In the ballad the pilgrim is met by a traveller who is looking for his true love. The song goes on to reveal that his true love has in fact been false and the traveller has lost her. Ophelia is haunted here by her loss of Hamlet, her own 'true love'. Thus Ophelia makes the seeker a woman and not a man.

Ophelia *then* switches from the ballad to a funeral elegy

*White his shroud as the mountain snow...*

Where she can be heard alluding to the finality of the loss of her love and also to the other tragedy that haunts her broken mind, the murder of her father.

Ophelia's *Valentine Song* is not found anywhere else in this form but it is a common theme in many songs of the time. Like her first song it is one of disappointed love. And though she has not been seduced and abandoned by Hamlet, she feels in her innocence and isolation that he has cruelly rejected her. Thus the song is emotionally appropriate to her situation.

## Historical and cultural context

*They say the owl was a baker's daughter.*

This line refers to folktale which tells how when a beggar asked for bread from a baker's daughter she decided to save money by not giving only a little. The beggar was Christ and to punish her he turned her into an owl. Another version amongst gypsies tells that the baker's daughter refused him a glass of water. That is why in the language of the Gypsies an owl is called a baker's daughter. The relevance to Ophelia is probably that the owl sings only in the winter and is associated with the death of love in contrast to the songs of the cuckoo and nightingale heard in the mating season. Another belief was that the owl's song was a sign of disaster and this too would apply to Ophelia's fate.

## To work with and to discuss

- What is happening to Ophelia in this scene? Why does she go mad?
- What signs of madness do you find here?
- Could this happen today?
- Are young girls still being judged by society if they don't "protect their reputation"?
- According to you, do boys too have to "protect their reputation"?
- The picture of Ophelia drowning is an icon in itself and has its own tradition in painting, photography and film. Can you think of examples?
- Imagine you are Ophelia. With your own words, write a letter to Hamlet explaining how you feel.
- Imagine you are in a theatre company, about to put on "Hamlet". Choose one of the following:
  - Draw or build a small model of the set design.
  - Design the costumes for the characters in the play.
  - Compose some music for the play.
  - Rehearse and perform one of the scenes from "Hamlet" in front of your class.



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## Links

Helena Bonham Carter playing Ophelia: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfcsP-eKJF8>

Kate Winslet playing Ophelia: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PG26B2dMXA>  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116477/>

Ophelia in pictures and music:

Painting (1851) by John Everett Millais: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:John\\_Everett\\_Millais\\_-\\_Ophelia\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:John_Everett_Millais_-_Ophelia_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

Nick Cave and Kyle Minoque: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_obh4w6tD8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_obh4w6tD8)

Sparknotes [http://nfs.sparknotes.com/hamlet/page\\_238.html](http://nfs.sparknotes.com/hamlet/page_238.html)

TV/Movies

"Hamlet" (1996): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116477/>

"Hamlet" (1990): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099726/>

"Hamlet" (1948): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0040416/>

"Desperate Romantics" – BBC series about the Pre-Raphaelites and John Everett Millais painting Ophelia:  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1346018/>

### Did you know?

In 1851, the British artist John Everett Millais wanted to paint his own picture of Ophelia. As a model, he chose the young woman Elizabeth Siddal. Siddal lay fully dressed in a bathtub filled with water in Millais' atelier. To heat the water, Millais used oil lamps. As the painting process carried on, Millais was so drawn into his work that he forgot to keep the oil lamps burning. Siddal, being a good model, lay absolutely still in the cold water, caught a severe cold or a pneumonia and almost died from the event.



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## Programme 4

# I am your wife if you will marry me

Act 3, scene 1

The Tempest

Kristina Blackwell as Miranda

### About the play

The action of *The Tempest* takes place on an enchanted island. There are two human inhabitants, Prospero and his 15 year old daughter Miranda. Prospero had been the ruler of Milan but twelve years before the drama opens he was forced off his throne by his brother Antonio with the help of the Alonso the king of Naples. They intended to kill Prospero and Miranda by putting them out to sea in a small boat. By chance however they came to an island where they found everything they needed to be able to live. Prospero was a magician with special powers that could control nature. In the opening of the play Antonio, Alonso and, Alonso's son Ferdinand are on board a ship. Prospero uses his magic to create a Tempest that wrecks them on the shores of his island. When they come ashore Ferdinand becomes separated from the others and comes face to face with Prospero and Miranda.

### About Miranda

To understand Miranda in the *close-up* we need to see the world through her eyes. She has been raised and educated by her father. The only other creature she has seen is a half monster, a native of the island called Caliban, son of a god and a witch who Prospero keeps as a slave. So when Miranda sees the charming young prince Ferdinand she is enchanted by his beauty, and because she is innocent and unspoilt with no experience of human nature and society outside her little world, she acts unthinkingly, without shame or fear, childlike.

### About the scene

Prospero has brought Miranda and Ferdinand together through his magic in the hope they will fall in love and marry. He then planned to forgive his enemies, Antonio and Alonso, and through the marriage of the young prince and princess join the two ruling families of Milan and Naples in peace. However, Prospero first needs to make sure Ferdinand truly loves his daughter and can be trusted to treat her honourably. To test him he pretends that he believes Ferdinand is a spy come to harm them and punishes him by making him work endlessly carrying heavy logs backwards and forwards. He then hides and watches as the two lovers meet. Miranda has been warned by her father that she must not lose her virginity before she is married.

At the opening of the *close-up* we see Miranda's spontaneous joy and adoration of Ferdinand and wishes to give herself to him in every way, body and soul. After Ferdinand has sworn his own undying love for her Miranda's passion and desire grows. She is completely natural and totally open about her feelings. And it is she who offers to be his wife and if he will not marry then she will be his servant for all time whether he wants it or not. Ferdinand kneels accepting her proposal and they seal a contract of marriage by joining hands.



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## Historical and cultural context

*"The very instant that I saw you, did  
My heart fly to your service, there resides  
To make me slave to it,"*

It was a belief at the time that when you fell in love your own heart took residence in the one you loved and actually lived there.

*"Here's my hand"*

This was a time where it was enough for two people to make a legal marriage, to take each other's hands. In the Elizabethan times this was a big issue, the church wanted to make it only legal to marry in a church - taking each other's hands would at the time of the play mean that they are married.

## To work with

- Look for passages where Miranda shows her feelings. If you were to do the dialogue, how would you read the lines?
- Read the dialogue in different ways. Shyly, straightforward, happily, cautious. Try moving when doing the dialogue. Try a version where one of the characters stand still and the other is allowed to move.
- Discuss: What does "innocence" mean to you? What does "brave" mean to you? Miranda is not afraid to show her feelings, she wants Ferdinand. Do you think she is brave to say: *I am your wife if you want me* and to ask: *Do you love me?* Does society look differently on a woman who does what she wants from a man who does what he wants?
- What do you think it is like growing up isolated with no other children or women around you?
- Imagine you are Miranda. Write a diary about your life on the island.
- What do you think Miranda's island looks like? Draw or paint it.
- Find out more about old shipwrecks. Where were the ships going, why were they wrecked? Who was on board? Did anyone survive?

## Links

Royal Shakespeare company about the tempest: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/tempest/dating-the-play.aspx>

Peter Greenaway Prospero's books: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pdoUjdaIVM&feature=related>

Resan till Melonia: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zSVQ21X6Vw>

Sparknotes: <http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/tempest>

TV/Film

"Resan till Melonia" (1989): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098189/>

"the Tempest" (2010): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1274300/>

"the Tempest" (1998): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0178928/>

"Tempest" (1982): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0084776/>



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### **Did you know?**

One of the sources of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was a dramatic eyewitness report. Contemporary English writer William Strachey travelled in June 1609 with a fleet of nine ships that sailed from England to the colony of Virginia.

One of the ships, *The Sea Venture*, was separated from the others by a hurricane and wrecked off the coast of Bermuda. It was assumed that all on board had been lost. However, miraculously, as the ship was being driven to the shore by the storm it lodged between two rocks and the crew were able to go ashore with their stores.

The island was hospitable with all that they needed by way of food and water and this, together with the temperate climate and the exotic flora and fauna, made them feel as if they were on an enchanted island. They stayed for nine months and by then were able to repair and re-float their ship and complete their trip to Virginia. Many accounts of this extraordinary event circulated in England after their safe return and it is generally agreed that Shakespeare drew on the story when he opened his play with a violent storm and a shipwreck where no life was lost and the ship did not sink.



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## Programme 5

# All the world's a stage

### Act 2 scene 7

#### As You Like It

#### Miles Mitchell as Jaques

### About the monologue and Jaques

These well-known lines, often referred to as the **seven ages of man** are from Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It*. The young people who play the main characters experience life and love intensely, both the joys and the pains. The man who delivers this monologue however is not one of them.

His name is Jaques and he stands apart from the others. He likes to observe and judge from a distance in a sad even cynical manner based on what he has learned from his travels in the world. He is of a melancholic temperament and this can be seen in his picture of the last age of man as helpless as when he entered the world.

The Seven ages of man is one of Shakespeare's most frequently quoted passages. and especially the first words are very famous: "All the world's a stage". In the speech Jaques compares the world to a stage and life to a play, and catalogues seven stages of a man's life:

- Infancy: a dribbling baby
- Childhood: a child going to school.
- The lover: sighing and writing love songs
- The soldier: He is easily aroused. He is always trying to make a reputation for himself, even at the cost of his own life.
- The justice: a wise and experienced man with a round belly
- Old age: A greedy old man with glasses, with a childish, whistling voice
- The seventh and last scene: almost a child again, he loses everything: his teeth, his eyes, his taste.

### Historical and cultural context

The pantaloon is a character from the old Italian popular theatre tradition, Commedia dell'arte. Pantalone is old and mean, a bit like Mr Burns in *The Simpsons*.

### To work with

- What do you think about the speech? Do you agree?
- Find out what the monologue would look like in sign language, and take some inspiration from that.
- Try to read it in different ways: expressive, calm, with big changes in the expression. Listen to your voice, listen to the sounds of the words, use the pauses, and vary the speed.
- Watch different performances and compare them. How do the actors treat the language, the pauses, the music of the words and the rhythm of the speech?
- How would you describe life if you had to compare it with something?  
Write it down in a poetic manner.





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## Links

Morgan Freeman reads the monologue at the Academy Awards 1990

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziXqEX6AwKA>

Nicholas Pennell as Jaques - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-bhFovMJBk&feature=related>

Peter Barkworth as Jaques [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9e\\_RFtz3CM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9e_RFtz3CM)

Still pictures: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eYoorZaP-c&feature=related>

Enacted in clown technique by Beth Kennedy

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWVCBj5v9cE&NR=1&feature=endscreen>

TV/Movies

“As you like it” (2006): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0450972/>

“As you like it” (1992): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0103723/>

“As you like it” (1936): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0027311/>

### Did you know?

The comparison of the world to stage can be found as early as the twelfth century and is certainly much older than that. The motto of Shakespeare’s Globe theatre was said to be *Totus mundus agit histrionem* (all the world is acting out a play). Nor is the division of a man’s life Shakespeare’s idea. It can be found as far back as Aristotle where there were usually three or four stages described.

As so often then we can see Shakespeare in this speech drawing on tradition for his own purposes in the play and it is important not to think of the lines as in any way expressing his own views.