

# Two performances of Shakespeare's comedy 'Twelfth Night' Jan. 26 on Motlow campus

Two performances of William Shakespeare's "A Twelfth Night" will be presented by the National Players at the Motlow College Moore County campus on Jan. 26.

Performances will begin at 12:30 and 7:30 p.m. in Powers

Auditorium in Eoff Hall. There is no admission charge, but reservations are needed for planning purposes. To make reservations call the college at 931-393-1546.

"Twelfth Night" is set in a country called Illyria and is a

masquerade, a play whose title recalls one of those festivals which were dear to Elizabethans. This festival was the day (the 12th day after Christmas) when in every family a king for a day was chosen by lot. Sometimes it fell to a child to be ruler over the whole family. Or, a servant might be chosen to be crowned by his master. It was a world turned upside down, a topsy-turvy world created by chance, and the more outlandish the surprise, the merrier the festival.

The play opens when Viola, a highborn young woman, is separated by shipwreck from her twin brother, Sebastian, and each thinks the other is dead. Cast ashore on the coast of Illyria, Viola disguises herself as a boy and enters the service of Duke Orsino. The duke sends her to press his love-suit with the Countess Olivia, who is in mourning and will not receive him. Viola, calling herself Cesario, and now in love with Orsino, succeeds in her mission only in making Olivia fall in love with her under the impression that she is a young man.

Viola soon finds herself involved in the jolly domestic intrigue of the countess' household. Malvolio, the steward, has been so arrogant toward the members of Olivia's household, including her irresponsible uncle, Sir Toby Belch, and his foppish companion, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, that Maria, the audacious gentlewoman of Olivia, plots with the others to get the officious steward out of the way.

Maria places within his reach

a letter supposedly written by Olivia telling him of her love and admiration for him and advising him to assert himself boldly. Malvolio takes the bait with such abandon that Olivia thinks him mad and the happy conspirators have him locked up.

Matters are soon brought to a head when Olivia openly declares her passion to her page. Sir Andrew is encouraged by Sir Toby to win Olivia's favor by challenging her page (Cesario/Viola) to a duel. Meanwhile, Viola's brother Sebastian arrives in Illyria with Antonio, a sea captain. After they separate, Antonio comes upon the dueling scene. Believing "Cesario" is Sebastian, Antonio comes to the rescue but is arrested.

Later, Sir Toby mistakes Sebastian for Cesario and challenges him, but before any blood is shed, Olivia appears and takes the befuddled but delighted Sebastian with her. He falls in love and they are married.

When the duke arrives at Olivia's house, the twins are reunited, identities revealed, Malvolio released, and Viola and the duke pledge to wed.

During its 50-year history, the National Players touring theater group has presented approximately 5,500 performances and workshop on plays by Shakespeare, O'Neill, Moliere, Shaw and others. The group has performed in 35 states and 10 foreign countries.