

# PROSCENIUM

## **The Tempest**

By William Shakespeare

**The Tempest**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June to Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013  
Compass Theatre, Ickenham

# The Tempest,

## William Shakespeare

### Cast:

Alonso, King of Naples.....	Keith Bayross
Sebastian, his brother .....	Charles Anthony
Prospero, the right Duke of Milan .....	Mark Sutherland
Antonio, his brother, the usurping Duke of Milan.....	Alan Glover
Miranda, daughter to Prospero .....	Isobel Gathercole
Ferdinand, son to the King of Naples .....	Adrian Sykes
Ariel, an airy spirit.....	Vincent Eavis
Caliban, a savage and deformed slave .....	Robert Ewen
Gonzalo, an honest old councillor .....	Colin Hickman
Adrian, a lord.....	Arnold Glickman
Stephano, a drunken butler.....	David Pearson
Trinculo, a jester .....	Ben Morris
Master of a ship .....	Paul Davis
Boatswain .....	Alan Bobroff
Iris } .....	Anne Gerrard
Ceres } Spirits in the masque .....	Susi Thornton
Juno } .....	Amie Daly
Mariners and sprites .....	Amie Daly, Archie Brookes

Directed by .....

Crystal Anthony

Music composed and played by .....

Lewis Lev

Set design and construction.....

Mark Brookes

Stage Managers .....

Paul Davis

Mark Brookes

Assisted by.....

Anne Gerrard

Properties .....

Margaret Rudolph

Costumes.....

Judith Simmons

Sound and lighting .....

Paul Robinson

‘These two first plays (in the First Folio), *the Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, are the noblest Efforts of that sublime and amazing Imagination, peculiar to Shakespeare, which soars above the bounds of Nature without forsaking Sense: or, more properly, carries Nature along with him beyond her established Limits.’

Dr Johnson, Prefaces to Shakespeare

## Source

The plot is Shakespeare’s own, derived in general from a body of folk-tales and romantic comedies which were common currency among story-tellers and playwrights. There are references to Montaigne’s essay *Of the cannibals* (Gonzalo’s speech on ‘commonwealth’ in Act 2) and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (Prospero’s renunciation of magic). However, the subject of storm, shipwreck, providential survival in a state of nature, and eventual return to the civilised world, was without doubt suggested to Shakespeare by topical events. In 1609 a British fleet of nine ships sailed with 500 colonists to Virginia - *The Sea Adventure*. The ship carrying the expedition’s leaders, was separated from the rest by a storm, and presumed to have foundered. In fact the crew managed to run the ship ashore on the Bermudas. The island, previously believed to be inhabited by devils and therefore “feared and avoided of all sea-travellers”, proved “the richest, healthfullest and pleasing land as ever man set foot upon.” After nine months the castaways were able to put to sea again, and arrived in Virginia.

In 1610 James Srachey published *A true repertory of the wreck*”: “A dreadful storm and hideous began to blow from out the north-east, which swelling and roaring as if by fits, some hours with more violence than others, at length did beat all light from heaven, which like a hell of darkness turned black upon us. A little round

light, like a faint star, trembled and streamed along with a sparkling blaze half the height upon the mainmast, shooting sometimes from shroud to shroud, and for three or four hours together, half the night it kept with us, running sometimes along the mainyard to the very end and then returning. The Spaniards call it Saint Elmo, but when no man dreamed of such happiness, we discovered and cried land. We found it to be the dangerous and dreaded island of Bermuda. Yet it pleased our merciful God to make even this hideous and hated place both the place of our safety and the means of our deliverance."

## Prospero

As Dr Johnson points out Prospero is a character from Shakespeare's imagination: a philosopher and a magician, a deposed ruler and an avenger, a concerned father and a master of slaves. Almost all the action of *The Tempest* is the contrivance of Prospero, who is at once the inventor and the spectator of the plot. He exercises his magical powers not only over Ariel and Caliban but over the puppet-like characters of the court, so in an almost God-like way he reveals the essence of their characters: the goodness of Gonzalo, the remorse of Alonso, the selfishness and corruption of Antonio and Sebastian, and satisfies himself that Ferdinand is worthy of his daughter. However, Anne Barton, in an essay of 1971, discusses the extent and the limitations of his power:

"Prospero's power is so great that he can raise tempests, re-animate the dead and darken the sun at noon. Invulnerable himself to physical violence, he can paralyze other men. What his art cannot do, however, is the thing which ultimately matters most: change the nature and inclination of the human heart. Prospero cannot make Ferdinand and Miranda fall in love, nor can he guarantee the happiness of their union. When he releases Alonso,

Antonio and Sebastian from their trance, he has no way of forcing them to be good. Despite all the care lavished on him, Caliban cannot be civilised or made grateful. A 'rough magic' only Prospero's art has served to isolate him from humanity and this is why he abjures it at the end, accepting the limitations of mortality."

## **Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

Anne Barton's analysis is also relevant when considering the prevalent 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century critical view that the major theme of all Shakespeare's last plays is the human need for forgiveness and reconciliation. Certainly Prospero forgives his enemies, though only after the intervention of Ariel, and the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda offers the hope of unity and peace for the future. But the play is more complex than that. Stephen Orgel, Professor of English at Stanford University: "The play concludes with imperfect reconciliation and unfinished business, and Miranda's wonder at a 'brave new world/That has such people in it' contains an irony that is remarked even by Prospero in his moment of triumph." He also presents the marriage in a more cynical Jacobean light.

"We will miss much of the force of Miranda's love for Ferdinand if we ignore the fact that it is engineered by Prospero to resolve the problems of his dukedom. In order to secure the line of succession, disarm the ancient hostility between Milan and Naples, and most important deny his hated brother Antonio any future claim on the throne, he marries his only daughter to the son of his enemy. Shakespeare's contemporaries could have recognized good Renaissance statecraft here."

Kenneth Clark is sceptical of any interpretation that sees Prospero as a relaxed, benign Shakespeare bidding a fond farewell to his art as he breaks his staff and drowns his book: "There used to be a comfortable belief that great artists grew old in a kind of haze of

benevolence, but a theory that does not apply to Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Beethoven and Rembrandt is not really of much value; and the history of art shows that the minds that have not merely given up the struggle and in a kind of sublime despair at the spectacle of human destiny.”

## **Ariel and Caliban**

Coleridge in 1818: “The appearance of the characters of super- or ultra-natural appearance are finely contrasted. Ariel has in everything the airy tint which gives the name ... Caliban, on the other hand, is all earth all condensed and gross in feeling and images, he has the dawning of understanding without reason or the moral sense.” Both characters want ‘freedom’, but for Ariel this is a genuine release while for Caliban it is merely exchanging one master for another.

Frank Kermode, 1957, also sees Caliban as representing “nature without the benefit of nurture, nature divorced from grace or the senses without the mind, ignorant of gentleness and humanity he is savage and capable of all ill. His function is to illuminate by contrast the world of art, nurture, civility; the world which none the less nourishes the malice of Antonio and the guilt of Alonso.”

And although he claims his only profit from learning Prospero’s language is the knowledge of how to curse, Shakespeare gives him one of the great poetic set pieces of the play: “Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises/ Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.”

## The Sea and the Mirror

W.H. Auden wrote this poem in the middle years of the Second World War: it is a wise and fascinating reflection on *The Tempest* and this section is Prospero's farewell to Ariel at the end of the play.

Stay with me, Ariel, while I pack, and with your first free act  
Delight my leaving, share my resigning thoughts  
As you have served my revelling wishes: then, brave spirit,  
Ages to you of song and daring, and to me  
Briefly Milan, then earth. In all things have turned out better  
Than I once expected or ever deserved;  
I am glad that I did not recover my dukedom till  
I do not want it; I am glad that Miranda  
No longer pays me any attention; I am glad I have freed you,  
So at last I can really believe I shall die. ....  
The extravagant children, who lately swaggered  
Out of the sea like gods, have, I think, been soundly hunted  
By their own devils into their human selves:  
To all, then, but me, their pardons. Alonso's heaviness  
Is lost; and weak Sebastian will be patient  
In future with his slothful conscience – after all, it pays;  
Stephano is contracted to his belly, a minor  
But a prosperous kingdom; stale Trinculo receives,  
Gratis, a whole fresh repertoire of stories, and  
Our younger generation its own independent joy.....  
I see you starting to fidget. I forgot. To you  
That doesn't matter. My dear, here comes Gonzalo  
With a solemn face to fetch me. O Ariel, Ariel,  
How I shall miss you. Enjoy your element. Goodbye.

# Margaret Rudolph: In Memoriam

Margaret was a stalwart member of Proscenium for many years; a reliable box office manager in the build-up to most of our productions and regularly visible to all our audiences at the Proscenium Box Office table in the theatre foyer. There were many occasions when she would leave her Box Office table before curtain up and disappear backstage to fulfil a duty as properties manager or ASM. Margaret was in charge of properties for this production of *The Tempest*, but she tragically suffered a fatal stroke while on holiday three weeks ago. She will be sorely missed by her family and her many friends and Proscenium dedicates this production to her memory.

*Requiescat in Pace.*

## About Proscenium

Proscenium was founded in 1924. Since then, the aim of this experienced group has been to present classic and contemporary plays to as wide an audience as possible. Since 1990, performances have taken place at the Harrow Arts Centre and, more recently, at the Compass Theatre, Ickenham.

The company meets three times a week, at the Harrow Arts Centre for rehearsals, so that four plays are presented in each season. Social, fund raising activities and play readings take place throughout the year.

Secretary : Clare Wooster

Chair : Dave Pearson

Contact us at [www.proscenium.org.uk](http://www.proscenium.org.uk)