



PROPELLER

Education Pack

Written and compiled by Will Wollen

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THE WINTER'S TALE

by William Shakespeare

PRPELLER

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About Propeller

Propeller is an all-male Shakespeare company which seeks to find a more engaging way of expressing Shakespeare and to more completely explore the relationship between text and performance. Mixing a rigorous approach to the text with a modern physical aesthetic, they have been influenced by mask work, animation and classic and modern film and music from all ages.

Productions are directed by Edward Hall and designed by Michael Pavelka.

Lighting is designed by Ben Ormerod.

Propeller has toured internationally to Australia, China, Spain, Mexico, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Cyprus, Ireland, Tokyo, Gdansk, Germany, Italy, Malta, Hong Kong and the U.S.A.



Edward Hall

As our times have changed, so our responses to Shakespeare's work have changed too and I believe we have become an ensemble in the true sense of the word: We break and reform our relationships using the spirit of the particular play we are working on.

We have grown together, eaten together, argued and loved together. We have toured all over the world from Huddersfield to Bangladesh. We have played in National theatres, ancient amphitheatres, farmyards and globe theatres. We have been applauded, shot at and challenged by different audiences wherever we have gone.

We want to rediscover Shakespeare simply by doing the plays as we believe they should be done: with great clarity, speed and full of as much imagination in the staging as possible. We don't want to make the plays 'accessible', as this implies that they need 'dumbing down' in order to be understood, which they don't. We want to continue to take our work to as many different kinds of audiences as possible and so to grow as artists and people. We are hungry for more opportunity to explore the richness of Shakespeare's plays and if we keep doing this with rigour and invention, then I believe the company, and I hope our audiences too, will continue to grow.

Edward Hall, Artistic Director.

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To Teachers

This pack has been designed to complement your class's visit to see Propeller's 2012 production of *The Winter's Tale*, on national and international tour.

Most of the pack is aimed at A-level and GCSE students of Drama and English Literature in the UK, but some of the sections, and suggestions for classroom activities, may be of use to teachers teaching pupils at Key Stages 2, 3 & 4, while students studying in other countries and those in higher education may find much of interest in these pages.

While there are some images, the pack has been deliberately kept simple from a graphic point of view so that most pages can easily be photocopied for use in the classroom.

Your feedback is most welcome. You can make any comments on the pack on the Propeller website forum. www.propeller.org.uk

Workshops to accompany the production are also available.

I hope you find the pack useful.

Will Wollen
Education Consultant
Propeller

PROPELLER

Cast and Creatives

Directed by EDWARD HALL

Text adaptation by EDWARD HALL & ROGER WARREN

Designed by MICHAEL PAVELKA

Lighting by BEN ORMEROD

Music by PROPELLER

Sound by DAVID GREGORY

Cast

Ben Allen	Mamillius / Time / Perdita
Nicholas Asbury	Polixenes
Tony Bell	Autolycus / Officer / Lord of Sicilia
Dugald Bruce-Lockart	Antigonus
Gunnar Cauthery	Emilia / Mopsa
Karl Davies	Young Shepherd
Richard Dempsey	Hermione / Dorcas
John Dougall	Dion / Old Shephard
Robert Hands	Leontes
Finn Hanlon	Florizel / Mariner
Vince Leigh	Paulina
Chris Myles	Camillo
Gary Shelford	1 st Lady / Hermione's Attendant
Dominic Thorburn	1 st Lord of Sicilia / Cleomenes

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Synopsis

Leontes, the King of Sicilia, asks his dearest friend from childhood, Polixenes, the King of Bohemia, to extend his visit. Polixenes has not been home to his wife and young son for more than nine months but Leontes' wife, Hermione, who is heavily pregnant, finally convinces her husband's friend to stay a bit longer. As they talk apart, Leontes thinks that he observes Hermione's behaviour becoming too intimate with his friend, for as soon as they leave his sight he is imagining them "*leaning cheek to cheek, meeting noses, kissing with inside lip.*" He orders one of his courtiers, Camillo, to stand as cupbearer to Polixenes and poison him as soon as he can. Camillo cannot believe that Hermione is unfaithful and informs Polixenes of the plot. He escapes with Polixenes to Bohemia.

Leontes, discovering that they have fled, now believes that Camillo knew of the imagined affair and was plotting against him with Polixenes. He accuses Hermione of adultery, takes Mamillius, their son, from her and throws her in jail. He sends Cleomines and Dion to Apollo's Oracle at Delphi, for an answer to his charges. While Hermione is in jail her daughter is born, and Paulina, her friend, takes the baby girl to Leontes in the hope that the sight of his infant daughter will soften his heart. By this time Leontes has decided that Polixenes, Hermione and Camillo were all conspiring to murder him. He orders Antigonus, Paulina's husband to throw the baby into the fire, but Antigonus will not. Leontes relents but commands that the baby be abandoned in a desolate place.

Leontes puts Hermione on trial, and the Oracle at Delphi confirms that she is chaste, the child is not a bastard, Camillo is honest and Leontes is a tyrant. The oracle also says that "*The king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found.*" Leontes refuses the truth and immediately the news arrives that Mamillius, pining for his mother, has died. Hermione faints, Leontes realizes his terrible errors, and Paulina enters with the horrible news that Hermione, too, has died.

Antigonus arrives on the sea coast of Bohemia having dreamt that Hermione is dead and has been found guilty. He leaves the baby, named Perdita, to her fate. He is killed by a bear and the baby is found by an Old Shepherd and his son, who decide to raise her as their own.

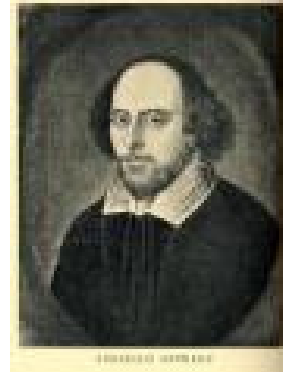
With the help of Time, we skip forward 16 years. Perdita is now a young lady, in love with the young man Doricles. He is actually Florizel, son of Bohemia's King Polixenes. Perdita is the queen of the local sheep-shearing festival and entertains everyone with her winning personality, good looks and natural charm. We meet a whole new cast of characters, including the rogue, vagabond and pickpocket Autolycus. Polixenes and Camillo are looking for Florizel. They finally catch up with him at the festival and observe his love of Perdita. Florizel asks the Old Shepherd to bless his betrothal to Perdita. Polixenes, whose permission has not been asked, removes his disguise and declares that the marriage will not happen and that the Old Shepherd will be executed for allowing a prince to court his daughter. In addition, Perdita will be "*scratched with briars*" and Florizel disinherited if he ever sees her again.

We return to Sicilia, where Leontes is still mourning the death of his family. Paulina gets him to agree never to marry again unless she gives the go ahead. Florizel and Perdita show up pretending to be on a diplomatic mission from Bohemia and both charm Leontes. Leontes vows to help the young couple and they go off, to reunite with Polixenes and Camillo, after all these years. We then hear from three lords that the lovely young shepherdess is actually the long-lost heir of Sicilia, and that Paulina has revealed an amazing statue of the long-dead Hermione. They all go to see this wonder and Paulina reveals the living Hermione. Her reward is to be given Camillo as a husband.

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William Shakespeare

The person we call William Shakespeare wrote some 37 plays, as well as sonnets and full-length poems; but very little is actually known about him. That there was someone called William Shakespeare is certain, and what we know about his life comes from registrar records, court records, wills, marriage certificates and his tombstone. There are also contemporary anecdotes and criticisms made by his rivals which speak of the famous playwright and suggest that he was indeed a playwright, poet and an actor.



The earliest record we have of his life is of his baptism, which took place on Wednesday 26th April 1564. Traditionally it is supposed that he was, as was common practice, baptised three days after his birth, making his birthday the 23rd of April 1564 – St George's Day. There is, however, no proof of this at all.

William's father was a John Shakespeare, a local businessman who was involved in tanning and leatherwork. John also dealt in grain and sometimes was described as a glover by trade. John was also a prominent man in Stratford. By 1560, he was one of the fourteen burgesses who made up the town council. William's mother was Mary Arden who married John Shakespeare in 1557. They had eight children, of whom William was the third. It is assumed that William grew up with them in Stratford, one hundred miles from London.

Very little is known about Shakespeare's education. We know that the King's New Grammar School taught boys basic reading and writing. We assume William attended this school since it existed to educate the sons of Stratford but we have no definite proof. There is also no evidence to suggest that William attended university.

On 28th November 1582 an eighteen-year-old William married the twenty-six-year-old Anne Hathaway. Seven months later, they had their first daughter, Susanna. Anne never left Stratford, living there her entire life.

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Baptism records reveal that twins Hamnet and Judith were born in February 1592. Hamnet, the only son died in 1596, just eleven years old.

At some point, Shakespeare joined the Burbage company in London as an actor, and was their principal writer. He wrote for them at the Theatre in Shoreditch, and by 1594 he was a sharer, or shareholder in the company. It was through being a sharer in the profits of the company that William made his money and in 1597 he was able to purchase a large house in Stratford.

The company moved to the newly-built Globe Theatre in 1599. It was for this theatre that Shakespeare wrote many of his greatest plays, including, in 1611, *The Winter's Tale*.

In 1613, the Globe Theatre caught fire during a performance of *Henry VIII*, one of Shakespeare's last plays, written with John Fletcher, and William retired to Stratford where he died in 1616, on 23rd April.



Propeller's 2005 production of *The Winter's Tale* at The Watermill Theatre

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Cue Script Exercise

When Shakespeare wrote *The Winter's Tale* in 1611, the actors would not have been given the whole script. Instead, they would have been given their part (or 'role', literally a 'roll' on which their part was written). Printing or copying the whole play for each actor would have been far too expensive and time-consuming, and a playwright would not have wanted a disloyal actor to be able to give the whole play to a rival company. As well as their lines, the actors would have been given their cues – just three or four words from the person who spoke just before them. Thus they would have their cues to enter, to speak and to exit. They would not be told how long the gap was between one of their speeches and the next. They simply had to listen for their cue and be ready to speak, trusting, of course that their fellow actors had learned their lines properly – if their cue wasn't given then they wouldn't speak! Rehearsals were short – at busy times they would only have three or four mornings to rehearse a new play – so learning the script accurately and very quickly was crucial to the actor's craft.



- The following pages are cue scripts (neatly word-processed!) for a scene from *The Winter's Tale*. You will need to cast Leontes, Hermione, Paulina, Officer, Servant and photocopy as many Lords' scripts as you need (you'll need at least two).

Once you have tried to run the scene, come back to these notes.

- What happened in your scene when Hermione fainted? How did the other characters react?
- What clues are there in the script that tell you how to speak your lines? How much does listening become important?
- To whom are you speaking on each line? How do you know? Why do you think Shakespeare is helping you?

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Cue Script – Leontes

Break up the seals, and read.

(Cue) ...Praised!

Hast thou read truth?

...here set down.

There is no truth at all i'th' oracle.

The sessions shall proceed. This is mere falsehood.

...the King, the King!

What is the business?

...Queen's speed, is gone.

How, 'gone'?

...Is dead.

**Apollo's angry, and the heavens
themselves**

Do strike at my injustice. How now there?

...death is doing.

Take her hence.

Her heart is but o'ercharged, she will recover.

I have too much believed mine own suspicion.

Beseech you, tenderly apply to her

Some remedies for life. Apollo, pardon

My profaneness 'gainst thine oracle.

Leontes is expecting a different verdict in this scene. How has he changed from the beginning to the end? How are you behaving to let the audience know that you have changed? At which points in the scene does the situation change for you?

Make sure that you are always speaking to someone (even if it is the god Apollo). Sometimes the person you are speaking to might have to change in the middle of a line.

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Cue script – Officer

...(Cue) the seals, and read.

**Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless,
Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his
innocent babe truly begotten, and the King shall live
without an heir if that which is lost be not found.**

...*Hast thou read truth?*

Ay, my lord, even so as it is here set down.

You are holding the verdict from the oracle and it is your duty to deliver it. A great deal depends on what you say. How is the officer feeling as he breaks the seals?

Is the occasion formal or relaxed, and how does that affect the way you give your lines.

After you have spoken the scene continues. What is the officer doing? What does he hear and see, and how does it affect him?

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Cue Script – Hermione

...(Cue) be the great Apollo!

Praised!

...Is dead.

[Faints]

Hermione has been let out of her cell for this occasion. She has now been accused publicly of adultery and high treason. She, of course, is innocent. How does she feel mentally and physically?

What are her biggest fears?

How does she feel when she hears the verdict of the oracle?

Why does she faint?

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Cue Script – Servant

...(Cue) *This is mere falsehood.*

[Enter]

My lord the King, the King!

What is the business?

**O sir, I shall be hated to report it.
The prince your son, with mere conceit and fear
Of the Queen's speed, is gone.**

How, 'gone'?

Is dead.

How does the news the servant has to tell affect his/her entry onto the stage?

Why does the servant say 'the King' twice?

Why doesn't the servant say 'dead' the first time?

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Cue Script – Paulina

...(Cue) *How now there?*

**This news is mortal to the Queen. Look down
And see what death is doing.**

...*remedies for life.*

[Exit]

Paulina spends the first half of this extract saying nothing. What is she doing? How is she feeling? How do those feelings change throughout the scene?

What is her attitude towards Leontes?

What is she doing as she exits?

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Cue Script – Lords

...(Cue) *be not found.*

Now blessèd be the great Apollo!

...*remedies for life.*

[Exit]

You have been called to witness the verdict of the oracle.
Have any of you brought Hermione here from her cell?
For whom do you feel the most sympathy?

What is your reaction to the servant's news?

What must you be doing when you exit?

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The Winter's Tale – Source of the Story

The main source of The Winter's Tale is from Robert Greene's popular romance *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*, published in 1588. Shakespeare changed all the characters' names and created two new ones, the Clown/Young Shepherd and Autolycus. He also swaps Sicilia for Bohemia.

Pandosto, King of Bohemia, becomes **Leontes**, King of Sicilia.

Bellaria, Queen of Bohemia, becomes **Hermione**, Queen of Sicilia.

Egistus, King of Sicilia corresponds to **Polixenes**, King of Bohemia. **Garrinter** corresponds to **Mamillius**.

Fawnia is **Perdita**.

Dorastus becomes **Florizel**, Polixenes' son.

Franion turns into **Camillo**.

Porrus, an old shepherd, corresponds to Shakespeare's **Old Shepherd**

The stories that Shakespeare uses in all 37 odd of his plays are almost entirely drawn from stories that already existed. He and his contemporaries were constantly 'stealing' and retelling stories to produce new works. The economic pressure on companies to churn out new works would have been immense; it wouldn't even have been financially viable to run a play like The Winter's Tale for two weeks at a London playhouse. In order to keep the audiences (who, of course had no television or cinema) coming in, theatres had to promise a stream of new plays to be heard. Over a two-month period a company might rotate a dozen plays, playing the most popular one only ten times. Compare that with many West End theatres in London today who have been showing the same production for years.

The plots of the plays are remarkably similar but in Greene's version Bellaria (Hermione) does actually die after her trial and Pandosto commits suicide at the end of the story. Greene has Bellaria ask that the oracle be consulted but in The Winter's Tale this is Leontes' idea.



Robert Greene

1558 - 1592 one of the most popular English prose writers of the later 16th century and Shakespeare's most successful predecessor in blank-verse romantic comedy. Greene gives us our first printed reference to Shakespeare, and clearly hadn't taken to the new kid on the block. Shakespeare is described as "*an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you.*"

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Doubling decisions

When Shakespeare was writing plays he was always writing with a specific company of about sixteen actors in mind. So, when he wrote a story like *The Winter's Tale*, with more than twenty named characters and directions for further lords, servants, and shepherds, he would have been expecting some of the actors to be playing more than one part.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century there was a fashion for large casts, so it was likely that each actor would play one part, and there would be a number of non-speaking actors, paid to be servants or lords to make up the picture of a scene.

Today, fashion and economic restraints means that it is common to play Shakespeare with fewer actors than characters (Propeller's production has only twelve actors), so actors will often find themselves 'doubling'. Every production can make different choices about which characters are played by the same actor - with interesting results, forcing the audience to draw comparisons between the two characters.

In Propeller's production the following parts are doubled:

Mamillius (Leontes' son)	and	Perdita (Leontes' daughter)
Hermione	and	Dorcas (shepherdess)
Emila	and	Mopsa

◆ Choose one of these pairs and discuss what effect the doubling has on the production. Or consider the effect of the pairings below:

In 1969, Judi Dench famously played both Hermione and Perdita for the RSC.

In Théâtre de Complicité's 1992 production, Leontes and the Clown/Young Shepherd were both played by Simon McBurney, and Katherine Hunter played Paulina, Mamillius and the Old Shepherd!