

PLAY PROPOSAL

“AS YOU LIKE IT”

GENERAL INFORMATION

I. Duke Senior of France has been usurped by his brother Frederick and sent to the Forest of Ardenne to live in exile. The Duke's daughter, Rosalind, remains at court where she falls in love with the young Orlando after he beats Frederick's champion in a wrestling match. Frederick decides Rosalind is a threat to his rule and banishes her despite the protests of his daughter, Celia. Rosalind disguises herself as a man and flees with Celia to the forest to join Duke Senior. Orlando, who discovers his brother Oliver is plotting to murder him to deny him his inheritance, flees to the forest as well. Several love stories unfold as various characters cross paths and the forest becomes a place where anything is possible:

- **Orlando publicly declares his love for Rosalind and pins love poems to her on trees throughout the forest. Upon finding them, Rosalind (still disguised as a man) persuades Orlando to get rid of his lovesickness by attempting to woo her as if she were his love, Rosalind.**
- **Local shepherdess Phoebe rejects her suitor Silvius and falls in love with the disguised Rosalind. The court jester, Touchstone, woos the goatherd Audrey. Oliver, realizes the error of his ways, comes to the forest to reconcile with his brother and falls in love with Celia.**
- **Rosalind reveals her true identity, and the four couples are married by Duke Senior who has been enjoying himself and feasting with his supporters in the forest. News comes that Frederick has had a moral conversion, joined a monastery and returned the duchy to his brother.**

II. Proposal submitted by

- Mark Wagner
 - JPL Employee
 - mark.f.wagner@jpl.nasa.gov
 - 2008 Montecito Drive, Glendale, CA 91208

III. Project description

- *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare
- Comedy
- 21 characters (though the Duke and his brother are typically played by the same actor).
- 4 female, 10 male and 7 unisex roles. Many of the minor roles could be combined, doubled or eliminated. All of the female roles and a strong female lead are required.
- Explores the nature of:
 - .i. Inheritance/fortune/chance/social status.
 - .ii. Gender roles (in Shakespeare's time, a male actor would have portrayed the main character, a woman disguised as a man impersonating a woman).
 - .iii. People's fantasies and whether or not our dreams are worth the prices we have to pay to achieve them.
- Shakespeare presents the audience with an idealized world for our enjoyment that also shows how shallow our desires are. He gives us what we want while questioning whether we really want it.

IV. Director (not required)

- Unidentified

DETAILED INFORMATION

I. Reasons for the proposed show

- Often dismissed as light comedy, “As You Like It” is one of the Bard's greatest social commentaries.
- Low cost of production/public domain.
- The role of Jacques, the melancholy observer, is highly coveted among Shakespearean actors, particularly his, “All the world's a stage; and all the men and women merely players” speech.
- Particularly relevant to the Caltech/academic community with its discussion of ambition/desire.
- Offers a strong female lead (Rosalind) and large ensemble cast.

II. Technical Aspects

- Ideally, set outside as most of the play takes place in a forest.
- A theater-in-the-round or arena theater could be used to allow cast members to enter/exit the stage from various directions adding to the whimsical setting.
- Great for a midsummer evening.
- Shakespearean period costumes could be used though the setting could easily be changed.