

**QUEENSLAND
SHAKESPEARE
ENSEMBLE**

**The
Rover**

"There is no sinner like a young saint..."

By Aphra Behn
Directed by Rebecca Murphy

Aug 19th – Aug 21st
Aug 24th – Aug 28th, Aug 31st – Sept 1st
The Amphitheatre, Roma Street Parkland
qldshakespeare.org

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ABOUT THE COMPANY

Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble - Who are we?

The Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble (QSE) was founded in 2001. Since its inception, the Ensemble has gained a reputation for energetic, accessible and unique productions of Shakespeare's plays. We use Shakespeare as a platform for positive change, via our ongoing programs. These include:

- ❖ Mainstage performances for the general public
- ❖ The Apprenticeship program, supporting emerging artists by offering a 6 month training program
- ❖ *Dare to Share* showing of company training
- ❖ *Shakespeare's Shorts*, touring to schools, festivals, markets and other events
- ❖ The Shakespeare Prison Project
- ❖ Our Shakespeare Beyond program, which includes A Night at the Theatre, Relaxed Performances, and Youth Justice workshops
- ❖ In-School Workshops in voice, Forum Theatre, and performing Shakespeare
- ❖ Actor training, including: Linklater Voice Work, Speaking Shakespeare in Your Own Voice, Theatre of the Oppressed, Shakespeare Scene Study, and the Young Actors Shakespeare Intensive

QSE exists to:

- ❖ Powerfully share epic stories with live audiences
- ❖ Provide world class training opportunities to actors and non-actors
- ❖ Support creativity in contexts and communities where it has been historically excluded
- ❖ Nurture an ensemble of artists managers that drive the company's activities and works together to develop their skills on stage and off

We believe that performing Shakespeare demands the cultivation of the whole self in the service of the communal enterprise, and as such is the ideal vehicle for this exploration. Although the Ensemble performs the works of other playwrights and authors, Shakespeare will always be the home from which we travel.

The Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we work, play and perform - the Jagera, Turrbal and Quandamooka peoples. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging, and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.

THE PRODUCTION AT A GLANCE

The Rover by Aphra Behn

Two sisters throw themselves into the chaotic streets of Naples during Carnival. One in search of her forbidden true love, the other in search of a good time! As their paths cross with a band of exiled English Cavaliers, Europe's most famous Courtesan and a host of colourful characters we are taken on a thrilling yet dangerous ride full of music, revelry, and masquerades.

From the pen of England's first female professional playwright (and sometimes spy), comes a play that scandalized 17th century audiences and continues to ask bold questions about freedom, anonymity, class, and sexual politics.

Performance season:	August 19th - September 4th 2022
Location:	Roma Street Parkland Amphitheatre
Length:	2 hours and 30 minutes (including 20 minute interval) <i>AND 30 minutes of live music before the show!</i>
Suitability:	Years 10-12
Please be advised:	This show contains sexual themes, theatricalised violence, and depictions of attempted assault.
Key themes:	Love vs Lust Disguise Libertinism Female Rebellion Revenge
Key questions:	Universal (what does it mean to be human?) Do we have power over who we fall in love with? Should we be led by our desires or our obligations? Political (how must we act towards each other?) In what instances is revenge justified? How do you interact with someone who has a different world-view than you? Individual (what should I do?) How are you constrained by societal rules and expectations? What can you do to break out of them? Should you do what <i>fee/s</i> right or what is right? What is the difference?

CAST AND CREATIVES

Cast:

Willmore
Hellena
Belville
Florinda
Angellica Bianca
Blunt
Frederick
Don Pedro
Don Antonio/Phillipo
Moretta/Woman
Callis/Diego
Lucetta/Stephano/Officer

Dudley Powell
Leah Fitzgerald-Quinn
Milan Bjlajac
Emily Potts
Rebekah Schmidt
Angus Thorburn
Willem Whitfeild
Rob Pensalfini
Matt Gaffney
Lilliana Macarone
Meg Bennet
Julie Martin

Creatives:

Director
Assistant Director
Production Manager
Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Set & Props Designer

Musical Director
Fight Director
Front of House Manager

Rebecca Murphy
Ellen Hardisty
Kylii Davies
Loretta Donnnelly
Mikala Crawley
Leah Fitzgerald-Quinn
B'Elanna Hill
Rebecca Murphy & Rob
Pensalfini
Liliana Macarone
Jason Mckell
Rebecca Murphy

Band: *Tilting for the Wench*

Liliana Macarone – Guitar / Bass / Mouth Harp / Vocals
Matt Gaffney – Drums / Djembe / Bass / Vocals
Rob Pensalfini – Guitar / Bass / Mandolin / Clarinet / Vocals
Julie Martin – Vocals / Tambourine
Rebekah Schmidt – Vocals / Maracas
Angus Thorburn – Clarinet / Djembe / Vocals
Willem Whitfield – Bass / Guitar
Leah Fitzgerald-Quinn – Violin / Vocals

PLAYGOING IN THE RESTORATION STYLE

We'd like to welcome you to the experience of attending a live performance in a non-traditional setting. When we perform in the amphitheatre we set our audience on stage with us, and use the parkland itself as the background to the action. Restoration audiences were socially diverse with aristocrats, merchants and servants all mixing together in the theatre. They were known to get pretty rowdy (especially during comedies like *The Rover*) and while here at QSE we encourage you to enjoy yourself, we would appreciate it if you kept the brawls and shouting to a minimum. Just like in any theatre, there are most of the usual expectations – and while we know you get all the etiquette stuff, here's a reminder of some simple information you can pass on to your students.

- ❖ We would love you to get involved in the performances by applauding and laughing at appropriate moments. If you have a specific question – ask your teacher at the interval/end of the show or ask one of the cast, if you have a chance for a Question & Answer session (which can be held with prior arrangement after any show within the season).
- ❖ You are welcome to eat during the show, but please be mindful of other patrons. Snacks and drinks (including water) can be purchased at the front-of-house prior to the show and during interval, and you are welcome to take these back to the audience space with you. Please be mindful of the placement of drinks, and keep all bottles closed when not being used.
- ❖ Live theatre is different to TV – the actors on stage can hear and see you and there are other members of the audience to think about. If you need to leave the performance for any reason, please ensure this is done quickly and quietly and at an appropriate break in the action
- ❖ Please ensure that you switch off your mobile phone (not just to 'silent') and leave it in your bag before the performance begins; and if you wear a smart-watch and are not wearing long sleeves to cover this, consider removing it also. The glow of the iPhone screen and even a watch (which can be set off whenever you shift your arm) is obvious to others and can be very distracting!
- ❖ Lastly, a reminder that there will be 30 minutes of live music performed by the band prior to the show. Audience seating will be open during this time, so you can enjoy from the audience space on stage, or it is also a popular audience tradition to bring dinner and/or a picnic blanket to enjoy the music from the grounds in and around the amphitheatre. We would just ask that if you do choose to sit in the audience seating, that you keep conversation to a non-intrusive volume level. Thank you for your consideration of the band's and other audience members' enjoyment.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Rebecca Murphy -

QSE's Core Ensemble first discussed Aphra Behn's *The Rover* back in 2020 and originally programmed it for our 2021 Season so it feels like this play has been bouncing round our collective thoughts for some time. It's been a pleasure to finally dive into it and explore it with this specific group of humans who have approached the process with joy, curiosity, open minds and hearts.

It's shocking although not surprising to me that Aphra Behn is not more broadly known (to channel Julia Gillard, I'm sure the fact that she's a woman doesn't explain everything but it sure as hell doesn't explain nothing). Her writing is so of it's time but still feels, disconcertingly at times, relevant. As we rehearsed, we watched in horror as *Roe v Wade* was overturned and Hellena's rage at the lack of choice for herself and her sister felt painfully current. Closer to home the ongoing inquiry into Queensland Police's responses to domestic and family violence has been a daily reminder that we are still categorising people into being 'of quality' and therefore worthy of respect and being taken seriously; or not 'of quality' and treated accordingly. Many of my favourite stories use comedy to dig into the complexities of living and offer more questions than answers. *The Rover* certainly does this. Nothing is black or white. Anonymity allows the young women to explore new ultimately more true versions of themselves, it gives people permissions to speak openly, it also allows them to act without thought of consequences 'whatever extravagances we commit in these faces, our own may not be oblig'd to answer them,'. Power is intoxicating, yearned for, resented. Love is the great motivator for some and unravels others. *The Rover* invites us to experience characters at their extremes – it's a rollercoaster that we've tried to go with, to not even out, tidy up or, 'fix' but to embrace the grey areas, sit in the dark spots, and allow ourselves to be flung into the joyous moments and outrageous twists. To acknowledge their coexistence. Resisting the urge to moralise or give closure allows the disquieting questions to percolate in our thinking after the final bow.

PLAY SYNOPSIS

The play opens in the city of Naples, where Helena and Florinda - two sisters from Spain - are discussing Florinda's love life. Florinda is in love with the English Colonel Belville, but her father wants her to marry a rich elderly man Don Vincentio. However their brother, Don Pedro, wishes her to marry his friend, Don Antonio. Hellena is supposed to become a nun, but longs to be in love herself. Don Pedro orders the girl's governess, Callis, to keep Hellena from the Carnival, but the sister's scheme to escape.

On a street in Naples, Belville enters, melancholy with love for Florinda. His friends, Ned Blunt and Frederick, tease him for it. The three men encounter Willmore, the Rover for whom the play is named, and the friends make their way to the Carnival. Florinda, Hellena and Callis arrive at the Carnival disguised as gipsies. Florinda recognizes Belville, and they arrange to run away together in the middle of the night. Hellena and Willmore hit it off and start flirting with each other. Don Pedro approaches and Florinda flees before he sees her, and Belville begs his friends to help him rescue her. Blunt has become infatuated with a local woman, Lucetta, and sneaks off with her. Lucetta is secretly a sex worker, and plots to rob the wealthy Blunt. Frederick informs his friends that Angelica Bianca, a beautiful courtesan who charges a thousand crowns per month, has arrived in Naples.

Willmore and Frederick head over to see Angelica and on the way they meet up with Blunt who believes that Lucetta is in love with him. As they mock him, servants place pictures of Angelica all around the stage, so that all can observe her beauty. Don Pedro enters, sees the pictures, and resolves to pay the thousand-crown price. Don Antonio enters, and also decides to purchase Angelica, despite pursuing a betrothal to Florinda. The two men get into a fight over who has first claim over Angelica, and they challenge each other to a duel the next day at a public square. Willmore attempts to steal one of the portraits, and when he is caught Angelica asks him to stay behind to face her in person. Willmore scolds her for putting a price on love, and tries to con her into sleeping with him for free. Angelica admits that she has fallen in love with him, and tells the cavalier that the only payment she wants is the exchange of his heart for hers; he agrees and they rush to her bedchamber.

Florinda, Valeria and Hellena are still in disguise and appear on the street outside. Hellena cannot stop thinking about Willmore, but becomes worried when the other men appear without him. The girls hide as the men enter the house, and the returned Willmore brags about having slept with Angelica without paying for it. Belville reminds him of the gypsy girl he had liked earlier, but the Rover protests that he does not want to think of any other woman. Yet when Hellena emerges in her gypsy disguise, he immediately starts flirting with her again. Angelica - in disguise - follows Willmore out and sees that he is not true to her. Hellena takes off her mask and Willmore is struck by her beauty. She makes Willmore promise not to see Angelica again, and Angelica orders one of her servants to follow Hellena to find out her identity.

Florinda and Callis are testing Belville's faithfulness by attempting to seduce him while in disguise. As they leave Florinda gives him a locket containing her picture, and he realises who he has been talking to. He decides to rescue her later that evening. Meanwhile, Blunt is preparing to sleep with Lucetta, taking off his fine clothes and jewellery. When he enters Lucetta's chamber, she opens a trap door which he falls through into the sewer. Lucetta and Sancho steal all of Blunt's belongings, and he emerges naked and covered in filth, cursing not just Lucetta but all women.

Later that evening, Florinda enters her family's garden and unlocks the door in preparation for Belville to come. Instead Willmore enters, masked and drunk, and mistakes her for a sex worker. She struggles as he attempts to assault her when Belville and Frederick arrive and pull him off her. The commotion attracts Don Pedro, and the Englishmen flee. Belville is enraged that Willmore attacked Florinda and demands a duel, but Willmore refuses and seeks refuge in Angelica's house. When he arrives, Don Antonio is there and announces that he has already paid Angelica's fee. They fight and Don Antonio is wounded. Willmore staggers away, and when Belville arrives in pursuit of Willmore he is mistakenly arrested for attacking Antonio.

Imprisoned in Don Antonio's house, Belville is surprised when the Spaniard gives him a sword. As he has been wounded, Don Antonio orders Belville to take his place in his duel against Don Pedro. Antonio explains that the duel is over Florinda, and Belville becomes upset thinking that she has another suitor. The two agree that Belville will duel disguised as Antonio. A masked Florinda arrives at the Molo to watch the fight. As Don Pedro and Belville duel, Florinda intercedes, fearful for her brother's life. She begs Belville (who she believes is Don Antonio) to stop in the name of his love, and he does immediately. Pedro believes this is a sign of "Antonio's" love for Florinda, and gives his now unmasked sister to him. Florinda is dismayed at the prospect of marrying Don Antonio, but Belville reveals himself to her. Willmore and Frederick enter, calling out Belville's name, making Pedro realise who he is and take Florinda back. Belville draws his sword on Willmore, who runs away just as Angelica enters with her servants. She reveals that she knows Hellena's identity as a noblewoman. When Willmore reenters she accuses him of courting Hellena for money. Willmore is thrilled that his gypsy girl is actually wealthy, and plots to leave and find her. Hellena enters dressed as a pageboy, and tells Angelica that she comes from a noblewoman who loves Willmore. The Rover realises that she is his gypsy girl. Angelica commands him to remain faithful to, which he refuses. Hellena exits and Willmore vows to find her. Angelica vows revenge.

Having escaped from Don Pedro, Florinda and Callis attempt to find the cavaliers. Callis reveals that she has contacted Belville, and that she will stall Pedro. They see both men and Willmore approaching, and put on their masks. Willmore begins to harass Florinda and she exits. Frederick tells the group of Blunt's escapades, and Belville offers to show Don Pedro his hapless companion. Florinda re-enters and hides in a house (that happens to be Belville's) only to encounter Blunt. He is convinced she is a sex worker, and enraged against all women he attempts to rape her and asks Frederick to help. They pause when she offers them a jewel to prove her wealth, and she mentions Belville's name. They decide to lock her up until they can

discern if she is telling the truth. Blunt hides in his room and his friends and Pedro break down the door. As they tease him, he reveals that he has taken a woman prisoner, showing off the jewel, which Belville recognises. He attempts to rescue free Florinda without alerting Don Pedro but cannot. The men draw their swords, deciding that the person who carries the longest sword will determine whether Florinda is noble. Don Pedro, being a Spaniard, had the longest sword and ends up threatening his own sister. Callis enters, and gets Pedro out of the room by telling him that Florinda has escaped. Florinda's identity is revealed and she and Belville resolve to be married, while the other men beg forgiveness. She grants it, and Frederick and Callis decide to marry as well. The two couples leave and Willmore stays to guard the house.

Angelica enters, threatening him with a pistol and calling him a traitor. She tells him how hurt she was when he abandoned her, and that she must kill him for the benefit of all womankind. Don Antonio enters, and offers to kill Willmore for her, while Don Pedro enters and hides himself. Angelica decides to let Willmore live, Pedro confronts Antonio and accuses him of not caring for Florinda. Pedro wonders if he should allow Florinda to marry Belville, Willmore informs him that they already are. Belville enters and Don Pedro congratulates him, and leaves to tell Florinda that they have Pedro's blessing. Hellena enters again in boys' clothing. She refuses to sleep with Willmore, so he agrees to marry her; at last they reveal their names to each other. The two married couples enter along with Don Pedro, who is dismayed but resigned to Hellena's union with Willmore. Blunt enters with a group of revellers and dressed in Spanish garb, and the group enjoy the carnival as the drama settles at last.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Aphra Behn's *The Rover* falls in the genre of Restoration Comedy popular from around 1660 to 1700. During the Puritan rule of England, the theatre was banned as immoral for 18 years. When Charles II (1630–85) returned to the English throne in 1660, he encouraged his court entertainment to move radically in the opposite direction. Restoration comedies are sexually frank and explicit, and typically without moral comeuppance. The plays, however, are understood to be satirical critiques of contemporary society, and especially the excesses of the aristocratic members of the audience. *The Rover* was one of King Charles II's favourite plays, and he commanded private performances of it at court. The character of Willmore is generally suspected to be a caricature of Charles's close compatriot, the notorious court libertine John Wilmont (1647–80), 2nd Earl of Rochester.

The growth of Restoration theatre is also notable as the first period in which women were officially allowed to act on public English stages. In particular, many plays, including *The Rover*, contained risqué "breeches roles" in which female actresses thinly disguised themselves as young men by donning breeches, which covered the knees, but revealed the legs in white tights from knee to ankle, set off by heeled boots. Modern scholars debate the extent to which these roles were liberating or objectifying; critics of the day voiced objections to them, but they were demonstrably popular. The period also saw the phenomenal success of Aphra Behn—the English language's first major female playwright.

By the ascension of British king William III (1650–1702) and queen Mary II (1662–94) in 1689, the bawdy style of Restoration Comedy had fallen out of favour. Dramas were expected to have a more responsible moral centre. Aphra Behn's plays suffered particularly in later criticism because the lewd character of her work was considered even less acceptable for having been written by a woman.

English Civil War:

The English Civil Wars continued with only brief interruptions between 1642 and 1651. On one side of the conflict were the Royalists, or Cavaliers, who supported King Charles I (1600–49) and his divine right to rule. Many Royalist soldiers were members of the nobility noted for their gaudy style of dress—including long, curled hair or wigs, lace at the collars and cuffs, bright colours, and plumed hats. A swashbuckling public attitude included a sword at the side ever ready to engage in matters of valour. Members of the opposing Parliamentary Army were called Roundheads in reference to their short haircuts. In direct criticism of the lavish "devil-may-care" attitude of the Catholic or Anglican Cavaliers, Roundheads were Protestants (Calvinists, Puritans, and Quakers) who dressed in sober black-and-white clothing with no decoration for either men or women. In 1645 the Parliamentary forces re-organised under leader Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658). Now called the New Model Army, Cromwell's troops saw great military and political success. The New Model Army became increasingly conservative in character as the war continued. Despite having officially surrendered, Charles I was tried and publicly beheaded by Parliament in 1649 after attempting to restart the war. Following their victory, the Parliamentary Army refused to recognise any of Charles's relatives as monarchs. Instead they instituted the Commonwealth of England, with Oliver Cromwell as the head of state.

Under Cromwell's rule, Puritan moral codes were enforced by measures such as closing all theatres, enforcing strict observance of Sundays, and disallowing Christmas. At the time of his death, Cromwell attempted to pass the position of Lord Protector to his politically inexperienced son, Richard. However, this continuation did not prove stable, and in 1660 Charles I's son Charles II (1630–85) returned from exile in Holland to be crowned king of England. Cromwell's body was exhumed, mutilated, and scattered, and his supporters were quickly rounded up and executed as traitors. Cromwell remains a controversial figure in Britain, considered by some to be one of England's greatest leaders and by others to be one of its worst.

The reign of Charles II was characterised by increased patronage of the arts and sciences, and a youthful, reckless court replete with all the entertainments and excesses and vices (such as public drunkenness) that had been prohibited by the Roundheads. He was known as "the Merry Monarch," a term that at the time had a distinctly more pleasure-seeking connotation. Charles II avoided confrontations with anyone who might interrupt his preferred lifestyle, including Parliament. He was significantly more conciliatory in matters of government than his late father had been but was usually remiss in paying his debts. Most Cavaliers who did not flatter the king suffered as much poverty as they had under the Roundheads.

Aphra Behn's *The Rover; or, the Banish'd Cavaliers* is set in 1656 when Cromwell's Commonwealth government was in power. The play's English characters are Royalist veterans of England's Civil Wars. It is implied that the ship captained by Willmore may currently house Charles II. Their inability to return home or access funds from their native country is the basis for their poverty, their relative lack of power, and their financial reliance on Blunt. Behn herself was a staunch Royalist and a spy for Charles II during the wars. Published in two parts in 1677 and 1681, *The Rover* was intended for a Royalist audience, and while the characters are fairly stereotypical (i.e., the sweet, young heroine or the impoverished lover) and not deeply sympathetic, there would have been a cultural and political connection between the characters and those watching the play.

Carnival:

The Carnivals of Italy have been among the most extravagant in Europe, with Venice in particular cultivating a tradition of beautiful and elaborate masks. The setting for *The Rover* is just such a masked Carnival. Masks (also called vizards) were usually black (leather or fabric) and covered the upper part of the face only. Noblemen wore them when they wanted to sneak out of the house for some fun, but the irony of these masks is that they hardly disguised the wearers.

The masks are associated with anonymous mischief, including defiance of Italian sumptuary laws. These laws limited the type, style, and fabric of clothing various members of society were permitted to wear according to status, dating back to Roman times. The purpose of such laws (such as limiting purple-colored fabrics to royalty) was to keep the lower classes from imitating the aristocracy, though the laws were largely unsuccessful. The lush and lively atmosphere of Catholic Naples is more welcoming to the Cavaliers than their own England, which at the time of the play is controlled by a largely Puritan government.

<https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Rover/context/>

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

Themes in *The Rover*

Disguise:

Irish author Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) said "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth." Aphra Behn's comedic play *The Rover* is set during Carnival in Naples, Italy, where going masked was a local custom. The masks allow the characters to act anonymously, as Belvile says "because whatever Extravagances we commit in these Faces, our own may not be oblig'd to answer 'em." Much of *The Rover's* humour comes from mistaken identity as characters disguise themselves, impersonate others, and dress across gender. Disguise grants the characters a licence to act as they wish, rather than as society expects them to. Hellena takes Carnival as an opportunity to flirt and love as she would never be able to as a proper Spanish lady. Characters also take advantage of their anonymity to peer candidly into situations they would otherwise not have access to, such as when Florinda tests Belvile's loyalty while disguised. There are more pointed deceits as well, such as Don Antonio sending Belvile to duel in his clothes to protect his honour. In addition, Lucetta pretends to be a noblewoman rather than a prostitute, and Hellena dresses herself as a male page to meddle with Willmore.

Many times within the play, disguises fool even the closest acquaintances. Don Pedro fails to recognize his own sister in a mask, with nearly tragic consequences. Lovers Belvile and Florinda become stressed when on several occasions they do not recognize each other in disguise.

Notably, of all the characters, Willmore spends the least amount of time in disguise. He has little to hide. While he is a liar and a rake, he is also exactly who he is on the surface. Furthermore, he alone of all the characters sees through a disguise without the aid of some other clue. His ability to recognize Hellena is one of the signs they are well matched.

Love vs Lust:

The theme of love versus lust touches every character in the play. Belvile and Florinda are chaste and virtuous lovers, abiding in the strength of their emotional connection until they are able to be married. They maintain their strength despite their chastity being assailed on all sides by temptation and force. However, neither of them is insensible to physical desires, and Florinda complains bitterly of the injustice that her youth should be wasted on the elderly Don Vincentio.

On the other side, Willmore begins the play decrying emotional connection and seeking only the transient pleasures of the flesh. Frederick, to a lesser extent, agrees with him. Both these characters view Carnival as nothing more than temporary fun, and marriage as a trap. However, both come to respect the female characters in the play and agree to marriage by the end.

Hellena is young and inexperienced, and questions what she wants and what love feels like. The play opens with her trying to extract this wisdom from her older sister, though with the opportunity of Carnival, she resolves to learn for herself. The play's youngest character, she nevertheless has the wit and ability to defend herself. She comes into the play as a virgin and

manages to maintain that status throughout, despite the attentions of Willmore. Her resilience to his seduction attempts finally convinces him to marry her.

Angelica, by contrast, is an experienced courtesan who, for all her skill in the physical realm of love, has never loved anyone romantically. She mentions this several times as a kind of virginity, no less than Hellena's. Unlike Hellena, however, she offers her love to Willmore but is unable to maintain his affections. It is not clear Hellena will either. Willmore says he does not believe fidelity is in his nature, but he does agree to marry Hellena. Angelica's conception of lust is as a tool to get what she wants from the world. She talks about making men slaves of her beauty, and she sets her picture out to entice customers. Both Don Pedro and Don Antonio are so moved by her physical beauty that they are ready to kill for her at more than one point in the play.

Predatory love and lust are also present in Blunt's storyline. This dull rural English lord is so convinced Lucetta loves him that he does not realise she intends to rob him blind. His willingness to trust easily and his misery are played for laughs, but they also fuel the character's growing hatred for all women—an emotion eclipsing either love or lust. In a similar fashion, Angelica's desperate want of love makes it hard for her to feel joy.

Women's Constraints and Liberation

The female characters in *The Rover* constantly struggle against the constraints of their social roles. With the exception of Hellena, however, they do not stray too far from them. Though invested in social expectations, Florinda refuses to marry someone designated for her, and she conspires to escape her brother and her father in order to be with Belvile. Hellena, likewise, has no intention of taking her holy orders and living in a convent, and she says so with considerably less decorum than her sister. They commiserate together and encourage each other toward bold action. Hellena urges Florinda, "come prithee be not sad—We'll out-wit twenty Brothers, if you'll be ruled by me." Even their governess, Callis, agrees to go with them to Carnival. Despite being an older, respectable woman, she also wants to enjoy herself. Angelica provides a passionate defense that her profession as a prostitute is no worse than the mercenary way in which men investigate the size of women's dowries before deciding whom to marry. Yet she is looked down on for a financial concern that is judged normal in men. These women openly express opinions on their restrictive lot in life and take action to change it.

Hellena steps further outside traditional boundaries than the other characters. She pursues Willmore and declares that her choice of a romantic companion will be solely her decision. It does not matter to her if a man likes her if she does not like him. Hellena's unfeminine boldness—to the point of rudeness—is part of what charms Willmore. By the end of the play, she has gone so far as to present herself as a man. Her unwillingness to be ruled is presented as much of what makes her attractive.

The play also highlights the vulnerability of the female characters. Hellena and Florinda depend on their family for their money, and soon they will depend on their husbands. Don Pedro makes

this point very clearly in arguing for Florinda's arranged marriage. Likewise at several points, only Florinda's status as a noblewoman protects her from rape, and in each case it is a close call. She does not even try to invoke her rights as an individual. Instead, she calls upon her connections to her lover and her family to save her. Though Angellica operates from a position of wealth and power, she is vulnerable to emotion. Moretta implies this is all too common a fate for women who are unable to keep themselves romantically detached. In rebuffing Willmore's advances, Hellena points out how much more is at risk for her than for him, asking, "And ... what shall I get? A Cradle full of Noise and Mischief, with a Pack of Repentance at my Back?" While she wants him, she refuses to passively accept love on his terms.

Behn's women are aware of the pitfalls all around them, but they still try to elude their constraints to attain what they want.

<https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Rover/themes/>

CHARACTER MAP

Pre-show activity - Making Character Connections

Materials:

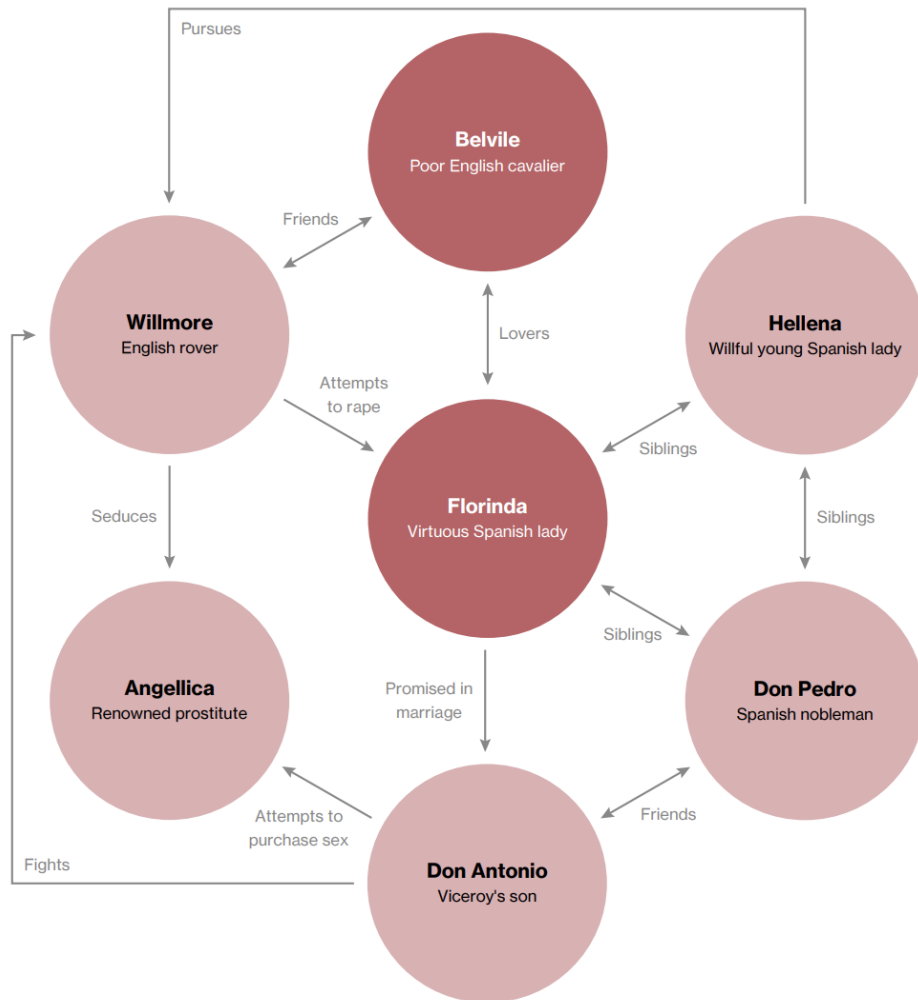
Character cards & glue (optional)

Poster-sized sheets of paper (or work as a whole class on the whiteboard)

Markers

Due to the multiple plot lines and use of disguise throughout most of the play, students will benefit from having a clear understanding of the relationships between characters in *The Rover*. Once students are familiar with the narrative, have them work in groups of 3 – 4. Rather than (or before) giving them the character map (below), have them create their own. Provide them with a list of the key characters and ask them to draw the relationship connections between the characters.

Character Map



<https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Rover/character-map/>

KEY CHARACTERS

Willmore

Willmore is an English naval captain and a friend to the other Englishmen in the play. He is eager but unfaithful with women and quick to get into fights. He shows little concern for others or remorse for his behaviour. He romances both Hellena and Angellica, and seems to forget one exists when in the other's presence. He also attempts multiple times to rape Florinda while she is disguised, betraying a belief that this is normal behavior. Willmore and Hellena are the central wits of the play and the sources of most of the verbal comedy. It is Hellena's superior wit and will that eventually win Willmore over, and he marries her at the play's conclusion.

Florinda

Florinda is a virtuous, young Spanish noblewoman, in love with the Cavalier Belvile. Her father and brother have both selected other husbands for her, but she refuses to be ruled by others in matters of the heart. She uses disguises and her concealed identity to test Belvile's loyalty and to pass him messages so that they may elope. Though Florinda is willful about her own marriage plans, she is shocked by her sister's libertine (freethinking) frankness. Florinda spends much of the play menaced by the possibility of rape, most often by Willmore. She is, however, graciously forgiving once the truth is revealed.

Hellena

Hellena is a witty, willful young Spanish noblewoman who has been promised to a convent. She does not want to become a nun and has resolved to seek out love at Carnival. She finds Willmore and is delighted by his wit and good looks. Her sister is horrified by how quickly she has abandoned sense and virtue, but Hellena insists she will love as she likes. Hellena loves Willmore and, despite frustrations with her own feelings for him, she resolves to pursue him. Though she is in competition with Angellica, she is sympathetic to her rival. She refuses to sleep with Willmore until they are married, and he eventually gives in.

Belvile

Belvile is a former colonel in the Royalist Army, now living in exile. While he shares a limited sense of fun with his libertine friends, he is too in love with Florinda to carouse. He is the most levelheaded of the male characters, trying to keep the others out of mischief when things go too far. Though penniless, he is passionate and honourable, as shown by his conduct in the duel with Florinda's brother, Don Pedro. He rushes loyally to the defence of his friends, even when he is justifiably angry with them.

Angelica

Angelica Bianca is a renowned courtesan who charges 1000 crowns a month for her companionship. She hangs an advertising poster outside her home and prides herself on the power she has over men. Although she brags that she has never fallen in love, this changes when she meets Willmore. She is charmed and offers him her heart and her body with no charge but his love in return. She also gives him money to spend. When he is instantly unfaithful to her, she vows revenge. Angelica is a character who is powerful within her own sphere, and she is used to being treated with respect. However, the events of the play put her into positions

where she lacks that power, and it takes a severe toll on her. She despairs when she learns her rival for Willmore's affections is a noblewoman, feeling unable to compete with money and power. Her desire for Willmore and her humiliation that he does not return her love drive her to the brink of murder. While she ultimately decides to leave his punishment up to the universe, she is clearly overwhelmed and distraught.

Blunt

An English gentleman, Blunt is an oafish idiot, mocked and disdained by his friends, and valued only for his money. During the play, he believes himself in love with Lucetta, a prostitute, who tricks him out of his clothes and money with the help of her lover Philipppo. Humiliated and naked, Blunt attempts to revenge himself on the female sex by raping and beating Florinda but, upon learning that she is of noble birth and Belville's beloved, begs her forgiveness.

Don Pedro

Don Pedro is a hot-headed Spanish nobleman. Though he is not technically the head of his household, he commands his sisters and the servants as if he were. He intends to marry Florinda to his friend rather than their father's choice. He desires Angelica, and he challenges his friend Don Antonio to a duel over her as much as over his sister's honour. Though he is watchful and suspicious, both Florinda and Hellena are able to fool him and pursue romances of their own choosing. Don Pedro is sensitive to slights to his honour and quick to call a duel. However, honour in others impresses him, and Belville's conduct in their duel raises him in Don Pedro's estimation. Likewise, Don Antonio's disregard of honour is a major factor in Don Pedro approving of Florinda's marriage to Belville. The other factor is Willmore's threats. For all his talk of bravery, Don Pedro can be intimidated.

Don Antonio

Don Antonio is a rich Spanish nobleman. He is accustomed to the respect and comfort of his position, and he has little regard for others. He is engaged to Florinda. He does not seem deeply emotionally invested in the engagement, though he does view her as his by right. Instead, he puts most of his energies into pursuit of the courtesan Angellica. He is quick to fight Willmore when he insults her by stealing a picture, and he is ready to kill Willmore for her with no context other than knowing she would like him dead. He sends Belville in his place to duel over Angellica, displaying both a casual violence and a lack of personal honour or responsibility.

<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-rover/characters/>

<https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Rover/character-analysis/>

ADVICE FOR INTERPRETING *THE ROVER*

The Rover is a Restoration play first performed in 1677 - that was a while ago. Texts from this time can, at first, sound very different to how we speak today. There may be some words or phrases that seem strange, or even patterns of speaking. Just like Shakespeare and other classical playwrights, Aphra Behn utilised verse and poetic metre in some of her writing. This is a device that can seem intimidating, but actually works to make the text flow rhythmically, which can inject emotion and passion into the words. When watching a production of a classical play, there are a few things to keep in mind to get the most out of the experience:

- ❖ If you walk away feeling like you didn't understand what was happening, or who was generally doing what to who and more or less why, rest assured that the fault lies not in you, but (most probably) in the production.
- ❖ Don't seek to understand every word - there will be words that you probably don't understand. But the words are never in isolation: the context, the sound of the word, the action, and the actor's intonation and intention will, in a good production, allow you to glean what the word is doing. Seek to understand the gist.
- ❖ Let the words wash over you and into you. Don't focus so hard on the meaning that you miss the images, the thoughts and mental pictures that your own mind makes out of them, the things they remind you of. Let the rhythms and sounds of the language in. The play is every bit as much yours as it is Behn's or the actors'.

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

From the QSE Rehearsal Room

1. Geography of Thought (Literalising the Image)

*Elements of Drama: Exploring **Language**, **Space**, and **Movement***

Rob Pensalfini encourages actors to physicalise the literal images their characters are describing as they speak the words in early rehearsals. This can be a very useful way of creating personalised connections with the character's words and with their emotional state, as well as bringing the symbolic imagery to life. The below monologue could be explored by one actor with the whole class assisting or audiencing, or the activity could be undertaken in small groups, as a practical exploration of this rehearsal technique.

Suggested classroom activity:

Have one actor read through Angelica's monologue (below).

As a class / group, work through the images in the monologue, discussing briefly what they entail (it can even be very useful to research or print out images that relate to those described, especially for specific mythical references such as Phaedron's lodging).

Have the actor read through the monologue again, this time standing on a 'stage' space; as the actor names each new image, invite other group members to enter the stage and create a freeze-frame of that image (if using a larger group, each image can stay; if smaller groups of 4 – 5, the 3 – 4 non-speaking actors will need to create a simple choreography, moving from one freeze-frame to the next, as appropriate). Encourage large, heightened shapes, incorporating levels, and using the full breadth of the stage space available.

Have the actor playing Angelica speak the speech a third time, this time directly to the relevant images created by their peers. Encourage him or her to move freely among, towards or away from the images / freeze-frames. Invite them to respond with movement if Angelica's words or actions invite this.

Finally, have the image-actors return to the audience and invite the actor playing Juliet to share the speech with the audience one more time, allowing the literalised imagery to colour their movement and vocal delivery.

Discuss with the class whether (and where) this increased the clarity (and their understanding) of the speech, and how it changed their perception of Angelica's emotional state and / or the scene's mood.

The Rover - Act 5 scene 1

Angelica: How many poor believing fools thou hast undone;
How many hearts thou hast betray'd to ruin!
- Yet these are little mischiefs to the ills
Thou'st taught mine to commit: thou'st taught it Love
Love, that has robb'd it of its unconcern,
Of all the pride that taught me how to value it,
And in its room a mean submissive passion was convey'd,
That made me humbly bow, which I ne'er did
To anything but Heaven.
Thou, perjur'd Man, didst this, and with thy Oaths,
Softened my yielding heart - And then, I was a Slave;
Yet still had been content to've worn my chains,
Hadst thou not broke those Vows that put them on.
- 'Twas then I was undone.

1. Scene in Gibberish

*Elements of Drama: Exploring **Language** (verbal and non-verbal), **Tension** and **Mood***

Behn's language is powerful and specific, but it is also visceral – the whole being speaks. These days our experience of language tends to be more disembodied, and actors approaching classical texts sometimes leave behind their non-textual communication skills like body language, gesture, and tone – which convey the stakes and urgency of what they are saying.

The actors in the scene play out the scene in gibberish, a made-up (on the spot) babble which sounds like language, but sounds like no specific language. They shouldn't try to replicate the scene line by line, but essentially play out the intentions and ideas and actions in the scene. They will be forced to rely on all of these non-verbal strategies to communicate and get their needs met.

Then, immediately go back and play the written scene, this time **adding** language to the non-verbal expression they have discovered. Keep encouraging them to find the level of intensity and energy they had in the gibberish version of the scene, with the mere addition of the text to further support it, not replace it.

Suggested classroom activity:

As a group, have students read **Act 1 Scene 2** – we will focus on Willmore and Hellena's first encounter with each other. Ensure that they understand the meaning of the words.

Workshop the scene as a class by having pairs 'present' the scene. The first pair should attempt the scene using the original text; following pairs will attempt the scene using only gibberish (there is no need to hold the script or follow the intent of each line exactly – but they should be attempting to recreate as much of the intention of the original as possible, without sensible dialogue).

After each gibberish performance, elicit feedback on which sections of the scene were clearest, and what gestures, movements, or vocal intonation assisted this. For every two or three gibberish performances, have a pair return to using the original text, incorporating as much of the useful gestures, movement and intonation as they are able.

Discuss as a class how the performance of the scene has changed through the focus on communication of dramatic meaning through non-verbal language and vocal intonation (rather than just through the meaning of the words themselves).

The Rover - Act 1 scene 2

Will: Dear pretty (and I hope) young Devil, will you tell an amorous Stranger what luck he's like to have?

Hell: Have a care how you venture with me, Sir, lest I pick your Pocket, which will more vex your English Humour, than an Italian Fortune will please you.

Will: How the Devil cam'st thou to know my Country and Humour?

Hell: The first I guess by a certain forward impudence, which does not displease me at this time; and the loss of your money will vex you, because I hope you have but very little to lose.

Will: Egad Child, thou'rt i'th' right; it is so little, I dare not offer it thee for a Kindness—But cannot you divine what other things of more value I have about me, that I would more willingly part with?

Hell: Indeed no, that's the Business of a Witch, and I am but a Gipsy. Yet, without looking in your hand, I have a parlous guess, 'tis some foolish Heart you mean, an inconstant English Heart, as little worth stealing as your purse.

Will: Thou hast guess'd as right as if thou hadst been one of that Number it has languisht for.

Hell: Why—I could be inclin'd that way—but for a foolish vow I am going to make—to die a Maid.

PREPARING FOR PERFORMANCE

An Actor's Warm-up

Rob Pensalfini, Artistic Director of QSE, says:

Warm up together as a cast. Let the warm up be a way to connect to your fellow performers so that you are all inhabiting the same world even before the performance begins.

A warm up should bring you gradually from everyday energy to performance energy. Begin with observation of how you feel (physically, mentally, emotionally), and work to free yourself of physical tension and vocal inhibition. Include plenty of yawning and humming, increasing in range and power.

Never move or make sound mechanically. You are not warming up an instrument; you are warming up the connection between your body, your thoughts, your feelings, your intentions, and your voice. Every sound you make is a release of thought, some part of your psyche speaking.

A short group warm up may include activities to:

- Facilitate self-observation (e.g. a 'body scan' visualisation; or neutral walking through the space, observing weight placement, tension points, and movement of breath)
- Connect out to members of your ensemble (e.g. Salute to the Sun, or similar repetitive movement sequences that the group works to perform simultaneously)
- Connect to the space and build energy (e.g. the 'bomb and shield' drama game)
- Activate your voice, such as:
 - Gentle yawning, sighing and humming through your range (can be done in combination with spinal rolls)
 - Massaging the jaw and the sinuses
 - Stretching the lips, tongue (roll it out over your bottom teeth), and soft palate (create an unvoiced 'k' sound on both in and out breath)
 - Stretching the ribs (can also use gentle massage / vibration on the chest)
 - A vocal scale - working through combinations of vowels and consonants at varying pitches
 - Tongue twisters (to activate articulators)

BACKSTAGE PASS

INTERVIEW WITH THE ACTORS

Dudley Powell - Willmore

Q: What has helped you empathise with and inhabit your character?

A: For me, there has never been one single thing that has helped me “inhabit” my character. There is so much literature out there about “how to act” (a lot of it is quite useful, don’t get me wrong). I have never stuck to The-one-and-only-method, simply because I think different roles I play will demand a little more or a little less of some “techniques”.

I feel like I could end up writing a book about all the different things I’ve done to try and connect with my character Willmore, however as mentioned before, there are already a ton of excellent resources out there about acting, and I think I’ll just leave it up to those who’ve already developed a great talent at communicating that to inform you. But I will make mention of one consistent thing I always do with every new role I have the privilege of playing.

It’s QSEs very own ‘The Six Ps of Playing Shakespeare’ - Devised by Tina Packer, developed by Rob Pensalfini. I swear Rob is not holding my family hostage, forcing me to write this. For anyone that has been involved with QSEs training you would know about this, it’s a technique of examining text: Asking THE questions to the actor about the text and the role. And (for me anyways) it’s not restricted to just Shakespeare’s work, you can use it for any character. Now I cannot possibly go into immense detail about QSEs six Ps (you’re going to have to get involved with QSEs training for that) but rest assured the six Ps are robust and demand the discipline they deserve from the actor. You’re not writing an essay with the six Ps, it’s not designed to envelop you in an entirely cerebral approach to the work - more: A series of questions that ask you to answer from your heart, soul and mind.

The six Ps are broad and extensive, they’ve really helped me to (hopefully) create a character full of nuance and complexity. And in the words of one of Hollywood’s greatest power houses, Meryl Streep - “I never give any character I play less respect than I give my own life”.

Q: What would you consider your character’s greatest strength and weakness?

A: Straight off the bat when I first read this play I immediately thought ‘damn this guy has a colossal amount of confidence and a sharp tongue!’ In the rehearsal room we’d often hear our director Rebecca Murphy exclaim (but most often lament I think) “IT’S HIS WORDS!” Willmore exudes great wit and his personality is that of someone you would love to be around all the time. Willmore is loyal to boot for his friends, a passionate lover and when he sets his heart and mind on something, almost nothing will get in his way. The man is not rigid either, he demonstrates a willingness to change and make amends where he FINALLY understands when he’s done wrong.

For all of Willmore’s great talent for words he’s surprisingly a horrible liar, which in most circumstances would be considered not such a bad thing, but in the case of Willmore he seems to have an inability to “read the room” sometimes. And although he tells the truth, it’s done where perhaps a little white lie could be useful for everybody’s mental health.

There is also the guy's insatiable hunger for sex (not so bad, yeah?) - we do see how Willmore's lust for love can hurt (or destroy) those who fall under his amorous spell, the need for sex is not in itself his weakness (we are only human after all) but it's the excess and overindulgence that's the chink in his person. Willmore's nature to do everything at 1000%, while an admirable virtue, does cast a sinister shadow over the likeable man: A deeply tragic flaw we witness when Willmore meets Florinda in the garden.

Q: Why are you excited to share this production with audiences?

A: From the standpoint as the actor playing Willmore I'm looking forward to hearing how people feel when they see someone they find charming and likeable commit something vile, evil, despite whether they meant it or not. I'm keen to know if or how you begin to process redemption for destructive acts such as physical violence, threats and rape. I want to know if said violence is more excusable in comfortable environments such as carnivals...

I feel like as a man I like to believe society has made great progress in the march for equality and feminism- I wonder however: How much of the sexual politics that's lived through *The Rover* is equally or partially transferable to our lives today?

Most of all though- I'm looking forward to showing audiences that sometimes in life, we don't always get what we want and for me as an audience member that reminder in our storytelling is always refreshing and cathartic. I think nowadays our media feeds are saturated with stories of superheroes saving the world a 100 times over, and I don't blame people for wanting to watch those types of stories either; these are after all "strange times". But I do think it's important to watch a variety of stories, to help expand our perspective on the world, to gain insights of our past - I think it's important that audiences try and use *The Rover* as a guide post to make sure we are on the right path to the society we want to live in.

Besides... who doesn't want to watch a play written by a 17th century female spy?!

Q: What is your favourite line from the play?

A: There are many, but I'm unashamedly proud to say that my favourite line and the one I feel connected to the most (only because I've asked friends this question many times... and will most likely continue to ask) is "Why, how the devil came you so sober?" Act 3, scene 6.

Leah Fitzgerald-Quinn - Hellena

Q: What has helped you to empathise with and inhabit your character?

A: Despite living roughly 350 years apart, Hellena's struggles as a woman in a patriarchal society are not all that different to the struggles facing myself and my fellow women today. Sure, nobody is forcing me into a convent or an arranged marriage (although this does still happen today), but we only need to look at recent events in America to see that bodily autonomy for women is still being denied time and time again. And the thing is, it really is as simple as that. All I need to do is look at the daily news and I am reminded that this too is the world I live in.

Q: What would you consider your character's greatest strength and weakness?

A: Although young, Hellena is a highly intelligent, bold, and witty woman who knows exactly what she wants. She recognises that she - and all of her female counterparts - have enormous

worth beyond that which is laid out for them by the men in their life. She loudly challenges her religious “fate” and makes it known to those around her that she is not satisfied - and you shouldn’t be either! However, I think one of her greatest strengths and the thing that I admire most about her is that she shows absolutely no hostility or disrespect towards Willmore’s “other” woman, Angelica. Both ladies are initially unaware of the other, but when they do learn of each other, their resentment and anger is always towards Willmore who, on multiple occasions, lied to them about his loyalty. Which brings me to what I believe to be Hellena’s biggest weakness - her devotion to man she knows will never remain true to her. There is great power in her staunch commitment to driving her own destiny, but it also makes her rash and desperate to find a way out, and as a result leads her down a road with only one possible ending - again limiting her freedom of choice. I suppose then it’s not really a weakness in herself, but yet another failing of a patriarchal world.

Q: Why are you excited to share this production with audiences?

A: This is an exciting production to share because even as an actor who knows the text, I am constantly surprised about how it makes me feel and how it parallels my own life. Besides which it is going to be a barrel of laughs, exceptionally energetic, and equipped with original live music, epic sword fights, and vibrant costumes!

Q: What is your favourite line from the play?

A: There are so many delightfully witty lines, it’s almost impossible to choose! The one that has stuck with me from the very first read is “Why must we be guilty of either fornication or murder if we converse with you men?”

Rebekah Schmidt - Angelica Bianca

Q: What has helped you empathise with and inhabit your character?

A: Angelica is a surprisingly modern character, despite the era *The Rover* was written in. I relate enormously to her independence and autonomy over her life - something not afforded to most Restoration women. She has an incredibly strong sense of self, which makes her fall even more tragic once she meets Willmore, and I can definitely empathise with the struggle she faces regarding her feelings for him. I found that developing a backstory really helped, as I was able to establish a solid anchor for when we first meet her in the play. This then allowed me to explore just how far she strays from her initial convictions, and also how they conflict with her desires. There is a lot of head vs heart involved with Angelica - something I think a lot of us can relate to. Physicality also played a big role for me, as Angelica is very different from Rebekah. I wouldn’t consider myself an exceptional feminine person, whereas Angelica oozes with typical “feminine” energy. This is something she uses to get what she wants, but it is also important to remember that it is a reflection of how she is perceived and treated by others. Leah’s incredible costumes also helped - the corset is a wonderful metaphor for the constraints of beauty.

Q: What would you consider your character's greatest strength and weakness?

A: I think they are one in the same - pride. Angelica uses her pride as a shield, as a way to protect herself from the many dangers of being a woman and a sex worker. She has established herself as unattainable, almost god-like in the way that many will languish for her but few will ever be granted the pleasure of her company. This allows her to be selective - she can take her time to choose the gallant that she wants, and not just have to accept the first offer. I think it is important to remember though that this pride does not exist in a vacuum. Angelica is sitting pretty up on her pedestal because she has been placed there by men - sometimes the very men that want to tear her down from it. Willmore berates her trade yet still praises her beauty, feeding into her vanity. But we all know the higher the climb, the greater the fall. Angelica has been so sheltered by the pride she takes in not falling in love, that once the little archer strikes she is pushed completely off kilter. She is constantly being told that she is the most desirable woman in Europe, so it is no surprise that she unhinges when the man she loves doesn't love her back. Angelica's perception of the world and herself is completely undone, and she falls back to earth with other mere mortals who don't get what they want. Because of her pride (and the excessive reverence bestowed upon her by men) Angelica has never had to experience humility, and so when faced with it for the first time she has no way of dealing with it....except revenge!

Q: Why are you excited to share this production with audiences?

A: Behn's writing is incredible! One minute it's rib-crackingly funny, the next it's pulling at your heartstrings, and the next you're wondering if anyone in this play is actually a decent person. I think Behn has done such a great job of creating characters that we love and want to root for, and then pulling rug out from under us and having them do something terrible. But that's life! Sometimes good people do bad things, and sometimes bad people can redeem themselves. It's up to us - or the audience - to decide where these things lie on our own moral compass. I'm very excited to hear the post show chats and what audiences make of certain characters....

The women in this play are also so delightful! They have full autonomy over their actions, and are led by their desires rather than what is expected of them. It's rare to find a classic play (and let's face it, modern ones as well), where the majority of the plot is driven forward by female characters.

Q: What is your favourite line in the play?

A: There are almost too many to choose from! Each character has some true comedy gold, but I think my favourite line to say as Angelica comes at her emotional peak of the play -

"I shou'd have thought all Men were born my Slaves;
And worn my Pow'r like Lightning in my Eyes,"

PREPARATION FOR RESPONDING (DRAMA)

Responding requires students to:

- *analyse the use of the Dramatic Languages within a production to create dramatic action and dramatic meaning*
- *evaluate the success of this creation of dramatic meaning for the audience*
- *synthesise their understanding of how the use of the Dramatic Languages worked to engage the audience.*

The Dramatic Languages include:

Elements of Drama	Skills of Drama	Conventions of Restoration Theatre
Characters / Roles Relationships Situation / Context Place Space Movement Language Symbol Mood Dramatic focus Dramatic tension Contrast	Acting (voice & movement) Directing (responsible for dramatic meaning) Design / Stage craft (set, lighting, costume, sound)	

Students' process for planning a Responding essay may include these steps:

1. Decide what the overall dramatic meaning of the production was (this may change as you analyse the production further).
2. Decide on the key Dramatic Languages that effectively contributed to the creation of dramatic action and meaning throughout the production.
3. For each body paragraph - choose a moment within the play that contributed significantly to the creation of this dramatic meaning (a moment that made an impact!)
4. Analyse which of the key Dramatic Languages have been used to create this impact
5. Connect (synthesise) the use of element(s) of drama with skill(s) of drama and/or convention(s) of form and style within the chosen moment
 - You could link a key convention that was present in the chosen moment with an element of drama that has also been effectively used
 - You could link two elements of drama together where one element impacts on another e.g. dramatic tension often enhances mood
 - You could link a convention with one of the skills of drama
 - You could link an element of drama with one of the skills of drama
6. Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the creation of dramatic action and meaning within the chosen moment.
 - Evaluative words could include:
 - o Successful
 - o Effective
 - o Engaging
 - o Disjointed
 - o Confusing
 - o Heightened
 - o Enhanced
 - o Confronting
 - o Well-developed

RESPONDING SCAFFOLDING TABLE

Your students may use a table similar to this one to link their notes around the use of the dramatic languages within QSE's production of Romeo and Juliet.

Elements of Drama	Conventions of Style	Skills of Drama	Purpose / Meaning	Examples in the production	Topic Sentence
Dramatic Meaning:					

STRUCTURING A SENIOR DRAMA RESPONDING ESSAY

A Responding essay is not a review. There is no obligation to include plot or character summaries (beyond what may be necessary within the analysis of the use of the Dramatic Languages), and evaluation of the production is focused on how effectively the Dramatic Languages were used to create dramatic action and dramatic meaning (rather than on whether the show was well-received / liked).

The structure of a Responding essay may include:

1. Introduction

- Introduce the text (*Instant Romeo and Juliet*) and the style (Elizabethan Theatre)
- Frame the key question of the Responding task as a statement – form a ‘hypothesis’ that takes a position (one way or the other) on answering the key question, which will be supported with evidence throughout the essay.

2. Body Paragraph - each paragraph may focus on a single key moment from the production, and will include:

- Topic sentence – introducing the focus ‘moment’ and key Dramatic Languages used within that moment
- Evidence – describe how these Dramatic Languages were used within the focus moment to create dramatic action and meaning.
- Evaluate – was the moment effectively realised, referring to the Dramatic Languages
- Link – back to your hypothesis and / or Dramatic Meaning

3. Conclusion

- Refer to each of the key points within your body paragraphs.
- Summarise your analysis with a final evaluation