



# Shakespeare is Love.

THE PLAY

Based on the screenplay by  
**MARC NORMAN & TOM STOPPARD**

Adapted for the stage by **LEE HALL**

Music by **PADDY CUNNEEN**

**13 to 16 AUGUST**

Subiaco Arts Centre



Christ Church  
Grammar School  
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**AUDITION PACK**

# AUDITIONS

## WE ARE SEEKING

Performers in Yr 11 and 12. All roles are open for audition. Some actors will play multiple roles.

## AUDITION DATE:

**Monday 31 March OR  
Wednesday 2 April**



## PERFORMANCE DATES: 13 to 16 August 2025

Forbidden love unfolds against the backdrop of the vibrant Elizabethan theatre scene, showcasing the power of art, love and creativity.

**Who can audition ?** Any WA student in year 11 and 12 can audition.

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## REHEARSALS commence Monday 7 April from 3.30pm ALL CAST

They continue Monday & Wednesday 3.30pm – 5.30pm Sundays 2-5pm until performances. (Not including school holidays and long weekends!) A detailed rehearsal schedule will be available at the first read. Some roles will not be required to attend every rehearsal.

## 4 Performances: Venue: Subiaco Arts Centre

Wednesday 13 Aug (7pm)

Thursday 14 Aug (7pm)

Friday 15 August (7pm)

Saturday 16 August (7pm)

Seeking performers in Year 11 and 12 to play various roles and who are willing to work as an ensemble. (Year 10s may be offered an opportunity to audition should places be available.)

Email [midnite@ccgs.wa.edu.au](mailto:midnite@ccgs.wa.edu.au) to book a time for your solo audition or visit the Drama Centre in person.

**Audition Packs** and Audition Forms available online 10 March: [midnite.ccgs.wa.edu.au](http://midnite.ccgs.wa.edu.au)

Tickets for *Shakespeare in Love* are on sale: Arts Culture Trust Website

# AUDITIONS

Director **Gregory Jones**

Sword fights will be taught and choreographed by a professional fight director. Will, Viola, and Wabash must speak Shakespearean language convincingly; everyone else speaks “normal” contemporary dialogue or, possibly, bad Shakespeare. British accents may be used. The show is a lot of fun with comedy, music, dancing, drama and oh, a dog!



## Audition Process

**Monday 31 March OR Wednesday 2 April**

- The forthcoming pages contain a description of the roles available in *Shakespeare in Love*, followed by a collection of audition sides. If you would like to be considered for a specific role, please familiarise yourself with the audition materials listed in that character’s role description. If no materials are mentioned, please choose any other side to perform.
- Auditions will take place at Christ Church Grammar School Drama Centre.
- Book your audition time, requesting a 10 minute slot by emailing [midnite@ccgs.wa.edu.au](mailto:midnite@ccgs.wa.edu.au) with your Name, Age, School and mobile contact number. Or you can book your time in person at the Drama Office (upstairs in the Drama Centre). First come first serve.
- Please arrive 20 mins prior to your audition time to register (with your audition form completed).
- Prepare your Audition side (memorised) preferably with a partner.

Didn’t book an audition? Just turn up!

**REHEARSALS** start Monday 7 April 3.30pm- 6pm. **ALL CAST full read**

Rehearsals continue every Monday & Wednesday (3.30pm – 5.30pm) and Sunday (2pm – 5pm) until performances. (Not including school holidays and long weekends)

Production week from August 9



Paul David Story in "Shakespeare in Love." Photo by Jordan Kubat.

## CHARACTERS:

# Shakespeare in Love.

THE PLAY

Ages given in this list are stage ages of characters, not the performer's actual age. If you require any clarification, please email us: [midnite@ccgs.wa.edu.au](mailto:midnite@ccgs.wa.edu.au)

Some actors may play multiple roles. Being able to utilize movement and change of voice to demonstrate different characters is a must. \* **Indicates may be doubled**

### **Will Shakespeare – A playwright**

A passionate poet and playwright who alternates between anxiously brooding over his writer's block and boasting all the confidence and charm expected from one of Elizabethan England's most renowned dramatists. A friend to, and playful competitor of, Kit Marlowe, Will is a sensitive soul searching for a muse – which he finds, both theatrically and romantically, in the equally fervent Viola. Sword fights 20s Audition sides 1 or 2

### **Viola De Lesseps**

A noblewoman who fiercely dreams of becoming an actor, Viola disguises herself as Thomas Kent in order to perform, illegally, in Shakespeare's latest play. Engaged to Lord Wessex, a man she hardly knows or cares for, and restricted by a society that bases her worth solely on her marriage prospects, Viola escapes to the stage, where she thrives in reciting the playwright's poetry and subsequently falls in love with Will. Rebellious and passionate, Shakespeare's verse should roll off this devotee's tongue, and she should embody a sense of playfulness and determination in her attempts to play a man. Plays both Romeo & Juliet. 20s Audition sides 2 or 3.

### **Kit Marlowe – A playwright**

Will's more successful theatrical cohort, never suffers from the writer's block that plagues his pal – he always knows exactly what Will should write or say next. Smooth and charming, Kit is perpetually good-humoured and encouraging – the best kind of friend(ly competitor) to Shakespeare's protagonist. 20s Audition side 1

### **Lord Wessex**

An insufferable and cash-poor nobleman engaged to Viola, is smarmy with the Queen, but hateful to nearly everyone else. A shameless misogynist, Wessex desires Viola only for her father's wealth. 40s Audition side 4

### **Nurse**

A devoted servant to Viola, helps her lady, with kindness and humour, to dress as an actor and avoid the pompous Lord Wessex. 40s Audition side 3

### **Henslowe – A theatre owner**

The owner and manager of the Rose Theatre, which will host Shakespeare's newest comedy. Alas, the frustrated Philip Henslowe must continually hound the ever-pondering playwright for the play. A slippery equivocator, his increasing debts and frustrations are ripe fodder for a comedic actor. 40s Audition side 5

### **Fennyman – A money lender**

A producer of plays – aka “the money.” A ruthless loan shark with no sense of humour (to Henslowe’s great dismay), Hugh Fennyman cuts an imperious and intimidating figure. However, his enthusiasm – and resulting stage fright – at playing the supporting role of the Apothecary in Romeo and Juliet endears him to his fellow players and audiences alike. 40-50+ Audition side 5

### **Richard Burbage – An actor-manager**

Lead actor of the Chamberlain’s Men, a rival troupe of the Admiral’s Men, and owner of the Curtain Theatre, becomes enraged and instigates a sword fight with Will when he discovers the playwright gave Romeo and Juliet to the Admiral’s Men. Audition side 6  
Burbage Lead actor of the Chamberlain’s Men, a rival troupe, and owner of the Curtain Theatre. Hot-headed. Sword fights. 40s Audition Side 6

### **Edmund Tilney – Master of the revels**

Lord Chamberlain and obsequious courtier to Queen Elizabeth, manages court entertainment. Strict and exacting in his position, Tilney is deferential to the Queen and censorious to Will and his plays Audition side 7

### **\*Ned Alleyn**

The lead actor of the Admiral’s Men, plays Mercutio, Romeo’s kinsman and close friend. Self-absorbed and a bit reckless, this pompous actor agrees to take the role only when he thinks the play’s title is Mercutio. Ned Alleyn Handsome lead actor of the Admiral’s Men. Plays Mercutio. Self-absorbed, reckless, pompous. Sword fights. 30s

### **\*Queen Elizabeth I**

England’s shrewd monarch who loves the theatre but demands comedies that incorporate dogs, sternly commands her courtiers and playwrights alike. A daunting presence, the Queen delivers her proclamations drolly and fairly. 50s Audition side 8

### **\*John Webster – a street kid**

A street urchin who aspires to be an actor and possesses an unsettling fondness for plays featuring pain and gore. 14

### **\*Sir Robert De Lesseps**

Viola’s father, thinks of his daughter only as a piece of property to be given away to the odious Lord Wessex. Arrogant, selfish. 50-60s Audition side 9

### **\*Sam**

A sweet young actor who plays Juliet, causes panic in Shakespeare’s company when his voice changes the day of Romeo and Juliet’s first performance. Sam Young actor with the Admiral’s Men. Plays Juliet, sincerely. 16

**\*Lambert**

No-nonsense duo and of few words; Fennyman's flunkies who forcefully help the producer collect debts owed to him. 40s

**\*Frees**

No-nonsense duo and of few words; Fennyman's flunkies who forcefully help the producer collect debts owed to him. 40s

**\*Ralph**

A tavern server by day and ambition actor. Plays Juliet's Nurse and Capulet. 40-60s

**\*Nol**

Number one actor at the Rose theatre. Plays Benvolio, Lord Montague's nephew and Romeo's cousin; and Sampson, a servant to the Capulets. Sword fights. 20-30s

**Robin**

A male actor at the Rose, plays Tybalt and Juliet's mother, Lady Capulet. Sword fights 20/30s

**\*Adam**

An actor, plays Gregory, a servant to the Capulets; and Servingman. 40s

**\*Wabash**

Henslowe's tailor, an aspiring actor who stutters; he delivers the prologue to Romeo and Juliet. Wabash Henslowe's tailor. Aspiring actor with a stutter. He delivers the prologue to Romeo & Juliet. 20-40s

**\*Peter**

An actor. Plays Tybalt, Juliet's cousin. Peter Admiral's Men Actor. Plays Petruchio. Sword fights. 20s

**\*Catling**

A guard at De Lesseps Hall.

**\*Boatman**

A chatty, aspiring playwright. 30s

**\*Mistress Quickly**

The wardrobe mistress at Whitehall Palace 30s

**\*Molly & Kate**

Bar wenches who flirt with Will and other tavern patron. 20/30s

# Audition Side 1

(WILL is writing at his desk.)

WILL. Shall I compare...

Shall I compare...

Shall I compare...the...um...

Shall I compare thee...

Shall I compare thee to a...to a...?

Shall I compare thee to a...sum...a sum...a something,  
something...

Damn it.

Shall I compare thee to a mummer's play?

Shall I compare thee...to...an autumn morning? An  
afternoon in springtime? Zounds.

(MARLOWE enters.)

MARLOWE. A sonnet. I thought you were writing a play.

WILL. A month overdue to Henslowe but nothing comes.

I have lost my gift, Kit. I don't know what it is. My  
quill is broken, my well is dry. The proud tower of the  
imagination hath collapsed completely.

MARLOWE. Interesting. And how are your marital  
relations, Will?

WILL. The Hathaways?

MARLOWE. The bedroom.

WILL. As cold as her heart.

MARLOWE. So you are free to love.

WILL. Yet not to write so it seems. Leave me, Kit.

MARLOWE. I've almost finished my new play for Burbage.

More blood and thunder but he pays well for it. I hear  
he plays your *Two Gentlemen of Verona* for Her Majesty  
this very afternoon.

WILL. My play, for the Queen!

MARLOWE. A summer's day.

WILL. What?

MARLOWE. "A summer's day." Start with something lovely,  
temperate, and thoroughly trite. Gives you somewhere  
to go.

(MARLOWE leaves.)

WILL. (unconvinced) A summer's day?!

Shall I compare thee...to a...summer's day? Mmmm?

Thou art more...something something something...

## Audition Side 2

**WILL.** She loves me, Thomas!

**VIOLA/KENT.** Does she say so?

**WILL.** Well, no...And yet she does. Look where the ink has run with tears. Was she weeping when she gave you this?

**VIOLA/KENT.** I...Her letter came to me by the nurse.

**WILL.** Your aunt?

**VIOLA/KENT.** Yes, my aunt. Perhaps she wept a little. Tell me how you love her, Will.

**WILL.** Like a sickness and its cure together.

**VIOLA/KENT.** Yes, like rain and sun, like cold and heat.  
*(collecting herself)* Is your lady beautiful? Since I came to visit from the country, I have not seen her close. Tell me, is she beautiful?

**WILL.** Oh, Thomas, if I could write the beauty of her eyes! I was born to look in them and know myself.

**VIOLA/KENT.** And her lips?

**WILL.** Oh, Thomas, her lips! The early morning rose would wither on the branch, if it could feel envy!

**VIOLA/KENT.** And her voice? Like lark song?

**WILL.** Deeper, softer. None of your twittering larks! I would banish nightingales from her garden before they interrupt her song.

**VIOLA/KENT.** She sings too?

**WILL.** Constantly. Without doubt. And plays the lute, she has a natural ear. And her bosom – Thomas, Thomas, did I mention her bosom?

**VIOLA/KENT.** What of her bosom?

**WILL.** Oh, Thomas, a pair of pippins! As round and rare as golden apples.

**VIOLA/KENT.** I think the lady is wise to keep your love at a distance. For what lady could live up to it close to, when her eyes and lips and voice may be no more beautiful than mine? Besides, can a lady born to wealth and noble marriage love happily with a bankside poet and player?

**WILL.** Yes, by God! Love knows nothing of rank or riverbank! It will spark between a queen and the poor vagabond who plays the king, and their love should be minded by each, for love denied blights the soul we owe to God! So tell My Lady, William Shakespeare waits for her in the garden.

**VIOLA/KENT.** But what of Lord Wessex?

**WILL.** For one kiss I would defy a thousand Wessexes!

**VIOLA/KENT.** Oh, Will.



## Audition Side 3

*(VIOLA is performing for an imaginary audience.)*

**VIOLA.**

What light is light, if Silvia be not seen?

What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by?

Unless it be to think that she is by  
And feed upon the shadow of perfection.

Except I be by Silvia in the night,  
There is no music in the nightingale;  
Unless I look on Silvia in the day,  
There is no day for me to look upon.

Such poetry...

*(Viola's NURSE enters.)*

...But how can one care for Silvia while she is – by  
the order of the Lord Chamberlain – played by a  
pipsqueak boy in petticoats!

**NURSE.** I liked the dog.

**VIOLA.** Stage love will never be real love until we women  
can be onstage ourselves. Yet when can we see  
another?

**NURSE.** When the Queen commands it.

**VIOLA.** But at the playhouse.

**NURSE.** Playhouses are not for well-born ladies.

**VIOLA.** I am not so well-born.

**NURSE.** Well-moned is the same as well-born these days  
and well-married better than both. Lord Wessex was  
looking at you tonight.

**VIOLA.** All the men at court are without poetry. If they  
look at me they see my father's fortune. I will have  
poetry in my life. And adventure. And love. Love  
above all.

**NURSE.** Like Valentine and Silvia?

**VIOLA.** No – not the artful postures of love, but the love  
that overthrows life. Unbiddable, ungovernable, like a  
riot in the heart, and nothing to be done, come ruin  
or rapture. Love like there has never been in a play. I  
will have love or I will end my days –

**NURSE.** As a nurse?

**VIOLA.** But I would be Valentine and Silvia too, somehow.  
Good Nurse, God save you and good night. I would  
stay asleep my whole life if I could dream myself into a  
company of players.

## Audition Side 4

**WESSEX.** Nurse. Nurse! Where is the future Lady Wessex?

**NURSE.** You must have patience, sir. My Lady is still in the act of contemplation.

**WESSEX.** Lengthy orisons for one so young.

**NURSE.** She always was a pious little girl, My Lord. My mistress is the sweetest lady, My Lord, and still as pious. Lord, Lord, even when she was a prating child, sir, she would spend hours on her knees. I used to swear she'd wear them out!

**WESSEX.** Oh, for heaven's sake, where the devil is she?!

*(VIOLA runs back on, fully dressed.)*

**WESSEX.** My Lady.

**VIOLA.** Lord Wessex. You have been waiting.

**WESSEX.** I am aware of it. It is beauty's privilege. Though four hours' prayer is less piety than self-importance. I have spoken to the Queen. Her Majesty's consent is requisite when a Wessex takes a wife, and once gained, her consent is her command.

**VIOLA.** Do you intend to marry, My Lord?

**WESSEX.** Your father should keep you better informed. He has bought me for you. He returns from his estates to see us married two weeks from Saturday. You are allowed to show your pleasure.

**VIOLA.** But I do not love you, My Lord.

**WESSEX.** How your mind hops about! Your father was a shopkeeper, your children will bear a coat of arms, and I will recover my fortune. That is the only matter under discussion today. You will like Virginia.

**VIOLA.** Virginia?

**WESSEX.** Why, yes! My fortune lies in my plantations. The tobacco weed. I need four thousand pounds to fit out a ship and put my investments to work – I fancy tobacco has a future. We will not stay there long, three or four years.

**VIOLA.** But why me?

**WESSEX.** It was your eyes. No, your lips.

*(WESSEX kisses VIOLA with more passion than ceremony. VIOLA slaps him.)*

Will you defy your father and your Queen?

**VIOLA.** The Queen has consented?

**WESSEX.** She wants to inspect you. At Greenwich, come Sunday. Be submissive, modest, grateful. And on time.

# Audition Side 5

(LAMBERT and FREES have HENSLOWE over hot coals as FENNYMAN looks on.)

HENSLOWE. Arrttgghh!!!!

FENNYMAN. You mongrel! Why do you howl when it is I who am bitten? What am I, Mister Lambert?

LAMBERT. Bitten, Mister Fennyman.

FENNYMAN. How badly, Mister Frees?

FREES. Twelve pounds, one shilling, and fourpence, Mister Fennyman, plus interest.

HENSLOWE. I can pay you!

FENNYMAN. When? Mister Henslowe?

HENSLOWE. Two weeks. Three at the most. Aaagh. For pity's sake.

FENNYMAN. Drop him.

HENSLOWE. Aaaagh!

FENNYMAN. Where will you get...

FREES. Sixteen pounds, five shillings, and ninepence...

HENSLOWE. I have a wonderful new play!

FENNYMAN. A play?

HENSLOWE. A play, Mister Fennyman.

FENNYMAN. Let him have it.

HENSLOWE. Aaaagh! It's a comedy.

FENNYMAN. Cut off his nose.

HENSLOWE. Aaaagh! A new comedy.

FENNYMAN. And his ear.

HENSLOWE. By Will Shakespeare.

FENNYMAN. Who?

HENSLOWE. His *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is to be played for the Queen at Whitehall today, acted by Richard Burbage and the Chamberlain's Men.

FENNYMAN. Shakespeare? Never heard of him.

HENSLOWE. I think he has potential. We will be partners, Mister Fennyman.

FENNYMAN. Partners?

HENSLOWE. The play's a crowd tickler – mistaken identities, a shipwreck, a pirate king, a bit with a dog, and love triumphant.

FREES. Didn't you see that one, Lambert?

LAMBERT. Yeah, and I didn't like it.

HENSLOWE. Aaaagh! But this time it is by Shakespeare.

FENNYMAN. What's it called?

HENSLOWE. *Romeo and Ethel the Pirate's Daughter*.

FENNYMAN. Good title. A play takes time. Find actors... rehearsals, let's say open in three weeks. That's – what – five hundred groundlings at tuppence each, in addition four hundred backside at three pence – a penny extra for a cushion, call it two hundred cushions, say two performances for safety. How much is that, Mister Frees?

FREES. Twenty pounds to the penny.

FENNYMAN. Correct!

HENSLOWE. But I have to pay the actors and the author.

FENNYMAN. A share of the profits.

HENSLOWE. There's never any profits.

FENNYMAN. Of course not!

HENSLOWE. Mister Fennyman, I think you may have hit on something.

FENNYMAN. Sign here.

HENSLOWE. It's blank.

FENNYMAN. I know.

## Audition Side 6

(*ACTORS prepare with a DOG. BURBAGE enters.*)

**BURBAGE.** Gentlemen of Verona. This is your two-minute call. Act One, Scene One. Wardrobe mistress, quickly.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY.** Ready, sir!

(*WILL arrives.*)

**WILL.** Burbage!

**BURBAGE.** Oh God, an author.

**WILL.** How dare you perform me here in front of the Queen without my say-so. I am still owed half of the commission.

**BURBAGE.** Not from me. I stole it from Henslowe. If he stole it from you that's his business.

**WILL.** Why is there a dog?

**BURBAGE.** The Queen loves a dog.

**WILL.** There's no dog in my *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

**BURBAGE.** There is now.

**WILL.** I demand to be paid for this, Burbage.

**BURBAGE.** I told you I will make you a partner, Shakespeare. For fifty pounds. Your hireling days will be over.

**WILL.** Where will I go for fifty pounds?

**BURBAGE.** I hear Anne Hathaway is a woman of property.

**WILL.** No, she has a cottage. What would you give me for a comedy all but done?

**BURBAGE.** What's the part?

**WILL.** Romeo. Wit, swordsman, lover.

**BURBAGE.** And the title?

**WILL.** *Romeo.*

**BURBAGE.** I shall play him. Here's two sovereigns, and two more when you show me the pages. Now begone!

(*TILNEY appears.*)

**TILNEY.** My masters, are you mad? Her Majesty is waiting!

**BURBAGE.** We are ready, Mister Tilney.

**TILNEY.** Is that the dog?

**BURBAGE.** Yes.

**TILNEY.** But it's a different dog.

**BURBAGE.** The other was eaten by a bear.

**TILNEY.** The only reason the Queen asked to see this circus – was the dog.

**ACTOR.** But Spot can do tricks, sir, look. Spot, jump! Spot, jump!

(*The DOG fails to jump.*)

**BURBAGE.** I assure you he brings the house down at the Curtain.

**TILNEY.** It doesn't look funny.

**BURBAGE.** Nerves. He's never played the Palace.

**TILNEY.** If you don't go up this instant I will revoke your charter.

**BURBAGE.** Gentlemen. Beginners, please.

## Audition Side 7

*(TILNEY enters with WEBSTER.)*

**TILNEY.** Enough of this play-acting. This theatre is closed.

**HENSLOWE.** Mister Tilney. What is this?

**TILNEY.** The theatre. A pit of sedition, filth, and treachery. I'd have them all ploughed into the ground and covered over with lime— *(sees WESSEX and bows)* My Lord Wessex.

**WESSEX.** Carry on, Tilney.

**TILNEY.** Under the seal of the Lord Chamberlain, the Rose Theatre is closed for public indecency.

**HENSLOWE.** Admittedly we are under-rehearsed, but is this really a moral issue?

**TILNEY.** For the displaying of a female on the public stage.

*(TILNEY grabs SAM and lifts up his skirt.)*

**WEBSTER.** Not him. Her.

*(WEBSTER advances on VIOLA.)*

**TILNEY.** Him?!

**HENSLOWE.** Master Kent's a woman?!

**TILNEY.** Really?

**WEBSTER.** Look.

*(WEBSTER whips off VIOLA's hat and moustache.)*

**TILNEY.** My Lady de Lesseps!

**HENSLOWE.** Viola de Lesseps?

**WESSEX.** Viola! Good God. Here. Dressed as a common actor. Tilney, do your duty.

**TILNEY.** Henslowe!

**HENSLOWE.** I am amazed. I knew nothing of this.

**VIOLA.** Nobody knew.

**WEBSTER.** *(points to WILL)* He did. I saw him kissing her bobbies.

**TILNEY.** Kissing her where?!

**WEBSTER.** In the wardrobe. Him.

**TILNEY.** Let me be straight with you. Her Majesty is only too willing to bid these dens of vice farewell. Henslowe, you will never play again. The Rose Theatre is closed.

**QUEEN.** Stand up straight, girl. (*examines VIOLA*) I have seen you. You are the one who comes to all the plays... at Whitehall, at Richmond.

**VIOLA.** Your Majesty.

**QUEEN.** What do you love so much?

**VIOLA.** Your Majesty...?

**QUEEN.** Speak out! I know who I am. Do you love stories of kings and queens? Feats of arms? Or is it courtly love?

**VIOLA.** I love theatre. To have stories acted for me by a company of fellows is indeed—

**QUEEN.** They are not acted for you, they are acted for me.

(*Obsequious laughter from the COURT.*)

And...?

**VIOLA.** I love poetry above all.

**QUEEN.** Above Lord Wessex? My Lord, when you cannot find your wife you had better look for her at the playhouse.

**TILNEY.** Hardly a place for a young lady of breeding, Your Majesty.

**QUEEN.** Oh, I am all for the theatre, Mister Tilney. But playwrights teach nothing about love; they make it pretty, they make it comical, or they make it lust. They cannot make it true.

**VIOLA.** Oh, but they can!

(*A gasp from the COURT.*)

**TILNEY.** Her Majesty is not in the habit of being contradicted.

**VIOLA.** I mean...Your Majesty, they do not, they have not, but I believe there is one who can.

(*Horrified, WESSEX rushes to intervene.*)

**WESSEX.** Lady Viola is...young in the world. Your Majesty is wise in it. Nature and truth are the very enemies of playacting. I'll wager my fortune.

**QUEEN.** I thought you were here because you had none. Well, will anyone take Lord Wessex up on his wager? Mister Tilney?

**TILNEY.** The Lord Chamberlain cannot be seen to gamble, Your Majesty.

**QUEEN.** Lady Viola, it seems no one will risk this wager.

**WILL/WILHELMINA.** Fifty pounds.

**QUEEN.** I hear from somewhere fifty pounds. A very worthy sum on a very worthy question. Can a play show us the very truth and nature of love? I bear witness to the wager, and will be the judge of it as occasion arises.

**TILNEY.** A conceit of genius, Your Majesty.

(*TILNEY leads a scatter of applause.*)

**QUEEN.** I have not seen anything to settle it yet. So. The fireworks will be soothing after the excitements of Lady Viola's audience. (*intimately, to WESSEX*) Have her then, but you are a lordly fool. She has been plucked since I saw her last and not by you. It takes a woman to know it.

## Audition Side 9

*(Inside De Lesseps Hall, decorated for a ball. The COMPANY dances. Out of the action emerges a conversation between WESSEX and SIR ROBERT DE LESSEPS.)*

**WESSEX.** Where is she, Sir Robert? I am starting to wonder if she is a mythical beast of your invention.

**DE LESSEPS.** She will come, I assure you. She is a beauty, My Lord, as would take a king to church for a dowry of nutmeg.

**WESSEX.** My plantations in Virginia are not mortgaged for a nutmeg. I have an ancient name that will bring you preferment when your grandson is a Wessex. Is she fertile?

**DE LESSEPS.** She will breed. If she do not, send her back.

**WESSEX.** And obedient?

**DE LESSEPS.** As any mule in Christendom. But if you are the man to ride her, there are rubies in the saddle.

**WESSEX.** I like her.

**DE LESSEPS.** Come, she will be down any moment.