

# Cast List and Staging

The setting for the assembly is the Globe Theatre. The whole cast is on stage. Fact Readers and Shakespeare stand to one side. The facts could be added to and at these points artwork could be displayed. There is some Elizabethan music included with parts for recorder and percussion.

Shakespeare	A large speaking part for the playwright.
Touchstone the Jester	The jester from <i>As You Like It</i> is a main part with lots of lines. A cheeky child with a jolly delivery would be perfect for this role. Needs a purse and a jester's hat.
Stagehands	Four rough-looking stagehands, each with a line. They need a firework, a bucket and shovel, a skull and some carpentry tools.
Money-box Men	There are two Money-box men with three lines each. Their parts should be delivered with confidence and humour. They need collecting boxes on long sticks.
Food Vendors	There are four Food Vendors with one line each. They need props for pies, pastries, ale, honey biscuits, bread, cheese and hazelnuts.
Flag Bearers	The three flag bearers have one line each. Three flags are needed and three masks. They do a formal dance during the Elizabethan Music.
Bottom	From <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Bottom has a small speaking part and needs to wear an ass's head.
Titania	The fairy queen from <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> . She has a small speaking part.
Titania's Fairies	There is a small speaking part for each of Titania's fairies – Pease Blossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustard Seed. Cobweb should be taller than the rest.
Julius Caesar	He needs to be dressed as a Roman and has one line.
Falstaff	The fat knight from <i>Henry IV parts 1 &amp; 2</i> has a few lines.
Lady Macbeth	The vain leading lady from <i>Macbeth</i> has two lines.
3 Weird Sisters	The three witches from <i>Macbeth</i> have one line each.
Players	There are three actors' parts with one line each.
Fact Readers	There are three fact readers, each with several facts to read out. They should have clear, confident voices.
Cutpurse	A non-speaking pickpocket.
Elizabethan Musicians	Recorder and percussion players who play for the Elizabethan Music throughout the assembly. They could be dressed in Elizabethan costume.

# Script

*The assembly opens with the whole cast on stage in their character groups:*

- A group of character actors dressed accordingly, lead by Touchstone the Jester.
- A group of stagehands.
- A group of money-box men.
- A group of food vendors.
- A group of flag bearers.
- A group of players.
- A group of fact readers. *Can also include the cutpurse who annoys the Jester.*

## ELIZABETHAN MUSIC

CD Track 7

*(See pages 23 & 24 for recorder and percussion parts)*

*As the music ends, William Shakespeare rushes forward.*

**SHAKESPEARE** Good morning! Good morning! Good morning!

**PLAYERS** Good morning Will!

**JESTER** You look fraught!

**SHAKESPEARE** I am, dear boy. I have an important engagement (*taps nose mysteriously*) and a brand-new play to finish by this afternoon. I'll be back later. Meanwhile, get this stage cleared up and ready for rehearsals!

*All mutter and groan behind his back.*

**JESTER** (*Sarcastically*) Easy peasy, lemon squeezy!

**SHAKESPEARE** Good, because before that I want you to get out there and do some advertising. Get an audience in... if you expect to be paid!

## Song 1 COME TO THE GLOBE

CD Track 1/4

*(Some players walk amongst the audience during the song. See p25 for lyrics.)*

*All freeze as Fact Readers step forward.*

**FACT READER 1** The Globe Theatre was an open-air theatre built in London on the banks of the Thames in 1599. (*Displays picture*) It was burnt down in 1613, rebuilt the following year and used regularly until 1644. William Shakespeare was part-owner of the theatre and many of his plays were acted there. As many as ten different plays could be performed in a two-week period.

**FACT READER 2** The theatre had three floors for the audience and could contain around 3,000 people. The audience could buy food and drink and listen to buskers playing while they waited for the play to begin. The price of their ticket depended on where they sat or stood.

**FACT READER 3** The central stage was raised so that a trap door could be used to get on and off the stage. There were lots of special effects used including live animals, fire crackers and live cannons. If the audience didn't like the play, they were noisy and disruptive and threw fruit and vegetables at the actors. The whole experience was a fun day out for them.

*The cast unfreeze as the Jester speaks to the audience.*

**JESTER** Hello everyone! I am Touchstone the court jester from William's play *As You Like It*. It's so nice to see you here at the Globe today! Let me introduce you to some of the people who work here – not actors, but stagehands. *(He indicates the rough-looking group)* A rum-looking lot I grant you, but what would we do without them?

*The Stagehands step forward with appropriate props.*

**STAGEHAND 1** *(Brandishing a firework)* Battle scenes are my favourites. Fireworks, smoke, cannons, we do 'em all! 'Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more' – *Henry V*!

**STAGEHAND 2** *(With bucket and shovel)* Animals are my speciality. 'A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse' – *Richard III*.

**STAGEHAND 3** I do blood, guts and bones *(holds up a skull)* 'Alas, poor Yorick' – *Hamlet*! *(Aside)* I bet you thought I knew him well!

**STAGEHAND 4** *(With carpentry tools)* And I build the sets – bridges, boats, balconies. *(In a high voice)* 'O Romeo, Romeo! Where for art thou, Romeo?' *(In a deep voice)* *Romeo and Juliet*!

**JESTER** Thank you, thank you! Don't give up the day job! Now, I have to mention the money at this point. Some good-hearted chaps will be passing by with their collection boxes, so please have your coins ready.

*The Money-box Men step forward. With collecting boxes on long sticks they address the audience.*

**MONEY-BOX 1** It's one penny for you groundlings standing in the front. *(The Money-box Men hold their noses)* Cor! Stinkers!

**MONEY-BOX 2** Tuppence for you lot behind with bums on benches.

**MONEY-BOX 1** Thruppence for the hoity-toity bunch at the back on cushions.

**MONEY-BOX 2** And all you lords and ladies with a bird's-eye view – well, you can afford it!

**MONEY-BOX 1** Now, it's off to the *box office* – get it? *(Points to the boxes)* It's where we store the takings 'til we can count it all up!

**MONEY-BOX 2** Luvverly jubberly!

**JESTER** The food vendors are here with delicious delights as you can see... and the cutpurses are probably here too, so watch your purses ladies and gentlemen – thieving little toads!

*Whilst the Food Vendors shout their wares and sell their goods, the cutpurse runs around the stage and up to the Jester and pretends to cut his purse. The Jester chases him off. Room for some ad-libbing here depending on the children's ability.*

**FOOD VENDOR 1** Pies and pastries, pastries and pies. Flagons of ale!

**FOOD VENDOR 2** Get your honey biscuits here. Finest mead! Come and try!

**FOOD VENDOR 3** Bread and cheese, bread and cheese! The original fast food!

**FOOD VENDOR 4** Hazelnuts! Hazelnuts! You'll go nuts for these hazelnuts!

JESTER                      The flag bearers are waiting eagerly to hoist the right flag to advertise news of our next play.

FLAG BEARER 1    *(Holding up a white flag)* Will it be a comedy?

FLAG BEARER 2    *(Holding up a red flag)* Will it be a history?

FLAG BEARER 3    *(Holding up a black flag)* Or will it be a tragedy?

**ELIZABETHAN MUSIC**

CD Track 7

*(Flag bearers do a short but formal dance with their flags. They could also wear masks to indicate comedy, history and tragedy.)*

*All freeze as the Fact Readers step forward.*

FACT READER 1    There were no women in Elizabethan theatre, only men, so men had to play all the women's parts.

FACT READER 2    With so many plays in a short space of time, it was hard for the actors to remember their lines. They often had to learn speeches at the last minute while they were offstage waiting for their cue.

FACT READER 3    Costumes were valued possessions used over and over again. Some actors even left their costumes to a fellow thespian in their will.

*All unfreeze as the Jester continues.*

JESTER                      And so, dear people, come and meet the stars from our shows. A round of applause please! *(Everyone claps)*

BOTTOM                    *(Addressing the audience)* Did any of you come to see *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? That was supposed to be a comedy. Comedy? If you ask me, it was a bloomin' farce. I played Bottom the Weaver and wore this ass's head!

TITANIA                    Well I thought it suited you! I was Titania, the Fairy Queen.

ALL FAIRIES              *(Sarcastically)* And here we are – your lovely fairies!

*The fairies introduce themselves, curtseying unsteadily.*

PEASE BLOSSOM    Pease Blossom.

COBWEB                    Cobweb.

PEASE BLOSSOM    He was more like a cob horse if you ask me!

MOTH                      But nobody did, did they? I'm Moth.

MUSTARD SEED    And I am Mustard Seed.

ALL FAIRIES              *(Pirouetting)* Tra la la!

JULIUS CAESAR    *(Strutting)* Well, I took the lead in *Julius Caesar* – it was my best historical performance to date I'm told!

FALSTAFF                Maybe so, but I have played Falstaff the popular knight in two plays no less – that takes some beating!

LADY MACBETH    *(Smugly)* Neither of you can top my Lady Macbeth, what a tragedy! And what I put up with from those Weird Sisters no one will ever know!

3 WEIRD SISTERS *(Chanting mysteriously in witchy voices)* Double, double toil and trouble!

LADY MACBETH *(Interrupting)* Give it a rest you old hags.

COBWEB Well I'm hoping for something a bit more meaty and manly for my next part, with less of the ful-de-lul-de-loo stuff!

**Song 2**      **FUL-DE-LUL-DE-LOO!**      **CD Track 2/5**  
*(This should be made very funny with lots of fooling about in the chorus. Tambours and drums could be introduced and the cast could click their fingers after 'But if we should forget our lines.' See p26 for lyrics.)*

*All freeze as the Fact Readers step forward.*

**FACT READER 1** William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon on 23 April 1564. He was educated at the Grammar School where he studied classics.

**FACT READER 2** He married Anne Hathaway when he was 18 years old. She was a few years older than him. They had a daughter Susanna and twins Judith and Hamnet. Sadly, Hamnet died very young.

**FACT READER 3** Shakespeare joined the Lord Chamberlain's Company of Actors in London and his successful career took off. Shakespeare and the Company often performed for Queen Elizabeth I. He wrote more than 30 plays and 154 sonnets in his lifetime.

*They all unfreeze.*

**JESTER** Watch yourselves everybody, here comes the bard himself, William Shakespeare! *(Applause and much foppish bowing by Shakespeare)*

**SHAKESPEARE** I'm back! Gather round, I have news! I've had an audience with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, *(with great drama)* 'A fair vestal throned by the west', to quote myself!

**JESTER** *(Aside)* Who else?

**SHAKESPEARE** We are to perform before her at court next month. So prepare yourselves!

**PLAYER 1** What's the play to be, Will?

**SHAKESPEARE** I have not completely decided yet. I'm thinking along the lines of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

**PLAYER 2** That sounds a bit risky – isn't it about a love tangle at the Royal Court?

**JESTER** Oops! I hope you've written your will then, Will! *(With comic exaggeration turns to the audience and rolls his eyes as he makes throat-cutting gestures)*  
**OFF WITH HIS HEAD!**

**SHAKESPEARE** I am not at all worried because Her Majesty is amused by my work and in that play I bring back her favourite character – the fat knight Falstaff, last seen in *Henry IV Part 2*.

**FALSTAFF** *(Looking smugly at the other actors)* Great, that will be me again then. Third time lucky! *(Pats stomach)* I'd better eat a few more pies in preparation!

**JESTER** Seriously though Will, have you written your will? You keep talking about it.

SHAKESPEARE Sadly no. I sat down to do it last night and my good wife Anne will certainly be inheriting my second-best bed, but that's as far as I got. I sort of became distracted after that!

PLAYER 3 You know what he's like when he's got a pen in his hand.

JESTER Don't we just! (*To audience*) Where there's a WILL there's a PLAY!

SHAKESPEARE (*Dreamily*) No, no, it wasn't a play, it was...

ALL (*Sighing*) Another sonnet?

SHAKESPEARE How did you guess? This one is number 18 and it's a...

ALL (*Knowingly*) Love poem!

SHAKESPEARE You know me so well! I'll read it to you. It won't take long, it's just the usual 14 lines – three quatrains and a couplet. (*Everyone yawns exaggeratedly as he reads*) Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate. Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May...

JESTER (*Hastily interrupting*) I don't want to cut you off mid-flow Will, but... um, 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on'. (*Aside to audience*) *The Tempest*, and we have a production to get on with.

ALL Let's get the show on the road! Good Queen Bess awaits!

JESTER Not to mention this audience!

SHAKESPEARE (*Addressing audience*) 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!' I am sure you will find that *All's Well That Ends Well*. I trust that this play will be just *As You Like It* and that you won't feel it is *Much Ado About Nothing*! Tickets are half price if you come on the *Twelfth Night*. We hope it won't be a *Comedy of Errors* and that *Measure for Measure* you will enjoy your visit to the Globe in the company of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*!

**Song 3      WHO WAS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE?      CD Track 3/6**  
 (*See p27 for lyrics*)

FACT READER 1 The plays mentioned today are not in the order they were written and of course there are many more that didn't get a mention. The first plays to be printed are thought to be unofficial 'pirate' copies, with the first folio not being printed until 1623, after Shakespeare's death. Many of Shakespeare's plays were performed for Queen Elizabeth I who died in 1603, but because Shakespeare didn't retire until 1613, many of his plays were also performed for King James I.

FACT READER 2 Shakespeare didn't get round to writing his will until the January before he died, but did leave his wife his second-best bed! He died on his birthday, 23 April 1616, and is buried in the churchyard in Stratford-upon-Avon.

FACT READER 3 To this day Shakespeare's plays and sonnets are performed and studied all over the world, and as you can see we have studied his life and works as well. Thank you for listening.