

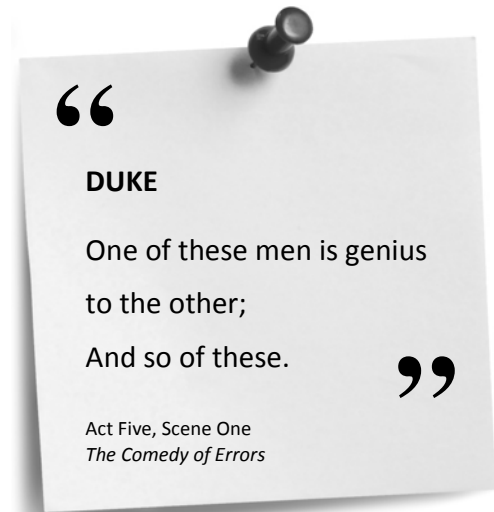


AIM: To explore the Earth-friendly philosophies that influenced the set and costume design of *The Comedy of Errors*.

The design concept for *The Comedy of Errors* incorporates recycled materials, including found objects and made costumes. This philosophy is partially inspired by Sydney Theatre Company's Greening the Wharf project; their response to climate change.



Find out about the Greening The Wharf project.
www.sydneytheatre.com.au/news/greening-the-wharf



REDUCING CARBON FOOTPRINTS

Inspired by the Greening The Wharf project, The Residents have taken up the challenge from the Australian Conservation Foundation's GreenHome program to reduce their carbon footprints. Along with the green improvements happening in their theatre home, The Residents are working towards a more sustainable lifestyle in their own homes.

Follow their journeys as they post regular updates to this blog.



Read about their challenges and successes, their experiences and ideas.
<http://stcgreeningthewharf.posterous.com/>

Australian Conservation Foundation's GreenHome program



Use ACF's Eco-calculator to find out your own eco-footprint.
www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section_id=86

Make a list of how you use energy and or water.

Brainstorm some measures you could take to reduce your carbon footprint.

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RECYCLING AND RE-USING

Make a list of things that you found interesting or that worked well in the set and costume designs for *The Comedy Of Errors*.



Discuss

1. Was there a set or costume element that you felt didn't work? Why or why not?
2. What are the benefits of using only found objects to make a set?
3. What limitations are there in using found objects?
4. How well do you think the set for *The Comedy of Errors* represents Sydney Theatre Company's Greening the Wharf project?

Then

Take a trip to your local rubbish tip, or

Keep your eyes open for you or anybody else throwing things away.

Look out for residential, industrial or commercial waste.

Collect or make a list of everything you see that could be used in the construction of a set.

Create a set using your collected items, or draw your design concept.

Include at least ten things that you have written on your list of found objects.

Use the found objects in any way that suits you – they do not have to be used according to their original form or intended purpose.

Remember that you can combine a number of things to make a new thing.

Label each item that you include from your list.

Give a brief explanation of why you have chosen to put it there.

Consider

1. Why does that item suit that scene or character?
2. Does the item symbolise anything beyond its external appearance or intended purpose in the production?
3. If you were not required to include the found objects, what would be different in your design?
4. How did the found objects inspire the remainder of your design?



Imagine that your set is to be used for a touring production of *The Comedy of Errors*.

Consider



1. How could you adapt your set to accommodate a number of different sized and shaped venues without causing too much distress to the actors and other designers?
2. Does your design need to be simplified?
3. Can your set be built in a way that it can be deconstructed and reconstructed easily?
4. Can you make some changes to include elements that are disposable or easily replaceable?

WHITE MODEL BOX



The white model box is the first step in designing a set. It follows the very basic space of the theatre space you are designing for, but doesn't have to completely comply with the exact dimensions, or be a perfect representation of the final set product.



Make your own white model set box.

Choose a play that you know well – perhaps another Shakespeare?

Begin with a simple and half cut out box or white cardboard, white paper, sticky tape (and scissors if you like, but most designers prefer to rip or tear).

Commence creating– straight away! *You know the saying that it's important to 'get up and do' in drama? It is just as important in the other creative arts as well.*

Start with five basic pieces of furniture and three walls (or stage dividers) as your initial kit.

Keep your 'kit' broad and vague to begin with.

Remember, the idea of a white model box is to create a blank canvas or structure, onto which you will layer your specific design ideas later.

Move the walls and pieces of furniture around to create a basic setting for each act and scene of your chosen play.



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Consider

1. Do you need to add another wall/set divider or piece of furniture?
2. If so, do you simply need an extra 'something', or do you need something specific?
3. Have you incorporated all set elements specifically mentioned in the text, or provided an alternative for the actors and director?
4. Do you have appropriate spaces for entrances and exits?
5. Can you remove anything to simplify the stage space?

Then

Look at the picture of the model box for *The Comedy of Errors* created by Matt Stegh.



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Begin to create a set box that you could use to demonstrate your design concept to a director.

Again, go scene by scene through your chosen play.

Layer some specific ideas onto your blank canvas.

Use colour to create mood.

Incorporate texture where you can. For example, a corrugated iron shed wall, or a fur rug.

Specify a time period – historical, contemporary or futuristic.

Locate your set geographically and demographically – London or Australia, rural or suburban.

Imagine you have no constraints to realising your set.

Consider

1. What materials would you use?
2. How often would you change your setting throughout the production?
3. What would you include in your set design that you may not have considered previously?
4. Have you artistically or thematically justified the inclusion of all the wonderful things you could buy with a limitless budget?

“

Scene: The play is set in Ephesus.

The scene throughout represents an unlocalised street or ‘mart’ in front of three ‘houses’, structures or doors marked with the signs of the Courtesan’s house (a porcupine), the house of Antipholus of Ephesus (the Phoenix), and the Priory (a cross or some religious emblem).

”

Then

Come to terms with the reality of a set designer’s constraints.

Reimagine your set from the following perspectives.

Financial: budgets and expenses.

Artistic: an overall vision that is realised consistently, and serves to highlight a theme of the text.

Practical: the theatre floor won’t take the weight of a two-tonne cement ball, so could you use paper mache instead?

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This is the set design for Sydney Theatre Company's 1997 production of *The Comedy of Errors*.



Compare this image with the set model for this year's production for STC Education in Wharf 2.

Note down the elements of the text that you see reflected in each design.

Think in terms of the referencing of another world.

For example, the 1997 design reflects the work of the artist Magritte.

The 2010 model reflects an imagined latino world with hints of voodoo and has more information regarding costume design, as well as a clear distinction of the three houses suggested in the text.

Consider the additional information this sort of referencing may provide an audience about the artistic vision and intention of a production.

Discuss

1. How important is it that the relationships between Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse, and Dromio of Ephesus and Dromio of Syracuse be indicated by their clothing?
2. Is an audience just as likely to invest in the story according as the way other characters refer to their likenesses, thus endowing the two sets of twins as identical?
3. How do the settings of each design lend themselves most readily to elements of farce?

Hint: consider the multiple doors, entrances, levels and heights represented in each.

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