

# EDUCATOR'S GUIDEBOOK



Directed by  
CLAIRE SYLER



THE NASHVILLE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL  
**TROUTT THEATER**  
AT BELMONT UNIVERSITY  
January  
14~31  
Thursdays ~  
Saturdays 7:30pm  
& Sundays 2:30pm

Flying Effects provided by ZFX, Inc.  
[nashvilleshakes.org](http://nashvilleshakes.org)



**January 14 – 31, 2010**

**The Nashville Shakespeare Festival | [Nashvilleshakes.org](http://Nashvilleshakes.org)**

Directed by Claire Syler | Costume Design by June Kingsbury | Set Design by 615Scenic  
Lighting Design by Anne Willingham | Music by Mario DaSilva  
Choreography by Andrew Krichels | Flying Effects by ZFX Flying, Inc.

This production is part of *Shakespeare for a New Generation*, a national initiative sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest.



## Greetings,

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival deeply appreciates your partnership for our third annual Winter Shakespeare production. We are thrilled to return to our winter home in the beautiful Troutt Theater on the campus of Belmont University and are very excited about sharing our magical production of *The Tempest* with you and your students.

We know that Shakespeare can be daunting and we believe the process of preparing to view and appreciate a play is as important as the event itself. Designed to facilitate that preparation, we offer this guidebook, which includes a synopsis of the play's cutting, information specifically pertaining to our production, and exploratory in-class activities. We hope this will provide some tools and inspiration for you as the date of your attendance approaches.

*The Tempest* guidebook also features contributions from members of the creative team, including the designers, the textual consultant, the dramaturg, and—most importantly—you. Thank you for providing questions! As with any quality theatrical experience, the process is never complete until you participate. The director of *The Tempest*, Education Director Claire Syler, and some of the actors have answered the questions that you provided, and we are always ready and willing to continue that dialogue.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the production, your matinee or workshop reservation, please do not hesitate to contact us: [education@nashvilleshakes.org](mailto:education@nashvilleshakes.org)

Enjoy the show!



**Denice Hicks**  
Artistic Director



School: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Performance Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Seats Reserved: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop Reservation Date & Time(s): \_\_\_\_\_

***The mission of The Nashville Shakespeare Festival is to educate and entertain the Mid-South community through professional Shakespearean experiences.***

**[www.nashvilleshakes.org](http://www.nashvilleshakes.org)**

# A Note from the Director, Claire Syler



Near the end of *The Tempest*, Prospero pronounces, “the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance,” and, with almost supernatural power, forgives those who had betrayed, abandoned and relegated him to an island existence twelve years earlier. The virtue of forgiveness is Shakespeare’s greatest lesson from *The Tempest* and, for me, the most important facet of the play. Prospero’s experience of injustice is timeless and his choice to forgive a universal aspiration.

Because Prospero’s story is not unique to one culture or era, I chose to set our production of *The Tempest* in an imagined time and place. Rather than emulate a specific period in history, this production is set in a devised world, one that will evoke the past while honoring the ‘real time’ immediacy of the narrative. With the help of the talented design team, we have created an aesthetic that draws from a number of cultures and concepts. Russian and Turkish kaftans inspired the costumes of the Milanese Court; they feature rich brocades and depict a cold, restrained culture. In contrast, the island attire was influenced by nature, employing loose-shaped clothing in both organic and vivid colors. The island setting will be a place of magic and wonder; spirits will enchant visitors; Prospero will conjure light and shadow; as her name would suggest, Ariel will have the ability to fly; and the island’s charming music will alter all who hear it.

It is my hope that Shakespeare’s poetry, united with the spectacle of this production, will highlight Prospero’s journey from vengeance to virtue. If I can be of service to you or your students as you prepare for the journey to the theatre, please don’t hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns about the production.

I look forward to seeing you at the matinee!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Claire Syler". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, elegant style.

Claire Syler

Education Director

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival

[claire@nashvilleshakes.org](mailto:claire@nashvilleshakes.org)

# Suspension of Disbelief – Theatrical Flying

Dr. Christine Mather, Script Advisor

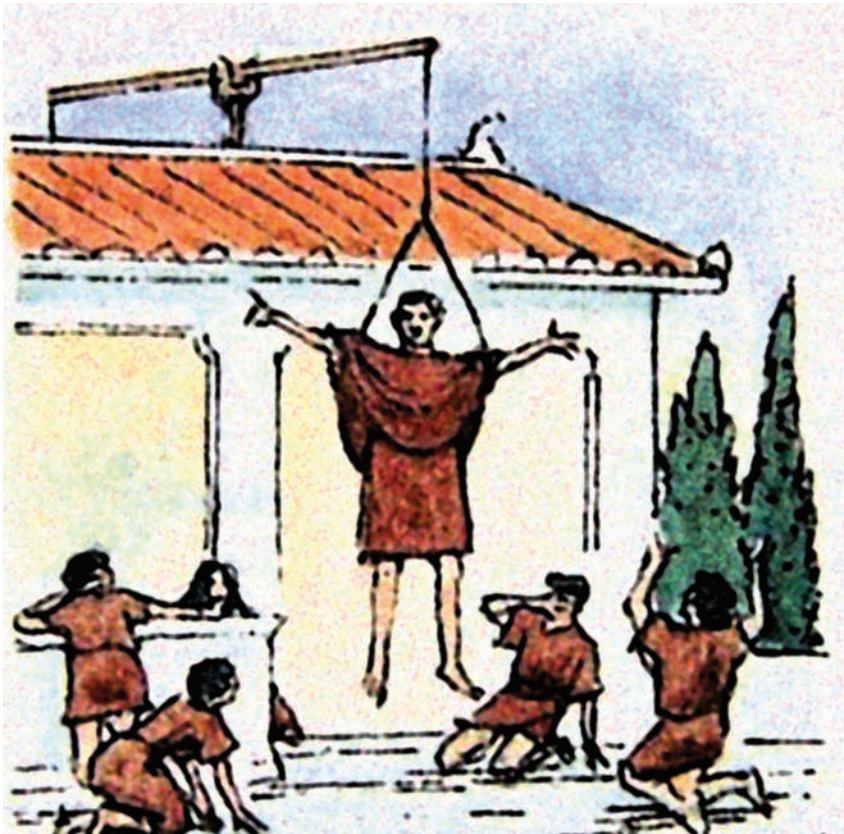
Medea took flight in a chariot pulled by dragons while spectators in ancient Greece watched. An angel hovered above Mary to give her the good news as Medieval townsfolk cheered. And of course, Peter Pan has led the Darling children to Never Never Land at least once a generation for decades.

While actors in the vast majority of plays keep their feet on the ground, devices for lifting them above it have been around almost as long as acting and for far longer than the venerable proscenium stage, like the stage in the Troutt Theater, that seems custom-made for the elaborate effect of flight.

From a small market almost entirely served by the legendary Peter Foy (Flying by Foy) in the twentieth century, stage flying has grown to include at least five major and as many minor companies as audiences thrill to everything from



Cathy Rigby in the 2005 tour of *Peter Pan*, with flight by ZFX Flying, Inc.



Ancient Greek theatre employed a device known as a *mechane* to “fly” the gods into their scenes.

Cirque du Soleil flights, to the improbable aerodynamics of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (a flying car called the star of the show by one reviewer), to the sight of Mary Poppins skimming lightly overhead.

Our airborne Ariel, Denice Hicks, continues this soaring tradition with the aid of ZFX Flying



# ***The Tempest* Synopsis**

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## ***Dr. Cal Fuller, Dramaturg***

*The Tempest* tells the story of Prospero, the former duke of Milan, whose intense attention to learning and magic enables a successful political coup by his jealous brother Antonio. Fearful of the consequences of assassinating this popular leader, Antonio sets Prospero adrift with his infant child in a leaky boat. Luckily, the kind, old nobleman Gonzalo secretly stashes provisions on board, including water, food, garments, and Prospero's books (the key to his power).

When the play opens, Prospero has survived twelve years in island-exile with his daughter Miranda, the spirit Ariel, and the monster Caliban as his only companions. By chance, Prospero's political enemies and the kind Gonzalo are passing near the island. Prospero uses his magic to divine their exact whereabouts and to conjure a storm that wrecks them on his shores. With the help of Ariel, Prospero controls the fate of his captives. Among them are King Alonso (a co-conspirator with Antonio) and Alonso's son Ferdinand.

Of course, when Ferdinand and Miranda first meet, they immediately fall in love. Still, their lack of experience is refreshing, with Miranda genuinely mistaking Ferdinand for a spirit, and Ferdinand truly thinking Miranda is a goddess of the isle. Prospero creates obstacles and tests for both father and son. He forces Ferdinand, for example, to move logs, labor beneath his station. Ferdinand does so willingly, proving his humility and purity. Through Prospero's trials, Ferdinand shows he is free from his father's sin as part of the coup.

Believing his son has perished in the storm, Alonso is likewise humbled, confessing his own corruption and asking forgiveness for his treacherous treatment of the former duke. A farcical subplot develops when the monster Caliban revolts against Prospero's control of the island. With the help of two of the King's stranded servants, Stephano the butler/cook and Trinculo the jester, Caliban plans to murder Prospero then steal his daughter, his magic, and his power. Their drunkenness, however, marvelously muddles their plotting. When Ariel overhears their plan, she further undermines them with their own audacious vanity. As the play reaches its climax, Prospero must decide whether to exact vengeance or to grant mercy in all these treasonous cases. With heroic desire for his daughter's future prosperity and that of Milan, he chooses the latter, famously promising to drown his books.



# Shakespeare's Life and Times

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Dr. Ann Jennalie Cook, Textual Consultant

<b>1558</b>	Queen Elizabeth begins her reign.
<b>April 1564</b>	William Shakespeare is born, traditionally on the 23rd (St. George's Day), though only his baptismal date, the 26th, is on record.
<b>c. 1570 – c. 1582</b>	Education at the King's New School in Stratford-upon-Avon provides a thorough training in classical literature and rhetoric, including performances of Latin plays.
<b>27 November 1582</b>	At only 18, Shakespeare hastily marries 26-year-old Anne Hathaway because she is pregnant.
<b>May 1583</b>	Susanna Shakespeare is born.
<b>February 1585</b>	Twins Hamnet and Judith are born.
<b>August 1596</b>	Hamnet Shakespeare dies.
<b>October 1596</b>	William Shakespeare receives a coat of arms, making him a true gentleman.
<b>1597</b>	Shakespeare buys New Place, the second largest house in Stratford-upon-Avon.
<b>1603</b>	Queen Elizabeth dies and King James comes to the throne.
<b>June 1607</b>	Susanna Shakespeare marries Dr. John Hall, a prominent physician.
<b>February 1616</b>	Judith Shakespeare marries Thomas Quiney, a disappointing, unfaithful man.
<b>23 April 1616</b>	William Shakespeare dies.

## Shakespeare and *The Tempest*

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Dr. James Wells, Textual Consultant

### **Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: What should you do with power? What should you do with freedom?**

First performed in 1611, *The Tempest* is the last play of which Shakespeare is the sole author (He later collaborated with John Fletcher on *The Two Noble Kinsmen*). Many scholars and readers consider this play to be Shakespeare's farewell to the stage. As evidence they point particularly to Prospero's speeches in Acts 4 and 5 as well as to the Epilogue, where they believe the voice of the character recedes and that of the playwright comes through in its place. Trying to explain to Miranda and Ferdinand why he has disrupted the pageant of the goddesses he has just created to celebrate their engagement, Prospero moralizes that all things eventually fade and that "the great globe itself, and all that it inherit, shall dissolve"—a line which many see as reference to Shakespeare's Globe theatre, where the play might have been performed (4.1.153). Additionally, Prospero's greatest moment of crisis is the point where he struggles to give up the power that his magic provides him and to forgive his brother Antonio who has deprived him of his title when he could easily and justifiably have killed him. In his soliloquy in Act 5, Prospero recounts powers that are eerily similar to those of a playwright before he resolves to "abjure" what he calls his "rough magic" and promises to "drown" his "book" (5.1.51,57).

Whether or not these are instances of an author saying goodbye to his craft is unknowable. However, the question implicit in these speeches is vital to what is going on in the play on a larger scale: "What should one do with power?" Prospero clearly enjoys his magic. His pursuit of "secret studies" was intense enough for him to entrust his Dukedom to a "perfidious" brother (1.2.68). When he talks of having "bedimmed the noontime sun" and of the

“graves” that have “oped” (i.e., opened) at his command (5.1.48), he clearly is exulting in what he has been able to do and demonstrates why his power over his imprisoned brother presents so great a moral challenge. Yet, Prospero’s greatest achievement in the play is his decision to use his power not for harm (even if it is justified) but for forgiveness. In fact, his forgiveness is so absolute that it does not even depend upon Antonio’s accepting it. Antonio, in fact, is silent after Prospero tells him, “I do forgive thy rankest fault—all of them” (5.1.131-32).

Although no other characters have Prospero’s power, almost all of them have to deal with the related issue of how they should use freedom. The island on which the characters are shipwrecked provides an unusual political environment in that it is relatively free from governmental structures. The King Alonso may be present, but his displacement from Naples clearly gives other characters a chance to imagine other forms of government. The circumstantial limits to the King’s power are evident even in the opening of the play, where Alonso can exercise power over neither the storm nor the insolent Boatswain. This relative freedom means that any government the characters experience must largely be self-government. How the inhabitants of the island govern or fail to govern themselves and what they do with freedom are fundamental to how the play is characterizing them.

The tension between power and freedom emerges early on and is visible in the relationship between Prospero and those characters close to him. In the island world, freedom is the characters’ most natural state. This issue first appears in the question of Ariel’s service to Prospero. Ariel moves from actual imprisonment under Caliban’s mother Sycorax to indentured servitude under Prospero, who needs his powers to conduct his magic and who must remind his servant repeatedly of the difference between his former and current states. This issue arises in a much different way with Caliban. No matter what degree of sympathy we feel for Caliban’s enslavement, he has, by his own admission, lost his freedom because he lacked self-government. When left alone with Miranda, Caliban attempted “to violate” her “honor,” and is still unrepentant of his deed.

The case of Caliban exhibits the character trait that Shakespeare’s play is scrutinizing most closely—the desire to use freedom to gain power over others. Antonio, who has already seized the opportunity to supplant his brother Prospero, urges Sebastian to take advantage of the occasion offered by the island to kill his brother Alonso and become King of Naples. Shakespeare presents a burlesque version of this ambition in Stephano and Trinculo who, at the urging of Caliban, attempt to murder Prospero and rule the island. Their desires contrast sharply with those of the good old counselor Gonzalo. In his long speech in Act 2, Gonzalo imagines his ideal vision of how he would act if he were king of the island, which, in short, amounts to nothing less than using his power to give freedom to others.

Like Gonzalo, Ferdinand and Miranda experience freedom in an innocent way. For most of the play they have been under Prospero’s careful watch. Even once the two are engaged, Prospero continues controlling their relationship by repeatedly warning Ferdinand about taking his daughter’s virginity. However, when Prospero must attend to the plot Caliban and Stephano have laid for his life, he leaves Miranda and Ferdinand to their own devices alone in his cell. Yet, when Prospero later discovers the couple, they have not taken advantage of the opportunity but are innocently deflecting their desires in a game of chess.

If Prospero has undergone a change in the end, he shows it in his ability to move fully from one notion of power to the other. For much of the play, he has needed to control others so that he could put himself in the position to regain his dukedom. However, once he regains his old title, he wields his newly restored power by giving others freedom. This freedom is neither naïve nor simplistic. Prospero gives it knowing full well that some, like Caliban, might appreciate it and “seek for grace” (5.1.299), while others may remain irreclaimable, ready to take advantage of whatever opportunity for power their freedom may present them (5.1.299).

Dr. James Wells

Associate Professor of English

Belmont University

# An Interview with *The Tempest* Artistic Team

Claire Syler, Director | Brian Webb Russell, Prospero | Denice Hicks, Ariel | June Kingsbury, Costume Designer

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**How do the themes of *Tempest* relate to young people?**

–Kirby Stewart, 10th grade, NSA (Nashville School of the Arts)

Shakespeare wrote plays that encompass really big themes, but when you get down to it, he created three-dimensional characters who experience feelings and thoughts that lots of people still have today. *The Tempest* has many themes to which young people might be able to relate: being outcasts, betrayal, control, trust, love, and hope. These are issues that young people will encounter sooner or later. There are also some fantastical themes in this play that young people might appreciate: Prospero's daughter finds out when she's sixteen that she's really a princess. There is much magic in the play, and who wouldn't love to be able to fly?

Denice Hicks

**How difficult is it to memorize Shakespearean text? Do you have any pointers for young actors when it comes to memorizing Shakespeare?**

–Mignon Grabois, 10th grade NSA

It's not nearly as daunting as it seems at first. My personal process is as follows: When I'm first handed the particular cutting that we're using for the show, I begin making personal notes in the margins using various guides to sift through the more archaic passages and words in the text to determine their meaning and intention. (My sources generally include the footnotes from my Arden version of the text, the footnotes from any other published scripts brought into rehearsals by the dramaturg, and the Shakespeare Glossaries for full definitions of every word I'm unsure of). I do this because if any mythological allusion or a Shakespearean joke or a pun is not clear to me, it probably won't be to members of the audience either. Then, and this is my best advice to you, I measure out the iambic rhythms of any and all verse lines. Often, this will show you exactly what Shakespeare wanted emphasized and where. And for me, it then becomes amazingly easier to memorize. This can be a painstaking process, to be sure. But you'll find the rhythms are so very distinct and unique to Shakespeare and are, I've found, the easiest way to get them into your brain!

Brian Webb Russell

**How long is your rehearsal process and what does it entail?**

–Katie Stockard, 10th grade NSA

My process started from the minute I got the role. I begin by making my notes on the text and reading any source material that might help me prior to and during rehearsals – critical insights into the character, reviews and commentaries on earlier productions, insights into how the role has been done previously, etc. If there is the need, I'll meet early with costumers to begin to sort out what I'll be wearing in the show. It's always better for me to jump in knowing a little (or a lot) about the guy I'm playing than to go in "cold turkey." The exciting part about doing the role this go-around is that this will be the second time I've been given the opportunity

of playing Prospero. I did the role previously for the Festival in the park in 1999. So, it's going to be an interesting challenge and, frankly, a lot of fun to see how ten years' time has changed me, physically, mentally and emotionally, and my outlooks about the part. (Better still, I've got a great big head start on getting the lines memorized!)

**Brian Webb Russell**

**What was the costume designer's vision for this performance of *The Tempest*? How does a costume designer find inspiration?**

**–Meghen L. Sanders, Stratford High School**

The vision was a collaboration between the director and me. The director, Claire Syler, and I spent several meetings discussing concept and sources of inspiration. We quickly agreed that the island should be warm, and the court of Milan should be a cold place. We did not want to settle on a specific culture or time for either of the locations. I suggested that we look at Indian and Pakistani clothing, but soon realized that we needed more structured (stiff looking) clothing for the court. After several false starts, we agreed to look at Scandinavian and Russian clothing. My research led me to Russian and Turkish kaftans, which were worn by nobility in the past. The historic kaftans inspired my development of the court clothing. The island clothing is less structured because the islanders' resources would be more limited. Claire and I decided that muslin would be a fabric which could have been on the ship and could be dyed by the characters on the island when they made their clothes. Prospero, who has been on the island twelve years, could still have some of the garments that he was wearing when he fled the court.

**June Kingsbury**

**What are the greatest hazards for costumes?**

**–Jane Anne Gibbs – Whites Creek HS**

Theatre, especially musical theatre, is hard on clothing. I find that the wear and tear that actors put on clothing through quick changes or crawling across the stage puts a lot more stress on costumes than you might in wearing your clothes. For this reason, I avoid using retail Halloween costumes designed for brief use and vintage clothing. They require too much repair.

**June Kingsbury**

**If you delete scenes or cut a scene, how do you decide which ones to delete/cut?**

**–Donna-Michelle Copas, Glenclyff HS**

My primary goal when editing Shakespeare is to clarify and refine the plot for a modern audience. I try to remove text that could be confusing and obstruct the narrative. For example, in Act 2, Scene 1, of *The Tempest*, there is a lengthy discussion of the "widow Dido," in reference to the Roman story of Dido and Aeneas from *The Aeneid*. I elected to cut these lines, because the allusion is not a familiar one for modern spectators and it doesn't help further the plot. Editing is also necessary for modern production needs. For instance, editing can result in the consolidation or deletion of minor characters to keep the size of a cast to a minimum. Additionally, many directors edit text to adhere to modern performance lengths. Because of our student matinees, it was important to edit *The Tempest* so that the performance was two hours in length.

**Claire Syler**

**How prominent will the role of the spirit Ariel be and why?**

**–Donna-Michelle Copas, Glenclyff HS**

For this production, the spirit Ariel will be featured quite prominently – above ground! As the text directs, Ariel is an "airy spirit" of the island and performs Prospero's magical bidding. Like Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Ariel is an invisible witness to all that happens on the island, watching and initiating much of the play's action. Because of Ariel's unique vantage point, and the fact that she propels the plot, it was important—for me—to feature this role. I envisioned Ariel literally flying, perching above scenes and flying down to take part when necessary. With the help of a theatrical flying company—ZFX Flying—we will achieve this special effect, rigging Denice Hicks, the actress playing Ariel, for flight. I hope this effect will highlight the significance of Ariel's character and be a memorable experience for the audience.

**Claire Syler**

*The hour's now come; Obey and be attentive.  
Canst thou remember a time before we came unto this cell?*

## Setting the Scene:

# *The Tempest* Activities for the Classroom

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Claire Syler, Education Director

Exposition—or backstory—is an important storytelling ingredient. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare discloses most of the exposition through Prospero's speech to Miranda early in the play (Act 1, Scene 2). As Miranda learns her personal history, the audience gains the information necessary to understand the plot. The amount of exposition provided, and the mode in which it is revealed, figures heavily in effective storytelling. Explore these concepts with your students using the following activities and discussion ideas.

### **ACTIVITY I:**

As a class, read Prospero and Ariel's scene in Act I, Scene 2. Ariel's request for freedom results in Prospero recounting the spirit's backstory when she was confined in a pine tree by the witch Sycorax. Discuss Ariel's life on the island before Prospero's arrival. How did Ariel's previous mistress, Sycorax, differ from Prospero? Divide the students into groups, asking one or two students to read Prospero's monologue of Ariel's background, as other students perform the key images (in tableau) within the speech. Share the performances with the class. Discuss the different ways students illustrated Ariel's confinement.

### **Discussion Ideas & Questions**

#### **DISCUSSION I:**

Caliban's backstory greatly affects the way he is treated by Prospero and Miranda. Early in the play, Prospero reveals that Caliban sought to "violate" Miranda, yet little context about this event is disclosed. Discuss Caliban's place on the island. Are Prospero and Miranda justified in their treatment of Caliban? Is there any way Caliban could be misunderstood?

#### **DISCUSSION II:**

Exposition is not exclusive to dramatic characters. Every day your backstory has an impact on your life. Think about how you get to know a new friend, girlfriend, or boyfriend. What do you ask about a friend's past? What do you reveal about your background? Report cards, resumes, and references also help document your backstory. When was the last time you supplied someone with a report card, resume, or reference?

## Designing *The Tempest*

With its magical island environment and supernatural characters, designers are often attracted to the creative opportunities and challenges in *The Tempest*. As a class (or in small groups) use the following prompts to create a visual world for *The Tempest*.

### Color Palette

Designers often work within a specific color palette or a range of hues. If your students had to choose only five colors to employ in a production of *The Tempest*, which five would they choose and why? Are the colors light or dark? Bright or dim? What might the colors communicate to the audience?

### Scenery

Imagine the island environment of *The Tempest*. Is it lush and green or barren and harsh? What is the weather like? Onstage, where are Prospero's "cell" and Caliban's "rock"? What do these scenic locations look like? Are they massive or slight? Tall or short? How might an actor move about the scenery?

### Ariel and Caliban

According to the text, Ariel is a shape-shifter who can become invisible, fly to whatever situation she needs to attend, or burst into flames. With the limitations of live theatre, how would you communicate this supernatural character to an audience? Would you cast a male or female actor? What costume, hair, and make-up choices might create this magical creature?

In contrast to Ariel's connection with fire and air, Caliban is linked to earth and water. He is acknowledged as man but also called "misshapen" and "monster." What type of actor would you cast in this role? What costume, hair and make-up choices might create this magical creature?



Gonzalo

King Alonso

Antonio

*The Tempest*  
NSF 2010



Stephano

Trinculo

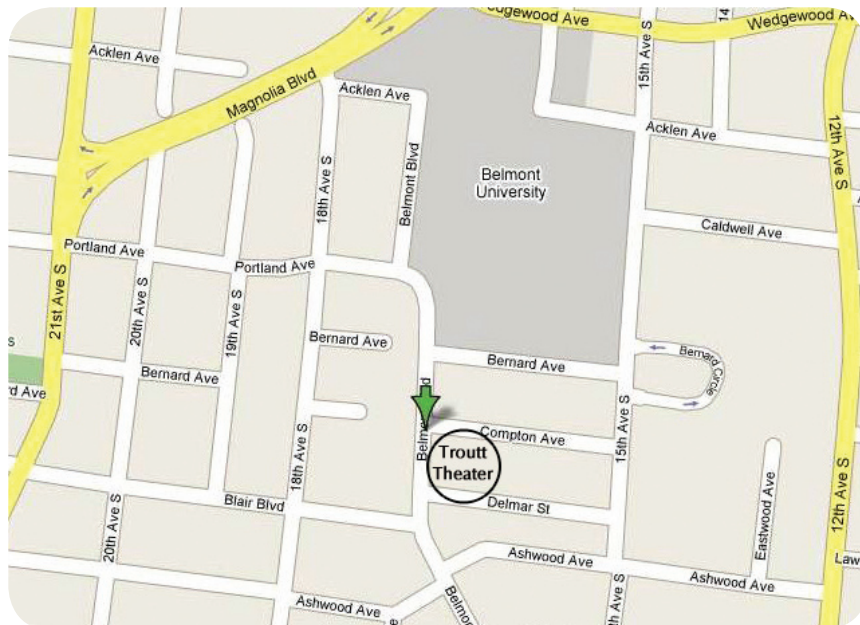
# Directions

## Trout Theater

2100 Belmont Blvd.  
Nashville, TN 37212

**From I-440:** take Exit 3 for 21st Avenue Merge onto 21st Avenue and continue 0.4 mile. Turn RIGHT onto Blair Blvd. and continue 0.4 mile. Turn LEFT onto Belmont Blvd. and continue 500ft.

**From I-65:** take Exit 81 for Wedgewood Ave. Go west on Wedgewood Ave. and continue 0.7mile. Turn LEFT on 12th Ave. S and continue 0.5 mile. Turn RIGHT on Ashwood Ave. and continue 0.4 mile. Turn RIGHT on Belmont Blvd. and continue 500ft.



## *Auditions for the Apprentice Company 2010!*

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival is looking for 14 playful, creative, and physical theatre artists to participate in the 2009 Shakespeare in the Park production. One Stage Managing Apprentice and one Directing Apprentice will be included in all aspects of the professional production.

Audition Date: **Saturday, April 17**

To schedule an appointment email **Claire Syler – [claire@nashvilleshakes.org](mailto:claire@nashvilleshakes.org)**

### **What is the Apprentice Company?**

A training intensive for aspiring performers ages 13-up led by Education Director Claire Syler and Artistic Director Denice Hicks, along with guest artists hired from the professional talent in Nashville. Apprentices receive 50 hours of performance training – movement, voice and diction, acting, text analysis and character work.

For further information and video on this program, visit [www.nashvilleshakes.org/students.htm](http://www.nashvilleshakes.org/students.htm).

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