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# TWELFTH NIGHT FEVER



PHOTO BY JANE HOBSON 2024



# SCHOOL PRODUCTION FEBRUARY 2024



The story began in The Simkins Centre when Mr Aldred, fresh from the success of the sell-out show ROCKBETH at Edinburgh Fringe in the summer of 2023, decided to swap out the skulls and leather for flares and disco balls. He swiftly put pen to paper and **Twelfth Night Fever** was born!

Our 2023/24 drama production was a fresh take on the bard's gender-bending comedy, set to a disco soundtrack. Featuring classic disco numbers including *Night Fever*, *Rock The Boat*, *I Feel Love*, *Boogie Wonderland* and *That's The Way (I Like It)*... it's a brand-new genre: Shakespeare Disco. The show had audiences on their feet and busting out the disco moves.

This glitzy show is performed with singing and dancing by an all-male cast for that authentic Shakespearean experience. Boys in Year 9 to Upper Sixth auditioned and were cast to bring this feel-good show to life.

The production ran at school for three nights in February 2024 and had its audiences on their feet, singing and dancing the night away!

Mr and Mrs Hetherington went to see the show on opening night, and pass on their congratulations and thanks to those involved...

*Thank you to all colleagues who have especially supported the boys to realise such a fabulous performance this evening. It was so funny and wonderful to watch. I was amazed at some of the performances, and full of admiration for the cast, crew, band, and all. There is something incredible about the dramatic (yes – that was deliberate) change in some of our boys when they are on a stage.*

*I was genuinely astonished by George's performance, Christopher brought the house down and Brooke has, perhaps, found his calling. But there were so many really brilliant actors, and the musicians were superb.*

*All in the audience walked out smiling – a real testament. It was such a jolly evening, and Lizzy and I enjoyed it tremendously.*

*Thank you so much to everyone involved, and huge congratulations.*

*Brilliant!*



ON STAGE AT HASLEMERE HALL





Following the success of their school production, **Twelfth Night Fever** played to a packed-out audience at Haslemere Hall on Friday 5th July 2024.

The boys stepped up to a bigger stage and were absolutely brilliant, singing, dancing and acting their hearts out. By the end of the show, the audience was on its feet, dancing and clapping along as the cast sang "*We Are Family*" at the curtain call.

The night was part of our preparations to take **Twelfth Night Fever** to the Edinburgh Fringe in August, and helped raise money needed for the tour.

This evening wouldn't have been possible without all of our generous sponsors and supporters - thank you!

LIVE AT  
EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE  
12-17 AUGUST 2024



IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE, PLAY ON...  
GET ON THE DANCE FLOOR!

# TWELFTH NIGHT FEVER

Shakespeare's gender-bending comedy  
modernised and musicalised with a  
disco soundtrack

12–17 August

2.40 pm • 70 minutes

£10 / £8 / £28 family

Performed by

  
**MORE THE  
MERRIER**

Neurodiverse Players



For 'Rockbeth'



0131 510 2384  
www.thespaceuk.com

theSpace Triplex

Venue ·  
**38**

Hill Place  
EH8 9DP

# FRINGE FEVER

**Twelfth Night Fever** gripped the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, winning over lots more fans to its unique brand of Shakespeare Disco. The tour was a richly rewarding and enjoyable experience for all who took part, and will live long in all our memories.

After being bigger, bolder and better at Haslemere Hall as part of our preparations to take the show on tour to the Fringe, the cast were challenged to be slicker, sharper and “smilier”. Come August, and two days’ rehearsal at the Simkins concluded with a run through in front of an invited audience, and then we were on the road! Mrs Rashleigh and Mr Aldred drove the van, loaded with all our kit, to Scotland via a pit-stop in Yorkshire. Meanwhile Miss Collington, Mr Feltwell and Mrs Gooderham took charge of the pupils, travelling by air from Gatwick to Edinburgh, with former pupil and *Easy Jet* crew member, Alex Carter, joining them on board and then staying on in Edinburgh to operate the lighting desk for the show.

The tour was action packed from start to finish – with daily performances at *TheSpace Triplex*, marketing the show on the Royal Mile, and trips to enjoy the eclectic tastes of some of the many different shows at the Fringe. Quite often, this included audience participation, and it was really encouraging to see staff and pupils getting into the action; on stage at *An Evening Without Kate Bush*, hijacking a *Nina Conti* show (thank you Anders), and becoming one of the running gags in *Foyle Arms and Hogg’s* comedy sketches, concluding with Miss Collington being kissed by an ostrich!

Our performances of **Twelfth Night Fever** were rapturously received, playing to fullish audiences, including one sold out show, and receiving glowing feedback from punters and professional theatre critics. It was truly heart warming to see the boys go from strength to strength, becoming slicker, sharper and even smilier (with the exception of smile-less Malvolio, marvellously played by Christopher Doxey) as the week went on.



Recognising the brilliance of Mrs Rashleigh's costume designs (in her swansong before retirement), the cast was also invited to an early morning photo shoot by TheSpace and was featured in the Scottish press. Bravo to the mistress of the wardrobe!

The tour was joined at various stages by Miss Jones, who assisted with social media and marketing, and Miss Batty who is taking over from Mrs Rashleigh and came to help with make-up. Many parents, family and friends also came to support, and we would like to record our appreciation for all that they have done, including the raising of so much funding, to make the trip possible.

The cast and crew were all OUTSTANDING, and a joy to be with on what was an intense and demanding tour. Special mention must be made of three school leavers, two of whom were in their last performances for More The Merrier. Firstly, Maverick Rayner who had returned from last year's tour with Rockbeth to express, for the first time ever, an ambition to go to University. This year, whilst at the Fringe, he attained the results which will take him on his next steps at Portsmouth University (bringing tears to his mother's eyes, as well as mine) - congratulations! Secondly, Ollie Sharples, who led from the front as our Dance Captain, dancing on the stage, through the streets of Edinburgh (and even on the bus!), having grown enormously in confidence and spirit. Last but by no means least, Patrick Stephens, who was also part of last year's Rockbeth tour, made the journey (his first one flying by himself) to support the show. He was in the audience for the last few shows and made himself busy crying on the Royal Mile in the manner of his father, Farnham's Town Crier.

What an incredible journey it has been, from the Simkins to the Edinburgh Fringe, via Haslemere Hall. A triumph and a truly transformative, educational experience from start to finish. In the words of Sebastian (charmingly played by Harry Owens): "If this is dreaming, let me carry on sleeping!"

**Mr David Aldred**

Head of Drama



PHOTO BY RICHARD DANIELS 2024

# SPECIAL FEATURE

Whilst the cast of the show were busy on the Mile promoting the opening show, Mr Aldred received an exciting email from TheSpaceUK (the home of award-winning performance and new writing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and managers of our venue for the week).

**Twelfth Night Fever** had been chosen for its “interesting, brilliant and terrific” costumes to feature in their press release. What amazing and thoroughly-deserved praise for Mrs Rashleigh, the creative genius behind all things set and costume for More House.

Bright and early on the Wednesday morning, the cast attended a photo shoot to showcase their disco outfits...



PHOTO BY RICHARD DANIELS 2024

REVIEWS FOR

# TWELFTH NIGHT FEVER

REVIEWS VIA: [TICKETS.EDFRINGE.COM/WHATS-ON/TWELFTH-NIGHT-FEVER](https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/twelfth-night-fever)  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANE HOBSON 2024



*I was lucky enough to attend the Tuesday show of "Twelfth Night Fever" and it was absolutely spectacular.*

*My partner and I flew to Edinburgh from London, specifically for this show and I can attest that it did not disappoint. We were kept in tears of laughter by the comedic timing and delivery of these talented, young performers.*

*The young men who make up the group "the more the merrier" are some of the funniest and most talented performers at the Fringe this year. DO NOT MISS IT!*





*Excellent energy from this joyful young neurodiverse cast!  
We especially loved Malvolio's displeased  
character and comedic performance! Truly captivating!  
We would love to see it again if we have time.*





*Great show, full of energy, enthusiasm and great moves! The cast all had great chemistry and the songs used were catchy and good fun. Malvolio's song in particular was awesome and I couldn't stop laughing! Couldn't be more proud of More the Merrier. If music be the food of the fringe - sell out!*







*Absolutely brilliant show!*

*Excellent production and choreography.  
Every single actor performed brilliantly and looked like  
they were enjoying themselves too! Some real stars  
amongst the cast who are going to go on to big things.*

*Couldn't recommend this show more, had no idea what we  
were going to see and definitely our favourite show so far!*



*A neurodivergent cast having a whale of a time performing a disco version of Twelfth Night, complete with an audience participation conga line! A show to gladden the heart!*



*This is a great idea with fun music. The young people/children have done a really good job. Such engaging and confident performances. Well done.*



*I thoroughly enjoyed this show. Shakespeare with a 70's twist, what's not to love?! Snappy dialogue, fun music, dance and romance. You will love it ★★★★★*

*Fantastic show... the boys are full of energy and enthusiasm. Well worth a visit.*



Fantastic feel good show ★★★★★





*This show was an absolute treat from start to finish...*

*This cast of around just over a dozen performers, of whom I used to go to their school so only a slight bias there, gave off some of the sharpest comedic timing, wonderful performance (especially towards Malvolio), and genuinely crying from laughter, throughout.*

*For a show of such young performers, this was a delight for all ages, with such a delightfully chaotic show that I cannot recommend enough, for fans of Shakespeare, disco (or both)! 5 stars*







# Twelfth Night Fever

*More The Merrier*



## Review

*If music be the food of love, get your boogie boots on and hit the dancefloor for an interesting take on Shakespeare's most gender-bending comedy, Twelfth Night only with time with a bit of added Fever. Based loosely around a disco soundtrack, this youth theatre version featured a twenty (or so) strong, neurodiversity led, all-male cast, lending it real 16th century Shakespearean authenticity with a 21st century twist. The cleverly adapted script stayed true to the plot (why not, the Bard knew how to write a decent one) and the original text whilst throwing in modern day asides in **a seventy minute, exquisitely costumed theatrical extravaganza.***

*Complementing the text was an interesting selection of classic disco numbers including Night Fever, Rock The Boat, I Feel Love and Boogie Wonderland, culminating in a pulsating finale medley incorporating It's Rainin' Men, Daddy Cool and We Are Family.*

*The whole piece has a warm, accessible feel to it, the audience being encouraged to join in with the songs they knew and, heavens above, they even had folks up on stage doing a conga at one point, a throwback to the Bard's beginnings when audience participation was a given.*

*There's clearly been a lot of thought put into staging the show, particularly given the large cast, the frequent scene changes and the need to get a lot of people on and off the floor quickly given the number of ensemble pieces. It looked to be a real team effort, too, with cast members clearly enjoying playing to an engaged audience that was itself clearly having a ball.*

*There were some lovely performances to admire as well. **Sir Toby Belch** was, well, appropriately belchy. His sidekick and fellow rabble-rouser, the impressive **Sir Andrew Aguecheek**, managed the tricky task of playing "drunk" whilst remaining crystal clear in delivery of his lines. **The Fool**, resplendent in a joyfully coloured costume, moved with alacrity and was splendidly jesterish. Sister/brother **Viola and Sebastian** were also well cast, physically similar and identically costumed, which might sound a minor point but it really helped explain yet another of Shakespeare's "cases of mistaken identity" as the denouement gathered pace. Throw in an extremely convincing "**Elvis Priestly**" and you can see the strength of the ensemble.*

*But the show was somewhat stolen by an alarmingly convincing Olivia and a truly bravura performance from Malvolio. **Olivia** steered things along nicely with a well judged characterisation of the part, together with almost perfect enunciation. **Malvolio** visibly grew into his role as the show progressed, excellent movement and mannerisms, a powerful stage presence and a "bring the house down" rendition of "Do You Think I'm Sexy" in that iconic scene where he's tricked by Maria, Olivia's maid, into appearing before her mistress in bright yellow cross garters. Priceless.*

*With the numbers involved and the many comings and goings, there was the odd, minor hiccup but it's easier to see through these and just enjoy what worked, which was pretty much all of it. **That's the beauty of the Fringe – in this case it's facilitated a bunch of engaging young people getting onto a stage, telling a story with considerable aplomb and, most importantly, having fun doing so.***

*And watching people have fun is infectious, so why not try and make one of their two remaining performances and join what felt like one great big disco party.*

# TWELFTH NIGHT FEVER

## IN THE PRESS

Q&A: EDINBURGH 2024: DAVID ALDRED ON TWELFTH NIGHT FEVER

[WWW.BORADWAYWORLD.COM](http://WWW.BORADWAYWORLD.COM) 22 JULY 2024

INTERVIEW: 'TWELFTH NIGHT FEVER', MORE THE MERRIER

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BUCKET HAT TO PROMOTE TWELFTH NIGHT  
FEVER ON THE ROAD TO ED FRINGE



*'If music be the food of love,  
play on... get on the dancefloor!'*

