

Prime Stage Theatre to end 2018-2019 season with  
Shakespeare comedy *Twelfth Night*, May 3–12 at the New Hazlett Theater

2019 Pittsburgh Public Theater Shakespeare Monologue winner  
Carolyn Jerz of Greensburg cast as Viola

(PITTSBURGH, PA – March 20, 2019) Prime Stage Theatre, a Pittsburgh theater organization that presents professionally produced plays based on works of classic and contemporary works of literature, will commence its 23rd consecutive season on a humorous note with one of William Shakespeare’s most beloved comedies, *Twelfth Night*.

The show will run from May 3 to 12 at the New Hazlett Theater Center for the Performing Arts on Pittsburgh’s North Side. Show times are at 8:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2:30 p.m. on Sundays.

“Our production, set in the colorful, musical and passionate world of Portugal, provides us with a funny, slightly bawdy, and very entertaining end to our 2018-2019 season,” said Brinda.

In the play, Viola, who’s been shipwrecked, disguises herself as a page boy to find her twin brother, Sebastian, and soon finds herself at the center of a crazy love triangle.

In Prime Stage’s production, Viola is played by Greensburg’s Carolyn Jerz, who in February won the Upper Division in Pittsburgh Public Theater’s 2019 Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Contest. Jerz has appeared in more than 40 local stage productions.

The show is being directed by veteran actor, director and Shakespeare coach Andy Kirtland, co-founder and managing director of the New Renaissance Theatre Company and the Unrehearsed Shakespeare Company, both based in Pittsburgh. Previously, Kirtland acted and worked behind the scenes as part of the Unseam’d Shakespeare Company.

For the benefit of those with physical challenges, Prime Stage will offer an audio description of the Friday, May 10th show, a sensory-friendly performance at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 11th, and sign language interpretation during the Saturday, May 11th show at 8:00 p.m. Tickets for all performances are available at [www.primestage.com](http://www.primestage.com).

Prime Stage Artistic Producing Director Wayne Brinda believes that *Twelfth Night* is the perfect play for anyone who wants to jump start a love affair with Shakespeare's works. “*Twelfth Night* was written by William Shakespeare, who is, arguably, the most influential writer in all of English literature,” Brinda said.

“He was commissioned to write the play by England's reigning monarch of the time, Queen Elizabeth I, as part of her festivities to end the Christmastide season known as Twelfth Night. This holiday was celebrated as a festival in which everything was turned upside down—much like the upside-down, chaotic world of the play. It’s believed this play was first performed in 1602, right in the middle of his career, which happens to coincide with when he wrote most of his masterpieces.”

Brinda noted that most critics consider *Twelfth Night* one of his greatest comedies, and one that fits almost seamlessly to our present-day world. “As Shakespeare wrote, ‘If music be the food of love, play on!’,