

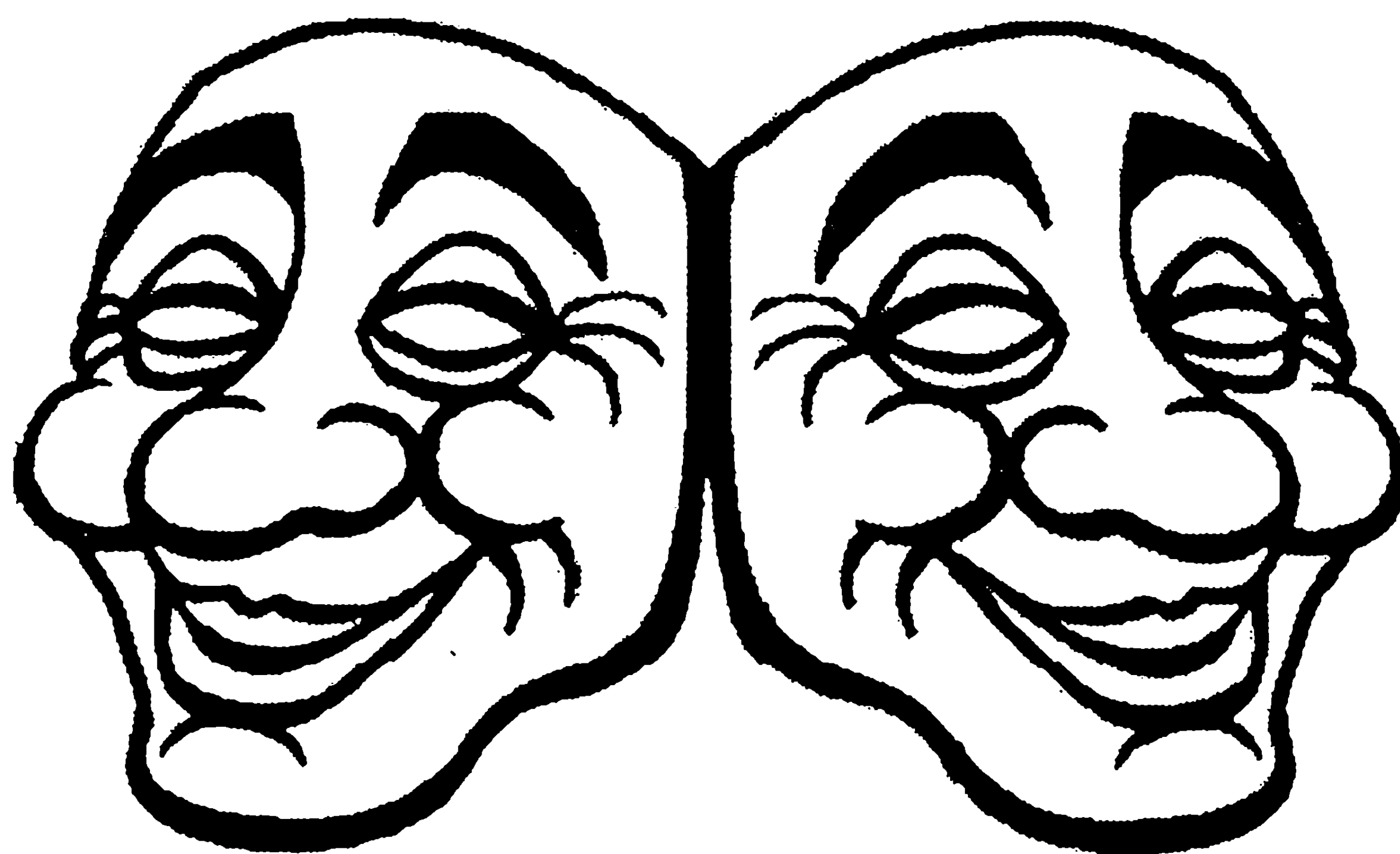


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The Comedy of Errors

by William Shakespeare

designed and directed by
Malcolm Brown



Wednesday, 6th to
Saturday, 9th May, 2009

The Comedy of Errors

by William Shakespeare

The Play

Twenty five years before the start of the play Aegeon's wife gives birth to identical twin sons, both called Antipholus, and Aegeon buys twin boys, both called Dromio, to serve them. During a sea voyage they become separated by a shipwreck, and Aegeon manages to save only one Antipholus and one Dromio.

They settle in Syracuse, and when the two boys grow up, they set out to find their twin brothers, later followed by Aegeon. Unknown to each other they all arrive in Ephesus, a city in conflict with Syracuse, and Aegeon is condemned to death by Duke Solinus unless he can pay a forfeit of 1,000 marks by sunset.

Unknown to all of them, the other Antipholus and Dromio happen to live in Ephesus, and this leads to considerable confusion, with Antipholus repeatedly mistaken for Antipholus, Dromio repeatedly mistaken for Dromio, Dromio mistaking Antipholus for Antipholus ... and vice versa ... and so on ... until everything is finally resolved with unexpected revelations and reconciliations.

The Comedy of Errors has many elements of farce, in which the audience and the dramatist are complicit in agreeing to accept even the most ridiculous coincidences. Yet the play, with its absurd plot and ingenious structure, goes well beyond the narrow confines of farce. The shadow of execution hanging over Aegeon is present in the background throughout the play, and is not resolved until the discoveries and reconciliations of the final scene.

As in so many of Shakespeare's plays, the happy ending can only be won after the passage of time and a struggle with mortality.

Shakespeare's main source for the plot of *The Comedy of Errors* was the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, which was published in Latin throughout the sixteenth century, and supplied the basic idea of a twin searching for his brother. Another work by Plautus, *Amphitruo*, provided the story of a wife mistakenly entertaining her husband's twin, and the idea of adding a second pair of twins as servants may also have come from this play, although the idea was also used later in many *commedia dell'arte* works.

The Comedy of Errors

Dramatis Personae

SOLINUS, Duke of Ephesus	Paul Fox
ÆGEON, a merchant of Syracuse	Rich Francis
ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus } twin sons	Tom Bailey
ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse } to Ægeon	Keith Huckfield
DROMIO of Ephesus } twin attendants on	Simon Twine
DROMIO of Syracuse } the Antipholuses	Mark Williamson
BALTHAZAR, a merchant	Henry Walker
ANGELO, a goldsmith	Andrew Allan
FIRST MERCHANT	Christopher Martin
SECOND MERCHANT	Graham Greensit
DR. PINCH, a conjurer	Edwin Barraclough
OFFICER	Nick Blackshaw
ÆMELIA, an Abbess	Margare Savage
ADRIANA, wife to Antipholus of Ephesus	Jo Murrice
LUCIANA, sister to Adriana	Katherine Tanney
LUCE, servant to Adriana	Maria Kwater
COURTESAN	Zoe Freedman

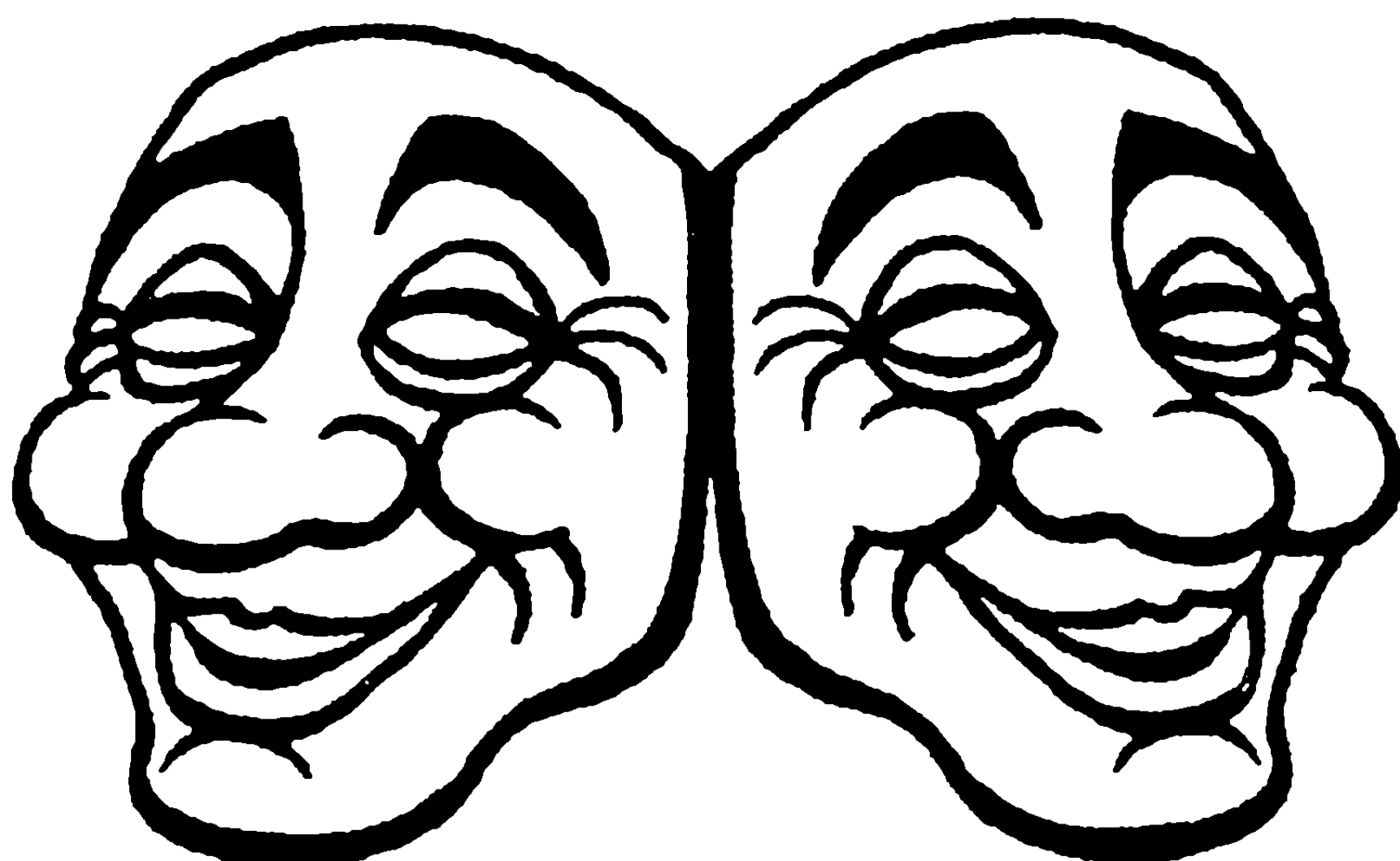
The scene is set in Ephesus

There will be one interval of twenty minutes
during which the bar will be open

Production Team

Production Manager	Chris Wilson
Set Construction and Stage Manager	Steve Fryatt
Assistant Stage Managers	Faye Stephens
	Miranda Foxton
Costumes	Pauline Ratcliffe and the LAC wardrobe team
Properties	Monica Brown, Denise Davies and Catherine Land
Wigs and Hair	Jean Blundell
Lighting	Peter Waddicor
Sound Recording	Jim Marshall
Sound Operation	Cal Rake
Prompter	Joyce King
Front of House Manager	Robin Thorntton

Designed and Directed by Malcolm Brown



The Comedy of Errors

Ephesus

"They say this town is full of cozenage,
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
And many such-like liberties of sin"

The Comedy of Errors, Act One, Scene Two

For the Elizabethans, Ephesus, on the borders between Greece and Asia, was a city associated with evil spirits, witchcraft, magic, exorcisms, dissipation and debauchery; but it was also the centre of the cult of Diana and the place where St. Paul spoke of harmony between wives and husbands and masters and servants.

For the Antipholus newly-arrived from Syracuse the magical associations are constantly reinforced as he becomes involved with Adriana, Luciana and the Courtesan, until he concludes, "There's none but witches do inhabit here", and gives voice to the heartfelt prayer,

"... here we wander in illusions:
Some blessed power deliver us from hence!"

All his strange experiences convince him that he is surrounded by fiends, and he finally takes refuge in a priory.

The native Antipholus of Ephesus believes he is a sane man in a world gone mad and the victim of an elaborate conspiracy. Everyone else thinks he is mad, and this culminates in his arrest, imprisonment and exorcism by Doctor Pinch:

"I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,
To yield possession to my holy prayers,
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight:
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven!"

Witches, fiends, sorcerers and devils are only really exorcised when the Abbess appears, the Duke's harsh justice is tempered with mercy, and madness is replaced by forgiveness and reconciliation.

Malcolm Brown



Leeds Arts Centre is a prestigious amateur theatre group which was founded in 1945. We are a friendly society, working together to maintain the high standards for which our productions are known. We produce four plays each year at the Carriageworks, as well as organising workshops to help members to develop their acting, directing and production skills.

We offer opportunities to all who are interested in becoming involved with any aspect of drama, including acting, directing, stage management, props, designing, costumes, lighting, sound, publicity and front of house.

New members are always welcome

If you are interested in joining our group, why not speak to one of our members front of house this evening, or in the theatre bar after the show?

You can also email us at: **publicity@leedsartscentre.org.uk**

Or you can write to:

**The Secretary,
Leeds Arts Centre,
c/o The Carriageworks,
3 Millennium Square,
Leeds,
LS2 3AD.**

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<http://leedsartscentre.org.uk/>

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Programmes and scripts for this production
produced with the kind assistance of

Lewis Francis Blackburn

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LEEDS ARTS CENTRE

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at the Carriageworks**

The House of Bernarda Alba

by Federico Garcia Lorca

directed by Amy Dutton

Wednesday 17 to Saturday 20 June, 2009

The Dumb Waiter

by Harold Pinter

directed by Maria Kwater

and

A Resounding Tinkle

by N. F. Simpson

directed by Zoe Freedman

Week commencing 12 October, 2009

Rozencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

by Tom Stoppard

directed by Pip Tibbetts

• Week commencing 25 January, 2010

The Dresser

by Ronald Harwood

directed by Rich Francis

Week commencing 12 April, 2010

The Deep Blue Sea

by Terence Rattigan

directed by David Lancaster

Week commencing 20 June, 2010

The next Leeds Civic Arts Guild production at the Carriageworks

The Cosmopolitan Players

The Graduate

by Terry Johnson

20 to 23 May, 2009