

**MAITLAND REPERTORY THEATRE PRESENTS**

*William Shakespeare's*

# **THE TAMING OF THE SHREW**



*Directed by Joanne Lawler*

**AUGUST 16 - 31, 2019**

**All Tickets \$18**

**Bookings: 02 4931 2800**

**[maitlandreptheatre.org](http://maitlandreptheatre.org)**



## THE SETTING

Baptista is a wealthy gentleman of Padua with two daughters. The youngest daughter is Bianca, a pleasant, sweet, quiet and obedient girl who is being courted by several suitors. The eldest is Katherina, renowned for being wild, angry and uncontrollable. To ensure that Katherina is married first, Baptista declares that no suitor will have any access to Bianca until Katherina is married.

One of the Bard's earliest and most popular plays, *The Taming of the Shrew* is a comedy of wooing, winning and wedding. A battle of sexes involving a strong-minded, bitter shrew wooed by an equally stubborn man. This rough and tumble play of unconventional romance is rife with subplots involving the Bard's customary devices of disguises and mistaken identity.

## THE CHARACTERS



### BAPTISTA

A wealthy gentleman of Padua and father of two daughters. He is seeking husbands for his daughters but stipulates that Katherina must be married first.

*Played by Alex Simpson*



### KATHERINA

The eldest daughter of Baptista she is wild, angry and uncontrollable. Often referred to as Kate the Curst.

*Played by Isabelle Moy*



### BIANCA

The youngest daughter of Baptista. A pleasant, sweet, quiet and obedient girl who is being courted by several suitors.

*Played by Victoria Bridge*



### HORTENSIO

A suitor to Bianca who plots to find a husband for Katherina. He disguises himself as a musician in an attempt to woo Bianca.

*Played by Matt Scoles*



### GREMIO

Neighbour to Baptista and a suitor to Bianca. He joins with Hortensio to find a husband for Katherina.

*Played by Patrick Delaney*



### LUCENTIO

Son of a wealthy merchant from Pisa. He has travelled to Padua to attend the University. He trades places with his servant so he can woo Bianca.

*Played by Robert Lewis*



### TRANIO

Lucentio's trusted servant. He trades places with Lucentio to give his master the freedom to court Bianca.

*Played by Faiz Khan*



### BIONDELLO

Witty servant to Lucentio

*Played by Lailah Hayes*





### PETRUCHIO

Having recently inherited the wealth of his deceased father, Petruchio has travelled from Verona to Pisa in search of a wealthy wife.

*Played by James McCaffrey*



### GRUMIO

A witty and trusted servant to Petruchio.

*Played by Mel Hickey*



### VINCENTIO

A wealthy merchant from Pisa and father to Lucentio. He travels to Padua to visit his son who is studying at the University.

*Played by Matt Collins (also plays Peter, a servant to Petruchio)*



### PEDANT

A traveller from Manuta who is told his life is in danger. He is convinced to disguise himself as Lucentio's father and pass a dowry in marriage.

*Played by Joseph Manning (also plays Curtis, a servant to Petruchio)*



### WIDOW

After losing her husband she courts Hortensio as her new husband.

*Played by Lisa Agnew (also plays Phillip, a servant to Petruchio)*



### JOSEPH

Petruchio's tailor

*Played by Shay Gardiner*



### NICHOLAS

Servant to Petruchio

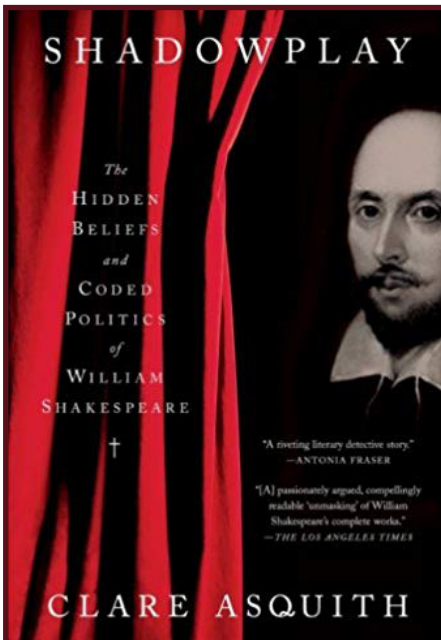
*Played by Lianna Creighton*

## A DEEPER MEANING TO BE INVESTIGATED

*Taming of the Shrew* is a play that tends to upset feminists - a shrewish wife is brought to heel by a forceful husband, and exits with a meek speech recommending female submission. But there must be more to it than that?

Shakespeare was writing in a time period that was characterised by religious warfare - the English Reformation. Below is a passage from Clare Asquith's book 'Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare'. Asquith believes that the play attempts to address the religious issues of the day.

*The setting is a household in chaos. Two sisters caricature the country's warring factions, the dark and shrewish Katherine, 'brown in hue as a hazelnut', representing the new religion - Protestantism - and Bianca, the name means 'white' in Italian, representing the*



old. When Bianca refuses to reveal the name of her lover, Katherine ties her up and beats her, forcing her to strip off her pretty clothes, while repeatedly threatening, for no clear reason, to be revenged. In a parody of the crackdown on freedom of worship, Katherine's weak father is forced to bow to her demands that no one should 'worship' Bianca until she, Kate, is married even though, unlike her, Bianca is surrounded by admirers.

Bianca is passive and self pitying, a natural victim, but sanctified in religious terms by her suitors. The suitors are portraits of typical old and new Catholics, passionately idealising the sacramental religion, the younger ones ardent activists who become hopelessly entangled in their own plots and disguises.

Enter the swaggering Petruchio. He is a personification of all that is most vigorous and irreverent in an idealised pre-Protestant England. He accepts the task of taming Kate so that the suitors can attain sacramental Bianca but discusses the job in pragmatic, political terms. His marriage will be a reign; he talks not of love but of law and covenants. In the simplified landscape of the play, he represents the kind of ruler able to check the chief obstacle to religious coexistence - vengeful Protestant extremists.

He sets about the task with pre-Reformation relish, wrecking his solemn Protestant wedding service with rude and riotous behaviour, ridiculous clothes and a smacking kiss. He woos Kate 'in her own humour' by giving her a prolonged and varied taste of her own medicine - subjecting her to the same joyless regime that the Puritans proposed for England. This passage must have given particular amusement, for a common accusation against many Puritans was hypocrisy - they prescribed austerity while enjoying all the benefits of wealth and high office.

Down to the last detail, Shakespeare associates Katherine with the Puritan faction. With equal accuracy, Petruchio's household is made to embody an idealised picture of pre-Reformation life - earthy, rumbustious, full of servants with exaggerated names of band Saints, yet all merrily obedient to their unpredictable master. The same is true of Bianca, who is as typical of the oppressed Catholic faction as Kate is of the Puritans. She defines herself as clearly as a character in a morality play: 'Old fashions please me best'. Kate may be married by a vicar, but Bianca, at Saint Luke's, has a priest. She is surrounded by admirers in disguise who call her sacred, sweet, patroness of heavenly harmony - phrases common to coded madrigals and lyrics.

## PRODUCTION & DESIGN

**Director:** Joanne Lawler

**Production Manager:** Ian Robinson

**Costume Design:** Kadisha Patterson

**Lighting Design:** James McCaffrey

**Set Design:** Joanne Lawler

**Sound Design:** Joanne Lawler

**Stage Manager:** Courtney Lawrence

**Properties:** Mel Hickey and Joanne Lawler

**Lighting/Sound Technicians:** Coldan Kirkman and Rhys Hughes

**Publicity:** Meg O'Hara and Ian Robinson

**Photography:** Joanne Lawler

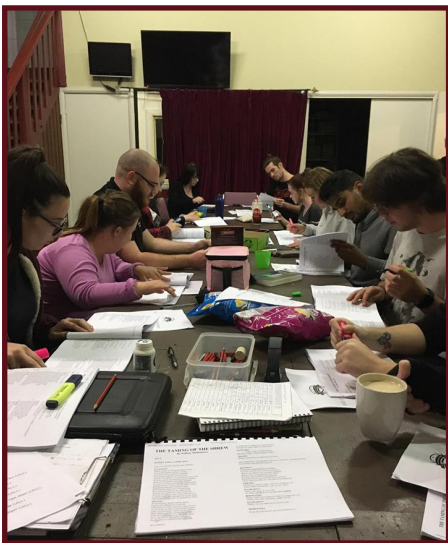
**Fight Choreography:** Isabelle Moy

**Catering:** Terry Allen

**Set Construction:** Reamus cast members and theatre volunteers led by Joanne Lawler and Ian Robinson with special thanks to Danny Shaunessy, Patrick Delaney, Lisa Agnew, Shay Gardiner, Matt Scoles and Joesph Manning.



## REAMUS YOUTH THEATRE



Reamus Youth Theatre (RYT) gathers young community thespians between the ages of 16 and 25 and aids in developing their skills in a wide range of theatre concepts. The groups meets on a weekly basis and has performed an annual Shakespeare play since 2002.

Director and current leader of RYT, Joanne Lawler, first became involved with Reamus during their 2016 production of *Titus* because of her passion for Shakespeare.

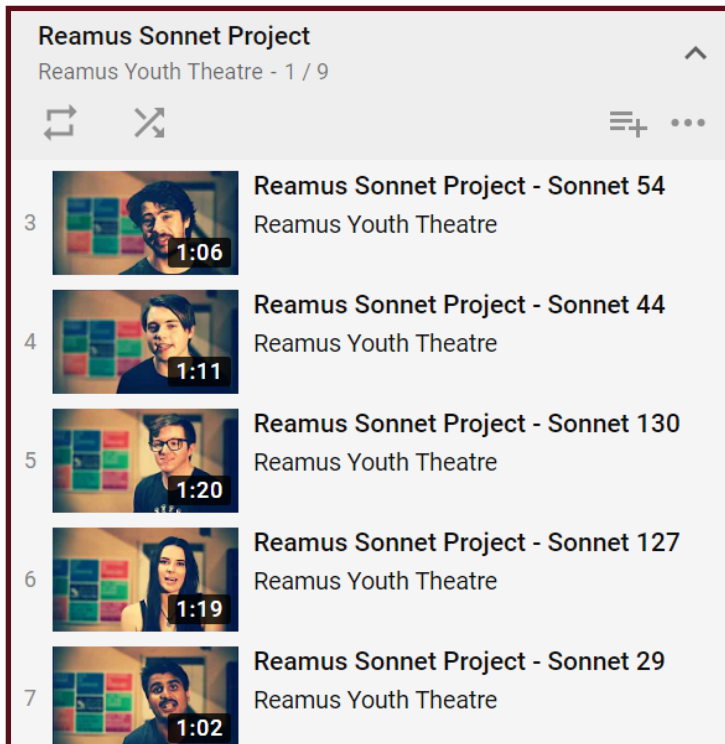
For this 2019 production Reamus members debated over the *Comedy of Errors*, *King Lear*, *Othello* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Shakespeare's tragedies like *King Lear* or *Othello* are very demanding and require actors with a good understanding of, a significant exposure to and experience of working on Shakespeare's plays to do them justice. So the decision was made to study *The Taming of the Shrew* as a stepping stone towards the tragedies. *The Taming of the Shrew* has both strong male and female leads and is still quite demanding on the cast.

Auditions were held in mid-March and we have since spent months pulling the play apart to break down and understand the language and then put it all back together again. We have



not rewritten any of Shakespeare's text, however we have shortened the play. We have not sought to change the story or try to amend it to suit today's conditions, our interest is in studying Shakespeare as it was written in the time period that Shakespeare lived. We have worked to investigate the events of the time in an attempt to understand the circumstances of the day that may have influenced his decisions to write what he did.

## REAMUS SONNET PROJECT



In early 2019 Reamus Youth Theatre members participated in an 8 week sonnet project investigating the sonnets of William Shakespeare.

Members chose a sonnet each, worked to get it memorised and over several weeks of workshops pulled the sonnets apart and then put them back together again. We touched on the various techniques Shakespeare employs such as iambic pentameter, inverting the meter, the sonnet rhyming scheme, dealing with series of monosyllabic words, the use of index words,

Shakespeare's verbs, rhyming couplets and more. This was a crash course and the 8 week project culminated in recording videos of each of the sonnets which are available on youtube at <https://youtu.be/asyTJ-vOI7g>.

### Sonnet 54

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,  
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!  
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem  
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.  
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye  
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,  
Hang on such thorns and play as wantonly  
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:  
But, for their virtue only is their show,  
They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade,  
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;  
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:  
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,  
When that shall fade, my verse distills your truth.

## JOIN US

We're always looking for new, active members. To find out how to join, visit the 'Get Involved' page of our website:

[www.mrt.org](http://www.mrt.org)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks to A V Chartered Accountants, Custom Audio, Scion Audio, ABC Radio 1233, Ken Longworth (The Newcastle Herald), Donna Sharpe (The Maitland Mercury), The Sign Shop, Inkquip Maitland, Optic Empire Webhosting, CONDA Judges and also to our audiences for their continued patronage.

Patrons: Jenny Aitchison MP, Mayor Loretta Baker, Keith Cockburn, Bob Geoghegan, Margaret Sivyer OAM and Meryl Swanson MP.

## DONATE

All donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible. To find out how to donate to Maitland Repertory Theatre please visit the 'Get Involved' page of our website.

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## 2019 Season

ARSENIC  
AND  
OLD LACE

October 9 - 27

LILY, THE  
FELON'S  
DAUGHTER

Nov 29 - Dec 15

**Audience members are reminded to please turn off mobile telephones once in the theatre.  
No photographs can be taken inside the theatre.**



