



## *Curriculum Guide 2012-2013*

# TITUS ANDRONICUS



### Sunshine State Standards

#### Language Arts

- LA.7-12.1.7.2
- LA.7-12.1.7.3
- LA.7-12.2.1.3
- LA.910.1.7.4
- LA.7-12.2.1.7
- LA.7-12.2.1.9
- LA.910.5.2.1

#### Theatre Arts

- TH.912.O.1.4
- TH.912.S.2.8
- TH.912.C.1.6

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## A Letter from the Director of Education

“All the world’s a stage,” William Shakespeare tells us “and all the men and women merely players.” I invite you and your class to join us on the world of **our** stage, where we not only rehearse and perform, but research, learn, teach, compare, contrast, analyze, critique, experiment, solve problems and work as a team to expand our horizons.



We’re “Shakin’ It Up” at Orlando Shakes, with new Lesson Plans designed to assist teachers with curriculum needs while sharing what is unique and magical about the Theater Arts. We’ve designed our Curriculum Guides with Sunshine State Standards in mind. You’ll find a first section which will help you prepare your students for the theatrical experience, a second section suggesting what to watch and listen for during the performance, and lastly, discussion questions and lesson plans to use when you are back in your classroom, to help your students connect what they’ve learned to their lives and your diverse and demanding curriculum.

I believe that as an Educator it is imperative that I continue learning as I teach and teaching as I learn. It is my sincere hope that you will find our Curriculum Guides helpful to you and eye opening for your students. Feel free to contact us at Orlando Shakes should you have any questions or suggestions on how we can better serve you. We are always learning from you.

Thank you for the tremendous work you do each and every day in nurturing our audiences of tomorrow.

Curtain Up!!

Anne Hering  
Director of Education

# Pre-Performance

## Read the Plot Summary

### *Titus Andronicus*

In Rome, all gather to see the late emperor buried. Saturninus, his eldest son, declares he should be the next emperor, but his brother Bassianus wants to hold an election, hoping himself to be elected. However, Titus' brother Marcus Andronicus (the Tribune of Rome) announces that the Senate has elected Titus the new emperor, as reward for long years of service as a military commander. Saturninus and Bassianus seem to peacefully withdraw their claims. Titus Andronicus then appears, back from the 10 year war with the Goths, in which he killed the Goth king, King Priam, and captured the queen Tamora and her three sons, Alarbus, Demetrius, and Chiron. Immediately, Titus' three living sons Lucius, Quintus, and Martius sacrifice Alarbus to appease the Roman gods, bringing Tamora to curse the Romans (interestingly, Titus had 21 other sons die valiantly in war over the years). When Marcus attempts to name Titus emperor, he refuses, claiming to be only a soldier. Marcus agrees to allow Titus to choose between Saturninus and Bassianus; he chooses the elder, Saturninus, who is immediately crowned emperor, then names Titus' daughter Lavinia his empress (although she loves Bassianus). Next, Tamora and her sons are brought in and presented to Saturninus, who immediately falls in love with Tamora, and to the surprise of all sets her and her sons free. Bassianus then



declares he is in love with Lavinia, but her own father Titus declares she should stay with Saturninus. Her brothers protect her and Bassianus as they flee, with Titus' son Mutius blocking the way. In the chase, Titus kills his own son, Mutius for defying Titus' orders. Saturninus appears and declares he no longer cares about Lavinia, and, to Titus' amazement and dismay, declares Tamora the new empress (although she loves Aaron the Moor, who is from Africa). Titus' brother Marcus and Titus' sons Lucius, Quintus, and Martius beg Titus to let Mutius be buried in the Andronicus tomb. Although difficult, they eventually convince him as such. Saturninus then reappears and accuses Bassianus of being a traitor. Tamora, though, after much persuasion, convinces Saturninus to forgive all, including Titus for murdering his son. In private, she vows to one day massacre them all. They then leave to see Saturninus marry Tamora and hold a feast.

Before the palace, Aaron ponders how he will wait on Tamora and continue to woo her. He comes across her sons

Demetrius and Chiron quarreling since they both love the already engaged Lavinia. Aaron tries to convince them they are insane to pursue her, but it is to no avail. He then convinces them to attempt to rape her in the woods when she goes for a walk while the Roman men are out on a hunt. Before the hunt, Titus tells his sons to protect the emperor and his party, as Titus has had a bad night's sleep. In the forest, Aaron and Tamora meet and he announces today is the day Bassianus will die, then gives her a scroll to give to Saturninus. Bassianus and Lavinia appear and question Tamora about being with the Moor. Demetrius and Chiron then appear and Tamora tells them that Bassianus had threatened her, provoking both sons to stab and kill him. They drag him away, and, against her pleadings, drag Lavinia to rape her. Separately in the forest, Aaron leads Titus' sons Quintus and Martius to the pit where Bassianus is buried. Martius falls in and Aaron goes to get Saturninus. Trying to help his brother, Quintus falls in too. Saturninus arrives and is told of Bassianus' death, then Tamora gives Saturninus the scroll which describes the plot, causing Saturninus to immediately accuse Quintus and Martius of killing Bassianus and has them imprisoned while Titus pleads for their lives to no avail. Separately, Demetrius and Chiron drop off Lavinia in the forest, her tongue cut off and both her hands cut off so she cannot tell who has ravished her;



## Pre-Performance

### Read the Plot Summary

yet, she still lives. Marcus finds her and plans to bring her to her father Titus.



Back in Rome, Titus pleads to the Tribunes to let his sons live, but they ignore him. Even after they leave, he continues to plead, even to the stones of the buildings, until his son Lucius appears and tells Titus he (Lucius) has been banished from Rome for trying to free his brothers. Marcus then appears with Lavinia, causing Titus, Lucius, and Marcus to all weep for her. Aaron appears and informs them that Saturninus has declared he will free Titus' sons if one of the men will send Saturninus his hand cut off. All pledge their hands and Lucius and Marcus leave to get an axe. While gone, though, Titus lets Aaron cut off his hand. Aaron privately tells the audience he'll bring Titus his sons' heads and Titus' hand back within one half hour. Sure enough, a messenger appears with Titus' sons' heads and Titus' hand in scorn from the emperor. Titus tells his banished son Lucius to go to the Goths and raise an army to be "revenged on Rome and Saturnine". At Titus' house, he, Lavinia, Marcus, and Lucius' son

(young Lucius) eat dinner while we see Titus slowly going mad.

Still at Titus' house, Lavinia leads Titus, Marcus, and young Lucius to a book describing a rape, prompting the men to realize she was raped. They then have her write in sand with a stick who did it: she writes "Rape. Chiron. Demetrius." Titus vows to revenge their deed. He sends young Lucius to Chiron and Demetrius with weapons and a scroll describing the rape in riddles. Chiron and Demetrius do not catch on, but Aaron does (privately) and he decides not to tell anyone. All learn that Tamora has given birth to a son. Her nurse brings the babe to Aaron to show him it is black and he is obviously the father; the nurse says Tamora wants the baby killed before Saturninus sees it. Aaron convinces her not to kill it, then kills the nurse so she cannot tell anyone of the baby. Aaron tells Chiron and Demetrius to send him the midwife so he can kill her too, then they can bury the women. He also tells them to go to Muliteus' wife and give her gold to let them have her newborn child, which they will give to Tamora, and thus deceive Saturninus. In private, Aaron decides he will take his baby back to the Goths and hide it there, raising it to be a warrior. Before the palace, Titus, Marcus, his son Publius, and young Lucius arrive with letters on the ends of arrows. Titus wants the letters shot to the Gods, demanding justice be brought to

Rome. Pretending to do so, Marcus has the men shoot them into the palace's courtyard. Titus also entreats a clown to give one of the letters to Saturninus, and he agrees. Saturninus receives the letters, but only grows in anger. When the clown presents Titus' letter, Saturninus orders the clown killed. Aemilius arrives and announces Lucius is attacking Rome with help from the Goths. Saturninus fears the citizens will favor Lucius and dethrone him. Tamora convinces Saturninus to let her try to convince Titus to stop his son's attack.

In a plain outside Rome, Lucius and the Goths appear. Aaron and his baby are brought in, captured at a monastery. In return for his baby's safety, Aaron promises to tell of all his misdeeds. Lucius agrees and Aaron tells of Chiron and Demetrius rape and torture of Lavinia, murder of Bassianus, and framing of Lucius' brothers. Aaron admits he was behind it all and he and Tamora laughed at length at it all. Lucius does not hang Aaron, but rather promises a more painful torture. At Titus' house, Tamora appears disguised as Revenge, with her sons disguised as Rape and Murder. Titus initially recognizes them, but Tamora convinces him they are Revenge, Rape, and Murder, and befriends him. He asks them to seek out Demetrius, Chiron, and Tamora and kill them. Tamora agrees, but asks him to bid Lucius come to his house and Titus bids Marcus to do so. Titus privately reveals that



## Pre-Performance Read the Plot Summary

he is not mad, and he knows who they really are. Tamora leaves, but



Titus asks "Murder" and "Rape" to stay with him. After she leaves, Titus calls Publius and others in to bind and gag Demetrius and Chiron. He then tells them he knows of their deeds and will slit their throats, whilst Lavinia catches their blood in a basin. He tells them he will then grind up their bones to make a pie crust, and use their heads to make the pastry, then serve it to their mother. He kills them, then begins to cook. At Titus' house, Lucius and the Goths arrive with Aaron and order him imprisoned. Next, Saturninus and Tamora arrive and sit down for dinner, Saturninus and Tamora eating the pies. In front of

them, Titus kills Lavinia to end her shame and suffering over her rape. He tells all Chiron and Demetrius raped her, prompting Saturninus to order them brought to him, but Titus announces they have just eaten them. Titus then kills Tamora, Saturninus kills Titus, and Lucius kills Saturninus. Later, Lucius explains all of the events to the Roman people, who immediately proclaim him the new emperor. Lastly, Lucius orders Aaron buried breast deep and starved to death. As for Tamora, he orders her to have no funeral, but her body be thrown to the birds of prey.

## Pre-Performance Meet the Characters

**SATURNINUS**, Son to the late Emperor of Rome, and afterwards declared Emperor.

**BASSIANUS**, Brother to Saturninus, in love with Lavinia.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**, a Roman, General against the Goths.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**, Tribune of the People, and brother to Titus.

**LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS, & MUTIUS**, Sons to Titus Andronicus.

**YOUNG LUCIUS**, a Boy, Son to Lucius.

**PUBLIUS**, Son to Marcus Andronicus.

**SEMPRONIUS, CAIUS, & VALENTINE**, Kinsmen to Titus.

**ÆMILIUS**, a noble Roman.

**ALARBUS, DEMETRIUS, & CHIRON**, Sons to Tamora.

**AARON**, a Moor, beloved by Tamora.

**TAMORA**, Queen of the Goths.

**LAVINIA**, Daughter to Titus Andronicus.



# Pre-Performance

## *Titus Andronicus* as Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy

Thomas Kyd established the revenge tragedy with his wildly popular *Spanish Tragedy* (1587). Shakespeare explored the genre with *Titus Andronicus* and perfected it with *Hamlet*, which is likely based on another revenge play by Kyd called the Ur-Hamlet. Sadly, no copy of Kyd's Ur-Hamlet exists today.

Most revenge tragedies share some basic elements:

- A play within a play
- Mad scenes
- A vengeful ghost
- One or several gory scenes
- A central character who has a serious grievance against a formidable opponent

“The works of Shakespeare, once frequently cited as “timeless,” have been subject to a periodic rise and fall in critical favor over the course of time. *Measure for Measure* offended the conservative sensibilities of nineteenth century audiences, and *King Lear* was disregarded for generations as “unactable” by. However, no other Shakespearean work has experienced the dramatic fall from favor or endured the level of sustained ridicule that has been heaped on the early tragedy *Titus Andronicus*.

Although *Titus* was quite successful in Elizabethan times, the overwhelming critical consensus in subsequent years dismissed the play as “an accumulation of vulgar physical horrors.” Critics were disgusted by *Titus*’s brutal violence, memorably catalogued by S. Clarke Hulse in 1979 as including:

- 14 killings
- 9 of them on stage
- 6 severed members
- 1 rape (or 2 or 3, depending on how you count)
- 1 live burial
- 1 case of insanity and 1 of cannibalism
- an average of 5.2 atrocities per act, or one for every 97 lines

The bloody spectacle was even said to have frightened the young Robert Burns “almost into convulsions” when it was read aloud to him as a child. Theatrical audiences seem to have had a similar reaction, with nervous laughter and/or fainting frequently reported at even the most favorably reviewed productions. Accordingly, revivals have been few and far between, until quite recently.”

<http://pbsandwichofdoom.hubpages.com/hub/A-Performance-History-of-Titus-Andronicus-from-Shakespeares-Time-to-Ours>



# Pre-Performance

## Research the Historical Context



### Who was William Shakespeare?

-William Shakespeare is a mystery. He never went to college, only the local grammar school, but ended

up writing the most famous plays in the history of the world. How did it happen? Nobody really knows.

-We know very little about Shakespeare's personal life, his childhood and his marriage when you think about the impact he's had on our world. We have none of Shakespeare's letters, diaries, or original manuscripts. All we have is his signature on a couple of legal documents. In fact, the lack of information on him has made a lot of people argue that he never really wrote all those plays or even existed at all!

-Never forget, Shakespeare wrote his plays to be **PERFORMED** not read. Never sit down to **READ** one of his plays if you don't know it. Get up and try **ACTING IT OUT**. You'll be surprised how much you'll understand. Reading Shakespeare is **ALWAYS** hard, Performing him is **EASY**.

-Will wrote over 40 plays, but only 37 have survived. He wrote every kind of story you can think of- tragedies, comedies, histories. 22 of his plays were about **WAR**. Guess he had human nature down. . . In his plays you can find teenagers fighting with their parents, teenagers running away, teenagers falling in love, ghosts, gods, witches, drunks, murderers, a woman caressing her lover's body minus its head, a woman caressing her lover's head minus its body, weddings, funerals, death by stabbing, suffocation, poison, decapitation, spiking, hanging, execution, being made into a

meat-pie, and drowning in a vat of wine. The point is that Shakespeare did it **ALL**!

-Everybody went to see Shakespeare's plays: children, peasants, royalty, merchants, every kind of person from every social group and clique. It was the one place where a beggar could rub elbows with the rich and famous. Remember there were no televisions, no radios, no magazines, and only the beginnings of newspapers. Not that newspapers mattered much considering most people **COULDN'T** read or write! Aside from the plays, there were bear-baitings, cockfights, bull-baitings and if you were lucky, the occasional execution. That was all. Seeing one of his plays was something like a cross between a Magic basketball game and a rock concert. It was noisy, crazy, usually messy, and a whole lot of fun.

### Shakespeare's Early Years

- William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. He died on the exact same day fifty-two years later, in 1616. He lived during what was called the Elizabethan Era because at that time the queen of England was Queen Elizabeth I.

- William Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare, was a glovemaker by trade and ran a 'general store'. He was a prominent citizen in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon and even served as mayor for a term. The very first mention of John Shakespeare is in 1552. He was fined for keeping a 'dunghill' in front of his house. When William was eight years old, his father's fortunes started to decline. His father stopped going to church meetings and town council meetings, and his application for a coat-of-arms was turned down. A 'coat-of-arms' was an important status symbol in Elizabethan England. Today it would be like the U.S.

Government and everybody else in the country recognizing that you and your family were upper class and treating you like you were somebody important. Basically, you got invited to all the 'A-List' parties. Nobody knows why John Shakespeare's mysterious decline occurred.

- Shakespeare's mother was Mary Arden, a young lady from a prominent Catholic family. She married John Shakespeare in 1557 and they had seven children. William's older sisters Joan and Margaret died when they were babies. His younger sister Anne died when he was fifteen. The most of what we know about his three younger brothers is the youngest was named Edmund and that he later became an actor in London. Edmund died at age twenty-seven and was buried in London. We don't really know much about Shakespeare's other two brothers.

- As far as Shakespeare's education, even less is known. We assume he went to the local public grammar/elementary school in Stratford, but there are no records to prove it. We're also pretty sure he never went to college or university (pretty incredible when you consider Shakespeare invented over 2500 words that we still use everyday- including the words "puke", "eyeball", and "vulnerable"). In fact, after his baptism the next record we have of William Shakespeare is his marriage in 1582 to Anne Hathaway. William was eighteen years old when he married and Anne was twenty-six. Anne was also several months pregnant! Susanna, Shakespeare's first child, was born in 1583. Two years later, Shakespeare and Anne had twins, Judith and Hamnet. Sadly, Hamnet died only eleven years later. There is no record of his cause of death. William was deeply affected by his only son's death and after it spent more time in Stratford, traveling to London only for important theater business.



# Pre-Performance

## Historical Context continued

### The London Years

- Nobody knows exactly when William Shakespeare moved to London or how he supported himself once he got there. We do know he was an actor before he was a playwright. Even when he was thriving as a playwright, he still found time to act in his own plays. He played roles such as Adam in *As You Like It* and the ghost of Hamlet's father in *Hamlet*.

- In 1589-92, Shakespeare's first plays were all HITS in London. By 1594, Shakespeare's own acting troupe, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, became the premier acting company in London.



- In 1598, Shakespeare built his famous theater- The Globe Theater. It was located on the south bank of the Thames River in London. The new theater's motto was "Totus mundus agit histrionem" or in English instead of Latin "All the world's a stage".

-The Globe Theater could accommodate over 3,000 spectators and admission in the early 1600's was one penny. The Globe had twenty sides and was an "open-air" theater, meaning there was no roof in the center. What roof there was, was thatched (made of hay). The rest of the building was made of wood. From above it looked like a large donut. Performances were given every day from 2-5 in the afternoon

(so the sunlight wouldn't bother the audience or the actors) except Sunday. The beginning of a show was signaled by three blasts from a trumpet and a flag raised at the same time: black for tragedy, red for history, and white for comedy. Why didn't they just pass out leaflets? Going to plays was considered immoral and advertising for plays was prohibited. Yet, everybody came! Vendors at the shows sold beer, water, oranges, gingerbread, apples, and nuts. All of these were THROWN at the actors if the audience didn't like the show! Audience members also frequently talked back to the actors. For example, if a murderer was sneaking up on somebody, the audience usually screamed out "LOOK BEHIND YOU!"

- On June 29, 1613, the Globe Theater burned to the ground. It was during a performance of *Henry the Eighth*. The cannon shots that were fired to 'announce the arrival of the king' during the first act of the play misfired and engulfed the thatched roof in flames. One man's breeches (pants) caught on fire but before he got hurt badly somebody dumped their beer on him and put it out! While the rest of the audience escaped unharmed, The Globe Theater was completely destroyed. Thirty years later, an ordinance (law) was passed to close all theatres. Acting and plays were outlawed because they were considered immoral.

### The Later Years

- Back in Stratford, William Shakespeare enjoyed his retirement and his status as 'Gentleman'. He purchased 'New House', the second largest home in Stratford-upon-Avon and often invited his friends and fellow artists over to hang out. One such visit is recorded in the journal of John Ward, a vicar in Stratford. He wrote, "Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Johnson had a merry meeting, and it seems drank

too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted". Shakespeare indeed died thereafter and was buried in his family's church in Stratford on his birthday in 1616.

- In all, Shakespeare had written over 40 plays in two years. Two members of his acting company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, published all the plays they could find in 1623. This collection of 37 of Shakespeare's plays has come to be



known as The First Folio. If it had not been for these two men, John Heminges and Henry Condell, we might have no record of William Shakespeare's work and the world as we know it would be a very different place. In the preface to the Folio these men wrote, "We have but collected them (the plays) and done an office to the dead... without ambition either of self-profit or fame; only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend alive, as was our Shakespeare".

- Shakespeare's friend and fellow playwright Ben Johnson wrote this about Shakespeare when William died- "... I loved the man, and do honor his memory as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature: had excellent fantasies, brave notions, and gentle expressions..."

# Pre-Performance

## A Chronology of Shakespeare's Plays

1589	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	1600	<i>Hamlet</i>
1590	<i>Henry VI, Part II</i>		<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
	<i>Henry VI, Part III</i>	1601	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
1591	<i>Henry VI, Part I</i>	1602	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
1592	<i>Richard III</i>	1604	<i>Othello</i>
1593	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>		<i>Measure for Measure</i>
	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	1605	<i>King Lear</i>
1594	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>		<i>Macbeth</i>
	<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	1606	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	1607	<i>Coriolanus</i>
1595	<i>Richard II</i>		<i>Timon of Athens</i>
	<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	1608	<i>Pericles</i>
1596	<i>King John</i>	1609	<i>Cymbeline</i>
	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	1610	<i>Winter's Tale</i>
1597	<i>Henry IV, Part I</i>	1611	<i>Tempest</i>
	<i>Henry IV, Part II</i>	1612	<i>Henry VIII</i>
1598	<i>Henry V</i>		
	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>		
1599	<i>Twelfth Night</i>		
	<i>As You Like It</i>		
	<i>Julius Caesar</i>		





# Performance

## Theater is a Team Sport (“Who Does What?”)

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say, and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the author’s words and the director’s ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes and sound that will compliment and complete the director’s vision.



Stage Manager Amy Nicole Davis  
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.

The **Shop and Stage Crew** builds the set, props and costumes according to the designer’s plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting and stage machinery during each performance.

The **Front of House Staff** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of performance.

**The Theater** is where it all takes place. Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF is the only professional, classical theater company in Central Florida, reaching students and audiences in the surrounding eight counties.

### Mission/Vision:

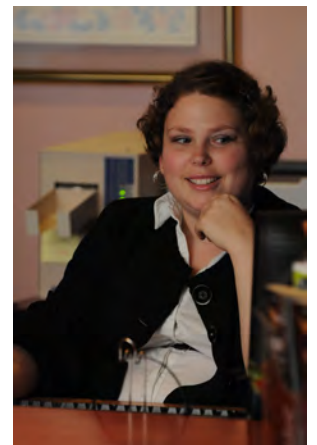
With Shakespeare as our standard and inspiration, the Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF produces bold professional theater, develops new plays, and provides innovative educational experiences that enrich our community. Our vision is to create theater of extraordinary quality that encourages the actor/audience relationship, embraces the passionate use of language, and ignites the imagination.



Sound Designer Bruce Bowes  
Photo: Rob Jones



Costume Designers  
Denise Warner and Mel Barger  
Photo: Rob Jones



Box Office Manager Gina Yolango  
Photo: Rob Jones

## Performance

### The Actor/Audience Relationship

The Audience is the reason Live Theater exists. At Orlando Shakes, we cherish the Actor/Audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an ACTIVE participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every, laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!



Photo: Rob Jones

There are certain Conventions of the Theatrical Event, like, when the lights go down you know that the show is about to start, and that the audience isn't encouraged to come and go during a performance. Here are some other tips to help you and your classmates be top notch audience members:

- Please make sure to turn off your cell phones. And NO TEXTING!
- Please stay in your seat. Try to use the restroom before you take your seat and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.
- Please do not eat or drink in the theater.

## Performance

### Enjoying the Production

1. How does the director stage scenes of violence? Are they believable?
2. Note when the actors talk directly to the audience. How does that make you feel?
3. How does the audience know when time has passed?
4. How do the lighting and sound effects help the audience know when the characters have changed setting?
5. What actors play more than one role? How do they indicate this?
6. Note different audience responses to brutal parts of play. Do they ever laugh during graphic sections? If so, why do you think they laugh?



# Post-Performance Reflect, Connect, Expand

## Talkback

After the performance, the actors will stay on stage for about 10 minutes to hear your comments and answer any questions you have about the play, the production and what it means to be a professional actor. We'd love to hear what you felt about the play, what things were clear or unclear to you, and hear your opinions about what the play means. This last portion of the Actor/Audience Relationship is so important to help us better serve you!

## Discuss

1. How are the female characters treated in the play?
2. What other time periods and locations could you use for this play? What adjustments would you need to make?
3. What role does race play in the story?
4. Are any of the characters purely evil? Justify your opinion.
5. Who in the play is out for revenge? Is their revenge justified?

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

# Post-Performance Lesson Plans

## Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Paraphrasing* Lesson Plan 1, page 1

**Name of organization:** Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF

**Event title:** *Titus Andronicus*

**Grade levels appropriate:** 7-12

### Objectives:

The student will:

- Paraphrase the characters' lines into modern language
- Demonstrate their understanding of the characters lines by reading their paraphrasing aloud to the class
- Substitute Shakespeare's text while thinking their own paraphrasing
- Create a personal connection to Shakespeare's text.

### Sunshine State Standards:

The student will:

- Analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of text and understand how they effect meaning; LA.7-12.1.7.2
- Analyze, compare, evaluate, and interpret poetry for the effects of various literary devices, graphics, structure, and theme to convey mood, meaning, and aesthetic qualities; LA.7-12.2.1.3
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate an author's use of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, pun, alliteration, onomatopoeia, allusion), figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), common idioms, and mythological and literary allusions, and explain how they impact meaning in a variety of texts with an emphasis on how they evoke reader's emotions; LA.7-12.2.1.7
- Describe changes in the English language over time, and support these descriptions with examples from literary texts; LA.7-12.2.1.9
- Strengthen acting skills by engaging in theatre games and improvisations. TH.912.S.2.8
- Respond to theatrical works by identifying and interpreting influences of historical, social, or cultural contexts. TH.912.C.1.6

### Materials needed:

Handout 1, *Paraphrasing Scene*

### Introductory/background information for teachers and students:

Have all students read the plot summary of *Titus Andronicus*, Curriculum Guide



# Post-Performance Lesson Plans

## Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Paraphrasing* Lesson Plan 1, page 2

**Name of organization:** Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF

**Event title:** *Titus Andronicus*

**Grade levels appropriate:** 7-12

### **Lesson Process:**

Paraphrasing is the Theater's primary tool for unlocking Shakespeare's text, both in the classroom and for our professional company. What is the definition of paraphrasing?

**Paraphrase:** n. a rewording of the meaning of something spoken or written.

A paraphrase is NOT a translation of the text, but a *rewording* of the text. This is one of the most important differentiations to make in teaching this material. Shakespeare's text is *NOT* a foreign language. It is Early Modern English- not "Old" English. Shakespeare created over 2500 words and compound words still in daily use. Our students speak Shakespeare every day without realizing it. Shakespeare's language in the context of his plays is poetry and therefore by 'poetic' nature 'open to interpretation'. Paraphrasing is the tool we use to align our understanding with Shakespeare's meaning.

There are two basic kinds of paraphrases- **Figurative** and **Literal**.

**Figurative:** 1. Representing by means of a figure or symbol 2. Not in its usual or exact sense; metaphorical  
3. Using figures of speech

**Literal:** 1. Following the exact words of the original 2. In basic or strict sense 3. Prosaic; matter of fact 4. Restricted to fact

We ask that the paraphrases the student creates are **Figurative** in nature. We don't ask them to create a word for word paraphrase of the text; but a common, lively rewording using their own daily expressions to capture the meaning of Shakespeare's verse.

1. Read the Plot Summary of *Titus Andronicus* to your students..

2. Divide students into pairs. Instruct them to write their own paraphrasing underneath each of the lines on Handout 1, *Paraphrasing Scene*, using a dictionary and the glossary at the bottom of the page when necessary. Encourage them to write conversationally, as they would say the lines today.

3. Have each pair perform their paraphrasing for the class. Encourage them to use their vocal inflections and gestures to act out the scene. Then perform the scene using Shakespeare's language. Encourage them to keep their vocal and physical choices when speaking Shakespeare's text.

# Post-Performance Lesson Plans

## Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Paraphrasing* Lesson Plan 1, page 3

**Name of organization:** The Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF

**Event title:** *Titus Andronicus*

**Grade levels appropriate:** 7-12

### **Assessment:**

The student successfully:

- Paraphrased the characters' lines into modern language
- Demonstrated their understanding of the characters lines by reading their paraphrasing aloud to the class
- Substituted Shakespeare's text while thinking their own paraphrasing
- Created a personal connection to Shakespeare's text.

### **Reflection:**

Lead the class in a discussion of the following questions:

1. Why is it better to paraphrase figuratively than literally?
2. In what way does paraphrasing allow for more than one interpretation of a line or character?
3. Why does thinking your paraphrasing while saying Shakespeare's words make the words easier to understand?

### **Additional Materials:**

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

*Titus Andronicus*, BBC 1985

*Titus Andronicus*, USA, 1999 directed by Julie Taymor and starring Anthony Hopkins

### **Connections to other learning:**

Consider having the student paraphrase other texts into their own words, such as the Declaration of Independence or the Pledge of Allegiance.

Create your own *Titus Andronicus* comic strips using software such as Comic Life or Bitstrips, uploading your own staged photos and writing your own paraphrased dialogue.

### ***Shakespeare Alive!***

**Want more paraphrasing? Orlando Shakes' Actor/Educators will come to your classroom and lead your students in an exploration of the play of your choice through an interactive plot summary and paraphrasing! 407-447-1700 ext. 208**



# Post-Performance Lesson Plans

## Handout 1 - Paraphrasing Scenes

### Act 2, Scene 1

**DEMETRIUS**  
Paraphrase:

Chiron, thy years want wit, thy wit wants edge,

Paraphrase:

And manners, to intrude where I am graced;

Paraphrase:

And may, for aught thou know'st, affected be.

**CHIRON**  
Paraphrase:

Demetrius, thou dost over-ween in all;

Paraphrase:

And so in this, to bear me down with braves.

Paraphrase:

'Tis not the difference of a year or two

Paraphrase:

Makes me less gracious or thee more fortunate:

Paraphrase:

I am as able and as fit as thou

Paraphrase:

To serve, and to deserve my mistress' grace;

Paraphrase:

And that my sword upon thee shall approve,

Paraphrase:

And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.

**DEMETRIUS**  
Paraphrase:

Why, boy, although our mother, unadvised,

Paraphrase:

Gave you a dancing-rapier by your side,

Paraphrase:

Are you so desperate grown, to threat your friends?

Paraphrase:

Go to; have your lath glued within your sheath

Paraphrase:

Till you know better how to handle it.

**CHIRON**  
Paraphrase:

Meanwhile, sir, with the little skill I have,

Paraphrase:

Full well shalt thou perceive how much I dare.

**DEMETRIUS**

Ay, boy, grow ye so brave?

*They draw*

# Post-Performance Lesson Plans

## Handout 1- Paraphrasing Scenes

**Act 2, Scene 3**

**TAMORA**

**I know not what it means; away with her!**

**Paraphrase:**

**LAVINIA**

**O, let me teach thee! for my father's sake,**

**Paraphrase:**

**That gave thee life, when well he might have slain thee,**

**Paraphrase:**

**Be not obdurate, open thy deaf ears.**

**TAMORA**

**Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,**

**Paraphrase:**

**Even for his sake am I pitiless.**

**Paraphrase:**

**Remember, boys, I pour'd forth tears in vain,**

**Paraphrase:**

**To save your brother from the sacrifice;**

**Paraphrase:**

**But fierce Andronicus would not relent;**

**Paraphrase:**

**Therefore, away with her, and use her as you will,**

**Paraphrase:**

**The worse to her, the better loved of me.**

**LAVINIA**

**O Tamora, be call'd a gentle queen,**

**Paraphrase:**

**And with thine own hands kill me in this place!**

**Paraphrase:**

**For 'tis not life that I have begg'd so long;**

**Paraphrase:**

**Poor I was slain when Bassianus died.**

**TAMORA**

**What begg'st thou, then? fond woman, let me go.**

**Paraphrase:**

**LAVINIA**

**'Tis present death I beg; and one thing more**

**Paraphrase:**

**That womanhood denies my tongue to tell:**

**Paraphrase:**

**O, keep me from their worse than killing lust,**

**Paraphrase:**

**And tumble me into some loathsome pit,**

**Paraphrase:**

**Where never man's eye may behold my body:**

**Paraphrase:**

**Do this, and be a charitable murderer.**

# Post-Performance Lesson Plans

## Journeys Into Arts & Culture *Write a Review* Lesson Plan 1, page 1

**Name of organization:** Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF

**Event title:** *Titus Andronicus*

**Grade levels appropriate:** 7-12

### Objectives:

The student will:

- Compare and contrast theatrical reviews of productions of *Titus Andronicus*
- Assess aspects of a theatrical production, expressing and justifying their opinions
- Write a critique of a performance including four aspects of the production, the audience's response and introductory and conclusive paragraphs
- Compare and contrast their opinions of a theatrical production with those of their peers
- Compare and contrast similar works and themes in the differing media of stage and film

### Sunshine State Standards:

The student will:

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence LACC.910.W.1.1
- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively LACC.910.SL.1.1
- Justify a response to a theatrical experience through oral or written analysis, using correct theatre terminology TH.912.C.1.3
- Research and define the physical/visual elements necessary to create theatrical reality for a specific historical and/or geographical play TH.912.C.1.4
- Justify personal perceptions of a director's vision and/or playwright's intent TH.912.C.1.7
- Apply the components of aesthetics and criticism to a theatrical performance or design TH.912.C.1.8
- Explore and describe possible solutions to production or acting challenges and select the solution most likely to produce desired results TH.912.C.2.1
- Explore commonalities between works of theatre and other performance media TH.912.C.3.1
- Critique, based on exemplary models and established criteria, the production values and effectiveness of school, community, and live or recorded professional productions TH.912.C.3.3

### Materials needed:

Handout 3, *Titus Andronicus Reviews*

### Introductory/background information for teachers and students:

Introduce students to "*Titus Andronicus as Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy*" in the Curriculum Guide.



# Post-Performance Lesson Plans

## Journeys Into Arts & Culture

### *Write a Review*

#### Lesson Plan 1, page 2

**Name of organization:** Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF

**Event title:** *Titus Andronicus*

**Grade levels appropriate:** 7-12

**Lesson Process:**

Explain to students that the director's job is to take the words in the script from the printed page to the stage and bring them to life. This is especially challenging in Shakespeare, because he rarely wrote stage directions. *Titus Andronicus* includes several staging challenges, which are:

- Cutting off someone's hand live onstage
- Showing rape onstage
- Cutting out a tongue and hands
- Slitting two peoples' throats and letting the blood go into a bowl
- Creating a "realistic" pie made out of human meat
- Titus putting his severed hand in Lavinia's mouth to carry
- Washing out all this blood for performances without ruining the costumes

Explain that theater critics review shows and publish their opinions. For AmericanTheatreCritics.org, critic Sherry Eaker wrote, "My point of view was that it wasn't the theatre critic's place to tell the playwright what he or she should be doing; instead, the critic should focus on what is already there and explain either why it works or why it doesn't work."

Before attending the performance, assign each student to read one of the theatrical reviews in Handout 2, and to highlight references to special effects in one color, acting in another color and the script in a third color.

In discussion, have students compare the reviews they read, specifically regarding how the director handled staging challenges. Instruct students to watch for these moments in Orlando Shakes' production and judge whether or not they are effective.

After seeing the production, have each student write a review of Orlando Shakes' production of *Titus Andronicus*. The review should include one paragraph each for:

- Introduction – What play did you watch, where and when, and maybe, why?
- The script – Did you like the writing, the story, the characters? Why or why not?
- The acting – Did you believe and care about the characters as portrayed? Why or why not?
- The design – Did you like the set, costume and light designs? Why or why not?
- The staging – How did the director stage the violence? Was it effective?
- The audience – What ways did the audience respond to particular moments?
- Conclusion – What will you remember about this performance?

Read more: How to Become a Theater Critic | eHow.com [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2079002\\_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc](http://www.ehow.com/how_2079002_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc)

# Post-Performance Lesson Plans

## Journeys Into Arts & Culture

### *Write a Review*

#### Lesson Plan 1, page 3

**Name of organization:** The Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF

**Event title:** *Titus Andronicus*

**Grade levels appropriate:** 7-12

#### **Assessment:**

The student successfully:

- Compared and contrasted theatrical reviews of productions of *Titus Andronicus*
- Assessed aspects of a theatrical production, expressing and justifying their opinions
- Wrote a critique of a performance covering four aspects of the production, the audience's response and including introductory and conclusive paragraphs
- Compared and contrasted their opinions of a theatrical production with those of their peers
- Compared and contrasted similar works and themes in the differing media of stage and film

#### **Reflection:**

After reviews have been handed in, discuss in class:

- How would anyone in the class solve a staging challenge differently were they the director?
- How would the staging differ depending on the size and configuration of the performance venue?
- How would you present *Titus Andronicus*, if you had only \$50 to spend? If you had no lighting? If you were filming it?

#### **Additional Materials:**

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

*Titus*, USA 1999 directed by Julie Taymor and starring Anthony Hopkins

#### **Connections to other learning:**

1. Consider watching Julie Taymor's film *Titus* in class. Note: Pre-view it to determine suitability for your class. You may want to choose to show only specific scenes, due to violence and graphic staging. Discuss how film allows for different ways to stage scenes for impact.
2. Pick a graphic or violent book or film and discuss ways to present it on stage.
3. List all the ways a designer might indicate blood on stage, such as red ribbons, water, glitter, etc. See how many creative ways your class can list.

# Post-Performance

## Lesson Plans

### Handout 3

#### Sample Reviews of *Titus Andronicus*



Titus Andronicus – review  
Shakespeare's Globe, London  
Andrew Dickson [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), Thursday 10 May  
2012  
Minimalist design ... Tang Shu-Wing Theatre  
Studio's Titus Andronicus.  
Photograph: Simon Kane/PR

What's *Titus Andronicus* really about? On one level, it's Shakespeare's most conspicuously show-offy tragedy: an earnest homage to Seneca and Ovid that reads, on the page, like a sixth-form essay in classical drama. On stage, it's the cartoonish carnage you remember: a play in which the hero is tricked into lopping his own hand off, then gets his own back on the two men who have raped his daughter by baking them in a pie, then feeding it to their mother. Revenge isn't always best served cold, Shakespeare suggests – sometimes it's worth taking it piping-hot from the oven.

Tang Shu-Wing's Hong Kong-based company – offering an abbreviated version in Cantonese – brought much of *Titus*'s antic energy to life, but somehow failed to make coherent sense of the play. Ricky Chan Chi-kuen's minimalist design didn't help: a blur of 12 people wearing indistinguishable grey and black outfits that did little to clarify the byzantine plotting, and reduced some of its grisliest moments to fashion-conscious costume changes. Certain scenes – such as the admittedly challenging one in which Queen Tamora (a vixenish Ivy Pang Ngan-ling) attempts to impersonate the goddess of revenge – failed to come off at all. More nigglingly, it felt like the actors couldn't quite find the right physical language for a drama so absorbed by its own mellifluous rhetoric. Only rarely was there the sense that this is a tragedy of people who spend all their time talking, but can't make themselves understood.

That's not to say there weren't good things here. Andy Ng Wai-shek's chalky Titus vividly suggested a soldier struggling with his own powerlessness on civvy street: you keep expecting him to break, but when he does so it's into manic laughter, as well as to long-overdue action. Chu Pak-hong was finely cast as a sneering, sarcastic Aaron, out for himself for the logical reason that no one else is. And Lai Yuk-ching's Lavinia caught the fierce inner strength of a young woman who refuses in the end to submit to the brutality of her attackers.

One of the production's most powerful moments, indeed, came immediately after the scene of that horrific rape, when Lavinia hobbles across the stage like an injured bird, caught in agonies about whether to confront her uncle with what's just happened. It was a moment of remarkable eloquence in a production that could have done with more.

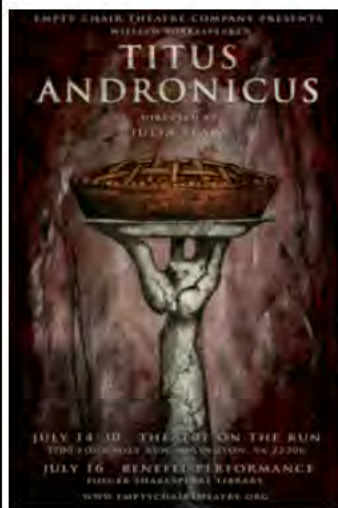


# Post-Performance

## Lesson Plans

### Handout 3

#### Sample Reviews of *Titus Andronicus*



#### Empty Chair Theatre: Titus Andronicus Review

Link: <http://emptychairtheatre.org>

Posted on July 19, 2011 by Jamie

Anyone who's ever visited this web site knows that I love seeing Shakespeare live. From the huge lavish productions of the Shakespeare Theatre Company, to well – The Empty Chair Theatre of Alexandria, who's budget is far exceeded by their talent.

Well' I had the pleasure this weekend to see Empty Chair perform Titus Andronicus to a packed house at the Folgers Theater in Washington DC. Mind you, this is the same company I saw last month perform Twelfth Night to an audience of 10 people, and their production was one of the funnest, and most energetic versions I had ever seen. So it was a great thrill to see them perform a benefit production of Titus at the Folgers.

Choosing to do Titus is always chancy. Being one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, you get the feeling he was out to make a name for himself. On stage there is 1 rape, multiple hands chopped off, 1 tongue ripped out, and various other hangings, butcheries, and other bits of nasty. As most people put it, it is Shakespeare's bloodiest play. And to Empty Chairs great credit, they did not pull any punches, and the blood did flow.

Without going into the plot of the play, I just want say Empty Chair did a fantastic job. Keeping in mind that most of these actors are between the ages of 20 and 25, they found a strong lead in Danny Cackelely as Titus, who easily portrayed the the authority needed. A graying and stately Marcus Andronicus was played by Jay Myers whom I would never have guessed was as young as he really is (I guess that's why they call it acting).

Then there's Lavinia, played by Amalia Camperlengo. Now I had seen this play several times before, and knew what was going to happen to Lavina. At first I thought Amaliea was playing Lavina to understated, but this might be me being a little jaded from seeing the play so many times. But once the tragedy took place, there was a complete, total, and absolute transformation in Amaliea. The Lavina from the beginning of the play was gone, and was replaced by a Lavina full of heartbreak, terror, and angst. She was chilling.

If it wasn't getting so late, I would gladly go on about the rest of the company, but I think you get the idea. My wife and I really enjoyed seeing Empty Chair do Titus Andronicus (As much as we enjoyed their Twelfth Night), and I really hope you get a chance to see them soon.



# Post-Performance

## Lesson Plans

### Handout 3

#### Sample Reviews of *Titus Andronicus*

REVIEW: 'Titus Andronicus' looks bloody good

TUESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2011

Shakespeare's 1590s slasher tragedy receives a stark staging by the Public Theater



BY MICHAEL SOMMERS  
NEWJERSEYNEWSROOM.COM  
OFF BROADWAY REVIEW

Shakespeare's splatter epic of the early 1590s, "Titus Andronicus" rarely gets produced, so it's a shame that the Public Theater has slated such a brief run for its effective revival, which opened on Tuesday and continues only through Sunday.

Performed by an 11-member company, director Michael Sexton's production is a compact, economical rendering of this relentless melodrama regarding a Roman general of inflexible virtue who runs afoul of several scheming villains.

Most of Titus' family is destroyed in one awful way or another but ultimately the mutilated protagonist reaps his revenge during a gory conclusion when more than half a dozen people perish. This is the play, incidentally, where two wicked brothers are baked into a pie and served to their unsuspecting mama.

These nasty doings often are so brutal that "Titus Andronicus" verges on becoming ridiculous, but the calculated modesty of Sexton's stark staging in semi-modern dress mostly restrains it from absurdity. Buckets of stage blood – actual buckets -- are sloshed upon the characters during the final massacre but this stratagem is in keeping with Sexton's stylized approach to the tragedy.

The director opens the play quietly as a young boy silently pages through Ovid while the story he reads comes to life. The boy is seated on a stack of raw wooden panels on an otherwise bare stage. As the play proceeds, these panels are deployed by the actors in different ways to suggest changing locations or are dealt out as crudely-drawn heraldic symbols meant to underscore the narrative – such as one that bears a crown for a scene when a new Roman emperor is chosen.

Dressed in combat fatigues, the bearded Jay O. Sanders makes an imposing mountain of a Titus brought low by his enemies only to rise again to murderous fury. Jennifer Ikeda becomes a mute picture of pathetic misery after her Lavinia is raped and maimed. Sherman Howard is a kindly figure as Titus' more temperate brother. The eventual ferocity of Rob Campbell's Lucius confirms his heritage as Titus' son.

It's debatable which among the drama's villainous characters prove to be the worst, but certainly Ron Cephas Jones is coolly unrepentant as the fiendish Aaron. A cold-eyed, crafty Stephanie Roth Haberle is alternately seething or seductive as Tamora while Patrick Carroll is especially creepy as one of her sons. Both Jacob Fishel's manner and peaked haircut as the treacherous emperor Saturninus suggest a shark.

Sexton paces the action steadily, making good use of Brandon Wolcott's clamorous music and ominous sound design to foster mood. Designer Brett J. Banakis' austere decor and Cait O'Connor's clothes are appropriately understated. If this "Titus Andronicus" forsakes grandeur, it certainly does not lack for intensity.



# Post-Performance

## Lesson Plans

### Handout 3 - Sample Reviews of *Titus Andronicus*

'TITUS ANDRONICUS': I Wouldn't Touch That Pie, if I Were You

By CHARLES ISHERWOOD

Published: December 13, 2011

The torture-porn movie business has an ancient and revered progenitor in the immortal Shakespeare himself. His early tragedy "Titus Andronicus" is a careering pileup of gothic horrors in which great ingenuity is shown in the matter of violent murder. Heads and hands are lopped off at regular intervals; the body count practically defies computation; and the finale is a banquet that only the meat-pie-making Mrs. Lovett of "Sweeney Todd" could love.



Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

Titus Andronicus Jennifer Ikeda as the mutilated Lavinia and Jay O. Sanders in the title role of this bloody Shakespearean drama, at the Public Lab.

The Public Lab production of this borderline ludicrous but sometimes, um, delicious play, directed by Michael Sexton, adorns the opening in a little apt classical allusion. Shakespeare drew on Ovid as a model for some of the play's excesses — Lavinia's extravagant ill fortune echoes the tale of the rape of Philomel — and the first image we see is that of a young boy in contemporary clothes reading Ovid in paperback atop a pile of wooden slats that will be used later as symbolic coffins. Today's gamers reveling in digital gore, we take it, are much like their equivalents of centuries past, who devoured poetry just for the bloody bits.

This youngster, ably played by Frank Dolce, will scamper in and out of Mr. Sexton's modern-dress production, camouflage backpack in tow, playing both victims and victors at various points. But nobody emerges unscathed — indeed, nobody emerges undrenched in blood — in this peculiar play, here presented in a sometimes crude but colorful staging featuring the talented Jay O. Sanders, a veteran of Shakespeare productions at the Public Theater, as the title character. (Mr. Sanders was a touchingly dopey Bottom in the Public's 2007 Central Park production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream.")

Set in an ancient Rome memorably described as a "wilderness of tigers" — though animal lovers may find this epithet offensive — the play whiplashes into life with a brisk scene in which Titus's misjudgment about who should rule Rome prefigures King Lear's bad choices about whom to invest with his power.

Returning in triumph after leading the imperial army to victory over the Goths, Titus humbly declines a public demand to become emperor, compounding the error by favoring the scheming Saturninus (a nicely snide Jacob Fishel) over his more worthy brother, Bassianus (a stolid Daoud Heidami).

Even before the first scene has concluded, a note of reckless bloodshed is struck. When Titus bestows the hand of his daughter, Lavinia, to the new emperor, her betrothed, Bassianus, absconds with her, aided by her brothers. The offended Titus impulsively slays one of his own sons in rage at this slight to his dignity.

Yet this rash act earns him no respect in the eyes of the peevish new emperor, who takes Tamora, the queen of the Goths (Stephanie Roth Haberle), as his empress. Tamora's seething anger over the killing of her sons by Titus will lead to a cycle of vengeful bloodletting that more or less consumes the rest of the play.

The violence is interrupted, or rather annotated, by much lush verse that sometimes strikes a preposterous note in the context of the vile deeds being committed. It is hard not to titter, for instance, when Titus's brother, Marcus (Sherman Howard), comes upon the piteous figure of the raped Lavinia (Jennifer Ikeda), who has had her hands sliced off and her tongue cut out by her attackers.



# Post-Performance

## Lesson Plans

### Handout 3 - Sample Reviews of *Titus Andronicus*

Does he rush, speechless in horror, to the bleeding woman's aid? No, he stands like a statue, bloviating in verse about her suffering, piling up pretty metaphor upon classical allusion for what seems like an eternity. Mr. Howard delivers the poetry in handsome tones of lyrical woe, but Mr. Sexton might, at least, have lessened the absurdity by having Marcus cradle the suffering young woman in his arms.

Mr. Sexton may believe that it's best to indulge the play's excesses rather than to mute them decorously. (Maybe Lavinia could get a laugh by gesturing, with one of her handleless arms, for Marcus to hurry things along?) I will admit I got a kick out of the buckets of blood — literal buckets, that is — that are hurled around the stage at the play's famous climactic banquet, in which the evil Tamora is fed a pie baked from the bodies of her slain sons Chiron (Patrick Carroll) and Demetrius (William Jackson Harper).

Trying to create astute psychological portraits from Shakespeare's conniving cartoons is probably a lost cause, and Mr. Sexton's cast doesn't attempt any such folly. In one of the more textured roles, Mr. Sanders does strike a variety of notes, as his Titus moves from understated, humble warrior to dazed, grieving father to wily plotter of bloody vengeance.

In his Santa Claus beard, his Titus at first seems like a lumbering, somewhat clueless bear without much bite, despite that slaying of his son. His gullibility is hilariously illustrated during the scene in which Titus, Marcus and Titus's loyal son, Lucius (Rob Campbell), argue over which of them will cut off his hand to win pardon for two more of Titus's sons, accused of murdering Bassianus. (Long story.) Here and elsewhere you suspect that Shakespeare himself was sending up the excesses of the revenge tragedies that so delighted Elizabethan audiences.

When Titus, the winner of that dubious contest, discovers that in fact his two sons have already been dispatched by the nasty Saturninus, Mr. Sanders has an effective moment when he opens his mouth wide, as if to let forth a howl to equal his suffering, and no sound at all comes out — until these eerie silent groans curdle into hysterical laughter. From this point on, his crazed Titus becomes a jolly participant in the bloody business at hand, half feigning madness (Hamlet-like) to trick his adversaries into falling into his traps.

The most corrupt of his foes is not really Tamora, played with glinting, elegance malice by Ms. Haberle, but the exuberantly vile Aaron (Ron Cephas Jones), Tamora's lover. A villain often compared to Christopher Marlowe's Barabas in the extravagant delight he takes in his deeds, Aaron is the real architect of the sanguinary cruelties visited upon Titus's family.

In his sleek, skinny suit, the lanky Mr. Jones is like a snake walking upright, slithering out his speeches as he describes a long life of iniquity with a drooling delight that, yes, almost makes you laugh out loud.

"Art thou not sorry for these heinous deeds?" Lucius asks, idiotlike, after Aaron has described in savory detail the grisly murders he's arranged.

"Ay," Aaron responds, "that I had not done a thousand more."

Elaborating on this theme, he then unfurls a litany of his iniquities that impresses us with its length, to say nothing of its ingenuity.

"Oft have I dugged up dead men from their graves," he brags, "and set them upright at their dear friends' doors, even when their sorrows were almost forgot; and on their skins, as on the bark of trees, have with my knife carved in Roman letters 'Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead.'"

Top that, Freddy Krueger.