

BY THE NUMBERS

It is estimated that CYMBELINE
was written in

1609.

In this production,

16 actors
portray approximately

26 characters.

86% of the full text is in verse,
while **14%** is prose.

The full text includes approximately

3753 lines.

In this production, King Cymbeline speaks
approximately **77** lines. Imogen
speaks approximately **113** lines.

photo by T. Charles Erickson

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

1. In the First Folio, CYMBELINE is categorized as a tragedy. Many scholars now consider the play to be a romance. Which genre do you think is more fitting?
2. Why do you think the play is named after the king? Is he the central character? If not, who is?
3. In this production, Posthumus and Cloten are portrayed by the same actor. How does this affect your perception of these characters?
4. What other Shakespearean characters have a similar relationship to Imogen and Posthumus? How do their stories differ? Why do you think Shakespeare was drawn to the story of an innocent woman being dishonestly slandered?

photo by T. Charles Erickson

CYMBELINE

DRAMATURGICAL INFORMATION

HUDSON
VALLEY
SHAKESPEARE
FESTIVAL

photo by T. Charles Erickson

INFLUENCES

Shakespeare likely based the title character on Cunobeline, an ancient king who ruled Southern England during the earlier years of the Roman Empire (approximately 10-40 CE). Though the “real” Cymbeline provides little more than a historical backdrop for the story to play out on, the historical figure did allegedly raise a man named Posthumus Leonatus as his son.

Many scholars believe that Raphael Holinshed's CHRONICLES and Boccaccio's DECAMERON inspired Shakespeare to write CYMBELINE.

WHERE & WHEN

CYMBELINE frequently shifts location and time period. Some of the settings we visit are London, Wales, and Rome during Pre-Christian Britain, Ancient Rome, and Renaissance Italy.

This production takes place in a contemporary world that draws inspiration from an eclectic array of sources, including Fleetwood Mac, TV's “Deadwood” and “Peaky Blinders,” and the USC Marching Band.

photo by T. Charles Erickson

WHO'S WHO

THE BRITONS

- * Imogen: Cymbeline's daughter, chooses to marry the lowborn Posthumus instead of Cloten.
- * Posthumus: An orphan raised by Cymbeline who marries Imogen.
- * Cymbeline: The king of Britain; Imogen's father.
- * Queen: Wife to Cymbeline, stepmother to Imogen, and mother to Cloten.
- * Cloten: The Queen's son, an arrogant man. Betrothed to Imogen before she married Posthumus.
- * Guiderius: Cymbeline's eldest son; Imogen's brother. Kidnapped from Britain at a young age.
- * Arviragus: Cymbeline's younger son; Imogen's brother. Kidnapped from Britain as an infant.
- * Belarius: Unjustly banished from Britain by Cymbeline. Now lives in Wales with his sons, who are about the same age as Cymbeline's kidnapped children.
- * Cornelius: A doctor at Cymbeline's court.
- * Pisanio: Posthumus' loyal servant.
- * Helen: Attendant to Imogen.

THE ROMANS

- * Iachimo: A clever and dishonest man, he makes a high-risk bet with Posthumus.
- * Philario: Posthumus stays with him in Italy.
- * Caius Lucius: Roman Ambassador to Britain.
- * Soothsayer: A seer in the service of Caius Lucius.
- * Jupiter: In Roman myth, the thunder god and king of Olympus. The Roman counterpart of the Greek god Zeus.

photo by T. Charles Erickson

Themes to Look Out For:

DECEIT SOCIAL STATUS
FORGIVENESS FIDELITY
AGENCY REMORSE

NAME CHANGE

It is believed that Shakespeare originally intended for Imogen's name to be Innogen, but the compilers of the First Folio misread “nn” as “m.”

PROSE V. VERSE

The language of Shakespeare's writing usually fits into one of two categories: prose or verse.

PROSE refers to ordinary speech. Lines written in prose do not adhere to a regular pattern of accentual rhythm.

There are two types of **VERSE**: rhymed verse and blank verse.

Rhymed verse is typically written in couplets. A couplet contains two lines of a similar length that rhyme.	Lines written in blank verse do not rhyme but are written in iambic pentameter, in which a specific rhythmic pattern is achieved through emphasis on particular syllables.
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Sources: ESSENTIAL SHAKESPEARE HANDBOOK, by Leslie Dunton-Downer and Alan Riding; THE SHAKESPEARE NAME DICTIONARY, by J. Madison Davis and Daniel A. Frankforter; No Holds Bard, “So You're Going to See Cymbeline.” Podcast; British Library Timelines. Web; Royal Shakespeare Company, “Who Was Cymbeline” Web; Utah Shakespeare Festival, “The Legend of King Cymbeline” Web.

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