

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT NEW PALTZ
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS PRESENTS



MEASURE
FOR MEASURE
April 27–28



Measure for Measure

Measure for Measure written by **William Shakespeare**
in a modern verse translation by **Aditi Brennan Kapil**.

Directed by **Dr. Isabel Smith-Bernstein**

Saturday, April 27 at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 28 at 2:00 p.m.

Parker Theatre*

Produced with permission of Play On! Shakespeare and the Hitz Foundation.

**Parker Theatre is situated on the ancestral land of the Esopus, Lenape, and Munsee people.*



DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Measure for Measure is the first play I saw that moved me as a teenager; the first professional play I dramaturged; the first play I ever taught as a TA—it is a piece I am always excited to share with the unfamiliar. For this reason, I am grateful to Play On Shakespeare, Lue Douthit, and Aditi Brennan Kapil and her dramaturgs for revitalizing the play through the delicate process of translation into more familiar English—especially since this play is so nuanced, so daring, that even those familiar with Shakespeare claim that it's not just inscrutable, but impossible.

This play has a bad reputation of being a “problem.” The term “problem play” has itself been translated across time, shifting from the original meaning of “a play about societal issues” (in relation to Henrik Ibsen) to a play that is difficult to produce or even entirely unproduceable. I think this is an unfair reputation for a play that is weird, hopeful, bawdy, and disquieting all at once. Measure for Measure deals with a whole slew of social issues, asks a ton of questions, and intentionally leaves us in the mess. The play's “problems” are why I keep coming back to this text—no one interprets it the same way. And besides, don't we want theater that confronts us with our issues and demands we reckon with them? Aren't we up for the challenge?

I am thankful for my entire cast and team, especially my stage manager, for their dedication and hard work on this lightning-fast reading process!

Isabel Smith-Bernstein, Ph.D.
Director

DRAMATURG NOTE



Dramaturgs **Julia Dubinsky & William Reyman**

“Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged:
and with what measure... it shall be measured to you again.”
(Matthew 7:1-3, King James translation)

At times hilarious, other times devastating, often both at once, Measure for Measure interrogates our assumptions about morality and justice—making a point of never providing clean answers. In Shakespeare’s Vienna, the pious Angelo stands in as deputy duke when Duke Vincentio goes undercover as a friar to observe the tightening of the law from the city’s underbelly. He soon encounters Isabella, a nun-to-be, who must appeal to Angelo in an attempt to save her brother’s life, who, under the new deputy’s law, is sentenced to death for having premarital sex. In a rampant act of hypocrisy, Angelo’s replies:

Save your brother by yielding up your body to my will,
or else he must not only die the death,
but your unkindness will his death draw out
to lingering suffering... As for you,
say what you wish. My false outweighs your true.
(2.4. 180-184)

How we proceed from there is a question both for the characters and for the audience. The Duke enacts an intricate plan to play hero, in which he prioritizes a most-moral solution, but even he, who the play centers as an agent of justice, arranges sexual assaults, lies to and manipulates nearly everyone around him, and even ends up leveraging his position in ways not so dissimilar to Angelo. He commits these atrocities to exact revenge on Angelo, as the Duke has a personal vendetta against him due to issues that arose between the two before the start of the play. Although he feels an intense need to punish Angelo for his wrongdoing, he still has an innate urge to be loved by his people. As a result, we witness the Duke’s conniving, calculated actions as he attempts to secretly weave Angelo’s web of destruction. In his own way, the Duke is trying to serve justice. An eye for an eye: measure for measure.

DRAMATURG NOTE (CONTINUED)



Measure for Measure is defiantly irreverent, theatrically obscuring the appearance of vice and virtue as often as its characters disguise themselves. Audiences are left to wonder: what do justice and morality look like? Where are false appearances outweighing truth today? Despite being 420 years old in 2024, Measure still carries dire importance. If not for questioning moral pretense, then for containing a snapshot of patriarchal abuse that's sorely recognizable in contemporary times. In a society where women are flattened by men and forced to take on singular titles rather than being acknowledged as complex, nuanced human beings, the powerlessness Isabella experiences is not uncommon among the women in Shakespeare's Vienna. Measure for Measure perhaps has something to offer us once again, especially as modern technology revolutionizes both social justice and information access.

This staged reading is a modern translation by Aditi Brennan Kapil commissioned by Play On Shakespeare, a non-profit that modernizes Shakespeare's plays to make them accessible for professionals, educators, and students today.

William Reymann Dramaturg & Composer
Julia Dubinsky Dramaturg & Alto Saxophone

CAST

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Duke Vincentio **Benjamin Giordano**
Isabella **Mya Espinosa**
Angelo **Allen Potter**
Lucio **Lee Camara**
Claudio **Noah Speek**
Mariana **Sydney Button**
Pompey **Kyra Perles**
Escalus **Jen Marshall**
Provost /Justice **Kaydin Mark**
Francisca / Mistress Overdone / **Servant Alli Byrne**
Juliet / Froth / Messenger **Lorelei Velez**
Second Gentleman / Father Thomas / Barnardine **Ellis Jablonski**

MUSICIANS

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Guitar **William Reymann**
Drums **Noah Speek**
Saxophone **Julia Dubinski**
Vocals **Angelina Bell**
Vocals **Jocelyn Mejia**

PRODUCTION STAFF

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Director **Isabel Smith-Bernstein**
Dramaturgs **Julia Dubinsky & William Reyman**
Production Stage Manager **Barclay Travis**
Assistant Stage Managers **Genesis Ramos-Bravo & Meara LeFevre**
Light Design **Max Rosenfeld**
Head Electrician **Graham Anderson**
Costume Designer **Hannah Goldberg**
Sound Design **Oz Fen Wang**
Composer/Lyricist **William Reymann**

UPCOMING EVENTS



New Pages

An undergraduate writing showcase co-presented with the Department of English

Monday, April 29 at 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 30 at 8:00 p.m.

Parker Theatre

Free & Open to the Public

TICKET OFFICE



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