**TWELFTH NIGHT – CHARACTERS**

Many of the traditionally male characters could be cast as male/female/gender non-specific – so PLEASE just come to the audition and have fun. Ages can also be very fluid depending on who else is cast. There may also be some doubling up of roles depending on numbers/suitability. Three words I would use to describe my idea for this play? Energetic, accessible and fun!!

There may be some group singing, playing of simple instruments, an easy dance (it IS Shakespeare!!) and hopefully some soundscapes….. …basically be up for anything!

**Viola**

A young woman of aristocratic birth, and the play’s protagonist. Washed up on the shore of Illyria when her ship is wrecked in a storm, Viola decides to make her own way in the world. She disguises herself as a young man, calling herself "Cesario," and becomes a page to Duke Orsino. She ends up falling in love with Orsino—while Olivia, the woman Orsino is courting, falls in love with Cesario. Thus, Viola finds that her clever disguise has entrapped her. Her predicament is the central conflict in the play.

**Orsino**

A powerful nobleman in the country of Illyria. Orsino is lovesick for the beautiful Lady Olivia, but becomes more and more fond of his handsome new page boy, Cesario (the disguised Viola). Orsino is a vehicle through which the play explores the absurdity of love.

**Olivia**

A wealthy, beautiful, and noble Illyrian lady, Olivia is courted by Orsino and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. However, she insists that she is in mourning for her brother, who has recently died, and will not marry for seven years. She and Orsino are similar characters in that each seems to enjoy wallowing in his or her own misery. Viola’s arrival in the masculine guise of Cesario changes everything. She falls for ‘him’ and then things start to get complicated.

**Maria**

Olivia’s clever, daring waiting-gentlewoman. She is intelligent and witty and has real affection for Sir Toby despite their differences in social standing, and his incessant drinking!

**Sir Toby**

Olivia’s uncle. Olivia lets Sir Toby Belch live with her, but she does not approve of his rowdy behaviour or his friends (specifically the idiotic Sir Andrew). Malvolio finds him particularly annoying. But Sir Toby has an ally, and eventually a mate, in Olivia’s sharp-witted waiting-gentlewoman, Maria. Together they bring about Malvolio’s downfall. Must be a good drunk.

**Sir Andrew Aguecheek**

A rich friend of Sir Toby’s. Sir Andrew Aguecheek attempts to court Olivia, but he does not stand a chance. He thinks that he is witty, brave, good at languages and dancing, but he is none of those things. Sir Toby is using him for his money. A comedy character but we are laughing at him, not with him.

**Feste**

The clown, or fool, of Olivia’s household, Feste moves between Olivia’s and Orsino’s homes. He earns his living by making pointed jokes, singing old songs, being generally witty, and offering good advice cloaked under a layer of foolishness. Despite being a professional fool, Feste often seems the wisest character in the play. Must be able to sing!!! (NOT essential but in an ideal world ….also play an instrument to accompany himself… or be willing to learn???)

**Fabian**

Another member of Olivia’s household - takes part in the tricking of Malvolio. Good comedy timing essential. Will undoubtedly also have a lot of on stage ‘business’…

**Malvolio**

The straitlaced steward—or head servant—in the household of Lady Olivia. Malvolio is very efficient but also very self-righteous, and he has a poor opinion of drinking, singing, and fun. His haughty attitude makes him very unpopular with Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria, who play a cruel trick on him - making him believe that Olivia is in love with him. Must have good comedy timing and be able to inhabit two personalities easily – the humourless steward and the lovesick puppy.

**Sea Captain**

A kindly man who helps Viola after the ship wreck at the start of the play.

**Antonio**

A sailor who rescues Sebastian after his shipwreck. Antonio has become very fond of Sebastian, caring for him, accompanying him to Illyria, and furnishing him with money—all because of a love so strong that it is often considered to be romantic in nature. Antonio’s attraction to Sebastian, however, never bears fruit. This is a complex part to play – we need to feel the love without it being too obvious.

.**Sebastian**

Viola’s lost twin brother. He arrives in Illyria traveling with Antonio, his close friend and protector. Sebastian discovers that many people think that they know him, including the beautiful Lady Olivia, whom he has never met, who wants to marry him. Sebastian is not as well rounded a character as his sister which makes the character interesting (and challenging) to play – as the actor needs to find their own inner story for him.

**Valentine**

A member of Orsino’s court.

**Curio**

A member of Orsino’s court.

**Priest**

Brought on to prove to Orsino that he officiated the marriage of Olivia and Cesario.

**Officer #1 / Officer #2**

Briefly come on to arrest Antonio.

**Attendants (also Stage crew?)**

There may be non speaking parts available which would help with set changes etc but WOULD be in costume.