Director Jonathan Munby discusses Measure for Measure page 3

STC Bard Association Chair Abbe D. Lowell plays Devil’s Advocate page 17
Dear Friend,

I hold the play *Measure for Measure* very near to my heart. It was the first Shakespeare play I was invited to direct, and the one that would encourage me to become a director of classical theatre. I had some very strong ideas about the play, and my production in 1967 for Joe Papp in Central Park was both controversial and highly successful. Over the years, I’ve had a special fondness for directors who have a strong vision for this play, and I held on to this one for years so that we could produce Jonathan Munby’s daring version.

Jonathan sees very clearly that the questions this play poses about society are as relevant today as they were in Shakespeare’s time. Where does the responsibility of leadership end? What is just punishment? What is the relationship between government, religion and personal morality? In this issue of *Asides*, we will explore some of these dilemmas. Inside you will find a legal defense of Angelo by STC Trustee and Chair of the Bard Association Abbe Lowell, along with an analysis of “governing desire” by prominent Shakespearean scholar Theodore Leinwand. We have also included a feature on Jonathan and articles about governance, the divine right of kings and 1930s Vienna, along with visuals from the production. I hope you enjoy them.

Please visit Asides Online (Asides.ShakespeareTheatre.org) for more information about the play and production. We have an excellent season in store for you, and look forward to seeing you again soon.

Warm regards,

Michael Kahn
Artistic Director
Shakespeare Theatre Company
A production of Measure for Measure changed Jonathan Munby’s life. Talking with excited erudition from London, the director can still recall the experience.

“I was in high school,” he remembers. “It was Measure for Measure.” The director was Declan Donnellan, of Cheek by Jowl, the English company famous for their irreverent adaptations of Shakespeare and other classics.

“It was incredibly vivid, set in a 20th century world. The most startling moment for me was the way they handled the ending, the Duke’s proposal to Isabella. I remember her smacking him directly across the face. It liberated the play for me. It felt like he was saying, directly to me: ‘Don’t just accept convention. Stay true to your instincts.’ If you stay true to the humanity of these plays, then whatever will be in the final moments of these complicated plays will be. It was a transcendent moment for me in terms of my understanding Shakespeare and the way it might be performed in the present tense.”

The ending of Measure for Measure is a famous “problem” in Shakespeare criticism, but according to Munby, the rest of the play poses similarly controversial—and unanswerable—questions. The play, perhaps the most provocative of Shakespeare’s “problem comedies,” is also, in Munby’s words, “a hybrid tragedy.” The plot hinges on the decision made by Isabella, a novice nun who is sexually propositioned by Angelo, the deputy of Vienna. Isabella defeats Angelo and saves her chastity with the help of the Duke—who is disguised as a friar—only to have the Duke proposition Isabella himself at the very end of the play.

“The central axis of this play,” Munby contends, “is human sexuality in conflict with the stricture of law and religion. I think this play is about the birth of sexuality, in fact. Sex informs every scene and almost every
character. But it opens onto a much wider dialogue: What is acceptable in society? How do we govern our own sexuality, which can be so at odds with our humanity? What is the role of faith and religion in all of this? And at the end of the day, it feels like very human choices have been made to solve these human dilemmas. It’s a play that transcends period and culture, I think.”

Measure for Measure’s timeless intrigue—the play’s ability to touch on contemporary taboos as well as Shakespearean ones—is one reason why Munby has chosen a 20th-century setting for his production. Vienna and the larger German-speaking world in the 1930s, says Munby, “was an incredibly fertile time and an incredibly unstable time. On the one hand, you have this explosion of productivity in music, in visual arts, in literature. Psychoanalysis was being born during this period. But this creativity and liberation, while very joyful, was also very dangerous, perfect ground for the far right to seize power. Fascism was seen as a solution for a lot of problems, and indeed it was. Angelo’s regime is also a kind of solution to a problem.”

Munby is no stranger to reimagining the classics. He has quickly established a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic for his willingness to take on some of the most controversial plays in the canon. Recently, he staged John Ford’s Jacobean incest tragedy ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore. Earlier in the 2000s, his reputation grew among hardcore canon-spotters for two ambitious rediscoveries at London’s Donmar Warehouse: brand new translations of Calderon’s Life is a Dream and Heinrich von Kleist’s Prince of Homburg. Both classics are rarely produced, beloved by theorists and feared by practitioners for their thorny mixture of philosophy, sensuality and, in the case of Kleist, fascism. Washington audiences know Munby, of course, from his Helen Hayes-nominated stint directing Lope de Vega’s The Dog in the Manger here at STC in 2008, as well as his award-winning direction of The Canterbury Tales, on tour from the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Kennedy Center in 2005.
“It feels like the playwrights of this era,” Munby says, with a nod to Jacobean Shakespeare, John Ford and John Webster, “are kind of pushing the boundaries, in terms of what’s acceptable to show onstage. Some of these plays become the Quentin Tarantino movies of their time. Measure for Measure may not be physically explicit, but it has some very explicit ideas.”

Perhaps the most explicit notion in the play, according to Munby, is the extent to which Shakespeare subversively portrays James I, the bisexual, hard-drinking, theatre-loving king who casts an inimitable shadow over Shakespeare’s late works. “I’m exploring transgression in this play, in order to find that provocative edge that Shakespeare was seeking 400 years ago. I’m interested in a Duke who is wrestling with his own sexuality and identity, someone who is seeking to know himself after a period of anarchy for fourteen years. There are many scenes in this play that sail very close to the wind, that feel absolutely double-edged. I think that’s where part of the ending of the play comes from. Shakespeare wrote the play he wanted to write and then, to avoid having his head cut off, wrapped it up rather neatly. Too neatly, I think, for us in the 21st century.”

And as for how he’s going to handle that infamous ending? “I think we’ll find that out,” he says, smiling, before continuing. “I think if you stay true to the human experience, then it’s hard to wrap up these plays conventionally. We don’t have to tie things up neatly anymore. Life isn’t neat. Life is complicated and sexy and dangerous. And I want the end to be as complex and as messy as life is.”

Drew Lichtenberg is the Literary Associate at STC and production dramaturg for Measure for Measure. He holds an MFA in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from Yale School of Drama.
Shakespeare’s plays are thought experiments. Staged inquiries or dramatic essays, they pose problems and speculate about their solutions. There is nothing doctrinaire about Shakespeare’s evaluation of the questions his plays raise. His instinct is to be analytical, not ideological—although he is hardly oblivious to the workings of ideology. Washington, D.C., residents might be forgiven for thinking of the Bard as the house dramatist at a non-partisan think tank. He continually puts positions and even polemics on the table, setting them in motion and at odds with one another, but he never sponsors any one of them. In fact, his plays, with their hosts of characters and their tolerance for contradictory points of view, have numerous advantages over the argumentative form of the written essay or policy statement.

In the case of Measure for Measure, Shakespeare seems to have been thinking about governance. How does one govern a city (Vienna) or oneself (Angelo) in the face of recalcitrance? More to the point, how does one manage the eruption of unruly sexual desire—in others and in oneself?

First the city: Duke Vincentio himself acknowledges that sexuality has gone unpoliced in Vienna for fourteen years. Because he has “let slip” that city’s “strict statutes,” a culture of prostitution and extra-marital fornication prevails. Now, he aims to step aside and install as his deputy Angelo, a “man of stricture and firm abstinence.” Hence the first response to urban decay that the play probes is a straightforward law and order approach. Afforded the power to “strike home,” Angelo intends his punitive reaction to Claudio and Juliet’s extra-marital relations to set an example for all of Vienna’s denizens. The loss of her maidenhead will cost him his head. Fair-minded and patient, Shakespeare gives Angelo quite a bit of air time in his debates with Isabella during which he rationalizes his policies.

But the play has on offer other responses to Viennese disarray. The Duke, for example, for all his responsibility in deputizing Angelo, has doubts about his surrogate’s rigor. He himself endorses a much less draconian, rather wily response to lawlessness: the ameliorative or therapeutic, putatively benign approach of the social engineer or mental healthcare professional. If he can just analyze the big picture and then get all the pieces to fall into their right places, a kind of uplift, or healing, will take place. Whereas Angelo assumes that our natures (his own, included) are incorrigible, the Duke has faith in the perfectibility of our better natures—or at least in his own ability to perfect them.
Measure for Measure also explores religious forms of governance. The Duke dons the robes of a friar and speaks on behalf of the power of penitence and conscience to redeem a corrupt community. But we know that he is no friar, so we may well feel uneasy when he compromises the deep emotional power of auricular confession (not to mention orchestrates the play’s bed trick, ever so casually putting Mariana in bed with Angelo).

Finally the play gives us glimpses of alternative communities, at once part of and apart from the city. There is the prison, in which the unregenerate, drunken Barnardine (our play’s Falstaff, or perhaps its Caliban) seems to have found a congenial home. It is not at all clear at the play’s end that by granting him mercy, the Duke has done him a favor. There is also the convent, to which we see Isabella repairing at the start of the play. How might this sororal community counteract the sordid, pestilential, sewer sexuality of Mistress Overdone, Pompey and their ilk? We might construe both the prison and the convent as escapist venues, insulated from or indifferent to the complexities of life in an unruly city. Or we might think of them as distinct fellowships, replete with rules of their own. For her part, Isabella contemplates entering the order of Saint Clare because she seeks “more strict restraint” for herself. What can she be thinking—Shakespeare gives her no words—when the Duke proposes marriage to her in the closing lines of the play?

If governing Vienna—achieving the right balance between what the play calls “scope” and “restraint”—is one of the burdens of the Measure for Measure thought experiment, self-governance is its other preoccupation. This pertains to restraint-seeking Isabella, and to the fastidious, “decorum”-obsessed Duke—a man who tells us that “the dribbling dart of love/Can[not] pierce [his] complete bosom.” But the more fully developed case study in this play is the self-loathing, hypocritical, puritanical Angelo. Surely, the play’s most electrifying moment commences with his repetition of just two words, spoken late in act 2, scene 2: “What’s this? What’s this?” To his shock and dismay, Angelo, he of “firm abstinence” and about whom it is said that his “urine is congealed ice,” has been aroused by the “enskied [heavenly] and sainted” Isabella. By Isabella in the habit of a nun, no less! How can this be and how ought he to respond to this “rebellion of [his] codpiece”? How, Shakespeare asks, do we govern our own sexual desire?

Just like us when desire rises unbidden, Angelo finds himself baffled. He has hardly a clue why he now feels what he feels, just as he will remain deeply confused about why he does what he does. How can it be, he asks in soliloquy, “That modesty may more betray our sense/Than woman’s lightness?” Why should a nun turn me on when I am indifferent to experienced prostitutes? But matters turn much darker and more disturbing when the deputy goes on to ask himself, “Having waste ground enough/Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary/And pitch our evils there?” The language of urban renewal, of “waste ground,” razing and pitching, is recruited to sexuality. Defloration becomes demolition and ejaculation, evil-pitching. Not just desire has reared its head, but “foul” desire: ruthlessly
honest with himself as he always is, Angelo admits that he desires Isabella “foully for those things/That make her good.” He wants to foul her, to soil her, to coerce her into giving up her body to “sweat uncleanness.” He wants her to admit that she “wants it” every bit as much as he does. But he does not know why. And it is not clear that Shakespeare knows, either. The conundrum that Shakespeare would have known as *akrasia*—when we act against our own better judgment—puzzled Plato and continues to puzzle philosophers to this day.

Near the start of the play, the Duke speaks vengefully of the “bits and curbs” required to restrain Viennese sexuality. One act later, Angelo has compulsively begun to give his “sensual race the rein,” as if his desire were a barely controllable racehorse. But now his sadism becomes at once ferocious and repellent: he tells Isabella that she must “Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite.” What he has in mind, he calls “saucy sweetness.” Aroused by an innocent novitiate, Angelo feels “goad[ed] on/To sin in loving virtue.” The paradox that the play probes in these lines turns on the limits of self-governance when our desire is inherently compromised, when, to some degree, it is always unsanctified. Long before Dr. Freud, Shakespeare asked whether any of us can find our way to sin-free, or innocent, sex.

Our inclination is to distance ourselves from Angelo’s depravity. We tell ourselves that he is a monster and that we are not like he is. But the play insists that desire, even perverse desire, can rebel in any one of us. Shakespeare’s surprising, if shrewd, argument for this is the Duke, who imagines that he is immune to the cravings of “burning youth.” The play’s still more stunning proof of the perversity of desire emanates from chaste Isabella herself. Confronted with an intolerable choice—sex with Angelo or consent to her brother’s execution—she imagines herself “under terms of death.” In such a circumstance, she unselfconsciously exclaims that she would “th’ impression of keen whips . . . wear as rubies/And strip myself to death as to a bed/That longing [I] have been sick for.” His sadism finds an answering voice in her masochism. She converts bloody lashes into a martyr’s jewelry and turns death itself into a lover for whom she is sick with desire.

There are no pat answers to the question of how to regulate desire in *Measure for Measure*’s Vienna, or anywhere else. Nor are there easy solutions to the management of this play’s characters’ desires, or our own. Our flesh, our sexuality, has the power to unhinge the best, even the most ascetic, among us. By Shakespeare’s reckoning, all of our erotic desires are more or less perverse. Unwilling to lobby on behalf of one or another form of governance (or theology or psychology), he contents himself with analysis. His thrilling, often unnerving play leaves it to us to decide for ourselves where we stand.

**Theodore Leinwand** has taught Shakespeare at the University of Maryland for more than thirty years. He is an associate editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly* and he has written two books on Jacobean London, its plays and their social and economic context.
MEASURE FOR MEASURE CAST

ERIC MARTIN BROWN* PROVOST
AVERY CLARK* CLAUDIO
KATIE DEBUYS* JULIET

NATASCA DIAZ* MARIANA
CAMERON FOLMAR* LUCIO
CHRIS GENEBAECH* POMPEY

DAN ISTRATE* BARNARDINE
NAOMI JACOBSON* MISTRESS OVERDONE
JOHN LESCAULT* FRIAR PETER/JUSTICE

HUGH NEES* ELBOW
NED NOYES* FROTH
SCOTT PARKINSON* ANGELO

KURT RHOADS* THE DUKE
MIRIAM SILVERMAN* ISABELLA
JACK WETHERALL* ESCALUS

ARTISTIC TEAM

Jonathan Munby
Director

Alexander Dodge
Set Designer

Linda Cho
Costume Designer

Philip Rosenberg
Lighting Designer

Adam Wernick
Composer

Walter Trarbach
Sound Designer

Daniel Pelzig
Choreographer

Robb Hunter
Fight Director

Stuart Howard and Paul Hardt
New York Casting

Daniel Neville-Rehbehn
Resident Casting Director

Ellen O’Brien
Vocal Coach

Drew Lichtenberg
Literary Associate

Gus Heagerty
Assistant Director

Joseph Smelser*
Production Stage Manager

Claire E. Zawa*
Stage Manager

Erin C. Patrick*
Assistant Stage Manager

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.

ENGLISH TEAM

ANDREW CRISS
ABHORSON

S. LEWIS FEEMSTER, JACQUI JARROLD, MANU KUMASI, MICHAEL LITCHFIELD, AMBER MAYBERRY, JACK POWERS, GRACIE TERZIAN, JAYSEN WRIGHT

ARTISTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.

Artists subject to change.
Measure for Measure: the title brings to mind justice. Pulled from the Gospel of Matthew, the title reminds the reader that judgment falls not to man but to God:

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again.

In thinking of the quote, the title becomes a clever introduction to the play, reminding the audience that justice will prevail and that no one is safe from that justice. If only God can dole out punishment, then those in leadership must become gods. In the early 1600s there was no separation between the Church and the State; political power was divine right.

At the 1603 coronation of James I, a sermon delivered by the Bishop of Winchester pronounced that even though royalty are not “Gods by nature” they are “gods by Office”[sic]. The function of the regent is to provide reward and punishment in place of God. The King will judge you on earth and God will judge you in the afterlife. When James ascended the throne of England he was no stranger to royal power, having been King of Scotland since his childhood. A few years prior to his cousin Queen Elizabeth’s death, James published The True Law of Free Monarchies, a treatise on the monarch’s absolute power. Using religious language and biblical quotations, James explained how a monarchy, “as resembling the divinity, approacheth nearest to perfection” of any other style of political leadership. It is not surprising that James turned to the Bible to demonstrate his authority. After all, he made himself a household name for centuries by commissioning an English translation of the Bible known still as the “King James Bible.” The translation addressed Puritan concerns with previous translations and reflected the structure of the Church of England.
The Church of England was relatively new when James came to power. The history of the Church’s growth played out, at times painfully, in his family. About thirty years before James was born to the ill-fated Mary Stuart, Henry VIII was declared head of the Church of England, effectively negating any power from the Pope and breaking with Catholicism. The Protestant Church of England was further solidified under Queen Elizabeth. The Catholic Mary Stuart’s abdication from the Scottish monarchy and subsequent execution left the toddler James as the King, under the guidance of her Protestant half-brother.

By the time he took over rule in England, James was eager to unite Scotland and England and rule over both as “King of Great Britain.” This expansion of power further cemented his authority. As King of England, he now stood at the head of the Church of England, a more settled church than that in Scotland. Catholicism as a practice, however, had not disappeared from England, despite the persecution of priests. As he took power, James spoke of leniency toward practicing Catholics, at least those who worshiped in secret. In simple words, it was a case of don’t ask, don’t tell.

This feeling of relative security was not true in other elements of James’ governance. James installed more layers of government oversight, including elements of state spying and higher levels of bureaucracy. Elizabeth was not a lenient ruler, but James came into the monarchy with a show of power. Within the first few years of his reign, James’ rule grew increasingly harsh as he faced a number of assassination attempts, the most well-known being Guy Fawkes’ attempt to blow up Parliament, known as the “Gunpowder Plot.” The arrest and torture of those who betrayed the crown became what historian Alvin B. Kernan refers to as a “theater of punishment.” The public demonstrations of the law’s power created an environment not only of justice but of unlimited authority over the citizens. The government’s unlimited power manifested through extensive enforcement of laws and seemingly senseless clemency. Mercy played an important part in these theatrics, showing that the King’s government, like a God, has the ability to give and the ability to take away.

One of the communities to which James showed generosity was the theatre. Under his patronage the Lord Chamberlain’s Men changed their name to The King’s Men. While under Elizabeth’s rule, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men performed before court three times a year, James’ taste for performances led to a boom in bookings for The King’s Men; they performed in front of royalty on average nearly fourteen times a year. On December 26, 1604, the audience at Whitehall, including King James, watched *Measure for Measure*. There is no way of knowing how James may have reacted to Shakespeare’s dark vision of perverse power and the reach of authority. Did he see a defense of his own use of divinely ordained absolute justice? Or did he see a cautionary tale of how justice could be perverted in a Catholic community? We will never know. But what is known, is that Shakespeare and The King’s Men continued to perform before Court with regularity for the following decade.

Hannah J. Hessel, STC’s Audience Enrichment Manager, is in her third season at STC and holds an MFA in Dramaturgy from Columbia University.
Jonathan Munby’s setting for *Measure for Measure* is inspired by the period between World Wars I and II, which was dominated by grotesque extremes. Soldiers returning shellshocked from the war found women forced into the sex trade, and one of the results was the growth and glorification of the pleasure industry. A culture of exploring and liberating oneself was born. All of these tensions are reflected in the art of the period.

“War Cripples”: Otto Dix’s 1920 painting, made just after WWI, leaves little to the imagination. Inspired by the industrial aesthetics of Dadaism, Dix depicts machine-like soldiers, dependent on false appendages, returning from the war. They have lost their human aspect. In this period, thousands of soldiers returned to Vienna and Berlin, often maimed and dismembered in a fashion similar to the men in Dix’s print. This is an early example of the new cultural trend known as *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or the “New Objectivity.” In the words of Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub, Dix and his fellows were “neither impressionistically relaxed or expressionistically abstract.” Instead, artists such as Dix portrayed their changing world, in which reality was more grotesque than art. Despite the grim subject matter, Dix embeds satirical humor into the work by drawing the men passing by a Schuhmacherei or shoemaker, for which they have little use.
“The Salon I”: Despite their cartoonish appearance, the women in Otto Dix’s 1921 painting bear a close resemblance to those in Berlin during the Weimar period. Sallow and saggy, Dix’s prostitutes nevertheless remain remarkably human. In the streets of Berlin and Vienna (which experienced severe housing shortages after the war), prostitution ran rampant. For many women, it was the only way to find a bed to sleep in at night. In contrast to War Cripples, this style of portraiture, also known as “Verism,” portrayed its subjects without distortion, “warts and all.” Dix’s portraits were anticipated by the work of the Viennese artist Egon Schiele, who died in 1918.

Kabarett: Alongside the avant-garde theatre of Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill, Erwin Piscator and others in interwar Germany, most of the entertainment onstage was to be found in the cabaret, or “kabarett.” Cabaret in its traditional “Moulin Rouge” style was born in Paris, a variety form containing music acts, slapstick comedy, monologues from plays and snatches of poetry, all in an intimate setting. In early 1920s Berlin, however, only 12 of the 150 clubs advertised as cabarets featured all of these amusements. Most of the others revolved around the erotic sensibilities. Among the many forms spawned from cabaret was the erotic revue, in which a loose plot strung together titillating dances, and the “pleasure palaces,” or luxury nightclubs where the upper class could indulge their carnal desires in privacy.

Play in Process

I. Description and Cast:

1. Measure for Measure
   - Gracie Terzian (Ensemble), Cameron Folmar (Lucio) and Amber Mayberry (Ensemble).
   - Natascia Diaz (Mariana) and the cast of Measure for Measure.
   - Assistant Director Gus Heagerty, Director Jonathan Munby and Production Stage Manager Joseph Smelser.

2. Photos by Elayna Speight.

II. Visuals:

- Photos of Avery Clark (Claudio) and Miriam Silverman (Isabella).
- Naomi Jacobson (Mistress Overdone) and Kurt Rhoads (The Duke).

To see more photos, visit Asides.ShakespeareTheatre.org.
World War I brought the cities of Europe to their knees. Vienna and Berlin, captains of the losing team, were stripped of both power and identity. Vienna, a capital city without an empire, was a ghost of its fin-de-siècle splendor. Berlin, destitute and disillusioned, found solace in cynicism and flesh. From 1919 to 1938, both cities bred experimentation and obsession, fighting to regain their footing amidst a remade Europe. In this world of extremes, moderation equaled death.

World War I was a death knell for Vienna. The Habsburg dynasty, six centuries old, had collapsed; the lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had been carved into smaller nations by the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Vienna had been the cultural center of the German-speaking world: music lovers came from all over the globe to hear the latest compositions of Beethoven, Brahms and Mahler; intellectuals in the city’s coffeehouses argued over the art of Klimt, the theatre of Schnitzler and the theories of Freud—but no longer. After the war, the new ruling party, the Social Democrats, attempted to transform decadent Vienna into a model Marxist society. “Red Vienna,” however, was losing ground as artists and intellectuals fled to the new idol of Europe: Berlin.

If Vienna’s Belle Époque was ending, Berlin’s heyday was dawning. Few moments in world history rival the frantic hedonism of the Weimar Republic, Germany’s first-ever constitutional democracy. With the fall of Kaiser Wilhelm’s Second Reich, Berlin found itself free of censorship. An unprecedented explosion of erotic culture enveloped the city: casinos and cabarets, seedy hotels and pornographic cinemas, naked boxing, private torture dungeons and sex clubs for all tastes. Conservative Germans were aghast. One army officer...
reflected, “Returning home, we no longer found an honest German people, but a mob stirred up by its lowest instincts. Whatever virtues were once found among the Germans seemed to have sunk once and for all into the muddy flood…” Berlin reveled in its reputation; police commissioners often bragged that vice and debauchery were the city’s primary industries.

Weimar Berlin’s erotic mecca was also fantastically tolerant. Every proclivity was incorporated into the constellation of Berlin nightlife. Homosexuality, fetishes, even pedophilia were as standard as bourgeois marriage. Even the burgeoning Nazi movement had to swallow the diversity of Weimar at first. Ernst Roehm, a trusted friend and follower of Hitler since 1919, was openly gay. A fierce and talented military leader, Roehm headed the Nazi paramilitary group the *Sturmabteilung*, which by 1934 comprised three million men. Roehm’s sexuality—and that of his inner circle of comrades—was an open secret, yet Hitler continued to defend his second-in-command.

Back in Austria, the 1930s brought the failure of banks and riots against the leaders of Red Vienna. With the endorsement of Mussolini and the Vatican, conservative Engelbert Dollfuss was elected chancellor in 1932. Once he took office, however, Dollfuss found himself fighting a war on two fronts: against the socialists, outraged at losing power, and against the rise of Nazism at home and across the German border. Searching for any way to unite Austria, Dollfuss suspended the national assembly and embraced fascism. Incredibly, among the bedlam that seized Europe in 1933, Dollfuss was a moderate, promoting tenets of Christian social justice and striving to establish peace amidst ferocious class warfare.

Meanwhile, in Berlin, Adolf Hitler was appointed *Reichschancellor* in a misguided attempt to quell the rising Nazi fever. Germany’s leaders presumed Hitler could do little without the approval of Parliament—until the Parliament building was set ablaze, and Hitler seized dictatorial power. Almost immediately, Hitler’s private militias set out to “cleanse” Berlin of its Jewish, homosexual and other “deviant” elements. Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS guard, rival to Roehm’s *Sturmabteilung*, waged a personal war against homosexuals. Himmler finally convinced Hitler that he must assert authority over the *Sturmabteilung* and eliminate its unruly leader. During the “Night of the Long Knives”, Roehm, his followers, and hundreds of others were slaughtered. The erotic world of Weimar collapsed while Berlin’s inhabitants were engulfed in the horror of Nazi violence.

Already, Hitler had his eyes on Austria. Just a few months after Roehm’s murder, Austrian Nazis assassinated Dollfuss, and the divided Viennese government proved too weak to resist Hitler’s schemes. In March of 1938, Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany. Twenty years after the Great War, Berlin and Vienna finally shared a new identity: the Third Reich.

Laura Henry Buda is STC’s Education Coordinator and served as Artistic Fellow in the 2011-2012 Season. She holds an MFA in Dramaturgy from the A.R.T./M.X.A.T. Institute at Harvard University.
As the chair of the Shakespeare Theatre Company’s Bard Association, I have the pleasure of helping coordinate annual events at the theatre with Washington’s legal community, including the Mock Trial, Will on the Hill and Shakespeare and the Law panel discussions. By participating in these events, I have been able to observe Shakespeare’s legal insights on subjects ranging from marriage and divorce law to lobbying to corruption. All the programs we sponsor in the Bard Association seek to take the Shakespeare’s timeless themes off the page, out of the texts, and off the stage of the Harman Center for the Arts and show how they work in courtrooms in America today.

Perhaps the most surprising moments are those when we can observe Shakespeare departing from American legal practice, allowing us to see the gap between his legal world and ours. Measure for Measure offers precisely one of those examples.

In this play, Shakespeare asks the most fundamental and searching questions of the law: What is the difference between the law and justice? How does the law govern our darkest impulses, and how does it fail? The answers Shakespeare provides to these questions, as I can testify, still resonate powerfully today.
Criminal defense attorneys are often (all too often) asked what we call The Question: “How can you defend that person?” Think Casey Anthony, George Zimmerman or even Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. With that question in mind, I decided to look at the case of Angelo in Measure for Measure. The human and legal aspects of Angelo’s case could certainly be compared to Dominique Strauss-Kahn or former Congressman Gary Condit of our modern times. But what kind of legal defense can be mounted for one of Shakespeare’s worst and seemingly most indefensible villains? And what can his defense tell us about the properties of government? The answer may surprise you, and give you insight as to how defense attorneys today answer The Question. Lawyers, among other duties, serve to ensure that the system works for the Angelos and Tsarnevs of the world, so that it works for all the rest of us as well.

Allegations
For the purposes of the trial, we can only evaluate evidence that is admissible in court. This rules out acts 1 through 4, in which no witnesses observe the contested conversation between Angelo and Isabella, the plaintiff in question. The first public accusation against Angelo surfaces in Shakespeare’s act 5, scene 1, when Isabella, a novice nun, describes an attempted sexual assault. According to Isabella, Angelo, who had been acting as the deputy of the Duke, demanded that only “by gift of [her] chaste body/To his concupiscible intemperate lust,” would he spare her condemned brother Claudio’s life. Having completed the act, Angelo then sent a warrant for Claudio’s death, despite his promise to spare him. Isabella then produced the figure of Mariana, Angelo’s former fiancée, who testified that she had consummated the marriage act in place of Isabella. Finally, Isabella produced one Friar Lodowick, who had aided the two women in deceiving Angelo. This Friar would later, in the same scene, be revealed as the Duke in disguise, with full knowledge of Angelo’s alleged crimes.

Opinions
Putting aside for the moment whether Angelo is guilty, the question at hand is whether it makes sense to accept Isabella’s public accusation and the ensuing testimony of Mariana and the Friar/Duke as proof of Angelo’s guilt. My first instinct as a defense attorney is to observe that, instead of receiving a fair trial, Angelo is publicly railroaded, ambushed by a conspiracy designed to coerce him into a confession.

Secondly, the Duke (disguised as a friar) acted as a knowing colluder in this conspiracy. The Duke commits entrapment by orchestrating the bed trick, whereas Angelo had acted legally (albeit dishonorably) by breaking off his marriage to Mariana.

Third, and most importantly, the Duke disregards the rule of law in order to take justice into his own hands. Rather than returning to Vienna to preside over his citizens, the Duke returns in disguise and spies on his subordinates. He then participates in a conspiracy designed to entrap Angelo and metes out personal justice. In the American system, more often than not, this behavior would lead to a mistrial, an appeal or possibly even an impeachment of the Duke for abuse of executive powers.
In this final scene of the play, the Duke provides a homily-like speech discoursing on the nature of the law:

Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;
Like doth quit like, and measure still for measure. (act 5, scene 1)

As pointed out by Kenji Yoshino, the law professor and author of *A Thousand Times More Fair; What Shakespeare’s Plays Teach Us About Justice*, the Duke is here paraphrasing the famous and oft-quoted line in the book of Exodus:

thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (21:24)

Also known as the Code of Hammurabi, this Old Testament conception of justice belongs more to an ancient world of retributive violence than to our modern state. In our system, it is wrong to bring about justice by any means possible, but in the Duke’s paradoxical logic, two wrongs together make a right, two offenses against the law serve to uphold it, measure makes measure. In other words, the play appears to be asking whether the ends of “justice” justify the means of getting it.

**Conclusion**

Readers and attendees of this play might allow their (well-founded) dislike of Angelo to color their perception of the play’s more subtle messages. Doing so provides a way to shift blame onto an unsympathetic scapegoat, but does not get at the real problems examined in the play or ensure that we will learn the lessons to avoid repeating them in the future. If we only care about seeing Angelo punished for his sins, we will never notice that Vienna has returned to the chaotic legal status quo that reigned at the very beginning of the play. The Duke has brought about justice, but only through a web of deceit and a miscarriage of the law. No real reform has been achieved.

The plot of *Measure for Measure* is almost a legal parable, an allegorical tale concerned with demonstrating the proper enforcement and application of the law. Perhaps its wisest and darkest observation is that the law is an imperfect thing, subject to abuse by human actors. Instead of blaming Angelo alone, we should see that Shakespeare is also pointing fingers at the other characters as well. In this play (and sometimes in real life), a powerful executive supersedes his legal authority in order to bring an outlaw to justice. Today, some might point to President Obama’s use of drones. In Shakespeare’s cautionary tale, this morality play of the law, we can see plainly the evil of Angelo. But we also ought to see that how we treat the Angelos of the world can make us no better than he is.

Abbe D. Lowell is head of the Litigation Department at the international law firm of Chadbourne & Parke, and is also a Trustee and chair of the Bard Association of the Shakespeare Theatre Company.
### PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

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Sunday, September 22, 5–6 p.m.
Lansburgh Theatre Lobby
Explore the production with the artistic team and local scholars.

**FREE**

**BOOKENDS**
Wednesday, September 25
5:30 p.m. and post-show
Lansburgh Theatre Lobby
Immerse yourself in the world of the play with pre- and post-show discussions.

**FREE**

**ASIDES LIVE SYMPOSIUM**
Sunday, September 29, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
The Forum at Sidney Harman Hall
Take a deep look into the text, production and cultural context in this morning-long symposium. Tickets available online and at the box office.

**FREE**

**POST-PERFORMANCE CAST DISCUSSION**
Wednesday, October 9, post-show
Lansburgh Theatre
Extend your theatre experience with a post-show discussion with the acting company.

**FREE**

**CLASSICS IN CONTEXT**
Saturday, October 12, 5–6 p.m.
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