

*A Masque of Gratitude or,
A Farewell to the Divine Goddess
as She Journeys from Her Domain,*
humbly presented to Her Maiesty
by her loving subiects
at the Annual Luncheon of the Forty-Sixth Meeting
of the Shakespeare Association of America,
on the Plaza Pool Deck of
the Westin Bonaventure Hotel
in Los Angeles, California
on the Thirtieth Day of March
MMXVIII.

OFFICIAL
ANNOUNCEMENT

It's not often that at SAA's annual luncheon we can make a major announcement of scholarly importance. But today we can. Apart from the Earl of Rutland's *impres*a we have no evidence of Shakespeare's being directly involved in court entertainments. But, astonishingly, a manuscript has now surfaced in a collection in the U.S. that, though incomplete, is part of a previously unknown masque. It is unquestionably in the same handwriting as Hand D of *Sir Thomas More* and hence is, for many of us, unquestionably by Shakespeare in concert with other hands evident in the manuscript, which point to various other wordSMITHs, including, it would seem, women as well as men. I have asked a few of my colleagues to join me in the first reading of the masque since 1607. (The music is lost and could not be reconstructed in time for this event.) The masque has a title: *A Masque of Gratitude; or, A Farewell to the Divine Goddess as She Journeys from Her Domain*. The goddess has multiple names in the piece: she is called Lena, sometimes confusingly Lena Orlina, as though these are alternatives. Sometimes she is noted only as Edie (ED), which seems to be some kind of title obliquely referring to her astonishing executive powers as the Director of the nation. Her land is a strange sort of democracy, unknown in other early modern contexts, which elects a new leader every year. It is known as Essayay, perhaps an allusion to her skills in governance; or perhaps a reference to the essays, articles, and books for which she serves as Muse. Alternately, it points to a more mysterious acronym, S-A-A, whose meaning will continue to unfold in the future.

So to our performance.

Come, my colleagues. Bring some friends to help ye.
Rather than waste our time, appear quite smartly.
No tongue. All Eyes. Be silent.

An attendant spirit, perhaps wearing an Ariel-like bird cap, goes to Lena's table and escorts her to a chair on the platform, positioned to one side at a 45-degree angle so that she can both see the masque and be seen by the spectators.

Outsized masks for Iris, Ceres, and Juno have been previously placed face-down on a table at the rear of the performance-space. Each mask will be picked up in turn by an attendant spirit who will

hold up the mask behind each of the three goddesses as they speak – first Iris, then Ceres, then Juno. The three masks remain displayed throughout the remainder of the masque.

Enter Iris.

IRIS Ceres, bounteous lady: the Queen o' th' sky,
Whose wat'ry arch and messenger am I,
Bids thee now leave thy lands, and with Her Grace,
Here by this swimming pool, in this sweet place,
To come and sport. Her peacocks fly amain.
Approach, rich Ceres, her to entertain.

Enter Ceres.

CERES Hail, many-colored messenger, that ne'er
Dost disobey the wife of Jupiter,
Upon what reason hath the heavenly Queen
Summoned me hither to this banquet scene?

IRIS The gratitude of all to celebrate,
And some donation freely to estate
Upon the gracious lady of this bower
Who's now upon her just retiring hour.

Enter Juno.

CERES I willingly subscribe. High'st queen of state,
Great Juno, comes. I know her by her gait.

JUNO How does my bounteous sister? Go with me
To bless this lady, may she prosperous be
And honored in her departure from this throng
To pastoral retirement with our song.

They chant.

JUNO Honours, riches, scholars' blessing,
Published writings never ceasing,
Brilliant thoughts be still upon you.
Juno sings her blessings on you.

CERES Ideas' increase, prose's plenty,
Grants and stipends never empty,
Boons and bounties always growing,
Editors and printers bowing,
Rest come to you at the farthest
In the very end of harvest.
Rat-race drudgery shall shun you.
Ceres' blessing so is on you.

JUNO (*gesturing out into the audience*)
You nymphs, called naiads of the yellow sands,
With sunshades on and never-fading tans,
Leave your white beach and on this Westin land
Answer the summons, Juno does command.
Come, California nymphs, and celebrate
Retirement truly earned. Be not too late.
You sunburned surfer-men, of August weary,
Come hither from your surges and be merry.
Make holiday: your baseball caps put on,
And these fresh nymphs encounter every one
In country footing.

Enter seven Anti-masquers, chanting as they wind their way through the tables:

ANTI-MASQUERS Double, double, scholars' muddle,
Conference comes and then there's trouble.

IRIS But what are these who do usurp so rude
On comely nymph and sun-kissed surfer-dude?
They are the Seven Sins of Essayay
Come hither to disturb and disarray.
I had forgot their foul conspiracy
To mar retirement and blot legacy.
Fiends, grotesques, monsters, zanies, void of sense!
Obeisance give to Lena, and get hence.
Admired Orlina, whom we know as Edie,
Confutes your vices prideful, envious, greedy.
She never did, nor ever could succumb
To such malfeasance. Praise her, and be dumb!

*When named, each anti-masquer crosses the platform, bows to Lena,
and exits in a chastened demeanor.*

IRIS Begone, Foul Weather, Spirit of Atlanta,
“All flights cancelled” is thy only mantra!

CERES Aroint thee, Rumour, oiliest of courtiers!

JUNO Down, Hangover, thou sickly morning fiend!

CERES Off, Budget-Breaker, glutton of hors d’oeuvres!

IRIS Hence, Wordy Questioner, nemesis of panels!

JUNO Out, Techno-havoc, bane of points of power!

IRIS Avaunt, Six-a.m. Meeting, thou breaker of sound sleeps.

After all seven have exited, the masque continues:

JUNO *(crowning Lena with a tiara)*
O heaven, O earth, bear witness to our suit
And crown what we profess with kind event.
Beyond all limit of what else i’ th’ world
We must do love, prize, honour, and thank you.

CERES *(banding Lena a scepter)*
Most gracious Lady Lena Orlina,
The people of this scepter’d isle, this realm,
This blessed plot, this feast, this Essayay,
Do give this staff to our departing hero.
In blisses may you reign -- e Buen Retiro!

IRIS *(banding Lena the picture)*
Never came trouble to our land in the likeness of your grace: for
trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart
from us, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

ALL *(in unison)*
All hail, Divine Lady Lena Orlina!

Applause.

CONCEPTION Peter Holland

SCRIPT William Shakespeare
Tom Bishop
Diana E. Henderson
Peter Holland
Heather James
Bruce R. Smith

MASKS & PROPS Gordon Davis

CAST Tom Bishop (Hangover)
Katie Brokaw (Six-a.m. Meeting)
William C. Carroll (Attendant to Lena)
Carla Della Gatta (Attendant to Ceres)
Diana E. Henderson (Ceres)
Peter Holland (Announcement and Techno-havoc)
Wendy Beth Hyman (Rumour)
Heather James (Iris)
Jeffrey Masten (Budget-Breaker)
Shankar Raman (Attendant to Iris)
Amy Rodgers (Foul Weather)
Bruce R. Smith (Juno)
Scott A. Trudell (Attendant to Juno)
Deanne Williams (Wordy Questioner)

STAGE MANAGER Bi-qi Beatrice Lei

VIDEO Timothy Jennings