



Felicity Enas

“A Visit With Queen Elizabeth I”

Grades: 6-12

Classroom Residency

**Performance Length: 2 sessions –
45 minutes each**

Audience Limit: 30 per class

About the Artist

Felicity Enas, Resident Director of Tyler’s Rogers Children’s Theater, has been acting since she was 6 years old. She received her formal dramatic training at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. She has been studying and dramatizing the life of Queen Elizabeth I for more than 20 years. Ms. Enas creates her costumes by hand, including the elaborate costume of Queen Elizabeth I.

Before the performance:

- Review the attached articles about Elizabethan clothing and British Sumptuary laws.
- Discuss the life and times of Queen Elizabeth I. Ask students what questions would they would ask the Queen if they could speak to her today.

After the performance:

- Ask students what they enjoyed most about being part of the Queen’s court. What part of court life do they feel would be most difficult?

About the Program

In this two-day residency, British born actress Felicity Enas brings the Elizabethan Age to life as she leads students in an exploration of the culture, customs, dance, music, foods, clothing, and literature of the period. During Ms. Enas’ first visit, students will learn fascinating details about the Elizabethan era and will be given assignments to research for the second part of the residency. For the second visit scheduled two weeks later, Ms. Enas appears as Queen Elizabeth I herself and is “entertained” by the court (class) with their prepared reports, clothing, food, dance, and music. In the character of Queen Elizabeth I, Ms. Enas will bring the Elizabethan era to life for students in way they will never forget.

Performance Set-up Requirements:

Session 1: Please clear a performance area at the front of the classroom (6’ x 6’ minimum).

Session 2: A larger performance area in the center of the classroom will be needed for the students’ dance presentations. Please provide a chair for Queen Elizabeth I at the front of the classroom.

Classroom Connections

History: Higher Level Thinking

1. Ask your students to read the “Overview of an Elizabethan Outfit”. Compare and contrast Cecily’s outfit to the clothes worn by young women of today. How would the clothing of a woman going to see the Queen today be similar to Cecily’s clothing? How would it be different? Ask your students to determine how historical and cultural events affected the choice of clothing in the Elizabethan Era vs. the twenty-first century.

2. Ask your students to read about English sumptuary laws in the attached article. Invite them to evaluate these laws’ effectiveness in promoting the power of the nobility during the Elizabethan Era. Why did Queen Elizabeth allow these laws to continue during her reign? What was the impact of these laws on her costuming? Invite your students to view portraits of Elizabeth I at the beginning and at the end of her reign. Discuss the impact of sumptuary laws and the Great Chain of Being on her choice of costuming. Invite your students to think of questions they would like to ask Queen Elizabeth I about these customs when she visits their class.

Language Arts: Higher Level Thinking

Invite your students to write a description of Elizabethan sumptuary laws and the Golden Chain of Being. Ask them to imagine that they are living in the Elizabethan era and to decide if the sumptuary laws and the Golden Chain of Being should be continued or replaced during that era. Finally, write to Queen Elizabeth I to convince her either to continue the laws or to end them.

Thank you for allowing Young Audiences of Northeast Texas to share these artists and performances with your students. Students’ written thank you notes may be sent to:

Young Audiences of Northeast Texas
200 East Amherst, Tyler, Texas 75701

Classroom Connections, cont.

Science: Higher Level Thinking

Invite your students to:

- Discuss the safety of the following cosmetic ingredients used on women’s faces in Elizabethan England: mercury, lead, musk (from the male musk deer)
- Evaluate ingredients found in today’s cosmetics. Do they think people 400 years from now will be as aghast at the ingredients in women’s cosmetics today as we are at those of the Elizabethan era?

Word List

Elizabethan Period: the period in English history from 1558-1603 when Elizabeth I ruled

Sumptuary Laws: English laws enacted by Henry VIII that dictated what types of clothing people of different social classes could wear

Great Chain of Being: although becoming less entrenched, this traditional idea of social order dictated the following hierarchy: God, Queen, nobles, prosperous middle class (merchants), middle class (artisans), and peasants

Pavane: a slow, stately dance

Lavolta: a fast dance where the woman is lifted into the air; a favorite of Queen Elizabeth’s, but condemned by the clergy as a cause of divorce and pregnancy

Classroom Management

Please note that Young Audiences’ policy mandates that the classroom teacher is to be present during the entire program or residency. Should the teacher leave, the artist is instructed to leave also. The teacher is responsible for managing classroom behavior during the program or residency.

Overview of an Elizabethan Outfit



This is a listing of the main elements of Elizabethan dress. By the term "Elizabethan", I mean the dress worn by the English during Queen Elizabeth's reign, or approximately 1550-1600.

There was a very wide variation in style between 1550 and 1600. Indeed, the entire silhouette of fashion transformed itself during the 50 year time span. The variation between the clothing worn by the nobility and that worn by the common folk was almost as great.

In addition, there is a bewildering variety in English Elizabethan women's wear. Just like today, not all women dressed in identical outfits. What a woman wore depended on her age (older women preferred more traditional styles), background (rural noblewomen weren't privy to the latest London fashions), body type (some larger women may have worn styles that flattered their figure) and individual taste. In 1580, a woman could choose to wear a French gown, round gown, loose gown, night gown, doublet, Italian gown, and Flemish and Polish gown, just for starters. Therefore, I'm narrowing it down to one lady, at one time and place.

Meet Cecily Hawkins, a minor noblewoman living in London in 1575. She's going to Elizabeth's court today, and has decided to wear her most fashionable gown: A French gown, with a low, square neckline, a tight-fitting bodice, and a full skirt gathered to the waist.

Putting on an upper-class English Elizabethan gown is a complicated process, and when you include hair and makeup, it can take half an hour or more. Several writers of Elizabethan times lampooned the extraordinary amount of time required for a woman to complete her toilette and dress. Phillip Stubbes' [Rant on Women's Dress](#), written in the 1580s, is an entertaining & informative example.

Cecily has a number of servants to do her hair and put on her shoes after she dresses. If you are unfortunate enough to lack servants to help you dress, you must do your hair and put on any underwear, stockings and shoes before starting. Once you're dressed, these things will be much more difficult to do. Although the Elizabethan noblewomen didn't wear underwear per se, several modern re-enactors do; when wearing Elizabethan dress in hot weather, shorts can prevent chafing.

After stretching and washing her face and hands, Cecily is ready to dress. Here we go!



Smock/Shift

The first thing Cecily puts on is her smock, also called a shift. This innermost layer of clothing, worn by all women of all classes, was a basic undergarment worn to protect outer clothing from sweat and body oils.

But which smock to wear? Cecily has different kinds of smocks; some are cut close to the body with a low, square neck and close-fitting, ungathered sleeves. Others have puffy sleeves gathered to cuffs and a body gathered to a close-fitting neckband. Since Cecily's wearing her low-cut French gown rather than a gown with a high bodice, she chooses a linen smock with a low, square neck, decorated with blackwork and narrow lace around the neck opening.



Stockings

Next, Cecily opens her clothes chest and looks through her stockings. Women's hose of the 1570s came to just above the knee. Cecily has several pair of cloth hose for everyday wear. These are made of bias cut wool in a number of colors. She also has three pairs of expensive knitted hose, two of wool jarnsey yarn, and one of fine silk yarn. Today, she decides, she should wear her silk hose. Cecily's stockings are kept up by a garter, a thin ribbon tied just below the knee.



Corset

Now it's time for the corset. Cecily's corset, which she calls a "pair of bodies", is a close-fitting bodice stiffened with reed and whalebone. Cecily doesn't wear a corset every day--although she's a buxom woman, her petticoat bodies gives a fashionable enough silhouette for relaxed home wear--but for court, she needs a corset to give her the flat front line required for her French gown. Sometimes she wishes she were small-busted like her sister, Anne, who can get away with a few bones down the front of her gown bodices and rarely needs to wear a corset.

For today, she slips a busk of horn down the front of her corset to make it very stiff and straight.



Spanish Farthingale

Cecily's Spanish farthingale is next, which she calls a "verdingal". This is a cone-shaped hoop skirt which gives the A-line shape that has become so fashionable at court in the past few years. She has some farthingales stiffened with rows of rope, which give a softer line, as well as some stiffened with willow bents, which create a very rigid shape indeed. For court, she chooses her willow-bent Spanish farthingale made of red taffeta.

Her maid, Joan, slips it over her head and ties it to the corset at the sides. This keeps it from slipping down and moving, and helps transfer the weight of heavy skirts to the torso rather than having it rest all on the hips.



Bumroll

Should she wear a "rowle" to Court or not? Cecily debates the question. Some women wear small, padded crescents around their hips to make skirts spring out more. The French gown Cecily plans to wear has pleats that are stuffed with batting and stiffened buckram near the top, to give them more spring, but perhaps a bumroll would give an extra "oomph" to her skirt. She decides to wear one, and Joan ties it around her waist.

Petticoat

All the structural items are on, and now it's time for Cecily's creativity to come to the fore. She has a number of different petticoats that she can wear. Some are simple, with decorative trim around the bottom; others are made of fancy silks. One is elaborately embroidered (a wedding gift from her husband.) Some are simply full skirts gathered to a narrow band, while others have bodices sewn to the skirt and are called "petticoat bodies." Cecily feels a chill draft creep under her hoopskirt, and belatedly wishes that she had put on a warm, flannel petticoat under her farthingale.

A petticoat's not really suited to the French Gown she plans to wear, Cecily decides. The skirts of this kind of gown are open in front to show off a fancy forepart, which is attached to either the front of the farthingale itself, or to a fitted, a-line skirt, called a kirtle. Cecily decides to wear a kirtle instead.



Kirtle and Forepart

Cecily has a number of different kirtles. Many are separate skirts, although some of her "kirtles" are actually entire undergowns, worn under different styles of gowns. In fact, her "gathered kirtle", with a skirt gathered to a bodice, is indistinguishable from a "petticoat bodies."

For this French gown, Cecily plans to wear a kirtle skirt over her farthingale. Her green satin kirtle fits particularly well over this farthingale, and Cecily has her maid Joan take it out of the press. After looking over her embroidered and couched foreparts, Cecily chooses one that will go well with the red velvet gown: a forepart of red taffeta and black sarcanet puffs, embroidered in gold. It has matching sleeves, like several of her other foreparts. While Joan removes Cecily's usual gold silk forepart from the green satin kirtle and stitches the new forepart on, Cecily's other chambermaid laces the matching sleeves into the armholes of her gown.



Partlet

Cecily had planned to wear her favorite shirt under her gown. It gathers to a high neck and has poufy sleeves which gather to cuffs. It's entirely covered with blackwork embroidery. As she's wearing sleeves that match her forepart, however, the shirt isn't an option. Instead, she chooses a white silk partlet embroidered with a network design in white silk "whitework" embroidery. This partlet ties under her arms, and fills in the low neckline of her gown quite nicely. It is a "ruffed partlet", and has a large ruff attached to the neckband.



Gown and Sleeves

At last! Time for Cecily's gown. Joan helps her into the French gown, makes sure the partlet is evenly tucked around the neckline, and laces it closed in front as the other maid, Maud, fiddles with the fashionable large shoulder rolls to make sure they're straight. Most of Cecily's gowns fasten up the front up the front, either with lacing or with hooks and eyes. The skirt is shaken out so that it lies evenly around.



Shoes

Cecily has several shoes to wear. They all have thin leather soles and uppers of leather, velvet or other fabrics. They are lined with wool, taffeta and satin. Some are slip-on shoes, similar to modern espadrilles. Others look rather like modern Mary Janes, with a low-cut top and a strap across the instep. Cecily decides to wear her red leather "latchet" shoes. These shoes have two side-flaps that fasten over a central tongue, tying with a yellow ribbon.

Headwear

Cecily sits down before her mirror with a sigh of relief, as Maud and Joan busy themselves with her hair. Joan places a linen cape over her gown, to keep hair and hair oils (Cecily rarely washes her hair with soap) away from the delicate silks. She then brushes the knots from her mistress's hair with a bone comb. The front hair is rolled into two poufs, using some false hair to add body, and the rest is braided into a thick brown braid. Joan then threads a blunt needle with a ribbon, called a "hair tape", and proceeds to "sew" the braid around the back of Cecily's head to keep it in place. She then fixes a small bag, or "cawle", over the braid.

After looking through her various headwear--a rather out-of-date french hood, a small flat cap, and several hats of differing shapes, sizes and colors--Cecily decides to wear a tall hat of white and gold brocade, embellished with several white feathers and a beautiful hatpin of enamelled gold.

Makeup

Meanwhile, Maud has been preparing Cecily's makeup. Cecily doesn't often wear makeup, but for an appearance at court it really is required. She prefers white lead for a foundation base. Although some folk warn that it's bad for the skin, she's never noticed any bad effect; in fact, it sometimes helps to clear up some spots.

Maud applies the white foundation to Cecily face and bosom, and then applies red "ceruse", or vermilion, to Cecily's lips. She also puts a touch of ceruse on the cheeks.

Ruffs

Cecily orders her fancy white linen ruff-band with the gold lace edging and spangles to be brought from its band-box. It was set into neat, crisp figure-eights just the night before, by a local woman known for her starching ability and knack with setting ruffs. It has matching wrist ruffs. Joan and Maud hook them onto Cecily's neck and wrists.

Jewelry

Cecily chooses a rich carcanet, or jeweled choker, of garnets and pearls to wear around her neck. It has a pendant depicting a dolphin, decorated with diamonds and emeralds. She chooses ruby and pearl earrings, and Joan slips some bodkins tipped with pearls into the poufs of her hair.

Not quite satisfied with the effect, Cecily also dons a long gold chain and has Joan fix a large pendant to the front center of her bodice.

Safeguard & Cloak

It's a rather cloudy day and there's a slight chance of rain. Joan keeps nagging Cecily to wear some protective clothing, so Cecily has Maud put a "safeguard", or protective outer skirt, over her gown to keep any unfortunate mud or water from it during her horse ride across town. A cape conceals her bodice and sleeves.

Cecily is finally ready to go to court! (And, as she steps down the stairs and out the door, she is glad that she's not a courtier or lady in waiting, who has to do this every day.)

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Sumptuary Laws in Tudor England: Is Your Garb Legal?

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Henry VIII was a good king in that during his reign, England prospered. There was virtually no beggary and it was becoming more and more difficult to tell the merchants and middle class from the nobility. The distinction was, by all appearances, an important one to the king because he enacted Sumptuary Laws.

SUMPTUARY \ 'sem(p)-che-,wer-e\ adj. [L sumptuarius, fr. sumptus expense, fr. sumptus, pp. of sumere to take, spend - more at CONSUME] 1: designed to regulate personal expenditures and esp. to prevent extravagance and luxury 2: designed to regulate habits on moral or religious grounds

These laws and taxes were enacted by Henry to keep the different classes separate. He wanted to be able to tell at a glance where you stood socially by the clothes you were wearing. During King Henry VIII's reign, violation of these laws could result in loss of property, title or (in cases of lower class) death.

MEN:

None shall wear . . .cloth of gold or silver, or silk of purple color. . . except . . .Earls, all above that rank, and Knights of the King (and then only in their mantles).

None shall wear . . .cloth of gold or silver, tinsel satin, silk, cloth mixed or embroidered with gold or silver, or foreign woolen cloth. . . except . . .Barons, all above that rank, Knights of the Garter, and Privy Councillors.

None shall wear . . .any lace of gold or silver, lace mixed with gold or silver, silk, spurs, swords, rapiers, daggers, buckles, or studs with gold, silver or gilt. . . except . . .Baron's Sons, all above that rank, Gentlemen attending the Queen, Knights and Captains.

None shall wear . . .velvet in gowns, cloaks, coats, or upper garments, or embroidery with silk, or hose of silk. . . except . . .Knights, all above that rank, and their heirs apparent.

None shall wear . . .velvet, satin, damask, taffeta, or grosgrain in gowns, cloaks, coats, or upper garments, or velvet in their jerkins, hose or doublets. . . except . . .Knight's Eldest Sons and all above that rank.

WOMEN:

None shall wear . . .cloth of gold or silver, or silk of purple color. . . except . . .Countesses and all above that rank. (Viscountesses may wear it in their kirtles)

None shall wear . . .silk or cloth mixed with or embroidered with silk, pearls, gold or silver. . . except . . .Baronesses and all above that rank.

None shall wear . . . cloth of silver in belts or kirtles. . . except . . . Wives of Knights and all above that rank.

None shall wear . . . embroideries of gold, silver or silk (mixed) or headdresses trimmed with pearls. . . except . . . Wives of Baron's Eldest Sons, all above that rank, Baron's Daughters, Wives of King's Knights or Privy Councillors, or Maids of Honor.

None shall wear . . . velvet in upper garments or embroidery with silk thread. . . except . . . Knight's Wives and all above that rank.

None shall wear . . . velvet in kirtles or petticoats, or satin in gowns, cloaks and other outer garments. . . except . . . Wives of Knight's Eldest Sons, Gentlewomen attending Countesses, and all above that rank.

None shall wear . . . satin, damask, taffeta or grosgrain in their gowns. . . except . . . Landed Gentlemen's Wives and all above that rank.

provided by Scarborough Academy for Performing Arts 1991

The previous article was reproduced from <http://costume.dm.net/sumptuary.html>