Dramaturgy Packet: *Head Over Heels*

Songs by The Go-Go's
Conceived and Original Book by Jeff Whitty
Based on *Arcadia* by Sir Philip Sidney
Adapted by James Magruder

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Santa Clara University



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1. Dramaturg's Note

Head Over Heels is a musical driven by inversion: a world turned upside down where tempo and bodies collide rhythmically, historically, and culturally. Set in a highly stylized Renaissance era and powered by the music of The Go-Go's, the show contrasts poetic verse with the driving pulse of 1980s pop punk. Its heightened, pseudo-Shakespearean language gleefully clashes with contemporary vernacular as the world of pastoral shepherds meets romantic comedy meets a generous dose of queer camp and drag spectacle. What emerges is a dissonant theatrical world that revels in playful pastiche, finding coherence not in order but in exuberant unpredictability.

Dissonant rhythms are embedded in the musical's central metaphor: *the beat*. This is signaled by the show-stopping opening number set to the Go-Go's 1980s teen anthem "We Got the Beat." The song signals vitality and collective energy that pulses through the theatre and carries across the show's musical numbers. In Arcadia, where the story unfolds, an oracle's dark prophecy foretells the loss of that communal beat, setting its royal characters on a journey toward an unknown fate. The appearance of a snake, a lion, and an owl along the road foregrounds Greek and Roman mythology embedded in the musical's source text: Philip Sidney's 16th century pastoral romance *Arcadia.* At the same time, the 2015 musical's trailblazing inclusion of a nonbinary prophet, alongside its embrace of crossdressing and sexual fluidity, expands the range of bodies and roles onstage, deliberately pushing against the strict gender codes of history. (At the time of its premiere on Broadway in 2018, it was the first major musical to feature a nonbinary character). As the plot unfolds, lovers unite and gender roles dissolve in playful and unexpected ways.

Rather than restoring a singular beat to its world, *Head Over Heels* suggests that rhythm, like identity, can be plural and ever-shifting. Arcadia does not lose its beat; it learns to hear it differently, inviting audiences to do the same.

Benjamin Gillespie

2. Cast & Creative Team

Gynecia: Caroline Gruenbaum
Basilius: Christian Barnard
Pamela: Emma Fox
Philoclea: Victoria Liu
Mopsa: Emilia Rodriguez
Musidorus: Ashwin Raman
Pythio: Audrey Thomson
Dametas: Jaren Frederick

Ensemble: Destin Emmert, Viola Sunderman, Kirby Maitra, Josh Payumo, James Beckman Maldonaldo, Jade Zhou, Frank Pusich, Isabelle Martinez, Lana Jean Villegas, Steven Dominguez

Director: Jeffrey Bracco
Assistant Director: Ana Lynch
Costume Designer: Katie Dowse
Asst. Costume Designers: Audrey Thomson, Dylan Masamitsu, Christian Barnard
Scenic Designer: Heather Kenyon
Assistant Set Designer: Leila Sharafkah
Lighting Designer: Mitchell Ost
Assistant Lighting Designer: Kiernan Doty
TD & PM: Erik Sunderman
Assistant Production Manager: Mihika Gupta
Facility & Technical Support: Steven Fetter
Costume Shop Manager: Naomi Arnst
Vocal/Music Director: Debra Lambert
Fight Choreographer & Intimacy Coordinator: Bessie Zolno
Stage Manager: Gia Gonnella
Assistant Stage Managers: John Gumba, Mihika Gupta, Ximena Melgoza



3. Short Synopsis:

Head Over Heels is a jukebox musical set to the music of The Go-Go's and inspired by Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. It follows the royal family of Arcadia after King Basilius receives a prophecy that his kingdom will fall. In an attempt to avoid this fate, he leads his family on a journey that entangles the characters in a topsy-turvy plot of mistaken identities and unexpected romances.

Act 1 begins in the prosperous kingdom of Arcadia, where life is governed by a unifying force known as the Beat. King Basilius and Queen Gynecia rule alongside their two daughters, Pamela and Philoclea. Philoclea is in love with Musidorus, a shepherd considered socially unsuitable, while Pamela struggles with the pressures of her beauty and constant attention from suitors. The oracle Pythio warns Basilius that the Beat is in danger and delivers four prophecies: Philoclea will fall for a forbidden lover, Pamela will love someone unexpected, Basilius and Gynecia will commit adultery, and Basilius will be replaced by a new ruler. Determined to avoid this fate, Basilius lies to his family about the prophecy and leads them on a journey, hoping to control events and prevent its fulfillment. Meanwhile, Musidorus follows them and, with Pythio's guidance, disguises himself as the Amazon warrior Cleophila in order to remain close to Philoclea. This disguise creates a web of attraction, as not only Philoclea but also Pamela, Gynecia, and Basilius develop feelings for Cleophila (Musidorus in disguise). At the same time, Mopsa, Pamela's handmaid, realizes she is in love with Pamela. Eventually, Philoclea discovers Cleophila's true identity as Musidorus, and the two affirm their love.

Act 2 Basilius and Gynecia both pursue Cleophila, each believing they are arranging a secret meeting, but they instead encounter one another in the dark, unintentionally fulfilling the prophecy of adultery. As tensions rise, the truth about Cleophila's identity and the various romantic entanglements is revealed, causing confusion and conflict within the group. Convinced that Musidorus is the prophesied new king, Basilius challenges him to a duel and ultimately kills him. In the aftermath, Basilius realizes that his attempts to avoid the prophecy have in fact caused it. With all four prophecies fulfilled, the Beat disappears and the kingdom falls into disorder. However, a new Beat emerges, restoring balance, and Musidorus is miraculously revived. The characters embrace transformation and acceptance: Philoclea and Musidorus reunite, Pamela and Mopsa declare their love, and Pythio is revealed to be Mopsa's parent, returning after being exiled for their gender identity. Musidorus also expresses a fluid sense of gender, choosing to retain aspects of Cleophila. By the end, Basilius relinquishes power, and the group recognizes that although their journey has brought them back to Arcadia, they have fundamentally changed, creating a more open and inclusive society.

4. Character List

GYNECIA: The queen of Arcadia, wife to Basilius.

Mother to the sweet but naive Philoclea and spoiled as hell Pamela. Super fed up with everyone and her sarcasm barely contains the years of disappointment she holds onto. Attracted to Cleophila (Musidorus in disguise).

BASILIUS: The king of Arcadia, husband to Gynecia, father to Pamela and Philoclea.

He has a God complex, but really needs to be put in his place. Also attracted to Cleophila (Musidorus in disguise).

PAMELA: Eldest daughter to Gynecia and Basilius, sister of Princess Philoclea.

Thinks that her beauty is God's gift to man, she is self-obsessed, and vain. Also, she is a closeted lesbian but doesn't want to open that door anytime soon. Also attracted to Cleophila (because who isn't at this stage?)

PHILOCLEA: Younger daughter to Gynecia and Basilius, sister of Princess Pamela.

Can be easily written off as just another ingénue, but she actually has a good sense of morality and desires a simple life and true love. In love with Musidorus.

MOPSA: Handmaid to Princess Pamela, childhood friend of both princesses, daughter of Dametas (and, as is later revealed, Pythio).

She is one of the most socially aware characters with both humans and animals. Also, the fact that she has one of the best gaydars out of anyone in the room is great.

MUSIDORUS: Shepherd boy, childhood friend of princess Philoclea, he desires to be with her forever. Spends much of the play in drag as Cleophila.

His naivety leads to him being accidentally pathetic in a very comedic way. Everyone desires Musidorus/Cleophila. He discovers gender fluidity in the course of the play.

PYTHIO/THE ORACLE: A non-binary magical entity that inspires the King's journey.

Pronouns: They/Them. They always enjoy being the only one in the room who understands what's going on because…well, they are a prophet!

DAMETAS: Right hand to King Basilius, father of Mopsa.

Very sincere and dedicated to the royal family, but his bravado quickly crumbles under pressure. He is attracted to the Oracle (Pythio).

5. Language Guide

Part 1 includes includes a pronunciation guide. Don't know how to say a word, we've got you covered! Part 2 includes phrase translations. This is where you can find what colloquial phrases mean, especially sections in "Elizabethan" English. Part 3 includes various word definitions.

A Note on Iambic Pentameter: This is a poetic meter used throughout the play consisting of ten syllables that alternate between stressed and unstressed (da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM)

Part 1: Pronunciations

Doth : Du-th
Fixèd: Fix-sid
Virile: Vur-uhl
Espy: Es-pie
Ecce: Ech-ay
Tak'st: Tay-kest
Dar'st: D-air-ist

Part 2: Phrase Translations

- Act 1, Scene 1

"Ah! Were you but content with me to dwell / On Rudesby's cot in the beaver'd bank our home / Shoot the fardels blow / Or with osier-wand / Fadge not the puling cock!
If only you would be happy living with me / In a simple, rustic little home by the riverbank / Cast off burdens (or) forget worldly troubles / Don't fuss or complain (like a whining child)

"moisture to the corn / ewes with young / blowzy old beldame / thy bellows… to ope."
rain that helps crops grow / pregnant sheep (a symbol of fertility and nurturing) / a loud old woman / your loud voice/breath calling out to the gods

"Be not a two-fisted jenny heifer."
Don't be so stubborn!

"Too many turns of the hourglass…"
Too much time has passed

"...Resistance / Impolitic"
Resisting would be unwise

"...your toilette"
Preparing yourself

“I’ll fetch the utensils of thy radiance.”
I’ll get the things that make you look your best

- Act 1, Scene 2

“An aura serpentine…”
A snake-like presence

“...great curlicues of gesture.”
Big, swirling, dramatic hand or body movements

- Act 1, Scene 3:

“...the gadding ivy-spray / And laughing-eyed udders swollen with milk!”
Wandering ivy and fertile animals full of milk -> lush and abundant imagery

“...thy tongue curdles reason.”
The things you say twist or ruin logic

- Act 1, Scene 4

“...dear chuck”
Dear one, sweetheart (casual term of affection)

- Act 1, Scene 6:

“...my bosky coppice.”
My shady little grove

“Ecce! Aslant my avian orbits / Dian’s moon shoots her silver’d furbelows.”
Look! Across my bird-like gaze, the moonlight shines across her view

- Act 1, Scene 7:

“Must you / Ever pluck that one sharp string to your lute?”
Do you always have to bring up that one irritating topic

“Thy tongue is honeyed.”
You speak very sweetly

- Act 1, Scene 8:

“My fragments are lost to time like Sappho’s.”
My work/words are mostly lost, like Sappho’s

- Act 1, Scene 9:

“...to spur him with folly.”
To push him into acting foolishly

“Caprine caper”
A goat-like leap

- Act 1, Scene 10:

“O posies verdant, grass and hedges dure / Drinkest thee this alizarin acqua / Vita that issues from a yeoman’s dingle / to slake thy thirsty roots.”
The plants are being nourished by a reddish stream flowing through the countryside

Part 3: Word Definitions

- Act 1, Scene 1:

Fardels
burdens

Osier-wand
a flexible stick

Puling cock
a whining/crying creature

Beldame
Messy, loud, old woman

Guileless
Devoid of deceit or treachery

Repose
Temporary rest from exertion

Tourney
Tournament

Dilapidate
To bring into a state of ruin

Surfeit
Excessive consumption of food or drink, gluttony

Belfry

A church bell tower

Umbrage
Displeasure or annoyance

Cosseted
To indulge or pamper

Gentry
Individuals of high social rank or status

Portents
A sign or omen of a momentous or catastrophic event

Portage
The action of carrying or transporting goods, letters, etc.

- Act 1, Scene 2

Distempurature
Extreme temperature; weather conditions that are not properly tempered for human well-being

Prevarication
Deviation from a course of action that is thought to be right/proper

- Act 1, Scene 3

Spake
To utter

Beguilement
To deceive
To win the attention of a person by willing means

- Act 1, Scene 4:

Flouts
To mock or insult

Retinue
A group of people or animals in the service of or accompanying a person of higher status

- Act 1, Scene 5:

Vantage
Advantage or superiority in a contest

- Act 1, Scene 6:

Espy
To discover by spying

Ecce
Latin for lo! Or behold!

- Act 1, Scene 8:

Enmeshes
To entrap, entangle

Hearken
To listen

Ardency
Intensity of heat, burning quality

Misprize
To mistake or misunderstand

Rouse
To disturb sleep

- Act 1, Scene 9

Modish
Someone who follows the latest fashion or style

- Act 1, Scene 10:

Torrent
A fast-flowing stream of water

Transposes
To alter the order of

- Act 1, Scene 12:

Gravid
Pregnant

Forsooth
Truly, or truth

Pantalettes
Long, loose pants with a frill or ruffle at the bottom of each leg, showing underneath a skirt

Ardor
Heat of passion or desire

- Act 2, Scene 2:

Missive
A letter from a superior authority to a particular person conveying a command, recommendation, or permission

Fie
Exclamation expressing disgust

Quaver
To shake or tremble

Trumperies
Something regarded as having little or no true value

Abjure
To renounce an oath

- Act 2, Scene 3

Stag
A male deer

- Act 2, Scene 4:

Lilt
To sing cheerfully or merrily

Doff
To take off the body
Doleful
Fraught with grief

- Act 2, Scene 5:

Sororal
On a sister's side

Predilection
A preference or particular liking for something

Inconstancy
Fickleness of conduct or purpose; changeableness of character or disposition

Melliflous
Sweet-sounding words, speech, music

Mirth
Lightness of mood or mind

Broil
To be or to engage in a confused struggle or fight

Bellows
To cry in a loud and deep voice; to shout or roar

Overweening
Having unreasonably high expectations or an excessively high opinion of oneself

Penitent
A person who repents

Twain
Into two parts or pieces

Diffident
Lacking in self-confidence; timid, shy, modest

Diaphonus
Permitting the free passage of light; perfectly transparent

Repin'd
To feel or express discontent or dissatisfaction

6. The Go-Go's/Punk Music

The Go-Go's: Formed in 1978 in Los Angeles. In 1981, they released their debut album *Beauty and the Beat.* This spent half of 1980 touring the UK where "We Got the Beat" was a minor hit. In 1982, they were nominated for best New Artist Grammy. "Our Lips are Sealed" and "We Got the Beat" brought them to stardom and gained them a fanbase. It was not common for women to write their own music and play their own instruments for a band. The Go-Go's were the first all-female band to have an LP (*Beauty and the Beat)* top the billboard album charts for six weeks before reaching double platinum status in the U.S. These achievements have yet to be matched. *Beauty and the Beat* is considered one of the cornerstones of US new wave punk music.

Original Band:
Belinda Carlisle* - Lead Vocalist, Percussion
Jane Wiedlin* - Lead Guitar, Rhythm Guitar, Backing Vocals
Margot Olavarria - Bass
Ellisa Bello - Drums

Replacements:
Charlotte Caffey* - Keyboards, Backing Vocals, Lead Guitar
Kathy Valentine* - Bass, Backing Vocals, Rhythm Guitar, Backing Vocals
Paula Jean Brown - Bass
Gina Schock* - Drums, Backing Vocals

Punk Rock: Emerged in mid-1970s rooted in 1950s rock and roll and 60s garage bands. Rooted in antiestablishment, anti-capitalism, youthful rebellion, and rejection of overproduction and corporate mainstream music. Very DIY and technically accessible form of music creation. Created in New York, continued expanding across the U.S., expanded globally, especially in the UK, and finally reached California where subgenres began to form.



Original Lyrics (Selection)

We Got The Beat

See the people walking down the street
Fall in line just watching all their feet
They don't know where they wanna go
But they're walking in time
They got the beat
They got the beat
They got the beat, yeah
They got the beat
See the kids just getting out of school
They can't wait to hang out and be cool
Hang around 'til quarter after twelve
That's when they fall in line
They got the beat
They got the beat
Kids got the beat, yeah
Kids got the beat
Go-go music really makes us dance
Do the pony puts us in a trance
Do the watusi just give us a chance
That's when we fall in line
'Cause we got the beat
We got the beat
We got the beat, yeah
We got it
We got the beat
We got the beat
We got the beat
Everybody get on your feet
We got the beat
We know you can dance to the beat
We got the beat
Jumpin', get down
We got the beat
Round and round and round
We got the beat
We got the beat...

Skidmarks

You sure know how to hurt a girl
Fewer hugs and no more kisses
Just water for your carburetor
And bearings for your pistons
Rev her engine for your pleasure
Caress and fondle her steering wheel
But when you moan and hug her gear shift

Stop, think how it makes me feel
Oh, skid marks on my heart
You've got me in fifth
You're burning rubber like my love
Oh, skid marks on my heart
You've got me in fifth
You're burning rubber like my love
Spend all your time and money
On that Pontiac GTO pile

Getting tired of your greasy antics
My pride's getting hurt by the mile
Blow her engine, blow my mind
Keep her shocks and brakes aligned
I see that you're all jacked up
Leaving me and your exhaust behind

Oh, skid marks on my heart
You've got me in fifth
You're burning rubber like my love
Oh, skid marks on my heart
You've got me in fifth
You're burning rubber like my love
One, two, three, four
I buy you cologne, you want to axle grease
You say, "Get a mechanic, " I say, "Get a shrink"

I need promises, you need Motor Trend
Our love needs an overhaul
Or this, this may be the end
Oh, skid marks on my heart
You've got me in fifth
You're burning rubber like my love
Oh, skid marks on my heart
You've got me in fifth
You're burning rubber like my love
I'm driving in risk
I'm driving in risk
I'm driving in risk
I'm driving in risk

Mad About You

I'm mad about you, you're mad about me, babe
Couple of fools run wild, aren't we?
Pushing the day into the nighttime
Somewhere between the two, we start to see
Mad about you (mad about you)
Lost in your eyes (reason aside)
Mad about love (mad about you)
You and I
Something 'bout you
Right here beside me
Touches the touched part of me like I can't believe
Pushing the night into the daytime
Watching the sky's first light while the city sleeps
Mad about you (mad about you)
Lost in your eyes (reason aside)
Mad about love (mad about you)
You and I
Mad about you (mad about you)
Lost in your eyes (reason aside)
Mad about love (mad about you)
You and I
I'm mad about you, you're mad about me, babe
A couple of fools run wild, aren't we?
Mad about you (mad about you)
Lost in your eyes (reason aside)
Mad about love (mad about you)
You and I
I'm mad about you (mad about you)
Lost in your eyes (reason aside)
Mad about love (mad about you)
You and I
Mad about you (mad about you)
Lost in your eyes (reason aside)
Mad about love (mad about you)
You and I
I'm mad about you (mad about you)
Lost in your eyes (reason aside)
Mad about...

Vacation

Can't seem to get my mind off of you
Back here at home, there's nothin' to do
Now that I'm away, I wish I'd stayed
Tomorrow's a day of mine that you won't be in
When you looked at me, I should have run
But I thought it was just for fun
I see I was wrong, and I'm not so strong
I should have known all along that time would tell
A week without you
Thought I'd forget
Two weeks without you and I
Still haven't gotten over you yet
Vacation, all I ever wanted
Vacation, had to get away
Vacation, meant to be spent all alone
Vacation, all I ever wanted
Vacation, had to get away
Vacation, meant to be spent all alone
A week without you
Thought I'd forget
Two weeks without you and I
Still haven't gotten over you yet

Vacation, all I ever wanted
Vacation, had to get away
Vacation, meant to be spent all alone
Vacation, all I ever wanted
Vacation, had to get away
Vacation, meant to be spent all alone
Vacation, all I ever wanted
Vacation, had to get away
Vacation, meant to be spent all alone

Head Over Heels

… Been running so long
I've nearly lost all track of time
In every direction
I couldn't see the warning signs
I must be losing it
'Cause my mind plays tricks on me
It looked so easy
But you know looks sometimes deceive
… Been running so fast
Right from the starting line
No more connections
I don't need any more advice
One hand's just reaching out
And one's just hanging on
It seems my weaknesses
Just keep going strong
… Head over heels, where should I go?
Can't stop myself, out of control
Head over heels, no time to think
Looks like the whole world's out of sync
… Been running so hard
When what I need is to unwind
The voice of reason
Is one I left so far behind
I've waited so long
So long to play this part
And just remembered
That I'd forgotten about my heart
… Head over heels, where should I go?
Can't stop myself, out of control
Head over heels, no time to think
Looks like the whole world's out of sync
… Head over heels, where should I go?
Can't stop myself, out of control
Head over heels, no time to think
Looks like the whole world's out of sync
… Head over heels, where should I go?
Can't stop myself, out of control
Head over heels, no time to think
Looks like the whole world's out of sync
Head over heels, where should I go?
Can't stop myself, out of control
Head over heels, no time to think
Looks like the whole world's out of sync!

7. Cultural Context: Elizabethan

In Elizabethan England, men at court often sought advancement by attaching themselves to powerful patrons or pursuing favor through relationships with elite women, particularly within royal circles. Their role was less about individual achievement and more about enhancing the prestige of those they served while positioning themselves for social and political mobility.

Women's roles, especially among the nobility, were structured through networks of kinship. Noblewomen typically assembled their households from female relatives or daughters of the gentry, reinforcing alliances and maintaining social cohesion within elite circles.

Social hierarchy sharply divided common people from royalty. Common folk were defined by their labor, land access, and local reputation, with little opportunity to move beyond their position. In contrast, royalty held concentrated political, legal, and symbolic power, grounded in lineage and visibly reinforced through ceremony, dress, and courtly life.

Marriage functioned as a key mechanism for maintaining and consolidating this hierarchy. Among the nobility and royalty, marriage was less about personal choice and more about strategy, shaping inheritance, alliances, and political influence. While women across all classes faced expectations to marry, elite women were subject to particularly intense control, as their marriages carried significant economic and social consequences.

[Source: *Life in Elizabethan England: A Compendium of Common Knowledge*]

Queer Identity in the 16th century:

In Elizabethan England, same-sex desire was not understood as a fixed identity in the way we think of sexual orientation today. Instead, it was viewed as a temporary behavior and often framed as a sign of moral failing rather than an inherent aspect of a person's identity.

At the same time, intimate emotional and physical expressions between men were socially acceptable within the bounds of friendship. Influenced by ideals of chivalry and religious devotion, male friendships could include gestures such as walking arm-in-arm or kissing without being considered sexual. Even brief kisses on the mouth functioned as ordinary social greetings.

Gender expression was also structured differently than in contemporary contexts. Clothing distinctions between men and women were based more on cut than material, meaning that fabrics like silk, lace, and jewelry signaled wealth and status rather than

femininity. As a result, elite men often appeared “effeminate” by modern standards, though this did not carry the same connotations at the time.

However, certain forms of same-sex behavior were still stigmatized. Satirical portrayals of fashionable men suggested that engaging in relationships with both women and male partners marked a failure to meet accepted norms of masculinity, positioning such behavior as excessive, frivolous, and socially suspect.

[Source: *Homosexuality in Elizabethan England* by Anne Lyle]

8. 80s Styles



















9. *Arcadia* and mythology

This section provides context on Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, including the distinction between the Old and New versions and the purpose of its pastoral structure; an overview of key literary devices such as pastoral form and hexameter; an explanation of major Greek and Roman mythological references; and a comparison highlighting differences between the original text and its musical adaptation.

Head Over Heels vs *Arcadia*

Head Over Heels adapts and reshapes Sidney's *Arcadia*, particularly through its use of classical mythology, prophecy, and thematic focus. While both works draw on Greek and Roman references such as Apollo, Prometheus, and Diana, the musical simplifies or omits many figures from the original, streamlining the mythological landscape.

Key elements like prophecy are also revised: Sidney's version is more complex and expansive, while the musical condenses and alters it for clarity and dramatic effect.

Structural changes include reducing symbolic elements (such as the removal of the bear) and altering narrative details like the oracle.

At the same time, the adaptation intentionally shifts emphasis toward contemporary concerns, especially gender and identity, and reorients the story's exploration of love across time, class, and social boundaries.

Even stylistically, the musical retains a heightened, pseudo-classical language, but with careful attention to rhythm and tone rather than parody.

More on *Arcadia*

Early Greek writers composed in hexameter, and Sidney drew heavily on these classical traditions, embracing their forms, myths, and belief in poetry as a vital way of shaping history and human understanding.

Arcadia emerges from two main influences the pastoral novel and chivalric romance combining idealized rural life with heroic adventure. Sidney's aim was both moral and imaginative: to transform abstract philosophical ideas into vivid, lived experience through poetic storytelling.

The work also carries a more personal dimension, as it was reportedly written to entertain his sister and possibly to navigate courtly relationships. Its composition was fluid and unfinished, with revisions, lost pages, and shifting structures reflecting both Sidney's ongoing experimentation and the complex literary influences of his time.

Pastoral Genre

Pastoral is a literary mode that simplifies and idealizes complex human life by placing it in a rural, often shepherd-centered setting, emphasizing a humble, reflective relationship to nature.

Rather than a single genre, it appears across poetry, drama, and prose, typically contrasting the simplicity of country life with the corruption or complexity of urban society.

Rooted in ancient Greek texts like Hesiod's *Works and Days*, pastoral traditionally romanticizes rural labor as closer to a lost "golden age." Revived by Italian writers in the 14th century and widely adopted across Renaissance Europe, it became a key framework for blending nostalgia, social critique, and poetic imagination.

Latin Poetic Structure

Latin poetry is structured through quantitative meter, meaning its rhythm depends on patterns of long and short syllables rather than stressed and unstressed ones as in English.

A long syllable takes roughly twice as long to pronounce as a short one, and identifying these patterns is called scansion.

Syllables are generally long if they contain a long vowel or combined vowels, though certain consonant combinations can affect this. One of the most important forms is hexameter, a six-foot metrical line commonly used in classical Greek and Latin epic poetry, often built from repeating dactylic patterns.

10. Understanding Queer Identity

LGBTQ stands for *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning*; the "+" includes additional identities (e.g., intersex, asexual, pansexual, etc).

Refers broadly to **sexual orientation** (who you are attracted to) and **gender identity** (how you understand your gender).

LGBTQ identity challenges the assumption that everyone is **heterosexual and cisgender** (gender identity matches sex assigned at birth).

Terminology

Sexual Orientation: Emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual).

Gender Identity: One's internal sense of being male, female, both, neither, or something else.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth.

Transgender: A person whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex at birth.

What Does Nonbinary Mean?

Nonbinary is a gender identity that does not fit strictly within "male" or "female."

Nonbinary people may identify as:

- both male and female
- neither male nor female
- somewhere in between or fluid over time

Not all nonbinary people identify as transgender

Common pronouns include they/them, though individuals may use a mix of he/she/they or a range of other pronouns.

What does Queer mean?

Queer is an umbrella term for people whose sexual orientation or gender identity falls outside heterosexual and cisgender norms.

It can describe identities such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and nonbinary, among others.

Historically used as a slur, the term has been reclaimed by many as a positive, self-defined identity.

In academic contexts, “queer” also names a way of thinking that challenges fixed categories of gender and sexuality or other heteronormative ideals (reproduction, time, family, etc).

**LGBTQ identities expand how we understand gender and sexuality beyond binary norms. Queer identity is perceived as fluid rather than fixed.

Head Over Heels

Pythio identifies with the pronouns they/them. There is also use of drag/female impersonation in the show with Musidorus, leading to a more gender fluid identification by the end of the play

> **Basilus:** “Things need to be one thing or another.” (gender binary)
>
> **Pythio:** “My qualities transcend your rude opinion!” “Pythio is a nonbinary plural.”

Queerness is tied to casting, mistaken identity, crossdressing (drag), and gender fluidity in the play. References to Sappho also draw in lesbian identity explicitly with Pamela (and possibly others).

The Broadway premiere was a major moment for queer identity: *Head Over Heels* is a rarity in its portrayal of the full spectrum of gender identity and in its casting of a trans actor (and drag queen) to play a nonbinary role. By starring in the Broadway production, the artist Peppermint, a finalist from the ninth season of RuPaul’s Drag Race, became the first transgender woman to originate a principal role on Broadway.



Above: Pythio (Peppermint) and their serpentine dancers in *Head Over Heels* on Broadway.

The Broadway production received multiple award nominations, and was largely recognized for its inclusive casting and performances. Key nominations included Outer Critics Circle nods for Outstanding New Broadway Musical, Book of a Musical (James Magruder & Jeff Whitty), and Featured Actress (Bonnie Milligan).

The production received the Extraordinary Excellence in Diversity on Broadway Award for the 2018–2019 season from the Actors' Equity Association.

The production was notable for being the first Broadway musical to feature a principal role played by an openly transgender woman (Peppermint)





Major Pre-Broadway Runs: World Premiere, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 2015; Curran Theatre, San Francisco, 2018 (pre-Broadway run, mostly the same cast).

11. Brief History of Drag

Drag has its origins in Ancient Greek, Roman and Elizabethan cultures. When women were not allowed to perform in shows, men were often tasked with performing female roles

Cross-dressing:



Male actor portraying Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*

- The term “drag” came about in the late 19th century, supposedly being a reference to long gowns that would drag cross the floor in ballrooms. American William Dorsey Swann, a formerly enslaved Black man, was the first self-proclaimed “queen of drag” and hosted numerous drag balls in Washington, D.C. during the late 19th century



William Dorsey Swann

- By early vaudeville (1920s), drag was becoming more significant in the performance field. Female impersonators were making a splash (Julian Eltinge in particular even made it to Broadway).



Julian Eltinge

During the 1940s and 1950s, drag artist Arthur Blake found success impersonating female celebrities of the time, and even performed as Eleanor Roosevelt at the White House



Arthur Blake as Bette Davis

An expansion of gay/queer bars were being made available by the late 60s (Stonewall Inn opened in 1967). These bars/spaces provided for drag queens and kings to bond and be their truest selves without shame from the outside world



Mid-20th century saw a rise in racism in Drag Balls which changed to house Balls, evolving into the way Ballroom is celebrated amongst queer people today.

The late 20th century saw the rise of new forms of drag such as Ballroom among the Black and Latine LGBTQ+ community. Ballroom is not the dance style that you typically think of, but the name comes from “Balls” where it is a large competition event where contestants compete in walks and dances like voguing.

Much of popular culture today (Snaps, tongue clicks for emphasis, and finger claps) are derived from drag culture from New York Latine and Black Ballroom
Support of one another was something that was very important to queer people, especially queer people of color, so they formed “Houses.” This is where you create a family structure as a system of support for young queer people as they were often displaced.

In 2009, RuPaul’s Drag Race premiered, bringing visibility of drag to the masses and quickly becoming a cultural icon





RuPaul /Various drag queens from season 18 of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*

Today, drag continues to expand and become more mainstream. Drag queens such as Peppermint, Monet X Change, Jinx Monsoon, Trixie Mattel and Katya have reached masses through performances, film, and theatre appearances. The 2026 revival of Cats (Cats: The Jellicle Ball) includes a runway and several drag and queer performers is an example of the ever thriving drag scene



Cats: The Jellicle Ball (2026 on Broadway)