Performance Notes
for The Castle of the Faithful Wives

THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

1. *Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom.* Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.

2. *Students can perform the play in the classroom.* Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."

3. *Students can perform the play on stage.* Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.

COSTUMES

- NARRATOR— Perhaps a nice shirt and slacks, a nice blouse and skirt, or a nice dress.

- DUKE, KING, ROYAL TAX COLLECTOR, NOBLEPERSONS— Dark colored pants, ideally rolled up to mid-calf to reflect the pant-style of the age; solid color button-up shirts in rich colors such as purple, golden yellow, red or royal blue. KING should also wear a crown.

- QUEEN, LADY IN WAITING, DUCHESS, and NOBLEPERSONS— Long dresses or skirts with a solid color blouse in a rich hue such as purple, dark pink, or turquoise. QUEEN should wear a tiara or crown and nice shoes, preferably brightly colored or sparkly. Can be high heels or flats. For Scene 2, QUEEN and LADY IN WAITING should wear boots.

- CITIZENS & MESSENGER— Boys can wear blue, black, dark green, brown or grey sweatpants, rolled up to mid-calf and button-down shirts in light colors such as white, tan, light blue or light grey, and dark colored vests. The girls can wear long skirts in any solid color and blouses in light colors such as white, light blue, light yellow, cream, and lavender. Hair can be down, in a ribbon or held back in a scarf.

- SOLDIERS & GUARD— Solid grey clothing. Optional: breastplates drawn on cardboard, and costume knight helmets. Cardboard swords and shields, painted silver.

PROPS

Scene 1
- Bags of money for those paying their tributes. These can be made from handkerchiefs or pieces of fabric, gathered into a small sack and tied at the top with twine or yarn. (Make the DUKE OF WEISENBERG'S bag larger than the others.) You can fill the bags with fake money, real coins, or marbles, for weight and sound. Optional: You can paint dollar signs on the bags.

Scene 2
- Baskets of fruit, vegetables, pastry and breads for WEISENBERG citizens to carry back and forth through the tunnels.
- Rolled scroll of parchment paper tied twine around it for MESSENGER to give to KING KONRAD.
- Blankets for SOLDIERS.

Scene 3
- Two coins for CITIZEN 2.
- Handful of dried kidney beans for CITIZEN 3.
- Stuffed bags for to WEISENBERG CITIZENS carry out when surrendering.
- Parchment paper tied around a rock (or fake rock) with a red or purple ribbon for KING KONRAD to pass off to SOLDIER #3 to throw.
- Bottle of ink for DUCHESS UTA. This can be represented by a small jar painted black.
- A feather quill for DUCHESS UTA. This can be represented by a fake feather with the tip painted black.
- Piece of paper for DUCHESS UTA to "write" note on.

SETS

To make scene transitions easy, the stage can be dividend into three sections. If you want, you can create a backdrop that show the three locations, or you can just rely on set pieces. The three locations are:
1) The Royal Court of King Konrad and Queen Gertrude, on one side of the stage.
2) The gate of Castle Weisenberg, in the middle of the stage
3) The Interior of Castle Weisenberg, on the other side of the stage.

Scene 1— The Royal Court of King Konrad and Queen Gertrude, on one side of the stage. If you do make a backdrop, you can paint this section to show the inside of a castle, with stone walls, royal portraits, and ornate castle windows, wish sashes and draperies.

Two thrones sit on stage. These can be any high back chairs. There is also a small side table or stool to hold the bags of money and a small stool or folding chair for NARRATOR.
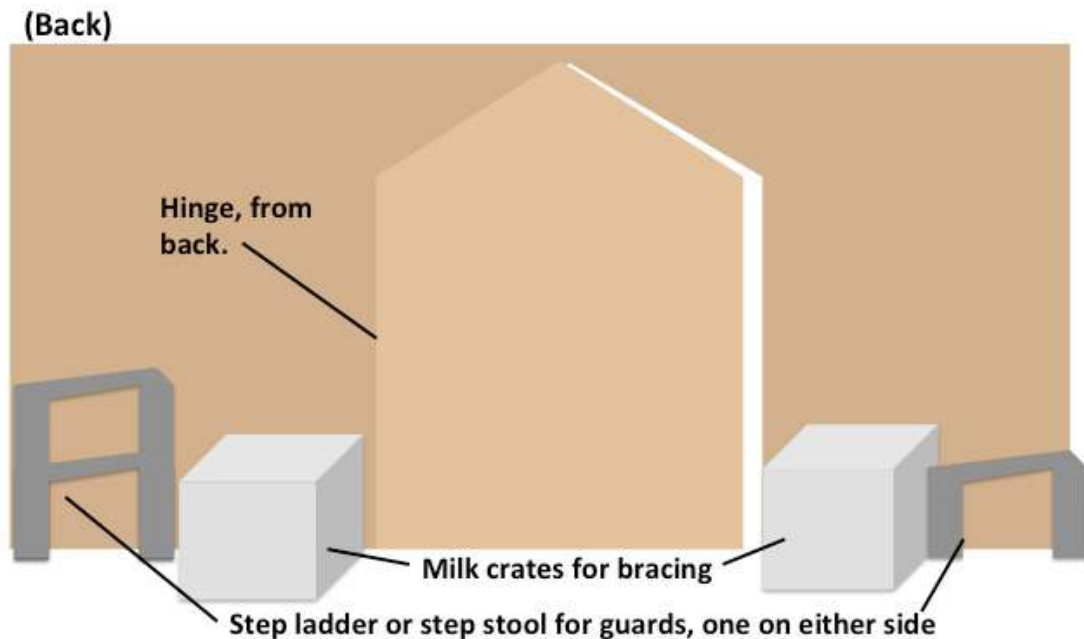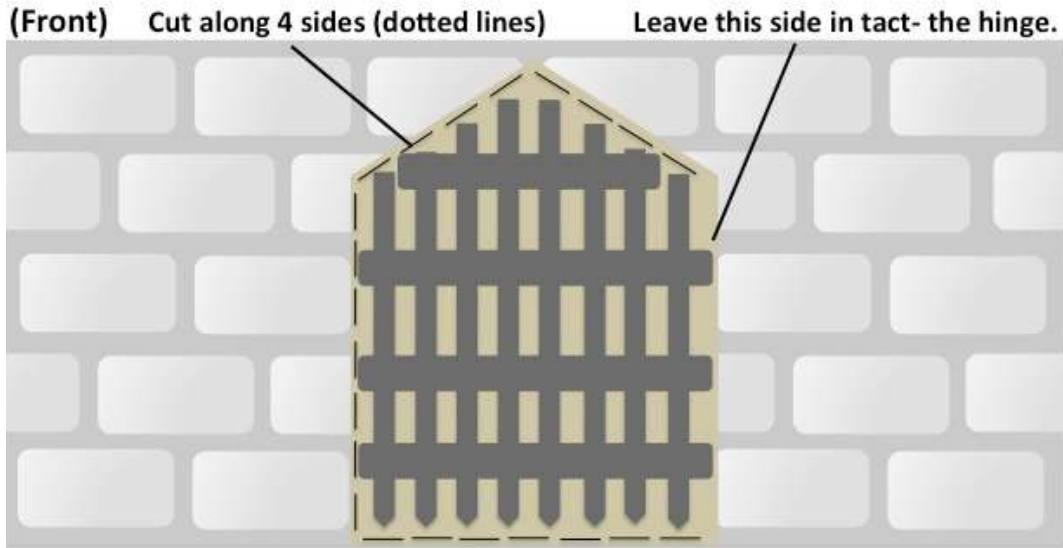
Scene 2— The gate of Castle Weisenberg, in the middle of the stage. If you do make a backdrop, you can paint this section to show rolling green hills, trees (at least one of which is an apple tree), and two modest castles atop of the hills at opposing ends of the backdrop.

The wall of the castle can be made from cardboard, such as a flattened large appliance cardboard box, and can be propped up against milk crates in the back, in

order to hold it up. Paint the cardboard gray and use a sponge, dipped in light gray paint, to make the stones. The gate can be painted onto the wall, and cut out, leaving only a hinge. On the back side of gate, there should be stepstools or something sturdy and tall for GUARDS to stand on.

See below:

(Front)   Cut along 4 sides (dotted lines)   Leave this side in tact- the hinge.

(Back)

Hinge, from back.

Milk crates for bracing

Step ladder or step stool for guards, one on either side

Note: The gate should be placed on stage on a slight angle, in order to establish the area outside the gate and inside the gate. Action takes place in both areas.

4

Scene 3— The Interior of Castle Weisenberg, on the other side of the stage.
If you do have a backdrop, you can paint this section to show large bronze or brown stones to indicate the inside of the castle. It should be simpler than that of the KING and QUEEN.
    Two nice chairs are on stage.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

***Physical Activity**— At the end of the play, the DUCHESS and WOMEN of Weisenberg give the MEN piggyback rides. Anyone playing the DUCHESS or one of the WOMEN should be capable giving a brief piggyback ride.