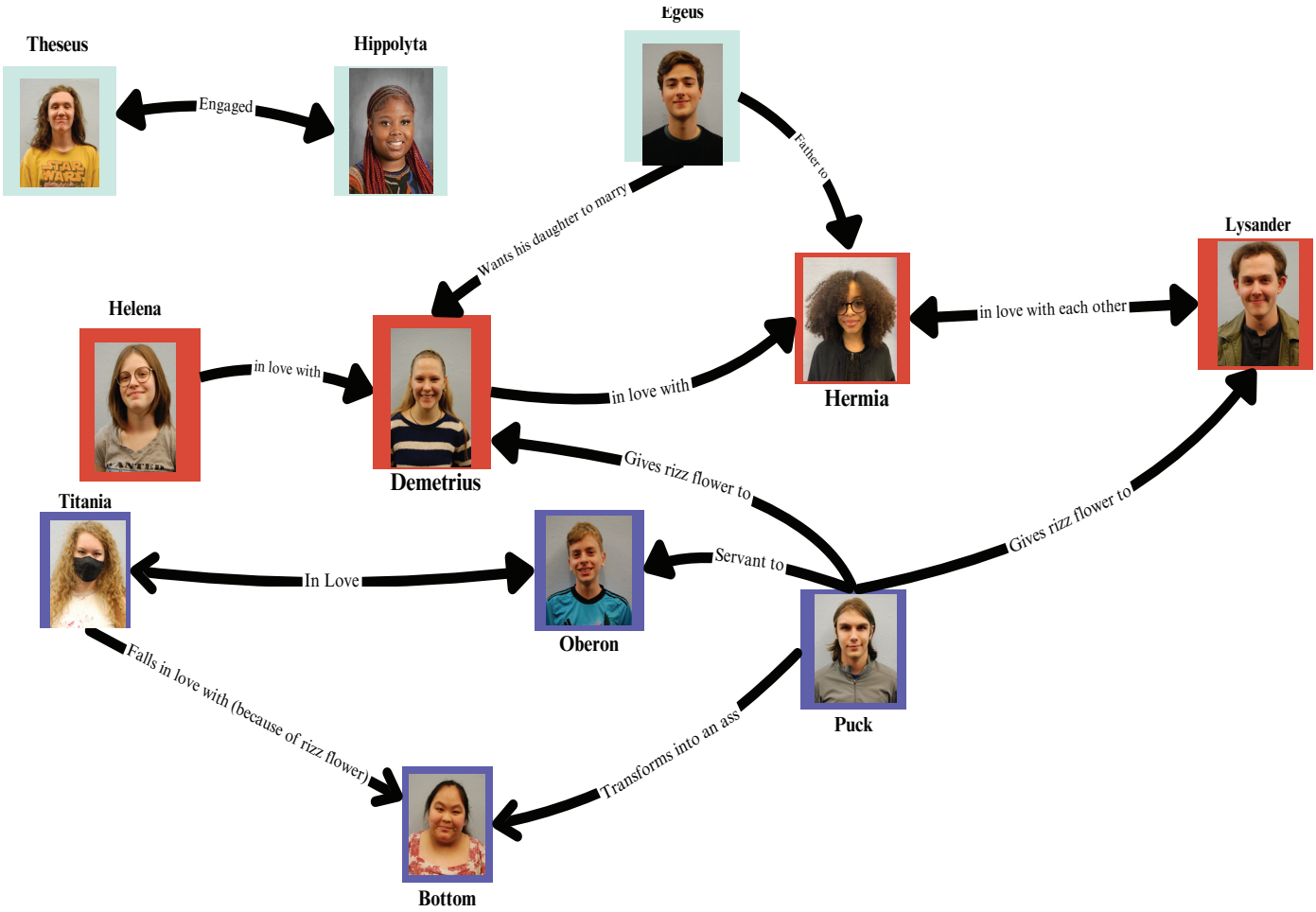
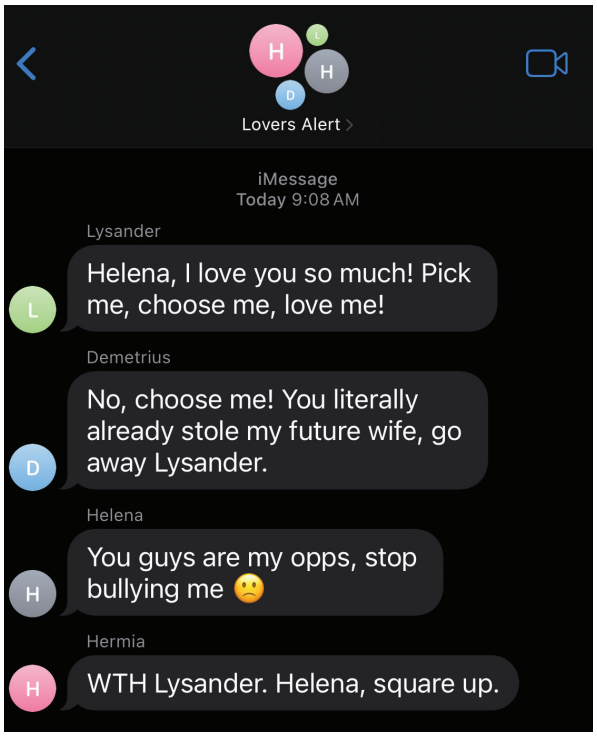
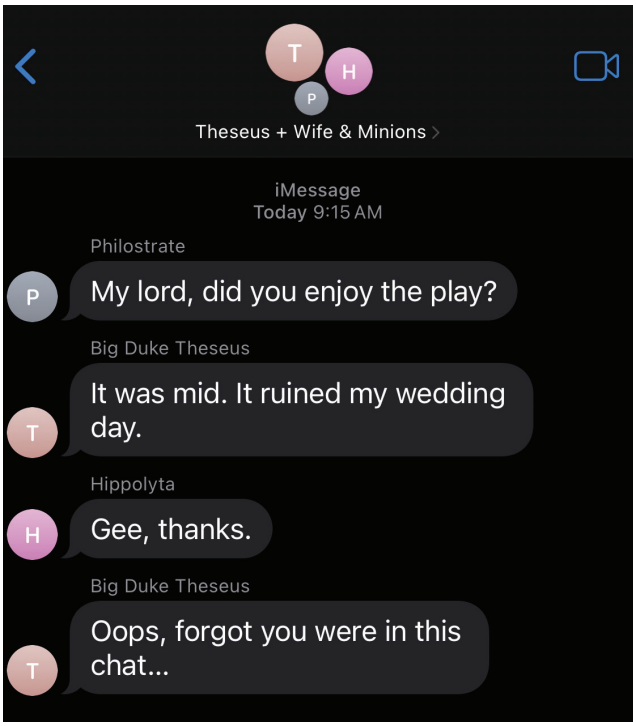

OWL Theater
Presents
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Dec. 11-13th, 2024

Relationship chart







Character breakdowns

The Lovers

Hermia
"So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord, my soul consents not." Hermia is the beautiful young woman who is enthralled with Lysander, though according to Athenian law, she must follow her father's commands and marry Demetrius.

Lysander
"I mean that my heart unto yours is knit, so that but one heart we can make of it." Lysander, Hermia's sweetheart, is very romantic and willing to stand up for those he cares about.

Helena
"I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell, to die upon the hand I love so well." Helena is the childhood friend of Hermia. Though she is in love with Demetrius, her loyalty to Hermia always draws her back to her friend.

Demetrius
"Where is Lysander and fair Hermia? The one I'll slay, and the other slayeth me." Demetrius is the self-absorbed man who Egeus has chosen to be the groom of Hermia.

The Forest People

Oberon
"'Tarry, rash wanton. Am not I thy Lord?" Oberon, king of the fairies is a commanding and powerful figure to all that appear in his presence. He believes he can do what he wants because of his power, but he still has a soft spot for love.

Titania
"Then I must be thy lady. But I know when thou hast stolen away from Fairyland." Queen of the fairies and wife of Oberon, Titania is an independent and powerful ruler, whose fairies follow her every command.

Robin Goodfellow/Puck
"Thou speakest aright. I am that merry wanderer of the night. I jest to Oberon and make him smile" Oberon's most loyal servant, Robin Goodfellow, also known as Puck, is a mischievous hobgoblin that loves playing pranks.

Fairies
"I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee, and they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep and sing while thou on pressed dost sleep." The group of fairies are Titania's most loyal servants. They are quick to do anything she asks of them, from fetching items, to taking great care of guests.

The Royal Court

Hippolyta
"Then the moon, like to a silver bow new bent in heaven, shall behold the night of our solemnities." Hippolyta is the Queen of the Amazons and fiancé to Theseus.

Theseus
"More strange than true. Lovers and madmen have such seething brains." Duke of Athens and fiancé to Hippolyta plays a central patriarchal figure in the play, although his character is presented as a fair and well liked leader.

Egeus
"Full of vexation come I, with complaint, against my child, my daughter Hermia." Egeus is the angry father of Hermia and a gentleman in the court of Athens. He is angered by his daughter's refusal to marry Demetrius.

Philostrate
"No, my noble lord, It is not for you. I have heard it over, and it is nothing" Philostrate is the master of revels at Theseus' court, meaning he is the head of entertainment.

The Mechanicals

Nick Bottom the Weaver
"If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. I will move storms; I will condole in some measure." Nick Bottom is a comically passionate amateur actor.

Petra Quince the Carpenter
"I am to entreat, request, and desire you con by them tomorrow night." Petra Quince is the earnest and somewhat exasperated leader of the Mechanicals.

Francis Flute the Bellows-Mender
"Nay, faith, let not me play a woman. I have a beard coming." Flute the Bellows-Mender is a reluctant amateur actor.

Tom Snout the Tinker
"In this same interlude it doth befall that I, one Snout by name, present a wall." Snout the Tinker is an earnest and humorous amateur actor.

Snug the Joiner
"Have you the lions part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study." Snug the Joiner is a comically timid and literal-minded amateur actor.

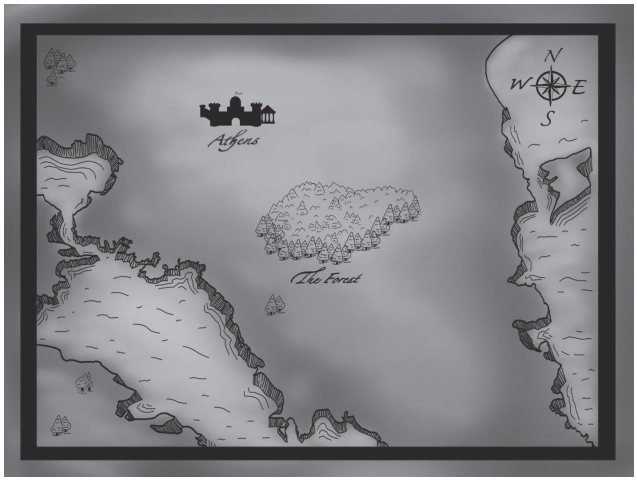
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Playbill

EDITORS: Claire Ales and Beatrice Cosgrove

THEATER DIRECTOR: Rebekah Rentzel



An Interview with the Director

Meet Alex Church

First of all, how did you end up as a director for this play? Tell us a bit about the happy circumstances that led you here.
I heard about the job from Ellen Fenster, an incredible director I was lucky enough to assist under earlier this summer. On breaks in rehearsal we'd chat about life and my multitude of other jobs, and she forwarded me an email Rebekah had sent to her networks looking for someone to direct while she was on maternity leave.

What has your experience been like working with the OWL actors and crew?
Delightful! It's so great to collaborate with a bunch of excited, talented artists. My middle/high school theater experience was very different from OWL's, but truthfully OWL's is much closer to what it's like out there as an artist in the real world. You work with your friends and peers, helping each other out to make it all happen. The brainstorming and energy within this program is incredible and I'm very jealous of it!

The play was chosen before you arrived on the scene, but what are your feelings or associations with A Midsummer Night's Dream? What makes this play a fun choice for high school theater?
I've seen a few productions of Midsummer over the years, and they all, in my opinion, took themselves waaaaaayy too seriously. This play is silly, rambunctious, angsty, and dripping with goofiness and tomfoolery. It's a very fun emotional rollercoaster for audiences and actors. Characters switch allegiances on a dime. Fairies are constantly causing problems, using humans as their toys even as they have very real, human problems themselves. The fun comes in watching these messy relationships get messier and messier until it ends and you're not even sure if what you're looking at is real anymore- or ever was at all!

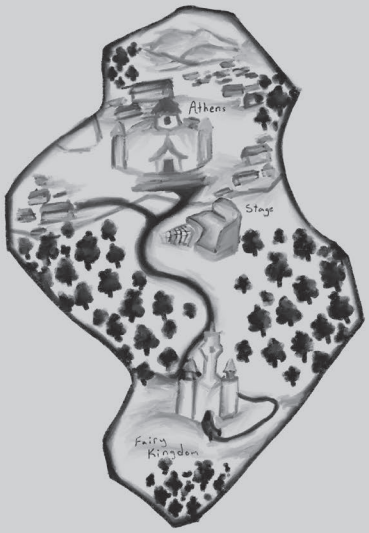
Are there particular challenges involved in directing a Shakespeare play, given the older language it uses? How do you handle that?
When I'm directing a Shakespeare, my main priority is to make it energetic and accessible. I want people to follow what's going on and be invited into the strange language and incredibly chaotic story, which means the actors need to have a very clear point of view on each and every line. A really great Shakespeare play can be performed with no language at all and still be intelligible. But since we're using the words, the next best thing is to make sure every actor knows not just what they're saying but also WHY they're saying it. When we approach the words with intention and then add a unique physical vocabulary that gives a visual aid to the story, we're providing audiences with multiple ways to digest what's going on around them.



Acknowledgements
Tammy Plaman, Adrienne Hannert, Anna Gorton, Suzy Messerole, Angelina Roslik, Gilda Houck-Markovits. And a special thanks to all the parents and community members who showed up on a Saturday to help with the build day.

Script
The adaptation of William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream used for this production was created by Rebekah Rentzel.

Directors
Director - Alex Church
Technical Director - Elliot Allen
Assistant Director - Laura Orris
Student Director - Rhoda Wonders



A Midsummer Night's Dream

By William Shakespeare

Cast

The Lovers:
Hermia - Basha Douglas
Lysander - Nick Christopherson
Helena - Atlas Schultz
Demetrius - Elinor McAlpine

The Royal Court:
Theseus - Grael Pedersen-Kieck
Hippolyta - Ne'zariah Parker
Philostrate - Xander Gottfried
Egeus - Duncan Smith

Fairy Court:
Titania - Rylan Merwin
Oberon - Henry Helle-Morrissey
Puck - Kaden McNamera
Peaseblossom - Miles Harris
Mustardseed - Ruby-Kate Nolan
Fairy - Lyric Jenkins
Fairy - Alice Mounes
Fairy - Lourdes Maldonado Gamez
Fairy - Saanii Beavers

The Rude Mechanicals:
Nick Bottom - Lillyian Yang
Petra Quince - Adelaide Stender
Francis Flute (Thisbe) - Oskar Helle-Morrissey
Tom Snout (Wall) - Kyle Parker
Snug (Lion) - Leo Meredith



Design Crew



Stage Management
Charley Cheatham - Head
Maggie Jansen - Head
Bahati Stalheim - Assistant Stage Manager

Sets
Keegan Schou - Head
Michael Ryan - Head
Jae Lind - Lead Artist
Onyx Oberheide - Lead Artist
Jay Schluender - Techie
Rosie Whitten - Techie



Costumes
Kate Houle - Head
Beatrice Cosgrove - Lead Artist
Lauren Harris - Lead Artist
Leo Scoggins - Lead Artist
Isabel Best - Techie
Cecilia Solis Monter - Techie

Makeup
Cal Schmid - Head
Yadiel Reh Dimayuga - Lead Artist
Marina Savolainen-Lee - Techie



Props
Maddie Linstad - Head
Iyanna Kelley - Lead Artist
Markus Leuer - Techie

Lights
Maren Sletten - Head
Moss Windingstad - Head
Asa Hannert-Dawson - Lead Artist

Sound
Joseph Schwartz - Head
Matteo Alejandro-Provenzano - Lead Artist
Emmett Hannert-Dawson - Techie

Who, What, When, Where?

Act 1

By Theodore Kimball

Love is in the air in Athens, and two lovers, Lysander and Hermia, can't wait to get married. Her father Egeus, however, has other plans, and goes to Duke Theseus, who himself is soon to be married to the Amazonian queen Hippolyta. He asks Theseus to force his daughter to marry a man of his choosing

"This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child."

named Demetrius. Theseus agrees, forcing Hermia to choose between marriage to a man she doesn't love, and death. But love is resilient, and she and Lysander run away into the woods to get married. Demetrius follows, wanting Hermia for himself, and he in turn is pursued by the fourth person in our story's love rectangle, Helena, who loves Demetrius despite repeatedly being rejected by him. On a lighter note, we are also introduced to the unintentionally comedic and not-so-bright troupe of performers known as the rude mechanicals, who are preparing to perform a play for Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding. The play features love and heartbreak, but its main character is played by the loud and rambunctious Bottom, who recites dramatic poems and insists on playing multiple roles. Clearly this ragtag group of performers has no idea how to put together a performance.

Act 2

By David Griffith

Act 2 brings us into the magical woods outside Athens, where we come across Puck and a Fairy, both employed by the Fairy King and Queen (Oberon and Titania). Puck and the Fairy discuss the ongoing argument between Titania and Oberon over ownership of a changeling boy. Enter Oberon and Titania, who are in the midst of the argument, where they go back and forth, discussing how their conflict is causing environmental problems.

After the fairies depart, Oberon reflects on how he saw a flower be magically transformed by Cupid, and sends Puck to go fetch it. Once the flower has been obtained, Oberon applies the nectar to a sleeping Titania's eyes, cursing her to fall in love with the next thing she sees when she wakes up. Meanwhile, the four young lovers, Helena, Hermia, Demetrius, and

"Content with Hermia? No, I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent."

Lysander, wander through the forest, arguing about who loves who, and eventually all fall asleep. When Puck comes across them with orders from Oberon to anoint Demetrius' eyes with the flower, he accidentally anoints Lysander while he and Hermia are asleep. Lysander wakes up and accidentally falls in love with Helena, and leaves Hermia behind to pursue his new love interest.

Act 3

By Lana Stevens

With Titania still asleep, the mechanicals return. They voice their concerns about how the audience will react to their play. They wouldn't want to frighten the ladies, of course. They decide on two prologues to explain that they are nothing to fear. Puck, invisible, joins them secretly as they rehearse.

"O spite! O hell! I see you are all bent to against me for your merriment!"

Puck, being Puck, thinks it would be hilarious if Bottom's head was turned to an ass (donkey). And so… he does. All of Bottom's friends are spooked by the strange sight, and run away. Oblivious Bottom thinks it's all a cruel joke, and all of the clamor ends up waking Titania, who sees Bottom with her anointed eyes. She falls in love with him and vows to grant his every wish.

Puck proudly informs Oberon of his 'success' with the love flower. When Hermia and Demitrius enter the scene, Oberon tells Puck, 'That's the man, but that's not the right woman. Puck, you've mixed up the women. Go fix it.' So now Puck has to go fix everything and put the love flower on all four lovers' eyes so they wake up loving the correct person. But first, the four end up all together. They argue. Helena believes all three are mocking her, Hermia is mad at Helena for 'stealing' Lysander, and the men decide to duel for Helena. Eventually, thanks to Puck's clever mischief, all four fall asleep and Puck can 'go fix it.'

Midsummer Act Summaries

Act 4

By Mikko Liimatta

Leading up to act 4, Puck transforms Bottom's head into that of an ass, and by some revenge forest "rizz" magic Titania, the queen of the fairies, falls in love with Bottom. The act opens with Titania and her fairy attendants fawning over Bottom. After doting on him, the two eventually fall asleep. As they fall asleep, Oberon and Puck enter, and begin discussing Titania's plight, and her unnatural affection for Bottom. They decide to break the spell, and revert Titania to her pre-enchantment state. Once the spell is lifted, Titania awakens, confused, believing her love for Bottom was just a strange dream.

At the same time this is happening, Theseus and Egeus are out hunting when they come upon all four lovers asleep at the edge of the forest. Egeus is furious at Hermia and Lysander's defiance and demands punishment. Theseus has other plans in mind, however, like maybe a triple wedding.

"Masters, I am to discourse wonders—but ask me not what, for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you everything right as it fell out."

Act 5

By Clara Crosby

Theseus and Hippolyta are having a discussion about whether or not they believe the four lovers accounts of what happened in the forest. Theseus doesn't believe their story, but Hippolyta says that their stories would not match up if they weren't true. The four lovers then enter, and Theseus welcomes them kindly and suggests watching a play. Philostrate reads off a list of play suggestions and Theseus, of course, chooses the very play Philostrate tells him not to watch- this play being the Pyramus and Thisbe story the craftsman have put together. The craftsman put on their play very fittingly to their usual nature, very clumsy and silly.

"If we shadows have offended. Think but this, and all is mended. . . ".

Once the festivities are over and everyone is asleep, Puck enters along with Titania and Oberon. Titania and Oberon sing a blessing over the four sleeping lovers and over Theseus and Hippolyta so they will always be in love with each other. Titania and Oberon exit, leaving Puck alone. He talks to the audience, saying that if the play offended anyone, they should just think of it as a dream. Curtains.









Actor Bios



Hermia - Basha Douglas
Basha has performed in two OWL plays in the past: Anastasia and A Murder is Announced. This time, she will be playing the role of Hermia.



Lysander - Nick Christopherson
Nick made his OWL theatre debut last fall as Patrick in A Murder is Announced. He has always loved performing, and is excited for his return to the stage.



Helena - Atlas Schultz
Atlas was previously in Ragnasplosion and A Murder is Announced at OWL, and has been in several community theater musicals outside of school.



Demetrius - Elinor McAlpine
Elinor has previously acted in Anastasia for OWL. She has always been interested in acting and she loves to go to plays with her her grandma.



Theseus - Grael Pedersen-Kieck
Grael has been involved in theater since he was a kid, and did plays all throughout middle school. This is his OWL theatre debut.



Hippolyta - Ne'zariah Parker
Ne'zariah was in a play in elementary school and was part of tech in two previous shows. She joined in order to start her senior year off with a bang.



Philostrate - Xander Gottfried
Xander's first theater experience was in 3rd grade, and he's attended many theater camps since. He was a Props Techie in A Murder Is Announced, and played Lenny in Snow Angel.



Egeus - Duncan Smith
Duncan has no prior acting experience, but he was a sets lead artist for previous OWL plays. Inspired by these plays, he has decided to try his hand at performing.



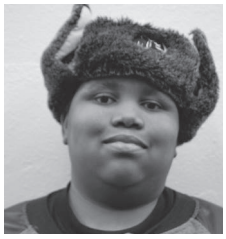
Nick Bottom - Lillyian Yang
Lillyian has previous acting experience, appearing in Anastasia and Alice in Wonderland. She has always been interested in dramas, movies and acting as a kid.



Petra Quince - Adelaide Stender
Adelaide was a member of the make up department for two OWL productions before switching to acting. She debuted last spring as Gus in Snow Angel.



Francis Flute (Thisbe) - Oskar Helle-Morrissey
Oskar played Crank in The Snow Angel last spring. He also has experience singing opera.



Tom Snout (Wall) - Kyle Parker
Kyle has no prior acting or theatre experience. He became interested in theatre when he did play in a week for interim. He will be playing Tom Snout (Wall).

Actor Bios



Snug (Lion) - Leo Meredith
This is Leo's OWL theatre debut. He has enjoyed some roles in Rebekah's theatre class, and also dabbled in summer theatre camps.



Titania - Rylan Merwin
Rylan was Head of Props for Snow Angel and A Murder Is Announced, and was in Destination Imagination outside of school. They did a lot of theater camps as a kid.



Oberon - Henry Helle-Morrissey
Henry has previously played Arlo in Snow Angel for OWL and Amahl in Amahl and the Night Visitors. He also has experience singing opera.



Puck - Kaden McNamera
Kaden acted in Ragnasplosion and Snow Angel, and was Props Lead in Anastasia and A Murder Was Announced. First started liking theater in the mandatory 7th grade class.



Peaseblossom - Miles Harris
This is Miles' debut performance for OWL theater. His previous experience includes roles as a robot and police officer at Stepping Stone Theater summer camp.



Mustardseed - Ruby-Kate Nolan
Ruby acted in The Vampire Cat, Anastasia, A Murder Is Announced, and Snow Angel. In 5th grade they played a blade of grass in Lion King. Found her love for theater at camp.



Fairy -Lyric Jenkins
Lyric has experience in dance, but this is her first play. She was originally going to be part of makeup, and likes theater so far because it's a good way to communicate.



Fairy -Alice Mounes
Alice learned to love theater at a camp and was encouraged by her mother to join her first OWL play. She has previous theater experience, including Willy Wonka and Matilda.



Fairy -Lourdes Maldonado Gamez
Lourdes has enjoyed making plays with her friends and going to see her parents' shows. This year she is eager to make her debut in OWL's theatere program.



Fairy - Saanii Beavers
Saanii has no prior experience, and this is her first play. Her dad is involved in theater, and she thought it would be fun to try with friends.

Play Feature

Behind the scenes: costumes

By Kate Houle

When you sign up to design costumes for a Shakespeare show, you're probably thinking of making extravagant garments, huge collars, and intricate embroidery. Yeah, that's not how Midsummer works.

Instead, costumers have to figure out how to transform someone into a donkey, turn natural elements into magical beings, and make sure the complicated characters are easily recognizable. Not quite the stereotypical Tudor era fashion, huh? Costumes help create the overall feeling that the character needs to give off through specific garments and design choices. In OWL theater, this falls to a handful of students from grades 6-12. They work closely with the makeup department to design the looks for each character and figure out how to make them look good on stage.

"I tend to first just look around the costumes area and just see what we have. And then I start sketching based on what I've seen or what I think that I want in my costumes. And then I start picking things out, seeing what I still need, what I can make, and then eventually I put it all together," said 8th grade lead artist Lauren Harris about her creative process.

For this production of Midsummer the director, Alex Church, wanted a timeless, autumnal, and naturey feel for the show. This turned the costumers to looser silhouettes, a warm color palette, and incorporation of leaves, flowers, and other natural elements.

"I kind of based [the fairies] off of insects that I liked, and then I had to make that work with the costume," said 7th grade techie Isabel Best. A lot of the costumer's time is spent making their design ideas work, which is often easier said than done.

"It can be really, really hard. When you put a lot of work into something and it just doesn't work,



because you want to make it work, you want to try your very best to make it work, but sometimes it just won't," said 9th grade lead artist Beatrice Cosgrove. Lauren agrees. "Sometimes there's like, one specific thing that's missing and you can't figure it out. It's just the little things that are sometimes difficult."

That doesn't mean the process isn't rewarding. Costumers have a unique impact on the play, getting to help shape the characters, and the audience's perception of them. "You can add so many details that correspond with [the characters] personalities that maybe the audience won't notice, but you know they're there," said Beatrice. Keep an eye out for the Mechanicals handkerchiefs, glittery fabric on the fairy king and queen, and beading on the fairies antennae plus little spots on the edges of their wings— all details the costumers spent time purposefully adding to enhance their designs. "I don't always have a lot of time to be creative, but by doing costumes I get to be creative and just put my own personality into it," said Lauren.

It's not all about the creative aspects though. The costumers have a lot of fun together going on shopping trips, trying to trouble-shoot problems, or just hanging out backstage. "The coolest thing is getting to know the people in costumes and spending so much time with them. You really get to bond with them, in a way you don't get to in [places outside of] theater," said Lauren. Isabel feels the same way. "My favorite part is just talking to the people while working. It's really nice." So while the more magical parts of Midsummer may be a bit confounding, the hard work and community the costumers build is anything but. Plus, it makes for some pretty cool results. As Beatrice said, "it's so fun putting all the work in, and then seeing it on stage and seeing all of your work become real."

What is the "rizz flower"?

By Anson Lind

At any production of A Midsummer Night's Dream, the audience can always expect two things: romance and drama. And in this play, both of those can generally be traced back to one unlikely source: a flower. Dubbed "the rizz flower" by OWL's AP Literature class, this flower is a form of love potion, frequently used in the fairies' plots and mischief.

Both of the play's two main plots - that of the lovers falling in and out of love over the course of one night in the forest, and that of the fairy queen Titania falling in love with Bottom, who has been cursed with a donkey's head - are only possible because of this flower, making it one of Midsummer's most important plot devices. Oberon uses it in his plot to steal one of Titania's attendants by causing her to fall in love with some foul beast, and when Lysander, Hermia, Helena, and Demetrius wind up in the forest, he orders Puck to use it to fix their complicated love tangle, but due to a miscommunication, Puck only makes everything even more complex.

"One of Midsummer's most important plot devices.

The flower itself only occasionally makes appearances, but its effects are prevalent in many of the play's most important scenes. Throughout the play, many of the lovers' interactions are laced with the influence of the flower, which plays into no small amount of irony and humor as each character abruptly and wholeheartedly changes love interests on a whim. A guy with the head of a donkey finding himself becoming the lover of the fairy queen is perhaps the most iconic scene of the play.

Perhaps the most ironic aspect of the flower's love potion is that everybody affected doesn't once question their sudden changes in emotion. Lysander, once affected, seems to believe his changing love interest was the product of a perfectly logical line of reasoning, whereas Demetrius, once in love with Helena, compares his previous love for Hermia to an illness he has since recovered from. The lovers as a whole certainly know some weird things happened, but they don't realize that a love potion was involved.



Obviously, this play is a fictional story, but does a similar flower exist in real life? Oberon calls the flower "love-in-idleness", a name attributed to the wild pansy. The flower is said to have been struck with an arrow from Cupid's bow, which turned it purple and gave it its supernatural properties. While real pansies can be purple, they of course don't have the ability to make people fall in love. However, scientific studies have shown that the presence of flowers increases the production of positive chemicals in the brain, including dopamine, serotonin, and even oxytocin, the chemical commonly found as a result of love and affection. So while no flowers may be magic, in a way, every flower is a love flower.



A Midsummers Night's Dream fantastic film festival

By Aanen Kulseth and Nick Christopherson

While other Shakespeare plays like Macbeth, Hamlet, and even Romeo and Juliet have been adapted to the silver screen many times, A Midsummer Night's Dream has had relatively few turns in the cinema. Still, there are a number of adaptations that are worth mentioning, so here's a brief history of them.

1909



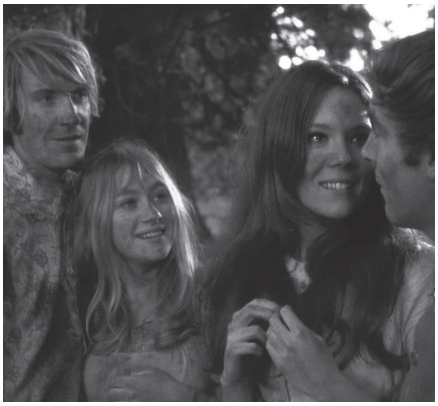
The first film adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream is from 1909, and is actually one of the very first Shakespeare plays ever put to film. It's only 11 minutes long, and if you went in without knowing the play at all, almost entirely incomprehensible. It's a silent film, but features no dialogue cards. Instead, slides appear that provide a quick summary of each scene before they're played. Another notable thing about this adaptation is that it covers the entire story of the play, even in just 11 minutes. The very few Shakespeare film adaptations that came before it were typically just single scenes or set pieces from a larger work, but this film has it all. The only obvious change to the story is that Oberon's character is replaced with a woman named Penelope, which could give the film some lesbian undertones depending on how you look at it.

1935



Several decades later came the second adaptation, A Midsummer Night's Dream (1935). This film is notably the very first film adaptation of any Shakespeare play to be recorded with sound. Shakespeare is all about the dialogue, so the advent of audio allowed the film's directors to make it a real adaptation, as opposed to the mostly incomprehensible 1909 version. More than that, the extravagant sets, mystical lighting tricks, rearranged scenes, and fully scored music allow this version to really take advantage of being a film, and make it feel special. It actually won two Oscars for both its cinematography and editing at the 8th Academy Awards, and is considered by critics to be one of the best film versions of the play.

1959, 1968, and 1969



Next are some more minor adaptations, like a 1959 Czech version, which is done entirely with puppets; a 1969 French TV adaptation, and most notably, a 1968 British film. The 1968 release marks the first time the play was filmed and played in color. It's also surprisingly star-studded, featuring Ian Holm as Puck, Judi Dench as Titania, Helen Mirren as Hermia, and David Warner as Lysander. Besides that retrospectively cool fact, it received generally poor reviews, and is seen as inferior to its 1935 counterpart.

1999

Now, if we jump ahead 30 years, we come to probably the most popular film version of A Midsummer Night's Dream, the 1999 film. This adaptation received generally favorable reviews, but notably transports the setting of the play from Athens to 1890s Italy. It also features numerous bicycles (for some reason), another star-studded cast (Michelle Pfeiffer as Titania, Stanley Tucci as Puck, Kevin Kline as Nick Bottom, Christian Bale as Demetrius, among others) and is a noticeably more modern overall production. With the big names and the romcom feel, this one was obviously meant to be marketed to a wider audience than most Shakespeare films.



2016



Finally, this brings us to the 2016 adaptation produced by the BBC. Frankly, this version is not particularly popular, but it's so unique that we felt compelled to include it. It takes far and away the most liberties with the original story. Rather than being set in Athens, this one takes place in a somewhat ambiguous time period under a Nazi-esque regime led by Duke Theseus, complete with the red armbands and giant banners. It heavily uses CGI (the only adaptation discussed here to do so), has a long dance-party sequence at the end, and strongly alters the characterizations and importances of certain people (Oberon and Theseus in particular). To put it bluntly, this film is crazy, and the promotional poster does NOT do it justice.

Patriarchy in 'Midsummer'

By Halie Karre

Scholars often examine Shakespeare's takes on social structures, such as race in Othello, nobility in King Lear, and patriarchy in A Midsummer Night's Dream. A Midsummer Night's Dream is a critique of patriarchal marriage traditions which uses ancient Athens as an allegorical setting. Many of the allegories and allusions used need to be put into a historical context to be understood.

The first mention of male-controlled arranged marriages comes from Theseus, the Duke of Athens, discussing his engagement to Hippolyta. He speaks of acquiring her love by violence and force, saying, "Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword and won thy love doing thee injuries," Hippolyta is also described as an "Amazon Queen." This could imply she was taken against her will; after all, why would a foreign queen be so willing to drop everything and leave her kingdom?

After this moment, Shakespeare shows his hand and reveals a bit of the allegory. Immediately after Theseus' speech, Egeus bursts in demanding that Theseus use Athenian law to compel Egeus' daughter, Hermia, to marry Demetrius. Egeus even goes so far as to state that if she doesn't marry who he wants, it is within his power to kill her: "As she is mine, I may dispose of her, which shall be either to this gentleman or to her death, according to our law." Theseus agrees with Egeus on how the law should be interpreted, stating, "To you, your father should be as a god, one that composed your beauties, yea, and one to whom you are but as a form in wax by him imprinted, and within his power to leave the figure or disfigure it." However, Theseus seems willing to listen to Hermia's protests. When pressed by her, he does give a third choice—for her to become a nun and commit herself to celibacy: "Either to die the death or to abjure forever the society of men." This option is interesting because ancient Greek religion did not have nuns like those of Shakespeare's time. Instead this line shows that Shakespeare is pulling less from historical Athenian customs and more from his own time. It appears Shakespeare is using Athens as a reference point to comment on the patriarchy. Athens even in Shakespeare's time was known for its strict laws around women.

Shakespeare's opinions on patriarchal control over marriage are also revealed through how Egeus is portrayed. Egeus' claims are often absurd and meant to be the laughed at, having lines such as "This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child," and "Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung with feigning voice verses of feigning love," setting his character up and the ideals he stands for to be comically absurd. This is further emphasized by the ending in which Hermia, Lysander, and Helena get what they wanted, and in the original, Egeus is thwarted by Theseus, who says, "Egeus, I will overbear your will."

However, in the adapted version that you are seeing, this line is actually said by Hippolyta. This changes the impact of the line, removing Shakespeare's ending that requires the benevolent patriarch. The original ending gives the characters their resolution without needing a full upheaval of the system. The OWL adapted version has Hippolyta, a woman, saying no to Egeus, a man. This is further compounded by the fact that both Egeus and Demetrius appeal to Theseus, saying in their requests "My lord" and "My good lord," yet Theseus doesn't respond to them, instead they are addressed by Hippolyta, who makes the final decision. This puts destruction of the patriarch, Egeus, and all that he represents in the hands of Hippolyta. This ending could be seen as a feminist triumph and makes sense for a playwright wanting to elevate Hippolyta's character. This effect could be even greater if Hippolyta had more of Theseus' lines in the first scene with Egeus.

There is evidence in the original version that Shakespeare views the patriarchy negatively since the patriarchal Athenian law is the antagonizing force that is mocked for its absurdity.

Behind the scenes: sets

By Michael Ryan

In A Midsummer Night's Dream you will be transported into a world of magic and wonder, of royal courts with corrupt officials and feuding fairies who meddle in human's lives. This is thanks, in part, to the sets.

Sets help create the illusion that the actors are in a different time and place. The sets department is the biggest and the baddest of the backstage theater departments, because the stuff that is made is so large-scale and requires a lot of labor to be put into it. Senior Keegan Schou and I are co-heads of the sets department. Having two heads requires a lot of collaboration, and has a benefit of bouncing ideas off of each other to create a strong final product.

The initial concept designs for the sets are made through brainstorming with each other and the director, Alex Church. "We drew



up some concepts, and we went to the director and talked it out with him," said Keegan. It's important to talk to the director because he's the one who's deciding how the actors are going to interact with the fictional world around them.

The biggest challenge in producing the sets is the lack of



time. There are only so many days of rehearsal that can be used to build, so we have to use our time wisely. Luckily on Saturday the 16th, we got an extra day called Build Day when people and their families came in with their knowledge and expertise to come and help us with what we need. More time was needed than we had, so another Build Day on the Thursday after the first session was planned and used.

A unique thing about the sets in A Midsummer Night's Dream is the use of projections, which are created and controlled by junior Moss Windingstad. Just like in a movie theater, images are projected (as the name implies) onto a screen at the back of the stage. As said by Moss, "Projections are like sets but are less permanent and mostly used to enhance the sets and make the stage look a little more alive."

The images projected were made by digitally drawing the outline on an iPad, then printing them out and coloring them in physically. Then, "once I scanned in the new colored-in drawings, I animated fireflies in the forest night," explained Moss. The created effect is that of a forest where anything can happen, from the mundane to the magical. "By far my favorite is the forest. It's not surprising that I put the most amount of effort into it though, when it's most of the play," continued Moss.

The actors use the sets and



projections to add to their performance, and transport the audience to another world. In this production, the illusion of the actors being in a royal palace or in an enchanted forest is created through the handmade set pieces. We hope you will agree with Keegan that, "They're really cool stairs and trees."

Historical context for this play

By Wyatt Hanson

Not much is known about William Shakespeare. Historians have pieced together a timeline of Shakespeare's life but almost every detail is so debated that it is difficult to piece together the story of Shakespeare.

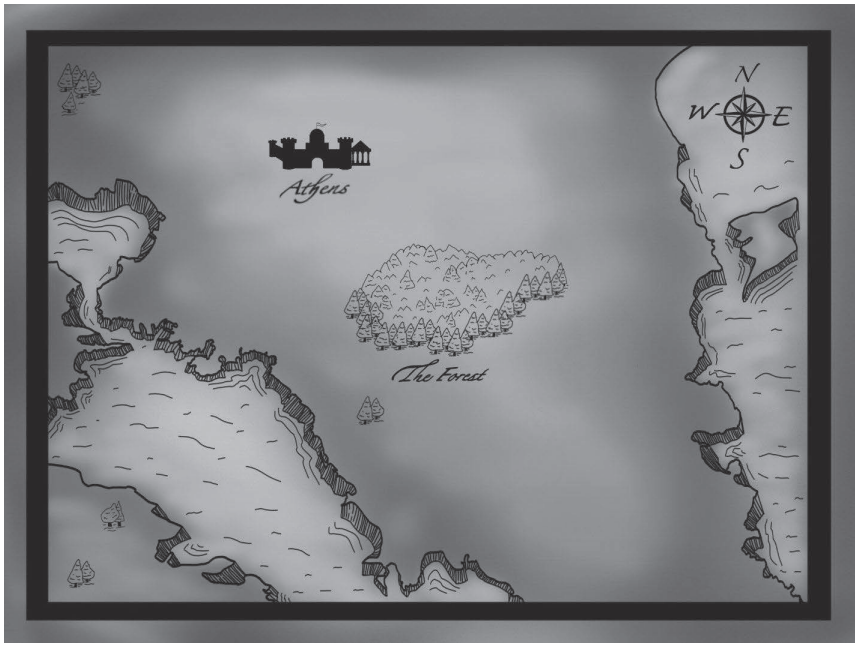
Shakespeare wrote A Midsummer's Night's Dream in 1595 or 1596. The story is set in Athens in what is believed to be the 1100s. During the time Athens was ruled by the Eastern Roman Empire better known as the Byzantine Empire. In the 1100's, the Byzantines were rocked by Catholic Crusaders traveling to the Levant (modern day Israel and surrounding countries) by order of the Pope.

The Byzantines lost a significant amount of territory to the Seljuk turks; this was part of an ongoing struggle between Muslims and Orthodox Christians in Constantinople. The Christian Crusaders hatched a plot to install a new monarch on their way to Jerusalem as paths to the Levant often crossed through Constantinople. This rapidly evolved into a sacking of Constantinople and Christian armies pillaging across the Empire.

This rapid decline in stability led to the crusaders propping up their own states by 1200. Among these crusader states was the Duchy of Athens. This Duchy was ruled by a duke called the Duke of Athens referred to as Theusus before even a Midsummer Night's Dream in Dante's Inferno. This mention of Theseus the Duke of Athens is a reference to the Greek hero Theusus who killed the Minotaur and returned a hero to Greece.

Although the Duchy of Athens established in the 1200s never had a duke named Theseus, we can assume that the play still takes place here given the time it was written. Shakespeare, though he never would have lived to see the Duchy of Athens that was under Ottoman rule by 1456. Shakespeare likely would have placed it in a familiar setting to the average European that was far away enough to create an air of mysticism.

This makes the setting of the play in the Duchy of Athens perfect as it was a relatively far away place for most Shakespearean playgoers. It also has characters taken from ancient myths widely told as bedtime stories and that no longer exists in living memory. Most scholars confidently believe this is where the play is set with some believing that the play was set earlier in 1000s Greece or in Ancient Athens.



Midsummer BINGO

Lysander and Hermia attempt to run away	Rizz flower usage goes wrong	”The course of true love never did run smooth.”	Bottom goes off on a tangent	Some sort of magic is used
Somebody speaks in rhymes	Someone’s head gets turned into a donkey’s	Blatant misogyny	All four lovers are in the woods -- at the same time	Lysander and Demetrius get in a fight
There is a play within the play	Long soliloquy	**Free Square**	Someone falls in love with the wrong person	A mechanical misses their cue
Someone gets married	Oberon talks to himself	The word ‘dream’ is used	The rizz flower is used	Helena gets emotional
A fancy metaphor is used	”Lord, what fools these mortals be!”	Somebody plays the role of an object or a thing	Puck causes mischief	The fairies sing a song or perform a dance

Midsummer in Photos

Mockumentary style trailer shown at the Community Meeting.



One actor performs the entirety of Midsummer's Act 1.











