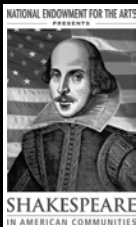


A Guidebook to

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

NEW ENGLAND TOUR | JANUARY - MAY 2008

Shakespeare.org  
DREAM



*A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
by William Shakespeare

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# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Guidebook 2008

### Contents

An Introduction to Our Guidebook .....	3
Preparing Students for Shakespeare in Performance .....	4
Our Touring Production: <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , 2008 .....	5
Notes From the Director .....	6
Who's Who in the Play .....	6
A Scene-By-Scene Description of Events of the Play .....	9
Sources of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> .....	11
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> & the Elizabethan Period .....	12
Historical and Mythological References in the Play .....	13
Words and Phrases Coined by Shakespeare .....	16
Exploring Scenes .....	17
Cut Scenes to Explore .....	18
Useful Websites .....	20
Touring Company Biographies .....	21
About Shakespeare & Company Education Program .....	22
About Shakespeare & Company .....	23
Works Cited .....	23



## An Introduction to our Guidebook

The task of creating a study guide for any of Shakespeare's plays is difficult. How does one provide a modest resource for encountering the play without oversimplifying it? The complexity of these plays is part of what makes them so exciting and engaging, so by simplifying them, we risk robbing them of that idiosyncratic texture that can attract a wide variety of readers. At the same time it can be difficult for the modern reader to initially connect with the plays. This study guide, instead of simplifying Shakespeare's complex play, intentionally seeks to provide points of connection, to point out some rough edges and fissures. We hope these pages will consequently inspire, provoke and engage you to look more deeply into the play's richness and complexity. We offer some background information, some discoveries we've made in our research and some decisions we've made in our presentation, but by no means what one might call definitive statements or interpretation.

We've provided a bare-bones synopsis of the play, wording it carefully to minimize any interpretation. In the 'Who's Who,' we've offered brief descriptions to help a new reader or audience member keep in mind who the main characters are. When one can do that it helps 'quiet the mind' to focus on the language and the development of a now familiar story as it unfolds scene by scene. Next there is a scene-by-scene description of action. While we do reference the standard act and scene divisions, it's worth noting that Shakespeare didn't actually write his plays in acts and scenes. The plays published during his lifetime in Quarto editions are written as continuous action: characters exit and different characters enter without a break, as it would be performed in a playhouse. The five-act structure was first imposed on Shakespeare's plays in the Folio edition (published after his death), presumably because it was the fashion at the time of its publication in 1623. The next section provides a bit of background information on some of the references in the text. Rather than a traditional glossary, we chose to focus on words and phrases that appear for the first time in this play. The last section of the guidebook provides Shakespeare & Company techniques for exploring Shakespeare dramatically.

Drama by its nature is very democratic, interpretive, and collaborative. The best playwrights avoid the kind of authorial voice which tells one what to believe or how 'rightly' to interpret text. Shakespeare left this kind of business to puritans and politicians. He presents characters who represent different points of view, interpreted by individual actors who bring their personalities into the mix, heard by individual audience members who will additionally have their own unique responses to what they hear. Shakespeare, as a playwright, does not seek to interpret the world for us, but rather gives us the opportunity to experience – with the characters – significant events: falling in love, losing a friend, being betrayed, facing fears, making choices, killing kings, re-establishing order out of chaos, etc. Shakespeare, as a poet, gives us these experiences in language that transcends the merely immediate situation of his characters. His language resonates with both immediacy and universality and subsequently has had lasting value through the ages.

Because Shakespeare doesn't provide answers, this guidebook does not aim to either. Rather, we hope through this effort to provoke even more questions, and inspire each individual to discover more and more in this extraordinarily rich and complex play.

This study guide was prepared by Kevin G. Coleman, Jo Ann Valle, and Jonathan Croy, with the gratefully acknowledged help of Mary Hartman, Alexandra Lincoln and a host of others.

# Preparing Students for Shakespeare in Performance

## ***How can I prepare my students?***

**Give them a sense of the story.** The plots of most of Shakespeare's plays are usually laid out simply and sequentially and can be readily detailed beforehand. His plays are not murder mysteries that depend on elaborate twists or surprise revelations to keep the excitement high. It doesn't spoil the experience to know before hand that Ophelia goes mad and drowns, Romeo and Juliet die, Prince Hal will become King Henry V, or to know that in his comedies the lovers almost always get married in the end. In Shakespeare, it doesn't detract to "give away" the ending. Shakespeare's plays are language and character-driven. The audience or reader becomes engaged by the individual characters, their thoughts, feelings, relationships and journeys. When we know the plot ahead of time – when we know what's going to happen – we are better able to quiet our minds and focus on how and why we got there through the characters' interaction and the piercingly beautiful language.

**Introduce them to the characters.** Before the play starts, it's very helpful if the audience is able to know who the characters are. This allows them to focus on *what* and *why* the characters do what they do: *development* and *interpretation*. Since most of Shakespeare's plays have a rather long list of characters, they will either become a feast of friends, or a jumble of confusing strangers. Having some pre-understanding of the relationships between Helena, Hermia, Demetrius, Lysander, Hippolyta, Theseus and the rest, we are better able to notice the nuances, surprises and changes that comprise the story. For all the characters in any play of Shakespeare's it's helpful to know their social status, their degree of nobility and what social position (political, familial or religious) they hold.

**Get them excited about the language.** This preparation may be the most difficult to do beforehand. Shakespeare's language and style of writing is different from what we're most familiar with: movies, tv, or novels. The language is poetic, so it often involves unusual sentence structures, syntax and words. At the same time, the language is primarily dramatic, which makes it more engaging and alive in performance. While most people think of Shakespeare's language as 400 years older than the English we speak today, it is much more helpful to think of his language as being 400 years *younger* than what we speak today. Now it can be presented as more vibrant, daring and outrageous. It is a language replete with images. Shakespeare delights and nearly overwhelms our modern ear with a myriad of images that surprise, delight, inspire or even startle us. We lose much of our enjoyment if his language too often confuses us.

**Discuss the qualities of live theatrical performance.** It's helpful for students who don't normally attend theatre to reflect a bit on the nature of live performances. Because we're so used to other forms of entertainment, it can be surprising to remember that everything happens in real time, with real people playing before us who can hear, see and play with the attending audience. At Shakespeare & Company, we celebrate these aspects of live performances, placing great emphasis on a lively relationship with the audience. Our actors look directly at the audience, speak to them directly – sometimes even ask them for a response. We want – even depend – on our audiences to participate actively in the imaginative and emotional creation of the play. There is constant acknowledgement that this is a play, being performed in the moment and in the presence of people who have come to hear and see it – in other words – the actors will continually shift between the "real" reality of being actors on a stage in front of people watching, and the "imaginative" reality of say, being Theseus in ancient Athens, or in the woods during the night. We also ask students to reflect on their role as responders. Rather than focusing on "theatre etiquette," we invite students to participate as an engaged, supportive and responsive audience. When an audience is attentive and actively responsive they share in the creation of the performance and genuinely influence its success. Since the actors are aware of the audience's response, they can be inspired to give more generously, take more risks in their performance. Great audiences create great performances.

## Our Touring Production: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2008

What you will be seeing is a seven-actor, ninety-minute touring production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. While this model of theatre – a small cast of actors playing multiple roles with a cut script and traveling – has a long history throughout Europe and England stretching from the Middle Ages, we can easily imagine this model being employed from the earliest beginnings of theatre. In Shakespeare's time, touring productions would leave London and take to the road for various reasons; the plague, political or religious suppression, the winter weather, or financial need. As a resident of Stratford-upon-Avon, a town whose central location made it lively with commerce and travel, it is most likely that Shakespeare himself was exposed to numerous touring productions while he was growing up. While there is no hard evidence to prove this – or to propose an early fascination with theatre and performances – it is more reasonable to imagine it being true from the subsequent path of his life, than to reject it because of the absence of documented proof.

Our touring production visits schools and theatre venues across the northeast for 14 weeks. We perform in huge venues – The Egg in Albany, Symphony Hall in Springfield, and the Academy of Music Theatre in Northampton – as well as small spaces like libraries, churches and high school auditoriums. Audience members range in age from elementary students, through middle school, high school, college, community – even to senior citizens. Because of this, our touring production and the actors performing must be extremely versatile to engage with a wide range of audience members, their familiarity with the play, and all types of performance spaces.

The production elements (sets, props, weapons, costumes, and sound) have been carefully designed to accommodate the wide variety of locations, the demands of travel, quick load-ins and assembly, and the quick costume changes each actor must achieve to play multiple roles. Theatrical lights are not transported because of the time involved in setting them up and the availability of adequate power. Besides, Shakespeare's plays were written for performances in the middle of the day when the sun was the only source of light illuminating the audience as well as the action. Real swords are used because they are better constructed, balanced and can be trusted by the actors not to break in performance. The only adjustments made to the weapons are to dull the edges and blunt the tips a bit – which makes no difference visually – but makes them safer for the actors. The set design must serve to help the audience keep track of the locations and the time frame of the story as well as create an image that brings to life the emotional environment of the play – particularly for those audience members least familiar with the story. Attention is also paid to the design of the costumes – their style and color – which serve to associate characters, denote relationships (e.g. Capulets wear red, Montagues wear blue) and help keep the story clear scene by scene. Without additional technical staff (which keeps the cost of the tour more affordable for schools) the actors themselves are responsible for transporting everything, assembling the set and caring for the props and costumes.

The tour schedule is packed. Five performances each week is normal, but with additional workshops, days of *multiple* performances, travel, load-in, set up, vocal and stage combat warm-ups, strike and more travel, the schedule calls for some very early mornings and long days. The primary demand on the actors remains – in presenting multiple characters to a live audience – to tell a complex story in a compelling way. Since playbills are impractical in most venues, (nor would Shakespeare have used them), costumes – even sound cues – become very important. Elizabethan actors also traveled with reduced versions of the plays, edited to allow for small casts to present multiple characters. Scholars are now convinced that, for performance, the plays were always edited. They were shorter than the versions that were approved by the Master of Revels. They were shorter than the versions we read or study in literature classes, the published versions. For example, *Hamlet*, which could take nearly four hours to read aloud, most likely was around two hours in performance. Our 90-minute version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is similarly edited and performed without intermission. A bit shorter than what the Elizabethans typically attended, this version is created to better accommodate the scheduling demands of schools.

Shakespeare's plays are essentially language plays, rather than musical plays or plays where the visual or technical aspects are primary. Elizabethan audiences went to “hear a play” – their expression. Today we go to “see a movie,” “watch TV,” or describe ourselves as “sports spectators” – our expressions. Elizabethan audiences particularly enjoyed the language of the plays, and this demanded plays in which the language was profoundly dramatic, vibrant, eloquent, and memorable. Language is why we remain passionate about Shakespeare.

One final thing to keep in mind... In the Elizabethan playhouses, the actors would address their audience directly – even eliciting responses when needed. Shakespeare goes out of his way to acknowledge the audience and to remind them of the fact that they are witnessing a play. This model of theatre is aesthetically very different from our own where actors are aware of, but ignore, the audience and where the characters in the story are oblivious to the audience's presence. We believe Shakespeare's style of theatre engages the audience more actively: vocally, imaginatively, intellectually and – hopefully – viscerally. It is the theatre we are proud to be a part of, and to bring to you.

## Notes from the Director

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is possibly the most charming of Shakespeare's plays for the audience, and consequently might be dismissed or undervalued as compared to the great tragedies he wrote later in his career. Certainly it is one of his most popular – and always seems to do good business at the box office. It's delightful to watch – the lovers and their tribulations – expressed in such extreme and heroic language as to capture the experience of adolescence for those adolescents who can delve beneath their disaffection and newfound disillusionment. Not all that hard to accomplish when the play is so charming, funny and poignant in its portrayal of unrequited love. For adults, the lovers recall a past intensity of feeling, an ache and fear that can change moment by moment from joy to despair and back again. It is truly a young person's play – and it brings out the part of each of us that is young.

The squabbling of the fairy-folk, the petty blaming and rehashing of old wrongs rising to dangerous heights, and the revenges and reconciliation that are played out newly and boldly in the fairy-world, reflect real life chaos a bit too close for comfort – still remain enjoyable in the sure-handed context of comedy.

The handicraftsmen, whom Puck calls 'mechanicals' afford great comic delight – not in their wit, but rather in their innocence and hapless good will. The court of heroes, characters larger than life, have strength and experience, wisdom and tolerance, graciousness and gratitude, qualities as rare as longed for in our very real world. So many elements combine in this play – elements that travel effortlessly between the real and the unseen worlds – that '*Midsummer*' is almost a blueprint, a beautifully conceived rough-draft, elegant in itself, for a lifetime's body of work that returns again and again to the great themes of love, the nature of art, the necessity of play and the importance of dreams – revisited at the end of Shakespeare's career in *The Tempest*.

'*Midsummer*' – not at the level of the crowd-pleasing theatre experience, but on a deeper level – is a wake up call, a call to arms, a cry to the careful reader or listener in the theatre to value, embrace and nurture that part of ourselves which can all too quickly vanish in the tough-minded, hard-edged and impatient "real world". I think this play makes a compelling case for the importance of mischief and magic – the children of imagination. It also points up the desperate need in our own lives for the very themes it flashes across the pages or on the stage.

Jonathan R. Croy

## Who's Who in the Play

### THE COURT:

**THESEUS:** Duke of Athens. For Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, the character of Theseus stands alone as the archetype of a hero/king. Drawn from a rich store of myth and legend, this classical Athenian ruler serves to set the scene in a familiar mythical time period. Son of King Aegius, namesake of the Aegean Sea, Theseus was raised far from Athens, and only came to know his royal father and his city as a young man, after a series of incredibly heroic adventures. No sooner had he set foot in Athens, but Theseus selected himself to be sent with other youths as a sacrifice to the Minotaur, the man-bull monster of Crete. With the help of Ariadne, daughter to the king of Crete, Theseus manages to kill the Minotaur, escape the labyrinth and return to Athens. More and more stories and legends attached themselves to Theseus over time. He was so revered, so valued as a hero, law-giver, companion and guest, that the expression, "Nothing – without Theseus!" can still be heard in our time by visitors to Greece.

**HIPPOLYTA:** The mythical queen of the Amazons, that renowned tribe of ferocious warrior women referred to in Greek and Roman legend. The Amazons were said to be the daughters of Ares, the god of war, and they appear in many tales of heroic quests. Like most legendary figures, Hippolyta has several conflicting incarnations. In perhaps the best-known of these Theseus tricked the Amazon ruler into capture and marriage. He invited her aboard his visiting ship, then sailed immediately away, kidnapping the queen to be his bride. The outraged Amazons retaliated with battle, but the Athenians won and Theseus and Hippolyta were married. As Theseus says 'I won thee with my sword.' She bore him a son, Hippolytus, but was later replaced by Phedre, a sister of one of Theseus' earlier conquests. Hippolyta reappears in the story of Heracles, who was sent to retrieve her girdle as one of his labors. (Lee) In still other stories Hippolyta is killed at Theseus' side fighting against the Amazons who had come to rescue her.

**PHILOSTRATE:** Master of Revels for Theseus. In Elizabethan England the Master of Revels had very specific legal and ritual duties. Under Theseus, Philostrate's role seems to be more informal, a coordinator and master of ceremonies. In Chaucer's 'The Knight's Tale,' of *The Canterbury Tales* (c. 1387-1394), one of the rival lovers takes the name "Philostrate" in order to work at the court of Theseus and Hippolyta.

**EGEUS:** An Athenian nobleman, father of Hermia. Egeus has his roots in Roman comedy where the issue of forced marriage is a common scenario. (Goddard)

### **THE LOVERS:**

**Young, impulsive, changeable and nearly interchangeable, the quartet of lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* focus the plot but seem also to be pawns in everyone else's games...**

**HELENA:** A young Athenian woman, in love with Demetrius. His early protestations of love and his subsequent defection to Hermia, Helena's dearest friend, have left Helena hurt, desperate, and mad. *Helena is the English variant of the Greek name of Helen, derived from Helios, the sun. Helena, whose name means light, is referred to as 'fair,' and often cast as a blonde.*

**HERMIA:** Daughter of Egeus, in love with Lysander. Hermia's refusal to marry Demetrius, her other suitor and her father's choice, sparks the opening conflict of the play. *Hermia is a Greek name, derived from Hermes, the thieving wing-footed messenger and herald of the gods. Characteristics associated with the name include truthfulness, implicit faithfulness in love, and a refusal to forgive those who deceive her.*

**LYSANDER:** A noble Athenian youth, in love with Hermia. Egeus had previously accepted his suit for Hermia's hand before switching his preferment to Demetrius. *Shakespeare may have borrowed the name Lysander from an historical prince, Lysander of Sparta, who defeated Athens and overthrew its democracy in 404 BCE. Both the historical Demetrius and Lysander appear in Plutarch's Lives, one of Shakespeare's main sources of classical knowledge.*

**DEMETRIUS:** A noble Athenian youth, currently courting Hermia, who had formerly courted Helena. Demetrius is Egeus' choice of son-in-law, but his prior avowals of love to Helena have made Hermia extremely unwilling to marry him. *His name is almost certainly borrowed from Demetrius Poliorcetes, king of Macedon c.337–283 BCE. (see Lysander)*

### **THE MECHANICALS:**

**The working men, or 'rude mechanicals,' who meet to rehearse a play for Theseus' wedding belong to yet another source tradition. They are unmistakably Elizabethan tradesmen working in professions common and familiar to the era. The majority of their names contain a reference to their profession and social status. Their speech and simple natures follow the comic tradition, e.g. *The Second Shepard's Play*. Shakespeare must have taken some pleasure in having them put on a play for Theseus and Hippolyta.**

**PETER QUINCE the CARPENTER:** Director and author of the mechanicals' play, *Pyramus & Thisbe*. Quince's name probably derives from "quines," which are blocks of wood used in building—almost as if he had been called Peter Two-by-four. Quince refers to himself as playing the part of Thisbe's father, but in the performance his only spoken words are the two prologues.

**BOTTOM the WEAVER:** Nick Bottom, the man whom William Hazlitt called "the most romantic of mechanics," is indeed a character who transcends type. His blunderings and blusterings dominate the 'mechanicals' scenes and his response to his strange adventures have made Bottom one of the best-remembered characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, inspiring several different adaptations. The story of the human transmuted to an animal form is a common story in mythology.

Bottom's wonder upon awakening from his enchanted 'dream' is extreme. As he says, "The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was" (*MSND* 4:1 209-12). These lines are an echo of Paul, 1 Corinthians 2:9-10: "Eye hath not seen, ear hath nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit..." "...for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the botome of God's secrets." (Kott) Among many other things the word 'bottom' means 'a skein of thread,' appropriate to a weaver. Bottom, though he is eager to play any part, or all the parts at once, plays Pyramus, the male lover.

**FLUTE the BELLOWS-MENDER:** A beardless youth who is made to play the part of the 'lady that Pyramus must love.' Flute's name may refer to the pleated sides of the bellows that he mends. Bellows were an apparatus for producing a strong current of air, as for sounding a pipe organ or increasing the draft to a fire, and consist of a flexible, valved air chamber that is contracted and expanded by pumping which forces the air through a nozzle. This is a common household fixture in any home with a fireplace, which was in every home until the introduction of stoves in the 1800s.

**SNOUT the TINKER:** A tinker is a slightly derogatory term for a mender of household utensils. Tinkers often had to travel in pursuit of their trade. Indeed, in Irish usage the word is often used to mean gypsy. Much of the tinker's business is in repairing pots and kettles. In the kettles' spouts, or snouts, lies a possible explanation for the name. He also plays The Wall that divided Pyramus and Thisbe.

**STARVELING the TAILOR:** Robin Starveling plays Thisbe's mother, a non-speaking role. Tailors, because of their indoor, finicky work, were often thought to be poor physical specimens, skinny and sniveling. Thus the name starveling is used to indicate the stereotypical tailor. Other possible explanations include the nobilities' practice of running up debt to the tailor, and then not paying (see Touchstone in *As You Like It*). Starveling also plays Moonshine.

**SNUG the JOINER:** Humble and 'slow of study,' Snug is a craftsman, a maker of wooden furniture. The practice of the crafts in Elizabethan England was regulated by the Guilds, political and artistic unions that controlled all aspects of training, pricing, and competition. The Mystery (or Guild) of the Joiners used legislation to gain a monopoly over all cabinet and furniture making. The Turners guild was responsible for the making of all furniture parts that required turning on a lathe, a sort of mass-production. (Fiske) The pieces were then literally 'joined' (preferably snugly) by the joiner, the creator of the finished piece. Snug plays the Lion.

#### **THE FAIRY COURT, THE NIGHT AND FOREST WORLD:**

**OBERON & TITANIA:** Oberon is probably related to the Alberich of German medieval legends, a Nibelung (dwarf) who steals the magic treasure from the Rhine maidens. (MacMillan) The stories and references used by Oberon and Titania tie them to the classical world, as do their forest rituals. Titania, as an idealized natural female, became a popular subject for painters of the Romantic period. Oberon, Titania, and Puck, as well as Ariel from *The Tempest*, are the names of some of the moons of the planet Uranus.

**PUCK:** Also known as Robin Goodfellow. A 'knavish sprite,' servant to Oberon. Puck's appearance in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* marked a new turn in his literary career. But Puck is, as Kipling called him at the beginning of the 20th century, 'the oldest Old Thing in England.' He has been known by many names and in many shapes. In Welsh, Puck was Pwca, in Irish Phouka, Pooka, or Puca. Parallel words exist in many ancient languages: puca in Old English, puki in Old Norse, puke in Swedish, puge in Danish, puks in Low German, pukis in Latvia and Lithuania – mostly with the original meaning of a demon, devil, or evil and malignant spirit.

"Pouk was a typical medieval term for the devil...and the Phouka was sometimes pictured as a frightening creature with the head of an ass." As a folklore spirit, the devilishness of Puck is not only a Christian devil, but an older thing, the familiar devil, demon, and dangerous goblin. Puck is a shapeshifter, who can take the form of animals, of elements, of humans, of the nature-god Pan. Puck leads travelers (and young women) astray and delights in the creation of mischief. Puck appears in writings and at least one ballad as early as 1588. After the premiere of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Puck began to appear more and more frequently in plays and ballads. (Wright)

**First Fairy:** A fairy attending on Titania, responsible for dewdrops and other natural phenomena.

Pease-blossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustard-Seed: Fairies attending on Titania. Named for humble natural things, these fairies are usually depicted as small, eager to serve, with simple powers.

# A Scene-by-Scene Description of Events of the Play

For rehearsal and performance purposes, the play has been broken down into beats. Beats divide the play into mini scenes that usually begin with the entrance or exit of a character onstage. The Act and scene format is a convention of literature and not theatre, and was imposed on Shakespeare's plays when they were published in the Folio of 1623. Notations like Act II, scene 3 lines 78 – 125 are very awkward nomenclature in dividing up a play to rehearse, and are irrelevant in a performance which is continuous.

**SCENE 1** The play opens with Theseus, the fabled hero of ancient Greece, talking to Hippolyta, the Queen of the Amazons, about their impending wedding in 4 days and his impatience for it. He promises to wed her very differently than the violent way he wooed her.

**SCENE 2** They are interrupted by the entrance of Egeus, his daughter Hermia, his desired son-in-law Demetrius, and Hermia's own choice for a husband, Lysander. Egeus accuses Lysander of seducing Hermia with cunning and gifts, and invokes the law of Athens which allows him to send his daughter to her death if she refuses to wed the man he has chosen for her, Demetrius. Hermia pleads with Theseus to take her part, but Theseus seems to side with her father. He gives her 4 days to make up her mind but adds an additional option to marriage or death – a vow of single life. Hermia remains steadfast in her choice of Lysander, who accuses Demetrius of wooing another girl, Helena, who remains devoted to him. Theseus takes Egeus and Demetrius away with him to talk leaving Hermia and her lover Lysander alone onstage. Hippolyta says nothing during the whole encounter.

**SCENE 3** Hermia and Lysander bemoan their predicament, comparing their troubles to the plight of other similarly crossed lovers from history. Lysander devises a plan to escape from Athens to the woods where his aunt lives, there to be married. Hermia agrees and swears an elaborate vow. Helena is discovered and interrupts them as she attempts to flee.

**SCENE 4** Helena complains about her inability to attract her own love, Demetrius. She compares herself unfavorably to Hermia, and it seems to compound her unhappiness. Hermia tries to comfort her by revealing Lysander's plan for the two of them to elope. They then say farewell and leave Helena alone onstage.

**SCENE 5** Helena bemoans her unhappy state to the audience, scolds Cupid for his capriciousness, and then decides to tell Demetrius of Hermia's flight with Lysander, thinking that will at least make him grateful to her. She exits cheered by her own escape from Athens to follow Demetrius.

**SCENE 6** Peter Quince, Nick Bottom and several other craftsmen of Athens have assembled to be cast in a play to present to Theseus in celebration of his wedding. Quince has chosen the tragic love story of Pyramus and Thisbe, and divides the parts of the play he has written among his actors. Bottom will play the lead and only the lead. The others get their parts and agree to meet in the woods outside of Athens so they may rehearse secretly.

**SCENE 7** This scene takes us to those woods where we will remain until the very end of the play. Here we meet Robin Goodfellow (Puck) and a fairy and learn that Titania, Queen of the Fairies, is about to arrive. Puck warns her that Oberon, the fairy King, is also coming and that they are angry with each other concerning a little mortal boy whom Oberon wants, but Titania refuses to surrender. Their scene is interrupted by the entrance of Titania and Oberon.

**SCENE 8** The King and Queen of the fairies immediately start arguing, accusing each other of jealousy and betrayal – they have a long history. Titania observes that a consequence of their fighting is the altered seasons, which are raising havoc with human life and prosperity. After blaming each other some more Titania leaves again refusing to give up the child. Oberon vows revenge.

**SCENE 9** Oberon – after a lengthy speech about their history, Cupid, Queen Elizabeth and other curious matters, plans his revenge and enrolls Puck to help him by retrieving a special flower, wounded by one of Cupid's arrows, which – when the juice of it is applied to the eyes of a sleeper – will cause that person to fall in love with the next live creature that he or she sees. Puck leaves to fetch the flower. Oberon, alone onstage, explains his plan to the audience. Titania will be the victim. He is interrupted by the entrance of Demetrius and Helena.

**SCENE 10** Demetrius scolds, threatens and shames Helena for following him. Helena argues that she is powerless to resist him, citing several classical references. Demetrius runs off to find Lysander and Hermia. Helena vows to follow him, even if it means her own death. Oberon, having observed the scene, commiserates with Helena.

**SCENE 11** Puck returns with the flower and Oberon explains again his plan for Titania. He then instructs Puck to find an Athenian youth (meaning Demetrius) and anoint his eyes – which will cause him to fall in love with the unrequited Helena. Puck dashes off to do so.

**SCENE 12** Titania and some fairies enter. She issues a few instructions and then tells them to sing her to sleep. Oberon then enters and puts the flower's juice in her eyes.

**SCENE 13** Now Lysander and Hermia enter, exhausted and lost in the woods. They lie down to sleep – separately. Puck enters, compliments the sleeping Hermia, scolds the sleeping Lysander, and rubs the flower in his eyes, mistakenly thinking this is the Athenian youth Oberon was talking about. He dashes off to report back to Oberon.

**SCENE 14** Helena and Demetrius reenter, argue a bit more, and Demetrius runs away. Helena then discovers the sleeping Lysander and wakes him. With his charmed eyes, Lysander falls immediately in love with Helena and starts to woo her. She rebukes him and runs away. Lysander disdains the sleeping Hermia and runs off to be Helena's knight. Hermia awakes from a nightmare after he leaves, is distressed to find herself alone, and runs off to find Lysander.

**SCENE 15** The handicraftsmen of Athens enter to rehearse their play, but they have to solve a few problems first. That accomplished, they start the rehearsal. Puck stumbles upon them, and decides to take an active role in their rehearsal. He transforms Bottom by giving him an ass's head, which frightens the others back to Athens. Bottom is left alone and starts to sing. His singing awakes Titania, whose eyes are charmed, and she immediately falls in love with him. She summons her fairies to attend on him, and they eventually lead him to her bower. Puck observes it all and dashes off to tell Oberon.

**SCENE 16** Oberon enters next and is joined by Puck, who recounts what has happened to both Titania and the Athenian youth (which turns out to have been Lysander, the wrong youth). They are interrupted by Demetrius (the youth Oberon had in mind for the magic flower) and Hermia (whom Oberon hasn't seen before). They argue, and Hermia runs off to find her love, Lysander (of the charmed eyes). Demetrius stays and goes to sleep. Oberon scolds Puck for his mistake, and sends him off to get Helena. He then charms Demetrius's eyes in preparation of her coming. Now both boys have their eyes charmed by the magical flower. Puck reenters and tells Oberon that Helena is coming, which she is, and followed by Lysander.

**SCENE 17** Lysander enters wooing Helena who still rebuffs his advances, as she is in love with Demetrius. Demetrius – with charmed eyes – wakes and sees Helena. He immediately starts to woo her in the presence of Lysander. They both begin to compete for Helena's affections. Hermia enters and marvels at Lysander's peculiar behavior in wooing Helena. An argument breaks out between the two girls who insult each other while the boys stay fixated on Helena. Eventually what Puck calls 'the lovers' pageant' ends with the boys running off to fight for Helena's love. Helena exits as well, escaping the fingernails of Hermia. There are lots of insulting remarks hurled around, and after everyone has left, Oberon accuses Puck of mischief or ignorance, both displeasing to him.

**SCENE 18** Oberon is furious at Puck. Eventually he calms down and then instructs Puck – with the aid of another flower – to take the charm off Lysander's eye so he will again be in love with Hermia.

**SCENE 19** Puck further darkens the night in the woods, rounds up the 4 lovers and tires them out with chases until they all fall asleep in the same place. He undoes the charm in Lysander's eye as planned. Now, when they awake, Lysander will again be in love with Hermia, Demetrius with Helena, and the 2 girls will be reconciled to their loves and each other. Puck remarks, "Jack shall have Jill, and naught shall go ill."

**SCENE 20** Titania reenters with the exhausted Bottom in his ass's head and they both fall asleep. Oberon enters and wakes Titania. They reconcile. Oberon then instructs Puck to restore Bottom to himself. They all go off together in flight from the sun.

**SCENE 21** Theseus, Hippolyta and Egeus are out hunting in the woods the following morning. When they stumble across the 4 sleeping lovers, Theseus instructs the forester to wake them with his horn. Upon arising, the boys sort out who they are in love with. Theseus overrides Egeus's demands, and everyone goes back to Athens to prepare for the multiple weddings that will follow.

**SCENE 22** Bottom awakes alone in the woods and talks to the audience about his dream. He too heads back to Athens to be reunited with his friends.

**SCENE 23** It is immediately after the multiple weddings and Theseus requests some entertainment before bed. Philostrate, the Master of Revels, announces several possibilities. Upon hearing of the Pyramus and Thisbe play Theseus requests it but has to argue with Philostrate who disapproves of it. Theseus gets his way and the players approach.

**SCENE 24** The 'players' enter and what ensues is their retelling of the Pyramus and Thisbe story, which is graciously – sometimes – received by the court. At the end of their play Theseus praises the players and sends all the newly married couples off to bed.

**SCENE 25** Puck enters followed by Titania and Oberon who bless the house and the offspring of the 3 couples. Puck has the last word and apologizes to the audience on behalf of all the cast, promising to mend their ways if the audience will pardon them.

## Sources of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is first mentioned by Francis Meres in 1598, leading many scholars to date the play between 1594 and 1596. It is likely to have been written around the same period *Romeo and Juliet* was created.

The play was first printed in quarto in 1600, following its entry into the Stationer's Register on October 8, 1600. This quarto is almost surely taken directly from a manuscript written by Shakespeare. A second quarto, printed in 1619 (and falsely backdated to 1600), attempted to correct some of the errors in the first printing; unfortunately it introduced several new errors. It is the second quarto, which served as the basis for the First Folio in 1623. (ClassicNotes)

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* has no direct source material. Unlike many of Shakespeare's plays, which lifted plots entirely from earlier plays or historical accounts, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a composite. In its creation Shakespeare drew on a wealth of available material, from philosophical texts to low comedic situations. All of his sources would have been familiar to the well educated in his audience, and most of them would have been familiar to everyone else through oral tradition as well as other plays of the time. A similar effect might be achieved today by mixing some characters from *Grimm's Fairy Tales* with a Harry Potter novel, a sit-com, several urban legends, and a Shakespeare play – all combined in the same play world.

The play introduces characters from a variety of theatrical traditions – their separate journeys tied improbably together by arbitrary plot devices and the common theme of love and marriage.

The setting and frame of the play, the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta, is a classical story retold by Chaucer in 'The Knights' Tale.' In that story, which also uses the legend of Theseus as a framework, two very different suitors vie for the love of Hippolyta's sister Emily. In that story, as in *Midsummer*, Theseus, while out hunting, is called upon to act as a judge, having come upon the lovers fighting. Chaucer presumably took his material from many sources, including Plutarch's *Lives*.

Quince and Bottom and the gang of 'rude mechanicals' are stock Elizabethan workingmen, much like other lower characters in most Shakespeare plays, but the adventures of Bottom draw him out of this group into a far different mythological sphere. The story of Bottom's 'translation' and his night in the fairy world has its roots in Greek mythology and the medieval carnival tradition, which, in turn, is a permutation of the Roman Saturnalia. Both these traditions are concerned with the animal nature of man, which reveals itself in transformations and low – often sexual – acts. (Kott)

The probable main source for the story of Bottom is Lucius Apeleius' *The Golden Asse* (c. 170 AD), translated by W. Adlington in 1566. (The first person adventure of Apeleius himself, who was accidentally turned into an ass by a sorceress, and lived in that shape many years.) In one episode, Apeleius, in ass-shape, is desired by a high-born woman. At first he is afraid of hurting her but reminds himself of the story of Pasiphae of Crete who, coupled with a bull, bore a monstrous son, the Minotaur, who was later killed by Theseus.

Titania and Oberon, the fairy king and queen, are drawn in part from the Olympian world (Titania is one of the names of the goddess Diana) and in part from Northern European folklore and Renaissance literature. They or their counterparts appear in *Huon de Bordeaux*, (trans. by Lord Berners, c. 1545) and in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (published in 1596). The stories and references used by Oberon and Titania tie them to the classical world, as do their forest rituals. The nature of their servants (Puck and the fairies) and their place in the story attach them to spirits and legends closer to European tradition.

Puck and the little fairies, or 'elves,' are taken from British folklore. The 'little folk,' or 'fair folk,' were generally seen as dangerous, anarchic, and hurtful – though in the right circumstances they could be helpful.

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe (the play performed by the mechanicals), as well as most of the other mythological allusions in the text, can be found in the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid (Ovidius Naso, 43 BC-17 AD), a well-known Latin text in Shakespeare's day and the source for a recent Broadway play by the same name. The *Metamorphoses* contains numerous stories of transformation where a god or human lover is changed in form, to an animal, vegetable, or mineral.

## *A Midsummer Night's Dream* & the Elizabethan Period

**Midsummer's Night** Midsummer's Night, or St. John the Baptist's Eve in the Christian tradition, is the night before the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. This night was said to be particularly sacred to the fairy folk. (Nichols) "The... summer solstice is traditionally a time when charms and spells were performed for the purpose of protecting the livestock and the barns in which they live, as well as the farmhouse." (DuMolin) Although the (few) references to time of year in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* place the action somewhat earlier in the year, the play's spirit places it in the magical uncertainty of the Midsummer's Night.

**Master of Revels** "A Court official, under the Lord Chamberlain, with responsibility for the Court Revels, which traditionally lasted from All Saints' Day (1 November) to the beginning of Lent, with performances of masques and plays centering on the twelve days of Christmas (December 26 - January 6). Plays performed in public theaters were often selected to be presented at Court, and in the later half of the sixteenth century the Master became the official licenser and censor of plays, at first for performance, and, from 1607, for printing." (Wells)

**Court Masques** One popular form of private entertainment was the masque. These pieces were usually short with simple classical or allegorical plots. The emphasis was placed on musical and visual effects. At court performers were the nobility and care was taken to see that the characters played were equal in rank to that of the player. At the end of the piece, the performers would remove their disguise and invite the audience to dance. The English form of the masque includes the earlier traditions of festival mummers and disguise. Shakespeare both parodies and uses the forms of the masque in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the end with the Pyramus and Thisbe play.

**Crafts and Trades** Craftsmen, such as those who meet in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to rehearse a play for 'Duke' Theseus, were under the protection and regulation of organizations called Guilds. These Guilds were established to provide quality control, personnel support, political bargaining, and training systems. For more information on individual crafts and trades see the character breakdown on the 'Mechanicals.'

**Seeming** The Elizabethans were uneasy both philosophically and politically with the act and notion of 'seeming'. A disguise – or pretending to be someone else – was feared since it could be confused with reality. Acting and plays were especially problematic since this 'seeming' was, of course, their entire purpose and mode. Could a commoner usurp a king by playing one? Would a man ostensibly become a lion by putting on a lion costume? Shakespeare's characters – most notably Hamlet – are deeply concerned with the tension between 'seeming' and 'being'.

**Literature and the Arts, Intellectual/Spiritual Life** The Elizabethan period was the height of the Renaissance in England. Theatre, literature, music, sciences and the arts were flourishing and in constant interaction and debate. The variety of themes and sources in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* reflect some of the busy multi-leveled excitement of the period.

# Historical and Mythological References in the Play

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is packed with references from classical mythology. The following is an alphabetical listing of the many classical references Shakespeare mentions in his play.

## GODS, GODDESSES, HEROES AND PLACES

**ACHERON** is the river of pain, one of the five rivers that flow in the underworld. The others are Phlegethon (the river of fire), Lethe (the river of oblivion), Cocytus (the river of wailing), and Styx (the river of hatred). (source: www.theoi.com)

*With drooping fog as black as **Acheron** (III.ii.)*

**APOLLO** is the god of music, of reason, and often of sunlight. Brother to Diana, the moon huntress, he is the patron of healing, sculpture and lyric, the keeper of the oracle at Delphi. Like most gods, Apollo didn't take well to being denied in love. The story referred to in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the story of his encounter with Daphne, a forest nymph. He pursued her until she could run no further, at which point Zeus (Jove) granted her prayer to be hidden, transforming her into a laurel tree. The laurel became the tree sacred to Apollo and the laurel wreath the prize in competitions of art and rhetoric. As Helena pursues Demetrius into the forest, the myth has been turned on its head as the woman chases after the all-unwilling man.

***Apollo** flies, and **Daphne** holds the chase (II.i.)*

**AURORA**, Roman goddess of the dawn. The Aurora Borealis, or the northern lights, are the false dawn over the arctic sky.

*And yonder shines **Aurora's** harbinger (III.ii.)*

**THE BACCHANALS**, followers of the Greek wine-god Bacchus, or the Latin Dionysus, were wild bands of women and satyrs who rioted across the countryside in dangerously ecstatic states. The **Thracian singer** was Orpheus, a mortal with the ability to make music so beautiful it could charm anyone or anything – even the gods. He charmed his way down to the underworld to rescue his bride, Eurydice, who was killed on their wedding day. His music bought her freedom, but Orpheus' lack of trust in the god Hades sent her back to the underworld and left him doomed to wander alone. In this state he encountered a group of Bacchanals who, enraged by his unwillingness to sing for them, tore him to pieces.

*The riot of the tipsy **Bacchanals**,  
Tearing the **Thracian** singer in their rage (V.i.)*

**THE CARTHAGE QUEEN** is Dido, a widowed princess who fled her native land of Tyre after the murder of her husband. Dido founded the city of Carthage, later a great power in Roman times. Her story is told in detail in Vergil's *Aeneid*. The '**false Trojan**' is Aeneas, the hero of that epic. Aeneas was a Trojan warrior and the mythical founder of Rome. When Aeneas came to Carthage Queen Dido fell in love with him. Aeneas accepted her love and married her, but later abandoned her and sailed away. When Dido saw his ship leaving her harbor she built a pyre and burned herself to death. She is the archetype of the betrayed woman.

*And by that fire which burn'd the **Carthage queen**,  
When the false **Trojan** under sail was seen (I.i.)*

**CENTAURS** were monster-like creatures with the body of a horse and the head and torso of a man. Most were wild, rude, quarrelsome, and lecherous, though a few, notably Chiron, were renowned for wisdom. The battle referred to occurred at a noble wedding where the invited centaurs drank heavily and behaved with great depravity attempting to steal the bride. Theseus and others at the wedding fought back and defeated the rioting centaurs.

*The battle with the **Centaurs** (V.i.)*

**CORIN & PHILLIDA** are common names in pastoral verse, the archetypal shepherd and shepherdess.

*And in the shape of **Corin** sat all day,  
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love  
To amorous **Phillida** (II.i.)*

**CUPID** is the Latin god – Eros for the Greeks – who is usually depicted as a winged boy with a quiver of arrows. He is the son of Venus, the goddess of love, and of Mars, the god of war. Cupid is sometimes depicted as blind because of the mismatched lovers he creates. Cupid's arrows overpoweringly affected anyone they hit, god or mortal, and his selection and aim was anarchic and unsparing. In some traditions he has two kinds of arrows – the golden headed one which caused love, the leaden one, hate. Oberon tells the story of Cupid's attempt to catch the heart of a **fair vestal throned by the west**. This **imperial votaress** is generally assumed to refer to Queen Elizabeth I, who despite extraordinary social and political pressure, never married.

*I swear to thee, by **Cupid's** strongest bow  
By his best arrow with the golden head (I.i.)*

*Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;  
And therefore is wing'd **Cupid** painted blind (I.i.)*

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,  
 Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
**Cupid** all arm'd: a certain aim he took  
 At a fair vestal throned by the west,  
 And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;  
 But I might see young **Cupid's** fiery shaft  
 Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,  
 And the imperial votaress passed on,  
 In maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of **Cupid** fell:  
 It fell upon a little western flower,  
 Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound, (this would be the pansy)  
 And maidens call it love-in-idleness.  
 Flower of this purple dye,  
 Hit with **Cupid's** archery,  
 Sink in apple of his eye. (III.ii.)

**Cupid** is a knavish lad,  
 Thus to make poor females mad (III.ii.)

**DIAN, or Diana**, was the virgin goddess of the hunt, and of the moon. Diana is the daughter of Zeus and the sister of the god Apollo.

Or on **Diana's** altar to protest  
 For aye austerity and single life. (I.i.)

**Dian's** bud o'er **Cupid's** flower  
 Hath such force and blessed power (IV.i.)

The **THREE FATES** are daughters of Themis, goddess of Necessity. All things, including gods and mortals, are ultimately in the power of **Clotho**, **Lachesis** and **Atropos**. Life in their hands is depicted as a wheel, upon which Clotho spins (the past), Lachesis measures and guides the thread (choosing in the present), and Atropos cuts the thread of life (the future which is death). (source: <http://www.messagenet.com/myths/bios/fates.html>)

The foolish **Fates** (I.ii.)

O **Sisters Three**,  
 Come, come to me (V.i.)

O **Fates**, come, come,  
 Cut thread and thrum; (V.i.)

The **FURIES** are goddesses of vengeance and punishers of the unfaithful. They tortured the mind, body, and heart of those who crossed the gods or broke natural law. Also three sisters, Alecto, Tisiphone and Megaera, the furies are renowned for being cruel, but fair.

Approach, ye **Furies** fell! (V.i.)

**HECATE** is an underworld goddess of witchcraft often depicted in a triple form for the moon including Phoebe and Diana. The three faces of Hecate are the horse, the dog, and the serpent, or else the virgin, the mother, and the crone. Hecate, who appears in another form in Celtic mythology, is probably a remnant of an older series of Titans assimilated into the Olympian pantheon.

And we fairies, that do run  
 By the triple **Hecate's** team (V.i.)

**HELEN**, daughter to Zeus and to Leda, a mortal woman, was described as the most beautiful woman of the ancient world. As a child she was abducted by **Theseus** but rescued and returned to her father's house. She married Menelaus, the king of Sparta, but was abducted – apparently willingly – by Paris, Prince of Troy. Thus began the ten years of the Trojan war. When Troy fell, Helen returned to Sparta with her husband. Helen is still invoked as the incarnation of ultimate beauty. The second quotation is a bit mysterious, as Helen was not known for faith. Some people think that Limander may refer to Alexander, another name for Paris, or even Leander (Hellesport swimmer), but then Helen would need to be Hero for this to make better sense.

Sees **Helen's** beauty in a brow of Egypt (V.i.)

**Pyramus**: Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;  
 And, like **Limander**, am I trusty still.

**Thisbe**: And I like **Helen**, till the **Fates** me kill. (V.i.)

**HERCULES, or HERACLES** is the original hero of the Age of Heroes. Half-man, half-god (Zeus was his father), his deeds and his mighty Labours (one of which was to steal the golden belt of Hippolyta) have carved out his place in legend for all time. He took part in every adventure, and when finally vanquished by the remnants of a treacherous poison he had previously used, Hercules' strength would not allow him to die. Instead, he was raised to Olympus to live immortal among the stars. The only hero of mythology who rivals Hercules in his particular sphere is Theseus. **Cadmus** was a Phoenician prince who, according to the myth, killed a dragon and planted its teeth, from which grew an army of men who fought with one another until only five survived. Cadmus then went on to found the city of Thebes with the five surviving soldiers. Cadmus was never in Crete.

*I could play **Ercles** rarely (I.ii.)*

*I was with **Hercules** and **Cadmus** once,  
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear  
With bounds of Sparta (IV.i.)*

*In glory of my kinsman **Hercules** (V.i.)*

**HIEMS**, in Latin, is the word for winter. Like many gods of nature, **HIEM** is both the god of winter and winter itself.

*And on old **Hiems**' thin and icy crown (II.i)*

**LEVIATHAN**, a deep-sea creature, sometimes a whale, the largest large thing.

*Ere the **leviathan** can swim a league (II.i.)*

**THE NINE MUSES** (thrice, or three times, three equals nine), daughters of Zeus (Jove) and Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, are often pictured in myth and painting grouped around Apollo, patron of the arts. Each muse has her special area of expertise, in which she inspires works of genius in mortals. The **MUSES** are: **Kleio** (history), **Euterpe** (flute playing), **Thaleia** (comedy), **Melpomene** (tragedy), **Terpsichore** (dance) **Erato** (love poems), **Polyhymnia** (sacred music), **Ourania** (astrology) and **Kalliope**, (epic poetry) who holds the highest rank of the Muses.

*'The thrice three **Muses** mourning for the death  
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.' (V.i.)*

**NEPTUNE**, or Poseidon, god of the sea. Powerful Neptune, the 'earth-shaker,' is the only one of the three original Olympian brothers (Jove, Neptune, and Pluto) mentioned in the play.

***Neptune's** yellow sands (II.i)*

*Opening on **Neptune** with fair blessed beams (III.ii.)*

**PHOEBE**, the Moon in the sky (one of the three aspects of the moon, besides Diana and Hecate).

*To-morrow night, when **Phoebe** doth behold  
Her silver visage in the watery glass,  
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass (I.i.)*

**PHOEBUS**, or Helios, is both the sun and the sun god. Each day he rides his fiery horses across the path of the sky, pulling the cart that holds the sun.

*And **Phibbus**' car  
Shall shine from far (I.ii.)*

**CEPHALUS & PROCRIS**, or Shafalus & Procrus as the play calls them, are a somewhat unfortunate reference for true lovers. They were husband and wife, but Procris left her husband, believing him to be unfaithful. He went out to look for her, and she in turn went out to spy on him. Hearing her rustling like a wild beast in the bushes, Cephalus threw a javelin and killed her. When he realized his mistake, he sent the same javelin into his heart. (E. Cobham Brewer 1810–1897. Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. 1898.)

*Pyramus: Not **Shafalus** to **Procrus** was so true.  
Thisbe: As **Shafalus** to **Procrus**, I to you.*

**VENUS**, or Aphrodite. The goddess of love, Venus hears the prayers of lovers in distress. Venus appears in the sky as the evening star, bright and glorious.

*When his love he doth espy,  
Let her shine as gloriously  
As the **Venus** of the sky (III.ii.)*

*By the simplicity of **Venus**' doves (I.i.)*

*As yonder **Venus** in her glimmering sphere (III.ii.)*

# Words and Phrases Coined by Shakespeare

## New Words that Appear for the First Time in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**Beach** (transitive verb) - to run or drive ashore; to ground as if on a beach.

*Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
By paved fountain or by rusky brook,  
Or in the **beached** margent of the sea*

**Bedroom** (noun) - a room furnished with a bed and intended primarily for sleeping; from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, merely means a place to sleep on the ground.

*Then by your side no **bed-room** me deny;  
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.*

**Eyeballs** (noun) - the more or less globular capsule of the vertebrate eye formed by the sclera and cornea together with their contained structures.

*Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;  
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,  
To take from thence all error with his might,  
And make his **eyeballs** roll with wonted sight.*

**Mimic** (noun) - an ancient dramatic entertainment representing scenes from life usually in a ridiculous manner; one that ridicules by imitation.

*An ass's nole I fixed on his head:  
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,  
And forth my **mimic** comes.*

**Moonbeams** (noun) - a ray or beam of light from the moon.

*To have my love to bed and to arise;  
And pluck the wings from Painted butterflies  
To fan the **moonbeams** from his sleeping eyes:  
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.*

**Rival** (adjective) - having the same pretensions or claims; competing or standing in rivalry (First used as an adjective in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - it had been well known as a noun).

*I know you two are **rival** enemies:  
How comes this gentle concord in the world,  
That hatred is so far from jealousy,  
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?*

**Swagger** (verb) - to conduct oneself in an arrogant or superciliously pompous manner; especially: to walk with an air of overbearing self-confidence.

*What hempen home-spuns have we **swaggering** here,  
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?  
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;  
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.*

**Trippingly** (adverb) - in a nimble or lively manner.

*Every elf and fairy sprite  
Hop as light as bird from brier;  
And this ditty, after me,  
Sing, and dance it **trippingly**.*

**Fancy-free** (adjective) - free from amorous attachment or engagement; free to imagine or fancy.

*But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,  
And the imperial votaress passed on,  
In maiden meditation, **fancy-free**.*

**Flowery** (adjective) - of, relating to, or resembling flowers; marked by or given to rhetorical elegance.

*Come, sit thee down upon this **flowery** bed,  
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,  
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,  
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.*

Some commonly used phrases from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

**Swift as a shadow**

**Lord, what fools these mortals be**

**The course of true love never did run smooth.**

**Over hill, over dale...**

**The lover...Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.**

**I'll put a girdle round about the earth**

**Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.**

**I know a bank where the wild thyme blows...**

# Exploring Scenes

Some Shakespeare & Company techniques for exploring Shakespeare dramatically.

## FEEDING IN

One of the biggest obstacles to doing scenes in the classroom is trying to read them and act them at the same time. At Shakespeare & Company, we use a technique called “feeding in” to eliminate this obstacle in rehearsals. The students who are actors in the scenes don’t hold scripts. Instead, they have “feeders” who stand behind them with the script. The feeders give the actors the text, a line or a phrase at a time, which the actor then interprets. It’s important that the feeder gives the lines loudly enough for the actor to hear, but with absolutely no interpretation. Interpreting is the actor’s job. The feeder is simply there to serve the actor, and in a sense should be invisible. The actor can ask the feeder to be louder, to be faster, to give fewer words at a time, to repeat something they didn’t quite get, but they shouldn’t have to turn around to look at the text. Encourage generosity among all of the students. Feeding in takes a little practice before it is comfortable for everyone. The feeders may forget to wait for the actors to speak. The actor may keep turning around to hear what the feeder is saying. Gentle encouragement and patience are needed, but the payoff can be enormous. With this technique, the actors are free to look at one another, to talk and listen to one another, to move around, to jump and shout, in a word, act. For students who aren’t strong readers, just the prospect of reading aloud in front of a class may be so frightening that enjoying themselves is impossible. But with feeding in, all of the students, not just the strong readers, can have a chance to play any of the roles.

## NON-JUDGMENTAL LANGUAGE

When students have finished doing a scene, it’s often our habitual response to comment on whether or not it was “good”. This response, although it is our habit, doesn’t provoke useful discussion or new insights. It’s worth the effort to encourage a habit of non-judgmental language. Questions to ask after students work on a scene include: **What came up for you?, What just happened between you?, What feelings came up when you said that text?, What feelings came up for you as you listened to what the other character said to you?, Did anything surprise you?, What can we do to make the scene even more exciting?** It’s more respectful to let the actor speak first. The director or observers might then throw in their ideas, and then ask the actors to play them out. Non-judgmental language is essential to create an atmosphere where the students will risk exposing their immediate thoughts and feelings. Fearing to be wrong, to look “stupid”, to not “get it right” shuts them down and can easily kill any enjoyable experience or new insight they might have.

## “GETTING IT ALIVE” VS. “GETTING IT RIGHT”

Sometimes, the more outrageous a scene becomes, the more alive and illuminating it can be. Often, allowing students to express themselves comically can lead to greater expression in the tragic scenes. One way to create excitement is to put non-speaking characters on stage. Let your own students’ imaginations play. Give yourself and them the huge permission they need to play the scenes boldly, to bring it alive. Encourage them to rise to the outrageous language and situations of the play. Paraphrasing Shakespeare or “putting it into your own words” can often backfire by dumbing Shakespeare down.

# Cut Scenes to Explore

## The LOVERS (Hermia / Helena) Scene 1

HERMIA

*God speed fair Helena! whither away?*

HELENA

*Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.  
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!  
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air...  
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,  
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;  
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,  
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.  
O, teach me how you look, and with what art  
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.*

HERMIA

*Ifrown upon him, yet he loves me still.*

HELENA

*O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!*

HERMIA

*I give him curses, yet he gives me love.*

HELENA

*O that my prayers could such affection move!*

HERMIA

*The more I hate, the more he follows me.*

HELENA

*The more I love, the more he hateth me.*

HERMIA

*His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.*

HELENA

*None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!*

HERMIA

*Take comfort: be no more shall see my face;  
Lysander and myself will fly this place.  
Before the time I did Lysander see,  
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:  
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,  
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!*

## The LOVERS (Helena / Demetrius) Scene 2

DEMETRIUS

*I love thee not, therefore pursue me not...*

HELENA

*You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;  
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart  
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,  
And I shall have no power to follow you.*

DEMETRIUS

*Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?  
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth  
Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?*

HELENA

*And even for that do I love you the more.  
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,  
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:*

*Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,  
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,  
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.  
What worsen place can I beg in your love,--  
And yet a place of high respect with me,--  
Than to be used as you use your dog?*

DEMETRIUS

*Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;  
For I am sick when I do look on thee.*

HELENA

*And I am sick when I look not on you.*

DEMETRIUS

*I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,  
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.*

HELENA

*The wildest hath not such a heart as you.  
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:  
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;  
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind  
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,  
When cowardice pursues and valour flies.*

DEMETRIUS

*I will not stay thy questions; let me go:  
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe  
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.*

HELENA

*Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!  
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:  
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;  
We should be wooed and were not made to woo.*

Exit DEMETRIUS

*I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,  
To die upon the band I love so well.*

## The FAIRIES (Oberon, Titania and Puck) Scene 3

OBERON

*I'll met by moonlight, proud Titania.*

TITANIA

*What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:  
I have forsworn his bed and company.*

OBERON

*Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?*

TITANIA

*Then I must be thy lady...  
Why art thou here,  
Come from the farthest Steppe of India?  
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,  
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come  
To give their bed joy and prosperity.*

OBERON

*How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,  
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?...  
Exit OBERON*

TITANIA

*These are the forgeries of jealousy:  
And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport...*

OBERON

*Do you amend it then; it lies in you:  
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?  
I do but beg a little changeling boy,  
To be my henchman.*

TITANIA

*Set your heart at rest:  
The fairy land buys not the child of me.  
His mother was a votaress of my order:...  
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;  
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,  
And for her sake I will not part with him.*

OBERON

*How long within this wood intend you stay?*

TITANIA

*Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.  
If you will patiently dance in our round  
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;  
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.*

OBERON

*Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.*

TITANIA

*Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!  
We shall chide downright if I longer stay.*

## Exit The MECHANICALS (Bottom/Quince/Flute/Snout/ Starling/Snug/ Puck) Scene 4

BOTTOM

*Are we all met?*

QUINCE

*Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place  
for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our  
stage,... and we will do it in action as we will do it  
before the duke.  
Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse  
your parts...*

Enter PUCK behind

PUCK

*What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,  
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?  
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;  
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.*

Exit BOTTOM

QUINCE

*Thisbe, stand forth.*

STARVELING

*Must I speak now?*

**QUINCE**

*Ay, marry, must you...*

**STARVELING**

*Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,  
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,...  
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.*

**QUINCE**

*'Ninus' tomb, 'man: why, you must not speak that  
yet; that you answer to Pyramus: Pyramus enter:  
your cue is past...*

**STARVELING**

O--

*Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head*

**BOTTOM**

*If I were fair, Thisbe, I were only thine.*

**QUINCE**

*O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. Pray,  
masters! fly, masters! Help!*

*Exeunt QUINCE, STARVELING, et al*

**PUCK**

*I'll follow you, I'll lead you about around,  
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through  
brier:*

*Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,  
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire...*

**BOTTOM**

*Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them  
to make me afraid.*

*Re-enter SNOUT*

**SNOUT**

*O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?*

**BOTTOM**

*What do you see? you see an asshead of your own,  
do you?*

*Exit SNOUT*

*Re-enter QUINCE*

**QUINCE**

*Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.*

*Exit QUINCE*

**BOTTOM**

*I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to  
fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from  
this place, do what they can: I will walk up and  
down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I  
am not afraid.*

**The MECHANICALS**

**(Quince/Bottom as Pyramus/Flute  
as Thisbe/Snout as Wall/Starveling as  
Moonshine/Snug as Lion)**

**Scene 5****PROLOGUE**

*Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;  
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.  
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;  
This beauteous lady Thisbe is certain.  
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present  
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;  
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content  
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.  
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,*

*Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,  
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn  
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.  
This grisly beast, which Lion hight\* by name,*

\*hight: called, named, known as

*The trusty Thisbe, coming first by night,  
Did scare away, or rather did affright;  
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,  
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.  
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,  
And finds his trusty Thisbe's mantle slain:  
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;  
And Thisbe, tarrying in mulberry shade,  
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,  
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain  
At large discourse, while here they do remain.*

**WALL**

*In this same interlude it doth befall  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,  
Did whisper often very secretly.  
This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show  
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.*

**PYRAMUS**

*O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!...  
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,  
I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot!  
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,  
That stand'st between her father's ground and  
mine!...*

*Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine  
eyne!...*

*But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.*

*O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!  
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!*

*Enter THISBE*

**THISBE**

*O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,  
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!*

**PYRAMUS**

*I see a voice: now will I to the chink,  
To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face. Thisbe!*

**THISBE**

*My love thou art, my love I think.*

**PYRAMUS**

*O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!*

**THISBE**

*I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.*

**PYRAMUS**

*Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?*

**THISBE**

*'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.*

*Exeunt PYRAMUS AND THISBE*

**WALL**

*Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;  
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.*

*Enter LION AND MOONSHINE*

**LION**

*You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear  
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,  
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.  
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am  
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;  
For, if I should as lion come in strife  
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.*

**MOONSHINE**

*This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;  
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be...  
All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the  
lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this  
thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.*

**THISBE**

*This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?*

**LION**

*[Roaring] Oh--*

*THISBE runs off*

*The LION shakes THISBE'S mantle, and exit*

*Enter PYRAMUS*

**PYRAMUS**

*Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;  
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,  
I trust to take of truest Thisbe's sight...  
But stay, O spite.*

*But mark, poor knight,  
What dreadful dole is here!...*

*O dainty duck! O dear!*

*Thy mantle good,  
What, stain'd with blood!...*

*O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?  
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear!...*

*Come, tears, confound;  
Out, sword, and wound  
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.*

*Now am I dead,  
Now am I fled;...*

*Moon take thy flight:*

*Exit MOONSHINE*

*Now die, die, die, die, die.*

*Re-enter THISBE*

**THISBE**

*Asleep, my love?  
What, dead, my dove?*

*O Pyramus, arise!  
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?*

*Dead, dead? A tomb  
Must cover thy sweet eyes.*

*These lily lips,  
This cherry nose,*

*These yellow cowslip cheeks,  
Are gone, are gone:*

*Lovers, make moan:  
His eyes were green as leeks...*

*Come, trusty sword;  
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:*

*And, farewell, friends;  
Thus Thisbe ends:*

*Adieu, adieu, adieu.*

*Dies*

# Useful Websites

## Play Texts

<http://etext.virginia.edu/shakespeare/folio>

<http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Annex/DraftTxt/index.html>

Both sites offer the Folio text.

[www.it.usyd.edu.au/~matty/Shakespeare/](http://www.it.usyd.edu.au/~matty/Shakespeare/)

They claim to be the “Web’s oldest Shakespeare site.” This is our favorite site because when you copy and paste the text into Microsoft Word, the text is formatted into tables, rather than with nasty tabs.

<http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/>

Businesslike and scholarly texts of the plays, supported by MIT.

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/lambtales/LTMND.HTM>

Lamb’s Tales from Shakespeare. 1807 Story of the play. More narrative than many modern plot summaries.

<http://eserver.org/books/apuleius/default.html>

*The Golden Asse*, by Lucius Apuleius

## Elizabethan/Renaissance

<http://renaissance.dm.net/compendium/home.html>

LIFE IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND: *A Compendium of Common Knowledge 1558-1603*. This site offers a concise, yet superficial view of basic daily existence in Elizabethan England. Good for a basic introduction to the period and quick fact searches.

[http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page)

EURODOCS: Primary Historical Documents from Western Europe. Contains facsimiles of documents from the period concerning wedding ceremonies, 16th & 17th century papers and writings authored by Queen Elizabeth.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1577harrison-england.html>

MODERN HISTORY SOURCEBOOK: *Holinshed’s Chronicles of England 1577*. Holinshed’s Chronicles are a primary source account of daily living in England during the Renaissance. It includes a discussion of topics such as laws, policies, inventions and public health.

<http://renaissance.dm.net/sites.html>

RENAISSANCE RESOURCES: Designed for scholars and Renaissance Faire aficionados, this page has links to nearly anything and everything, from portraits of Elizabeth I to the rules of rapier and dagger fighting to Elizabethan gardening and the Great Chain of Being. If the site is missing anything at all, you can bet it links to a page where that something can be found.

<http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/englisch/shakespeare/spear.html>

Guide to Shakespeare’s playhouses and playing

[www.sca.org](http://www.sca.org)

Official website of the society for Creative Anachronism (SCA). An international organization dedicated to researching and re-creating pre-17th-century European history. Some of the material is highly esoteric, but the SCA is a wonderful resource for finding helpful people in your area.

<http://www.drizzle.com/~celyn/mrwp/mrwp.html>

The Medieval and Renaissance Wedding Page. Information on wedding customs from the Vikings on.

## Classical

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>

The best resource for the study of classical texts. Perseus, run by the Classics Department at Tufts University, offers classical texts in several languages, translations, linked commentary, ancient art, and more.

<http://www.messagenet.com/myths/>

A simple, more or less scholarly, and accessible site for information on basic Greek gods and myths.

## Lesson Plans and Study Guides

<http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=618>

Links and lesson plans for teaching Shakespeare’s plays to primary and secondary school students.

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/learning/Learning.aspx>

Play guides for all of Shakespeare’s works, from The Royal Shakespeare Company in England, for both teachers and students.

<http://www.gradesaver.com/classicnotes/titles/midsummernight/>

An act-by-act summary and analyses of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, as well as an e-text of the play.

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>

A thorough guide and links to all and anything Shakespeare

<http://www.shakespeare.com/>

Collection of lesson plans and study guides for Shakespeare’s works.

## Miscellaneous

[http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/](http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/)

MidsummerPaintings.html

A linked list of paintings up to 1846 inspired by *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

[www.william-shakespeare.org.uk/shakespeare-insults-dictionary.htm](http://www.william-shakespeare.org.uk/shakespeare-insults-dictionary.htm)

PERSONALIZED SHAKESPEAREAN INSULTS.

Need we say more? - thou tottering shard-borne pumpion!

<http://www.geocities.com/beyondearth2001/uranus.htm>

Details and pictures of the moons of URANUS, many of which are named for Shakespeare characters, including Titania, Oberon, and Puck.

[www.shakespeare.org](http://www.shakespeare.org)

SHAKESPEARE & COMPANY’s wonderful website.

Here can be found our mission statement, up-to-date information on productions and programs, and photos from previous performance seasons.

<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/classics/chaironeia/>

<http://www.e-classics.com/plutarch.htm>

Either of these websites include anything and everything you might want to know about Plutarch, including the text of Plutarch’s *Lives*.

[http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/Production\\_Shakespeare/SearchPublic.cfm](http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/Production_Shakespeare/SearchPublic.cfm)

**Please Note:** If you have any suggestions of other websites to add to our list, please email us at [education@shakespeare.org](mailto:education@shakespeare.org). Also, due to the constantly changing nature of the web, let us know if any of these sites are no longer accessible, so that we can update our list.

# Touring Company Biographies

**Adam Banks** (Puck, Snug, Egeus) This is Adam's first year with Shakespeare & Company. He appeared on the main stage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and also on The Rose Playhouse in *Shakespeare and the Language that Shaped a World*. He trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, the British American Drama Academy, and Atelier in Los Angeles. Adam has also been seen in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *True West*, and *Crimes of the Heart*.

**Samantha Cullen** (Helena, Snout, a fairy) Samantha has grown up with Shakespeare & Company. She started doing shows when she was in the sixth grade. During high school she participated in the Fall Festival of Shakespeare and the Young Company programs. Samantha currently lives in New York City and recently graduated from The Neighborhood Playhouse, a 2-year theatre conservatory. Some of her previous shows include: *The Tempest*, *Julius Caesar*, *Scapin*, and in small roles at the Metropolitan Opera. Sam is delighted to be back with her Company and taking part in this magical show.

**Paul D'Agostino** (Oberon, Theseus) is thrilled to be on tour with this wonderful cast. An alumnus of the Month-Long-Intensive at Shakespeare & Company, Paul also holds a Master of Music in Musical Theater from The Boston Conservatory and a B.A. in Theater from Gordon College. Previous experience includes: Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Launce in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Archibald in *The Secret Garden*, and *Cry Innocent with History Alive*. He teaches at North Shore Music Theatre's Academy of Musical Theatre.

**Alyssa Hughlett** (Hermia, Starveling, a fairy) is thrilled to take part in the New England Tour of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Before coming to Shakespeare & Company as an education artist, she received her B.F.A in Acting with a minor in Dance from Texas State University. Most recently she co-directed *The Tragedy of Richard III* in the 19th annual Fall Festival. Almost equal to her love for theatre, Alyssa has also collaborated and danced both on and off the ground throughout Austin, Texas for the last five years. Her most memorable projects and roles have been "Insomnia", a duet in *A Night of Modern Dance*, and Myrrha, Iris, Hunger and Midas' Daughter in Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

**Dan Kurtz** (Demetrius, Bottom) is thrilled to be on tour for his first time with Shakespeare & Company. Dan received his B.F.A. in Acting from Syracuse University and has traveled around the world studying classical voice. Dan recently appeared as Autolycus (*The Winter's Tale*), Wilbur (*Charlotte's Web*) and Vince (*Tape*) and is currently writing a workbook to aid the teaching of the Meisner Technique.

**Steve Unwin** (Lysander, Flute) is thrilled to be a part of the New England Tour. While at the University of Utah he played Azdak (*Caucasian Chalk Circle*), Simple (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*), Mercutio (*Romeo and Juliet*), Lindner (*Raisin in the Sun*), and Castruccio (*The Dutchess of Malfi*). He also specialized in Eastern movement styles of stage combat. At Shakespeare & Company he trained in the Summer Performance Institute in '06, and the Summer Training Institute in '05. He was nominated for the Irene Ryan Award for Acting, and received the Meritorious Achievement Award. He attended the University of Utah and the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan.

**Josie Wilson** (Titania, Quince, Hippolyta) is delighted to be embarking on her second tour of New England with Shakespeare & Company. Josie is a graduate of the University of Utah where she received her B.F.A. in Acting. Josie recently directed her second Fall Festival with a production of *Romeo and Juliet* at Taconic High School. Favorite roles include: Lady Macbeth in last year's tour of the Scottish Play, Emilia in *Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief*, and Rose in *The Woolgatherer*.

# About Shakespeare & Company's Education Program

The goal of Shakespeare & Company's Education Program, since the company was founded in 1978, has been and remains, 'to bring the poetry and plays of William Shakespeare alive and into the lives of as many students and teachers as possible'. Succinct enough for a mission statement, the excitement comes in unpacking it. Over many years we've developed, refined – even abandoned – strategies and activities to engage students and teachers in multiple ways that are responsive to their levels of education and experience. These activities are designed to be intellectually rigorous, emotionally engaging, and personally meaningful.

One of the most extensive arts-in-education programs in the northeast, Shakespeare & Company's Education Program reaches nearly 50,000 students and teachers each year with innovative, socially responsive and educationally challenging performances, workshops and residencies. Identified by the Arts Education Partnership, the GE Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities as a *Champion of Change*, Shakespeare & Company's Education Program is recognized as an innovative leader in the field of arts in education. In 2005, the Education Program received the Massachusetts Commonwealth Award, the highest honor offered by the state for significant contributions in the fields of art, science and humanities. In 2007 the Education Program was honored with the prestigious *Coming Up Taller* Award presented at the White House. Since the founding of the program in 1978, well over a million elementary, middle and high school students – and their teachers – have taken part.

By incorporating into each of our programs clear goals, measurable outcomes, and both student and teacher assessments of each activity, we are better able to evaluate and improve the impact of what we do. Assessments are done daily. Changes can be incorporated quickly. Logs are kept to record observations, gather feedback and jot down new ideas to try. At the completion of each project, a lengthy evaluation is conducted. Daily logs and assessments are reviewed. Anecdotes from schoolteachers and our staff are incorporated and help determine what worked, what didn't work and new ideas to try. These are the methods we use to evaluate our programs, their effectiveness for the students and teachers we serve, and our own sense of satisfaction.

In brief, our programs for teachers include: **Shakespeare as Theatre: Series I: Getting Shakespeare on Its Feet for Non-Actors**, an introductory 4-day workshop that presents – and lets teachers practice – the most engaging methods we've developed for students to explore Shakespeare in the classroom; **Series II: Playing Shakespeare in the Classroom**, one (in a series of four) play-specific 4-day workshops designed around a particular play being taught in the curriculum: *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, or *Julius Caesar*; **Series III: Directing Shakespeare with Students**, a 4-day workshop of rationale and methodologies for teachers with great interest but little experience directing productions of Shakespeare in schools; the **Discovering Shakespeare Series – Macbeth**, the first in a series of cd/dvd resources with downloadable lesson plans, rationale, cut-scripts, activities and clips of student performances on video (our plan is to further develop this series in a web-based format for greater accessibility, greater materials storage and updating convenience); the **National Institute on Teaching Shakespeare**, a 4-week program funded by the NEH for

selected high school teachers to work with world-renowned scholars and theatre artists to develop new curriculum. To date, this institute has been funded by the NEH 9 times. Finally, we offer reduced-price tickets to school teachers for performances in our summer season—another way we've found to realize the Education Program's mission statement.

In brief, our programs for students include: the **Fall Festival of Shakespeare**, where 10 schools each mount a full production of Shakespeare at their own school and then come together for 4 days in a non-competitive festival on our mainstage. This program also includes workshops and mentoring in technical theatre, stage management, costume, lighting, sound and promotion for students not interested in acting. Several common classes occur during the rehearsal period to foster students' playing together prior to their performances; the **Winter Residencies**, various in-school residencies culminating in performances appropriate to students' grade levels and courses of study; **Riotous Youth**, a summer-long program of repeating 2-week, day-long sessions for children aged 7-9, 10-12 and 13-15, each culminating in performance; **Shakespeare & Young Company**, a 13-week evening and weekend training and performance program for area high school students in the winter and spring, as well as an 8-week full time program in the summer for students from across the country; the **Shakespeare in the Courts** project, an intense rehearsal and performance experience for adjudicated youth offered by the court as an alternative to punishment (this program has received the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities' *Coming Up Taller* Award); and finally, the **New England Tour**, which includes a 90-minute, 7-actor production of a Shakespeare play (this year *Midsummer*), *Workshops in Performance*, a 45-minute workshop where students themselves perform; *Shakespeare & the Language that Shaped a World*, a 45-minute performance piece that serves as an introduction to Shakespeare, his plays, language, life and times; and *Actors and the Audience*, a post-performance, interactive workshop which allows the audience to respond to our tour production with insights and observations and to redirect the actors, examining different interpretations.

To meet the demands of classical theatre, theatre created for language, we must help students to breathe more deeply, free their voices, and commit their bodies through acting, stage combat, and dance. We must help them to speak sublime poetry with clear thought and deep feeling; to listen openly and respond passionately and reflectively; to embrace the paradox of human nature as it is expressed in dramatic situations; and to be sensitive, flexible, and expansive intellectually, physically, imaginatively and emotionally.

We must help students to work collaboratively, strive for honesty with themselves and others, and add their energy to the group through conviction – or through conviction, to stand alone. We must help them manage both success and failure, praise, and criticism, and through the words of Shakespeare, expose them to a more vital experience of their own and others' humanity.

This is the ethic and aesthetic that guides all our programs. What could be more exciting?



Kevin G. Coleman  
Director of Education

# About Shakespeare & Company

Founded in 1978, Shakespeare & Company aspires to create a theatre of unprecedented excellence rooted in the classical ideals of inquiry, balance and harmony; a company that performs as the Elizabethans did – in love with poetry, physical prowess, and the mysteries of the universe.

With a core of over 120 artists, the Company performs Shakespeare, generating opportunities for collaboration between actors, directors, and designers of all races, nationalities, and backgrounds. Shakespeare & Company provides original, in-depth, classical training and performance methods, influencing theatre professionals and actors-in-training from all over the world. Shakespeare & Company also develops and produces new plays of social and political significance, with particular interest in plays that emphasize language.

This synergy is further enhanced as Shakespeare & Company's Education Program brings our work to students and teachers across the nation. Through a company-wide commitment to performance, education and training, Shakespeare & Company inspires actors, directors, designers, students, teachers and audiences to rediscover the resonance of Shakespeare's truths in the everyday world, demonstrating the influence that classical theatre can have within a community and the world.

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Shakespeare & Company's Education Program gratefully acknowledges the support of the  
National Endowment for the Arts, through its *Shakespeare in American Communities:*  
*Shakespeare for a New Generation* initiative; the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and Legacy Banks.

