

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

DIRECTED AND ADAPTED BY
DAVID H. BELL



chicago
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on navy pier

guide
resources

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Acknowledgments

This Handbook grew out of a team effort of teachers past and present, Chicago Shakespeare Theater artists, interns, educators, and scholars. Interns Rebecca Dumain, Samuel Evola and Julie Strassel revised a previous edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* handbook for this production. Chicago Shakespeare Theater gratefully acknowledges the groundbreaking and indelible work of Dr. Rex Gibson and the Cambridge School Shakespeare Series, and The Folger Shakespeare Institute, whose contributions to the field of teaching have helped shape our own work through the years.

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Barbara Gaines Artistic Director
Criss Henderson Executive Director

Chicago Shakespeare Theater is Chicago's professional theater dedicated to the works of William Shakespeare. Founded as Shakespeare Repertory in 1986, the company moved to its seven-story home on Navy Pier in 1999. In its Elizabethan-style courtyard theater, 500 seats on three levels wrap around a deep thrust stage—with only nine rows separating the farthest seat from the stage. Chicago Shakespeare also features a flexible 180-seat black box studio theater, a Teacher Resource Center, and a Shakespeare specialty bookstall.

Now in its twenty-seventh season, the Theater has produced nearly the entire Shakespeare canon. Chicago Shakespeare Theater was the 2008 recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award. Chicago's Jeff Awards year after year have honored the Theater, including repeated awards for Best Production and Best Director, the two highest honors in Chicago theater.

As a theater within a multicultural city, we are committed to bringing Shakespeare to people of all ages and backgrounds. Chicago Shakespeare Theater offers a region-wide forum for new vision and enthusiasm for teaching Shakespeare in our schools. In 2012, the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, honored that vision with the prestigious Shakespeare Steward Award. We hope that you and your students will enjoy our work—and Shakespeare's creative genius brought to life on stage.

Marilyn J. Halperin Director of Education
Jason Harrington Education Outreach Manager
Molly Topper Learning Programs Manager

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Written by **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

Directed by **DAVID H. BELL**

Welcome to the woods just beyond the gates of the city, where one small flower can kindle love—or just kill it.

As wanderers here, we feel hopeless and alone one moment and, in the next, surrounded by creatures only our imagination can conjure. We may forget who we are. We may turn on our best friend. Or, most unimaginable of all, fall head-over-heels in love with, well, an ass...

The forest is strange, terrifying—and beautiful. It can be life-changing.

The fairy king and queen who reign here are currently locked in a marital battle—which happen to be disrupting the entire natural world in the process. Shakespeare invites us along, bringing no other luggage than our own imaginative powers.

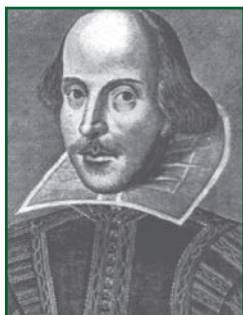
Get ready for a wild ride. ✱

Art That Lives

Drama is a living art. It is written to be performed live before a group of people who form an audience and together experience a play. In theater, unlike television or film, there is a two-way communication that occurs between the actors and their audience. The audience hears and sees the actors, and the actors hear and see the audience. We are used to thinking about the actors' roles in a play, but may find it strange to imagine ourselves, the audience, playing an important role in this living art. Because the art lives, each production is guaranteed to be different, depending in part upon an audience's response. Live drama is the sharing of human experience, intensely and immediately, in the theater, which momentarily becomes our universe.

Bard's Bio

The exact date of William Shakespeare's birth is not known, but his baptism, traditionally three days after a child's birth, was recorded on April 26, 1564. There is no record that Shakespeare acquired a university education of any kind. Some skeptical scholars have raised doubts about whether Shakespeare, due to his relatively average level of education and humble origins, could have possibly written what has long been considered the best verse drama composed in the English language. But not until 1769, 150 years after Shakespeare's death, did these theories arise—and, to all appearances, Shakespeare's contemporaries and immediate successors never seemed to question whether William Shakespeare wrote the celebrated works attributed to him.



During his career of approximately twenty years, Shakespeare wrote or collaborated on what most scholars now agree upon as thirty-eight plays. His earliest plays, including *Love's Labor's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III*, *King John* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, were written between 1589 and 1594. Between 1594 and 1599, Shakespeare wrote both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar* as well as other plays, including *Richard II*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*. His great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, were composed between 1599 and 1607, and were preceded by his last play traditionally categorized as comedy, *Measure for Measure*. The earlier histories, comedies and tragedies made way for Shakespeare's final dramatic form—the so-called “romances,” which were written between 1606 and 1611 and include *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. These were the plays of a playwright no longer bound by the constraints of his earlier historical and tragic forms.

Shakespeare retired in 1611 to live as a country gentleman in Stratford, his birthplace, until his death on April 23, 1616.

Shakespeare was the man, who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there.

—JOHN DRYDEN, 1688

On the Road: A Brief History of Touring Shakespeare

Another op'nin, another show, in Philly, Boston, or Baltimore; a chance for stage folks to say hello, another op'nin of another show.

—COLE PORTER, *KISS ME*, KATE

The actors are come hither, my lord... The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *HAMLET*

No one knows for certain where or when theater began, but from what historians can tell, touring was a part of theater almost from the beginning. Theater has always required an audience, and it's still true that if the audience can't get to the theater, the theater will go to its audience. And though working in the theater is often full of uncertainties, anyone who does is sure to travel, and likely to tour. Tours can be as large as productions like *The Phantom of the Opera*, or as small as a juggler who wanders around the city, clubs in hand. The traveling lifestyle is so strongly associated with actors that many of them refer to themselves as gypsies; the word fits them as they wander about from show to show, going wherever their work takes them.

As early as the second century BC, companies of actors traveled the Roman Empire, setting up temporary stages at carnivals or in market squares. Shakespeare may have developed his love for the theater by watching traveling acting troupes temporarily transform the courtyard of an inn or town square into a theater. When he was a boy growing up in Stratford-upon-Avon, acting troupes traveled around the countryside in flatbed, horsedrawn carts, which did triple duty as transportation, stage and storage for props and costumes. Their horses pulled the cart into an inn yard or the courtyard of a country

estate or college. People gathered around to watch, some leaning over the rails from the balconies above to view the action on the impromptu stage below.

Every year, Chicago Shakespeare Theater also goes on tour to schools. More in line with the traveling acting troupes of Shakespeare's day and not as elaborate as a national touring show, our abridged Shakespeare production tours for five weeks around the tri-state area. The full cast, accompanied by a crew of light and sound operators, a dresser, and stage managers, brings Shakespeare to dozens of communities, giving them the opportunity to share in this centuries-old part of the theater experience.

In 2011, Chicago Shakespeare Theater began touring a summer show to neighborhood parks in Chicago. This year, 26 performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be performed in 18 parks across the north, west, and south sides of the city and will be performed FREE FOR ALL people, of all ages, to attend.*

Shakespeare's Plays

COMEDIES

Love's Labor's Lost
The Comedy of Errors
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
The Taming of the Shrew
The Merchant of Venice
Much Ado About Nothing
The Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night
Troilus and Cressida
All's Well That Ends Well

HISTORIES

1, 2, 3 Henry VI
Richard III
King John
Richard II
1,2 Henry IV
Henry V
Henry VIII

TRAGEDIES

Titus Andronicus
Romeo and Juliet
Julius Caesar
Hamlet
Othello
King Lear
Macbeth
Antony and Cleopatra
Timon of Athens
Coriolanus
Measure for Measure

ROMANCES

Pericles
Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale
The Tempest
The Two Noble Kinsmen

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Dramatis Personae

THE COURT

THESEUS *Duke of Athens*
HIPPOLYTA *Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus*
EGEUS *a nobleman and father to Hermia*
HERMIA *in love with Lysander*
LYSANDER *in love with Hermia*
DEMETRIUS *in love with Hermia (and her father's choice)*
HELENA *in love with Demetrius*
PHILOSTRATE *Master of the Revels at Theseus's court*

THE FAIRIES

OBERON *King of the Fairies*
TITANIA *Queen of the Fairies*
PUCK *(aka Robin Goodfellow) attendant to Oberon*
PEASEBLOSSOM *attendant to Titania*
COBWEB *attendant to Titania*
MOTH *attendant to Titania*
MUSTARDSEED *attendant to Titania*
CHANGELING BOY *a mortal*

THE MECHANICALS

PETER QUINCE *a carpenter (director of "Pyramus and Thisbe")*
NICK BOTTOM *a weaver (Pyramus)*
FRANCIS FLUTE *a bellows-mender (Thisbe)*
TOM SNOOT *a tinker (Wall)*
SNUG *a joiner (Lion)*
ROBIN STARVELING *a tailor (Moonshine)*



The Story

After what you might call a less-than-ideal courtship, Theseus, Duke of Athens, awaits his marriage to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons—the same woman he has conquered in battle. And Theseus soon discovers he isn't the only one with obstacles to romance when Egeus approaches him with a problem of his own: Egeus's daughter Hermia, who's in love with Lysander, refuses to marry Demetrius, her father's choice. The Duke answers Egeus's suit, giving Hermia three choices: she must marry Demetrius, take her vows as a nun, or die. Instead, she decides on a fourth course of action: to flee the city with Lysander. Demetrius will follow in hot pursuit. And where Demetrius goes, so goes Helena, Hermia's lovesick best friend...

Into the woods they go, where the fairy king and queen are having relationship problems of their own. Enraged by Titania's devotion to a young human boy, Oberon commands Puck to retrieve the magic flower that makes its victim adore the first creature she sees—whatever that may be...

Observing Helena pursue Demetrius through the woods, Oberon takes pity on the young woman, and commands Puck to enchant the young Athenian man she hopelessly loves with the flower's juice. But from Puck's perspective, one Athenian looks like another—and soon it is Lysander, not Demetrius, who falls for Helena. Hermia is not amused.

Also in the woods that night is a troupe of amateur actors, rehearsing a play they hope to perform on Theseus's wedding day. Among this motley crew, it takes no time for Puck to pinpoint Bottom as a perfect love match for Titania, who will awake to dote upon this mortal—transformed into an ass. Love all around seems destined for disaster. Puck's handiwork, beginning to end—until Oberon steps back in to set things aright... ✨



Photo by Liz Lauren

From Left: Richard Iglewski as Bottom and Ellen Karas as Titania in CST's 2000 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Directed by Joe Dowling.

A History of Dreams

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* blurs the line between reality and dreams. Characters, bound by the confines of society, struggle to escape their realities and stumble into a fantastic dreamscape, where anything can—and does—happen!

But where do dreams come from, and what did they mean to the citizens of Athens? To Shakespeare and his contemporaries? To audiences today? To uncover the answer, we must first travel back in time, to explore the ways that different civilizations thought about dreams and their meanings.



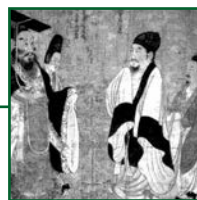
Ancient Greeks

The Ancient Greeks believed that dreamers received messages from the gods, but not merely by listening. Ancient Greek gods physically entered a sleeper's room through the keyhole, performing the kind of miracles that were impossible for mere mortals—like healing a wound or curing an ailment—before leaving the way they came. Greek gods could also punish sleepers who displeased them. Perhaps playing off this belief, Shakespeare both cursed and cured the Athenian dreamers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, magically transforming them into monsters and washing their memories of inopportune infatuations.



Egyptians

The Egyptians believed that the gods spoke to mortals through dreams. Receiving and interpreting the gods' messages was so important, in fact, that the Egyptians built special dream temples, where people could go to enhance their dreams. The Egyptians also used the help of professional dream interpreters to decode the gods' wishes.



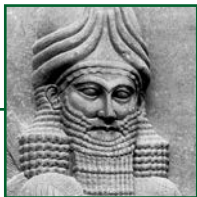
Ancient Chinese

Chinese dreamers believed that their souls left their bodies during sleep, transitioning to the land of the dead. There, dreamers could communicate with their ancestors, receiving inspiration and guidance before returning to their bodies at the end of the night.



Ancient Hebrews

Claiming that "dreams which are not understood are like letters which are not opened," the Ancient Hebrews believed that God sent messages to His people through their dreams. The Ancient Hebrews used the Talmud, a record of rabbinic law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history written between 200 and 500 AD, to help interpret their dreams.



Mesopotamians

The writers of the first dream interpretations in 3100 BCE, the Mesopotamians viewed dreams as prophesies that guided their everyday lives. A king's dream, therefore, was much more important than a servant's, because the king's dream could lead to a change in law or policy that would affect the entire kingdom.

3000 BCE



Hindus

In the Upanishads, a set of philosophical texts that gave birth to Hinduism, dreams were interpreted in two different ways. The first stated that dreams were merely expressions of our innermost desires, projections of daytime longings into the sleeping mind. The second hypothesized that souls left their bodies during dreams. If the sleeper were to be awakened too suddenly, the soul might not be able to find its way back to the body, and the sleeper would die.



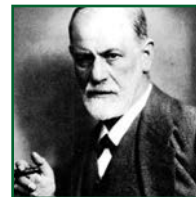
Elizabethans

Fueled by the scientific culture emerging during the English Renaissance, the Elizabethans began to look inward for the causation of dreams. Elizabethan doctors and playwrights alike pointed to chemicals in the body, called humors, to explain different dreams and personality traits. The stronger a particular humor was in a person, the clearer their dreams would be. For example, a sanguine person (someone characteristically jovial and passionate) would have dreams that reflected his particular humor. Shakespeare used his knowledge of the humors in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when the most sanguine character, Bottom the Weaver, "dreams" of a happy, lusty encounter with the queen of the fairies.



Romantics

English Romantic writer William Wordsworth articulated a theory on dreams that changed the study of dreams forever. Wordsworth believed that the sleeping mind had a set system of images, and that each image symbolized a specific emotion or desire. Using Wordsworth's theories, dream interpretation was much easier for the average person to understand without the help of a professional dream interpreter. Wordsworth's beliefs invited dreamers to base their readings on symbolic interpretation rather than any direct correlation between the dream world and the gods, a practice that is still widely used today.



Sigmund Freud

Perhaps the most famous dream interpreter, Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud sought to use dream analysis to uncover the hidden secrets of the human mind. Freud hypothesized that within every person, opposing forces were at war: manifest desires (or desires we know we have) and latent desires (or desires we conceal even from our conscious minds). According to Freud, the repression of these latent desires could cause mental illness, but the exploration of latent desires through dreams could lead to understanding and healing. In his 1899 book *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud argued that "the most fantastic dream must have a meaning and can be used to unriddle the often incomprehensible maneuvers we call thinking."



Victorians

Fascinated by the supernatural, the Victorians were less interested in dreams than in visions. Victorians convened for gatherings called séances, where they would enter a trance-like state similar to sleep in an attempt to commune with the dead. During these séances, objects flew seemingly unaided around the room, unexplained noises were heard, and the dead delivered messages to loved ones still living. However, these messages could only be received with the help of an interpreter, or medium, and well-respected mediums quickly became celebrities in Victorian society.

1900 AD

A Conversation with the Director

Director David H. Bell met with Director of Education Marilyn Halperin to discuss his ideas for his production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Q. Have you directed *Dream* before?

A. This is my fourth! My first was my graduation from college thesis project. It is a show I dearly love.

Q. Now all these years later as a “veteran director,” do you see the play differently?

A. What is wonderful about revisiting Shakespeare is what you learn about yourself. Now that I am sixty-four, the play is uniquely and profoundly different. Its comic content reminds me a lot more now of *Comedy of Errors*, in that the stakes in both are very high and they have to be motivated and propelled by a great sense of urgency and truth. But once they start playing out, you lose that dark overlay of motivation that makes us compelled to begin the story. I think you have to believe, totally, that Hermia is on the brink of choosing death over marrying Demetrius, this person that she doesn't love.

Instead, she and Lysander escape to the Woods of Athens. All of a sudden, the social constructs start to fall away. The laws that society imposes are replaced by laws that nature imposes. What are the laws of man? What are the laws of love? What is reality versus a dream, versus fantasy? I always find the lines between comedy and tragedy slightly blurred, but this is the first time I really have a strong feeling that the line between fantasy and reality is equally blurred.

Q. Are the enchanted feelings “real”?

A. The dream part, I think, is really equally important to what we understand as our reality. We have intonations of our other selves when we sleep, when we dream. They're part fantasies, they're part wishes of that thing you could be, and they're part revelation of what's really going on.

Q. Are Hermia and Lysander changed in some way by the dream—even though they end up loving the same person as before?

A. I think significantly. They suddenly relax. What makes Hermia idealistic and silly and Lysander poetic and silly, suddenly that just drops away. They have, in the course of this one evening, matured into an understanding of what love is and who each others are—and they also have borne hurts that make them wiser, smarter. And even though they only vaguely remember the dream, that's its value. They are affected by it. We see them as mature individuals at the other end of a very strange journey.*

Suggested Reading

SHAKESPEARE AND ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

<http://shakespeare.org.uk>

Learn more about Shakespeare's life and birthplace through an extensive online collection of Shakespeare-related materials.

The Elizabethan Theatre

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

Read a lecture on Elizabethan Theatre by Professor Hilda D. Spear, University of Dundee, held at Cologne University.

Queen Elizabeth I

<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm>

Learn more about Queen Elizabeth and the people, events and concepts relevant to the study of the Elizabethan Age.

Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend

<http://newberry.org/elizabeth/>

This web-based exhibit is a companion to The Newberry Library's 2003/2004 Queen Elizabeth exhibit.

TEXTS AND EARLY EDITIONS

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/works.html>

Access the first online web edition of the complete works, created and maintained by Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Treasures in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto

<http://bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html>

A copy of the quartos, available to compare side-by-side, as well as background information. This website was created and is maintained by the British Library.

The Internet Shakespeare Editions

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Foyer/plays.html>

This website has transcriptions and high quality facsimiles of Shakespeare's folios and quartos, categorized by play with links to any articles written about the play that can be found on the website.

Furness Shakespeare Library

<http://dewey.lib.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/>

This collection of primary and secondary texts and images that illustrate the theater, literature, and history of Shakespeare. Created and maintained by University of Pennsylvania.

What Is a Folio?

<http://shea.mit.edu/ramparts/newstuff3.htm>

This page gives an easy to understand introduction to the Folio texts, part of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's website "Hamlet on the Ramparts."

SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE

The Internet Broadway Database

<http://ibdb.com>

This online database of Broadway plays is a great place to search for 'Shakespeare' and learn about some of the different productions of the Bard's works. (Note: This will only give you information about shows performed on Broadway.)

The Internet Movie Database: William Shakespeare

<http://imdb.com>

Similar to IBDB, utilize this online movie database to search for 'Shakespeare' and learn about the different cinematic versions of his plays.

Shakespeare's Staging: Shakespeare's Performance and his Globe Theatre

<http://shakespearestaging.berkeley.edu>

This website catalogues stagings (with images!) from the 16th century to today.

Designing Shakespeare Collections

<http://www.ahds.rhul.ac.uk/ahdscollections/docroot/shakespeare/playslist.do>

This index page once connected to a now-defunct Arts and Humanities Data Service in the UK. While much of the original site (<http://ahds.ac.uk/performingarts>) is no longer searchable, this single link offers a treasure trove of production photos focusing on design practice at the Royal Shakespeare Company, along with many other British theaters. The photos can be enlarged and used for a myriad of classroom activities and research.

SHAKESPEARE IN ART

Shakespeare Illustrated

http://english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html

Harry Rusche, English professor at Emory University, created this helpful website that explores nineteenth-century paintings that depict scenes from Shakespeare's plays. Most plays have at least two works of arts accompanying them; you can search for works of art by both play title and artist name.

Absolute Shakespeare

http://absoluteshakespeare.com/pictures/shakespeare_pictures.htm

View examples of paintings based on Shakespeare's works and features examples of text believed to have inspired the painting.

The Faces of Elizabeth I

<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizface.htm>

Access a collection of paintings of Queen Elizabeth spanning her lifetime.

Tudor England: Images

<http://marileecody.com/images.html>

Peruse paintings of royalty from the Tudor Era.



Photo by Liz Lauren

Timothy Edward Kane at Oberon, Matthew Abraham as Changeling Boy and Tracy Michelle Arnold as Titania in CST's 2012 Production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Gary Griffin



Chicago Shakespeare Theater
on Navy Pier
800 East Grand Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611



Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) believes that Shakespeare speaks to everyone. A global theatrical force, CST is known for vibrant productions that reflect Shakespeare's genius for storytelling, language and empathy for the human condition. We have evolved into a dynamic company, producing award-winning plays at our home on Navy Pier, throughout Chicago's schools and neighborhoods, and on stages around the world. Reflecting the global city we call home, CST is the leading producer of international work in Chicago and has toured our own plays abroad to Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe.

The Theater's tradition of excellence and civic leadership has been honored with numerous national and international awards, including the Regional Theater Tony Award, three Laurence Olivier Awards, and seventy-seven total Joseph Jefferson Awards. CST was the 2012 recipient of the Folger Shakespeare Library's national Shakespeare Steward Award for our innovative teaching of Shakespeare in American classrooms. Among our many international engagements, CST participated in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2006 Complete Works Festival and was selected to represent North America at the Globe to Globe festival as part of London's 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater serves as a partner in literacy to Chicago Public Schools, working alongside English teachers to help struggling readers connect with Shakespeare in the classroom, and bringing his text to life on stage for 40,000 students every year. And this summer, 20,000 families and audience members of all ages will welcome our free Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks tour into their neighborhoods across the far north, west and south sides of the city.

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