a midsummer night's dream

Titania, rendering by Fabio Tobini, 2018

teacher handbook

chicago shakespeare on navy pier theater

table of contents

Preface 1
Art That Lives 2
Bard's Bio. 3
The First Folio 3
Shakespeare's England 5
The English Renaissance Theater 6
The Courtyard-style Theater. 7
Timelines 9

shakespeare's a midsummer night's dream

Dramatis Personae 11
Who's Who: What's in a Name? 12
The Story 13
Act by Act Synopsis 13
Something Borrowed, Something New:
Shakespeare's Sources 15
The Nature of Comedy 17

perspectives

Spirits of Another Sort 19
What the Critics and Artists Say 21

a play comes to life

A Midsummer Night's Dream in Performance. . . 29
A Conversation with the Director 32

classroom activities and resources

Before You Read the Play 36
As You Read the Play 47
After You Read the Play 67
The Performance: Preparing and Reflecting . . . 72
Classroom Warm-ups and Community Builders . 77
Teaching *Midsummer* with Film 83
Techno-Shakespeare 90
Suggested Readings 95

This Teacher Handbook grew out of a team effort of teachers past and present, Chicago Shakespeare Theater artists, interns, educators, and scholars. Chicago Shakespeare Theater gratefully acknowledges the groundbreaking and indelible work of Dr. Rex Gibson and the Cambridge School Shakespeare Series, whose contributions to the field of teaching have helped shape our own work through the years.

Marilyn J. Halperin Director of Education
Ray and Judy McCaskey Chair
Jason Harrington Education Outreach Manager
Sara B.T. Thiel Public Humanities Manager
Molly Truglia Learning Programs Manager

chicago shakespeare on navy pier theater

Barbara Gaines
Artistic Director
Carl and Marilynn Thoma Chair

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. In 2017, a new, innovative performance venue, The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare, expanded CST's campus to include three theaters. The year-round, flexible venue can be configured in a variety of shapes and sizes with audience capacities ranging from 150 to 850, defining the audience-artist relationship to best serve each production. Now in its thirty-second season, the Theater has produced nearly the entire Shakespeare canon: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Cymbeline*, *Edward III*, *Hamlet*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Parts 1, 2 and 3*, *Henry VIII*, *Julius Caesar*, *King John*, *King Lear*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *Pericles*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *The Winter's Tale*. 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. Since Chicago Shakespeare's founding, its programming for young audiences has been an essential element in the realization of its mission. Team Shakespeare supports education in our schools, where Shakespeare is part of the required curriculum. As a theater within a multicultural city, we are committed to bringing Shakespeare to life for tens of thousands of middle and high school students each year. Team Shakespeare's programming includes free teacher workshops, student matinees of main stage shows, post-performance discussions, comprehensive teacher handbooks, and an abridged, original production each year of one of the "curriculum plays." Team Shakespeare offers a regionwide 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. The 2018-19 Season offers a student matinee series for two of Chicago Shakespeare Theater's full-length productions: in the winter, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Joe Dowling, and in the spring, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* directed by Artistic Director Barbara Gaines. Also this winter, a 75-minute abridged version of *Macbeth* will be performed at the Theater on Navy Pier and will tour to schools across the region. We hope that you and your students will enjoy our work—and Shakespeare's creative genius brought to life on stage.

©2018, Chicago Shakespeare Theater

a midsummer night's dream

Written by
William Shakespeare
Directed by Joe Dowling

Welcome to the woods just beyond the gates of the city, a place of our imagination where one small flower can kindle love–or kill it.

As wanderers here, we may feel hopeless and alone one moment and, in the next, surrounded by creatures only our imaginations 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 painful. It is a life-changing place into which we wander between childhood and adulthood.

The fairy king and queen who reign here are currently locked in a marital battle–which happens 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 experience it together, just as you will here at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater. This tradition of performance and observance, of drama as communication, is a historically rich and complex one that reaches far back in time. Textual evidence from Egypt and Mesopotamia–even art like cave paintings depicting men disguised as animals–reveals that since ancient times, impersonation and imitation have been used not only ritualistically but also as a means of expression and communication, a way to impart the knowledge of the community.

The beginnings of Western drama further developed in the religious ritual and festivals of the ancient Greeks, while their theater also took on new emphasis as a sophisticated mode of storytelling, especially as a way of communicating the history of a culture and imagining new heroic tales. The drama of Europe's Middle Ages was closely tied to forms of religious observance, but the medievals also used theater to teach biblical stories, present the lives of saints, and creatively communicate the moral ideals of the community. It is this long and varied tradition that Shakespeare and the Renaissance playwrights inherited–and from which they would both borrow and imagine new possibilities.

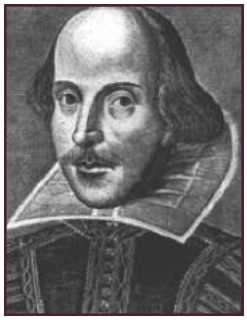
Drama not only depicts human communication, it *is* human communication. But in the theater, unlike television or film, a two-way communication occurs between the actors and their audience. When you experience theatrical storytelling, you are not simply on the receiving end of this communicative process: the audience, as a community, is also a participant. We are quite 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 theater is art that lives, each performance is guaranteed to be different, depending in part upon an audience's response. A live performance depends upon its audience. In the theater, the audience hears and sees the actors, just as the actors hear and see the audience. When the actors experience a responsive, interested audience, their work is at its best–full of animation and energy. When the audience is unengaged, the play they create is less dynamic and compelling. Actors have described the experience of live performance as a story told by the cast members and audience together. In this way, you are also a storyteller when you experience live theater. We hope you'll enjoy *your* role–and will help us to give you a dramatic experience that you'll always remember.

How can you help us give you the best performance we can?

- **Please, no talking during the performance.** It distracts the actors as well as the people sitting nearby.
- **Respond naturally to our play.** Emotions are part of drama. We hope that you'll laugh, cry, and even gasp–but as a natural response to the story, and not in order to distract attention from the stage.
- **Please leave all "noisemakers"**–food, gum, cell phones, iPods, etc.–back at school or on the bus. In a quiet theater, wrappers, munching–and even a phone's vibration–are heard by all, the actors included.
- **No photographs of any kind, please.** Flashbulbs can make the actors lose their focus and can be dangerous. Digital cameras, along with all other kinds of recording devices, are prohibited, as is text-messaging.

[Theatrical performance] is essentially a sociable, communal affair. This is important. To resist this is, I think, to ruin one of the very important parts of the theatrical experience. Let the play and let the fact that temporarily you are not your private self, but a member of a closely fused group, make it easy for the performance to 'take you out of yourself.' This, I suggest, is the object of going to a play...to be taken out of yourself, out of your ordinary life, away from the ordinary world of everyday.

–Tyrone Guthrie, 1962



Bard's Bio

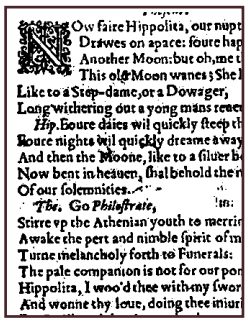
The exact date of William Shakespeare's birth is not known, but his baptism (traditionally held three days after a child's birth) was recorded on April 26, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, was a tanner, glover, grain dealer, and prominent town official of the thriving market town of Stratford-upon-Avon. His mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a prosperous, educated farmer. Though the records are lost, Shakespeare undoubtedly attended Stratford's grammar school, where he would have acquired knowledge of Latin and the classical writers, training in rhetoric and analysis of texts, and gained a smattering of arithmetic as well as instruction in the articles of the Christian faith. There is no record that Shakespeare acquired a university education of any kind.

At the age of eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. They had one daughter, Susanna, followed by twins, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, died at age eleven. From 1585, the year in which the twins were baptized, until 1592 when he is first referred to as a dramatist in London, we know nothing of Shakespeare's life. Consequently, these seven so-called "lost years" are filled with legend and conjecture. We may never know what brought Shakespeare to London or how he entered its world of the theater. The first reference to Shakespeare as an actor and playwright appears in 1592 and was made by Robert Greene, a rival playwright and pamphleteer, who attacked Shakespeare as an "upstart crow" for presuming to write plays (when he was only a mere actor) and for copying the material of established dramatists.

By the early 1590s Shakespeare had emerged as a rising playwright in London, where he continued to enjoy fame and financial success as an actor, playwright, and part-owner of one of London's leading theater companies for nearly twenty years. Subsequent references to Shakespeare indicate that as early as 1594 he was not only an actor and a playwright, but also a shareholder in a new theatrical company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which soon became one of London's two principal companies. With the accession of James I in 1603, the company's name changed to the King's Men, and it thrived until the Commonwealth closed the theaters in 1642.

During his career, 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 *Twelfth Night*. His great tragedies–*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*–were composed between 1599 and 1607, and were preceded by his last plays traditionally categorized as comedy, *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. The earlier histories, comedies, and tragedies made way for Shakespeare's final dramatic form–the plays commonly termed "romances" or "tragicomedies" for their blending of the comic and tragic forms. Written between 1606 and 1611, the romances 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 forms.

Although some quarto versions of the plays were printed in Shakespeare's lifetime, there is no definitive extant evidence to suggest that he directly oversaw their publication. It was not until 1623, seven years after his death, that his complete plays were published in the First Folio. However, we do know that Shakespeare did oversee the publication of two narrative poems and a collection of 154 sonnets during his lifetime. Shakespeare retired ca. 1611 to live as a country gentleman in Stratford, his birthplace, until his death on April 23, 1616.


Now faire Hippolita, our nupt
Drawes on apace: foure hap
Another Moon: but oh, me t
This old Moon wanes; She l
Like to a Step-dame, or a Dowager,
Long withering out a yong mans reue
Hip. Foure daies will quickly steep th
Foure nights will quickly dreame away
And then the Moone, like to a siluer b
Now bent in heauen, shall behold the n
Of our solemnities.
The. Go Philostrate,
Stirre vp the Athenian youth to merrim
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of m
Turne melancholy forth to Funerals:
The pale companion is not for our pom
Hippolita, I woo'd thee with my swor
And wonne thy loue, doing thee inju

The First Folio

Throughout much of the Renaissance, plays did not occupy the same high cultural status that we attribute to them today. In fact, theatrical texts were not viewed as "literature" at all. When a play was published (if it was published at all) it was printed inexpensively in a small book, called a "quarto," the sixteenth-century equivalent of our paperbacks. It was not until 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, when a contemporary English poet and dramatist, Ben Jonson, published his own plays in a large-format book called a "folio"–the format traditionally reserved for the authoritative texts of religious and

classical works. Jonson sought to challenge the pervasive understanding of theatrical texts as holding little literary value, that plays began to be understood as literature worthy of publication. Jonson was chided as bold and arrogant for his venture for many years.

During Shakespeare's lifetime, only half of his plays were ever published, and those were printed as quartos. He did, however, oversee the publication of two narrative poems and a collection of 154 sonnets. It was not until seven years after the playwright's death that two of his close colleagues decided to gather his plays for publication in a move of threefold significance: as a gesture of homage to a long-time friend and colleague; as a promotion of the King's Men as a theater company of the highest cultural prestige; and as a financial venture with lucrative potential.

In 1623 what is now known as the First Folio, a book containing thirty-six of Shakespeare's estimated thirty-eight plays, was published. Modern textual scholars maintain that the First Folio was likely compiled from a combination of stage prompt books and other theatrical documents, the playwright's handwritten manuscripts (no longer extant), and various versions of some of the plays already published. Shakespeare's First Folio took five compositors two-and-one-half years to print. The compositors manually set each individual letter of type, memorizing the text line by line to increase efficiency as they moved down the page. There was no editor overseeing the printing, and the compositors frequently altered punctuation and spelling. Errors caught in printing would be corrected, but due to the high cost of paper, earlier copies remained intact. Of the 1,200 copies of the First Folio that were printed, approximately 230 survive today, and each is slightly different. Chicago's Newberry Library contains an original First Folio in its rich collections.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater traditionally utilizes the First Folio as the basis for its play scripts. The First Folio still serves as a manual for many Shakespearean actors nearly 400 years after its publication because the editors of the First Folio took theatrical documents as their basis for printing. Its punctuation, capitalizations, variant spellings, line breaks, and rhetorical structures all give clues to actors and directors about what words to emphasize and about what ideas are important–helping them to break open and examine the language. In Shakespeare's own theater company, with only a few days to rehearse each new play, these built-in clues were essential and provided information for members of the entire company. Today, these textual clues still help modern actors make the language easier to break apart–even though they're speaking language that's 400 years "younger" than ours.

This is the book that gave us Shakespeare (or most of Shakespeare)[...] But the way it presented Shakespeare was carefully calculated to make a collection of theatre works look plausible as what we would now call works of literature. The book not only gives us the texts; it gives us Shakespeare as a cultural icon.

–John Jowett, 2007

From left: Lane Anthony Flores as "Thisbe," Jarrett King as Peter Quince, Richard Costes as "Wall" in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2018 production of *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Jess McLeod. Photo by Liz Lauren.

Shakespeare's England

Elizabeth I–daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn–ruled England for forty-five years, from 1558 to 1603, in a time of relative prosperity and peace. "Few monarchs," says Shakespearean scholar David Bevington, "have ever influenced an age so pervasively and left their stamp on it so permanently." He maintains that "[her] combination of imperious will and femininity and her brilliant handling of her many contending male admirers have become legendary," and resulted in a monarchy that remained secure in the face of religious and political threats from many sides. In choosing not to marry, Elizabeth avoided allying herself and her throne with a foreign country or an English faction which may have threatened her broad base of power and influence.

Throughout early modern Europe–the period that spans the timeframe from after the late portion of the Middle Ages (ca. 1500) through the beginning of the Age of Revolutions (ca. 1800)–governments were centralized, assuming the power that once belonged to city-states and feudal lords, but the rule of monarchs like Queen Elizabeth I was still absolute, just as it had been understood in earlier historical periods. The monarch was seen as God's deputy on earth, and the divine right of kings (the theory that the monarch derives his/her power to rule and authority from God alone) was a cherished doctrine. It was this doctrine that condemned rebellion as an act of disobedience against both the state and God.

The politics of religion constantly threatened Elizabeth's reign, even though it was one of the most secure that England had known for hundreds of years. As the daughter of Henry V's marriage following his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Elizabeth was regarded by many Catholics as an illegitimate child–and thus an illegitimate monarch. Upon her ascension to the throne, Elizabeth I inherited the rule of a country that, in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, was engaged in the process of attempting to make sense of its own history. Religious power changed hands during the early modern period with astonishing rapidity.

Stephen Greenblatt reminds us that within living memory, England transformed from a highly conservative Roman Catholic State (in the 1520s Henry VIII fiercely attacked Martin Luther and the pope awarded him with the title "Defender of the Faith"). England then shifted first to a wary, tentative Protestantism; subsequently to a more radical Protestantism; later to a renewed and militant Roman Catholicism; and then, with Elizabeth and James, to Protestantism once again.[1] The English were living in a world where few people had clear memories of a time without religious confusion. Under Elizabeth, England had returned to Protestantism, and the Church of England's government was held under the direct authority of the crown (and England's conforming Protestant clergy).

In addition, Elizabethan England was a smaller, more isolated country than it had been previously or would be subsequently. The country withdrew from its extensive empire on the Continent, and its explorations of the New World were just beginning. There was a period of internal economic development as Elizabeth ignored the counsel of her advisors and kept out of war until the attempted invasion by Spain and the Great Armada in 1588. England's economy was still based in agriculture, and its farmers were poor and embittered by strife with rich landowners who "enclosed" what was once the farmers' cropland for pastures. Uprisings and food riots were commonplace in the rural area surrounding Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare grew up. London, then the largest city of Europe, was a city of contrasts: the richest and the poorest of England lived there, side by side. While many bettered themselves in a developing urban economy, unemployment was a serious problem. As England eventually began what would be a long transition from an economy based mostly in agriculture to one of increased reliance upon trade and the manufacture of goods, both cities and social structures would evolve rapidly–it was a time of change and social mobility. For the first time in English history, a rising middle class aspired to the wealth and status of the aristocracy.

As Elizabeth had no heir, the politics of succession posed a real threat to the nation's peace throughout her reign, and Elizabeth I died childless in 1603. The crown passed to her cousin James VI, King of Scotland, who became England's King James I. Ruling from 1603 to 1625 (Shakespeare died in 1616), James I was famously responsible for overseeing a new translation of the English bible–the 1611 King James Version–which, with its powerful syntax, remains a legacy of this fertile time, just as Shakespeare's canon has. But national peace was never quite secured, and the reign of James I was troubled with political and religious controversy. James's son,

[1]Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*, (New York: Norton, 2004): 93-94

Charles I, would be beheaded in the English Civil War of the 1640s for tyrannically abusing what he believed was his divinely ordained power.

The English Renaissance Theater

A time of historical transition, of incredible social upheaval and change, the English Renaissance provided fertile ground for creative innovation. The early modern period stands as the bridge between England's very recent medieval past and its near future in the centuries commonly referred to as the "Age of Exploration," or the Enlightenment. When the English Renaissance is considered within its wider historical context, it is perhaps not surprising that the early modern period produced so many important dramatists and literary luminaries, with William Shakespeare as a significant example.

Because of its unique placement at a crossroad in history, the English Renaissance served as the setting for a number of momentous historical events: the radical re-conception of the English state, the beginnings of a new economy of industry, an explosion of exploration and colonialism, and the break with traditional religion as the Church of England separated from the Catholic Church. It is perhaps this last example of cultural upheaval–the changes brought from Continental Europe by the Protestant Reformation–that provides us with a useful lens to examine the culture of theater in England during this period, in particular.

It is held by scholars today that Shakespeare as a boy would have witnessed in his hometown the acting troupes that were still traveling from town to town–the early modern successors to a long heritage of English theater carried over from the Middle Ages. Troupes often enacted important stories from the Bible, staged tales of mystery and miracles, or presented their audiences with the stories of the lives of saints and heroes of the faith.

These companies would travel in flatbed, horse-drawn carts, which did triple duty as transportation, stage, and storage for their props and costumes. They would pull into a town square, into an inn yard, or the courtyard of a country estate or college, and transform that space into a theater. People gathered around to watch, some standing on the ground in front of the players' stage, some leaning over the rails from balconies above to view the action on the impromptu stage below.

But during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as the Protestant Reformation gained surer footing in England, the English theater was caught between conflicting ideas about the value and purpose of drama. Many officials of the Protestant Reformation were determined to outlaw these traveling performances for their strong Catholic sensibilities; and even as late as 1606 James I passed legislation to remove all treatment of religious matters from the English playhouses.

But as the stories enacted in the newly constructed public theaters became more secular, public officials scorned the theater as immoral and frivolous. The theaters just outside London's walls came to be feared as places where moral and social corruption spread. The authorities frequently shut them down during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when the city was menaced by the plague and, frequently too, by political rioting. When the theaters were open, the Master of the Revels had to read and approve every word of a new play before it could be staged. But the practical enforcement of such measures was often sketchy at best, and playing companies themselves found plenty of ways around the strictures of the theatrical censors.

A man who would later become an associate of Shakespeare's, James Burbage, built the first commercial theater in England in 1576, in the decade prior to Shakespeare's own arrival on the London theater scene. Burbage skirted rigid restrictions governing entertainment in London by placing his theater just outside the city walls, in a community with the unglamorous name of "Shoreditch." Burbage was not the only one to dodge the severe rules of the Common Council of London by setting up shop in Shoreditch. His neighbors were other businesses of marginal repute, including London's brothels and bear-baiting arenas. Actors in Shakespeare's day were legally given the status of "vagabonds." They were considered little better than common criminals unless they could secure the patronage of a nobleman or, better still, the monarch.

Shakespeare and his fellow actors managed to secure both. They provided popular entertainment at Queen Elizabeth I's court as the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and they continued to enjoy court patronage after James I

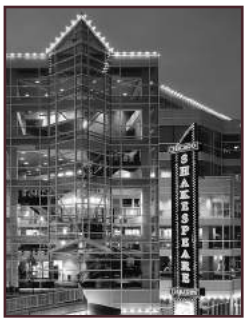
came to the throne in 1603, when they became the King's Men. Their success at court gave Shakespeare and his fellow shareholders in the company the funds to build the new Globe playhouse in 1599. The Globe then joined a handful of other theaters located just out of the city's jurisdiction as one of the first public theaters in England.

All kinds of people came to plays at the Globe, and they came in great numbers—a full house could accommodate as many as 3,000 people. The audience typically arrived well before the play began to meet friends, drink ale, and snack on the refreshments sold at the plays. An outing to the theater was a highly social and communal event and might take half the day. It was more like tailgating at a football game, or going with friends to a rock concert, than our experience of attending theater today.

Affluent patrons paid two to three pence or more for gallery seats (like the two levels of balcony seating in Chicago Shakespeare's Courtyard Theater), while the "common folk"—shopkeepers, artisans, and apprentices—stood for a penny, about a day's wages for a skilled worker. The audience of the English Renaissance playhouse was a diverse and demanding group, and so it is often noted that Shakespeare depicted characters and situations that appealed to every cross-section of early modern English society. Audience appeal was a driving force for the theater as a business venture, and so during this period most new plays had short runs and were seldom revived. The acting companies were always in rehearsal for new shows and, because of the number of ongoing and upcoming productions, most plays were rehearsed for just a few days.

There was, of course, no electricity for lighting, so all plays were performed in daylight. Sets and props were bare and basic. Since English Renaissance plays were written to be performed without scene breaks, a throne, table or bed had to be brought on stage during the action or lowered from a pulley above. For example, when stage directions in *Macbeth* indicate that "a banquet is prepared," the stage keepers likely prepared the banquet in full view of the audience. From what scholars can best reconstruct about performance conventions, Shakespeare's plays were performed primarily in "contemporary dress"—that is, the clothes of Shakespeare's time—regardless of the play's historical setting. Company members with tailoring skills sewed many of the company's stock costumes, and hand-me-downs from the English aristocracy often provided the elegant costumes for the play's nobility. Because women were not permitted to act on the English stage until 1660, female roles were performed by boys or young men, their male physique disguised with elaborate dresses and wigs. The young actors were readily accepted as women by the audience.

After an extremely productive creative period spanning about 100 years—often called the "Golden Age" of the English theater—the Puritans, now in power of the government, succeeded in 1642 in closing the theaters altogether. The public theaters did not reopen until the English monarchy was restored and Charles II came to the throne in 1660. A number of theaters, including the Globe, were open long before the Great Fire of London destroyed them in 1666. The fire, combined with the eighteen years of Commonwealth rule—the so-called Interregnum ("between kings")—led to the loss of many of the primary sources that would have provided us with further evidence of the staging traditions of Shakespeare's theater. The new theater of the Restoration approached plays, including Shakespeare's, very differently, often rewriting and adapting original scripts to suit the audience's contemporary tastes. It is left to scholars of early modern English drama to reconstruct the practices of Renaissance theater from clues left behind.



Courtyard-style Theater

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's unique performance space reflects elements of both the first public playhouses in London and the courtyards of inns temporarily transformed into theaters, in which the young Shakespeare might first have acquired his love of the stage. The interior of the Globe playhouse, opened in 1599, was simple, and similar to that of Chicago Shakespeare Theater—a raised platform for the stage surrounded by an open, circular area, with seating on three levels, one above the other. Both theaters use a thrust stage with an open performance area upstage; basically, the entire performance space is in the shape of a capital "T." With the audience seated on three sides of the thrust stage, the play is staged in the middle of them. An architect for Chicago Shakespeare Theater describes the experience of theater staged in this way: "You're the scenery. You're

the special effects. And the people you see performing this play are performing it in front, and out of, you."

If you think about a more traditional theater's proscenium arch "framing" what is (not literally) a two-dimensional stage picture behind it, the thrust stage by contrast creates a three-dimensional picture for an audience that surrounds it on three sides. The people sitting in the side seats have the closest interaction with the performers, and the performers with them. The play unfolds between the audience members seated along the sides, and the actors draw upon the responses of the audience (laughter, gasps, nervous shifting in chairs when tension mounts) as they perform. As an audience member, your facial expressions and body language serve both as the focal point of the actors' energy and the backdrop for the other audience members seated across from you. Architect David Taylor and his company, Theatre Projects Consultants, worked closely with Chicago Shakespeare Theater to design this courtyard theater. "It's important that we don't lose the performer among the faces, but it's essential to understand that every single face is a live piece of scenery reflecting and framing what's going on," Taylor explains. "That's the reason why the courtyard theater shape is such a wonderful historical springboard for modern theater design."

"The backdrop and the scenery for Shakespeare is the human race," Taylor notes, "so we're putting Shakespeare into its proper context by making human faces the backdrop for those sitting in any seat in the theater." According to Taylor:

> *This close, close relationship with the performers on stage is the very essence of the courtyard experience. The courtyard experience was about leaning out of windows. It was about throwing open the windows in the courtyard when the stage was brought through on a cart and leaning out and interacting.*

Audience members seated in the galleries at Chicago Shakespeare Theater are encouraged to use the "leaning rails" to watch the players below—like those watching from an inn's balconies centuries ago when traveling troupes set up their temporary stages.

The actors and the audience share the experience of seeing and interacting with one another. Taylor thinks that actors benefit tremendously from the courtyard design: "They're not looking at people sitting in straight rows, disconnected from everybody around them in big seats. There's a sense of community in the space, a sense of embracing the performer on stage." Actors are always fed by the energy generated from their audience. The design of Chicago Shakespeare Theater offers a feast of feedback to the actors on its stage.

Danyon Davis as Puck in CST's 2000 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Joe Dowling. Photo by Liz Lauren.

Other theaters have been modeled upon the Elizabethan experience of courtyard theater, perhaps most notably the Royal Shakespeare Company's Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Swan served as a model for Chicago Shakespeare's Courtyeard Theater. Besides their deep thrust stages that were designed to create an intimate relationship between actors and audience, prominent architectural elements in both theaters are the brick walls that surround the audience and natural wood that creates a feeling of warmth. Brick is an aesthetic choice but, due to its particular design, it also serves as an acoustic choice. The angle of the bricks in the side walls helps diffuse sound, sending it in different directions throughout the theater. The sound, lighting, and rigging systems are all state-of-the-art. Chicago Shakespeare Theater's design accommodates a wide array of possibilities for structuring and using the performance space.

1300

1326 Founding of universities at Oxford and Cambridge
1348 Boccaccio's *Decameron*
1349 Bubonic Plague kills one-third of England's population
1387 Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

1400

***ca.*1440** Johannes Gutenberg invents printing press
1472 Dante's *Divine Comedy* first printed
1492 Christopher Columbus lands at Cuba
1497 Vasco da Gama sails around the Cape of Good Hope

1500

1501-4 Michelangelo's *David* sculpture
1503 Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*
1512 Copernicus' *Commentarioulus* published, theorizing that Earth and other planets revolve around the sun
1518 License to import 4,000 African slaves to Spanish American colonies granted to Lorens de Gominzot
1519 Ferdinand Magellan's trip around the world
1519 Conquest of Mexico by Cortez
1522 Luther's translation of the New Testament

1525

1531 Henry VIII recognized as Supreme Head of the Church of England
1533 Henry VIII secretly marries Anne Boleyn, and is excommunicated by Pope
1539 Hernando de Soto explores Florida
1540 G.L. de Cardenas "discovers" Grand Canyon
1541 Hernando de Soto "discovers" the Mississippi

1550

1558 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth I
1562 John Hawkins begins slave trade between Guinea and West Indies
1564 Birth of William Shakespeare and Galileo
1565 Pencils first manufactured in England
1570 Pope Pius V excommunicates Queen Elizabeth
1573 Francis Drake sees the Pacific Ocean

1575

1576 Mayor of London forbids theatrical performances in the City
Burbage erects first public theater in England (the "Theater" in Shoreditch)
1577 Drake's trip around the world
1580 *Essays* of Montaigne published
1582 Marriage license issued for William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway
Daughter Susanna Shakespeare christened

Shakespeare's Plays ca. 1592-1595

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

Histories

1,2,3 Henry VI
Richard III
King John

Tragedies

Titus Andronicus
Romeo and Juliet

Sonnets

Probably written in this period

timeline

1585 Christening of son Hamnet and twin Judith
1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed
1588 Destruction of the Spanish Armada
1592 Shakespeare listed with the Lord Chamberlain's Men
1593-4 Plague closes London playhouses for 20 months
1595 Coat of arms granted to Shakespeare's father, John
1596 Death of son Hamnet, age 11
Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*
1597 Shakespeare, one of London's most successful playwrights, buys New Place, one of the grandest houses in Stratford-upon-Avon
1599 Globe Theatre opens, as home to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, with Shakespeare as part-owner

1600

1602 Oxford University's Bodleian Library opens
1603 Death of Queen Elizabeth, coronation of James I
Lord Chamberlain's Men become the King's Men upon endorsement of James I
1603-11 Plague closes London playhouses for at least 68 months (nearly 6 years)
1605 Cervantes' *Don Quixote Part 1* published
1607 Marriage of Susanna Shakespeare to Dr. John Hall
Founding of Jamestown, Virginia, first English settlement on American mainland
1608 *A true relation of such Occurances and Accidents of Note as hath passed in Virginia* by John Smith
Galileo constructs astronomical telescope
1609 Blackfriars Theatre, London's first commercial indoor theater, becomes winter home of the King's Men
1611 "King James Version" of the Bible published
1613 Globe Theatre destroyed by fire
1614 Globe Theatre rebuilt
1615 Galileo faces the Inquisition for the first time
1616 Judith Shakespeare marries Thomas Quinney
Death of William Shakespeare, age 52
1618 Copernican system condemned by Roman Catholic Church
1619 First African slaves arrive in Virginia
1623 The First Folio, the first compiled text of Shakespeare's complete works published

1625

1625 James I dies, succeeded by Charles I
1633 Galileo recants before the Inquisition
1636 Harvard College founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts
1642 Civil War in England begins
1642 Puritans close theaters throughout England until the Restoration of the monarchy, 18 years later, with Charles II
1649 Charles I beheaded
1649 Commonwealth declared

ca. 1596-1600

Comedies
Much Ado About Nothing
The Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night

Histories
Richard II
1, 2 Henry IV
Henry V

Tragedies
Julius Caesar

Problem Plays
The Merchant of Venice

ca. 1601-1609

Comedies
Troilus and Cressida

Tragedies
Hamlet
Othello
King Lear
Macbeth
Antony and Cleopatra
Timon of Athens
Coriolanus

Problem Plays
All's Well That Ends Well
Measure for Measure

ca. 1609-1613

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

Histories
Henry VIII

Dramatis Personae

Demetrius and Lysander

Hippolyta

Oberon

Puck

Fairy

Fairy

THE COURT
THESEUS *Duke of Athens*
HIPPOLYTA *Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus*
EGEUS *father to Hermia*
HERMIA *in love with Lysander*
LYSANDER *in love with Hermia*
DEMETRIUS *Egeus's choice for his daughter's hand*
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 (plays Pyramus)*
FRANCIS FLUTE *a bellows-mender (plays Thisbe)*
TOM SNOUT *a tinker (plays Wall)*
SNUG *a joiner (plays Lion)*
ROBIN STARVELING *a tailor (plays Moonshine)*

Renderings by Costume Designer Fabio Toblini for CST's 2019 production of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Who's Who: What's in a Name?

Characters, just like people, are rarely named by accident. Maybe someone you know is named after his grandparent. Perhaps she is named after a family friend or someone their parents admired. Or maybe he has a name that is completely unique to him. Just as parents choose names for their children, Shakespeare named his characters so that his audiences would know something about them before they said a single line.

Here are some of the characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Might anything about their names suggest something about their personalities?

Hermia is a derivation of Hermes, the Greek god of commerce—and a master thief. Hermes is renowned for his ability to sneak out of sticky situations before anyone can notice. Hermes is also the guardian of dreams.

Helena means light, and is related to the Greek word for the moon.

Lysander was the name of a famous Greek warrior. In Greek, "Lysander" means literally, "the man who escapes."

Demetrius is a derivative of Demeter, the goddess of grain and agriculture.

Titania means "woman of the Titans." The Titans were the oldest Greek gods, extremely powerful and fierce fighters.

Oberon derives from the old German words for "powerful elf."

The Mechanicals are also aptly named. What might their names and professions suggest about their appearance or personalities?

Nick Bottom the weaver

Francis Flute the bellows-mender

Snug the joiner

Tom Snout the tinker

Robin Starveling the tailor

PR JiLoy as Oberon and Archana Ramaswamy as Titania in CST's 2008 World's Stage production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Tim Supple. Photo by Tristram Kenton.

The Story

In just four days, Theseus, Duke of Athens, plans to marry Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons–the woman he has conquered on the battlefield. As Theseus anticipates his wedding, Egeus approaches him with a family problem on his mind. His daughter Hermia, who loves Lysander, refuses to marry Demetrius–her father's choice. And so Theseus offers three choices to Hermia: marry Demetrius, become a nun, or die. She chooses instead a fourth course of action: to flee from Athens with her love, Lysander. Demetrius–tipped off by his former girlfriend, Helena–follows the couple in hot pursuit. And where Demetrius goes, so goes Helena, Hermia's lovesick best friend...

Into the woods all four head, right 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 his fairy servant Puck to retrieve the magic flower that will cause Titania to fall madly in love with the first creature she next encounters–whatever that may be...

Observing Helena desperately pursue Demetrius through the woods, Oberon takes pity on her and commands Puck to also enchant the young Athenian man with the flower's juice. But unfortunately, from Puck's vantage point, one Athenian looks pretty much like another–and soon it is Lysander, not Demetrius, who falls head over heels for Helena. Hermia is not in the least amused.

On that same night into the woods heads a troupe of amateur actors–Athenian workers rehearsing a play that they hope to present on Theseus's wedding day. Puck happens upon them, and it takes no time to target Bottom as the perfect love match for his fairy queen, who will soon awake to dote upon this mortal–transformed by Puck into an ass. Love all around seems destined for disaster–until Oberon steps back in to set things aright...

Act-by-Act Synopsis

ACT ONE

While Duke Theseus and his recently conquered war bride-to-be Hippolyta anticipate their wedding, Egeus, a nobleman, arrives at court with a problem. Egeus's daughter, Hermia, refuses to wed Demetrius, her father's choice, because she loves Lysander, Demetrius's equal in both status and wealth. Despite Hermia's protests, Theseus invokes Athenian law: Hermia must either agree to marry Demetrius, become a nun, or be put to death. To escape this harsh punishment, Hermia and Lysander plan to meet that night in the Athenian woods to run away and get married. They tell their secret plan to Hermia's best friend Helena, who relates the plan to Demetrius in hope of winning his affections back. The lovers pursue each other into the forest. Meanwhile, a group of workmen, led by the boastful Nick Bottom, meets to hear the cast list for "Pyramus and Thisbe," a play they hope to perform at the Duke's wedding celebration. They too plan to meets that night in the forest for their first rehearsal.

ACT TWO

The forest, as it turns out, is as chaotic as Athens at the moment. Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of the fairies, are at war over a child whom Titania has adopted, and the entire natural world is in disarray. Hoping to punish Titania for her refusal to relinquish the child to him, Oberon sends his servant Puck in quest of a magic flower which, when squeezed into a sleeping victim's eyes, will make her completely infatuated with the first thing she sees upon waking. While waiting for Puck to return, Oberon witnesses Demetrius's rejection of a heartbroken Helena. Filled with pity for the girl, Oberon orders Puck to find the Athenian gentleman and enchant him too. But Puck mistakes Lysander for Demetrius, and when Helena stumbles upon the sleeping Lysander, it is he, and not Demetrius, who is suddenly smitten. Convinced that her best friend's boyfriend is mocking her, Helena flees, pursued by Lysander. Hermia wakes and, finding Lysander gone, races off in search of him.

ACT THREE

Puck happens upon the amateur actors rehearsing "Pyramus and Thisbe" quite close to the place where Titania is sleeping. Inspired, Puck transforms the bombastic Bottom into an ass. The other actors, terrified by their friend's transformation, flee the scene. Left alone, Bottom sings to bolster his spirits, and awakens Titania, who immediately falls in love with him. Puck brings the good news to Oberon, who praises his servant for his excellent work–until he sees Demetrius clearly under no magic spell, and still pursuing Hermia. To remedy the situation, Oberon applies the flower's juice to the sleeping Demetrius's eyes. Upon waking, Demetrius sees Helena, tailed by Lysander, and promptly falls in love with her, too! Hermia arrives on the scene and demands an explanation. Helena, still convinced that they are all playing a cruel joke on her, attacks Hermia for her part in the plot. Soon the two friends come to blows, and Lysander and Demetrius head off to duel one another for Helena's affections. Oberon warns Puck to keep the lovers apart until Oberon can repair the mistake. Puck uses his magic to trick Demetrius and Lysander into chasing after his voice until all four lovers collapse, exhausted. Puck reverses the charm on Lysander's eyes, assuring the audience that all will soon be well.

ACT FOUR

Oberon finds Titania sleeping happily with Bottom. He uses an herb to reverse the spell and Titania wakes, stunned to find herself beside an ass. Newly reconciled, the fairy king and queen recount the stories of their night just as day breaks. Theseus and his court come to the woods to hunt and find the four young lovers asleep together. Egeus demands that Lysander be punished for stealing away with his daughter, but Demetrius explains that his love for Hermia has vanished, and now his heart belongs only to Helena. Theseus arranges for the lovers to share his wedding day, and all return to Athens. Meanwhile, Bottom wakes to find himself human again, convinced that the night was merely a dream.

ACT FIVE

The marriage vows taken, and all stories told, Theseus and Hippolyta prepare for the evening's entertainment. Theseus chooses "Pyramus and Thisbe," which turns out to be a delightful disaster. After the three couples head off to bed, Puck tells us that if we haven't enjoyed the play, we should simply think of it as a midsummer night's dream.

Lanise Antoine Shelley as Titania and Eric Parks as Oberon in CST's 2014 production of Short Shakespeare! *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by David Bell. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

Something Borrowed, Something New... Shakespeare's Sources for "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

He was more original than the originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life. –Walter Savage Landor, 1846

...the most notable feature of the play is the dramatist's inventiveness, brilliantly fusing scattered elements from legend, folklore and earlier books and plays into a whole that remains as fresh and original now as when it was composed. –R.A. Foakes, 1984

In writing plays, Shakespeare borrowed all the time–from others' works, from myths, and from English folklore. Sometimes he relied heavily on one or two sources. At other times, as when he wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he used bits and pieces from many sources, adapting and blending them to create a new story entirely.

Two of the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theseus and Puck, were already well known to Shakespeare's audiences. Theseus is a character from Greek mythology, and stories of his conquests were very familiar. Shakespeare probablylearned about Theseus from Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, in which Theseus is depicted as a fearsome warrior and a callous heartbreaker, a conqueror of cities and seducer of women across the world. In his play, however, Shakespeare focuses less on Theseus's past conquests; though Oberon does mention these affairs when taunting Titania, the Theseus we see is a more domesticated version of Plutarch's bloodthirsty conqueror.

Indeed, Shakespeare's Duke Theseus looks more like the Theseus that appears in "The Knight's Tale," part of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1387). In this story, Chaucer depicts Theseus as a wise and just ruler of Athens who has conquered the Amazons and married their queen, Hippolyta. Like Shakespeare, Chaucer focuses on the elaborate wedding preparations that surround Theseus's homecoming. Just like Shakespeare's, Chaucer's Theseus addresses a problem of unrequited love. In "The Knight's Tale," two of Theseus's prisoners fall in love with the same woman and escape into the nearby woods to duel for her love. Though this story may have inspired Shakespeare to create the characters of Lysander and Demetrius, it plays a more important role in Shakespeare's later collaboration with John Fletcher, called *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which borrows extensively from the plot of "The Knight's Tale."

Though scholars do not attribute a single specific source to the story of the four lovers, theirs would not have been an unfamiliar one. The Pastoral, a popular genre in Shakespeare's day, was characterized by a desire to escape the confines of society in favor of a life surrounded by nature. In pastoral comedies, young couples could often be found fleeing into forests in search of a freer way of life. Shakespeare made frequent use of the pastoral genre in his later works, but the lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are the earliest examples of pastoral lovers in his plays.

The Pastoral, a popular genre in Shakespeare's day, was characterized by a desire to escape the confines of society in favor of a life surrounded by nature.

Elizabethan playgoers would have recognized Puck as the legendary sprite Robin Goodfellow. Fairies, and Puck in particular, appear in many places in English folklore and were familiar figures associated with typical behaviors. The Elizabethans believed that fairies fell into two different categories: rural elves that inhabited mountains, forests and seas; and house sprites that helped with–or hindered–domestic duties. The malicious deeds that Puck is accused of perpetrating were well known to Elizabethan audiences, who would have also recognized his ability to shape-shift and the broom he carries in Act 5, scene 1, used to sweep the doorsteps of maids whose milk he had stolen. But Shakespeare's Puck is less malicious than the frightening Robin Goodfellow of Elizabethan lore.

Fairy intervention in human affairs was a common notion to the Elizabethans. In Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale," the king and queen of fairies battle one another by meddling in the lives of a couple. Many scholars believe that this story inspired Titania and Oberon's battle. In the "Merchant's Tale," however, the fairies are careless with the mortals they influence, unlike Shakespeare's king and queen, who are often fiercely protective of the humans who stumble into their realm.

The name Oberon, which means "powerful elf," was probably taken from the magical fairy king who ruled an enchanted wood and protected the main character in the French romance *Huon of Bordeaux*, which was then translated into English by Lord Berners (*ca.* 1540). Oberon and his fairies controlled the weather, "all fantastie and enchauntments," and the minds of mortals, whom they could trick into believing that they were in paradise. This Oberon is associated with the Far East and appears in one section on his way to "Inde," which some critics believe to have inspired Shakespeare's changeling boy from India. "Titania" is mentioned frequently in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the poet uses the word to describe a descendent of the oldest Greek gods, including Diana, the goddess associated with the moon and the hunt.

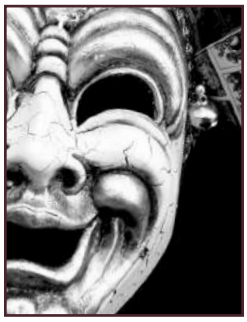
From lower left: Joy Fernandes as Bottom, Archana Ramaswamy as Titania, and Ram Pawar as Boy in CST's 2008 World's Stage production of *A Midsummer Night's Dre*am, directed by Tim Supple. Photo by Tristram Kenton.

Despite Shakespeare's penchant for borrowing, scholars believe that Bottom and his crew are entirely original, inspired by the actors of the playwright's own company, including the well-known clown, Will Kempe. The Mechanicals are certainly from Shakespeare's England; their names are all puns on their professions: a "bottom" is the core on which a weaver winds yarn, a "quince" is a wedge a carpenter would have used for leveling a joint, and Starveling was probably named after the Elizabethan caricature of the rail-thin tailor. (For more on the meanings of characters' names, see "Who's Who: What's in a Name?" on page 12.)

...a fairy king from French romance, a fairy queen from ancient Greek mythology, a sprite from English lore, and common players from the Elizabethan stage.

While the Mechanicals' characters were original, their antics were probably not. In Anthony Murday's play *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (ca. 1587-1590), terrible actors put on a play in front of bemused nobles. Murday's play also contains a convoluted love plot and a trickster named Shrimp who bears a striking resemblance to Puck. Nor is the play of "Pyramus and Thisbe" unique to Shakespeare. It appears as a tragedy in *Metamorphoses*, and Shakespeare adapted it again in his own tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. Even Bottom's transformation may have been borrowed. In Scot's *Discoverie of Supposed Witchcraft*, a man finds an ass's head placed on his shoulders by magic. In popular legend, as well as John Lyly's play *Midas*, Midas's head is turned into an ass's head; the same magical occurrence happens in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, translated into English by William Adlintgon in 1566.

Foakes's sentiments (quoted above) about Shakespeare's diverse and masterful borrowing resonates especially when we consider the inhabitants of the woods in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. By the end of the play, the forest has contained a fairy king from French romance, a fairy queen from ancient Greek mythology, a sprite from English lore, and common players from the Elizabethan stage. As Foakes points out, what is most interesting about all of these sources is the way in which Shakespeare carefully selected them, twisting and changing existing stories to create a work of genius entirely his own.



The Nature of Comedy

Shakespeare did not publish his plays, so we don't know how he would have (or if he would have) classified them. But when his actor friends prepared his plays for publication seven years after Shakespeare's death, they divided them into three categories in the First Folio: tragedies, histories, and comedies.

A comedy, of course, includes scenes—often many scenes—that make us laugh. But even Shakespeare's darkest tragedies have scenes that welcome laughter. *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*—all have clowns and fools providing levity and commentary. What, then, makes a comedy a comedy?

When scholars speak about the genre of Shakespearean comedy, they are referencing a particular dramatic structure. In a typical Shakespearean comedy, chaos, mistaken identities, disguises, confusion, even magical spells are followed by a return to order and a happy conclusion that wraps up all the loose ends. The play ends with hope for the future, usually in new families formed by the marriages of the central characters. Though the final outcome may seem unrealistic, we don't complain because things end up the way we secretly hoped they would—as Puck describes, "Jack shall have Jill…and all shall be well."

Comedy, like all drama, "holds a mirror up to nature," and allows us to see ourselves from a distance, shining a spotlight on our human foibles.

Comedy, like all drama, "holds a mirror up to nature," and allows us to see ourselves from a distance, shining a spotlight on our human foibles. Comedy challenges our sense of self-importance and allows us to make light of our own, admittedly ridiculous, behaviors. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we see what happens when we are as bombastic and self-centered as Bottom, as blindly infatuated as Helena, and as fickle and forgetful as Demetrius. The lovers' overblown poetry makes us laugh at all the grandiose things we've said at one point or another in our lives to express seemingly undying love.

A Midsummer Night's Dream also portrays a darker side of life. At moments, the line between fun and fear, between comedy and tragedy, is thinly drawn. At a bit of a distance, we laugh at the chaos that envelops the lovers throughout their night in the fairy wood, even as we experience them becoming more frightened and angry. When Helena chases Demetrius, desperate and degraded, he seriously threatens to attack her. The scene is written to be funny, though his threat of rape in a different situation would be horrifying. Indeed, many of the most comic moments in *Dream* are prompted by some disturbing circumstances. Oberon and Titania's fighting takes on voyeuristic overtones as Oberon watches Titania and Bottom with sadistic glee. Theseus's impending nuptials to Hippolyta become problematic if Hippolyta is considered a prisoner of war. And, as scholar Rene Girard puts it, the young lovers have a "tragic destiny from which they escape only by the sheer luck of being in a comedy."

Scholar Charles Barber writes, "The finest comedy is not a diversion from serious themes but an alternative mode of developing them." In his comedies, Shakespeare addresses darker topics through a lens that tells us we are allowed to laugh. Though they threaten one another fiercely, Demetrius and Lysander never actually do any real harm. After escaping into the forest, Hermia seems to forget the threat of death issued by her father. Theseus and Hippolyta's marriage is blessed by the fairies, and Oberon and Titania are reconciled. With their conflicts far behind them in Athens, the characters exist entirely in the moment, and their antics are thereby made to appear all the more ridiculous.

Shakespearean comedies point to the future, to the younger generation, and to new beginnings. Unlike many tragic heroes, comic characters are often young. The older generation plays an important part in setting the plot in motion, but they recede in prominence as the story progresses. It is as if they step aside and leave the stage to those whose adult lives still lie ahead. An older character may help bring the play to its conclusion or express approval by blessing the young characters as the play draws to a close, but it is the young men and women who hold the spotlight.

The label "comedy" directs our reactions. The woods are dark and deep, but the fact that we know we are watching a comedy calms our fears and encourages laughter. After all, we tell ourselves, we can trust comedy not to let things get so out of control that they can't be fixed, and Shakespeare, being the master playwright that he was, is perhaps the most trustworthy comedian of all.

CELEBRATING "CPS SHAKESPEARE!"

In its ten-year history, this transformational arts program brought CPS teachers and students together to perform Shakespeare as an intergenerational ensemble, working together for six weeks of intensive workshops and rehearsals *CPS Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream* was staged twice in the Courtyard Theater, fully realized with the help of a team of professional artists working alongside Director Kirsten Kelly and the entire Chicago Shakespeare education team. In 2014, CPS Shakespeare! received the highest honor in the US for arts after-school programming, honored at the White House by First Lady Michelle Obama. Taking the expanse of learning from CPS Shakespeare!, Chicago Shakespeare developed and launched a new program in 2017 called the Chicago Shakespeare Slam, which brings students together from across the region's public, private and parochial schools to celebrate Shakespeare and our diverse community in a slam-style arena.

Photos: Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2014 production of CPS Shakespeare! *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Kirsten Kelly. Photo by Liz Lauren.

Spirits of Another Sort

MARJORIE GARBER *is the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of English and Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University, and Chair of the Committee on Dramatic Arts. She has published eighteen books and edited seven collections of essays on topics from Shakespeare to literary and cultural theory to the arts and intellectual life.*

If we shadows have offended
Think but this, and all is mended:
That you have but slumb'red here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream.
(5.1.422-27)

Puck's closing address to the audience is characteristic of the tone of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; it seems to trivialize what it obliquely praises. All the key words of dream are here, as they have been from the play's title and opening lines: "shadows," "slumb'red," "visions," and "dream" itself. Puck is making an important analogy between the play and the dream state–an analogy we have encountered before in Shakespeare, but which is here for the first time carefully explored. For *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a play consciously concerned with dreaming; it reverses the categories of reality and illusion, sleeping and waking, art and nature, to touch upon the central theme of the dream which is truer than reality.

Puck offers the traditional apologia at the play's end; if the audience is dissatisfied, it may choose to regard the play as only a "dream" or trifle and not a real experience at all. The players, as Theseus has already suggested, are only "shadows" (5.1.212); the play, in short, is potentially reducible to a "weak and idle theme" of no significance. Yet everything which has gone before points in precisely the opposite direction: sleep in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the gateway, not to folly, but to revelation and reordering; the "visions" gained are, as Bottom says, "most rare" (4.1.208), and the "shadows" substantial. Puck's purposeful ambiguity dwells yet again on a lesson learned by character after character within the play: that reason is impoverished without imagination, and that we must accept the dimension of dream in our lives. Without this acknowledgment, there can be no real self-knowledge.

The fundamental reversal or inversion of conventional categories which is a structuring principle of this play is familiar to us in part from the framing device of *The Taming of the Shrew*. The Athenian lovers flee to the wood and fall asleep, entering as they do so the charmed circle of dream. When Puck comes upon them and anoints their eyes, the world of the supernatural at once takes over the stage, controlling their lives in a way they cannot guess at, but must accept, "apprehending" "more than cool reason ever comprehends." In the great dream of the forest experience and the smaller dreams within it, we might say paradoxically that their eyes are opened; this is the fundamental significance of the key word "vision," which appears several times in the play, offsetting the deliberately disparaging use of "dream" to mean something insignificant, momentary.

...a lesson learned by character after character within the play: that reason is impoverished without imagination, and that we must accept the dimension of dream in our lives.

By contrast, "vision," as it is introduced into the play, is a code word for the dream understood, the dream correctly valued. Often the user does not know that he knows; this is another of the play's thematic patterns, supporting the elevation of the irrational above the merely rational. As a device it is related to a character type always present in Shakespeare, but more highly refined in the later plays, that of the wise fool. Thus Bottom, awakening, is immediately and intuitively impressed with the significance of his "dream," which we of course recognize as not a dream at all, but rather a literal reality within the play.

Excerpted from *Dream in Shakespeare*, © 1974, and reprinted with permission from Yale University Press

I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was.
(4.1.205-07)

It is [the] transposition of transformation which is the special prerogative of the dream state and the center of interest of the whole of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Dream is truer than reality because it has this transforming power; it is part of the fertile, unbounded world of the imagination.

At the last, as Puck alone remains upon the stage, the "shadows" of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have become inexhaustibly evocative, "no more yielding but a dream," in a dramatic world where dreams are a reliable source of vision and heightened insight, consistently truer than the reality they seek to interpret and transform.

Timothy Edward Kane (kneeling) as Oberon and Elizabeth Ledo as Puck in CST's 2012 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Gary Griffin. Photo by Liz Lauren.

From left: Richard Manera, Levinix Riddle, Rod Thomas, Sean Parris, and Michael Aaron Lindner as Fairies, and Tracy Michelle Arnold as Titania in foreground, in CST's 2012 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Gary Griffin. Photo by Liz Lauren.

what the critics and artists say

1600s & 1700s

I sent for some dinner…and then to the King's Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.

–Samuel Pepys, 1662

But certainly the greatness of this Author's Genius does no where so much appear, as where he gives his Imagination an entire Loose, and raises his Fancy to a flight above Mankind and the limits of the visible World…It is the same Magick that raises the Fairies in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Witches in *Macbeth*, and the Ghost in *Hamlet*, with Thoughts and Language so proper to the Parts they sustain, and so peculiar to the *Talent of this Writer*.

–Nicholas Rowe, 1709

I am very sensible that he do's, in this Play, depart too much from that likeness to Truth which ought to be observ'd in these sort of writings; yet he do's it so very finely, that one is easily drawn in to have more Faith for his sake, that Reason does well allow of.

–Nicholas Rowe, 1709

There is a kind of Writing, wherein the Poet quite loses sight of Nature, and entertains his Reader's Imagination with the Characters and Actions of such Persons as have many of them no Existence, but what he bestows on them. Such are Fairies, Witches, Magicians, Demons, and departed Spirits…There is a very odd turn of Thought required for this sort of Writing…Among the English, Shakespeare has incomparably excelled all others.

–Joseph Addison, 1712

The imagination of the waking consciousness is a civilized republic, kept in order by the voice of the magistrate; the imagination of the dreaming consciousness is the same republic, delivered up to anarchy.

–Diderot, 1772

The piece has great poetical and dramatic merit, considered in general; but a puerile plot, an odd mixture of incidents, and a forced connection of various styles throw a kind of shade over that blaze of merit many passages would otherwise have possessed.

–Francis Gentleman, 1774

1800s

The different parts of the plot: the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta, Oberon and Titania's quarrel, the flight of the two pairs of lovers, and the theatrical maneuvers of the mechanicals, are so lightly and happily interwoven that they seem necessary to each other for the formation of the whole.

–August Wilhelm Schlegel, 1808

Spirits and fairies cannot be represented, they cannot even be painted–they can only be believed.

–Charles Lamb, 1811

The *Midsummer Night's Dream*, when acted, is converted from a delightful fiction into a dull pantomime. All that is finest in the play is lost in the representation…Poetry and the stage do not agree well together…Thus Bottom's head in the play is a fantastic illusion, produced by magic spells: on the stage it is an ass's head, and nothing more; certainly a strange costume for a gentleman to appear in. Fancy cannot be embodied any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate Wall or Moonshine. Fairies are not incredible, but fairies six feet high are so.

–William Bazlitt, 1817

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, all Eden is unlocked before us, and the whole treasury of natural and supernatural beauty poured out profusely, to the delight of all our faculties.

–Francis Jeffrey, 1817

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, again, we have the old traditional fairy, a lovely mode of preternatural life, remodified by Shakespeare's eternal talisman. . . The dialogue between Oberon and Titania is, of itself, and taken separately from its connection, one of the most delightful poetic scenes that literature affords.

–Thomas De Quincey, 1838

what the critics and artists say

1800s

Throughout there is such a wanton play of fancy and frolic. Such chameleon-like succession of tricks and complicated cross-purpose that at first sight we are disposed to deny that it can possess any rational meaning.

–Hermann Ulrici, 1839

Bottom the Weaver is the representative of the whole human race…the same personification of that self-love which the simple cannot conceal and the wise can with difficulty repress.

–Charles Knight, 1849

The *Midsummer Night's Dream* is too exquisite a composition to be dulled by the infliction of philosophical analysis.

–J.O. Halliwell-Phillipps, 1879

Unfortunately, Shakespear's (sic) own immaturity… made it impossible for him to keep the play on the realistic plane to the end; and the last scene is altogether disgusting to modern sensibility. No man with any decency of feeling can sit it out in the company of a woman without feeling extremely ashamed of the lord-of-creation moral implied in the wager and the speech put into the woman's own mouth.

–George Bernard Shaw, 1897

1900s

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a psychological study, not of a solitary man, but of a spirit that unites mankind… The whole question which is balanced, and balanced nobly and fairly, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is whether the life of waking, or the life of the vision, is the real life.

–C.K. Chesterton, 1904

Productions arose which explored the fairy world as the repository of whatever is repressed in a society, sexuality, violence, racism, imperialism, homosexuality. The fairies, heretofore ethereal, airy beings, were transformed into erotic spirits whose playful antics could occasionally turn dangerous.

–Margaret Lucy, 1906

What else was Shakespeare's chief delight in this play but the word-music to be spoken by Oberon, Titania, and Puck?…So recklessly happy in writing such verse does Shakespeare grow that even the quarrel of the four lovers is stayed by a charming speech of Helena's 37 lines long. For Shakespeare has sacrificed every other more purely dramatic advantage to this one. He allows himself no absorbing complexity of plot, no development of character.

–Harley Granville-Barker, 1914

The quintessence of all these comedies (as we may say of *Hamlet* in respect of the great tragedies) is the *Midsummer Night's Dream*… The little drama seems born of a smile, so delicate, refined and ethereal it is.

–Benedett O. Croce, 1920

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, all the best of Shakespeare's earlier poetry is woven into so comprehensive and exquisite a design that it is hard not to feel that this play alone is worth all the other romances.

–G. Wilson Knight, 1932

Look how impoverished the poet's imagination really is. Shakespeare, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, has a woman fall in love with a donkey. The audience wonders at that.

–Sigmund Freud, 1938

A dream is the theater in which the dreamer is himself, the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public, and the critic.

–C.G. Jung, 1948

1900s

Young love, as Shakespeare presents it, is passionate, intense, permeated with lyrical wonder and indefinite magic, but it is transient, irrational, full of frenzy and fantasy.

–E.C. Pettet, 1949

A Midsummer Night's Dream as a whole is prophetic, in one respect at least, as is no other of the earlier plays, of the course the poet's genius was to take. There are few more fruitful ways of regarding his works than to think of them as an account of the warfare between Imagination and Chaos–or, if you will, between Imagination and the World–the story of the multifarious attempts of the divine faculty in man to ignore, to escape, to outwit, to surmount, to combat, to subdue, to forgive, to convert, to redeem, to transmute into its own substance, as the case may be, the powers of disorder that possess the world.

–Harold C. Goddard, 1951

A gap divides the human participants' view from ours. This gap is unique in Shakespeare's comedies in that it remains open even at the end of the play. We alone know that an immortal spirit has manipulated human events, and solved a mortal problem.

–Bertrand Evans, 1960

A Midsummer Night's Dream is best seen, in fact, as…a suite of dances–gay, sober, stately, absurd…The dance is a dance of emotions, but… Shakespeare limits our response by showing us the lovers as the mere puppets of the fairies.

–G.K. Hunter, 1962

The life in the lovers' part is not to be caught in the individual speeches, but by regarding the whole movement of the farce, which swings and spins each of them through a common pattern, an evolution that seems to have an impersonal power of its own.

–C.L. Barber, 1963

Love's choices remain inexplicable, and the eventual pairings are determined only by the constancy of Helena and Hermia in their initial choices.

–R.W. Dent, 1964

It is [Puck] who…pulls all the characters on strings. He liberates instincts and puts the mechanism of this world in motion. He puts it in motion and mocks it at the same time.

–Jan Kott, 1964

[Puck] can be the merry sprite or Oberon's instrument of torture who delights in other's pain and says, "What fools these mortals be!" in joyous superiority and contempt, playful but evil, the Vice of the morality plays, the archetypal spy and gnomish spirit of the devil, as Jan Kott would have him.

–Allan Lewis, 1965

Who are we to say with assurance what madness is when a sudden change in reality can make it sanity?

–David P. Young, 1966

A Midsummer Night's Dream is itself a panorama of smaller scenes and characters, a great landscape with cities, woods, fields, mountains, valleys, river, ocean, and a host of figures representative of society and the supernatural…[T]he panoramas contribute significantly to the play's atmosphere of magic, spaciousness and limitless possibility, all attributes of the power of imagination which It both derives from and celebrates.

–David P. Young, 1966

Anyone expecting the kind of "true-to-life" subtlety of personality with which Shakespeare endows characters in the other comedies will be disappointed at the thinness of detail in the "personalities" of Hermia, Helena, Lysander, and Demetrius… After reading or watching *A Midsummer Night's Dream* we have the greatest difficulty remembering for long even important details about the characters… Their names seem little more than labels, as interchangeable as their alliances in the wood.

–Stephen Fender, 1968

Does not the play, then, suggest that love is as much a dream as are the midsummer night's happenings? And cannot this dream, comic though it may be in the play, very easily be rocked into nightmare?

–Michael Taylor, 1969

1900s

This is a mysterious play, and there is nothing in it by accident, nothing by chance. Other playwrights' meanings can be fully fathomed. But here the material is as if beyond Shakespeare altogether.

–Peter Brook, 1970

Why should there be a set? In a dream, places displace each other, contrary to all logic.

–Peter Brook, 1970

We can at best give our rather arch approval to the elegance of the play's verse, the symmetrical disposition of its worlds, and the graceful unfolding of its movements while at the same time, in the flintier portions of our soul, endorsing Theseus's "I never may believe / These antique fables nor their fairy toys" (5.1.2-3).

–James Calderwood, 1971

Shakespeare's basic comic strategy in the play: He suggests that the two sides of man's mind (conscious/civilized and unconscious/archaic) simply have nothing to do with one another and he underscores this suggestion by making them have nothing to do with one another in actuality.

–M.D. Faber, 1972

A Midsummer Night's Dream is the happiest of Shakespeare's plays, and very possibly the happiest work of literature ever conceived…*A Midsummer Night's Dream* moves in dreamlike sequences as if on the brink of an eternal bliss.

–Thomas McFarland, 1972

"Pyramus and Thisby," while comic in performance, is unrelievedly tragic in conception. In it we see the spectacle of the father who harshly opposes the marriage of his daughter, just as was the case with Egeus and Hermia. But here the result is not reconciliation, but tragic death for the lovers. Similarly the menacing forest of the playlet, which contains the fatal lion, stands as a tragic alternative to the amiable world of the Athenian wood…In the cathartic world of art the outcome is death, not marriage. The play-within-a-play thus absorbs and disarms the tragic alternative, the events which did not happen. Art becomes a way of containing and triumphing over unbearable reality.

–Marjorie Garber, 1974

There are two watchers–Puck, with his delight in chaos, and Oberon, who wishes to bring chaos to an end. We share in both these attitudes.

–Alexander Leggatt, 1974

The first couple's happiness appears threatened from the outside, but the second couple, even from the start, insist on being unhappy by themselves, always falling in love with the wrong person. We soon realize that Shakespeare is more interested in this systematically self-defeating type of passion than in the initial theme of "true love," something unconquerable by definition and always in need of villainous enemies if it is to provide any semblance of dramatic plot.

–Rene Girard, 1979

Separating the lovers but also providing a medium of communication, binding them in a union of partition, this wall stands both as a comic, literal-minded device and as a literalization of one of the play's key figures. The wall acts as a visual metaphor [for all human relationships]. These reflections should lead us to wonder about what we are laughing at when we find the mechanicals ridiculous… What, after all, is more ridiculous: to personate the wall that stands between us all, thereby insisting that we see it, or to act as if the wall is not there?

–David Marshall, 1982

Some critics have felt the play affirms the importance of the world of dreams or fantasy, and shows that reason impoverishes the imagination; others have recognized the extent to which it also exposes the absurdities of the imagination and gives approval to the voice of reason. It seems to me that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* achieves a splendid balance between the two; if the imagination makes possible visions and experiences otherwise inaccessible, and liberates natural energies from the restraints of reason, those visions and experiences are only given form and meaning through the reason.

–R.A. Foakes, 1984

Our world of daily tragedies is more faithfully mirrored in the godless world of Pyramus and Thisbe than in the fairy world of the Athenian woods.

–Virgil Hutton, 1985

1900s

Bottom wakes up along with the lovers and makes one of the most extraordinary speeches in Shakespeare… He will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of his dream, and "It shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom." Like most of what Bottom says, this is absurd; like many absurdities in Shakespeare, it makes a lot of sense. Bottom does not know that he is anticipating by three centuries a remark of Freud: "every dream has a point at which it is unfathomable; a link, as it were, with the unknown."…He will never see his Titania again, nor even remember that she had once loved him…But he has been closer to the center of this wonderful and mysterious play than any other of its characters, and it no longer matters that Puck thinks him a fool or that Titania loathes his asinine face.

–Northrop Frye, 1986

If the comedy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* depended on the transformation of personality by magical enchantment, Shakespeare, not Quince, would be the mechanical playwright. The chief source of delight is the refusal of those who are enchanted to change their customary way of behaving or even admit that they are enchanted despite the curious lengthening of Bottom's ears and the instantaneous reversals of Demetrius and Lysander's passions. Although their circumstances radically change, they remain stubbornly the same, their feet firmly planted on the floor even when the floor becomes the ceiling.

–Robert Ornstein, 1986

Fairies make excellent mediators. They mediate between matter and spirit, in that whilst they are insubstantial shape changers, they are mortal, give birth, and eventually fade away. They mediate between habitat and wilderness, structure and communitas. They reside either in the wilderness nor parts of habitat that have fallen back into the wilderness such as paths, deserted churches, etc.

However, they possess a structured society of their own, often inverted to the normal–nocturnal and matriarchal–and maintain an interest in human affairs. They mediate between the polarities of good and evil, encapsulated in the tradition that they are fallen angels, too bad for heaven, too good for hell. They mediate between the human and the divine, as both elevated ancestors (the ghosts of the prehistoric dead) and fallen gods.

–Peter Rogerson, 1986

This play represents neither the views on sex and marriage, nor the news on fancy held by Shakespeare and his contemporaries; instead it presents the significance of love as a way of knowing higher truth.

–Jane K. Brown, 1987

[The play] demonstrates the universal power of love, which can overcome the queen of fairies as readily as the lowliest of men. It also suggests the irrational nature of love and its affinity to enchantment, witchcraft, and even madness. Love is seen as an affliction taken in through the frail sense, particularly the eyes. When it strikes, the victim cannot choose but to embrace the object of his infatuation.

–David Bevington, 1988

At the beginning of the play Hermia and Lysander are types of young lovers right out of Greek and Roman literature, who plot to trick a stern father by escaping to a dowager aunt who will solve their problems for them. Helena, Echo-like, would be anyone, anything rather than be herself. And Demetrius, still a Narcissus, has been so frightened by the mystery of what he feels for Helena that he willingly accedes to Egeus's plan to arrange a marriage for him. All four, in self-confusion, follow the way of adolescence: flight. Keep moving before your self catches up with you.

–Robert Kimbrough, 1990

No Shakespearean comedy offers wider scope to the imagination of directors, designers, and actors.

–David Richman, 1990

Shakespeare uses desire here as an instrument to differentiate between the genders: inside men, desire tends to eradicate the personality of [its object]; inside women, it does not.

–Mark Taylor, 1991

what the critics and artists say

1900s

Puck is…so clearly a figure projected from the folk imagination, a way of giving a quasi-human identity and thus providing a reason for a series of random domestic mishaps, the unseen or disguised power that we still sometimes feel to be behind a daily world experienced as perverse, or for unexplained reasons resistant to or thwarting of our purposes.

–Ronald R. MacDonald, 1992

Puck is a spiteful manipulator, and all his pretty rhymes–he speaks or sings the play's most gossamer verse–are not enough to give warmth to his character.

–Kenneth McLeish, 1992

It's a play about four young people who get lost in a frightening place, a forest, at night. And in that forest their true selves emerge. They go through a metamorphosis and for that to happen, they have to go through pain and torment in order to discover who they are. They discover who they are in terms of sex and in terms of their relationships with each other. Young people today go through the same kind of trauma in their imagina¬tion and sexual awareness.

–Joe Dowling, 1993

A Midsummer Night's Dream is endlessly fascinated by the possibilities of transformation and translation within its action and by its metamorphoses of its materials.

–Peter Holland, 1994

Rather than see Lysander's denigration and dismissal of Hermia ('Away you Ethiope,' 'Out, tawny Tartar') as an isolated reference to brunette hair, we might look at it in conjunction with the play's concerns with trade and gender politics…What is also apparent is that here threatening female sexuality and power is located in the space of the foreign: male, Grecian order is opposed to the dark, feminine world of the forest, which is also replete with Indians, Tartars, and 'Ethiopes.'

–Kim F. Hall, 1996

Shakespeare's warning to the audience is unmistakable: prudent readers…will resist the pressure to interpret the vision.

–Annabel Patterson, 1998

[*A Midsummer Night's Dream*] is his first undoubted masterwork, without flaw, and one of his dozen or so plays of overwhelming originality and power.

–Harold Bloom, 1998

If there were ever a play written about young people, immersed in the painful process of growing up, it's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

–Joe Dowling, 1999

2000s

The lovers are apathetic about nothing. In our culture apathy is rewarded: to be cool is to not care. [The lovers] care about everything. I hope to show that love is something to be passionate about.

–Gary Griffin, 2001

At the end of courtship's arduous journey, the chaos finally settles. Couples submit to the laws of their society and take up their rightful positions as mature householders and sexually responsible adults–as parents, that is. As far as romantic comedy is concerned, this is a closed subject, as accepted and unarguable as the long-established relationships of the parents and guardians from which the younger generation both distance themselves and take their cue.

–Catherine Bates, 2002

Shakespeare's fairies laugh at mortal folly but they hardly moralize it. Given the ongoing quarrel between Oberon and Titania, the play's ironies derive from parallelism between the two sets of characters rather than the knowing superiority of one set over the other, and hence surround the fairies as well as the mortals.

–Janett E. Dillon, 2002

2000s

The implication is that the play is not a comic dream so much as a nightmare; the forest scenes have more than a touch of creepy reality.

–Bruce Weber, 2002

Helena is accurate in perceiving that the terms of what she and Hermia once enjoyed have changed; that the asexuality, or sexual latency, of childhood has yielded to the sexual identity of young womanhood, and that men, once of so little importance that they could be excluded from the company of females, now possess the power to drive women apart, even with no effort on their part.

–Mary Taylor, 2002

Everyone in the play, everyone, that is, aside from the mechanicals, is either married or to be married. And all seem singularly unsuited to long-term success within the institution proper. Titania and Oberon are miserable; Hippolyta is a recalcitrant war bride; and the lovers fail to offer even one good reason why they should be together.

–Megan M. Matchinske, 2003

The plot into which Puck and Oberon intervene has already been planned out and set in motion by Hermia and Helena. Hermia deceives her father to secure Lysander as her spouse, and Helena deceives both her friends (Hermia and Lysander) and the object of her affections (Demetrius) in the hope of winning what seems a lost love cause. Both women play the match-maker for themselves. Their boldness in this regard is seconded–significantly, not initiated–by Oberon.

–Regina Buccola, 2006

The experiences of the bewitched characters are explained as occurring on the borders of consciousness… Like the lovers in the play, if the audience are perturbed by the fantastic display they have witnessed, then they can explain it away as a dream.

–Sarah Carter, 2006

Dreams are always a kind of caricature, over-simplifying motives in one way or another. And the machinery of this *Dream* is designed to provide a masque-like entertainment by the use of such conventions, and the establishing of such expectations, as readily allow for sudden reversals whereby, for instance, a character can at one moment be vowing eternal loyalty to another, and at the next moment is headed in a quite different direction, paying equally zestful court to someone else.

–Scott L. Newstock, 2006

The *Dream* is all about translation, in the old sense of metamorphosis. Helena is prepared to give the world to be 'translated' into Hermia; Puck declares that he has 'translated' Pyramus; and in the most familiar line in this vein, Bottom's colleagues tell him, aghast, 'thou art translated.'

–Anada Lal, 2008

There are different levels of resonance in *Dream* for us today. On an immediate, social level, there is the patriarchy and authoritarianism with which Egeus attempts to impose his will on his daughter and there is the friction, playfulness and truth with which Shakespeare portrays the distance between the aristocracy and the workmen. On a visceral and emotional level, the *Dream* is a great drama of human emotions and relationships–the agonies and flippancy of love; the shifting ground between master and servant, friend and rival, husband and wife; the extraordinary detail etched within Quince, Bottom, and their fellow actors. Here, certainly, Shakespeare achieves a truth that defies time and place.

–Tim Supple, 2008

The woods of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are a fantastical notion…If you really could live within your dreams you wouldn't want to. They're actually too vibrant, too potent, too extreme. There's something right and normal about waking life. Dreams are good to have, but we shouldn't exist in them perpetually.

–Amanda Dehnert, 2009

…I want [the audience] to feel that it's okay…to think of the play in a more subconscious way. It's not performed at you. It's performed from within you.

–Gary Griffin, 2011

The figure of Oberon, examined through the political lens of Titania's matriarchy, serves as a figure of masculine disorder, where he is more aligned with rebellious and disorderly women in the play such as Hermia, who defies the orders of Theseus and her father by running away with Lysander, or Helena, who aggressively pursues her love interest into the forest. Shakespeare portrays complex layers of power dynamics, as the play depicts a back-and-forth oscillation of authority and rebellion between the two worlds of Athens and fairy land.

–Lisa Walters, 2013

2000s

I think that Shakespeare is asking us not to judge our experience. Have it. Don't predict who you're going to like, just like who you like. And that, to me, is a profound statement of now, an incredibly modern statement.

–David H. Bell, 2014

Written and performed in a historical moment when 'India' was a shifting signifier, the play interweaves residual and emergent understandings of the term… config[uring] India in more geographically precise terms… shaped in large part by actual European and English mercantile expeditions to the Indian subcontinent and the Spice Islands.

–Gitanjali Shahani, 2014

The characters are at once grouped together and rendered unique, and the audience is at least encouraged to imagine them as worthy of notice because they are individuals and because they all work…There is a simple human excellence in this identification: the commoner, the tradesman, is no less a man and no less worthy of proper recognition than is the ruler himself.

–Andrew Barnaby, 2015

Bottom's desire to dominate the stage with his theatrical skill is one that his director, his audience, and the play itself rejects–he is to play no part but Pyramus. Bottom's inaccurate presumption of artistic greatness is the overarching joke of the Mechanicals' subplot because it so clearly underscores his ineptitude.

–Louise Geddes, 2015

A Midsummer Night's Dream was produced five years before the setting up of the East India Company on the last day of 1600, at a time when very few new eye-witness accounts of India were circulating in England… the "India" of the play, and more generally the theme of otherness here, is an amalgam of elements drawn from an older exotica.

–Ania Loomba, 2016

Gender ideologies in the play and in the culture are shaped by fantasies of racial otherness which were molded by contact with worlds outside Europe; in this play, these fantasies and processes can be recovered by tracing their imprint on the relations between men and women.

–Ania Loomba, 2016

In terms of its historical impact, this play almost single-handedly caused an English obsession with the fairy world. Before Shakespeare, stories of Puck, Robin Goodfellow, and Hobgoblins were an established part of English folklore, but were not common subjects of literature (on or off the stage). Stories of this kind were important in oral traditions across the British Isles, but were treated with suspicion by Christian authorities. Creatures like Puck were the remnants of England's pagan past. After Shakespeare's presentation of midsummer fairies, however, there was an explosion of fairy literature that lasted well into the nineteenth century.

–Rafael Major, 2017

Lysander's flight into the Athenian forest with Hermia is prefaced by Oberon's plan to steal the already stolen Indian boy from Titania, which Puck carries out with his love-inducing potion that locks her affections on an ass-headed Bottom. Moreover, Lysander's flight is itself both a stealing away and a theft in the patriarchal legal understanding of the play's audience…So, if the application and misapplication of Puck's magic potion starts the cascading abductions of affections among the lovers, the correction of those mis-pairings is an intrinsic part of the release of Titania's donkey-centred emotions in exchange for her surrender to Oberon of the kidnapped Indian boy.

–Imtiaz Habib, 2018

For those of us who believe that theater is an important part of society and of human activity, the troupe performing a play to honor a wedding strikes me as one of the essential elements of this play–and not there simply for its comic effect. The Mechanicals aren't clowns. It is essential that they are not patronized, that we accept that these are real people trying to do their dead-level best.

–Joe Dowling, 2018

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" in Performance

> ***What one age considers right, is right for that age at a particular moment of history, but the society upon which the impact is made, the audience of the moment, is endlessly changing, and therefore so do performances and interpretations.***
>
> –Allan Lewis, 1965

Though scholars debate the exact date of the play's premiere, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was likely first performed in 1595 or 1596 at a wedding among the aristocracy. With its interweaving plots and central theme of love, the Dream was perfect for a nuptial ceremony, and was frequently adapted to fit other occasions. Much more radical changes to the play occurred during the English Civil War, which began in 1642, when audience members, surrounded by a society in upheaval, were no longer entertained by the chaotic quarrels of Oberon and Titania. Thus, the fairies and lovers were cut from the plot, and *The Merry Conceited Humors of Bottom the Weaver* was performed in smaller venues with varied success.

When the monarchy was restored to the English throne in 1660, life began to return to normal for the English people. Under the patronage of the new king, Charles II, who had been inspired by the thriving theatrical scene on the continent, where he had lived in exile during the civil war, theater in England flourished. The *Dream* grew from a rustic comedy to a full opera, which composer Henry Purcell called *The Fairy Queen*, in 1692. Purcell and librettist Thomas Betterton cut Athens from the play entirely, and "modernized" much of Shakespeare's speech. The addition of music helped audiences better envision the world of the fairies, and productions soon began to focus more on Oberon and Titania than Theseus and Hippolyta. This fascination with the fairies was made explicit in 1755, when the famous London actor and director David Garrick re-envisioned the play with lots of music–and without the Mechanicals!

The *Dream*'s "fairy mania" continued into the nineteenth century, when composer Felix Mendelssohn's score for an 1843 production in Pottsdam enchanted audiences across Europe. Through his music, Mendelssohn sought to depict each of the characters with a unique musical theme; the violins play the fairies running through the forest, and blaring brays from the brass section sound just like Bottom's transformation into a donkey.

Mendelssohn's lighthearted music inspired increasingly lavish stagings during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These productions were characterized by fluffy, pure, perfect dreams in idyllic woodland settings. In 1900, one stage was carpeted in thyme and wildflowers. In 1911, Herbert Beerbohm Tree's production featured live rabbits hopping around the actors' feet. To populate these magical sets, directors called for armies of fairies dressed in light-as-air costumes and bedecked with wings. In his notes, Tree listed the need for "special flying fairies, 4 fireflies, 9 imps, 4 sea urchins, 8 wood elves, and 2 wood fairies," in addition to Oberon and Titania's attendants.

Once again, however, the advent of war marked an abrupt change for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In 1914 at the outset of World War I, the Savoy Theatre in London staged an exotic and threatening production of the *Dream*. In it, the actors moved away from "gauzy, nostalgic romanticism" toward Eastern-inspired, gold-painted fairies with bright costumes and elaborate headdresses. The director, Harley Granville-Barker, believed that older productions used gauze and glamor to disguise the emotional truths that reside in Shakespeare's text. He sought to make audiences take a closer look at the mischief, the power struggles, and the violence in the play, saying in a 1912 letter to the *Daily Mail*, "I abide by the text and the demands of the text, and beyond that I claim freedom." Throughout the twentieth century, productions of the *Dream* followed Granville-Barker's example. Harcourt William's 1930 production at the Old Vic featured elemental, seaweedclad fairies, and a 1954 Old Vic production marked the end of Victorian stagings of the play. Bertolt Brecht, a German director, infused his *Dream* with stark sets and obvious illusions, constantly reminding audiences that the magic of the fairies was, in fact, the magic of the theater.

In 1970 Peter Brook directed a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that had a magic all its own, and still today serves as a cornerstone, inspiring productions more than forty years later. Completely turning his back on late-Romantic idealism, Brook staged his *Dream* inside a "white box," leaving the floor and walls of the Royal Shakespeare Company's Stratford stage completely pristine. Actors tumbled offstage, flew in on trapezes, and fell asleep in hammocks suspended above

the stage, yet, as in Shakespeare's time, there was no furniture, nothing to sit on or hide behind. The starkness of Brook's set placed the responsibility for setting the scene entirely on the actors' shoulders, and the result was a breathtaking performance infused with both emotion and levity. Sexually charged and honest, Brook's production was acclaimed by critics and audiences alike, and for the next four decades, productions of the *Dream* have been influenced in one way or another by Brook's profound vision.

Directors eager to embrace the technical challenges of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* found a solution to their problems in film. While early twentieth-century stage directors were turning away from the lushness and supernatural aspects of the forest, film directors capitalized on these images, creating versions of the *Dream* seemingly more at home in the Victorian era than the modern one. An idyllic portrayal of the fairy world, so unpopular in contemporary theater, was made possible by the technology available to film producers, and the industry capitalized on these opportunities. In 1935 Max Reinhardt's film adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* featured Mickey Rooney as Puck, and included a "cast of 1,000," comprised mostly of fairies flying around the set with glittering lanterns clutched in their hands. Michael Hoffman's 1999 film adaptation, starring Kevin Kline as Bottom and Stanley Tucci as Puck, was similarly crowded with extras, though not quite as glittery as in Reinhardt's film. In Hoffman's version, Nick Bottom is an imaginative dreamer trapped in a world of Tuscan commerce. The forest represents an escape from society, and the characters stumble through it looking beautifully disheveled until dawn breaks to the tune of Mendelssohn's music.

Puck ensnared the lovers in a literal web made of elastic bands, laughing as they became hopelessly entangled.

Most recently, stage productions of the *Dream* have struck a balance between Victorian idealism and contemporary gravity. In 2000 Joe Dowling directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, creating a production that combined the fantasy of the forest with the austerity of the court. Dressed in power suits and stifled by protocol, Theseus and Hippolyta stood in stark contrast to the brightly clad fairies, whose music-making caused many audience members to liken the production to a rock concert.

English director Tim Supple also sought to present the play in a visually and aurally exciting way. In 2004, Supple was commissioned by the British council to create a touring production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for India. Inspired by the performers themselves, Supple's *Dream* drew on the skills of twenty-three artists from across India and Sri Lanka, including dancers, actors, martial arts experts, musicians and street acrobats. This groundbreaking production completed its North American tour at Chicago Shakespeare Theater in 2008. With a production that was performed in eight different languages—half in English, half in the South Asian languages native to the performers—Supple sought to present a *Dream* that challenged the audience's expectations about how Shakespeare should be heard and seen. Rather than in the lush vegetation of the forest, Supple's *Dream* took place in a barren desert, the stage covered with red dirt out of which grew an immense bamboo scaffolding that the actors climbed and swung from. Puck ensnared the lovers in a literal web made of elastic bands, laughing as they became hopelessly entangled. Supple saw in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a play whose structure, story, and characters naturally embrace the wide variety of performance traditions and cultures that exist in our contemporary world.

In 2009 Amanda Dehnert brought her own interpretation of the fairies to Chicago Shakespeare Theater's stage in an abridged production for CST's education program. Inspired by the shifting nature of the immortals, Dehnert chose puppeteers and their whimsical puppets as her fairies, populating her forest with a menagerie of strange creatures and transforming CST's Courtyard Theater into a world of shifting seasons. In Dehnert's seventy-five minute production, the fairies had been lost in the forest since ancient times and reclaimed by nature; Titania's dress was a web of dry leaves and flowers, and Oberon's magic flower grew out of his shoe. Dehnert's natureinspired fairies recalled the sprites of Mendelssohn's ballet, while the use of puppets added a new dimension to the otherworldliness of the play.

CST Associate Artistic Director Gary Griffin staged the Theater's most recent full-length production in 2012. Inspired by the theme of dreams and wish-fulfillment, Griffin set his production in early nineteenth-century Europe at the time of Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis and modern dream theory. The play began in Dr. Freud's parlor, with the doctor played by a cigar-smoking Elizabeth Ledo, who soon disrobed from

her tweed suit to reveal her doubled character as Puck. Freud reappeared at the play's conclusion to speak Puck's closing monologue, "If we shadows have offended…" The Fairies and Mechanicals were also double-cast, costumed in striped pajamas, further explicating the convergence of dream and the fairy world.

In 2014 David H. Bell directed the most recent abridged production for Chicago Shakespeare Theater. After its five-week run at the Theater, it toured to schools for an additional five weeks. Then, in the summer of 2013, the production was remounted and toured to eighteen parks in the city, offering free Shakespeare to neighborhoods across Chicago. The Court scenes were set in the early twentieth century; Oberon and Puck were clad in leather and had a contemporary physicality. The Mechanicals were students in Peter Quince's classroom, preparing for a school play. Just before Puck's final "If we shadows have offended" monologue, all the actors returned to the stage, holding green umbrellas laced with fairy lights as each recited a significant line that their character had spoken.

Less than a year ago, director Gregory Boyd reimagined the *Dream* as a bonafide "battle of the sexes." Boyd's production in Houston, Texas, combined challenging physical movement and Shakespeare's wit to elicit the perplexing nature of love. Boyd's use of larger-than-life body language was an integral tool to help outline the intricate web of relationships in the play. Each physical movement in the production lent itself to weaving the plot lines together, both romantic and comical. Audiences were seldom confused about the trajectory or reasoning behind character relations because of the intentional, unmistakable, body language. The purposeful bare-bones set, as well as an emphasis on motion, echoes Brook's production forty-seven years ago. Similar to Brook's vision of the *Dream*, Boyd's cast was tasked with telling the story with their bodies, with little to no help from elaborate stage equipment.

In spring 2018 Chicago Shakespeare Theater staged the most recent abridged production of *Midsummer* in the Theater's newest performance space, The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare, and thousands of Chicago middle and high school students were among the very first audiences to see a performance in this groundbreaking new venue. In summer 2018 Artistic Director Barbara Gaines directed her first *Midsummer* in her career of directing Shakespeare. The seventy-five-minute abridged production was created for the annual Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks program, offering free Shakespeare to neighborhoods across Chicago. Interspersing Shakespeare's text with contemporary music, including remixing Chance the Rapper's "Blessings" with Puck's final monologue, Gaines's production shared the story of Midsummer through the lens of iconic Chicago. Athens' woods became Chicago parks and landmarks, like Buckingham Fountain, and Duke Theseus was referred to as the Mayor. The simple stage backdrop was the recognizable flag of the city, with its blue stripes and iconic four red stars.

Cage Sebastian Pierre as Puck in the 2018 Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Barbara Gaines. Photo by Liz Lauren.

This winter, Joe Dowling returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater to reimagine his 2000 production for today's audiences. Each time a director approaches a play, he or she strives to bring something new to light. Even now, over 400 years after it was written, artists are uncovering new attitudes about the *Dream*, using it to illuminate the world in which we live today, as well as to learn about Shakespeare's world of the past.

Conversation with the Director

Guest Director Joe Dowling, with an illustrious career in theater from Ireland to the US, returns to Chicago Shakespeare after a twenty-year hiatus to direct* A Midsummer Night's Dream *for a second time. He spoke to our staff some months ago when he visited Chicago to cast the production here.

Q We are delighted to have you return to Chicago Shakespeare. Having directed this play a number of times, do you look forward to revisiting it now?

Joe Dowling: I love coming back to this play. This will be the tenth time that I've actually directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It has so many different elements and, most importantly at this particular moment in our history, there is such comic value in the piece when we are living through a world in which there isn't much to laugh about. There are so many different layers at which the play can be read, and every time we do it we find something new, something that makes us say, 'Oh, I didn't see that before.' It comes down to not only the actors we choose, but also who we are at that moment in history, how we have changed as a society. This play has that capacity to shift its meaning, and it's one of the great things about Shakespeare. Ben Jonson said that he's 'not of an age but for all time.'

It is about these four young people finding themselves through the thicket of teenage years... The play speaks directly to the experience of growing up.

Our composer, Keith [Thomas] and I just worked at The Old Globe on *The Tempest*, which has so many similarities to the *Dream*. They're the only two plays that Shakespeare did not cull from somewhere else. He neither took them from Holinshed's history nor stole them from other playwrights, which he did a lot. These two plays are entirely out of Shakespeare's own imagination, and they come from an imagination that has a deep love for theater, and a belief that theater actually matters. And as somebody who has spent over fifty years trying to prove exactly that to audiences in various parts of the world, that's a very special part of this play to me, too.

It's also a wonderful story for young people. It is about these four young people finding themselves through the thicket of teenage years, and finding themselves in the forest of the imagination—a place where you have to grow up. They go through terrible tortures in the forest, but out of that come forth very different people. The play speaks directly to the experience of growing up. Apart from the fact that is just a joy to listen to its language.

Q: And since there will be thousands of high school students and teachers attending this production—and reading this interview—talk more about this forest and the role it plays in the lives of these young people.

Assuming that it's a place to escape from the rigors of the Athenian court, the four young lovers come into the forest—only to find that their world is turned upside-down completely here. The forest is not 'just another pretty place' like the Forest of Arden, where people walk around pinning poems on trees. In the first production that I directed more than twenty-five years ago now, the forest world was much more gentle. It's now not at all gentle as I see it now, but is instead a brutal place. This is a place where people get beaten, where they get rejected, where spells are placed upon them and taken off again. It's a dark place, full of the pain of young love, and the pain of rejection.

Nobody comes into this forest and gets away scot-free. The 'rude mechanicals' go there to rehearse their play late at night. One of them is transformed into an ass, and the others are beaten, chased, and driven out, literally shaking with fear. The love juice makes Lysander and Demetrius both think they're in love with Helena, and they feel the pain of rejection when she turns them away. There's the pain that Helena feels, believing that they are mocking and making a fool of her. And Hermia's pain when Lysander—whose last words before he falls asleep were, 'And then end life when I end loyalty!'—is now saying: 'Get you gone, you dwarf, you minimus of hindering knot-grass made, you bead, you acorn.' Not exactly love phrases, those. At the end of their time in the forest, when Helena talks about Demetrius and says, 'Mine own, and not mine own,' the confusions remains, but the night has helped them grow up.

Q: How do you envision the Fairy World—and specifically, its king and queen?

Oberon and Titania are utterly sexual beings. They exude a sensuality and an awareness of their sexual power, as their fairies do. Their world is an erotic playground, which is reflected in the Fabio Toblini's costumes. The fairies serve

Titania, queen of the forest, and if these fairies are going to be serving this queen, they need to be really sexy. In our production, the First Fairy we cast as her one lady-in-waiting, but the rest are men—and one can believe she uses them not just to pick blossoms . . . Titania needs an array of semi-naked men around her to be happy.

Oberon is a somewhat arrogant so-and-so. He thinks he doesn't need anybody, though he has Puck—one of the central figures here because he can do his own kind of magic. But Puck's also that quintessential fairytale figure—the demon imp of English folklore that audiences love. He's the bad boy of the forest.

Q: For readers, audiences, and artists alike, it can be challenging distinguishing between the four lovers. Your thoughts?

I disagree strongly with those critics who say that there is no difference between Lysander and Demetrius. Demetrius has a darker side than Lysander. Demetrius and Helena were together: there was clearly some sort of relationship between them before, though it may have been more on Helena's side because she's obsessed with him. Demetrius sees the advantage in becoming son-in-law to Egeus, the 'Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff' in Theseus's authoritarian government. It would be a good idea to become son-in-law to somebody like Egeus, famous and powerful. We all know—and Lysander says it: Demetrius does not love Hermia. It's a political move on his part.

Then when Helena follows him into the woods, he threatens to rape her: 'I shall do thee mischief in the wood.' You don't need to interpret his words too closely to know what he's talking about. Oberon sees that Demetrius needs serious intervention. He gets the love juice to torture Titania, but then orders Puck to give Demetrius a dose of it, as well. It's interesting that at the end of the play they take the love juice off Lysander's eyes but not from Demetrius's. He never goes back to being the person that he was. That's why when Helena says, 'Mine own, and not mine own,' she's truly not sure: is he the same person? We know he's not. Through his night in the forest, Demetrius has recognized something about himself. Shakespeare is making a differentiation between Lysander—a good, decent guy who wants to do the right thing—and Demetrius, whose first thought is to threaten rape. There is a huge difference between these two people. Demetrius needs the reformation that comes from going through the forest.

Q: And Hermia and Helena—are there differences between these two apart from their 'statures'?

Tiffany Yvonne Cox as Hermia and Nate Burger as Lysander in CST's 2014 production of Short Shakespeare! *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by David Bell. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

Helena and Hermia are completely different. Helena is much funnier. And she's brave. She follows Demetrius into the forest. Then, when he and Lysander turn on her, she gives as good as she gets. All four are young, rich people brought up in the court. The two young men are officers in the army, and will be the next leaders of the nation; the young women will be their wives. That's the way it's set up to be. Both Hermia and Helena are traditional Shakespearean young women—until Act 3.2, when they become completely different. As the play goes on, those two women take control much more.

Q: Can you explain why you choose to present Oberon and Titania as the shadow selves of Hippolyta and Theseus, portrayed by the same two actors?

There's clearly a link between the characters. Peter Brook was the first whom I remember to double the actors and thereby 'combine' the characters. It makes sense from a practical point of view, and that may well have been Brook's intention. Theseus has one scene at the beginning and one scene at the end, and what actor is going to say, 'Yes, I really want to play that'? The same with Hippolyta. Psychologically it makes sense, but I don't think one should draw too many parallels because of the differences.

One of the things that fascinates me about the play is the sexual politics between Oberon and Titania. Oberon's power is very important to him. He has to be in charge. He fastens on to the changeling boy as a way of showing Titania that he is the one in control, that she is not his equal. And when she refuses him, saying that she cannot give him the boy, he won't give up. The injury is to his pride. And he finally does win—by foul means. Throughout the *Dream*, there is cruelty and a crude development of male privilege and power. But in the end, Lysander and Hermia wed, in spite of Egeus and the male patriarchy. Hippolyta wins that one. In Shakespeare's script, she doesn't step up in the first act, but she does in our production. She walks out. That's all invention that comes from a reading of the text, but I think it's perfectly valid. That's where we've got to give Hippolyta the power.

Q: Tell us more about your inspiration for the overall design for the set.

As directors and designers, we often start from a visual perspective. When I first directed this play with The Acting Company in New York around 1990, the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, vivid in their incredible beauty and incredible violence and pain, served as inspiration. That imagery evolved in later productions, but now [Set Designer] Todd Rosenthal and I have worked on re-imagining that world of the Hieronymus Bosch paintings. This play is often thought of as a kind of merry romp in the forest, ideally suitable for small children—and it's not. It's a profound meditation on the use and abuse of power by both Theseus and Oberon, and on the sensual world of Titania and the young lovers.

Q: What about the court scenes specifically?

Theseus's court is not a benign place. Here is someone who says in his opening lines, 'I woo'd thee with my sword, and won thy love, doing thee injuries.' And then Egeus walks in and says, I want you to tell my daughter that she has to marry the man that I say, and if she doesn't, that I have the right to kill her. And Theseus agrees that Egeus has that right. So the world of Theseus is one that needs some readjustment. . .

To us, the idea that Hermia might die as a result of her choice seems so utterly bizarre, though of course there are cultures around the world where that would not be at all out of the ordinary. Again, context is very important. For us in our culture, issues of empowerment for young women resonate strongly. And as our own social norms have changed, this scene in productions over the years has become increasingly militaristic.

We haven't yet really talked much about the Mechanicals. What role do they fulfill in this play?

For those of us who believe that theater is an important part of society and of human activity, the troupe performing a play to honor a wedding strikes me as one of the essential elements of this play—and not there simply for its comic effect. The Mechanicals aren't clowns. It is essential that they are not patronized, that we accept that these are real people trying to do their dead-level best. The Mechanicals aren't from a distant 'Ancient Athens'; they're from here. And the play-within-a-play is like any community theater group trying to put together a production: they've got to find their own props, and their own bits-and-pieces of costumes. It has to feel like it's been put together in a hurry.

The forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a metaphor. It's something that everybody, from the ages of fourteen or fifteen until they become mature adults, has to go through. And they are painful times—that's what the forest is.

Q: Are there other "standouts" in the script that we've not yet in any way touched upon?

Titania's speech about the environment and how their actions have altered the seasons is quite extraordinary. Shakespeare wasn't sitting quietly in his study for years; these plays were being written to be performed. He took so much from contemporary times and, at the time he wrote this play, one of the biggest floods ever in England had destroyed almost the entire middle of the country. And here's Shakespeare writing about it in Titania's speech: 'We are their parents and original.' *We* are the cause of this, she says—just as policymakers today who do not recognize the idea that climate change is destroying the world are the cause of it. You could be reading a document from today about climate change.

Q: Finally, before we end our conversation, there is some alchemy between your style as a director and this play. What it is about your work that's so in sync with this particular script and has made it your signature work?

I am a bad judge of what my style is because it depends absolutely on the play that I am faced with, whether it is Shakespeare or Brian Friehl or Sean O'Casey, on which I've also done a huge amount of work and for which I am known,

as well. But Shakespeare has always been at the center of my life. I remember at the age of eight seeing *Hamlet* for the first time. I thought I'd died and gone to Heaven, and from then on I sought out any opportunity to see Shakespeare–which at the time in Dublin was very rare.

I have loved the play and the first production I saw was with Peter Brooks in 1970, which was a life-changing experience. It opened my eyes to things I have never imagined you could do in Shakespeare. Having seen Brook's *Dream*, I wasn't afraid to take risks with the piece, to explore it in a way that wasn't conventional, that asked questions of each of the characters.

I am not at all intimidated by the fact that people think the archaic language is going to defeat them. If you actually stop and read the text (which a lot of people don't), you'll find that Shakespeare understands human nature in the exact same way that Freud and other nineteenth- and twentieth-century psychologists later discovered–but Shakespeare was there long before them. He predates modern political systems, but he's aware of the human dimensions of political decisions in so many of his plays–including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Theseus makes a pragmatic decision at the beginning of the play that he then has to reverse at the end because the *human* factor becomes so strong. If you approach Shakespeare from the point of view, to quote Jan Kott, that 'Shakespeare is our contemporary,' these are not obscure plays.

Shakespeare survives because he was for all ages. What I've always believed is that you start from where you are, not by going back and trying to recreate. I find it a dangerous notion; you cannot recreate the political and economic conditions of the Elizabethan era. It's simply not possible. Instead, there are these potent, universal metaphors in Shakespeare. The forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a metaphor. It's something that everybody, from the ages of fourteen or fifteen until they become mature adults, has to go through. And they are painful times–that's what the forest is. Come at it from a love of the language, not a fear of the language. I found a way of doing this play that it relates to a contemporary audience, and that's why it has become a signature piece for me in my work.

From left: Tracy Michelle Arnold as Titania, and Timothy Edward Kane as Oberon, and Ron Orbach as Nick Bottom in CST's 2012 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Gary Griffin. Photo by Liz Lauren.

Before You Read the Play

AS A CLASS

1. BARD BLOG: A TOOL FOR DISCUSSION

[To the teacher: a blog can offer a way for your students to keep track of their thoughts, from pre-reading through post-viewing. It provides a place where students can make text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-world connections. They will be asked to find modern-day texts that relate back to Shakespeare's work, aspects of their own personality that relate to the characters, and real-world situations that relate back to the play. Don't yet have a class blog? Check out http://www.kidblog.org*, a free and simple website for teachers to create class blogs. You may also want to explore* http://wordpress.com/classrooms*, another resource for building a classroom website.]*

Create the beginnings of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* blog on your class website to which you can add as you read and discuss the play. Before you read the play, start by posting images or words that represent anything you already know or think about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As you study the play, add videos, headlines, articles, songs, etc. that remind you of characters, events, key objects, words, or anything else you feel is relevant to your reading.

You'll find more Bard Blog suggestions throughout this "Classroom Activities" section. As a class, discuss why you added a particular piece to the Bard Blog.

Guiding Questions:

- What words or images come to your mind when you hear *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?
- What do you already know about this play?
- What words would you use to best describe Shakespeare?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL1, W6, W10

2. TRAGEDY IN COMEDY?

Shakespeare, like most good writers do, chooses the opening moments for his plays with some thought about the story that followed them. In one way or another, the opening moments end up telling us a lot about the world we're about to enter. But for a comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* starts off very oddly! Within moments of the play's beginning, a character by the name of Egeus brings his daughter to the Duke to find out if he may have her killed if she refuses to marry his husband of choice. Why would something that's called a "comedy" start off by talking about "disposal" of a daughter? As a group, brainstorm some possibilities. Start getting some questions up on the board that you want answered, just based on Egeus's lines:

> I beg the ancient privilege of Athens;
> As she is mine, I may dispose of her;
> Which shall be either to this gentleman
> Or to her death

Consider going back to a couple of other stories you've finished recently and see if their first moments suggest anything about the author's "deck of cards" that gets revealed as the story plays itself out.

Guiding Questions:

- What do you already know about "comedy" from watching TV sitcoms or movies? What do you know from reading other Shakespeare comedies?
- What elements do you think a story must have for it to be called a comedy?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R2

3. SOUND AND SENSE

[To the teacher: Excerpt from the play one line for each student from the first few acts. Choose lines that are rich in Shakespeare's language or are descriptive of character, or use our suggestions below. Distribute a line to each student on a slip of paper, not revealing the character who spoke it. Since the students have not yet begun to read the play, the focus here is not on the characters themselves but rather on the language that the characters speak.]

Here are some suggestions:

This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child. (Egeus, 1.1)

I would my father looked but with my eyes. (Hermia, 1.1)

How happy some o'er other some can be! (Helena, 1.1)

The course of true love never did run smooth. (Lysander, 1.1)

Nay, faith, let not me play a woman. I have a beard coming. (Flute, 1.2)

We will meet, and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. (Bottom, 1.2)

I do wander everywhere / Swifter than the moon's sphere. (Fairy, 2.1)

Fairies, away. / We shall chide downright if I longer stay. (Titania, 2.1)

I'll put a girdle round about the earth / In forty minutes! (Puck, 2.1)

I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes, / And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts. (Demetrius, 2.1)

We should be wooed, and were not made to woo. (Helena, 2.1)

I mean that my heart unto yours is knit / So that but one heart we can make of it. (Lysander, 2.2)

This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn brake our tiring-house, and we will do it in action as we will do it before the Duke. (Quince, 3.1)

I am a spirit of no common rate. (Titania, 3.1)

- Look at your line(s), and as you begin to walk around the room, say it aloud again and again without addressing anyone. Let the nature of the line and the way you say it affect the rhythm and pace at which you walk around the room. Say your line for at least five other people, and listen closely as they share their line with you.
- Continue walking around the room, silently, making eye contact with each person you pass. Now begin investigating different ways of moving with these prompts:
- Pick up and slow down pace. If "1" is slow motion and "5" is running, start at a "3." Each time you take on a new pace, say your line to at least one other student. Slow down to a "2." Speed up to a "4." Back to "3." Down to "1," etc.
- Alter your posture. Walk upright with your chest out. Hunch your shoulders. Strut with swagger. Shuffle your feet Fold your arms. Swing your arms freely by your side. Each time you explore a new posture, say your line to at least one other student.
- Change your status. If "1" is the lowest status in a society and "10" is royalty, begin walking at a "5." Now change to a "10." What does a "1" feel like? Continue repeating your line to a fellow student each time you switch your status.

Now regroup in a circle, each student in turn delivering their line to a classmate opposite them in the circle, at the pace, posture, and status level that feels best. Sit down as a group and discuss the lines. Remember that this is an idea or brainstorming session; begin to imagine the world of the play you've just entered.

Guiding Questions:

- What do you imagine about the character who speaks your line?
- Are there lines you heard that might possibly have been spoken by the same character?
- What pace felt best with your line? What size? What status?
- Did any sounds of the words you spoke aloud in your line tell you anything about the emotions of the character?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, SL1

4. MIDSUMMER IN-A-SNAP!

[To the teacher: print out the sheet of the lines—along with their numbers—and cut them into strips. Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 people, giving each group several lines to share. Write the quote numbers on the board so you're ready to point to them to cue the small groups.]

In your small groups, read your lines aloud a few times. Discuss what questions you have about the lines. Then, working with one line at a time, decide how you want to physicalize it to help bring its meaning alive for your audience. Your choices don't need to be literal, but they should help your audience to better understand the line as you play with the words' meaning or sounds. Practice saying your line as a group with your gesture—either in a choral reading or dividing up the words between you. But everyone needs to speak at least part of each line! Repeat this process for the rest of your lines.

As a class, stand in a circle. As the story is read, watch for the moment the narrator points to your group's line numbers and jump in with your line and gesture.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, SL2

The cast of CST's 2008 World's Stage production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Tim Supple. Photo by Tristram Kenton.

NARRATOR SCRIPT!

We've got a problem–and four teens who are NOT amused by it. There's Hermia: she's in love with Lysander–and he, with her. But then there's Hermia's dad, who's dead set on her marrying Demetrius instead, and proclaims: (#1). And this is called a "*comedy*"?

Hang on... Hermia and Lysander plan to run away to the forest and elope (#2)–but not without Hermia first spilling the beans to Helena, her BFF. Helena, incidentally, is head over heels for Demetrius, but he's not having it–he wants Hermia. Well, you know what they say: (#3). Helena's got a plan (#4)! And all four run off, one right after the other, into the forest in the thick of night. What could possibly go wrong?

It's now time to meet: the "Rude Mechanicals," a motley troupe of amateurs who are also in the woods that night to start rehearsing a play–'The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe.' Some are none too thrilled about the parts they've been assigned (#5)–but Nick Bottom, a weaver, would love to play ALL the parts (#6).

Enter–some real fairies! (who actually do live in these woods…). Oberon and his queen, Titania, are throwing major shade each other's way before Titania storms off (#7). Snap! There's just one way to answer that kind of impertinence: revenge! Oberon commands Puck to enchant his wife Titania with a magic flower so that she'll fall for whomever–or *whatever*–happens to wake her (#8).

Oberon's on a roll, and orders Puck, while he's out dripping potion in eyes, to apply some to Demetrius, as well, so that he'll fall head-over-heels in love with Helena (#9). A nice idea–except that Puck mistakes *Lysander* for Demetrius.

Oops! But not to worry–just find Demetrius and apply love juice in *his* eyes now, too.

Oops again! . . . Now, we've got Lysander in love with Helena (#10). Demetrius in love with–Helena. . . We have Hermia, furious at her ex-BFF (#11), and Helena, who's outraged at all of them (#12). Everyone fights (13)! Insults fly (#14) (plus #15)!

Puck crashes the Mechanicals' rehearsal, and decides to have a little fun. He turns poor Bottom into (excuse our French) an ass--and guess who wakes up just in time to fall head-over-heels in love with him! (#16). Poor Titania…

Things have gone far enough–it's time to clean up the mess. Oberon sends Puck back into the fray with yet one more magic flower to undo the spell (#17), and everybody's happy, at long last, and with the person they're meant to be with. The Mechanicals perform at the big wedding, and Puck ends the play (#18). [Applause cue card, on the flip side of this sheet, extravagantly shared with the audience.]

APPLAUSE

#1: As she is mine, I may dispose of her.

#2: There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee.

#3: The course of true love never did run smooth.

#4: I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.

#5: Let not me play a woman: I have a beard coming.

#6: Let me play the lion too.

#7 Fairies away! We shall chide downright if I longer stay!

#8: Wake when some vile thing is near!

#9: Churl, upon thy eyes I throw all the power this charm doth owe.

#10: And run through fire I will for thy sake!

#11: You canker-blossom, you thief of love!

#12: O Spite! O Hell!

#13 I'll whip thee with a rod!

#14: You bead, you acorn.

#15: Thou runaway, thou coward!

#16: My mistress with a monster is in love.

#17: I'll apply to your eye, gentle lover, remedy.

#18: Give me your hands, if we be friends, and Robin shall restore amends.

5. CREATIVE DEFINITIONS

It can be helpful to play with the sound of Shakespeare's language to discover the meaning of the words and thoughts. Begin by reading a couple of lines from the play as a class and write down any words that may be unfamiliar to you. Now sit in a circle and say the lines one word at a time clockwise around the circle so that every student is responsible for one word. Once everyone knows what his or her word is, begin to play with the line. Try changing the sound of the words each time, with the following prompts:

- Stretch out the vowel sounds.
- Exaggerate the consonant sounds.
- Speed through the word, or go in slow motion.
- Whisper the word, or say the word at full volume

After you get through the line a few times, discuss what you discovered as a class. If there are words that are still unclear, arm two to three students with "dueling" copies of lexicons to define words that are unfamiliar (David and Ben Crystal's Shakespeare's Words recommended, which you can also visit online, for free, at http://www.shakespeareswords.com). These dueling "lexicon masters" can turn tedious vocabulary searches into an active and competitive sport. Here are some suggestions of lines to use for this activity:

> I would my father looked but with my eyes. / Rather your eyes must with his judgment look. (Hermia / Theseus, 1.1)
>
> The King doth keep his revels here tonight. / Take heed the Queen come not within his sight. (Puck, 2.1)
>
> The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid / Will make or man or woman madly dote / Upon the next live creature that it sees. (Oberon, 2.1.)

Guiding Questions:

- How does saying a word in different ways help you understand its meaning?
- How would you define your word differently after this activity?
- What influence do the sounds of the words have on their meaning?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L4, R1, R4

From left: Levenix Riddle as Flute/Thisbe, Michael Aaron Lindner as Snout/Wall, and Ron Orbach as Bottom/Pyramus in CST's 2012 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Gary Griffin. Photo by Liz Lauren.

6. PUNCTUATION THROUGH MOVEMENT

[To the teacher: Print a short passage from the play on a sheet you can mark up–see our text suggestions below. If space is limited, modify by bringing one or two students up at a time to demonstrate the activity at the front of the classroom]

Turn to your neighbor and take turns saying the monologue out loud. Discuss anything that you find confusing about the text. Afterwards, circle all "full-stop" punctuation–the questions marks, exclamation marks and periods. Begin to walk through the space, saying the words aloud. Whenever you come to one of the full-stop punctuation marks you have circled, come to a complete stop. Change directions and continue on to the next sentence. Do this a couple times through. Return to your partner and discuss what has become clearer from stopping on the full-stop punctuation marks. Discuss where the major thoughts begin and end.

Now go through the text and underline all other types of punctuation: commas, colons, and semi-colons. Begin to walk around the circle again, continuing to stop and change direction when you reach any "full- stop" punctuation marks. And when you hit a comma, colon, or semi-colon, stand up on your tip-toes for a moment, then continue walking.

Return to your partner again and discuss what adding in these "tip-toe moments" helped to make clearer. Did this speech have more complete changes in direction or more short pauses? What might this suggest about the character speaking?

Regroup as a class and discuss what you talked about with your partner. Watch a few volunteers demonstrate the activity. Discuss what you observed and share any new clarity you may have on the meaning of the passage. Break down the major thoughts in the text, and write a clear, concise summary of the passage.

> Full of vexation come I…Turned her obedience, which is due to me, to stubborn harshness. (Egeus 1.1, lines 22 – 38)
>
> Thou speakest aright;… But room, Fairy: here comes Oberon. (Puck, 2.1, lines 42 – 58)
>
> Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born? … Should of another therefore be abused! (Helena 2.2, lines 129 – 140)
>
> O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine! …this seal of bliss! (Demetrius 3.2, lines 137 – 144)
>
> Puppet? Why so? … But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes. (Hermia 3.2, lines 289 – 298)

Guiding Questions:

- What becomes clearer when you must change direction at each full stop?
- How might this help us read Shakespeare's verse?
- What are the major thoughts in your speech?
- What did adding in the "tip-toe moments" reveal about the character's emotional state?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L1, R1, R5

IN SMALL GROUPS

7. IAMBIC PENTAMETER

Much of Shakespeare's verse is written in iambic pentameter, or ten-syllable lines with alternating unstressed and stressed syllables. The ten unstressed/stressed beats mirror the natural cadence of the English language. Say these everyday sentences out loud and listen for the iambic pentameter rhythm:

I'm hungry and I want my dinner now.

The weather's nice. I want to go outside.

I really hope to see my friends tonight.

Now take a look at a passage from the play. In Act 2, scene 1, Titania says to 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.

Read these lines aloud, and really work to overemphasize the meter. If you're having trouble, look at the example below, in which the meter is stressed:

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.

Say the passage above aloud and exaggerate the stress. Try tapping the rhythm out on your knee at the same time to feel the rhythm. Once you have the hang of the meter, experiment with writing a few of your own lines in iambic pentameter. Write your favorite children's story or nursery rhyme in ten lines, all in iambic pentameter. Use your new tools—exaggerating when speaking and tapping—to make sure you keep the meter. Share your verse-tale with the class. "It may be harder than it seems to be…"

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R5, W3

8. INSULTS AND IMPROV

You know how sometimes it just makes you feel better when you've said a word or two to someone in anger? Words were developed to help us express feelings—and release feelings (and some words just by their very sound are better able to do that than others). As you read, find as many of the insults in the play as you can (hint: check Act 3, scene 2!) or see our suggestions below. In groups of four to six, practice aloud—at each other with feeling!—the insults that characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* sling at each other. If the meaning of a word is not clear, don't get stuck! Keep repeating the insult and you'll be closer to the meaning than you might think. Take *Hamlet*'s advice to the Players: "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action" and choose a physical gesture to accompany the insult as you say it.

Now, think of a modern situation in which someone might use the insult you've chosen. Put together a short scene in modern english portraying your situation. Incorporate the insult with the physical gesture into the scene. Make sure your scene, like Shakespeare's, has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Act out your scene for other groups in the class. Discuss the similarities that arise from the different scenes.

You are that shrewd and knavish sprite (2.1)

Tarry, rash wanton! Am not I thy lord? (2.1)

…you hardhearted adamant (2.1)

O, how fit a word / Is that vile name to perish on my sword! (2. 2)

Out, dog! Out, cur! (3.2)

…with doubler tongue / Than thine, thou serpent, adder never stung (3.2)

Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid! (3.2)

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! Vile thing, let loose… (3.2)

You juggler, you cankerblossom! You thief of love! (3.2)

She was a vixen when she went to school, / And though she be but little, she is fierce. (3.2)

Get you gone, you dwarf! / You minimus, of hindering knotgrass made! / You bead, you acorn! (3.2)

Lord, what fools these mortals be! (3.2)

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L4, R1, SL1

9. PROBLEM SITUATIONS

In small groups, choose one of the following scenarios below in which characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* find themselves in throughout the story. Discuss with your group the different options your character has and what you would do if you found yourself in that situation. (A special thanks to Dr. Tim Duggan, a regular instructor at CST Teacher Workshops, for this pre-reading suggestion!)

- Your father or mother forbids you from seeing someone whom you love because they think that the person is not a good influence on you. What are your options, and what would you do?
- Your partner tells you they no longer love you and are now in love with your best friend. What are your options, and what would you do?
- Somebody–a teacher, a parent, a boss–gives you a task and even though you try your best to do it, you completely mess it up. What are your options, and what would you do?
- You're the leader of a group, and somebody in your group keeps trying to take over even though you're supposed to be in charge. What are your options, and what do you do?

Guiding Questions:

- What personal experiences does your given scenario raise for your group members? How do these experiences help you to identify possible options to explore?
- What process did your group use to determine the most viable option for your given situation?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL1

10. PICTURES INTO STORY

[To the teacher: Find about five images of different moments from various productions/movies of A Midsummer Night's Dream *and give each group a set of pictures.*]

Good websites for choosing photos include:

- *IMDB,* http://www.imdb.com, *(films)*
- ADHS Performing Arts:
  http://www.ahds.rhul.ac.uk/ahdscollections/docroot/shakespeare/playslist.do, *(theater productions)*
- Past RSC Productions:
  https://www.rsc.org.uk/about-us/history/past-rsc-productions , *(theater productions)*
- Or, you might choose photos of CST productions sprinkled throughout this handbook!

In small groups, examine each of the five images in your packet. What do you imagine is going on and what might the relationship/s be between the people in the picture? Where might the scene take place? What do you think is happening, based on the visual information you have? Can you connect this image to anything in your own life, in another text you've read, or in the larger world? Take turns looking at the photos and write your responses down by each picture. You can also respond to comments your other group members have already made.

Guiding Questions:

- Which photos caught your eye the most, and why?
- Did any of your classmates write something that helped you make your own connection to a photo?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R7

11. FOCUSED FREE-WRITE AND COLLABORATIVE POEM

Before you begin to read *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it's helpful to think about some of the play's central ideas as they may relate to your own life and personal experiences. Take a moment to free-write some of your thoughts about one of the following situations, keeping in mind that your free-write will be shared with some of your classmates:

- Have you ever felt that you and your parents would never see eye-to-eye on an issue? Do you find it difficult sometimes to defend your side of the argument?
- Who was your best friend growing up? Describe them. What made them so special to you? Write about a time when you felt particularly close to this person. How would you have felt if this person were no longer your friend? Did any external forces ever get in the way of that friendship?
- Supernatural events are a big part of pop culture today. Are you superstitious? Do you believe in magic? Have you ever seen or experienced something you couldn't explain? What happened?
- Have you ever had a dream that seemed so incredibly real that it was hard to shake, and perhaps even affected how you thought about something or someone long after the dream ended? Did you have to wrestle with what was real and what belonged only to your dream state?
- Have you ever felt so strongly about someone that you felt like your behavior was being completely controlled by your heart and not at all by your head? Write about a time when you decided to do something based solely on your emotions. How did you feel before the event? What about during and after?

- Write about a time when you decided to do something based solely on your emotions. How did you feel before the event? What about during and after?

In groups of three, read what you wrote. After each reading, underline the words or phrases that stood out to your fellow classmates. Choose one of these underlined words, phrases, or lines to donate to a collaborative class poem. Then, as an entire class, sit in a circle or U-shape and speak the lines in turn, with a contribution from each student.

Guiding Questions:

- What predictions can you make about the play based on this activity?
- Were there any repeated ideas or themes in the collaborative class poem?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, SL6, W10

As You Read the Play

12. BARD BLOG: A TOOL FOR DISCUSSION

As you begin to enter Shakespeare's text, continue building on your Bard Blog. Use these ideas to get you started, or modify other activities in this section to a blogging format:

- Choose a character to follow throughout the play and write diary entries from that character's point of view. As the character, share your thoughts and feelings, incorporating quotations from the text whenever you can. Be creative! Rather than observing them from the outside, try to get at the heart of your character. Check out an example of one for the character of Hermia at http://hermiasdiary.blogspot.com.
- At the end of each act, list five of the major characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Write a single sentence for each that begins, "What I most want is…" Take a risk–there's not just one right answer! Then write a sentence for each character that begins, "What I'm most afraid of is…"(Is there ever a situation when what one most wants is also what one most fears?)
- Create a character discussion forum after reading Act 1, scene 1 when a wide range of character–from dukes to citizens, old men to young women, prisoners of war to prisoners of propriety–are introduced. Post one or two lines that exemplify a character of your choice. Add an image that defines your character. Be creative!
- Ask students to create a graphic design on http://www.wordle.net based on Helena's definition of "love" from her monologue in Act 1, scene 1 *"How happy some o'er other some can be!…"* As you read the play, follow up with blog posts on how the strong feelings of love set the action of the plot in motion.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W3, W6, W10

Act 1

AS A CLASS

13. MOVEMENT AND TEXT

As a class, read through Egeus's speech that begins with "Full of vexation come I…" In small groups take six lines of the speech and underline the words that strike you most–one per line. After you have chosen your words, choose a physical gesture or movement that connects to the meaning and/or emotion behind each word you've chosen. Practice all six lines of the speech in unison, doing your movement or gesture when you reach those key words.

Come together as a class and run the entire speech, each group speaking their section, with the movements and gestures added. When your group is not performing, watch the others carefully and see which words the other groups have chosen to highlight.

Guiding Questions:

- Does this exercise help you understand the speech?
- Were there moments when different groups chose similar gestures?
- What do you discover about Egeus's emotions throughout the speech?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, R4

14. INTERJECTED QUESTIONS

Now that you have heard the entire speech, read it as a class in unison, stopping at the end of each line for Theseus (your teacher) to ask you questions that will propel your next line.

[To the teacher: See below for the interjected questions for Egeus's speech and watch a video clip of these activities in action with an instructor and his students from the Royal Shakespeare Company at http:// tinyurl.com/rsctextandmovement.]

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
COMPLAINT AGAINST WHO?
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
WHAT HAS SHE DONE?
Stand forth, Demetrius!–My noble lord,
WHAT DOES HE HAVE TO DO WITH IT?
This man hath my consent to marry her.
SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?
Stand forth, Lysander!–And my gracious Duke,
WHAT HAS HE DONE?
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.
HOW HAS HE BEWITCHED HER?
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
IS THAT ALL?
And interchanged love-tokens with my child.
ANYTHING ELSE?
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung

WHAT DID HE SING?
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
AND DONE WHAT?
And stolen the impression of her fantasy,
HOW DID HE CONVINCE HER?
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
ANYTHING ELSE?
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats–messengers
WHAT KIND OF MESSENGERS?
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth;
AND WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF THIS?
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,
AND WHAT WAS THE EFFECT ON YOUR DAUGHTER?
Turned her obedience, which is due to me,
TURNED IT TO WHAT?
To stubborn harshness. And, my gracious Duke,
YES, WHAT ELSE?
Be it so she will not here before your grace
WHAT WILL SHE NOT DO?
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens;
WHICH PRIVILEGE?
As she is mine, I may dispose of her;
AND HOW WILL YOU DO THIS?
Which shall be either to this gentleman
OR WHAT?
Or to her death, according to our law
WHEN?
Immediately provided in that case.

Guiding Questions:

- Moving through this exercise, what is clarified in Egeus's speech? What questions remain for you?
- How did this interrogation affect the way Egeus's speech was delivered? Can you empathize with Egeus?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R4

IN SMALL GROUPS

15. UNROUND ROBIN

[To the teacher: This strategy can be an effective way to explore the close reading of a passage and to gain fluency, comprehension and confidence through re-reading a complex text aloud with multiple purposes. Unround Robin also allows for the exploration of varying interpretations within a dramatic text.]

Divide into pairs, A's and B's. Read the text below aloud, using the following prompts:

- **Read-through #1:** Alternating readers at every **punctuation mark**, read the passage aloud. Circle any unfamiliar words or words confusing in this context.
- **Read-through #2:** Read to the end of a **complete sentence** (ending in one of just three ways: a period, question mark, or exclamation point), alternating readers sentence by sentence. Again, circle any words or phrases that are confusing.
- **Read-through #3:** Read the passage, standing **back to back**, read the passage again (same roles) **whispering**–making sure that your partner can hear all the words. Are there moments when whispering feels instinctively right?
- **Read-through #4:** Standing about **ten paces apart**, read the passage again at "full" volume, sending your voice to one another. Are there moments when this elevated volume fits the meaning?
- **Read-through #5 (at last!):** While one partner stands still, the other **moves** wherever/however he/she wants in response to the script and in relationship to their scene partner. Based on the words you both say, move how it feels right instinctively. (If space is limited, explore the options of sitting and standing rather than moving around the room.)

From left: Matt Schwader as Demetrius, Laura Huizenga as Helena, Andy Truschinski as Lysander, and Christina Nieves as Hermia in CST's 2012 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Gary Griffin. Photo by Liz Lauren.

ACT 1, SCENE 1
Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

THESEUS
What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.
To you your father should be as a god,
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA
So is Lysander.

THESEUS
In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA
I would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS
Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA
I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS
Either to die the death, or to abjure
For ever the society of men.

Guiding Questions:

- Are there moments when whispering or an elevated volume feels instinctively right?
- How did re-reading the same exchange change your comprehension of the text? How did it affect your fluency?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, L4, R1

16. THESEUS AND HIPPOLYTA'S RELATIONSHIP

Read through the first twenty lines of Act 1, scene 1 in pairs, each person taking a part. In your *first read-through*, read slowly and circle any words that are confusing to you. In your *second read-through*, read your lines as though this is an exchange between a loving couple looking forward to their wedding day. In your *third read-through*, read your lines as though this scene is a tense moment between two powerful enemies. With your partner, determine if there are other ways that this scene could be read before reading it through a fourth time, trying out your idea. Present your version to the class, and discuss the various approaches.

Guiding Questions:

- What do you discover about Theseus and Hippolyta's relationship from observing your peers' interpretations?
- How does the way this scene is presented affect the action that ensues?
- What interpretation would you choose as a director, and why?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R1, R6

17. INTRODUCING THE MECHANICALS

One can find all types of characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Immediately following the Court scene with Duke Theseus, we are introduced to a group of workers, referred to as "the Mechanicals." Though the Mechanicals are often thought of as a group, actors must work to ensure that each is a distinct individual when performing for an audience. In groups of six, choose one character per person to follow as you read the scene aloud. As you read, search for clues that illuminate your individual character. As a class, share your discoveries about each of the characters in this group.

Guiding Questions:

- What is your character's stated profession? What characteristics are associated with people of that profession?
- How often does your character speak throughout the scene? What might the frequency of lines tell you about your character?
- How does the text structure and vocabulary of this scene compare with the first? What might that tell you about the world of the Mechanicals?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R1, R5

18. OFFSTAGE ACTION

In Act 1, scene 1, after Theseus has laid down the law for Hermia, he says, "But, Demetrius, come / And come, Egeus, you shall go with me; / I have some private schooling for you both." What do you think Theseus says to Demetrius and Egeus in this "private schooling" session—and how do they respond? Working in pairs, write out a brief script for this missing scene. Pass your scene to another group in the class who will act it out.

Guiding Questions:

- What clues in the text can you use to help you write your scene?
- What other action in the play is indicated by the text but not staged?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, W3

ON YOUR OWN

19. INTERNAL MONOLOGUES VOICED

A character's silence in Shakespeare is often just as important as speech–just as it is when we choose to be silent among others. In Act 1, scene 1, both Hippolyta and Hermia stand mostly silent while the men discuss their lives and futures. Choose one of these characters and write their internal monologue–that is, everything that they're not saying. Actors often imagine such a monologue on stage as they listen and respond to the other characters and events in the scene. Hermia's fate is in the hands of others. We are unclear of Hippolyta's attitude towards her imminent marriage to Theseus, and in performance the interpretations of Hippolyta in this scene are wildly divergent. Write the thoughts both women keep to themselves, and incorporate quotes from the text to make it clear how their thoughts connect to what's being spoken aloud by the men.

Now try speaking these internal monologues out loud in groups of six. While the four men discuss the fate of the women, Hermia and Hippolyta interject with their internal monologues, commenting on what is being said about them. Hermia can also interject her internal thoughts into her own lines, to voice what she is thinking but cannot say.

Shakespeare's characters often "break the fourth wall" and talk directly to the audience, with the other characters on stage "unable" to hear what they say. Try directing your internal monologue out to your "audience." Remember that only one person should be speaking at a time: if Hermia or Hippolyta interjects a thought, the male character freezes in place until she is finished, and then continues his thought.

Running the scene one more time, this time without the internal monologue, see what changes in the way lines are spoken or if the characters' body language is affected having now explored what Hippolyta and Hermia are thinking.

Guiding Questions:

- What might Hermia and Hippolyta's silence indicate about the society represented in this play?
- How does the act of writing an internal monologue help you to imagine what characters might be thinking or feeling when they aren't speaking?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W3

20. SCENE TITLES

One of the best ways to get at the "through-line" in a play is to give each scene a title that captures the heart of the action. Directors often use this technique to help actors (and themselves) navigate the story through the rehearsal process. Give each of the scenes in Act 1 a title that you feel gets at the essence of the scene. Be as creative and specific as you can in naming each scene. Then share your titles with your classmates–creating a tableau to represent your favorite among them. As a class, discuss the titles and tableaux that best capture the essence of each scene. *[To the teacher: Consider repeating this activity through each act as you read the play.]*

Guiding Questions:

- How do the titles clarify and summarize the dramatic progression?
- What themes become more apparent when writing the titles?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W10

Act 2

AS A CLASS

21. FINDING THE SUBTEXT

This exercise will help you get used to reading not only the text of Shakespeare's play, but also the "subtext"—the character's inner feelings beneath the text that influences actions, behavior, and tone. In everyday conversation, we can change the entire meaning of something we say by the words we accentuate—and actors do this, too, in performance. Read the following sentence written on the board—"I'm glad you're here this evening." What does it mean? Discuss it with your classmates, and don't be afraid to state the obvious. Now, elect six classmates to read the sentence, each person stressing a different word every time. Listen to how the meaning changes with each different reader. Now try the same exercise with Titania's line from Act 2, scene 1, "The Fairyland buys not the child of me":

The **Fairyland** buys not the child of me.

The Fairyland **buys** not the child of me.

The Fairyland buys **not** the child of me.

The Fairyland buys not the **child** of me.

The Fairyland buys not the child of **me**.

Here are some other lines to play with:

Yet Hermia still loves you; then be content. (Helena, 2.2)

This is the woman, but not this the man. (Puck, 3.2)

I understand not what you mean by this. (Hermia, 3.2)

Guiding Questions:

- How does emphasis on different words change your understanding of the line's meaning?
- How does the mood of the line change with different readings?
- Which of these line readings rings most truthful to you? Why?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, SL3

22. IMAGERY IN LANGUAGE AND MOVEMENT

Look at Titania's monologue in Act 2, scene 1, "These are the forgeries of jealousy:" This is one of the most image-rich speeches in the whole play, and in it, Shakespeare asks his audience to use their imaginations to help realize the story. Close your eyes and listen to an audio recording—http://tinyurl.com/titaniaaudio—as a class.

- Listen closely for imagery, and raise your hand any time the speech brings a picture to your mind.
- Listen to the audio recording again—this time, have the text in front of you to mark up. Circle all words and phrases that connect to your senses—smells, sounds and colors.
- Listen to the audio recording a final time, still with the text in front of you. This time, underline all metaphors that catch your ear (or eye). Discuss the overall mood of the passage. In small groups, agree on a single word,

phrase, or line to bring to life through a "living sculpture" of bodies. As your group creates this sculpture, you will notice just how many details Shakespeare includes in each image. Take turns directing, or "chiseling," the sculpture. Revise until the sculpture closely represents the imagery and intention. Present your final sculpture to the rest of the class. To explore your tableau more deeply, your classmates can tap any member of the group on the shoulder, and say, "Mouth," "Head," or "Heart." When they do, the chosen person responds with:

Discuss the overall mood of the passage. In small groups, agree on a single word, phrase or line to bring to life through a "living sculpture" of bodies. As your group creates this sculpture, you will notice just how many details Shakespeare includes in each image. Take turns directing, or "chiseling," the sculpture. Revise until the sculpture closely represents the imagery and intention. Present your final sculpture to the rest of the class. See if they can guess which word, phrase, or line you selected.

- o Mouth–paraphrase in your own words the line your group chose to embody
- o Head–explain what your character is thinking in that moment
- o Heart–describe how your character is feeling in that moment

Guiding Questions:

- As you listened to this image-rich speech, what images did you see in your head?
- What mood or tone does the speech's imagery suggest? What words or phrases indicate the mood particularly strongly?
- Is there a pattern or a theme among the chosen words, phrases and lines?
- Based on the sculptures presented by your classmates, what could we say this speech is about?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R4, SL2

23. THE CHANGELING BOY

The changeling boy who instigates Titania and Oberon's fight does not appear in Shakespeare's *dramatis personae*. But some directors choose to represent him onstage with a child. How do you think it would affect the audience's attitude toward their fight to have the source of the conflict on the stage? What are some things that the actor portraying the changeling boy could do to shift sympathies toward Titania? Toward Oberon? How might his looks and age affect the audience's point of view? Working in pairs, create a page or two of a graphic novel depicting Oberon and Titania's first encounter in Act 2, scene 1, "Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania!" Decide whether or not to include the changeling boy. Share your graphic novel pages with your classmates, and discuss the different interpretations. After you see CST's production, re-evaluate your earlier predictions!

Guiding Questions:

- How might the inclusion of the changeling boy onstage affect our response to this scene and to the two combatants, Titania and Oberon?
- What are some possible reasons that Shakespeare might have left the changeling boy off his original *dramatis personae*?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, SL1, SL2

24. DIRECTING CHARACTER MOTIVATION

There can be vast differences in the ways actors portray a scene, differences made possible by varying ideas about character motivation and the "subtext" of a scene—that is, what's felt by the characters underneath their spoken lines. Take a close look at Hermia and Lysander's interaction in Act 2, scene 2, starting at this line: "Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood…" Working in teams of three (one person reading Hermia's lines, one person reading Lysander's lines, and a director), read the scene out loud once. Then, try it again with each of the following directions:

- *Hermia is exhausted and Lysander, thrilled by the prospect of a night in the woods.*
- *Hermia is flirtatious and Lysander, frustrated.*
- *Hermia is modest and Lysander, full of adoration.*

How does our understanding of the scene alter with the changes in subtext? Directors, take note of the change in the movement and vocal intonation your two classmates make from one interpretation to the next. Jot down which version seems to work best. As a group, reflect on the scene work and decide which version you feel is most strongly supported by the text. Then, translate the dialogue into modern language, including any thoughts you think might going through Hermia and Lysander's heads.

Now try Titania and Oberon's meeting in Act 2, scene 1, starting with: "Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania." Once you've read through the scene once for comprehension, add on one of the following subtexts:

- *Titania is disdainful and Oberon loving.*
- *Titania misses Oberon immensely and he is hard-hearted.*
- *Titania and Oberon both can't stand that they're fighting.*
- *Titania and Oberon are both furious.*

Other great scenes to approach with different interpretations include:

- Bottom and Quince's discussion of playing Pyramus. (Act 1, scene 2, lines 57 – 73)
- Oberon's awaking of Titania. Oberon: "Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower…" (Act 4 scene 1, lines 71 – 99)

For those directing the scenes, feel free to be creative with your subtext direction, and suggest other motivations beyond what's shared here. For those reading the characters' lines, don't be afraid to take risks and make big choices!

As an extension to this exercise, check out the Shakespeare's Globe Theatre's "Staging It" interactive website: http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discovery-space/staging-it. You take on the role of director and choose Hermia and Lysander's moment-to-moment motivation through Act 2, scene 2, and then play it together to see the interpretation you've created!

Guiding Questions:

- What words or phrases become more or less important with each interpretation?
- For the actors: What did you have to do with your body and voice to make your subtext clear?
- For the directors: When the subtext wasn't clear, what suggestions did you give to the actors to help them communicate more clearly?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R4, R6

CST for $20 Chicago Shakespeare is committed to making our productions accessible for everyone, so CST for $20 was designed to fit the budget of students and young professionals. We have allocated thousands of tickets across the entire season, giving our friends under 35 the opportunity to see world-class theater at an everyday price. Anyone under 35 can buy up to two $20 tickets per production.

You can find out more at www.chicagoshakes.com/cst20

IN SMALL GROUPS

25. CHARACTER CLUES

The study of character contributes much to our understanding of a play. More often than not, we learn about an individual character's personality and temperament by way of: (1) what the character says about themself; (2) what others say about the character; (3) what the character does; and (4) what the character says about others. Look, for example, at the opening of Act 2, scene 1, when we meet Puck for the first time. In pairs, read the scene aloud beginning with "How now, spirit; whither wander you?" to "And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!" Underline or highlight any lines that offer new information about the character of Puck. Discuss what you discovered. Try this whenever a new character is introduced in the play…

Guiding Questions:

- What does the Fairy help us to understand about the character of Puck–and about the world of the fairies and their interactions with mortals?
- What are your first impressions of Puck based on his distinctive way of speaking? What patterns do you notice in his speech?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, SL2

Act 3

AS A CLASS

26. SHAKESPEARE'S STRUCTURE

Shakespeare writes in iambic pentameter throughout much of the play, but certain characters speak exclusively in prose. It's visually easy to tell the two forms apart as they appear on the page: verse begins at the left margin each time with a capitalized letter and a raggedy right margin, while prose goes all the way across the page with normal capitalization and even "justified" margins on both left and right. Take a look at Act 3, scene 1. Who speaks in verse? Who speaks in prose–and why do you think they don't speak in verse? Sometimes characters speak in shortened meter (fewer than ten syllables per line) for several lines. Find the places where this occurs. What do they have in common? Why do you think Shakespeare may have written these lines differently? Discuss your findings.

Guiding Questions:

- What similarities can you find between characters who speak mostly verse in this scene and those who speak mostly in prose? Does the text structure suggest anything about a character's social status and/or their emotional state?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5, R6

DEMETRIUS Cue Script:

O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

———————*so dead, so grim.*

So should the murdered look, and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty;
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

———————*thou give him me?*

I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

———————*never adder stung.*

You spend your passion on a misprised mood.
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood,
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

———————*that he is well.*

And if I could, what should I get therefor?

———————*be dead or no.*

HERMIA Cue Script:

———————*on your bitter foe.*

Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me. Would he have stol'n away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored, and that the moon
May through the centre creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with th'Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murdered him:
So should a murderer look; so dead, so grim.

———————*in her glimmering sphere.*

What's this to my Lysander? Where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

———————*carcass to my hounds.*

Out, dog! Out, cur! Thou driv'st me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him then?
Henceforth be never numbered among men.
O, once tell true; tell true, even for my sake:
Durst thou have looked upon him being awake?
And hast thou killed him sleeping? O, brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder do so much?
An adder did it; for with double tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

———————*that I can tell.*

I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

———————*should I get therefor?*

A privilege, never to see me more;
And from thy hated presence part I so.
See me no more whether he be dead or no.

IN SMALL GROUPS

27. LISTENING FOR CUE LINES

In the early modern theater when Shakespeare was writing, playwrights were often finishing a play even as the actors were getting ready to perform. Because the cost of paper was prohibitively expensive, and pirating of material was common, very few copies of the full script existed–and these were closely guarded! Actors were given copies of their own character's lines only, with just a few words from the end of the speech preceding theirs so they would know when to speak. These lines were called "cue lines," and an actor's turn to speak became known as his "cue." Having only his own lines and just a few cues forced the actor to listen carefully to what his fellow actors were saying. Divide into pairs, and decide who will play Demetrius and who will play Hermia. Each of the two scripts on page 58 contains the script for your character in Act 3, scene 2 and the cue line for your scene partner. Begin acting the scene with your partner, and listen closely for your cue to speak.

[To the teacher: This cue lines format can be used for any scene you would like to explore more closely. The American Shakespeare Center, in partnership with the Folger Digital Texts Collection, have created a "cue script generator" at https://www.twocrowns.com/cuescript/. Login "asc" and password "lightson."]

As you listen closely for your cue, you may hear other language that you might have missed in reading. Share your discoveries with your partner.

Guiding Questions:

- What can you tell about your character by just looking at your cue script? (How much do you say? Do you speak in verse or prose? Does your character speak in short, stilted lines, or in long run-on sentences?)
- What do you learn about your character from what he or she says in the scene? What do you learn about your character from what your scene partner says about you?
- Are you able to follow the action using only the cues and lines given?
- What did you hear more clearly when listening that you may have missed when reading every line?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, SL1

28. SHARED LINES

Shakespeare's texts contain many clues to help actors better understand their parts. You'll notice that some capitalized verse lines in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (in *any* of Shakespeare's plays, for that matter!) are indented from the left margin, starting well to the right of other lines. This is the first part of what is called a "shared line," and it happens when two speakers share the ten beats (or sometimes eleven or twelve) in a line. When actors come across a shared line, this prompts that the two lines be delivered as one, with no break in the rhythm between the end of one character's line and the beginning of the next.

In groups of four, decide who will take on the roles of Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander. Read through an excerpt of Act 3, scene 2, beginning with Helena's line "If you have any pity, grace or manners, / You would not make me such an argument." and ending with Lysander's line "Be certain, nothing truer–'tis no jest / That I do hate thee and love Helena." After your first read-through, recap with your group what you understand about the relationships between the lovers at this moment in the story. Who is in love with whom? Who is under the spell of Oberon's magic flower? Also with your group, identify and underline all of the shared lines you can find in this excerpt.

Read through your scene a second time. This time, when you reach a shared line, practice jumping in as soon as your scene partner has finished their line. For a challenge, you can also use a ball (like a hot potato!) for this activity to throw back and forth as you "toss" the lines to each other. Discuss what the shared lines suggest about these characters' emotions and state of mind in the scene.

Guiding Questions:

- How do shared lines influence the pace of dialogue between characters?
- Think about times when you've felt a need to jump in and respond to someone quickly, perhaps even cutting them off. Is there anything similar to that scenario and the circumstances in Act 3, scene 2?
- Where do you see shared lines the most in this play?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5, SL1

29. OBERON AND PUCK: INVISIBLE!

Throughout the lovers' feud in Act 3, scene 2, Puck and Oberon are onstage watching the fray, just as we do in the audience. Working in groups of six, choose a short portion (ten to twenty lines) of this scene. Read through the text once aloud. Decide what the mortals might be doing physically as they fight. Then discuss potential blocking options—the planning out of actors' movement onstage—for Oberon and Puck as they react to the quarrel at that moment. Remember, since the fairies are invisible to the humans, they can go anywhere and do virtually anything. Are Oberon and Puck laughing at the lovers from a distance? Is Oberon signaling Puck to interact with the lovers to add to the humor (both for the fairies and the audience)? Are Oberon and Puck working as a mischievous team?

Now, work up on your feet to create some blocking—the actors' movement—for your chosen text. What blocking and movement might best help to tell the story? Make big, bold choices with your blocking, which adds both to the comedy and might illuminate just how desperate these four are feeling. In the midst of this feud, how (if at all) are Oberon and Puck meddling with the mortals? Present your short performance, and discuss the different interpretations amongst the groups.

Guiding Questions:

- How does Oberon and Puck's "invisibility" free up directorial blocking choices?
- What sorts of blocking choices resulted in the most comedic moments?
- What textual evidence exists of Oberon and Puck's reactions to the lovers' quarrel?
- Was there an interpretation that was arguably more strongly supported by the text than others?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, SL4

ON YOUR OWN

30. FOCUSED FREE-WRITE

Helena and Hermia do not realize that Lysander and Demetrius are drugged in Act 3, scene 2. They feel betrayed by the young men and by each other. Helena, in particular, laments the loss of their friendship. Think about a time when you were forced to choose between groups of friends—or between a good friend and your boyfriend or girlfriend. What was the situation? What did you decide to do? Take a moment to free-write about your experience. Compare it to what happens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Guiding Questions:

- Do you empathize more with Helena or with Hermia?
- Were there any repeated ideas or themes in the collaborative class poem?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W3, W9

Act 4

AS A CLASS

31. ACTIVATING READING

In Act 4, scene 1, Oberon and Puck begin to resolve the chaos they have caused with their love potion. In this speech, Oberon describes in rich detail his most recent encounter with Titania, in which she gives in (albeit still under the charm of the love potion) to his demand to relinquish the changeling boy.

Explore Oberon's monologue with "jump-in reading," an interactive and playful way to read closely and make text (described below). Synthesize your thoughts with a free write. Follow with "pointing" (also described below), which leads to the creation of a "found poem" and a new interpretation of the passage.

Part One: Jump-in Reading

- Read Oberon's monologue aloud as a class, switching readers at each punctuation mark. While listening, mark at least one line or phrase that stands out for you.
- As a class, reread the speech—this time switching readers randomly without assignment or seating order. You can choose to jump in for any length of text you wish to read. Anyone can volunteer to jump in when the previous reader stops. If two readers begin at one time, one simply "yields" to the other. Proceed until the passage has been read a second time.
- Return again to the text. Take a few minutes to mark any lines, phrases, or individual words that stand out after this second reading.
- Choose one word, phrase or line and free-write about why it stands out to you.

Part Two: Pointing *(from Sheridan Blau, 2003)*

Pick a line or phrase from the same passage to read out loud—a line that is compelling, interesting, fun, etc. No one "owns" a word, phrase or line, and there is no prescribed order in which lines are to be spoken. Begin reading chosen lines and phrases, listening closely to one another to avoid speaking on top of one another. The same line can be read again and again, creating a choral effect in a type of found poem."

OBERON
Welcome, good Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity;
For, meeting her of late behind the wood
Seeking sweet favors for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her,
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds

Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begged my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child,
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in Fairyland.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
And, gentle Puck, take this transformèd scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain,
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the Fairy Queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see.
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessèd power.
Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet Queen!

Guiding Questions:

- Why do particular lines stand out for you? Is it the sounds, imagery, word play?
- During which reading did you need to listen most closely?
- How did your understanding of the passage change with each successive reading?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R5, R6, W10

IN SMALL GROUPS

32. "EMBEDDED" STAGE DIRECTIONS

Throughout Shakespeare, actors can find "signals" embedded in the script that can inform how they choose to move and speak to create the coherent story. These stage directions are sometimes embedded in the character's own lines or in the lines spoken by another character. (For example, when Egeus says, "Stand forth, Demetrius" in Act 1, scene 1, it's a good indication to the actor playing Demetrius that he step forward!) Act 4, scene 1 begins with Titania and her fairy attendants surrounding Bottom, transformed into a donkey. In groups of five, read through the scene aloud until Oberon's entrance, marking all lines that indicate when a character should move. Starting with Titania's line, "Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed," get up on your feet and explore possible variations in speaking and movement associated with the spoken stage directions. Present your favorite variation to the class. Play with overemphasizing some of these embedded stage directions to create comedy.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R1, SL1

33. NEWS REPORT: MYSTERY DISAPPEARANCES!

The four lovers have been missing from Athens throughout the night. Finding them together and asleep in the woods is, indeed, extraordinary–especially since Demetrius and Lysander left Athens as sworn enemies and Demetrius has unequivocally rejected the idea of reciprocating Helena's affection ever again. Work in small groups to write a TV news report for a cable news network about the discovery of the two couples and the explanation they provide. Remember that these are four young members of the nobility who have been missing for at least a day. Divide up the members of your group to play the parts of the lovers, the news anchor, and Theseus, Egeus, and Hippolyta (if there are enough people). Perform your news broadcast for the class. For extra credit, write the report from the bias of one of the following stations: CNN (sensational breaking news), MSNBC (liberal), and Fox (conservative, traditional values).

Guiding Questions:

- What are the different reactions the adults might have to the missing youth? How are their reactions supported by the text?
- What do you think each of the young lovers believe has happened?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R1, W3, W4

34. FIFTY-WORD SUMMARY

[To the teacher: for an improv, up-on-your-feet extension of this activity, check out activity #42, "PEARLS ON A STRING."]
Act 4 concludes, and the various plot points are wrapping up toward resolution. Reflect on all that unfolded in Act 4. Working in pairs, bullet point a list of no more than fifteen major events from the first four acts in chronological order. Together, recount the plot in exactly fifty words using your bullet point list as a guide to summarize the events.

Guiding Questions:

- Which plots and subplots are completely resolved by the end of Act 4? Which remain to be resolved?
- Which events were included in all or most groups' summaries?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W2

Act 5

AS A CLASS

35. "PYRAMUS AND THISBE": TRAGEDY OR COMEDY?

Read the play of "Pyramus and Thisbe," as it is performed before the court in Act 5, scene 1. You may have already read or seen Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, written right around the same time as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*–so the subject of star-crossed lovers, handled tragically and comically, was very much on Shakespeare's mind. But the total tragedy of "Pyramus and Thisbe" is ridiculously funny. How does it accomplish this in its language specifically? Cite evidence from the text.

With a few volunteers, try enacting the scene in two different ways, with the rest of the class serving as directors. First, try to make the play-within-a-play as hilarious as possible. Next, play it as seriously as you can, trying to make your audience feel sympathy for Pyramus and Thisbe. Discuss the different interpretations and which version resonates more with the class.

(As "dessert" following this activity, take a look at The Beatles own rendition of the play-within-a-play, filmed in 1964…) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vdm5sTjJ7U

Guiding Questions:

- What are the elements of a tragedy? Of a comedy?
- What is it about "Pyramus and Thisbe" that makes it seem ridiculous instead of tragic and horrifying?
- How did your two scenes differ? What parts, if any, remained the same?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R9

36. IRREGULAR METER AND RHYTHM

[To the teacher: For this exercise, push the desks to the sides of the room to create an open space in the middle of the floor.]

Open your script to Act 5, scene 1, starting at the line, "If we shadows have offended…" Form a circle and turn toward the right. While reading Puck's final speech, take one step per beat, stomping on the stressed syllables.

PUCK
IF we SHAdows HAVE oFFENded,
THINK but THIS and ALL is MENDed:
THAT you HAVE but SLUMbered HERE
WHILE these Visions DID appear.
AND this WEAK and IDle THEME,
NO more YIELDing BUT a DREAM,
GENTles DO not REpreHEND.
IF you PARdon WE will MEND.

What do you notice about this rhythm? How is it different from the iambic pentameter you have already studied? Why might Shakespeare have written Puck's final monologue in this unusual meter? After you have completed this exercise, watch this rock musical version of Puck's final monologue at http://tinyurl.com/pucksfinalmonologue. Follow along with the text. Does this actor stress the beats as we have scanned the speech, or does he choose to deviate from the meter? Now try adding your own rhythm to the speech, using your feet, hands, beat-boxing, etc.—to further explore the rhythm and musicality of the language. (You can check out some teachers trying out this exercise at https://tinyurl.com/pucksgotrhythm.)

Guiding Questions:

- How is the rhythm of Puck's speech different from regular iambic pentameter?
- What effect does the irregular meter create?
- Why might Shakespeare have chosen short lines and irregular meter for the final monologue of the play?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5

IN SMALL GROUPS

37. PUNCTUATION EXPLORATION

Take a look at Quince's Prologue to "Pyramus and Thisbe," printed below without punctuation or proper capitalization. As a class, read the passage once through for sense. As you listen, individually mark places you think punctuation should go. Remember to think about exclamation marks, question marks, commas or dashes at places where you think a brief pause is needed, and periods where you think a single thought ends. Then, in groups of three or four, agree on punctuation. Read the monologue again, emphasizing your punctuation choices. Discuss what is clearer now that you have added your own punctuation marks.

QUINCE
If we offend it is with our good will
That you should think we come not to offend
But with good will to show our simple skill
That is the true beginning of our end
Consider then we come but in despite
We do not come as minding to content you
Our true intent is all for your delight
We are not here that you should here repent you
The actors are at hand and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know

Now, read the same passage through again with the punctuation as noted in the First Folio, the first publication of Shakespeare's (almost…) complete works. What differences do you find? What effect does the punctuation in the First Folio create?

QUINCE
If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then, we come but in despite.
We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand; and by their show,
You shall know all, that you are like to know

Guiding Questions:

- How do your punctuation choices change the meaning of the passage?
- What may have been Shakespeare's purpose in using such unexpected punctuation?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L2, R5

38. IMAGERY, TABLEAU AND MULTIMEDIA

A tableau is a wordless, still (or almost still) picture made by bodies in a group and in relationship to one another, assuming certain poses and conveying a particular mood or image. A staged play may end with a tableau that the director creates to leave a dramatic impression. Use the tableau as a starting-off point to tap into a multimedia project that explores the imagery of Puck's final speech.

PUCK
If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended:
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear;
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend;
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearnèd luck
Now to' scape the serpent's tongue
We will make amends ere long,
Else the Puck a liar call.
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

- In groups of two or three, agree on one line to explore. Create a tableau–a "living sculpture"–based on that line alone. Find physical stances that express the imagery and mood of your line.
- Without revealing which line your group selected, present your tableau for another group, and then observe theirs. When you are observing another group's tableau, write as many descriptive words based on what you see.
- Find digital images that illustrate the descriptive words you have written. Check out Creative Commons (http://search. creativecommons.org,) a website where you can search media including photography, music and videos that you can legally publish with free copyright licenses.
- Create a collage with your favorite images. There are many free, collage software programs on-line. Try Fotor (http:// www.fotor.com/features/collage.html) to start.
- Publish all the collages on the Bard Blog, or post hard copies on the board. Seeing them all in one place, work with your group to find an instrumental song that mirrors the mood of the collages. Explore music at Sound Junction (http:// www.soundjunction.org/default.aspa) where you can find music from across the world. You can even create own your own music there. You can also search music on Creative Commons.
- In your group, play the song while reading Puck's final monologue aloud. What is the result? Do the instruments and melodies suit the words? Does the music evoke the mood and the imagery?

Guiding Questions:

- What words, sounds or imagery influenced the creation of your tableau?
- What is the mood do you think the text suggests at the end of the play?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, R4, SL1, SL2

ON YOUR OWN

39. MIDSUMMER MUSIC

If you were to tell the entire story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with music, how would it sound? Would you have a specific sound for the mortal world and a different sound for the fairy world? Felix Mendelssohn's score for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is probably the best-known piece of music for a Shakespeare play. Listen to the Overture several times at http://tinyurl.com/mendelssohndreamoverture, exploring a different purpose with each listening.

The first time, close your eyes and allow mental images come to your mind from the play; write down these images as they come to you. Listen to the song a second time and write down the names of particular characters that each section reminds you of. The third time, make notes for yourself about which scenes or events in the play the music evokes for you. Now, compare your list of characters and scenes. Do they match? Discuss your responses as a class and then compare them to the Kennedy's Center's description of this work at http://tinyurl.com/abouttheoverture.

Guiding Questions:

- How can music tell the story to an audience?
- Did you get a strong sense of "mortal" music and "fairy" music?
- What forms of storytelling use music to help convey plot, character and mood?
- How does Mendelssohn's music compare to how you imagined Midsummer should sound?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R7

After You Read the Play

40. BARD BLOG: A TOOL FOR DISCUSSION

After you've finished reading the play, continue adding to your Bard Blog. Use this idea to get you started, or modify other activities in this section to a blogging format:

- Looking back and reflecting on the play, choose one question that's still puzzling you about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It could be a question about character, plot, theme, relationship, or anything else that's still on your mind. Do any resolutions in the final act leave you asking questions? What ambiguity does the play leave for us to question? Consider, for instance, that Demetrius is the only character whose love potion is not removed from his eyes. Shakespeare seems to suggest that he remains under its influence at the end of the play. If he weren't, would he still want to marry Helena? Does it bother you that he is still under the spell? Why or why not? Feel free to revisit your blog post after seeing the performance, and add any new insights you might have.
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* talks a lot about love–Helena laments the folly of love early on in the play (Act 1, scene 1) and love motivates a good deal of the action. What is the nature of love in this play? Browse the play, and make a list of key words and descriptors related to love. What are the characteristics of love in your own opinion? Based on your web, what do you think Shakespeare may have wanted audiences to think? Consider also searching the play for textual connections to madness, reason and judgment, or magic. How does Shakespeare define these concepts in the play? How does he present them?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W6, W10

41. PEARLS ON A STRING

[To the teacher: Consider Activity #34, FIFTY-WORD SUMMARY, as a scaffold to the following exercise.] As a class you will create a story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* one sentence at a time. Before exploring the story of *Midsummer*, practice the exercise with a story that everyone has some familiarity with, like *The Three Little Pigs*.

- Eight to twelve students form a straight line across the back of your playing area.
- Each student will contribute one sentence for this story, with the goal of summarizing the main plot points of the story.
- The first student offers a beginning line for the story and steps forward to take the first position in the story line—all the way to the left.
- Another student gives a final line for the story and steps forward to take the last position in the story line—all the way to the right.
- The remaining students, one at a time, contribute a sentence to complete the story and take a place on the line where that plot point best fits in the sequence. They do not have to fall into the line one after another.
- Each time someone takes a place in the line, the story is retold from the very beginning, with each student saying their line in the sequence. This helps the students track the story.
- Continue until everyone has contributed a line to the story and taken a place on the story line.
- After the final telling, explore revising the story by adjusting the order or tweaking sentences for greater clarity.
- Continue until the group is satisfied the story is complete!

Once the activity is mastered, use it as a recall exercise to summarize the story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As an extension to this activity, try telling the story through different characters' perspectives to examine how the story might alter based on the character's perspective.

Guiding Questions:

- What's a gap in the story, and how can we fill it?
- What parts of the story are most important to the story arc?
- How does the story change when the story is told from different characters' perspectives? Were certain parts of the story emphasized more in some versions than in others?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R5, W5

42. CHARACTER QUARANTINE

[To the teacher: Divide your class into five small groups, providing each group with five slips of paper or blank index cards—you can increase or decrease the number of groups depending on the size of your class. Assign each group a major character from A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Designate a corner of the room for each of the five characters.]*

In your small groups, identify five lines spoken by your assigned character that demonstrate their journey within the play. Chart those moments to make sure those lines best correspond to the character's development. Write each line on a strip of paper or index card, notating the character's name. Delegate tasks among the group: dueling Quote Seekers, Arc Charter, Scribe, and Time-keeper. When finished, turn your cards in, face-down, with one pile for each of the five groups.

Pull a card from another pile at random. Read the quote quietly to yourself and move to the location of the room designated to the character who speaks your line, joining others who have lines from the same character. In this new group, read your lines aloud to one another. Do this a few times, rearranging yourselves until you are confident you are speaking the lines in the sequence they appear in the play, beginning to end. Create five "living statues"–frozen stances with your body–that represent your character in the moment he/she speaks each line. Present your character's story arc with the rest of the class confirming the order or suggesting changes. Want an extra challenge? Omit the character name from the quotes and see if you and your classmates can determine who the speaker is before moving to the appropriate corner of the classroom.

Guiding Questions:

- How does each line connect to a defining moment for your character?
- How do the "living statues" help us to understand the character's arcs?
- Which characters arguably undergo the biggest transformation from the beginning to the end of the story?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL1, SL4

43. CHARACTER MOTIVATION

Which characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* play the largest role in meddling with other people's affairs throughout the course of the play? Make a list of these characters on the board–then on your own, rank these characters from most meddling to least meddling, using quotes from the play to support your choices.

Choose one of the characters from your list. In that character's voice, write a justification of their actions as convincingly as you can, again using evidence from the text. As a class, read some of the justifications aloud and allow the rest of the class to ask questions and challenge the character's rationale for their actions.

Guiding Questions:

- How did hearing the justification for a character's actions affect your opinion of–or ability to empathize with–a character?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL4, W9

IN SMALL GROUPS

44. EXPLORING POINTS OF VIEW

In small groups, recount the story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* through RAFT-ing. In your group, decide on the following:

- **R**ole: Helena, Demetrius, Lysander, Demetrius, Bottom or Puck.
- **A**udience: an appropriate group based on format and role. Examples include Titania's fairy train, the people of Athens, the changeling boy, the grandchildren of Hermia and Lysander years later, a coffee house open-mic audience.
- **F**ormat: a song, spoken word, slam poem, formal speech to the public, news report, rap, sock puppet theater, children's story, or eulogy.
- **T**opic: the evening's events

As your character, create a three to five minute composition that retells the story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from the point of view of your chosen character. Try to come to a consensus on the night's events–or is the *Dream* too complicated to interpret?

Guiding Questions:

- At what moments, if any, was your character under the effects of the magic flower's spell? How might that impact their recollection of the evening's events?
- What do you better understand about the play now that you have retold (or reheard) the story from your character's point of view?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, W4

45. DOUBLING

Since Peter Brook's groundbreaking production of this play nearly fifty years ago, the characters of Theseus and Oberon, along with Hippolyta and Titania are often double cast, with one actor playing both parts. In small groups, explore the similarities between Theseus and Oberon, and Hippolyta and Titania. What are the differences? What skills or talents do the men use to rule his kingdom? How do the women wield their own royal powers? How do the characters react to their spouses?

Make a chart or diagram to show your findings. If you were directing this play and chose to double-cast these roles, how might you show their similarities and their differences? After you see the performance, discuss director Joe Dowling's interpretation of these two characters.

Guiding Questions:

- Based on your textual discoveries, what qualities or traits would an actor taking on both of these roles need to be able to portray?
- How might double-casting alter the audience's interpretation of the play?
- Do you agree with the director's casting choice for Theseus and Oberon at CST?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, SL1, SL4, SL5

46. THE DREAM IN TWENTY LINES

In small groups, look through the script to choose the most important lines (up to twenty!), making sure to illustrate all aspects of the plot. What scenes must be represented by a line to move the story along? What actions will you use to help your audience understand what's going on? Prepare a script connecting your selected lines with brief, over-the-top narration in the style of a movie trailer. Act out your trailer for your classmates, or consider filming a montage of clips or still photos to play under the recorded sound of the trailer. *[To the teacher: For a visual example of this activity, check out this movie trailer,* http://www.tinyurl.com/taftmovietrailer, *for another Shakespeare play performed by students at Taft High School in Chicago!]*

Guiding Questions:

- What are some strategies you can use to select lines?
- What becomes clearer in the plot when selecting only twenty lines to tell the entire story? What would you argue are the most important elements of the story?
- How can you use this concept for future use in reading?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, SL1, SL2

47. CREATING A BACK STORY "BACKPACK"

An actor must be as detailed as possible about the life of the character he or she will be playing. What does the character's voice sound like, how does he move? What's the character afraid of, what does he want more than anything else in the world? Actors must make choices about a character's "back story" based on what is said about them as well as by them in the text of the play.

Choose a character from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and answer the questions above to begin getting inside your chosen character's head. Collect materials that you think your character would carry around in their backpack– and explain why you chose each item. Your classmates will be asking you questions, like: "Was that item a gift?" "Who gave it to you?" etc. An actor must be as specific as possible in creating his/her character!

Now that you have developed a back story for your individual character, pair up with someone who has a different character to you. Find someone who your character is familiar with and has a relationship with. Work together to decide how your characters met and come up with 3 important moments in your relationship history. For some of the characters in the play, there will be clues about how they met, and what their relationships might be, in the text. Look through the play first to find any information you are given about these two characters together and then fill in any blanks with your imaginations.

[For the teacher: the character relationships do not necessarily need to be romantic ones, you could look at Helena and Hermia, Hermia and Egeus, Bottom and Peter Quince, Hippolyta and Helena or any other characters who we know have met before. This can be an interesting way to develop the less obvious relationships in the play and find interesting hidden clues from Shakespeare.]

Guiding Questions:

- What are the most meaningful items in your own backpack? What items do you imagine your character would find valuable and want to keep with them at all times?
- How does imagining the life of your character outside of the play help you to understand the character's actions in the play?
- What did you learn about your two characters and their relationship?
- Did you find something interesting in the text which you hadn't noticed before?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL4

The Performance: Preparing and Reflecting

This section will help you begin to imagine what it might be like to see the play, especially if you've never seen a play at Chicago Shakespeare Theater before, and to reflect on your experience after seeing the performance. Many activities will also ask you to watch the performance with a particular element of the production in mind—the director's vision, the overall concept, the unique design elements, casting choices, acting style—with guidance on how to reflect meaningfully back in the classroom post-performance.

48. BARD BLOG: A TOOL FOR DISCUSSION

Before and after you see the performance, continue adding to your Bard Blog. Use these ideas to get you started, or modify other activities in this section to a blogging format:

- Select one of the quotations from the "What the Critics Say" section of this handbook. Do you agree with the writer?
- Blog an argument about this quotation. Cite specific examples from the play to support your assertions. Does your argument still hold up after seeing the performance?
- Each actor brings his or her own unique quality to a character. They make specific choices based on the director's vision, chemistry with the ensemble of other actors and their own interpretation of what motivates their character to action. Choose a character to follow closely when you see CST's performance (if you already began a character diary, stick with your same character.) As you watch the actor playing your chosen character, note the acting choices he or she makes through voice, movement and "subtext"—the inner feelings beneath the spoken words. Compose a free-write of your thoughts on the actor's interpretation of the character. How does the actor in CST's production differ from what you had imagined? What choices did the actor make that enhanced your understanding of the character?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, W6, W10

AS A CLASS

49. THE STORY IN SHORT

If you have not read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in class, use these resources to become acquainted with the story and follow the performance more easily:

- Refer to the *dramatis personae* and the synopsis in the beginning of the handbook.
- Watch Video SparkNotes: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at http://www.sparknotes.com/sparknotes/ video/msnd
- Use the "Before You Read the Play" activities in this handbook to become more familiar with the story, setting, characters, themes and language.
- L.I.N.K to activate any prior knowledge you may have about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
    - **L**ist the information you already know about the story of the play before you watch the Sparknotes video or review the handbook sections.
    - **I**nquire about other information you would like to know.
    - **N**ote: After you watch the video and review the handbook sections above, **N**ote new knowledge and connections between known information.
    - **K**now: Finish by writing what you **K**now about the story including setting, characters, and themes.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R7

50. THE AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

The audience in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's courtyard-style theater is always in view of each other. The experience of theater is one of community. We are all present together, watching a story that has been acted countless times for hundreds of years and in hundreds of cities around the world. The thrust stage is much like the stages of Elizabethan theaters and situates the action of the play in the midst of the audience, allowing audience members to watch both the actors and each other! After you see you *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, share when you became aware of other audience members. How did this affect your own experience? Were there times during the performance that you found yourself watching other audience members rather than watching the stage action?

Guiding Questions:

- How does the audience experience at a play compare to a sporting event? A movie?
- How did the actors interact with the audience?
- What other art forms can you see live as an audience member? How are they similar to theater?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL1

IN SMALL GROUPS

51. THE DREAM TEAM

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's casting director is responsible for finding the right person for every character you see on our stage—no small task! After you've read the play, think about each character—how do they look, sound, move and behave? Think of television and film celebrities who fit your image of the character and, in groups, discuss who your "Dream Team" would be for your version of the play. Print or post on your class blog images to create "headshots" for your perfect cast! Then present your cast to your classmates, explaining why you made each decision, and compare your ideas with those of your classmates—and using specific textual evidence whenever possible. After you see the play, contrast your vision to that of Director Joe Dowling and the actors whom he and CST's casting director have assembled.

Guiding Questions:

- What clues in the text should you consider when casting a character?
- Why might one director choose different actors from another?
- How is your "dream team" different than or similar to Chicago Shakespeare's cast of actors? How did the production's interpretation of the main characters compare to yours?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R7, SL5

52. DIRECTOR'S VISION

Even though we study Shakespeare's works as literature today, they were originally written to be performed rather than read–and in fact only half of Shakespeare's plays were even printed during his lifetime. Every director has a vision to suit their own interpretation of the play and the audience's tastes. Read "What Creators These Mortals Be," an article published in *The New York Times* (http://theater.nytimes.com/2013/06/16/theater/a-midsummer-nights-dream-in-different-looks-and-cities.html) to get a sense of the range of creativity and innovation different directors have envisioned for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in productions across the country just this past summer.

Before you come to see CST's production, think about how you would bring *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to life in performance. How will you combine the following design elements together to carry out your vision of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on your stage? Design and produce a poster or diorama of your production that addresses the following areas to demonstrate your overall vision:

Setting:
What will the setting of your play be like? What do you want your audience to see when they first enter the theater? Look through different magazines and use your own imagination to create a visual representation of your set. What colors will you use? What kind of furniture, if any? What will Theseus's court look like? The woods? Can you think of specific buildings or rooms that have definite moods?

Sound and Music:
The script to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* calls for music or dancing many times throughout the play. Look at each instance where music is called for. What kind of music would you want to use in each instance? Write down a few adjectives describing the mood you want to create. What sounds or music would you use to evoke this mood? Can you think of specific songs you would want to have played or sung? Certain instruments? Make sure you can explain why you've made a certain choice. What other times would you like for music to be heard?

For example, many directors have music that follows the fairies wherever they go. What kind of music would you use for these instances? Add a playlist of the music you would include on your poster. To jumpstart your research, visit http://www.soundjunction.org/, a web resource where you can explore music by historical period, location in the world, genre, and even listen to the sounds of individual instruments.

Costumes:
Directors have grappled with the question of how to costume the fairies since *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written. How will your fairies look? How will they move? What clothing and make-up will they wear? How will you make them look like spirits of the night? You may want to "Google Images" past performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as at the "Performance History" essay in this handbook for costume ideas. Create a visual representation of the costume idea for a fairy, a mechanical and one of the mortals to add to your poster presentation. You may choose to draw the costumes or print images. (Professional costume designers present their early ideas to the director on a similar kind of "costume board," containing cut-outs from books and magazines, fabric swatches, and sometimes images from art or history.)

Lighting:
Lighting is an important element of live theater that works hand in hand with scenic design. It evokes mood through color, brightness, texture and shadows. Lighting often sets the time of day. It can also enhance location through special pattern and design effects like stars, water, the shadows of leaves and clouds. Spotlights and "specials" can isolate actors on stage to stand out to an audience. Think about a specific moment in the play and how you would want lighting to enhance it. Consider Act 2, scene 2 when Titania is lulled to sleep by her fairy attendants; Act 3, scene 1 when the mechanicals rehearse in the woods; Act 4, scene 1 when Theseus, Egeus and Hippolyta find the young couples asleep outside; or Act 5, scene 1 the concluding moments during Puck's final speech. Depict the lighting for a moment in the play on your poster. Pay close attention to location, time of day and mood of the scene. As you watch CST's production, note the choices that the lighting, costume, sound and set designers made in collaboration with Director Joe Dowling. At what moments did you become aware of music or special lighting effects? How did

the costumes affect your understanding of the characters? How did all of the design choices affect the mood of this production? How did they impact your emotional response to the story?

Guiding Questions:

- Who is the target audience for your production?
- What kind of theater space do you imagine your production to be performed? In the round? In a black box studio theater? Outdoors? In a large proscenium theater?
- What can you use to evoke a mood in your design?
- How can you convey the most important themes of the story through design?
- What was the most vivid scene in your mind as you read the play? How can the design elements bring this scene to life on stage?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL5, R1, R7, W9

53. REIMAGINING A DREAM WORLD

Though Shakespeare set *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in and around Athens, many directors have interpreted Athens and the play's other settings to be a place quite different from ancient Greece, or even Elizabethan England. Watch, for example, how Classical Theatre of Harlem has made "Athens" a reflection of Harlem in New York City - http://tinyurl. com/midsummerinharlem. If Athens becomes Harlem, what is the fairyland like within that world? Who are the Rude Mechanicals?

Before you see CST's interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, create a modern concept for one of the play's settings. What do you imagine Theseus's court might look like in today's world? Or the forest? Or the place where the Mechanicals meet to rehearse? Once you have determined an idea for setting, discuss in small groups how a modern concept would impact an actor's interpretation of their character. After you see CST's interpretation, discuss as a class how the director and designers conceptualized the world of the play.

Guiding Questions:

- If you were to conceptualize the world of the play to reflect your community, how might Athens, the fairies and the mechanicals change from a more traditional interpretation?
- Why might artists choose to redefine the world of the play?
- What was your reaction to CST's interpretation? Did the concept stay true to the story?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R9, SL2

Teacher Resource Center

If you have an activity or lesson plan that was a classroom success with your students, we want to hear about it! Consider donating your lesson plan to the Teacher Resource Center, and become part of our ever-growing, permanent collection! Need inspiration? If you are looking for the perfect activity or "proven" lesson plan, visit the Center to access hundreds of teaching resources.

Call the Education Department, 312.595.5678, to make an appointment.

ON YOUR OWN

54. WRITING A THEATER REVIEW

A scaffold for this activity: Before you write your review, read three different theater reviews of current plays at Theatre in Chicago's Critics Review Round-Up: http://www.theatreinchicago.com/reviewlistings.php. Analyze the structure of a review, identifying key elements. Based on these key elements, describe the style you found most helpful (or least helpful) in communicating a play's appeal for potential theater-goers. Now, write your own critical review of CST's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Briefly recount the plot. Discuss the parts of the production–including the casting, acting, setting, music, dance, costumes, cuts–you thought worked particularly well, or did not work well and explain how you thought each worked to tell the story. Consider publishing your piece in a school newspaper or the Bard Blog. Use some of the questions below to generate ideas for your review:

- What aspect of the play captivated your attention?
- How did the production's interpretation compare with your own interpretation of the play? Do you believe it stayed true to Shakespeare's intention?
- Were there particular performances that you believed were powerful? Why?
- Would you recommend this play to others? Who would most enjoy it?
- Based on your answers to the above questions, how many stars (out of a possible five) would you give this production?

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W1, W4

55. TOOLS OF THEATER

Consider all the different tools of theater that can help bring a story to life, including:

- Acting (vocal, physical and character choices made by the actors)
- Blocking (the actors' movement and positioning on stage)
- Set design
- Costume design
- Lighting design
- Music and sound design
- Props
- Special effects

In each of these arenas, there are countless choices made by the director, designers and actors, contributing to their unique interpretation of the story. Before you see CST's production, choose one of the above tools of theater to focus on. As you watch the performance, note the specific ways that tool is used throughout and how those choices help to support the storytelling.

After you see CST's production, write an analysis of how your chosen tool was utilized to create a unique interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Outline the choices made using that tool, and how those choices either supported or didn't effectively support the storytelling.

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, W1

Classroom Warm-ups and Community Builders

One of the actors at Chicago Shakespeare Theater likes to describe the experience of acting Shakespeare as the "Olympics of Acting." Shakespeare's verse demands a very flexible vocal instrument, and an ability to express not only the flow of the text, but the emotional shifts which are suggested by the variations in rhythm and sound. In light of the sheer volume of words, some of which are rarely–if ever–used in modern vocabulary, the actor must also be prepared to help the audience with his body, as well. An actor acting Shakespeare must go through each word of his text, determine its meaning, and then express it clearly to his audience. This requires a very physically demanding style. The physical and vocal warm-up is the actor's basis for each performance.

A brief physical and vocal warm-up can help your students move from a "classroom mode" to a "studio mode." It sets the tone for a student learning Shakespeare in a theatrical sense as well as a literary sense. Try warming up every class, and you will find that after the first couple of times, your students' nerves–and yours–will be unseated by energy and focus. A few rehearsals in the privacy of your own home can do a lot to bolster your courage! Every actor develops his/her own set of physical and vocal warm-ups. Warm-ups help the actor prepare for rehearsal or performance not only physically, but also mentally. The actor has the chance to focus on the work at hand, forgetting all the day-to-day distractions of life, and beginning to assume the flexibility required to create a character. The body, the voice and the imagination are the actor's (and the student's) tools in mastering Shakespeare.

PHYSICAL WARM-UPS

1. GETTING STARTED

- creates focus on the immediate moment
- brings students to body awareness
- helps dispel tension

Begin by taking a comfortable stance with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing straight ahead, knees relaxed. Inhale deeply through your nose, filling your lungs deep into your abdomen, and exhale through your mouth. Repeat this a few times. Notice how your lungs fill like a six-sided box, creating movement in all six directions.

2. WARM-UP FROM THE TOP OF THE BODY DOWN *(approximately seven to ten minutes)*

- gentle movement helps increase circulation, flexibility, and body readiness
- increases physical and spatial awareness

a. Begin by doing head-rolls to the left and to the right, about four times each way, very slowly. Then do a series of shoulder rolls to the back and to the front, again very slowly, and emphasizing a full range of motion.
b. Stretch each arm toward the ceiling alternately, and try to pull all the way through the rib cage, repeating this motion six to eight times.
c. Next, with particular care to keep knees slightly bent, twist from the waist in each direction, trying to look behind. Again, repeat six to eight times.
d. From a standing position, starting with the top of the head, roll down with relaxed neck and arms until the body is hanging from the waist. Shake things around, making sure your body is relaxed. From this position, bend at the knees, putting both hands on the floor. Stretch back up to hanging. Repeat this action about four times. Then roll back up–starting from the base of the spine, stack each vertebra until the head is the last thing to come up.
e. Repeat the deep breathing from the beginning of the warm-up. Bring your feet together, bend your knees. Keeping your knees together, rotate them in a circle parallel to the ground six to eight times. Repeat in the other direction. Return to standing.
f. Pick up the right foot, rotate it inward six to eight times, and then do the same with the left foot. Repeat with outward rotation of the foot. Take a few moments and shake out the entire body.

VOCAL WARM-UPS

[Your vocal warm-up should follow your physical warm-up directly—approximately seven minutes]

3. GETTING STARTED

- helps connect physicality to vocality
- begins to open the imagination to performance possibilities

a. Begin by gently massaging and pat the muscles of your face. This will help wake up the facial muscles.
b. Stick out your tongue out as far as possible—repeat this with the tongue pointing up, down, and to each side. (This exercise will seem strange, but can be made silly and fun, while accomplishing the necessary vocal warm-up. When students see you going through these exercises with commitment, that's often all they need to draw them in.) Repeat this exercise once or twice.
c. Put your lips gently together and blow air through them, creating a "raspberry."
d. Next, hum, quietly, loudly, and across the entire vocal range. The vocal instrument loves to hum. Explore all the resonating spaces in the body, by moving the sound around. Humming helps to lubricate.
e. Create the vowel sounds, overemphasizing each shape with the face –A, E, I, O, and U—with no break.
f. Choose two or three tongue-twisters—there are some listed below. Again overemphasizing the shape of each sound with the lips, tongue, jaw, and facial muscles, begin slowly with each tongue-twister, and gradually speed up, repeating until the speed is such that the enunciation is lost.

4. TONGUE TWISTERS

- red leather, yellow leather …(focus on the vertical motion of the mouth)
- unique New York…(focus on the front to back movement of the face)
- rubber, baby, buggie, bumpers…(focus on the clear repetition of the soft plosives)
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers…(focus on the clear repetition of hard plosives)

COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Each of these exercises is meant to open and expand our imaginations, increase our sense of "ensemble" or teamwork, and encourage being "in the moment." These are some of the most fundamental and crucial elements of an actor's training—and, of course, they are fundamental, too, to the learning process in the classroom.

5. STAGE PICTURES *(approximately ten minutes)*

- shows how varied interpretation is: there is no one "right" answer
- encourages the students to interpret concepts with their whole bodies
- begins to show how the body interprets emotion

You will need a list of very strong descriptive, colorful, emotional words from the script for this activity. Find your own, or use our examples below.

cold fruitless moon	Theseus, Act 1, scene 1
the tempest of my eyes	Hermia, Act 1, scene 1
hoary-headed frosts	Titania, Act 2, scnee 1
purple with love's wound	Oberon, Act 2, scene 1
spotted snakes with double tongue	Fairy, Act 2, scene 2
crystal is muddy	Demetrius, Act 3, scene 2
rent our ancient love asunder	Helena, Act 3, scene 2
drooping fog as black as Acheron	Oberon, Act 3, scene 2

Begin walking around the room. While walking, fill up the entire space, exploring pacing, what it would feel like to be a different weight or a different height. Move the center of your body into different places. For instance, try walking with your nose leading your body. Now try your hip, your knee, your elbow and so forth.

Shakespeare's characters are often very physically broad. He created elderly characters and hunchbacked characters; clowns, star-crossed lovers and cold-blooded killers. These characters call for the actors to figure out how they move. If the character is greedy, should his center be in his/her gut? Or perhaps his/her chin? The actor must be prepared to experiment with the character's body.

Notice if you feel any emotional differences within these changes. After about three minutes of exploring these changes, see if you notice any particularly interesting discoveries. *[To the teacher: encourage these discoveries without necessarily drawing focus to individual students, as this is a self-reflective activity, but perhaps suggest to the group they might "Try what it feels like if you slow your pace, hunch your shoulders, droop your head, and move your center into your knees."]*

After a few minutes of this exploration, find a "neutral" walk. You are now going to create a stage picture as an entire group. Chose a word, and then count down from seven. After those seven beats, say freeze, and the class must create a photograph of the word you have chosen, with their entire body, collectively. Comment on the emotional quality the stage picture exudes. After a couple of words, split the group in half–half will be in the space and half will be audience. Repeat the process, asking the observing group:

- What do you notice?
- What emotions are evoked in the stage picture?
- What questions do you have about the stage picture?
- What changes would you like to suggest to strengthen or clarify the stage picture?
- What patterns do you see emerging from the stage picture?

6. MIRRORING *(approximately ten minutes)*

- helps build trust within the ensemble
- encourages the students to "listen" with all their senses
- helps the students reach a state of "relaxed readiness," which will encourage their impulses, and discourage their internal censors

Many actors will tell you that learning the lines is the easy part; making it come out of their mouths as if for the first time is the hard part, especially with Shakespeare. Shakespeare can sound like a song, but how do you make it sound like real people talking to each other? Actors listen to each other, and try to respond to what they hear in the moment of the play. Listening is a very important part of acting; it keeps the moment real–and the characters believable.

Find a partner, then comfortably sit facing your partner, in fairly close proximity. You and your partner will be mirrors of each other. One partner will begin as the leader, and the other partner will move as their reflection. You must begin by using smaller, slower movements, and work up to the maximum range of movement that your partner can follow. Partners should make eye-contact and see each other as a whole picture, rather than following each other's small motions with their eyes. Switch leaders and repeat.

After the second leader has had a turn, students will stand and increase their range of movement. Switch leaders and repeat. Keep going, but now there is no leader. See what happens, and then discuss.

7. FOUR UP *(approximately five minutes, but can also be extended)*

- helps the ensemble work together
- helps to slowly introduce physical activities in the classroom
- helps to bring focus to the classroom

For this game, everyone should be seated; it would be fine for the students to stay seated at their desks. The goal of this game is to have four people standing at all times. There are a few rules–everyone can stand up whenever they want, but only four should be standing at a time and they can only stand up for a maximum of 5 seconds. Finally everyone needs to pay attention to each other and everybody should participate and try to stand with a group of four.

A sense of community and having a strong focus can be the keys to a successful production (and classroom too!). This exercise can help to establish those things in a fun way that is also getting the students up on their feet.

8. ZING! BALL *(approximately five minutes and requires a soft ball about 8-12 inches in diameter)*

- helps the ensemble grow together
- helps the students let go of their internal "censor" and begin tapping into their impulses
- brings the physical and the vocal actor tools together

Stand in a circle, facing into the center. In this game, the ball carries with it, energy. This energy is like a feedback loop that increases the energy, speed, and focus of the entire group by the amount that each actor-student puts into the ball. The idea is to keep the ball moving in the circle without letting the energy drop. There should be no space between throw and catch. There should be no thought as to whom the student will throw the ball to next. As the ball is thrown, to keep the intensity of the energy, you must make eye contact with the person you are throwing the ball to, and at the moment of release, the person throwing should say "Zing!" Experiment with the way you say "Zing!" It could be loud or soft, in a character voice, or in whatever way you wish, as long as it is impulsive and with energy. Shakespeare has love scenes, sword fights, betrayals, and all sorts of relationships in his plays. Actors must be able to experiment, follow their impulses, and create character without the fear of failure.

9. ZING! BALL (WITHOUT A BALL) *(approximately five to seven minutes)*

- asks the students to make their imagination clear to the ensemble
- focuses the students on physical detail

This exercise builds on Zing! Ball. Take the ball out of the circle and set it aside. Take an imaginary Zing! Ball out of your pocket. Grow this ball from a tiny rubber ball into a huge balloon. Using "Zing!," toss the ball to someone across the circle, and as it floats down, that person will try to catch it with the same weight and speed as you threw it. Then he/she will recreate the ball into a different weight and size, making it clear to the rest of the circle how it changed. In the same way as Zing! Ball, work around the circle. The wide range of vocabulary in Shakespeare's plays can often be intimidating as one reads the scripts. The actor's job is to make the language clear, and this is often accomplished by very specific physical gesturing.

10. WAH! *(approximately five to ten minutes)*

[*To the teacher: Want to see Wah! in action with a group of students? Watch this brief video, http://www.tinyurl.com/wahwarmup*]

- facilitates physical awareness and risk-taking
- encourages vocal projection
- helps actors increase their sense of timing and decrease response time

Stand in a circle, facing in. No one in the circle is a student or teacher any longer, but rather a fearsome warrior. Press the palms of your hands flat together to become a sword.

To begin the game, one warrior raises his or her sword straight up, then brings it down, pointing at another warrior in the circle. Warriors must make excellent eye contact to avoid confusion. As the warrior brings down his or her sword, he or she utters a fearsome battle cry, by saying, "Wah!" (Be wary, warriors, of shouting, which comes from the throat and leads to laryngitis, a warrior's worst enemy. Using the good support and deep breathing from your

vocal warm-up will help you keep your vocal chords in top fighting condition.) When you become the recipient of "Wah!," raise your sword up above your head. While your sword is raised, the warriors on either side of you slash towards her stomach, as they cry "Wah!" in unison. Then make eye contact with someone else in the circle, slash your sword towards them with a final defiant "Wah!" Each "battle" should therefore include three cries of "Wah!"

As the group becomes familiar with the game, work to increase your speed and volume. This is a silly game; remember that warriors don't care about "looking cool" because they're too busy fighting unending battles. When a warrior misses his or her cue, stop the round and start it again until everyone is comfortable being loud and making big physical choices.

11. **ZIP ZAP ZOP!** *(approximately five minutes)*

- facilitates mental focus
- encourages eye contact and team work
- builds a sense of rhythm and pace

[*To the teacher: For a demonstration of this community builder, watch this video,* http://www.tinyurl.com/zipzapzop, *for a demonstration and instructions.*]

Stand in a circle, facing in. Bring your hands to your chest in a prayer pose. Make sure everyone can see each person in the circle. Eye contact is going to be very important! Point your hands like a laser, make clear eye contact at another person in the circle, and say "zip," "zap" or "zop," picking up your cue from the person before you. While maintaining the word sequence of zip, zap, zop as well as the rhythm, start slowly and eventually build speed.

12. **TO BE!** (*approximately seven to ten minutes*)

- helps students to listen to and work with one another, creating a supportive learning community
- brings the physical and the vocal actor tools together
- facilitates mental focus
- introduces students to some of Shakespeare's language and characters

[*To the teacher: consider using ZIP ZAP ZOP here as a scaffold to this warm-up.*]

Stand in a circle, facing in. One person will start as the keeper of the energy. There are multiple ways to pass the energy, all based off Shakespeare's plays and words. The idea is to keep the energy constantly in motion around and across the circle. Introduce each option one at a time, so students have time to experiment with each option as the game builds in complexity.

- "To be!"—make eye contact with the person to the left or right of you. Reach towards them with your hand (as if you are clutching Yorick's skull) while speaking this line from *Hamlet*. Now that person has the energy.
- "Not to be!"—to change the direction the energy is flowing, hold up your hands in a "stop" gesture while speaking this line from *Hamlet*. The person who tried to pass you the energy now has to send it in another direction.
- "Get thee to a nunnery!"—to send the energy across the circle, point to someone and deliver this line from Hamlet. That person now has the energy
- "Out, damn spot!" —to "ricochet" the energy back across the circle in response to "Get thee to a nunnery!", make an X with your arms as you speak this line from *Macbeth*. The person who tried to pass you the energy now has to send it in anothe rdirection.
- "Romeo!" "Juliet!"—to trade places with someone else in the circle, make eye contact and stretch your arm towards them as you cry, "Romeo!" They must then respond "Juliet!" Now run gracefully past each other. The person who cried "Juliet" now has the energy.
- "Double, double, toil and trouble!"—this line from *Macbeth* instructs everyone to change places at once, leading to a completely new circle. Whoever cried, "Double, double, toil and trouble!" keeps the energy.

- "A horse, a horse!"–Whoever has the energy may call out this line from *Richard III*. Everyone else in the circle must respond, "My kingdom for a horse!" while galloping in place like a horse. The energy stays with the person who gave the command.
- "Exit, pursued by a bear!"– point to someone across the circle as you speak this stage direction from *A Winter's Tale*. Run through the circle to take their spot. Your classmate must now run around the outside of the circle to take your previous spot in the circle. That person now has the energy.

Add your own rules! Choose short lines from the play you're studying and match them with a gesture and action. Where does the energy travel? Your goal as a group is to keep the energy moving in the circle without letting focus drop. As the class becomes more comfortable with each command, the game will get faster and faster, and you will need to think less and less about what to say next. Experiment with the way you deliver the lines! There is no wrong way, as long as you speak the lines with energy.

13. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Form two parallel lines, and enough room in between for "action" to take place. The first student in one line, Student A, steps into the empty space between the two lines and begins miming any action (for example, bouncing a basketball). The first student in the opposite line, Student B, steps out and addresses Student A, saying their first name (a good name reinforcer!) and asking, "[Name], what are you doing?" Student A then states any action that is not what they are miming (e.g. "Baking a cake"). Student B then begins miming the action that Student A has just stated, and the next student steps out to continue the exercise.

The cast of CST's 2014 production of *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by David Bell. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

Teaching "A Midsummer Night's Dream" with Film

BY MARY T. CHRISTEL

MARY T. CHRISTEL *taught AP Literature and Composition as well as media and film studies courses at Adlai E. Stevenson High School from 1979 to 2012. She has published several works on media literacy including* Seeing and Believing: How to Teach Media Literacy in the English Classroom *with Ellen Krueger (Heinemann) as well as contributing articles to* Teaching Shakespeare Today *with Christine Heckel-Oliver (NCTE),* Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-First Century *with Anne Legore Christiansen (U of Ohio),* For All Time: Critical Issues in Shakespeare Studies *(Wakefield Press),* and Acting It Out: Using Drama in the Classroom to Improve Student Engagement, Close Reading, and Critical Thinking *with Juliet Hart and Mark Onuscheck (Routledge). Ms. Christel has been recognized by the Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for promoting media literacy education.*

Given that Shakespeare as a playwright in Elizabethan England found himself at the epicenter of popular culture, one wonders if he would be writing screenplays if he were alive today. It is up to the savvy teacher to determine how to help students "read" Shakespeare in the three ways Mary Ellen Dakin suggests: as text, as performance, and as film. Dakin's book, Reading Shakespeare Film First, might seem contradictory to the approach many English/Language Arts teachers take. How can one "read Shakespeare" studying film first? Film frequently follows the reading of a play and functions as "dessert" at the unit's end. The strategies that follow are intended to help teachers reconsider how and when film can be used in order to motivate, clarify, and enrich students' engagement with the play.

FILMS CAN BE USED BEFORE READING...

...to preview the story, characters and themes

Many of the stories that Shakespeare dramatized were familiar, even well known, to his audience, so providing students with a broad outline of the plot prior to reading would be consistent with the knowledge that Renaissance audiences brought to many of the plays they saw performed on stage.

For an easy and quick way to introduce the play, you might screen *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales – A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1992) with your students, an animated short that aired on HBO in the 1990s and now is distributed on DVD by Ambrose Video. This twenty-five minute, condensed animation retains the play's original language and presents the essentials of the story. To give students a viewing focus, each can be assigned a particular character or plot thread (the lovers, the fairies, the rude mechanicals) to track through the film and write a summary about the importance of their assigned element to the work as a whole. Charged with becoming an "expert" on that element, students can use their summary as a focus while reading the play or seeing the performance, helping those who may feel overwhelmed by understanding a complicated narrative or Shakespeare's language. (Also available on Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/68294795.)

...to create context

Film can be utilized as an introductory element to a unit to provide context prior to reading. Historian Michael Wood takes viewers on a lively tour of various locations throughout contemporary England to explore Shakespeare's life, times, and plays in this acclaimed four-part series, *In Search of Shakespeare* (2004).

Teachers can provide context by showing a commercially released film that "sets the stage" for the Elizabethan era, enabling students to get a sense of the politics, social customs, and "look" of the times. A film like *Elizabeth* (1998) starring Cate Blanchett has little to do with Shakespeare, but provides a vivid glimpse into the monarch's struggle to claim and maintain the throne. *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) and *Anonymous* (2011) offer glimpses into the world of early modern theater practice and Shakespeare himself, but the liberties these films take with conventional understandings of historical events may create more confusion than clarity for some students. Excerpts, however, can help students visualize the time and the occasion of attending the theater.

Films Media Group (http://ffh.films.com/) has an extensive catalogue of films useful in providing context; many titles are available as streaming video.

FILMS CAN BE USED DURING READING...

...to clarify understanding

For students who are having difficulty visualizing the action or fully comprehending the language, it can be beneficial to watch a film adaptation incrementally, act by act, in conjunction with reading the play. A dynamic way of approaching the play in class could involve three components:

- studying and discussing key scenes and speeches
- viewing portions of a film version (to fill in the gaps between what students are reading or to revisit moments that students found confusing)
- exploring key scenes and speeches through "active Shakespeare" strategies found in the Classroom Activities portion of this handbook.

The "Terms to Explore the Page-to-Screen Process" and "Key Questions for Classroom Discussion" on the following pages offer students the tools to "read" films as a visual text.

...to make comparisons

Just as the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries adapted Shakespeare's scripts to fit the fashion and tastes of audiences Shakespeare's scripts are often transformed to support the spectacle of the cinema. Every cinematic adapter of a complex dramatic text must grapple with the question: What can the art of film visually reveal through a close-up, crosscut, or a montage that effectively augments or replaces the text? In the past thirty years, Shakespeare's plays have been transported to modern settings that maintain the broad outlines of plot and character but replace Shakespeare's blank verse with contemporary language and colloquialisms. Viewing such adaptations in class allows students to see varied interpretations of the same story, opening up the idea that Shakespeare's plays can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. See the Film Finder on page 87 for suggested adaptations.

TERMS TO EXAMINE THE PAGE-TO-SCREEN PROCESS

(adapted from Film Adaptation*, ed. James Naremore)*

Fidelity: Much discussion in film adaptation criticism focuses on how faithful a film is to the source material. Obviously, film and literature use different narrative strategies and tools of composition. A fruitful way to have students approach the question of fidelity is to ask them to list the scenes, characters, motifs, and symbols that are essential to telling the story of the source text. Then as they watch a film adaptation, they can keep track of how those elements are handled by the film.

Film as Digest: This concept acknowledges that the written text is far more detailed and comprehensive in its ability to set a scene, develop a character, reveal a narrative point of view, or create a symbol. Film works best in developing plot and showing action.

Condensation: In film, characters and events need to be collapsed or composited in order to fit the limitations and conventions of the film adaptation. Students can explore this term by determining which characters can be combined based on their common functions in the text.

Immediacy: Viewing a film is a far more "immediate" cognitive experience than reading a play. We decode visual images much faster and more readily than the printed word.

Point of View: The camera can express a point of view, just as the narrator of a written text. Point of view in film is visual and subtle. Here are three ways to express or describe the point of view in a film:

- Neutral: the camera is merely recording events as they happen in a reportorial fashion. This is the most common shot in filmmaking.
- Subjective: the camera assumes the point of view of one of the character so the viewer sees what the character sees.
- Authorial: the director very deliberately focuses the camera on a feature of a sequence or shot to comment on the action or reveal something.

Shot and Sequence: As defined by *Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary*, a "shot" is the "basic unit of film structure or an unbroken strip of film made by an uninterrupted running of the camera." Think of a shot as a "still" image that is combined with other still images to create a moving picture. A shot captures its subject from a particular distance and angle. The camera can be stationary or moving as it captures its subject. Individual shots then are joined together by the editing process to create a sequence of action.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Prior to viewing:

- What are the essential scenes that must be included in an adaptation to cover the basic plot of Shakespeare's play? What constitutes the exposition, inciting incident, central conflict, complications, climax and resolution to represent and streamline the central action?
- What point of view dominates the play? Who is the central character? Which character has the most soliloquies or asides and might have the strongest relationship with the audience as a result? How could the viewpoint of the central character or the character that has the most direct connection with the audience be represented through the use of the camera?
- What details does the play provide to guide the casting of principle actors for the central characters? Looking at the text carefully, which details regarding physical appearance, class, or behavior should be embodied by an actor to make an immediate impression on the viewer?
- Which supporting characters are essential to the development of the plot and main characters? Which characters serve the same functions in the story? How might several of those characters be combined in order to condense the story in helpful and necessary ways?
- Which central images, motifs, symbols, or metaphors are central to the play? How could one or two of these literary techniques be translated into visual or sound techniques to make their impact more immediate in order to support or to replace the play's language? How would they be represented on the screen or through the musical score?

During viewing:

- How much of the dialogue from the play is used in a scene?
- To what extent does the camera work seem unobtrusive, natural, obvious, or stylized?
- Which character(s) appears mostly in one shots?
- At what point in the scene are two shots used? What is the effect of their use at that point?
- What is the typical distance (close, medium, long) of the camera to the subject of the shots? To what extent does the manipulation of camera distance make the scene an intimate one or not?
- To what extent are most of the shots at eye level, slightly above, or slightly below? How do subtle changes in angle influence how the viewer perceives the character in the shot? Are extreme high or low angles incorporated at times? To what effect?
- To what extent does the camera move? When? What is the effect of the movement?
- To what extent does the sequence use music? If it does, when do you become aware of the music and how does it set a mood or punctuate parts of the dialogue?

After viewing:

- Which of the screenwriter's choices to condense or expand the events of the play are the most successful in translating Shakespeare's text to the screen? Which choices are less successful or satisfying?
- Which narrative elements (events, characters, key speeches) omitted from the screen adaptation shift the focus of the comedy, tragedy, or history in comparison to the original text?
- If any characters were composites of two or more characters, what was gained or lost by reducing the number of characters or altering the function of a particular character?
- Which actors performed their roles in expected and/or unexpected ways? Did Shakespeare's play dictate how roles should be performed?
- Which visual elements of the film made the strongest impression upon you as a viewer?
- How did the visuals help draw your attention to an element of plot, a character, or a symbol that you might have missed or failed to understand when reading the play?
- As a reader of the play, how did viewing the film help you to better understand the overall plot, a particular character, or specific symbol/theme?

Tracy Michelle Arnold as Titania and Ron Orbach as Nick Bottom in CST's 2012 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Gary Griffin. Photo by Liz Lauren.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" Film Finder

BY MARY T. CHRISTEL

TOP FIVE FILMS TO INVITE INTO YOUR CLASSROOM:

1. ***Shakespeare: The Animated Tales - A Midsummer Night's Dream*** (1992, 25 min.)

   This condensed animation provides the perfect overview of the characters and plot to prepare students for reading the play or seeing a performance. Also available at Also available at https://vimeo.com/68294795.

2. ***Shakespeare Uncovered: A Midsummer Night's Dream*** (2015, NR, 53 min.)

   Hugh Bonneville teams up with Ralph Fiennes to examine one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies as well as attends a performance of Dominic Dromgoole's production at Shakespeare's Globe on Midsummer's Night. This episode also includes clips from Hollywood's 1930's film featuring Mickey Rooney as Puck and from Peter Brooks' landmark stage production.

3. ***William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream*** (1999, PG-13, 116 min.) directed by Michael Hoffman

   This adaptation situates the story in the Edwardian period in a place referred to as "Monte Athena," awash in Italian flora and fauna, sunshine, and moonlight. (Includes some partial nudity that clearly falls within its PG-13 rating's range.)

4. ***A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare Re-Told*** BBC series (2007, 90 min.)

   This contemporary language adaptation preserves the lovers, the fairy realm, and the rude mechanicals in a fairly recognizable manner. Those elements are introduced through an engagement party thrown by Theo and Polly for their daughter, Hermia, and James Demetrius at a posh resort called *Dream* Park. The bittersweet elements of this adaptation can advance a discussion of whether *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in any form is a comedy. (A helpful link to teaching materials at http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/midsummernightsdream/.

5. ***Get Over It*** (2001, 97 min.) starring Kirsten Dunst and Ben Foster

   The 1990s and early 2000s yielded a steady stream of updated vernacular versions of Shakespeare's tragedies. *Get Over It* received little attention even though it featured rising star Kirsten Dunst, plus then-unknowns Ben Foster, Colin Hanks, and Mila Kunis. The film uses a high school production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to lay the foundation for the central modern plotline echoing Shakespeare's romantic entanglements.

FILM VERSIONS OF *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*

1. **BBC Shakespeare** (1981, 112 min.), directed by Elijah Moshinsky
   Features few cuts to the text; television production so visually a bit dull

2. **Shakespeare's Globe** (2013, 167 min.), directed by Dominic Dromgoole
   Features few cuts to the text; shot on Shakespeare's Globe stage with a live audience; Renaissance costumes

3. **Theater for a New Audience** (2014, 144 min.) directed by Julie Taymor
   Heavily and effectively adapted by Taymor; engaging and imaginative design concept

All of these productions are available on DVD and Dromgoole's also is available on the Globe Player app.

Two other noteworthy adaptations might be more difficult to locate but turn up occasionally streaming through Amazon: the first directed by the RSC's Peter Hall (1968) and featuring Diana Rigg, Helen Mirren, and Judi Dench, which ran in the US on CBS television; and the second, Adrian Noble's theatrical release film based on his popular 1996 RSC production, which featured a surreal design concept.

DOCUMENTARY FINDS

1. ***Midsummer in Newtown*** (2016, 81 min.) directed by Lloyd Kramer

   A New York theater spends a summer residency with students from Sandy Hook Elementary School creating a musical version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The film follows the students' auditions, rehearsals, and performance, as well as featuring several parents grieving the loss of a child or supporting the emotional recovery of a surviving student in the aftermath of the school shooting. Stream the film on itunes or Amazon.

   Watch the trailer at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X5QyAsO5V0.

2. ***Still Dreaming*** (2014, 93 min.) directed by Jilann Spitzmiller and Hank Rogerson

   Residents of the Lillian Booth Actors Home, all retired actors, rehearse and perform *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This engaging film, both humorous and poignant, explores the restorative power of creativity no matter the age of the artist. Stream from the film's website https://stilldreamingmovie.com. Watch the trailer: https://vimeo.com/67079578

From left: Hannah Starr as Fairy, Lane Anthony Flores as Fair, Adam Wesley Brown as Bottom, and Christiana Clark as Titania, in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2018 production of *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Jess McLeod. Photo by Liz Lauren.

INTRIGUING COMPANIONS:

1. ***Thug Notes: A Midsummer Night's Dream*** (4:06) Series host Sparkey Sweets, Ph.D. presents a concise, informative, and irreverent summary and brief analysis of the play. This episode is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpLqTC2-HuA.

2. The 1909 silent film version directed by Charles Kent and J. Stuart Blackton is available on the DVD Silent Shakespeare (Milestone Collection 2000). The DVD is packed with other silent film treatments of Shakespeare's work.

3. A 1935 Hollywood extravaganza starred Mickey Rooney as Puck, James Cagney as Bottom, plus many actors playing the fairies–who would later appear as Munchkins in *The Wizard of Oz*.

4. Disney also adapted *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into an animated short (6:16) casting Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Daisy as the quartet of thwarted lovers and Goofy as Puck, who ineptly tries to set things romantically aright. Watch it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qx96B8Btb4. Warner's Animaniacs (2:50) provides Yakko's riff on Puck's closing speech, which Dot "translates," as a capper to the "Disasterpiece Theatre" (1993) episode. This piece provides a great opportunity to discuss intertextuality. Watch it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbqq77AEN_8.

5. ***"Bottom's Dream"*** (1984, 6 min.) created by John Canemaker (*Marching to a Different Toon*, Milestone Video) Acclaimed filmmaker John Canemaker uses the tools of the animator to craft an interpretation of Nick Bottom's mock-heroic, romantic dream.

6. In 2010, University of Kansas hosted a production of the play that featured "original pronunciation" of the text. Films Media Group offers a seventy-seven minute film, which explores how this project was conceived, developed, and performed in an intimate acting space. Rental or purchase of the film offers access to a copy of the script and an e-book, *The Original Pronunciation of Shakespeare's English*. Additional information at: http://ffh.films.com/id/30535/A_Midsummer_Nights_Dream_in_Original_Pronunciation.htm

7. ***10mlLove***, also produced in 2010, is a modestly produced Bollywood film, which uses the play's basic premise of romantic misadventures set against a wedding celebration. The title refers to a love potion handed over by a mother to her lovelorn son to help in his efforts as he woos the reluctant object of his desires. In a comic manner, the film also explores the tensions between people of Christian and Muslim faiths in modern-day India.

8. ***Hermia and Helena*** (2016) is the latest in a series of films from Argentine director Matías Piñeiro that he calls "Shakespeareads." He focuses on one (or here, two) of Shakespeare's heroines in a modern context, usually setting the action around a stage production of the Bard's play. Two Argentine women sort out their romantic entanglements in New York City and back home in Buenos Aires, while one of them is working on a Spanish language translation of Shakespeare's comedy.

**indicates specific focus on* A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in addition to other plays*

Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's website*
Access articles and teacher handbooks for eighteen of Shakespeare's plays, as well as information on introducing your students to Shakespeare in performance.
www.chicagoshakes.com/education

Comprehensive Link Sites

Absolute Shakespeare*
Access a comprehensive collection of Shakespeare's work, including full texts and summaries, a timeline and lists of film adaptations.
absoluteshakespeare.com

Shakespeare in Europe Sh:in:E
Access an array of web links categorized into criticism, theater and film, music, adaptation, education, and more. Website created and maintained by Basel University in Switzerland.
shine.unibas.ch/metasite.html

Shakespeare Resource Center*
A collection of links and articles on teaching Shakespeare's plays.
http://bardweb.net/index.html

The Reduced Shakespeare Company: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged
A comedy performance of abridged versions of all of Shakespeare's works.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vd4h16DWpdU

Shakespeare and Elizabethan England

The Elizabethan Costuming Page
Read articles on what Elizabethan woman and men wore, with drawings.
http://www.elizabethancostume.net/

Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend
This web-based exhibit is a companion to The Newberry Library's 2003/2004 Queen Elizabeth exhibit.
http://publications.newberry.org/elizabeth/exhibit/index.html

The Elizabethan Theatre
Read a lecture on Elizabethan Theatre by Professor Hilda D. Spear, University of Dundee, held at Cologne University.
uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/englisch/shakespeare

Life in Elizabethan England: Betrothal and Wedding
This site contains information on marriage contracts of the time, as well as links to other aspects of Elizabethan life.
http://elizabethan.org/compendium/9.html

The English Renaissance in Context
Multimedia tutorial about the English Renaissance, crated and maintained by University of Pennsylvania.
http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/eric/teach/index.cfm

The Map of Early Modern London Online
This resource includes a detailed, searchable map of Shakespeare's London and an evolving encyclopedia of the places listed.
http://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/index.htm

Proper Elizabethan Accents
A guide to speaking like an Elizabethan.
http://www.renfaire.com/Language/index.html

Queen Elizabeth I
Learn more about Queen Elizabeth and the people, events and concepts key to the study of the Elizabethan Age.
http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
Learn more about Shakespeare's life and birthplace through an extensive online collection.
http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/home.html

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre
The Encyclopedia Britannica's entry includes a detailed biography, contextual articles on Elizabethan literature, art, theaters and culture, and brief entries on famous Shakespearean actors, directors and scholars.
https://www.britannica.com/topic/Globe-Theatre

Designing Shakespeare Collections*
This link offers many production photos focusing on design practice at the Royal Shakespeare Company and other British theaters. The photos can be enlarged and used for a myriad of classroom activities and research. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has seventy-seven productions listed.
http://ahds.rhul.ac.uk/ahdscollections/docroot/shakespeare/playslist.do

The History of Costume by Braun and Schneider
View costume illustrations of different social classes and cultures from various historical times.
http://www.siue.edu/COSTUMES/history.html

The Internet Broadway Database
This online database of Broadway plays is a great place to search for 'Shakespeare' and learn about some productions of the Bard's works. This will only give information about shows performed on Broadway.
https://www.ibdb.com/

The Internet Movie Database
Similar to IBDB, utilize this online movie database to search for 'Shakespeare' and learn about the different cinematic versions of his plays.
http://www.imdb.com/

Shakespeare's Staging*
This website surveys staging of Shakespeare's plays, from Shakespeare's lifetime through modern times.
http://shakespearestaging.berkeley.edu/

Shakespeare in Art

The Faces of Elizabeth I
Access a collection of paintings of Queen Elizabeth spanning her lifetime.
http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizface.htm

Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection*
In August 2014, over 80,000 images from Folger's collection were released for use in the public domain. Images include production photos, books, manuscripts and art.
http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/view/all

Shakespeare Illustrated*
Harry Rusche, English professor at Emory University, created this website that explores nineteenth-century paintings depicting scenes from Shakespeare's plays. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has twenty-two linked works of art; the website is searchable by play title and artist name. english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html

Tudor and Elizabethan Portrait Gallery
England's National Portrait Gallery's Tudor and Elizabethan collection contains portraits from 1485-1603. These portraits are viewable on this website.
http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/explore/by-period/tudor.php

Teaching "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

BBC's *60-second Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream*
An engaging introduction to the play, this site is written in the format of exclusive breaking news on the front page of a newspaper.
http://bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/60secondshakespeare/themes_midsummer.shtml

Touchstone Online Exhibition: Peter Brook's 1970 Production
This site includes production photos from this important production, as well as an explanation of plot and theme.
http://touchstone.bham.ac.uk/exhibition/MND/home.html

A Teacher Guide to the Signet Edition
This teachers' guide provides summaries of each act in addition to study questions to consider while reading the play and follow up writing prompts.
http://us.penguingroup.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/midsummer.pdf

Elizabethan Wedding Customs
This is a useful resource for comparing today's customs of marriage to those during the Elizabethan era.
http://william-shakespeare.info/elizabethan-wedding-customs.htm

Hermia's Diary
This is a 2010 blog written as though it is Hermia's diary.
http://hermiasdiary.blogspot.com/

Pyramus and Thisbe as told by The Beatles
In 1964, The Beatles acted in a televised skit of Pyramus and Thisbe. Hilarity ensues!
http://tinyurl.com/beatlespyramusandthisbe

Shakespeare Unlocked
Shakespeare Unlocked offers insights into character, dramatic devices and interpretative choices through performance. Three scenes from the play are shown and then explored by actors and directors in workshops.
http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01dtvpl/features/dream

Texts and Early Editions

The First Folio of William Shakespeare (University of Virginia)*
Access *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and others of Shakespeare's plays online in their first folio additions.
http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/003081548

Folger Digital Texts*
All of Shakespeare's plays are available to download here in a variety of file formats from this site. Great for downloading plays into a Word document and cutting the text!
http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/download/

The Internet Shakespeare Editions*
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.
http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Foyer/plays/

Introduction to the First Folio: Creating the First Folio
This video by the Royal Shakespeare Company explains how Shakespeare was published during his lifetime and the creation of the First Folio after his death.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_vCC9coaHY

Making a Folio
This video demonstrates how to make a folio like Shakespeare's First Folio.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MmGmv6Ys1w

Shakespeare's First Folio
This page from the British Library provides an easy to understand introduction to the First Folio.
bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/landprint/shakespeare/

Shakespeare Online*
The full text of the play is provided with accompanying activities and information.
http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/tamingscenes.html

Treasures in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto*
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.
http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html

What Is a Folio?
This image shows how to read a Folio text; part of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's website "Hamlet on the Ramparts."
http://shea.mit.edu/ramparts/newstuff3.htm

Words, Words, Words

Open Source Shakespeare Concordance
Use this concordance to view all the uses of a word or word form in all of Shakespeare's works or in one play.
http://www.opensourceshakespeare.com/concordance/findform.php

Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary
Part of Tufts University's Perseus Digital Library and created by Alexander Schmidt.
http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0079

Shakespeare's Words Glossary and Language Companion
Created by David Crystal and Ben Crystal, this site is a free online companion to the best-selling glossary and language companion, Shakespeare's Words.
shakespeareswords.com

Elizabeth Ledo as Puck and Andy Truschinski as Lysander in CST's 2012 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Gary Griffin. Photo by Liz Lauren.

suggested reading

indicates a focus on methods for teaching Shakespeare through film

Barber, C.L. "May Games and Metamorphoses on a *Midsummer* Night" from *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. Princeton, 1959. This chapter provides insight into the Elizabethan *Midsummer* rituals and the context around which Shakespeare might have imagined his play.

Barton, John. *Playing Shakespeare*. London, 1986. A bible for Shakespearean actors, this classic book by John Barton (of Royal Shakespeare Company fame) offers any reader with an interest in Shakespeare's words an insider's insight into making Shakespeare's language comprehensible.

***Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary*. Dir. Sheldon Renan.** Pyramid Films, 1970. This short film was created with the purpose of teaching film technique and film appreciation in schools. Basic terms are explored and defined, which can aid in the classroom analysis of a film.

Bevington, David. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. New York, 1992. This comprehensive anthology is an easily accessible teaching resource that addresses the two main issues readers face while first reading Shakespeare—a lack of knowledge about the historical period and difficulty with the language of Shakespeare's plays—through essays on both the plays and the historical context.

Boose, Lynda E., and Richard Burt. *Shakespeare, the Movie: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video*. London, 1997. A valuable resource in teaching a wide variety of film adaptations, and especially the film adaptations of the 1990s. The first chapter provides an examination of the proliferation of film adaptations in the '90s that appeal to both teachers and students, and a useful overview of the styles of film adaptations that have evolved.

Brockbank, Philip, ed. *Players of Shakespeare, Volume 5*. Cambridge, 2005. Written by famous actors about the Shakespearean roles they have performed on the English stage, this collection of personal essays offers the reader a privileged look inside the characters and the artist's craft. Volume 5 of the series includes an essay on Puck in *Midsummer*.

Buckle, Linda, ed. *Cambridge School Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Cambridge, 2003. This excellent series, used extensively as a resource in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's education efforts, includes *Midsummer* among its titles. Its "active Shakespeare" activities are easily adaptable to any play in the curriculum.

Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. New York, 1975. The classic reference detailing Shakespeare's sources. Out of print, this multi-volume resource is well worth searching for in a library.

Chrisp, Peter. *Shakespeare*. London, 2002. Part of DK Eyewitness Books' "children's series," this title, plus a number of others (*Costume, Arms and Armor, Battle, Castle, Mythology*) offers students of any age beautifully illustrated background information to complement a classroom's Shakespeare study.

Christel, Mary T., and Scott Sullivan. *Lesson Plans for Creating Media-rich Classrooms*. Urbana, IL, 2007. This book provides sample lesson plans for incorporating media literacy into the curriculum. Particularly interesting are Scott Williams' lesson plans for creating movie trailers.

Crystal, David and Crystal, Ben. *Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion*. London, 2004. A terrific, easy-to-use Shakespeare dictionary that's a mainstay in CST's rehearsal hall.

Dakin, Mary Ellen. *Reading Shakespeare with Young Adults*. Urbana, IL, 2009. This book offers practical strategies for how and why to teach the Bard's work.

Davis, James E., and Ronald E. Salomone. *Teaching Shakespeare Today: Practical Approaches and Productive Strategies.* Urbana, IL, 1993. This text is similar in format to *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century*. In combination, they provide the greatest wealth of teaching ideas, including the use of film.

suggested reading

Foster, Cass. *Sixty-minute Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Chandler, AZ, 2000. Swan Books developed a series of "short Shakespeare" editions with Shakespeare's original language, abridged for younger students. It's an excellent series for elementary and ESL teachers to have on hand.

Frye, Northrop. *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Romance and Comedy*. San Diego, 1965. Frye's work is a classic in Shakespearean scholarship, and serves still as an excellent lens through which to understand Shakespeare's comedies.

Garber, Marjorie. *Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis*. New Haven, 2013. This new addition of the influential 1974 book further discusses the evolution of Shakespeare's use of the concept of "dreams" in his plays.

Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge, 1998. As "missionary" and inspiration to the "active Shakespeare" movement worldwide, Rex Gibson compiles into one incomparable resource activities that encourage students to playfully and thoughtfully engage with Shakespeare's language and its infinite possibilities.

Goddard, Harold C. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Chicago, 1951. This classic critical analysis, which is both readable and humanistic, devotes a chapter to each play in the canon.

Griffiths, Trevor R. *Shakespeare in Production: A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Cambridge, 1996. This excellent series, still available for only a few titles, combines the complete text with copious historical notes on production choices from the sixteenth to twenty-first centuries. It's a great resource for a teacher interested in performance choices.

Grun, Bernard. *The Timetables of History*. New York, 1991. This book is a must-have resource for anyone who loves to place Shakespeare, his writing and his royal characters in an historical context.

Hawkins, Harriet. *Twayne's New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare*. Boston, 1987. This very reliable, accessible series of Shakespearean criticism is a good resource for many plays in the canon. Each is a single scholar's voice, as opposed to a compilation of various shorter essays.

Hills and Öttchen. *Shakespeare's Insults: Educating Your Wit*. Ann Arbor, 1991. This fun reference guide catalogues insults from Shakespeare's plays.

Krueger, Ellen, and Mary T. Christel. *Seeing and Believing: How to Teach Media Literacy in the English Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH, 2001. Providing the vocabulary of film analysis, this resource helps acquaint teachers will various ways to teach film adaptations as a cinematic text.

Kott, Jan. "Titania and the Ass's Head." From *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. New York, 1964. Kott examines the themes of eroticism and bestiary in *Midsummer*.

McFadden, Mark. *The Course of True Love: A Workshop Approach to A Midsummer Night's Dream*. New South Wales, 1992. This easy-to-photocopy resource is part of a series published by St. Clair Press, including most of Shakespeare's most frequently taught plays. The activities encourage an active exploration of the script.

Michaels, Wendy. *Playbuilding Shakespeare*. Cambridge, 1996. The former director of education at the Royal Shakespeare Company guides students through exploring elements of five of Shakespeare's plays including *Midsummer*.

Mullaney, Steven. *The Place of the Stage*. Chicago, 1988. Mullaney examines the culture of popular drama in Elizabethan and Jacobean England by offering an original and historically grounded perspective on the emergence of popular theater.

Naremore, James. *Film Adaptation*. New Brunswick, NJ, 2000. The opening chapters outline the strategies that filmmakers use in adapting literature into film, which include "cinema as digest" and issues of fidelity to the literary source.

Nevo, Ruth. "Fancy's Images." From *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare*. London, 1980. In this book, Nevo analyzes ten of Shakespeare's comedies, interpreting them through theory of comedy, and tracing Shakespeare's development as a comic dramatist.

Nutt, Alfred. "The Fairy Mythology of Shakespeare." New York, 1968. (Reprint of 1900 edition.) Nutt examines Shakespeare's use of fairies and the subsequent influence on other written works.

O'Brien, Peggy. *Shakespeare Set Free*. New York, 1993. The Folger Library's revamping of teaching practice, encapsulated in this three-volume set (*Midsummer* is included in the first of three books) has helped teachers approach Shakespeare as the performative script it was written to be.

Ornstein, Robert. *Shakespeare's Comedies: From Roman Farce to Romantic Mystery*. Newark, 1986. In this book, Ornstein analyzes Shakespeare's comedies and his trajectory as a comic dramatist.

Parsons, Keith and Mason, Pamela. *Shakespeare in Performance*. London, 1995. A beautifully illustrated book detailing the performance history of Shakespeare's plays, both on the stage and in film.

Partridge, Eric. *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. London, 2000. Not for the prudish, Partridge's classic work offers an alphabetical glossary of the sexual and scatological meanings of Shakespeare's language. It will help the reader (including even the most Shakespeare-averse) understand another reason for this playwright's broad appeal on stage.

Peacock, John. *Costume 1066–1990s*. London, 1994. Among the many excellent costume books available, Peacock's offers hundreds and hundreds of annotated sketches–an essential resource for the study of Shakespeare.

Rosenthal, Daniel. *Shakespeare on Screen*. London, 2000. This lavishly illustrated book traces the development ofcinematic adaptation by focusing on plays that have been made into films several times. It is an excellent resource to locate different adaptations, and to gain insight into the filmmaking and adaptation process.

Salomone, Ronald E., and James E. Davis. *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century*. Athens, 1997. This collection of essays by high school teachers and college professors offers a wide range of strategies to teach Shakespeare, including several essays on the use of film and film adaptation in the classroom.

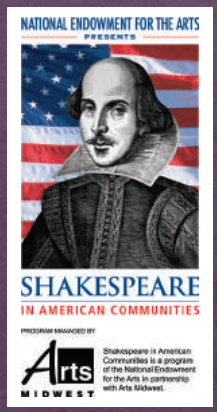
Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier
800 East Grand Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611

team shakespeare!

Shakespeare and the art of theater open up many and varied paths of learning. Through one of the largest arts-in-education programs in the entire country, Team Shakespeare brings Shakespeare's works to life for middle and high school students. Team Shakespeare is an expansive effort to share Shakespeare with young people and to celebrate the work of this great playwright, who embraced the limitless scope of imagination and the exploration of our complex human nature.

MAJOR SUPPORTERS OF TEAM SHAKESPEARE

A.N. and Pearl G. Barnett Foundation
LLOYD A. FRY FOUNDATION
ITW
KPMG
ART WORKS.
POLK BROS FOUNDATION a foundation for chicago families
The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust

Additional support perennially funded by: **the Malott Family Student Access Fund, the Pritzker Foundation Team Shakespeare Fund** and the **Segal Family Foundation Student Matinee Fund.**

Chicago Shakespeare productions are made possible in part by the Illinois Arts Council Agency and an IncentOvate Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.