

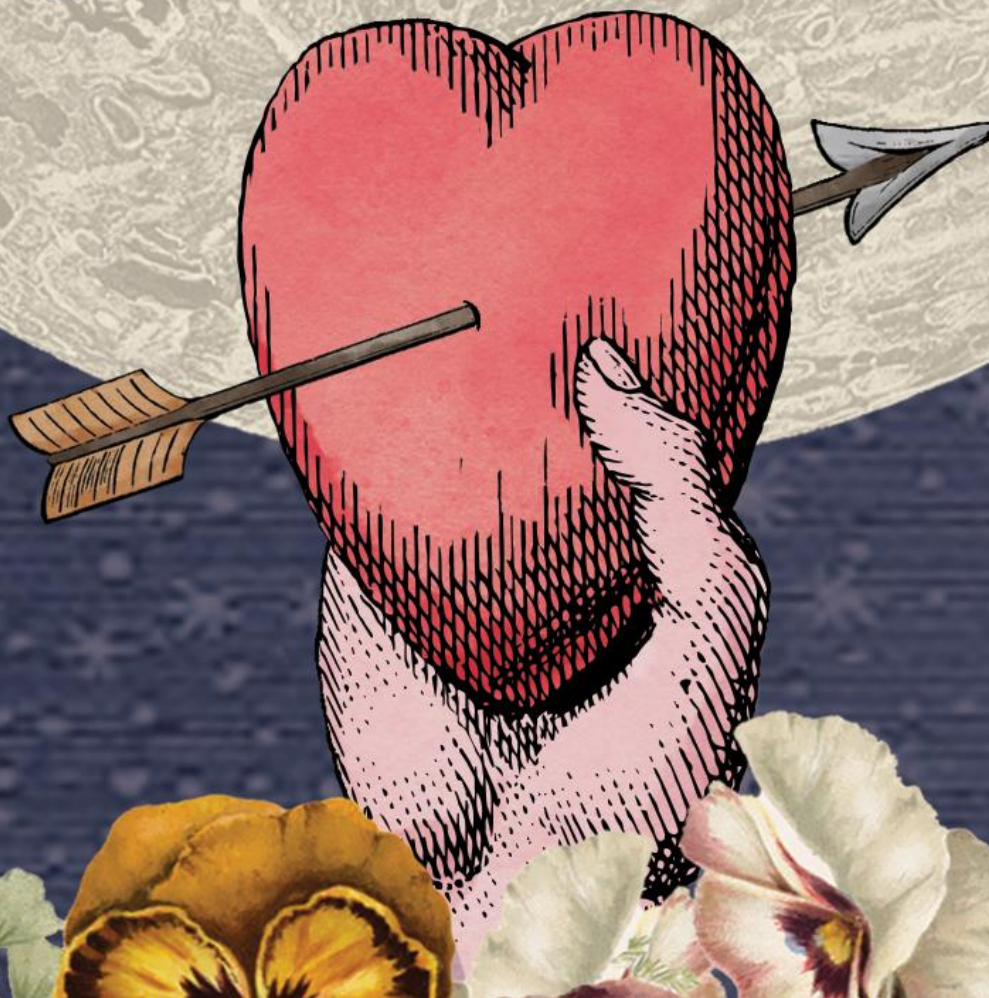


QUEENSLAND
SHAKESPEARE
ENSEMBLE

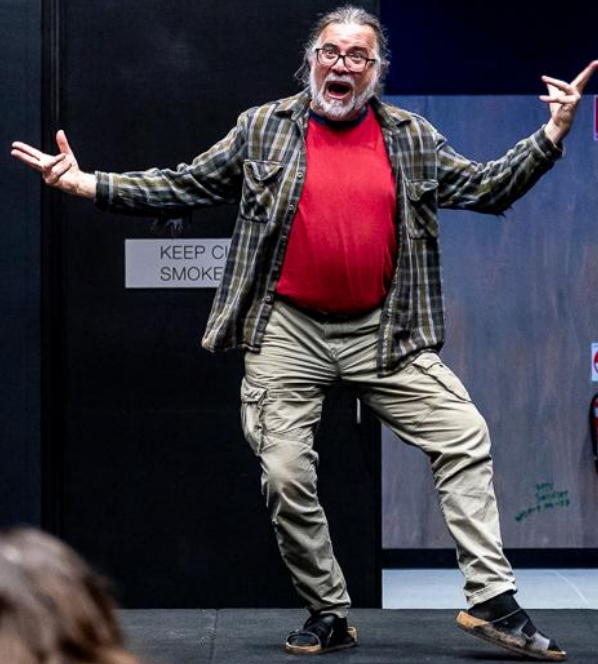
A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare

August 15 - 30



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ABOUT THE QUEENSLAND SHAKESPEARE ENSEMBLE

The Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble (QSE) was founded in 2001. Since its inception, the Ensemble has gained a reputation for energetic, accessible and unique productions of Shakespeare's plays. We use Shakespeare as a platform for positive change, via our ongoing programs. These include:

Mainstage performances for the general public.

The Apprenticeship program, supporting emerging artists by offering a 6 month training program.

Dare to Share showing of company training.

Shakespeare's Shorts, touring to schools, festivals, markets and other events.

The Shakespeare Prison Project.

Our Shakespeare Beyond program, which includes: A Night at the Theatre, Relaxed Performances, and Youth Justice workshops.

In-School Workshops in voice, Forum Theatre, and performing Shakespeare.

Actor training, including: Linklater Voice Work, Speaking Shakespeare in Your Own Voice, Theatre of the Oppressed, Shakespeare Scene Study, and the Young Actors Shakespeare

QSE exists to:

- Powerfully share epic stories with live audiences,
- Provide world class training opportunities to actors and non-actors,
- Support creativity in contexts and communities where it has been historically excluded,
- And nurture an ensemble of artists managers that drive the company's activities and works together to develop their skills on stage and off.

We believe that performing Shakespeare demands the cultivation of the whole self in the service of the communal enterprise, and as such is the ideal vehicle for this exploration. Although the Ensemble performs the works of other playwrights and authors, Shakespeare will always be the home from which we travel.

The Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we work, play and perform - the Jagera, Turrbal and Quandamooka peoples. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging, and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.



CURRICULUM LINKS

General Drama (QLD, Senior Curriculum)

Unit 1: SHARE.

Unit 3: CHALLENGE.

Unit 4: TRANSFORM.

Drama in Practice Applied Syllabus (QLD, Senior Curriculum)

Core Topic 1: DRAMATIC PRINCIPLES.

Electives -- acting (stage and screen), directing, technical design and production, theatre through the ages.

General English (QLD, Senior Curriculum)

Unit 1: PERSPECTIVES AND TEXTS.

Unit 3: TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS.

Unit 4: CLOSE STUDY OF LITERARY TEXTS.

Literature (QLD, Senior Curriculum)

Unit 1: INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY STUDIES.

Unit 3: LITERATURE AND IDENTITY.

Unit 4: INDEPENDENT EXPLORATIONS.

CAST & CREATIVES

Angus Thorburn	Director
Rebecca Murphy	Assistant Director & Choreography
Kylia Davies	Production Manager
Jordan Ferguson	Stage Manager
Marisa Bucolo	Assistant Stage Manager (Backstage)
Eleanor Shaw	Assistant Stage Manager (Lighting)
Josh Murphy	Set and Props Design & Construction
Harmony Barath	Costume Design & Construction
Ziggy Enoch	Lighting Design
Rob Pensalfini	Music Director & Composer
Liliana Macarone	Music Director & Composer
Jason McKell	Fight Coordinator

Meg Bennett	Lysandra
Emily Croft	Puck
Mikala Crawley	Helena
James Enwright	Philostrate, Flute & Cobweb
Eamon Langton	Demetrius
Paris Lindner	Hippolyta & Moth
Liliana Macarone	Quince
Leah Mustard	Hermia
Rebecca Murphy	Oberon & Starveling
Jason Nash	Theseus & Peaseblossom
Claire Pearson	Titania & Snout
Rob Pensalfini	Bottom
Dom Tennison	Egeus, Snug & Mustardseed



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I first performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* during high school, then again at university. I've spent more hours with this play than I care to say. Since I began Directing in 2019, *Midsummer* has been at the top of my bucket list. I nearly staged the play during the post-lockdown renaissance of 2021 but was advised to choose a different play due to *Midsummer* oversaturation at the time. However, the stars have finally aligned, and this play is now my debut as a QSE Director. Working on this play has been a dream AND a nightmare. I am grateful to everyone involved who gave me the chance to lead them through this beautiful mess of a play. It's an experience I will hold with me for a long time, as I hope my fellow audience will as well.

What's left to say about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? After 400 years, it remains one of Shakespeare's most hilarious, visionary and lyrical plays. The creative and stylistic potential in this text has made it one of the Bard's most frequently performed plays. Last year, Queensland Ballet and Brisbane Arts staged their versions. Later this year, Villanova Players will delve in too. This is QSE's second time with the play since 2013, and my third since 2015. So, I ask again: what's left to say about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

Charlie Chaplin once said: "Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot." So it is with *Midsummer*. We all enjoy the magical forest and slapstick moments that the play offers, but when you zoom in, beneath the trees, the enchantments, and the laughter, there lies: a constant struggle for working class artists, a series of roofied individuals forced into non-consensual encounters, a patriarchal dictatorship that enforces the death penalty on women, and a mass of environmental disasters grown from the irresponsible negligence of those with the most power to prevent it. To deny the darkness at the heart of this play is to deny the play altogether. But I'm not here to transform *Midsummer* into the next *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*. It is from this tragic grounding that we reap some of the most comedic and ridiculous moments to ever be staged.

So welcome one and all to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (during a late Brisbane winter). Relax, have a drink, and enjoy a sweet sojourn from the woes of your miserable lives. Explore our musings on Love, Gender, Escapism and Nature up close and personal. Experience an Athens that harkens back to classical Ancient Greek aesthetics, a Fairy Realm that looks and sounds like a setting from *The Legend of Zelda*, and of course, a crew of rude Mechanicals trying their damndest to produce ground-breaking community theatre. Let the Dream begin...

With love,

Angus Thorburn



SYNOPSIS

Theseus, Duke of Athens, prepares to marry **Hippolyta**, Queen of the Amazons, while also dealing with a legal dispute: **Egeus** demands that his daughter **Hermia** marry **Demetrius**, though she loves **Lysander**. Theseus gives Hermia the harsh choice of marrying Demetrius, becoming a nun, or facing death.



Hermia and Lysander flee into the forest to escape Athenian law and marry in secret. **Helena**, in love with Demetrius, tells him of their plan, hoping to gain his affection, and all four young lovers end up in the woods.



Oberon, king of the fairies, is in conflict with his queen, **Titania**, over a changeling boy. To punish her, he orders **Puck** to use a love potion on her, causing her to fall in love with the first creature she sees — which happens to be Bottom with a donkey's head.



Oberon also witnesses the turmoil among the lovers and orders Puck to use the potion on Lysander, mistakenly making him fall in love with Helena.




A group of Athenian craftsmen, including **Bottom**, **Quince**, **Starveling**, **Snout**, **Flute** and **Snug** decide to perform a play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, for the upcoming wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta.




They rehearse in the forest, where Puck mischievously transforms Bottom by giving him a donkey's head, causing chaos among the group.







In the forest, the fairy Puck mistakenly enchants Lysander to fall in love with Helena, and later enchants Demetrius as well, causing both men to love Helena and reject Hermia, leading to confusion and conflict among the lovers.




Titania, queen of the fairies, is enchanted by Oberon's spell and falls in love with Bottom (with his donkey head), leading to further comedic confusion.




After the chaos is resolved, Oberon removes the spell from Titania, and she reconciles with him, while the lovers' relationships are sorted out.



The spells are eventually corrected (except for Demetrius, who remains in love with Helena). Theseus, finding the couples in the forest on his wedding day, overrules Egeus and allows the lovers to marry according to their hearts.



After the spell is lifted, Bottom returns to normal, and the mechanicals go on to perform their hilariously clumsy play at the wedding celebration.



The fairies bless the marriages of the lovers and ensure a harmonious ending to the play.



ACTIVITIES FOR DRAMA

SPATIAL BIOGRAPHIES

Inspired by Harold “Egn” Eswar’s artwork series, Spatial Biographies explore connection to place through artistic illustration. For this activity, students will need paper and coloured pencils.

This activity can be applied to both a focus text and the students’ personal lives – I like to use school as a starting point for personal biographies.

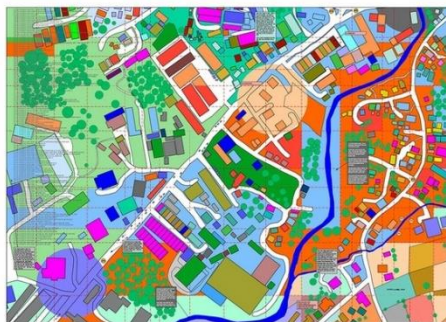
Activity – Spatial Biographies

Students are provided with a blank piece of paper, or, a print-out of a map. The map could represent the school grounds, or a place relevant to the focus text for the activity.

Students must create and colour-code the map based on their experiences and memories associated with that place. The teacher can provide prompts for students in younger grades. For example, colour in a space where you spend the most time.

In relation to *Midsummer*, students can take on the role of a character. Create a map that includes key setting locations, including the palace, the forest, etc. Where do the character/s spend their time?

The activity should provide students with a means of visually representing locations that are significant to themselves, or their characters.



GOOD ANGEL / BAD ANGEL

This activity encourages students to extend their thinking around a character and situation presented in a focus text – a good example for *Midsummer* is Demetrius choosing to follow Hermia and Lysander into the woods, or Theseus’ decision to give Hermia the option to join a nunnery. Students will engage their improvisational and creative thinking to broaden their understanding of character and play.

Activity – Good Angel / Bad Angel

One student is selected to play the character (this can be any character grappling with a decision within a focus text). The remainder of the class are split into two groups: a group of good and bad angels. Each group must send a representative to the character to convince them to go ahead with their version of the plan, justified by their knowledge of the story.

When the angels approach, they line up on either side of the student-character. One good angels speaks to him, then one bad, alternating from group to group. Students may rejoin the line if they think of another argument.

The student-character may choose to engage any of the angels in conversation as the activity progresses.

Once each group has run their course, reflect as a class on what argument their found more convincing – particularly for the student-character. Good angel / bad angel is a great opportunity to “rehearse for living.”

ACTIVITIES FOR DRAMA IN PRACTICE



STAGE MANAGEMENT

Activity – Rehearsal Report

Use our template on the following page to create your own rehearsal report!

In your next rehearsal in class, fill out the rehearsal report table. Pay particular attention to attendance and absence, any notes pertaining to set, props and costume design, as well as how the time is divided to focus on different aspects of the performance.

In a professional theatre setting, the Stage Manager holds as much authority as a Director or Production Manager. Paying respect to crew is very important!

[SHOW NAME]

REHEARSAL REPORT #1		[DATE]
SCHEDULED START TIME: ACTUAL START TIME: END TIME:	DIRECTOR: REPORT BY: LOCATION(S):	
IN ATTENDANCE:		
ABSENT:		

SCHEDULE	
TODAY IN REHEARSAL	NEXT REHEARSAL

NOTES
GENERAL
SCHEDULING
SCENIC/TECHNICAL DIRECTION
PROPS
COSTUMES
SOUND
LIGHTING
PROJECTIONS
CHOREOGRAPHY
PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

SET & PROP DESIGN

Activity – Set Design Your Space

Read through your script closely. Make a list of the props and set pieces that you need to tell the story clearly.

Using this information, measure the dimensions of your stage space – whether this is a classroom, auditorium or otherwise – with a measuring tape. Use these dimensions when drawing a diagram of the stage. When creating a set design, like Josh has stated above, you need to be practical!

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Mechanicals typically use the most props. For *Pyramus and Thisbe*, what do the actors need, as listed in the text?

Create your set design with the dimensions embedded in your sketch of mock-up. You can choose to do this digitally or by hand.





ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH & LITERATURE

SHADOWS

This activity focuses on moments of misunderstanding in a given text. You can model this activity in front of the class with eager students, as this is best used with an audience for reflection.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is filled with moments of misunderstanding, so here's a list of a few for you to use for this activity.

Act II Scene i. Puck infects the eye of the wrong "Athenian man."

Act III Scene i. Titania falls in love with the donkey-headed Bottom.

Act III Scene ii. Helena believes she is being mocked by Lysander and Demetrius, and Hermia believes Helena has stolen Lysander's love from her.

Activity – Shadows

Ask students to read through a scene in front of the class, focusing on moments when characters misunderstanding one another.

Each character is given two shadows: the first is an interpreter that explains what the character really means to say to the other people in the scene. The other shadow connects what the character is saying to how it is relevant for us today.

The shadows can converse or debate their conclusions with one another, the characters, or the class as a forum. They can also exchange places, or new shadows could take their place over the course of the activity.

Students should be able to interpret and infer the subtext of the scene, but also practice expressing theme.



VALUES CLARIFICATION

Inspired by the work of Augusto Boal in his Theatre of the Oppressed, this activity requires students to make decisions and justify their positions regarding topical statements. It is a good opportunity to expand ideas present in the play to relate to their broader lives outside the classroom.

Some sample questions are below:

Sometimes violence is the only option.

Everybody deserves to marry who they love.

No matter your level of intelligence, people should be given respect.

I see discrimination in our community.

Activity – Values Clarification

Students sit facing three signs evenly spaced – agree, disagree and unsure. As the teacher reads a statement, students will move to sign that expresses their view.

Students will be given two minutes to write an explanation or justification of their choice. The class will gather as a whole, or in focus groups, to discuss their choices.

Statements can be adapted to suit the age level and community, and will be written by the teacher.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are nine discussion questions for any classroom, for any group of students! You might even want to use these with your colleagues ... These are conversation starters for after the show or for the bus on the way home!

What is the significance of the dreams in the play? How do dreams relate to reality?

How is the rhythm of the fairy speeches different to the speech of the Athenians? Why did Shakespeare choose to differentiate these characters?

The moon is a key motif in the play – who uses the moon in their dialogue, and what does that tell us about them?

The setting is divided between the city of Athens and the woods outside of it. Compare and contrast these locations. What actions take place in what location, and why?

Demetrius, in Act 3 Scene ii, uses language that reflects business or commerce. What does this indicate about his character?

The four lovers are a key part of the narrative, but many criticise the characters for being indistinguishable. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

How is reputation or having a “good name” significant to characters such as Egeus or Oberon?

Titania often connects the nature of love and the change of the seasons – what evidence from the text relates these two ideas?

Pyramus and Thisbe, the play-within-a-play, is a veritable disaster. Is it a familiar narrative? Why did Shakespeare choose such “rude mechanicals” to perform the play?