

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM



APR. 14 – MAY 7, 2023

 theREP ★

Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill
Producing Artistic Director

Philip Morris
Chief Executive Officer

theREP
presents
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
By William Shakespeare

Featuring
(in alphabetical order)

Ethan Botwick*
Ellen Cribbs
Jovan Davis*
Kyle Garvin*
David Girard*
Taylor Hoffman
Kevin McGuire*
Raya Malcolm
Tamil Periasamy*
Yvonne Perry*
John Romeo*
Chauncy Thomas*
Oliver Wadsworth*

and
Gabrielle Bazinet Douglas Joshua DeMarco

Brian Prather+	Sera Bourgeau	Shelby Loera+	Jane Shaw+	Michael Dunn
Set Design	Costume Design	Lighting Design	Sound Design	Wig Design

Stephanie Klapper, csa
Casting Director

Kristine Schlachter*
Production Stage Manager

Rose Biggerstaff
Assistant Stage Mgr.

Shayne David Cameris*
Assistant Stage Mgr 2

Choreography by
Freddy Ramirez

Fight Choreography by
David Girard

Directed by
Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill

***Denotes Member of AEA LOGO + denotes member of USA LOGO**

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
CAST
(in order of speaking)

The Court

Theseus.....CHAUNCY THOMAS*
Philostrate.....KYLE GARVIN*
Hippolyta.....YVONNE PERRY*
Egeus.....DAVID GIRARD*
Hermia.....RAYA MALCOLM
Demetrius.....TAMIL PERIASAMY*
Lysander.....ETHAN BOTWICK*
Helena.....ELLEN CRIBBS
Statues.....JOSHUA De MARCO, GABRIELLE BAZINET DOUGLAS

The Mechanicals

Peter Quince, the carpenter, *Prologue*.....KEVIN McGUIRE*
Bottom, the weaver, *Pyramus*.....OLIVER WADSWORTH*
Flute, the bellows mender, *Thisbe*.....JOVAN DAVIS*
Robin Starveling, the tailor, *Moonshine*.....JOHN ROMEO*
Snug, the joiner, *Lion*.....DAVID GIRARD*
Karen Snout, the tinker, *Wall*.....TAYLOR HOFFMAN

The Fairies

First Fairy to Oberon.....KEVIN McGUIRE*
Puck, aka Robin Goodfellow.....KYLE GARVIN*
Oberon, King of Fairies.....CHAUNCY THOMAS *
Titania, Queen of Fairies.....YVONNE PERRY*
Peaseblossom.....JOVAN DAVIS*
Cobweb.....TAYLOR HOFFMAN
Mustardseed.....JOHN ROMEO*
Moth.....DAVID GIRARD*
Dancer fairies.....JOSHUA DeMARCO, GABRIELLE BAZINET DOUGLAS

Dance Captain.....JOVAN DAVIS*
Assistant dance captain.....GABRIELLE BAZINET DOUGLAS
Fight Captain.....DAVID GIRARD*

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Eileen Schuyler

Theatrical Cautions

This production includes moments of the following:

- . Moving lights**
- . Haze**
- . Performers entering and exiting the theatre aisles**

“A Midsummer Night’s Dream” is a light-hearted play about all kinds of lovers who are mismatched by the world of magical fairies. Parents of younger theatregoers please use discretion, as the Shakespeare text includes some sexual innuendo. Recommended for ages 12 and up.

Run time: 2 hours 10 minutes (including one 15-minute intermission)

Cast Bios



Gabrielle Bazinet Douglas – Fairy/Stagehand

Gabrielle Bazinet Douglas received her B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from Rider University where she also studied stage management. She recently made her Capital Repertory Theatre debut in "The Wizard of Oz". Other recent credits include "Other World," "Mamma Mia!" (Bucks County Playhouse), "Seared" (MCC Theatre), and "White Christmas" (Rider). She grew up dancing in her hometown of Albany and is so excited to be back at the REP. All my love to my fam and my Lance.



Ethan Botwick* – Lysander

Ethan Botwick is thrilled to finally be making his Capital Repertory Theatre debut. A New Jersey native, Ethan is a graduate of Russell Sage College in Troy New York and serves as Associate Artistic Director of Troy Foundry Theatre. Recent credits include "City of Myth: Ilium Sings," "Catastrophe Carnival: A Night Of Becket Shorts" (Troy Foundry Theatre), "Yellow," "The Prohibition Project: Ilium Was and La Ronde" (Troy Foundry Theatre/Die-Cast), "Proof" (Old Castle Theatre), "Romeo & Juliet" and "As You Like It" (Saratoga Shakespeare Company) and "Julius Caesar" (The Public Theater). Films include "Super Dark Times" and "Highwaymen" from Troy's own Chromosome Pictures.



Ellen Cribbs – Helena

Ellen Cribbs is thrilled to be back at Capital Repertory Theatre, where she previously played Anne de Bourgh in "Miss Bennet: Christmas" at Pemberley and the Nurse in "Shakespeare in Love." She is a local actor, director, playwright, voiceover artist and proud mother of two daughters. Ellen is also the Artistic Director at Albany Civic Theater and co-hosts the weekly podcast "Everything Theater" with Benita Zahn, where you can hear about all aspects of theater in the Capital Region and beyond. Thank you so much to Maggie, the cast and crew, and her ever-supportive Mom, Dad and husband.



Shayne David Cameris – Mechanicals Understudy

Shayne David Cameris is thrilled the folks at the REP keep bringing him back for more! Credits include: Capital Repertory Theatre- "*The Wizard of Oz*" (1st ASM), "*Jersey Boys*" (2nd ASM/Bob Crewe), "*The True*" (2nd ASM), "*Fly*" (Reynolds), "*The Irish...*" (2nd ASM), "*Cinderella: On-the-Go!*" (King/Puppeteer), "*Sleepy Hollow: On-the-Go!*" (Brom Bones), "*Camelot*" (Guilliam/Percussionist), "*Blue Sky Boys*" (CJ Caldwell); Troy Foundry Theatre- "*City of Myth: Ilium Sings*," "*Where There's Smoke: Ilium Burns*," "*The Prohibition Project: Ilium Was*," "*Catastrophe Carnivale*" and "*New World Order*"; Theatre Institute at Sage- "*Diary of Anne Frank*" (Mr. Van Daan); Lake George Dinner Theatre- "*Buyer and Cellar*" (Alex More) and "*The Hound of the Baskervilles*" (Sir Henry, et. Al); Saratoga Shakespeare – "*Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*" (Mistress Quickly et. Al), "*The Winter's Tale*" (Clown), "*Love's Labour's Lost*" (Dull); Theatre Voices- "*The Birthday Party*" (Stanley); Siena College- "*Endgame*" (Hamm) among others. Shayne loves video games and a good book but has come to find real comfort in writing. Much love to JSC.



Jovan Davis* - Francis Flute/ Peaseblossom

Jovan Davis is an actor and writer based in Brooklyn, NY. He has written several poems as well as a full-length play and is currently working on his first TV pilot. He is an avid Shakespeare fanatic and is extremely grateful for the opportunity to be a part of such a fun play. He would like to thank his friends and family for their unrelenting love and support. Some memorable credits include Othello in "*Othello*," Oberon in "*Midsummer Night's Dream*," Jim Fingal in "*Lifespan of a fact*" and Hotspur in "*Henry IV*." He can also be seen on TV in Season 5 of "*New Amsterdam*," as well as Season 1 of "*Mr. and Mrs. Smith*" coming to Amazon Prime.



Josh DeMarco – Fairy/Puck Understudy

Josh DeMarco couldn't be happier to be returning to the Capital Repertory Theatre this spring for "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*!" Josh is an Albany native and has been involved with the Rep for 5 years now! Previous credits include "*The Wizard of Oz*," "*Jersey Boys*," "*The Full Monty*," "*Shakespeare in Love*," "*She Loves Me*" and "*Mama Mia!*" Other credits within the community include: "*In The Heights*," "*How to Succeed...*," "*Damn Yankees*," "*All Shook Up*" and others. Please enjoy the show!



Kyle Garvin* - Philostrate/Robin Goodfellow/Puck

Previously seen in the REP's "The Wizard of Oz" (Lion) and "Jersey Boys," Kyle is glad to be back again! Originally from Bridgeport, CT, he earned a BFA degree in Musical Theater from the University of the Arts. Kyle has toured both nationally and internationally in "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," "Go Diego Go Live!" and "Thomas and Friends Live!" He's performed regionally in theaters across the country, his favorite credits include "Twist: An American Musical" under the direction of Debbie Allen (Alliance Theater, Pasadena Playhouse), "Hairspray" (Courthouse Repertory Theater), "Matilda" (Virginia Stage Company), "The Wild Party" (Barrow Group Theater), "Oliver" (Paper Mill Playhouse) and "Parable of the Sower Opera" (Touring). Follow- @thekylegarvin



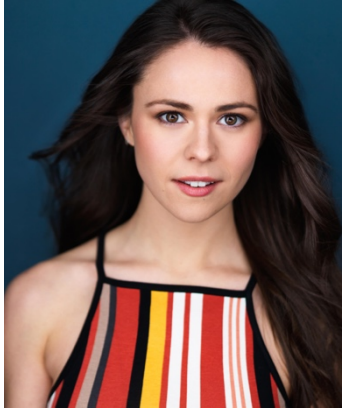
David Girard* - Egeus/Snug/Fairy; Dramaturg & Fight Choreographer

A Capital Region native based out of Historic Troy, NY, David has been working as a professional actor, director, and theatre educator for nearly twenty years. He is the Artistic Director for the Troy Foundry Theatre, most recently co-devising and directing their World Premiere Musical, "City of Myth: Ilium Sings" and creating, as well as co-devising and curating last season's hit production and World Premiere "Where There's Smoke: Ilium Burns." David is also a Core Adjunct Professor at Siena College, and is a former Associate Artistic Director for the Saratoga Shakespeare Company, serving 8 years in that capacity and positioning it as one of Saratoga Springs' cultural pearls. David has worked with the REP in many capacities, most recently as several roles "The Wizard of Oz." He was also the dialect coach for last season's "The Irish and How They Got That Way" and as Burbage in their 2020 BroadwayWorld award-winning production of "Shakespeare in Love." Other favorites at TheRep include "She Loves Me," "The Blue-Sky Boys" and "James Joyce's The Dead." David has his MFA in Directing from Temple University and is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.



Taylor Hoffman – Karen Snout/Fairy

Taylor Hoffman (she/her) is elated to be back for a second show with Capital Repertory Theatre! Some of Taylor's favorite credits include ensemble swing for "The Wizard of Oz" (Capital Repertory Theatre); Small Alison in "Fun Home" (Yale School of Drama); Martha in "Heathers" (Gatehouse Theatre Co); Suzy in "Wait Until Dark," and Ilse in "Spring Awakening" (Theatre Institute at Sage). BS: Russell Sage College. So much gratitude to my family, Ed, Sam, and my cats for the love and an enormous thank you to Maggie, Kristine, and the rest of the "Midsummer" cast and crew! My cup runneth over.



Raya Malcolm – Hermia

Raya Malcolm is delighted to be making her debut with Capital Repertory Theatre! She recently appeared in the East Coast premiere of "Things I Know to Be True" with Great Barrington Public and contributed to the devising of an original musical, "City of Myth: Ilium Sings," with Troy Foundry Theatre (TFT). Along with being an Associate Artistic Director with TFT, Raya also makes up ⅓ of the up-and-coming, indie-folk singing trio, Hold On Honeys, who recently played a sold-out Joni Mitchell tribute show at Cohoes Music Hall. When she isn't on stage or making music, you can find her zenning out on her yoga mat. Deep gratitude to Mom & Paul,

Dad & Monica and Grandma & Grandpa for their unwavering support. Love to Rob.

www.rayamalcolm.com



Kevin McGuire* - Peter Quince & Text Coach

Kevin McGuire - Broadway National, International Tours: "Les Miserables" (Jean Valjean), "The Phantom Of the Opera" (M. Andre, Phantom), "The Secret Garden" (Uncle Archie), "Jayne Eyre" (John Eyre, Assistant to Director John Caird). Kevin was named the First Associate Artist at Capital Repertory Theatre. At theREP: "Man of La Mancha," "Red," "A Christmas Carol," "Other Desert Cities," "Camelot," "She Loves Me," "The Secret Garden," "Shakespeare In Love," "The Full Monty," "The Irish And How They Got That Way." Kevin was most recently seen this year at Capital

Repertory Theatre as The Wizard in "The Wizard Of Oz" and as Charlie Ryan in "The True!" In 2015, Kevin directed the critically acclaimed "Hamlet" at theREP starring David Kenner. In New York, 2019 (pre-pandemic) Kevin appeared in the Heartbeat Opera's "Der Freischutz" as Kuno, receiving rave reviews from the New York Times for his first opera ever!

Off-Broadway: "Forbidden Broadway" (original cast), "Big Maggie" (original cast), "The Seagull," "Hamlet" (Csc), "Much Ado About Nothing," "The Gilded Age," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Goldoni's Il Campiello," "Waiting For Godot" (directed by Alan Schindler), "Romeo And Juliet" (New York Shakespeare Festival). Kevin is a company member at the Irish Repertory Theatre in New York. Denver Center Theatre Company in the American Premiere of Nick Dear's "Frankenstein" and "Sweeney Todd". Shakespeare Theatre "DC Henry IV Part One," "Henry IV Part Two" (directed By Michael Kahn). Hartford Stage, Arizona Theatre Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, (receiving his equity card in 1979) Troy Foundry Theatre (American premiere of Richard Dresser's "100 Years"). Edna Trunblat in "Hairspray." Kevin played George in "Sunday In The Park With George" and to this day is his favorite role.

Kevin was the Artistic Director of The Theatre Company at Hubbard Hall in Cambridge, New York. Three seasons with the Julliard Acting Company on Tour America. Born and raised in the Capital District. Education: St. Mary's Academy, Hoosick Falls, NY, The Hoosac School, The Julliard School.



Tamil Periasamy* - Demetrius

Thrilled to be making my debut with the Capital Repertory Theatre and after performing nationally in over 30 Renaissance productions (including 6 times in R&J) finally making my debut in "A Midsummer Night's Dream!" Highlighted theatre include NYC: "Richard III" (off-Broadway); Regional: "The Crucible" (Actor's Express - Atlanta Suzi Award Best Supporting Actor); "Swindlers" (Broadway Factor & Aurora Theatre); "Indian Ink," "Importance of Being Earnest" (Austin Shakespeare). TV/Film: "Dopesick" (opposite Peter Sarsgaard), "Dynasty," "Vendetta" (opposite Theo Rossi). Upcoming: "The Humans" (Theatrical Outfit) in Atlanta later this spring and the titular role in the

world premiere of "The Final Haunting of Edgar Allan Poe" in Chicago this fall.

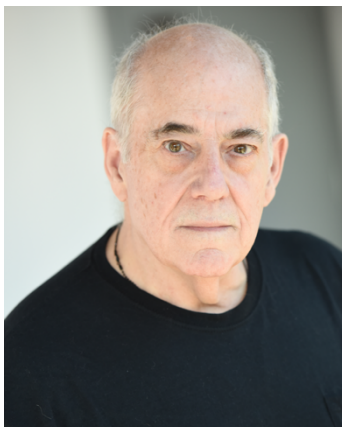
www.tamilperiasamy.com



Yvonne Perry* - Hippolyta/Titania

Yvonne Perry is a professional actress, director and educator. She is an Associate Artist here at Capital Repertory Theatre, where she frequently performs, directs and serves on the *NEXT ACT! New Play Summit* reading committee. She has also performed with Saratoga Shakespeare, Hubbard Hall, Oldcastle, NYSTI, NYC Fringe, River Valley Rep, Stageworks/Hudson, Theatre 88 and Gulfshore Playhouse. Yvonne originated the role of Rosanna Cabot on "As The World Turns." (Soap Opera Award, 1993) Other TV: "Law & Order," "SVU; Law & Order, CI," "Ghost: Power," "Book II." "Silk Stalkings," "Candid Camera," "All My Children." Yvonne also keeps busy doing

corporate training videos, TV commercials, and narration work. Yvonne has taught and directed shows at upstate colleges for over 20 years. (Skidmore, UAlbany, Siena, Union) and is a Consent Forward Artist certified by Intimacy Directors and Choreographers (IDC). BFA: Adelphi University. MA: UAlbany. Member AEA and SAG-AFTRA, Vice Chair of the Greater Albany Area Liaison of Actors Equity. www.yvonneperry.com



John Romeo* - Robin Starveling/Fairy

John is delighted to return to the REP stage where he was last seen in "Blithe Spirit" and "Shakespeare In Love." He was a resident actor with NYSTI for 28 years and performed in Moscow, Italy, Jordan, Sweden, London's West End and his home town, Albany. Film performances include "As You Are", "Axcillator", "Fighting For Freedom", "Laurina" and 6 films in post-production. He co-directed, edited and shot "the middle ages" and "The Neighborhood That Disappeared". Proud member of Actors Equity. For Paulie.



Chauncy Thomas* - Theseus/Oberon

Chauncy is thrilled to make his debut at Capital Repertory Theatre. He graduated from Washington University in St. Louis and currently resides in New York. Selected Credits - Bay Street Theatre: "A Raisin in the Sun," "To Kill a Mockingbird;" Alabama Shakespeare Festival: "Our Town," "Macbeth;" St. Louis Shakespeare Festival: "Much Ado About Nothing," "The Winter's Tale;" Illinois Shakespeare Festival: "Measure for Measure," "Pride and Prejudice;" Gulfshore Playhouse: "Radio Golf;" St. Louis Rep: "Clybourne Park." He is a four-time St. Louis Circle Award nominee. He will next be seen at the Great River Shakespeare Festival. Television: "Madam Secretary" and "Run the World".



Oliver Wadsworth* - Nick Bottom

Oliver Wadsworth is thrilled to be back at theRep where he has appeared in "Red Maple" (BroadwayWorld Berkshires Best Actor Award), "Fully Committed" (Metroland Best Performance), "The Taming of the Shrew," "Take Me Out" and "Art." He has worked extensively throughout the country. He was in the first National tour of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang." OFF BROADWAY: "Sideways" (Pecadillo Theatre), "Endpapers" (Variety Arts); "Well" (The Public Theater); "Bread and Roses" (New York Theatre Workshop). REGIONAL credits: "Fall River" (Penguin Rep); "Peter and the Starcatcher" (Pioneer Theatre); "Mystery of Irma Vep" (Arizona Theatre Company); "Misalliance" (Old Globe and Seattle Repertory); "An Enemy of the People" (Long Wharf Theatre); "Santaland Diaries," "Dracula" and "Christmas Carol" (Actors

Theatre of Louisville); "Santaland Diaries," "Velocity of Autumn" and "A Nantucket Christmas Carol" (White Heron Theatre); "Peter Pan" (Denver Center Theatre); "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (Syracuse Stage); "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (Fulton Theater); "Shipwrecked" (AriZoni Award, Actors Theatre of Phoenix); "Sherlock Holmes and the Jersey Lily", "Noises Off" and "Murder on the Nile" (Dorset Theatre Festival); "Stones In His Pockets" (Metroland Best Performance, Adirondack Theatre Festival). TV & FILM: "Deliver Us from Evil", "Ed's Next Move", "Dotty Gets Spanked", "Blacklist", and "Law and Order SVU". MFA NYU Graduate Acting Program. www.OliverWadsworth.com

Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill - Producing Artistic Director

Maggie has worked on and off Broadway and in numerous regional theatres, directing more than 100 productions. As Producing Artistic Director of theRep since 1995, she directs plays and musicals each season, including "Shakespeare in Love," "Nora," "Red," "Ring of Fire," "The Secret Garden," "To Kill a Mockingbird," "Grand View," "Metamorphoses," "Terra Nova," "The Irish And How They Got That Way," "Jersey Boys" and "The Wizard of Oz." A great proponent of history and the power of theatre to ignite young imaginations, Maggie has written and co-

written several plays for theRep's On the Go Theatre for Young Audiences tours, including "Pure Poe," "They Built America: the Immigrants Who Built the Erie Canal," "Friend of a Friend" (with Jill Rafferty-Weinisch), "Alice in Wonderland" and "Cinderella!" (with Margaret E. Hall). She is the recipient of the Norman E. Rice Award for Excellence in Arts Education, the Distinguished Leadership Award from the National Chamber of Commerce and was named a Woman of Excellence by the Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce. She holds an MFA in directing from Columbia University.

Kristine Schlachter* - Production Stage Manager

Kristine Schlachter is excited to be returning to theREP after spending her holiday season stage managing "The Wizard of Oz" Recent: Off-Broadway: "Avenue Q," "Emperors Nightingale" (Nom. Off-Broadway Alliance Award), "The Brothers Paranormal" (World Premiere), "Memorial" (NYTimes Critics Pick) Regional: "Holiday Inn," "The Glass Menagerie," "Long Days Journey Into Night," "Singing In The Rain," "Big River," "Macbeth," "Twelfth Night," "The Magic Flute," "It's A Wonderful Life," "The 39 Steps," "Shakespeare's Will," "Sheepdog." NYC: "As You Like It," "The Marriage of Figaro," "Raisin in the Sun," "The Great Society," "FAME!," "Cyrano De Bergerac," "Caucasian Chalk Circle," "The Roaring Girl," "Her Portmanteau," "Tartuffe," "Allegro," "The Secret Garden." BFA Syracuse University. Special thanks to my family for all your support.

Rose Biggerstaff – Assistant Stage Manager

Rose Biggerstaff is thrilled to be back at theREP! Prior to working on "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Rose has worked both backstage and on stage! Past credits include directing and stage managing with companies such as Northeast Theater Ensemble, SLOC, BrownBox Productions, NSCP, Proctors, as well as many others. Outside of theatre, she enjoys painting, reading and going on hikes. Wishing broken legs to the cast and crew who have worked tirelessly to put this show on stage!

Michaela Savoie – Assistant Stage Manager 2

Stephanie Klapper - Casting Director

Stephanie Klapper counts amongst her greatest joys, working in live theatre with Maggie and theREP family. Stephanie Klapper Castings's award-winning work is frequently seen on Broadway, off-Broadway, regionally, on film, television, and streaming media. With the return of live theatre, recent projects include: "Dracula" (theREP); "The Rat Trap;" "The Daughter in Law;" "Chains" (for Mint Theater); "The Lucky Star;" "Goldie, Max, and Milk;" "The New Golden Age" (all three for the Volt Festival at 59E59); "Grace, the musical" (Ford's Theatre) "Elf Quest," the audio movie; "Ranked," the musical/HBO Documentary; "Candide" (Cincinnati Symphony / Philadelphia Orchestra). Stephanie, along with her exceptional team, is dedicated to continuing to expand and champion diversity, equity, and inclusion in the business and is passionate about arts education. Connecting creative, caring people to each other to make extraordinary things happen is a driving force. Teaches for NYU's New Studio on Broadway and USC's dept of Theatre/Musical Theatre; participant NYU Tisch Women's Mentorship Program and Fordham HS for the Arts. Member of the National Board of Governors for Casting Society and Board

Member for Casting Society Cares. Co-host of the podcast "Someone's Thunder." For Bob and Florence.

Artistic Leadership Team

Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill, Producing Artistic Director
Margaret E. Hall*, Associate Producing Artistic Director

Gordon Greenberg, Associate Artist
Kevin McGuire*, Associate Artist
Barbara Howard*, Associate Artist
Stephanie Klapper, Associate Artist
Jean-Remy Monnay, Associate Artist
Yvonne Perry*, Associate Artist
Freddy Ramirez*, Associate Artist
Josh D. Smith*, Associate Artist

(* denotes a member of Actor's Equity)

theRep Administrative Staff

Jennifer Duke Anstey, Operations Manager
Kait VanHeusen, Company Manager
Kate Kern, Assistant Company Manager

Jennifer Duke Anstey, Operations Manager
Kait VanHeusen, Company Manager
Kate Kern, Assistant Company Manager
Diaka Kaba Hill*, Lead House Manager
Mary Murphy, Graham Webster
Felicia Nelson, Deborah Dzingle
Lanaea Brice, Amanda Jo Wilsey
Judie Buchard, House Managers
Letitia Johnson, Facilities Specialist
Terrence White, Facilities Specialist
Mama Rose Sykes, Parking Attendant

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Luke Krauss, Assistant Production Manager/ Audio Engineer
Andrea Adamczyk, Costume Shop Manager
Carolyn King, Assistant Costume Shop Manager
Vanessa VanZandt, Properties Supervisor

Stephen Pelletier, First Electrician
Meghan Maynard, Wardrobe Supervisor
Emily English, Wardrobe
Shayne Cameris, Run Crew
Kathleen Keane, Run Crew

Collaborative Scene Shop

Obadiah Savage, Shop Coordinator
Laura Brignull, Scenic Charge Artist
Kyle Avery, Dillon Kocsis, John Ruquet, Joe Vartanian, Ken Decker, Vince LaClair, Brian Drossel,
John Spang, Gabe Kingler-Horn, Leonard Moxon, Haley Macherone, Logan Hall, Maya Krantz,
Alex Madio, Eloise Shieferdecker, Cynthia Smith, Carpenters

Stephanie Klapper Casting Staff

Stephanie Klapper, CSA – Casting Director
Hershey Vasquez Millner– Casting Assistant

**GENDER AND
ROLE-REVERSAL IN THE
FOREST OF ATHENS.**



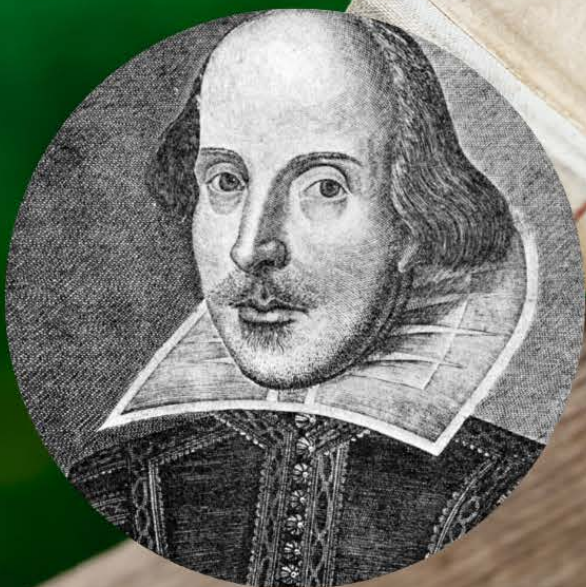
**A DRAMATURGICAL
ANALYSIS**

BY DAVID GIRARD


As David Crystal and Ben Crystal note, "Shakespeare was always alert to the subtleties of gender differences, and his plays are rich in expressions of masculinity and femininity." One of the treats of working on "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is how the play explores the complexities of gender and sexuality in a playful, comedic, yet meaningful way.

Shakespeare uses the concept of the "dramaturgical self" to portray the characters' gender and sexuality as socially constructed and performative rather than natural or inherent. In fact, many of Shakespeare's plays deal with power dynamics that may deviate from what is considered normal. Usually, that deviation—and subsequent conflict—is resolved when these dynamics are restored back to the normative. In reversing the roles of Oberon and Titania, our production will challenge the gendered power dynamic that is addressed in the original play, and perhaps spark a dialogue on the concept of heteronormativity.

There is a lot of scholarship that suggests that Shakespeare's estimation of women and their self-governance and power grew over time. Although parts of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" explore patriarchal power and its effects on female communities, Shakespeare's own hand in challenging those dynamics is present in many of his other plays, particularly his later works. From Portia's cross-dressing to assume authority in "The Merchant of Venice," to Beatrice's eschewing of marriage through most of "Much Ado About Nothing," to even Lady Macbeth's powerplay in manipulating her husband, Shakespeare's confrontation with gender roles steadily accumulates as he matures, and his canon grows.



SHAKESPEARE

A rustic wooden fence made of weathered logs and branches, set against a backdrop of dense green foliage and trees. The fence is built with vertical posts and horizontal rails, some of which are interwoven. The surrounding vegetation includes various green leaves and some small red berries on the left. The ground in the foreground is covered with grey stones and some moss.

And the women in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" do have agency and use it. Right from the start, we witness Hermia's refusal to be constrained by society's expectations. Egeus expresses his frustration with his daughter's disobedience, her "stubborn harshness" in refusing to conform to traditional gender roles. This highlights the power dynamic between men and women in Elizabethan society and the expectation that women must obey their fathers and husbands. Hermia goes so far as to readily accede to Theseus' verdict "to die the death or abjure; Forever the society of men" in defiance of her father's wish to marry Demetrius.

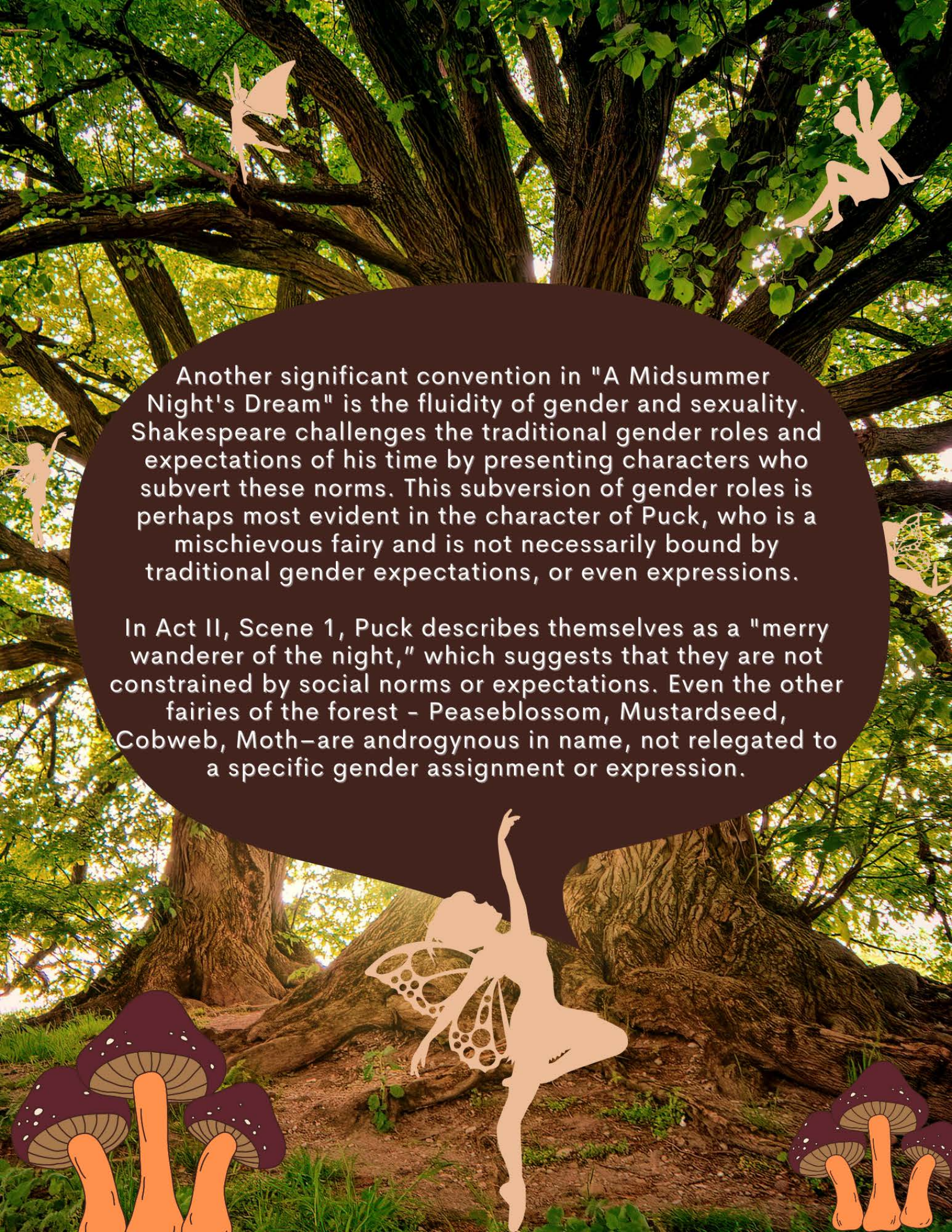
Later in the forest, Hermia and Helena both challenge the expectations their bewitched lovers have put upon them. They have needs, wants, expectations of their own and aren't afraid to express these desires. They both play the part of firebrand in the famous lovers' quarrel in ACT III, Scene 2.

This feminine agency over masculine authority is also demonstrated in the first scene, albeit briefly, in Hippolyta's refusal to be fully tamed by Theseus' seizure of her, as well as the give-and-take power dynamic between Oberon and Titania throughout the first part of the play.

Theseus later seems to acquiesce to his new conquest's individuality, and we see this mirrored in the Oberon and Titania dynamic throughout the play. It is likely that these roles would have been double-cast in Shakespeare's Elizabethan England, and quite possibly, a reversal of gender in that swap; thus, the option of Theseus playing Titania, and Hippolyta playing Oberon in the play.

As Reduced Shakespeare's Austin Tichenor points out, "double-casting is a theater technique (as opposed to a literary one) that creates a meta-narrative, transforming a large-cast play into a present-tense adventure... swapping costumes and changing roles (and sometimes genders) become part of the thrilling ride, and theater's fundamental artifice becomes its strength."






Another significant convention in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is the fluidity of gender and sexuality. Shakespeare challenges the traditional gender roles and expectations of his time by presenting characters who subvert these norms. This subversion of gender roles is perhaps most evident in the character of Puck, who is a mischievous fairy and is not necessarily bound by traditional gender expectations, or even expressions.

In Act II, Scene 1, Puck describes themselves as a "merry wanderer of the night," which suggests that they are not constrained by social norms or expectations. Even the other fairies of the forest – Peaseblossom, Mustardseed, Cobweb, Moth—are androgynous in name, not relegated to a specific gender assignment or expression.

There is also a fluidity, particularly from an Elizabethan perspective, in all the female characters in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." During the Elizabethan era, women were not allowed on stage and Shakespeare's use of male actors to play female roles allowed him to challenge and subvert traditional gender roles. Shakespeare could draw attention to the performative nature of gender and the ways in which gender roles are not only constructed, but enforced by society. Thus, a male actor would have been cast in the role of Titania (in addition to every other "female presenting" actor in the production).



Even more provocative, the exploration of same-sex desire evident in ACT III, Scene 1, as Titania expresses her desire for Bottom. The dynamic between the two characters challenges the heterosexual norms of the time and highlights the fluidity of sexual desire. The role reversal in our production adds, and perhaps even restores, a layer of queer subtext to Titania's worship of the ass-headed Bottom, something we can only imagine Elizabethan audiences would have been aware of and, perhaps, appreciated.



Swapping the roles of Titania and Oberon also provides a unique and interesting interpretation of the play. Traditionally, Titania is played as a graceful and ethereal queen of the fairy world, while Oberon is portrayed as a powerful and somewhat menacing king. In the swapping of the roles, there is an interesting added layer of complexity to the power dynamics between the two characters and their respective relationships with the other human characters in the play.

With Oberon playing the role of the fairy queen and Titania taking on the role of the fairy king, the audience may see a more dominant and assertive Titania with a more vulnerable and emotional Oberon. If Titania and Oberon's roles and intentions are swapped, then Oberon, by extension, becomes the more vulnerable character, a man who is more emotional and open with his feelings.

We hope the inventive and playful casting choices serve to entertain, while also challenging the audience's preconceptions of traditional gender roles!

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