



Audio Description Notes for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

WELCOME

Welcome to the Guthrie Theater's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The play was written by William Shakespeare. This production is directed by Joseph Haj.

My name is Laura Wiebers, and I will be your audio describer for this performance, which is approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission.

The creative team for this production includes:

- Scenic and Costume Designer: Lex Liang
- Lighting Designer: Isabella Byrd
- Sound Designer: Darron L West
- Composer/Musician: Jack Herrick
- Additional Compositions By: Royer Bockus
- Vocal Coach: Keely Wolter
- Movement Director: Emily Michaels King
- Fight Director/Intimacy By: Annie Enneking

This production contains haze, strobe lights and loud noises.

SYNOPSIS

On the longest night of the year, the magical and mortal worlds collide. What could possibly go wrong? Shakespeare gives us a clue: "The course of true love never did run smooth." In this beloved tale of mischief and merriment, four stories are cleverly woven together: the marriage of the Athenian duke to the Amazon queen; a spat between the fairy king and queen; the follies of four lovers; and the hilarious antics of amateur actors staging a play. When the exhilarating night in the forest finally resolves to (almost) everyone's satisfaction, a new day of love, joy and reconciliation dawns. Brimming with wit and wisdom, Shakespeare's most popular play will enchant you.

STAGING AND PROPS

The set was designed by Lex Liang. The floor of the stage consists of several angular platforms. They are blue/green, with light streaks running through, like tree branches or the veins of leaves. An arch reaches from one side of the stage to the other, with soft sprays of leaves and flowers cascading down in gradients of color from deep purple to bright pink to soft white. At the start of the play, a black gauzy curtain called a scrim extends from the arch down to the floor. When it is not lit from behind, nothing behind it is visible to the audience; it appears to be a solid black curtain. When we are in the Athenian court, this is the setting — angular and spare. The



STAGING AND PROPS (continued)

members of the court are dressed in somber gray and black costumes that match this setting. The only exceptions are the king and queen, who are dressed in flowing robes of ivory and gold.

When the scrim is lit from behind, the rest of the set behind it is visible. And when the scrim is raised, the set behind it is in full view of the audience, and we are in the lush forest — the land of the fairies. A large, cratered moon looms over the back of the stage. Glowing flowers are suspended from the ceiling. And the main set piece — an asymmetrical, curving stone staircase — is covered with grass-green moss, ferns and climbing ivy; watery blues; and vivid pink flowers. On the left side of the staircase is a bench where characters sometimes sit or sleep. Across the top of the staircase is a landing where characters, especially Oberon and Puck, can watch over the proceedings in the forest. On the right side of the staircase is a cushioned wingback chair, and Oberon, the king of the fairy world, is the only one who sits in that chair. In the archway formed by the staircase, more colorful flowers stream down from the landing. On the steps and along the edges of the staircase are nooks where characters can lean or lie down to sleep.

This play is full of music. Jack Herrick, a Tony Award-winning composer and a frequent collaborator with Joseph Haj, plays his original live score during each performance. He's seated at the right corner of the stage, surrounded by several musical instruments, such as a guitar, a mandolin, a keyboard and various percussion instruments. He wears a simple shirt, jeans and boots.

The play begins with music sung by Royer Bockus, who accompanies herself on a ukelele. She greets the audience with a song, and then steps into the role of Helena.

CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

Theseus, King of the Athenian court, played by **John Catron**, is a tall man with graying hair. He wears flowing cream-colored robes with gold accents and a gold ringlet crown that encircles his head, with a small animal skull attached at the back. This actor also plays **Oberon**, King of the fairy world, who wears a shirt and pants made of fabric colored with swirls of vivid pink and green that match the pink and green colors of the set. He wears a medallion on a chain around his neck, and his hair is partially covered with green moss and flowers.

Hippolyta, Queen of the Athenian court, played by **Regina Marie Williams**, is a tall, slender woman with closely cropped hair. She wears flowing cream-colored robes with gold accents and a gold ringlet crown. This actor also plays **Titania**, Queen of the fairies. She enters the fairy world wearing a cape made of huge cherry-red cape appliqued roses, almost as if she were wearing the roses themselves. Beneath the cape, she wears a one-shouldered flowing dress of purples, greens and golds, and her hair is deep purple and decorated with flowers.



CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES (continued)

Philostrate, the master of revels in the Athenian court, played by **Jimmy Kieffer**, is a large man with graying hair and beard who wears a gray suit. This actor also plays **Puck**, a fairy employed by Oberon. He wears a lime-green suit decorated with brightly colored flowers. His finely made silk suit is paired with well-worn brown lace-up boots. Flowers decorate his beard.

Egeus, a member of the Athenian court and father to Hermia, played by **William Sturdivant**, is a bald man wearing a black vest over a white shirt and gray trousers. This actor also plays **Peter Quince**, the leader of the Mechanicals, and the director of the play they're rehearsing. He wears a working man's clothes, a simple shirt, brown pants and shoes, and a tan overcoat.

Hermia, a member of the Athenian court and daughter to Egeus, played by **Ari Derambakhsh**, is a petite young woman with dark, flowing, wavy hair. She appears in court wearing a one-shouldered grayscale dress and silver high-heeled shoes. When she's in the forest, she's dressed for travel in a black jacket over a black tank top, black jeans and silver flats.

Demetrius, a member of the Athenian court, played by **Justin Withers**, is a tall young man wearing a white shirt and tie, a gray jacket and gray trousers held up by suspenders. The trousers are a bit too short, revealing white socks and black loafers. When he's in the forest, he's dressed for travel in a dark overcoat and black high-top tennis shoes.

Lysander, a member of the Athenian court, played by **Jonathan Luke Stevens**, is a young man with dark spiky hair, wearing a dark patterned short-sleeved shirt over a white tank top, black leather pants and black leather boots. He often sings and accompanies himself on the guitar. (He does an impressive impression of a famous Minnesota native, and we'll hear that when he's in the forest.)

Helena, a member of the Athenian court, played by **Royer Bockus**, is a tall young woman with straight auburn hair and dark-rimmed glasses, wearing gray short-sleeved shirt, dark jeans and dark lace-up boots. When she's in the forest, she's dressed for travel in a gray overcoat.

When the four young lovers travel to the forest, they're carrying purses or wearing backpacks.

The Mechanicals make their way to the forest to rehearse the play they plan to perform at the upcoming wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. They carry boxed lunches and munch on snacks, and they wear their working clothes, some of which are mismatched, wrinkled and patched.

With the exception of Nick Bottom, the same actors who play the Mechanicals also play the fairies. They have colorful hair or wear hats with colorful flowers, and their costumes are vibrantly colored and decorated with flowers. They are **Francis Flute**, played by **Max Wojtanowicz**; **Robin Starveling**, played by **Kimberly Richardson**; **Snug**, played by **Dustin Bronson**; and **Tom Snout**, played by **Aimee K. Bryant**. Additional courtiers and fairies are played by **Davis C.**



CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES (continued)

Brinker, May Heinecke, Kenzi Nash and Tic Treitler. They all sing, and many of them play musical instruments, including a flute, a guitar, a tambourine and even an accordion.

Nick Bottom, one of the Mechanicals, played by **Remy Auberjonois**, has graying hair and a gray beard. Like his fellow Mechanicals, he wears working clothes — a casual jacket, shirt and pants, and a denim hat. He's also the target of some fairy mischief. While the Mechanicals are rehearsing their play, Puck fixes a donkey's head on top of Bottom's head. The ass's head has fuzzy ears and large protruding front teeth, and is decorated with flowers and long grasses.

THINGS TO KNOW

- Hailed one of the most popular plays of all time, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written during a period of thriving creativity in Shakespeare's career as an actor and playwright.
- The Guthrie has staged *A Midsummer Night's Dream* seven times before, and Artistic Director Joseph Haj is thrilled to direct and bring this beloved story to our stage once again.
- Tony Award-winning composer Jack Herrick (*The History Plays, Hamlet*) returns to the Guthrie stage to perform his original score live during each performance.