

The Rude Mechanicals

present



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by William Shakespeare

directed by Joshua Engel

November 12, 13, 19, and 20, 1999

8 PM Laurel High School

About the Rude Mechanicals

The Rude Mechanicals are a nonprofit group in Laurel, Md. dedicated to classic theater, especially Shakespeare. Our name comes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which Puck bestows the name upon a group of players with far more enthusiasm than polish. We are proud to bear their name.

We strive to entertain both for those who have seen these plays before and for those seeing their first Shakespeare production. Most importantly, we believe that Shakespeare can be enjoyed, not just studied.

For our inaugural 1999-2000 season we present *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth* (Spring 2000), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Summer), and *Hamlet* (Fall).

If you would like to see the shows, audition for a part, work tech, construct sets, etc. call us at (301) 317-9438. You can also contact us by email at JackWibbe@aol.com or engel@erols.com.

The Rude Mechanicals are looking for sponsorships. If you would like to sponsor the Rude Mechanicals, please contact us.

Acknowledgments

Doug Humphrey provided a very generous gift to cover lighting expenses. We are very grateful for his contribution, which will help us continue to present fine plays in Laurel.

The lovely art on the cover of this program is by Lee Moyer. Yvonne DiGiacomo designed and created Titania's costume. Thanks to Tina Segovia for baubles and costumery.

Annaliese Moyer found our technical crew single-handedly, and provided tremendous help with makeup and costuming.

Jack Wibbe provided invaluable assistance preparing the text of the play, was a font of ideas, and bailed me out of many a bad situation.

Thanks to Patti Budd and Terry Parfitt of the Prince George's County School System, for the arrangements that allowed us to use the stage.

Marcus D'Amelio went above and beyond the call of duty to get the lights purchased, hung, and positioned.

J.P. Nunemaker videotaped a rehearsal for us, allowing us to see ourselves as others see us.

I can't possibly say enough good things about Brenda Jones, who leapt into our considerable breach of costume construction. Thomas Sayles and Paul Brinkley provided indispensable help with set construction. Robert Knight provided countless bits of miscellaneous help throughout the production. Paul Turner and Cherie Lanzi did publicity, which is probably why you're sitting here tonight reading this program.

Lauren Zambreny worked (and continues to work!) through the mounds of paperwork associated with creating a new nonprofit group.

The Cast

The Lovers

Helena.....	Chenoa Jones
Hermia.....	Heather Martin
Lysander.....	Andy Greenleaf
Demetrius.....	Paul Turner

The Athenians

Hippolyta.....	Vanessa Knight
Theseus.....	Karl Heimer
Egeus.....	Jill Vanderweit
Philostrate.....	Joshua Engel

The Fairies

Oberon.....	Jack Wibbe
Titania.....	Annaliese Moyer
Puck.....	Lauren Zambreny
Peaseblossom.....	Dave Mahl
Cobweb.....	Lauren Teixeira
Moth.....	Vanessa Knight
Mustardseed.....	Cherie Lanzi

The Players

Nick Bottom, the Weaver/Pyramus.....	Preston Wood
Francis Flute/Thisby.....	Arthur Adams
Snug, the Joiner/Lion.....	Cherie Lanzi
Tom Snout, the Tinker/Wall.....	Dave Mahl
Robin Starveling, the Tailor/Moonshine.....	Lauren Teixeira
Peter Quince.....	Jim Fenton

Crew

Director.....	Joshua Engel
Assistant Director.....	Chenoa Jones
Costumes.....	Brenda Jones
Lighting.....	Marcus D'Amelio
Violence engineer.....	Preston Wood
Stage manager and sets.....	Honor Wood Silver
Makeup.....	Annaliese Moyer

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

About the play

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is exactly that, a dream – a fantasy brewed up out of the madness that strikes us sometimes on midsummer nights. It is a brilliant piece of insanity with four wildly different plots (and with wildly different characters), each of which could be a play in itself.

First, "The Unhappy Bride": Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, is a brilliant military leader with a long string of victories in the field. She is completely unprepared for what happens when she fights Theseus, the Duke of Athens, and his army, and she is captured. If Theseus likes her, he might treat her with respect and unite the Athenians and the Amazons into a single happy kingdom. If he doesn't like her, he could subject her and her entire kingdom to rape, pillage, and enslavement.

Second, "Hermia's Dilemma": Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her mother Egeus wants her to marry Demetrius. According to the law of Athens, a daughter must marry the man of her parents' choice, or be put to death. Duke Theseus cannot overturn the law without jeopardizing the whole system of justice in Athens. Theseus, however, is not without compassion: he is about to marry Hippolyta, so he buys Hermia some time by delaying judgment on her case until after his wedding. In the meantime he is hoping to talk Egeus into a change of heart, or else to convince Demetrius to give up Hermia and go back to his old flame Helena, whom he dumped rather callously. Hermia and Lysander, meanwhile, are thinking desperate thoughts – Hermia has sworn that she will die rather than marry Demetrius, while the more practical Lysander is thinking of eloping.

Third, "The Orphan": In Shakespeare's world, the fairies have the difficult and delicate job of making the worked run smoothly, despite the best efforts of men. When all is well, the fairies amuse themselves with mischief. If the fairy world becomes disturbed, the fairies can no longer do their work, and the world of men will suffer: marriages will go sour, crops will rot in the field, and people will starve. So it is serious business when Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of fairyland, begin to squabble. Titania is mourning the death of her best friend, a mortal woman who died while giving birth, and she raises up the woman's baby son. Oberon insists that she give up the child, which brings discord into their marriage, and the world.

Fourth, "A Star is Born": Once word gets out that Theseus is going to hold a huge festival to commemorate his wedding, a group of workmen are struck with an idea: if we perform a play, and Theseus likes it, we could be hired as his professional theatrical troupe, and we'd be set for life! They decide to do the great tragic melodrama *Pyramus and Thisbe*, and write the script themselves. Philostrate, master of the festival, has seen their work and thinks it is laughably bad, but fate is on their side.

A lesser playwright would have made four separate plays out of these stories. Shakespeare launches all four of them in the first half-hour, and then hurls the main characters into a dark forest at midnight and mixes them all up. Oberon watches Helena chasing Demetrius, Titania listens to Bottom dazzle the forest with his singing – the stage is set for complete chaos.

Cast Biographies

Arthur C. Adams (Frances Flute/Thisby) is appearing for the first time with the Rude Mechanicals, which is not surprising, as this is their first production. Previously, he has performed in *Richard III* and *Arsenic and Old Lace* with Burtonsville Players, and directed the one-acts "Here We Are" and "Shoeicide", also for Burtonsville Players. He would like to add that there is no truth to the rumor he was the "body double" for Kate Winslet's nude scenes in *Titanic*.

Marcus D'Amelio (Lighting Executive/Designer) has decided that getting back into theater was a sane idea. He hails from the JHU barnstormers where he spent many a late evening preparing him to light this cafeteria. He can't wait 'til Macbeth so he can wear a kilt in the light booth.

Joshua Engel (Philostrate) has played Richmond in *Richard III* and Kent in *King Lear*, and directed *The Flying Machine* by Ray Bradbury for the Burtonsville Players. This is his first time directing Shakespeare.

Jim Fenton (Quince) is very pleased to be performing in the opening production of the Rude Mechanicals. He has previously appeared at Burtonsville, Greenbelt, and Cedarlane Stage. His Shakespearean experience includes *Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *King Lear*. This show has been a great deal of fun.

Chenoa Jones (Helena) is the stage name for Roger Bacon. She insists that she did not write this play, but has no comment on *Romeo and Juliet*. She will also have you know that Edward de Vere couldn't rhyme his way out of a paper bag.

Andy Greenleaf (Lysander) was most recently seen as Tom in RLT's acclaimed *Table Manners*, where he also played Jason Sharp in *Death by Dumpling*. Shakespeare experience includes directing *Othello* for GAC's Shakespeare on the Green; playing Edgar (*King Lear*); Alexas, Maecenas, Scarus (*Antony and Cleopatra*); and Antipholus of Syracuse (*Comedy of Errors*); and training with The Shakespeare Theater. Other recent performances include Edward (*Son of York*), Topper (*Christmas Carol*); and Sir Boss (*Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*). Carpe Diem!

Karl Heimer (Theseus) is well suited for the role as the Duke of Athens, since his day job is Grand Vizier of Luxembourg.

Vanessa Knight (Hippolyta) first played Hippolyta in Shakespeare's original production in 1595. Over the centuries she has played all of the parts except Demetrius. She thinks that Joshua is a better director than Will, but not as cute.

Cherie Lanzi (Snug) didn't think that the director really would make up a biography for her if she didn't turn one in herself.

Dave Mahl (Snout) won a Tony award for playing the title role in *Elvis '77: 445 Pounds of Love*, which ran on Broadway for 116 weeks.

Heather Martin (Hermia) wants to thank the Impetuous Leader of the planet Impraxil 7 for permitting her to attend rehearsals and performances in addition to her duties as High Priestess.

Annaliese Moyer (Titania) is a photographer, therapeutic horsemanship instructor, social worker, writer, model, and, once again, an actress. Her debut in a titled role came at the age of ten as The Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come (the only role she wanted). It has been nearly a decade since she appeared on the stage. She is especially glad to be presenting the role of Titania, as her first high school show was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and she has ever since dreamed of reveling as the fairy queen. She is married to illustrator Lee Moyer, and thanks him for bending his talents to the cause and most especially for his loving support.

Honor Wood Silver (Sets and Stage Manager) enjoys alligator wrestling, nude skydiving, and tinkering with her gravity nullifier. Her previous set design work includes the 1969 faked landing of Apollo 11, although her Tony Award was confiscated by the CIA.

Lauren Teixeira (Starveling) is excited to be in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She has also performed in *Anne of Green Gables*, *June and I*, and *Richard III*. She was an extra in the not-yet-released movie *The Replacements*. Lauren is a sophomore at Centennial High School. Besides acting she also enjoys playing sports and hanging out with her friends. Lauren would like to thank her parents and her friends for all their love and support.

Paul Turner (Demetrius) has appeared in Laurel Community Theater's version of *Oklahoma!* and played the Attendant in *Dracula* with Burtonsville Players. With his performance here as Demetrius, he has now worked with all three Laurel-based theater groups. Paul swears that there is no truth to the rumor that he has been blacklisted by theater troupes in Anne Arundel County where he lives, although the experience has made him better acquainted with Route 100 and the Silver Diner. He thanks his wonderful wife Sandy for all the time she sacrificed for the play, and hopes that his ability to woo his young stage counterparts will land him a part in Ricky Martin's next video, "El Toro Guano."

Jill Vanderweit (Egeus) has theater experience that includes 4 years of acting at the Maryland Renaissance Festival. She has studied at the Shakespeare Theater and the Studio Theater

Jack Wibbe (Oberon, King of the Fairies) is Jack's third king in a row, having just played Richard III and King Lear for the Burtonsville Players; this is his second go at *Midsummer*, having played Bottom the Weaver (and Pyramus) in 1996. He has also directed such works as *Man for All Seasons* and *The Philadelphia Story*. *Grand Prize*, which he co-wrote was voted Best Production of the Year in last year's ESTA One-Act competition.

Preston Wood (Bottom) got his start in theater eating flies and spiders as Renfield in *Dracula*. Moreover he's been killing things and people ever since in roles such as George Duke of Clarence in *Richard III*, Edmund in *King Lear*, Satan for *In Your Dreams*, Todd Schwartz the evil punker in *Breaking the Silence* and Mr. O'Donnell the nasty step dad (sans basketball) in *Silence* as well. With great delight, he joyfully brings to you the heroic buffoonery of Nick Bottom this evening. You can also catch Preston as an evil bodvaard

in the Cynthia Rothrick kung fu movie entitled *Honor and Glory*. Special thanks goes to Capt. James Tiberius Kirk for boldly taking him where no man has believed he's been.

Lauren Zambreny (Puck) was last seen as Cordelia and the Fool in King Lear. She has also been seen in another production of *Midsummer* as Titania. Thanks to Josh. Love to Mom, Dad, and Jack.

Director's Notes

The dominant theme of this play is love, in many forms. Titania and Oberon are an old married couple, ostensibly quarreling over a baby but really fighting about attention. Hippolyta is to be married to Theseus as the spoils of war. Titania loves Bottom because Oberon poured a love-potion on her eyes, and Bottom is love-struck (or lust-struck) the moment he sees her. Pyramus and Thisby are the prototypes of the star-crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet. Lysander loves Hermia, who is loved by Demetrius, who is loved by Helena, until Oberon gets involved and makes things really confusing.

In short, everybody is in love, and very few of them are happy about it. I am reminded of a high school, with mad little romances forming and disappearing like words in a bubbling pot of alphabet soup. To the lovers, each romance is great drama; to their friends, it's high comedy. Perhaps Oberon was carrying his purple flower around my high school.

Midsummer uses a wide variety of linguistic devices. The King and Queen of Fairyland, Oberon and Titania speak only in rhymed iambic pentameter, the classic Shakespearean style. Shakespeare deliberately parodies himself in the playing of Pyramus and Thisby. It has dreadful rhymes ("sinister" and "whisper" never rhymed, not even in 1595), horrendously inapt alliteration ("I thank thee, Moon, for by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams..."), deliberately obscure mythical references (Limander and Helen? Shafalus and Procrus?), and some disturbingly vivid imagery ("This cherry nose/These yellow cowslip cheeks").

When Bottom talks with Titania, she speaks in verse, and he in prose. Even if you couldn't see them, you could tell that she is cultured, and he is crude.

Titania's speech in Act 2 scene 1 is beguiling, sensuous poetry. Three minutes earlier, a man discovers that he is going to portray a woman on stage.

This play could be called Shakespeare's best play. There is scarcely a single line or a speech out of place. There are more than a dozen characters that are fun for actors to play. The four plots fit together with the precision of a jeweler. Shakespeare, like many playwrights of his time, stole his plots and stories rather than making up his own. *Midsummer* reuses some elements from other plays, but the plot is his own, and we can only wonder what other extraordinary work he would have done if he had crafted his own plots more often.

Famous Quotes

The course of true love never did run smooth

— Lysander, Act I scene 1

Lord, what fools these mortals be!

— Puck, Act III scene 2

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet

Are of imagination all compact:...

And as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.

— Theseus, Act V scene 1

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,

Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,

Quite overcanopied with luscious woodbine,

With sweet musk roses, and with eglantine.

— Oberon, Act II scene 2

If we shadows have offended,

Think but this, and all is mended,

That you have but slumber'd here

While these visions did appear.

— Puck, Act V scene 1

We are their parents, and original

— Titania, Act II scene 1

Ill met by moonlight, Proud Titania

— Oberon, Act II scene 1

Tarry, rash wanton!

— Oberon, Act II scene 1