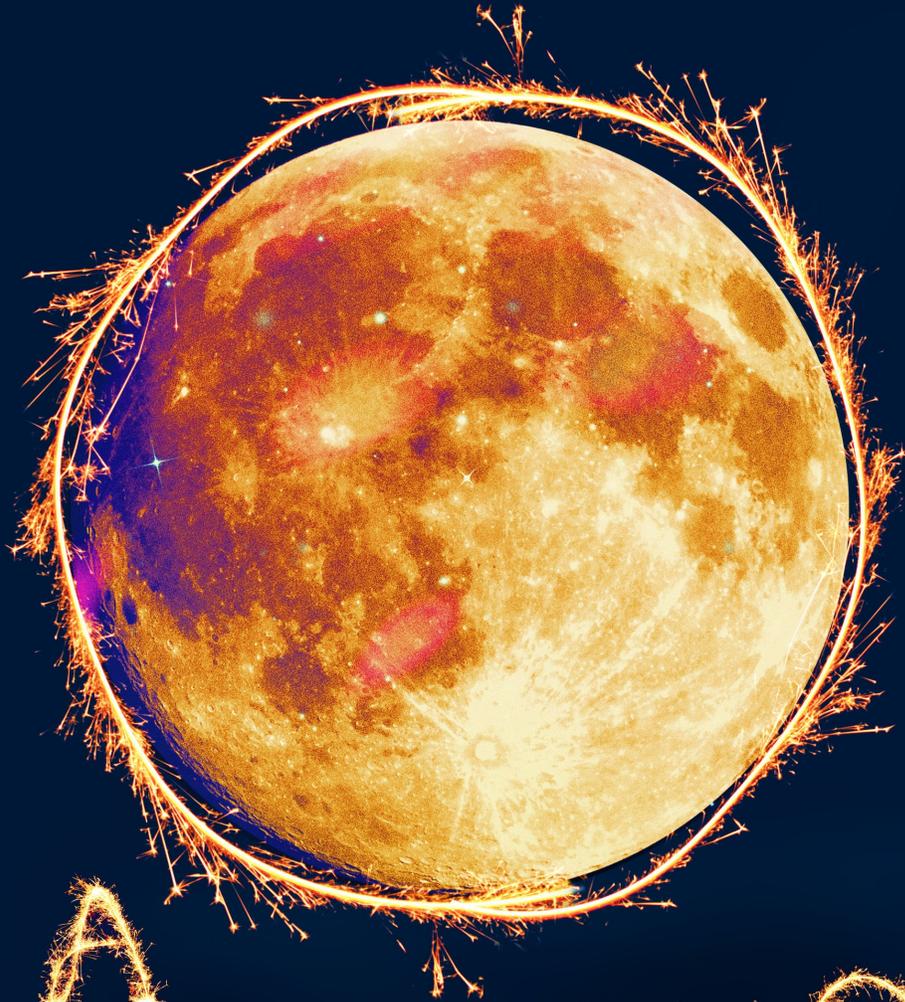


EDUCATION PACK



A
MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S
DREAM

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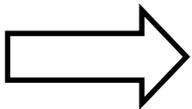
Introduction



This pack has been designed to support your visit to watch The Watermill Theatre's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Your feedback is most welcome, please email outreach@watermill.org.uk or call 01635 570927.

Don't forget that we offer workshops on most aspects of drama, and visit schools to work with students and teachers. For an education brochure, please visit the Outreach pages on our website, or contact us.



For our School's Brochure [click here](#).

We hope you find the pack useful.

Heidi Bird
Outreach Director

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This pack was written and designed by Lixi Chivas and Kezia Buckland with contributions from Abigail Pickard Price, Beth Flintoff and Poppy Jermaine.

UK Tour supported by The Sheepdrove Trust.

The Sackler Trust, Principal Supporter of The Watermill's core Education and Outreach programme.

Rehearsal photos by Eden Harry. Production photos by Scott Rylander.

Section 1: An Introduction to Shakespeare

William Shakespeare 1564 – 1616

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon to John Shakespeare, a glove maker and wool merchant, and Elizabeth Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer and landowner. It is believed that he was educated locally at King Edward VI Grammar School.

During the 1550s there was a growing trend for nobles to patronise travelling companies who would visit Shakespeare's hometown to perform at the Grammar School while on tour: there are records of more than 30 visits between 1568 and 1597. Shakespeare was four years old when these records started and his father is likely to have been responsible for his first exposure to theatre. John Shakespeare became a central figure in Stratford-upon-Avon when he was appointed as the town Bailiff. One of his responsibilities was to license the performances of these travelling companies by watching previews to check they were appropriate for public viewing. It is likely that William would have attended these previews.

The next surviving record is of his marriage to 26 year-old Anne Hathaway at the age of 18 in 1582. Their daughter, Susannah, was born 6 months after their wedding. Two years later, Anne gave birth to twins, Judith and Hamnet, but Hamnet died at the age of 11.

Records of his movements are unclear in the eight years following, but during this time he left his family in Stratford to begin establishing himself in the world of theatre in London. The reason for these 'lost years' is uncertain; but playwriting was not a respected form of literature so authors chose not to put their names to plays, and it may be that Shakespeare was writing during this time but without putting a name to his work. In 1592 his name reappears in a sour judgement made by dramatist Robert Greene on his deathbed, calling him 'an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers' in reference to his lack of university education which made him an impostor among the more

qualified playwrights of the time.

The Queen's Men, Queen Elizabeth I's travelling company, had been set up in 1583 and caused a decline in other playing companies because it brought together the country's leading actors. But an attempt was made to redress this in 1594 with a major reshuffle of actors, forming a duopoly of the Lord Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the latter of which Shakespeare became a member. The Chamberlain's Men were the resident company at a venue simply called 'The Theatre' in Shoreditch, and by August 1597 Shakespeare had become a shareholder in the business together with Richard Burbage and others. This new role afforded him the second largest house in Stratford – New Place.

In 1599 The Theatre's lease ran out and the structure was dismantled and moved across the River Thames to Southwark, where it became The Globe Theatre. The Globe opened with one of Shakespeare's plays, most likely *Henry V* or *As You Like It*, and Shakespeare's works continued to bring success and profit to the theatre, enjoyed by thousands. The Globe was one of only three theatres granted the privilege of licensing its own plays and the company's success awarded them a patent from James I



Jamie Satterthwaite (Oberon), Emma McDonald (Titania)

He was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-on-Avon on April 25 1616.

Many people consider him the world's greatest playwright, but he was also a skilled poet and actor. In 1623 his works were published as a collection, known as 'The First Folio.' Among them are a number of plays regarded as the greatest works in the English language. From histories, to comedies, to tragedies, the plays reflected the concerns and widespread social and cultural change in the period. Shakespeare played a key role in the rise of theatre-going in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: and as a

result shaped theatre and performance culture as we know it today.

POPPY JERMAINE

Sources

The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642 by Andrew Gurr

Shakespeare Survey, Volume 60: Theatres for Shakespeare by J. R. Mulryne

The Oxford Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet Oxford World Classics



Members of the ensemble

Section 2: The Watermill's
Production of *A Midsummer
Night's Dream*

A Brief Synopsis

Theseus is in charge of an old theatre. He is engaged to Hippolyta but they are not sure they want to get married. Egeus wants his daughter, Hermia, to marry Demetrius. Hermia and Lysander want to marry. Hermia and Helena are best friends. Helena loves Demetrius. Theseus tells Hermia she must listen to her father and marry Demetrius or become a nun or die. Lysander and Hermia plan to run away into the forest together. They tell Helena their plan.

The Mechanicals are the backstage crew of Theseus' theatre. They have decided to rehearse a play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, for Theseus' wedding day. Peter Quince has written the play and will direct the group of Mechanicals. He gives out the parts to Bottom, Flute, Snout, Starveling and Snug. They plan to have their first rehearsal in the forest.

In the Fairy World the King and Queen, Oberon and Titania are arguing. They can't have children of their own. Titania's friend was pregnant with an Indian Boy

but died and Titania wants to raise the baby. Oberon also wants the baby. Oberon decides to play a trick on Titania, to make her give him the baby. He sends his servant Puck to fetch a magical flower. This flower's juice is placed in someone's eye whilst they're asleep and makes them fall in love with the first person they see when they wake up.

In the forest, Demetrius looks for Hermia. Helena follows Demetrius who is rude and dismisses her. Oberon sees how sad she is and he feels sorry for her. He tells Puck to use the magical flower on Demetrius so he will love Helena. Titania falls asleep and Oberon uses the magic flower. Lysander and Hermia stop to rest, and both go to sleep. Puck sees Lysander and thinks he is Demetrius. Puck uses the magical flower on Lysander. Demetrius runs away from Helena. Helena sees Lysander and wakes him up. He falls in love with her. Helena doesn't want Lysander to love her. She leaves and he follows. Hermia wakes up and doesn't know where Lysander has gone. She goes to look for him.



The Fairies: Tyrone Huntley, Sophie Stone, Victoria Blunt and Lillie Flynn. Emma McDonald (Titania)

The Mechanicals meet for rehearsals in the forest. There are lots of suggestions for changes to be made to Quince's script. Bottom, who plays Pyramus, thinks the audience will be too upset that Pyramus kills himself and dies in the end. Snout and Starveling think the audience will be too scared of the Lion. Quince needs an actor to play the Moonshine and another actor to play the Wall. Bottom comes up with solutions for all of these problems. During the rehearsal Puck uses magic to

make Bottom's head into a donkey head. All the Mechanicals run away in fear leaving Bottom to think they are playing a joke on her.

Titania wakes up and falls in love with Bottom looking like a donkey. Puck tells Oberon about this and about using the flower on the young man. They watch as the young man arrives.

Demetrius has found Hermia. He says he loves her. She thinks he has hurt Lysander. Oberon realises that Puck has used the magic flower on the wrong young man! Oberon sends Puck to fetch Helena. Oberon uses the magic flower on Demetrius. Helena tries to get away from Lysander. She doesn't believe that Lysander loves her. Demetrius wakes and falls in love with Helena. Hermia finds them and doesn't understand why Lysander is so horrible to her. Helena thinks Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius are all trying to trick her. They all argue.

Titania tells her fairies (Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustardseed) to look after Bottom. Oberon asks Titania for the Indian Boy. Titania gives the baby to Oberon. Puck is proud of all her magic.

INTERVAL

Oberon is cross with Puck for her mistakes. Puck is sorry and Oberon gives Puck another magic flower to fix the mistakes.

Hermia, Helena, Lysander and Demetrius are all tired from arguing and chasing so they all go to sleep. Puck uses the second magic flower on Lysander to stop the first spell. Demetrius stays in love with Helena.

Titania and Bottom are resting and eating in bed. They go to sleep. Oberon removes the magic spell from Titania. Puck takes the magic donkey head off Bottom. Titania wakes up and is confused about what she remembers and thinks her being in love with Bottom was a dream.

Egeus and Theseus find all the lovers sleeping on the



Members of the ensemble

ground together. They wake the lovers up. Demetrius

says he now wants to marry Helena. Theseus says there will be three weddings today: Theseus and Hippolyta, Demetrius and Helena, and Lysander and Hermia.

Bottom wakes up, now with no donkey head. The others are waiting for Bottom to rehearse their play. Bottom arrives and tells everyone to get ready to perform.

After the weddings, Theseus wants to watch a play. Philostrate tells Theseus the entertainment options for his court: a harp player or the Mechanicals' play.

Theseus chooses the Mechanicals. They perform their play for everyone. It goes badly. They give away the whole storyline during the prologue and constantly make mistakes throughout the performance. Snout plays the Wall. Bottom plays Pyramus. Flute plays Thisbe. Snug plays Lion. Starveling plays Moonshine.

The story of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is as follows. Lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe plan to meet at Ninus' tomb. Thisbe arrives first and is scared away by the Lion. The Lion chews her cloak. When Pyramus arrives he sees the chewed cloak and thinks Thisbe is dead. He is so sad he uses a dagger to kill himself. Thisbe comes back and sees Pyramus dead. She is so sad she uses the dagger to kill herself, too. After the play they also perform a dance.

Character Profiles

The Mechanicals

Bottom: Working backstage at Theseus’ theatre, Bottom has seen plenty of actors in her time but she knows that she is the best yet to come. When Quince writes a play for Theseus’ wedding everyone knows Bottom is the only one who could play the lead, and help direct, and advise on costume.

Quince: A writer and director in the making, Quince has penned the epic tragi-comedy the crew will perform for Theseus and Hippolyta. He is in awe of Bottom and has some confidence wobbles but has particular views on how his masterpiece should be performed.

Flute: Eager to please and very impressed by Bottom in particular, Flute is not a natural performer but does his best.

Starveling: Troubled by a phobia of lions and some anger management issues, Starveling is a focused and thorough worker.

Snout: Grouchy and pessimistic about how impossible everything is, Snout is very proud of his prop making abilities.

Snug: An apprentice to Quince, Snug has the most dreadful stage fright, and a lisp that changes her own name to Thnug.

The Lovers

Hermia: A rebel in the cause of love, Hermia is in love with her childhood sweetheart Lysander, not her childhood play-fellow and father’s favourite, Demetrius. She is feisty and brave. She is deaf and has a secret love sign language with Lysander.

Helena: Smitten with unrequited love for Demetrius, and struck down with the sniffles, Helena seems more helpless than she is. Her best friend since childhood is Hermia and they have always stuck together through thick and thin, but then Helena spots an opportunity to get into Demetrius’ good books.

Lysander: A romantic at heart Lysander has gained a reputation as a bit of a playboy, but it’s only because he’s searching for his one true love. A confident young man from the same background and status as his childhood pals, Demetrius, Helena and Hermia, it’s Hermia he’s fallen for, deeply.

Demetrius: Nerdy and uptight Demetrius enjoyed a young romance with Helena which he has put aside to do his duty and claim his rightful place as husband to Hermia. He has never thought to try to learn to sign with Hermia, as her true love Lysander and her best friend Helena have done.



Sophie Stone (Hermia), Tyrone Huntley (Lysander)

Athenians

Theseus: Theseus is the actor-manager of a Victorian theatre that has seen better days. Whilst not on its last legs, the theatre is only a short run of bad luck from collapsing financially. Theseus has thinned down his theatre staff to the absolute minimum.

Hippolyta: A famed actress who Theseus hopes will resurrect the fortunes of his struggling theatre, Hippolyta has misgivings about her forthcoming marriage with Theseus. A woman of few words from an exotic far-flung land, she is independent, strong and passionate.

Philostrate: One of the last of Theseus' theatre staff, Philostrate is habitually buried in the depths of the theatre, beavering away unnoticed, with definite opinions on what is and is not worthy art.

Egeus: Ordinarily a slightly irritating busy-body, Egeus for once has something interesting to complain about to Theseus: he insists that his errant daughter Hermia marry the young man he has chosen for her, Demetrius. Marry him, or die. Or become a nun.

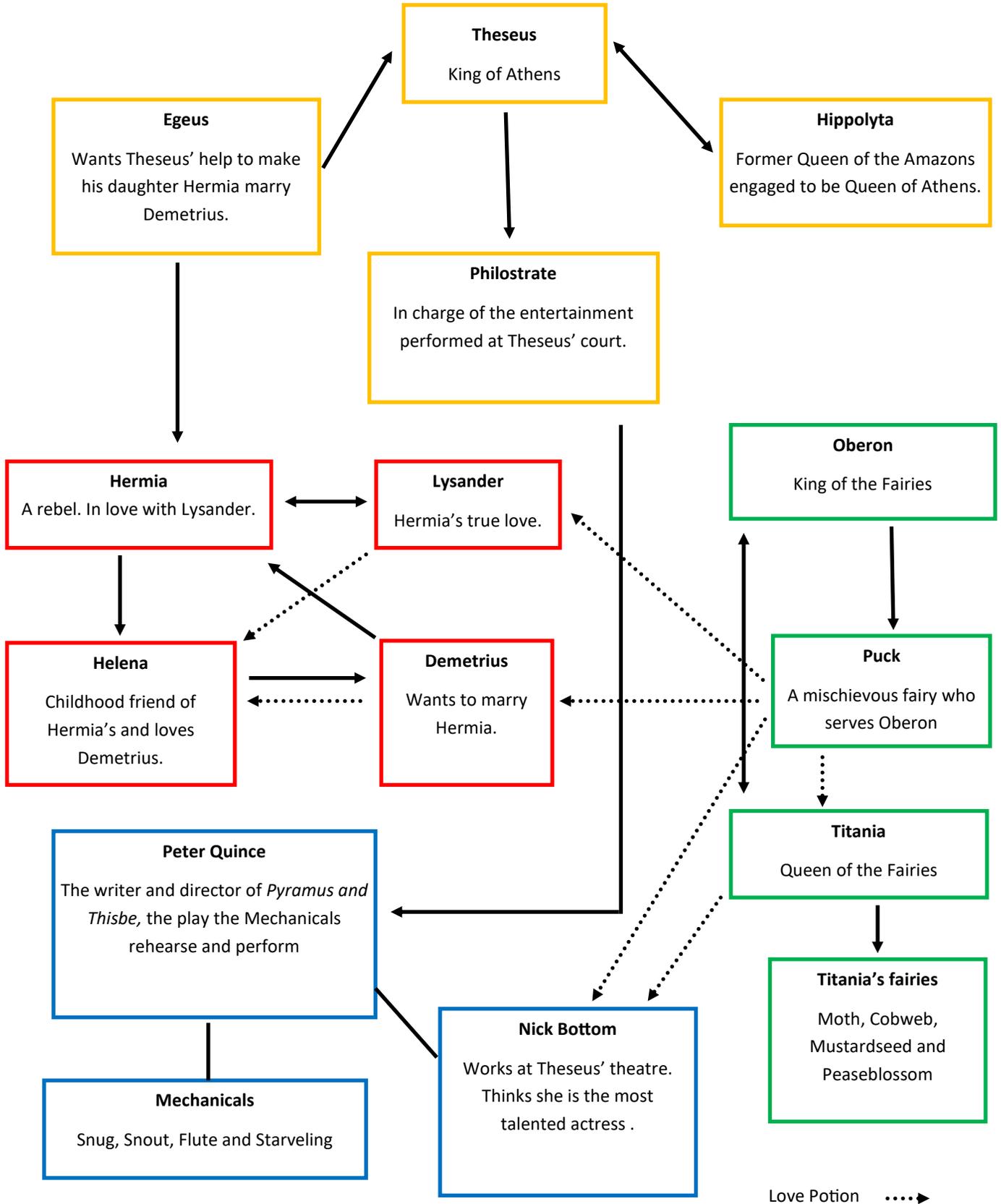
Fairies

Oberon: The King of the Fairies is embroiled in a bitter argument with his Queen over the custody of their longed-for child. He is a commanding presence in the fairy world, doted on by his former protégé Puck who he is equally exasperated and enchanted by.

Titania: As a mother to nature, as well as personally wounded by her discord with her King, Oberon, Titania feels deeply the damage and distress their supernatural feud is having on the natural world. She rules her fairy entourage with an iron will.

Puck: Previously beloved by Oberon, Puck's novelty has worn off and she is left bereft of his attention but still craving it. She seeks his approval and love in everything she does. She uses her own powerful magic on the mortals around her, almost like they are toys.

Character Map



Themes of The Watermill's

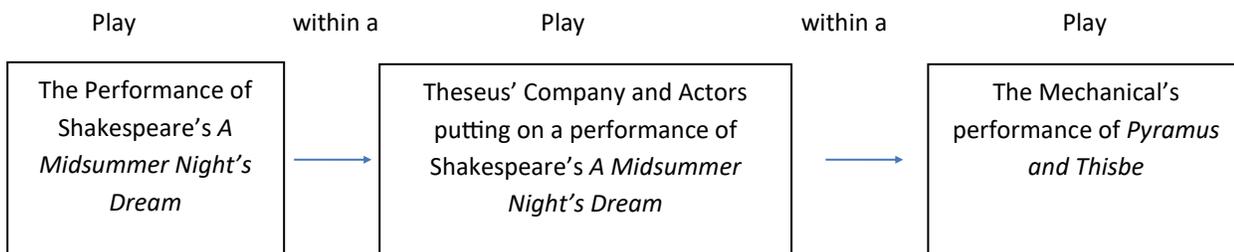
A Midsummer Night's Dream

Theatre in the Victorian era was an extremely popular form of entertainment. Up until 1843 the Licensing Act had restricted plays to only be performed in two theatres: The Theatre Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Once this Act was lifted, plays began to be performed nationwide and attracted a large base of working and middle-class audience members who were thriving off the back of the Industrial Revolution taking place at the time. Companies began to add more technology and spectacle to shows. Shakespeare's plays continued to be widely performed throughout this era but also began to be challenged and adapted by using different thematic angles and character developments. During this time the position of the actor-manager role emerged pioneered by the likes of Henry Irving, Charles Wyndham and Lucia Elizabeth Vestris.

Paul Hart's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at The Watermill Theatre is set in the Victorian era with the backdrop of a run down and crumbling theatre, owned by Theseus. We can clearly see this shabby location through the set with the fly system's ropes, unfinished flooring, costume rail, prop box and paint tower as significant elements to this production's design. All these elements combine to constantly affirm to the audience that they are watching a play, not real life, which widens the boundaries for magic to ensue.

The actor who plays Theseus follows the example of being an actor manager by playing Theseus and Snout. The actors he employs for the other roles are seen playing the lovers: Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander. The Mechanicals characters are played by the stage hands and creatives who work in the theatre. For example, the actor who plays Bottom is the theatre's costume maker.

The format for The Watermill's production does create another layer to the already established Metatheatre concept in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In this production there is a play within a play with in a play structure.



A company of ten young, vibrant and talented actors and actor- musicians form the cast of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Between them they play twenty- one characters as well as musical instruments, sing, perform stylised movement routines and magic tricks. The unstoppable cast reflect the limitless possibilities of what emotions, magic and trickery can occur in dreams. The soundtrack performed live, is

made up of arrangements of soul, folk and jazz spanning from the 1950s up until this decade with songs such as *My Baby Just Cares for Me*, *Blue Moon*, *Cupid* and *Sing to the Moon*.

Soul music as a genre evolved throughout the 1950s to the 1970s, dominating the pop charts and representing African-American culture. The direct emotional delivery of this type of music is used in The Watermill's production to display and transmit the emotions and moods felt by the characters towards the audience to evoke a further understanding of the plot.

The actor Sophie Stone has been the production's Creative Sign Consultant as Sophie is Deaf herself. In The Watermill's production, Sophie plays Hermia who is Deaf and one of Titania's fairies Mustardseed who is not. British Sign Language is integrated throughout the performance. Hermia and Lysander use a combination of BSL and speech to communicate to one another to show their true love and understanding for one another. Childhood friend Helena also signs with Hermia. Parts of the musical numbers and songs are accompanied with British Sign Language and often the signs are further developed and included in the stylised movement sequences.

The Design Process

The set is what we put onstage to help re-create the world of the play. The set designer makes a model box of the set to show the production department, director and actors what they want the set to look like. Designer, Katie Lias talks to the cast and production team about the design on the first day of rehearsals. There are many stages the designer goes through before they get to this point.

Step 1. Research

The first step is to research the time period and location of the piece. Often the designer will create a scrap book of images, materials and textures that may inspire their design. Initial ideas are discussed with the director to make sure they fit with the director's overall vision. These can also be given to the production team to help them when bringing the design to life. For example, the designer sometimes draws sketches of how they would like the costume to look and this is given to the wardrobe department as a reference.

Step 2. White Card

The White Card is an unpainted model of the set which is sent to the production team who makes sure it fits the space and the budget that is available.

Step 3. Model Box

The designer then creates a model box. This is made on a 1:25 scale to give the creative team a clear picture of the set. The production team uses the model for the building process, ensuring that the final set replicates exactly the designer's original model. Below is the Model Box for A Midsummer Night's Dream.



Step 4. Scale Drawings

The designer then draws a ground plan of the model box to the scale of the theatre. This gives the carpenter the exact dimensions to work from.

Step 5. Building The Set

The carpenter then starts to make the set. At The Watermill the set is built off-site in a large barn in The Cotswolds and then brought to the theatre and constructed during the weekend before the show opens.

Step 6. The Final Set

The final set is fixed into the theatre. During the fit-up the designer will work with the production team to ensure that all the final details are perfected on the set before the show opens.



Final set for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Costume Designs

The wardrobe department are in charge of finding or making the costumes and then adjusting them to fit each actor. They also have to make sure that the costumes are perfect for each performance, which means that they must repair rips or tears.

Our wardrobe department will meet the designer a long time before the performance so that they have plenty of time to see the designs and get the costumes ready. Below are some costume designs for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



Rehearsal Diary

Associate Director, Robert Kirby, gives an insight into the rehearsal process.

You can also see this diary on our blog [here](#).

Week One

The first week of rehearsals for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a well and truly jam packed one. The week was filled with our ensemble of ten company members throwing themselves into the read through. This was quickly followed by improvisations, music calls, movement, exploring character relationships and time spent getting our heads around the language, before starting to put the play up on its feet.

After being welcomed to The Watermill by Artistic Director and Director of our production, Paul Hart, we kicked Monday off with Designer Katie Lias and Paul sharing the model box and costume designs with the cast, creative team and Watermill staff. Set in an abandoned Victorian theatre, the play begins initially 'backstage' until the full set design is revealed later on.

After a read through of the play, the company then explored the 'play within the play' and in small groups came up with their versions of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. As laughter filled our joyous rehearsal room, this was a terrific way to playfully discover key ideas that we can revisit in the next few weeks when we begin to shape this part of the story in greater detail. This also enabled the company to quickly engage with the energy and improvisational nature of the 'mechanical' characters in the production.

With a talented company of singers and actor-musicians, music calls took place with our Musical Director Joey Hickman (who is also playing Demetrius and Flute... the character, not the instrument). Joey led us through his initial harmonies and arrangements for some of the songs that would be fused into our production. From the get go, the soulful sounds inspired by Simone, Lennox & Holiday sounded just beautiful as our ensemble got to grips with Joey's magic. It's pretty tricky to stop humming after rehearsals!

We blinked and 'twas the weekend.

Week Two

After a rehearsal free weekend, the company met back in Bagnor armed with a truckload of factor 50 to fend off the glorious sun that decided to hang out with us for week two. Movement director Tom Jackson Greaves gave the company the rare opportunity to dash out of the rehearsal room and do a session outside. When there wasn't interference from ducks and dogs or actors making quick dashes through the grounds to make their next entrance for the matinee, Tom focused primarily on exploring the dynamic between Puck and the fairies. Whilst difficult to sum up in words the delicacy of Tom's exercises and the way in which they led on seamlessly from one another, essentially we began to look at a grandeur vs animalistic nature of the chorus of fairies in relationship to Puck. There is arguably a push and pull type energy between them, and the space outside enabled the company to fully play around with and explore this idea in more depth, placing any discoveries they'd found back in to the rehearsal room in the context of the scene.

I've been fascinated by the idea of The Watermill Ensemble and was really interested to see what the room and process would be like. With half of the cast having worked together on *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet* last year, there seemed to be a playful, gently anarchic and crisp energy which makes the process a very special and exciting one. It encourages everyone in the company (which has a 50:50 gender split) to be daringly experimental and think outside the box. I've no doubt that, as a result of this process, the show will be fresh, dynamic and bold.

Week Two also involved a visit from Susan Elkin, a freelance journalist and author who often writes for *The Stage*. She popped down to observe a rehearsal in order to learn more about the pioneering integrated signing, spear-headed by The Watermill's Community Associate, Lixi Chivas. For two performances ([13th & 16th June](#)), Lixi along with interpreter Ana Becker, will be fully integrated into the show, making it dynamic and accessible. By being in costume alongside the company and through taking on the mannerisms and essence of the characters they are embodying, sign language is brought to the heart of the action, unlike traditional interpreting that takes place to the side of the stage, creating a split focus for audience members.

Having been in the room for rehearsals to interpret for Sophie Stone (playing Hermia), they have a deep understanding of the play and its story and during some rehearsals, have started the translation and integration process. Having Sophie in the company offers the production and the actors further choices to play with. For example, Sophie is able to sign without voice which empowers her, equally, the other three lovers can cut her out of the conversation during the quarrel by turning away from her, meaning she is unable to lip read what is going on, all of which creates a different dynamic between them. Another choice available to us and being explored throughout the process is the extent to which the lovers communicate with each other using sign. There are moments between Hermia and Lysander when they talk in BSL/theatre sign, deepening the intimacy between them and cutting out those characters who are unable to understand what is being said between them. This is in stark contrast to Demetrius, attempting to marry Hermia, who knows no sign language and doesn't even bother to try, perhaps giving us some further insight into him. It also means that Helena, having been childhood friends with Hermia, uses it at times to offend and to spite her. Throughout the process, Sophie has translated lyrics to our songs into BSL, and this is being fused into the choreography of the show by Tom and the company to support the physicality of the piece. It creates something quite special that I'll leave to you as an audience member to experience when you book to come and see it!

We had a Saturday call, filled up with roast dinners on Sunday and were raring to go for week three.

Creating *A Midsummer Night's Dream*— Behind the Scenes Team

Playwright: The person who writes the script for the play that is performed. The process of writing a script can take anywhere between a few months to many years. One script may be redrafted lots of times before it is handed to a Director and it may have further changes made to it throughout the rehearsal process.

Performer: A person who entertains an audience. At The Watermill the most common performers are actors, musicians and dancers. They have several weeks of rehearsals before the show begins its performances in a theatre or theatres. All of the performers in the production form a company.

Understudy: A member of the company who learns another role or roles during rehearsals in case of a performer being unable to perform in a production. For example if a performer is ill, their understudy will step in to cover their role during that performance.

Designer: Responsible for the overall visual appearance of the performance. The director and all of the designers work together to make sure the production has the same themes and coherent design throughout. Designers are often a freelance position, instead of being employed full time by a theatre. This means they may have several different pro-

jects that they are working on at the same time. The number of designers working on one production can vary, for example, a set designer may also design the costumes.

- **Lighting designer:** Once the lighting designer is aware of the overall creative vision for the production they first create a lighting plot for the play. This involves drawing a rig plan which has instructions for where in the theatre each of the lights should be placed or hung. This plan is very important as the lighting designer may not rig the lights in the theatre themselves. Therefore, the plan needs to be clear to a technician so they can rig the theatre exactly how the designer wanted it.
- **Sound designer:** a sound designer has to be very skilled and able to operate and install different types of audio equipment and systems. They follow the creative vision made by all the designers and directors to research or create the sounds that would work the best for the production. Sound designers can also be the musical composers for the show.
- **Set designer:** The first job of a set designer is to create a scale model of their vision. This is first made out of white card and then into a more sturdy material. The set designer uses this model to pitch their idea

to the director and design team (see page 16). The team building the set then use this model to know the measurements and details. The set designer also designs/chooses the props to be used on stage.

- **Costume designer:** The costume designer initially draws their ideas for each character's costume. These drawings can be shown to the director and design team. The costume designer then is responsible for either making the costumes, selecting the right fabrics or sourcing, buying and hiring costumes.

Technician: Usually works for the theatre, not the theatre company. They are responsible for the day-to-day running of the technical aspects of the theatre. They work as part of the technical team to plan, 'get in' maintain and 'get out' all of the equipment used during a production.

Director: Responsible for artistic control over the production to make sure the performance is polished in all areas. They oversee the cast in rehearsals as well as working closely with the design

team to create a coherent vision across every aspect of the play.

Stage manager (SM): The leader of the stage management team. They are responsible for the organisation and communication between all of the departments working on the show. During rehearsals the SM ensures production elements are in the right place at the right time. During a performance they are responsible for the backstage area and scene changes. If the director is not present for a performance then the SM has overall responsibility in making sure the show runs smoothly.

Theatre manager: Are responsible for personnel, financial and administrative control of the theatre. The manager is in charge of the theatre as a business. All heads of department report to the manager. Therefore, the manager oversees, for example staff, potential projects and performances, the budget and networks with the local community.

Rehearsal Reports

Organisation is the chief element of any stage manager's role. After each day of rehearsals, our Deputy Stage Manager, Alice Barber, types up the notes she has made during the day and sends them to all the staff at The Watermill involved in making the show. Here is an example of her daily report from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM

Rehearsal Report #11

Date: Saturday 21st April 2018

General

1. Paul would like to have more of a discussion about Starveling and Moonshine. We have re visited this character in rehearsals and would like to discuss some changes.
2. We are using the song 'Sing to the Moon'. Could we look into PRS for this please?

Lighting

1. We will be using the gallery slips, and the steps from the back of the auditorium for Helena's action in 2:1.

Production/Technical

Risk Assessment

Set

1. Would it be possible to shorten the scaf legs on the tower so that it can be stored under the balcony when we are not using it? There are moments where we are struggling for space US so this would help alleviate that.

Sound

Stage Management/Props

1. Can we please have the love in idleness flower early next week if possible.
2. We would like for Miss Blunt to have the buck teeth fitted on Monday so we can use them next week.

Wardrobe

1. Please see General Note 1.

Many Thanks
Alice Barber
DSM

Section 3: Teaching & Rehearsal Exercises

Character Mapping

The whole room becomes the 'heart' of the play. Put different characters (E.g. Hermia, Lysander, Oberon), played by students, in the centre of the room. Add the other characters one by one into the space. They should stand near or far away from the central character and the other characters, depending on how they feel about them.

Start off with the positions for the beginning of the play. Then move to key moments in the play and ask them if they want to move. There may be some conflicts, for example if one character likes the other but the feeling is not reciprocated.

Points:

1. You can hopefully use all the students if you use every character in the play.
2. This exercise makes for a gentle way into hot seating. You can ask them individually why they're standing where they are, and how they are feeling about other characters.
3. If they don't know the plot of the play very well, this can be an interactive way into them finding out the story. Tell them the main points of the story and ask them how they're feeling now that this new development has happened. They can move in response to what you tell them.
4. Alternatively, this can be a more advanced character exercise. 'Cast' the students in advance, and get them to write down quotes demonstrating how their character feels about other characters at key plot moments. Then, when they are moving around the character map, they can back up their new position with their quotations.

FOLLOW UP EXERCISES

1. **DIARY:** Imagine you're the character you played in the mapping exercise, and write a diary, with entries for each key moment.
2. **FREEZE FRAMES:** This is a natural way into 'sculpting' frozen pictures of key moments in the play.

Emotional Corridor



The students line up in two rows, facing each other. Give each student about half a line to say, perhaps some insults, from the play. It's fine to use each curse two or three times if you don't have enough.

Get them to repeat it a few times to the person opposite them, all at the same time, using lots of anger and venom.

Then, one by one, each student walks down the line, with everyone repeatedly saying their curse at the person walking. Afterwards, discuss how it feels to be the object of such dislike.

This exercise is particularly useful for invoking empathy in students.

Although you might want to start with something straightforward like curses, you can also move into more complex emotions for the play (this exercise is very useful for encouraging students to empathise).

Credits

For the original Watermill Theatre production:

A Midsummer Night's Dream

By William Shakespeare

Director Paul Hart

Designer Katie Lias

Movement Director Tom Jackson Greaves

Lighting Designer Tom White

Sound Designer David Gregory

Musical Director Joey Hickman

Assistant Director Robert Kirby

Creative Sign Consultant Sophie Stone

Magic Consultant Katherine Mills

Production Manager Lawrence T. Doyle

Company Stage Manager Kerrie Driscoll

Assistant Production Manager Harry Armytage

Theatre Technician Tim Knight

Deputy Stage Manager Alice Barber

Assistant Stage Manager (Book Cover) Claire Payton

Assistant Stage Managers Chloe Walker, Isobel Eagle-Wilsher

Wardrobe Supervisor Jessica Knight

Costume Maker Kate Johnston

Wardrobe Assistant Louise Patey

Sound Operator Rory Howson

Sign Integrated Performer and Audio Description Lixi Chivas

Sign Integrated Performer and Rehearsal BSL Interpreter Ana Becker

Rehearsal BSL Interpreters Felicity Becker, Chris Curran, Kim Helman, Lucy O' Keeffe

Set Construction DSH Carpentry and Design

Production Photographer Scott Rylander

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