

A
Midsummer
Night's
Dream

CAST

THESEUS	Ned Smith
HIPPOLYTA	Sophie Thornton
PHILOSTRATE	Nina Hemmings
EGEUS	Jack Sheeran
DEMETRIUS	Freddie Wise
LYSANDER	Hugo Francis
HELENA	Rosie Smythe
HERMIA	Rafaella Hutchinson
OBERON	Joshua Graham
TITANIA	Mary Clapp
PUCK	Darren Siah
PUCK'S FAIRIES	Georgie Wadstein & Laura Stewart
PEASEBLOSSOMS	Boppy Mason & Florence Sandberg
COBWEBS	Christy Callaway-Gale & Katie Shannon
MOTHS	Joely Harris & Sarah Praetorius
MUSTARDSEEDS	Kate Macrae & Talia Pick
COWSLIPS	Georgia Green & Elize Layton
NICK BOTTOM	David Thomas
PETER QUINCE	Jaimie Tullo
ROBIN STARVELING	Harry Boardman
TOM SNOOT	Georgie Robertson
FRANCIS FLUTE	Sam Wilkinson
SNUG	Tom Cotton
with	
Alexandru Siatin as puppeteer of The Indian Boy	

PRODUCTION

Lighting design – Joanne Greenwood
 Riggers – Tom Hardiman, Ollie Bradley, Jack Grierson, George Veys, Archie Howes, Angus MacLeod, Mick Kullman
 Lighting operator – Ollie Bradley
 Sound design – Jay Green
 Sound operator – Toby Matimong
 Set design – Joanne Greenwood
 Set construction - Garath Tulett and the theatre crews
 Prop construction – Hattie Selka, Hen Ullman, Hugo Francis, Darren Siah, Garath Tulett, Adam Bowden, Katy Stubbs
 The Indian Boy made by Billie Achilleos
www.billieachilleos.co.uk
 Opening film – Koa Padolsky
 Costume design – Joanne Greenwood
 Wardrobe – Lesley Dakin
 Wardrobe Assistants – Molly Rogerson, Ellie Mason
 Costumes supplied by Bedales Wardrobe, The National Theatre
 Ass's head supplied by The Royal Shakespeare Company
 Make up – Liz Housden
 Theatre manager – John Barker
 Production photography – Amanda D'Arcy
www.amandadarcy.co.uk
 Company clothing – Jack Nadel Active Promotions
www.activepromotions.com
 Company workshops – Dan Herd
www.wix.com/danherd/website
 Production Manager – Joanne Greenwood
 Assistant Stage Managers – Hattie Selka, Molly Rogerson, James Forsyth
 Deputy Stage Manager – Kim Viljoen
 Choreographer – Claire Gammon
 Assistant Choreographer – Charlotte Raines
 Director – Jay Green
 Assistant Director – Nina Hemmings

The production wishes to thank – Rod Edward, Alex McNaughton, Ben Shaw, Mohammad Halli, Facilities Department, Chris Wade

The Director wishes to thank Rebecca Lowe, Rachel Mars, Pippa Evans, Lou Presket, Zein Ja'far, Will Theakston, Ian Talbot, Bernie Bresslaw, Sally Dexter, Jesame Duguid, Antigone Polydorou, Nick Holden, Chris Earley, Benny Mepsted, Carrie Brooks, Alice Lee-Fox and Helen Hurd from whose MSNDs I've taken more than a little. Thank you for inspiration and conspiracy.



A Midsummer Night's Dream

William Shakespeare

SOUNDTRACK

The Byrds The Band Crosby, Stills & Nash Bob Dylan The Doors The Beach Boys the Small Faces Nick Drake The Kinks The Rolling Stones Jimi Hendrix The Temptations Sly & The Family Stone The Who and others



The Olivier Theatre

Bedales spoops

Notes from a Small Island

'Oh no, really?' they murmured unable to hide the mild disappointment.

'It's a bit ripe to turn up at Bedales, and whip out *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, you know,' they said, shaking their heads.

'They won't fall for that sort of caper down *there*,' they counseled.

But you don't fall for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

You fall in love with it. I did when I was twelve and I saw Ian Talbot's perennially great Bottom in The Regent's Park, twinkling and dancing on the edge of buffoonery and wisdom, and it seemed to me the very essence of what theatre was and should be. I'm delighted to return to it again, and once I had my ass's eyes on, there was no other choice to open my account in GU32.

The good old *Dream*. The good old trusty reliable *Dream*. So well known it's hard to take it seriously. Its village green cheerfulness, its text looming with the song and ballet and opera (that never appear) and now its deeper undergrowth haunted by Freud and Jung, with every director running towards or away from Peter Brook.

Why then do so few productions of the play pot all the balls?

The Dream lacks the depth of *Hamlet* or *King Lear* but its difficulties come from the fact that it is never inert, always liquid. The characters are apparently familiar; all driven by a love we recognise but they are slightly remote from us: there is no one in the play with whom we can imagine sustaining a conversation. There is no hero or heroine.

The Dream is a hall of mirrors in the fairground that stops on your Common each year. The light reflects and plays off all its surfaces, magnifying the hidden and secret, distorting the everyday. In the distance are the rumblings of the greater power the writer will strike in future works. It's a young man's play, seeking flippancy, unable to ignore the greater meaning of things.

Is there really any more to it than some fairy costumes, a toy dog, a lantern and an ass's head? No. Is it an open invitation to a wild

night out from theatre's greatest writer of dreams? Yes.

It holds a special place in the British literary imagination - partly because we love our secret gardens, our wonderlands, our paradises lost, postponed or regained. Avalon, Xanadu, Prospero's island, Tir-na-nOg, Middle-earth,

Narnia, Elidor, Utopia, New Atlantis, Erewhon, 100 Acre Wood - some part of us all lives in at least one of them and usually more. It also lives on in quite a different way to any other play in the canon because it captures a certain essential Britishness, capering with pagan mysteries and wiping the grin from its face with formal religion, featuring amateur actors and tradesmen who still hold the folk heart of the country in their rudely drawn

sincerity, suggesting but never showing a great deal of sex, laughing at ourselves, our failures and remembering to give a big bucket of melancholy and disappointment for us to wash ourselves down in too, as befits the national character - it couldn't really end any other way. Could it?

In 1969 the Summer of Love was the last gasp of the hippy dream, before it died. 1969 in Britain was also the start of the golden autumn of folk-rock that lasted until 1972, the breakthroughs in

contemporary music (modal jazz, the arrival of world musics, the period-instrument movement) mirrored by new post-60s structures as Wilson's

"white-hot" new realities took hold. It isn't too glib to see *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a play about change, about people and events on the cusp, after which they will not be the same again. Its author too perhaps.

"Since the dawn of the new millennium, British culture has been heading towards a more organic, anarchic, localised state...if you want to find the roots and traditions of a culture seek out the people at the bottom of the heap. The people that you don't want stopping at the bottom of your garden."
Will Hodgkinson, *The Ballad of Britain*

"Everyone should collect favourite acts in Shakespeare; one of mine would be Act IV of *The Dream* where wonder crowds wonder and eloquence overflows as Shakespeare manifests his creative exuberance without pause..."
Harold Bloom,
Shakespeare The Invention of The Human

The great plays would follow but never again would Shakespeare touch the combination of foolishness, innocence and profundity in quite this way; perhaps it can only be done the once? Love, sex, magik, folk wisdom, amateur dramatics and Englishness (far more intrinsically than the only contemporary domestic Elizabethan reflection he really mounted in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*) - it's the granddaddy of Butterworth's *Jerusalem*, the umbrella for Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Meredith's 'silver chain', some of Blake's visions, most of Drake's *Five Leaves Left* and Bryter Layter, bits of Van Morrison (especially *Summertime in England*); it has entranced Mendelssohn, Duke Ellington, Woody Allen, Louis Armstrong and the greatest lyricist and composer (late) of this parish, Alan Jay Learner. It's a brush with a growing genius, fumbling and inchoate with joy.

JJ Green
Hambleton, 2010

This production is for Pat: Irishman, Londoner, unmatched bookseller, sometime film-maker, one-time team-mate, musical inspirator, brother-in-law and old friend.

"The great age of folkloric retrieval is upon us...no longer does the word refer solely to songs and melodies...but the ancient lore of the land...Folk is 'shabby chic' that contains elements of the uncanny and eerie, as well as an antique veneer, a whiff of Britain's pagan ancestry...it opens up space for rampant imaginative fancies."
Rob Young, *Electric Eden*

