THE WINTER PRODUCTION 2010

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CAST

THESEUS  Ned Smith
HIPPOLYTA  Sophie Thornton
PHILOSTRATE  Nina Hemmings
EGUS  Jack Sheeran
DEMETRIUS  Freddie Wise
LYSANDER  Hugo Francis
HELENA  Rosie Smythe
HERMIA  Rafaela Hutchinson
OBERON  Joshua Graham
TITANIA  Mary Clapp
PUCK  Darren Siah
PUCK'S FAIRIES  Georgie Waldstein & Laura Stewart
PEASEBLOSSOMS  Boppy Mason & Florence Sandberg
COBWEBS  Christy Callaway-Gale & Katie Shannon
MOTHs  Joely Harris & Sarah Pretorius
MUSTARDSEEDS  Kate Macrae & Talia Pick
COWSLIPS  Georgia Green & Elize Layton
NICK BOTTOM  David Thomas
PETER QUINCE  Jamie Tullo
ROBIN STARVELING  Harry Boardman
TOM SNOUT  Georgie Robertson
FRANCIS FLUTE  Sam Wilkinson
SNUG  Tom Cotton

with

Alexandru Satin as puppeteer of The Indian Boy

PRODUCTION

Lighting design – Joanne Greenwood
Riggers – Tom Hardiman, Ollie Bradley, Jack Grierson, George Veys, Archie Hornes, 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.amandadararcy.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 Vijoen
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, Pepa Evans, Loui Prekker, Zoe J/Shane W Thompson, Ian Talbot, Bernie Breaday, Sally Deacon Joan Oughton, Antigone Polydorou, Nick Holden, Chris Earley, Benny Mapstone, Carne Brook, Alice Lee-Fox and Helen Hurd from whose MSNDs I’ve taken more than a little.
Thank you for inspiration and conspiration.

THE WINTER PRODUCTION 2010

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

7 8 9 DECEMBER 7.30pm
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 old, trusty, reliable Dream. So well known it’s hard to take it seriously. Its village green cheerfulness, its text booming with the song and ballet and opera (that never appear) and now its deeper underground 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, Eldor, 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.

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 once? Love, sex, magic, folk wisdom, amateur dramas and Englishness (far more intrinsically than the only contemporary domestic Elizabethan reflection he really mounted in The Merry Wives of Windsor) - it’s the grandaddy 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 Lerner. It’s a brush with a growing genius, fumbling and inchoate with joy.

JJ Green
Hambledon, 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.