

A Midsummer Night's Dream

PRODUCTION PATTERN a mini study guide

Welcome to "Production Patter," Indy Shakes' mini-study guide.

In the theatre, patter describes an actor's very quick speech or rapidly delivered song. Gilbert and Sullivan were superb masters of patter songs—just think of "I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major General" from the deliriously funny *THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE* (1879):

*I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical,
I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical,
About binomial theorem I am teeming with a lot o' news—
With many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse.*

Lin-Manuel Miranda's brilliant rap verses in *IN THE HEIGHTS* (2008) and *HAMILTON* (2015) are close relatives of the patter song.

Our "Patter" is designed to quickly give you some background about "our rare vision" for *MIDSUMMER*, including a few Internet links; suggested further readings; and some thoughts from the play's director Lauren Morris, to add to your enjoyment and understanding of our production. A proud Indiana native, Morris is an Indy Shakes Company Member and currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

At Indy Shakes, we are honored and committed to be true to Will and to you:

Yo. So read on just a bit, we'll show you a hit!

"I have had a most rare vision.
I have had a dream past the wit of man
to say what dream it was."

Bottom: Act 4, Scene 1



WHAT SHAKESPEARE ASKS US

Acclaimed British actress Glenda Jackson has noted that “All Shakespeare ever asks is: Who are we, what are we, why are we?” And, indeed, *MIDSUMMER* poses these questions for its characters—and for each of us—timeless questions for which there are no easy answers—but questions well-shared together in each other’s company in this lovely green and grassy Riverside Park—and in these on-stage woods.

Four hundred years ago, William Shakespeare tapped into what it means to be human and created crystal-clear, hilarious, tragic, and mesmerizing characters and scenes that universally ring true, even today. Will has much to say to us—still and always.

And so, Indy Shakes has chosen this perfectly delineated Shakespearean comedy to joyously welcome you this evening, as together we open our new home, the Taggart Memorial Mainstage Theatre. We are sure that you can hear the joyous flourish of welcoming trumpets and see our mischievous, whimsical fairies dancing among the trees, as you give yourself over to the wonder and magic of theatre unfolding before your very eyes and ears!

MIDSUMMER is one of Shakespeare’s most welcoming and celebratory plays. The language is heightened and often in rhyme—yet it is completely understandable. The characters are wild—yet we can readily empathize with them. And the Athenian “mechanicals”—the workers who decide to put on a play within the play—will have everyone laughing aloud! And so tonight, Indy Shakes brings you *MIDSUMMER*’s comedic intrigue, with royalty and fairies and “regular people” falling in and out of love in our “most rare vision,” in this exquisitely acted and designed, accessible, professional theatre production that will speak to who we are and who we hope to be.

Links

[A Midsummer Night's Dream | Folger Shakespeare Library](#)

Plot summary and introduction to the play, with links to on-line texts, digital images, and other resources.

[A Midsummer Night's Dream - YouTube](#)

“Directed by Sir Peter Hall and using The Royal Shakespeare Academy’s cast of actors—including Helen Mirren, Judi Dench, and Ian Holm—this 1968 version of Shakespeare’s classic comedy is one of the wittiest and wildest of all versions produced.”

[Shakespeare Online \(shakespeare-online.com\)](#)

Excellent source of all things Shakespeare with frequent updates.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABPZLLijfmM>

myShakespeare: Delightfully staged *MIDSUMMER* character interviews.

Further Readings

Bloom, Harold. [Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human](#). New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1999.

Greenblatt, Stephen. [Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare](#). New York: W.W. Norton, 2005.

Thomson, Peter. [Shakespeare’s Theatre](#). London: Routledge, 1984.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

A Glimpse into MIDSUMMER

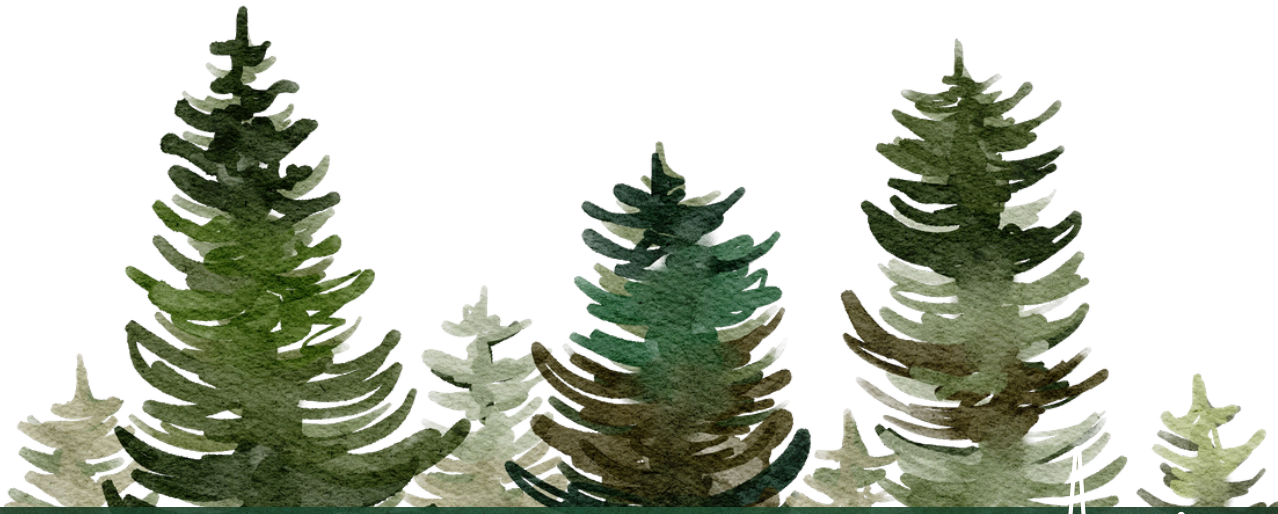
As we begin in MIDSUMMER's Athens, we find a place of restriction and rigidity, where the "rule of law" is the guide—a city where gender and class are distinctly defined, with clear designations regarding who has power. It is a place where a woman can be punished or dismissed for having intelligence and thoughts and desires. This manicured Athens presents a show of order and cleanliness that belies the molten humanity and sexuality underneath.

And then we come to the woods—a place where the fluidity of gender can be examined. Does Bottom have to be played by a man? Does Titania have to be played by a woman? Does Oberon have to be played by a man? What does a gender shift do to the dynamics of power? How does that perspective change our way of seeing?

We are in the woods, so these distinct categories can blur. Some elements of Oberon's being are feminine, some are masculine; and the result is something that transcends gender entirely. The woods are where our truer selves are revealed—beyond gender. It is dark and mysterious, unpredictable and mystical. Magic here does not always work as expected, and human nature does not either.

Yet in all of this looking—indeed, because of this looking—Shakespeare's text stands up still. He gives us today a truth—and a text—so peerless and so deep that we can ask questions of it—and then search for our own answers. Indeed, this is the great gift that great theatre compels us to ask—to question, to wonder, to learn, and to grow. It is a new and wondrous level of our own magic!

And so, we invite you into this world of our rare-visions MIDSUMMER—we invite you to immerse yourself in the joyous freedom of putting your feet in this grass, of sitting under these stars, of breathing in this fresh summer air, of communing with each other—something that in our technology-driven world—and after this last year and a half—is magic indeed! It is a magic where freedom and imagination can lead to deep discoveries and to waiting truth.



ECHOING OUR HEARTBEAT



As his iambic pentameter echoes our heartbeat in his plays and in his poems, Shakespeare speaks intrinsically to who we are and to who we can become.

So, we invite to you to come and listen, come and enjoy, come and delight in theatre, in *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*, our free, professional 2021 summer Shakespeare production. We will perform for you on July 22 - 24 and July 29 - 31 in our new Taggart Memorial Mainstage Amphitheatre, Riverside Regional Park, 2420 East Riverside Drive, Indianapolis. Livestream performances can be seen on July 29 (ASL-signed) and July 30.

Bring your laughter, your open hearts, your picnics, your blankets, your lawn chairs, your friends, and your families—and enjoy our pre-show, beginning at 6 p.m., and our performance, beginning at 8 p.m.



www.indyshakes.com