VIRGINIA ARTS FESTIVAL

2019-2020 WORLDCLASS® EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Friday, November 1, 2019
10:15 am - 12:45 pm
Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, Virginia Beach

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The American Shakespeare Center celebrates the joys and accessibility of Shakespeare's theatre, language, and humanity by exploring the English Renaissance stage and its practices through performance and education. With its performances, theater, exhibitions, and educational programs, the ASC seeks to make Shakespeare, the joys of theatre and language, and the communal experience of the Renaissance stage accessible to all. By re-creating Renaissance conditions of performance, the ASC explores its repertory of plays for a better understanding of these great works and of the human theatrical enterprise past, present, and future.

In its hometown of Staunton, Virginia, the ASC has constructed the Blackfriars Playhouse, the world's only re-creation of Shakespeare's original indoor theater. While the legendary open-air Globe Theatre of London is most associated with Shakespeare, the original Blackfriars was used by his performance company in the winter months. By following the basic principles of Renaissance theatrical production, the ASC gives its audiences some of the pleasures an Elizabethan playgoer would have enjoyed.

In addition to giving performances at its Blackfriars Playhouse, the ASC touring company travels the United States and abroad with the same unique brand of Shakespeare that thrills, delights, and educates its audiences.

SOURCE: Adapted from American Shakespeare Center, **www.americanshakespearecenter.com**

A Midsummer Night's Dream
TYPE: Comedy
FIRST PERFORMANCE: Circa 1595–1596
FIRST PUBLISHED: 1600

Forbidden love, stalker-ish love, jealous love, royal love, plus fairy-magic shenanigans that leave characters and audience alike wondering what's real and what's a dream—that's Shakespeare's most performed comedy in a nutshell. Back in the (Elizabethan England) day, "midsummer madness" was another way to say "a temporary lapse into craziness," and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is most definitely jam-packed with that.

To best understand how things roll in the play, let's break it down by character types. First up, the royals and the lovers; we'll call them the Upper Crust:

So Theseus, the duke of Athens, is getting ready for his wedding to Hippolyta when Egeus, a local nobleman, asks for help with his defiant daughter, Hermia. Egeus wants his girl to marry Demetrius; having a mind of her own, Hermia wishes to marry Lysander. Unfortunately, Athenian law insists she marry the dude her dad chooses—or die. Theseus offers another option: Hermia could become a nun. Not too surprisingly, Hermia and Lysander decide to skip town and marry elsewhere, but before they do, they let Helena, Hermia's best friend, in on their plans. Helena's actually the one who digs Demetrius, and she shares the couple's secret with him. Demetrius, who once romanced Helena before falling for Hermia, follows Lysander and Hermia into the woods, with lovesick Helena not helping her case by pretty much stalking Demetrius. Through a bit of fairy trickery, both the young guys suddenly fall hard for Helena, which sparks a nasty quarrel that fairy king Oberon stops. With help from his mischievous sprite Puck, Oberon puts the relationships (mostly?) right: Hermia + Lysander and Helena + Demetrius. When everyone awakes in the morning, Theseus has a change of heart and overrides the dad's-choice law, and the two young couples return to Athens to get hitched alongside the duke and his bride.

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The next group is made up of "the mechanicals," guys who work with their hands; let's call them the Craftsmen:

Remember that fancy wedding ol' Theseus is preparing for? Well, several of the city's working class have decided to perform a play as part of the big celebration (yep, a play within the play). Peter Quince, a carpenter, puts together a cast of other craftsmen/performers, including the weaver Nick Bottom as the lead actor. When the group meets in the woods to rehearse, that plucky fairy Puck replaces Bottom's head with a donkey's—yikes! The other Craftsmen are so freaked that they flee, leaving Bottom on his own in the forest. Fairy queen Titania, asleep nearby under a spell cast by her husband Oberon, wakes up and falls madly in love with Bottom, donkey face and all. After Oberon eventually releases them both from the spell, Bottom, believing he's just had a fantabulous dream, rushes off to Athens to find his friends. Together again, the group performs for the duke and duchess.

And finally, about those Fairies:

At the start of the play, Oberon and Titania, king and queen of the fairies, are at odds because she refuses to hand over to her husband a boy left in her care. Furious Oberon, who's jealous of the attention Titania lavishes on the child, puts a spell on her; when she wakes up from sleep, she'll fall in love with whatever creature she sees first. Thanks to Puck, the first creature she sees is the donkey-headed Bottom, on whom she orders her fairies to dote, feeding and entertaining him. Oberon takes the boy, then releases Titania from the spell. Their feud over, Titania and Oberon, plus their whole fairy crew, head for the big royal wedding bash.

Wrapping up the play, a solo Puck addresses the audience directly, suggesting that if the characters have offended us, we should think of the whole story as no more real than a dream...

THINK ABOUT THIS

We've all had dreams in which some pretty weird stuff has happened. We've had scary nightmares that startle us from sleep, and happy dreams that leave us in a terrific mood when we wake up. Think about all the things that happen in the play connected to dreams, sleep, or waking from sleep, and how they affect the characters.

TRY THIS

The play's title includes the word dream. If the comedy is indeed a *dream*, whose dream is it? Bottom's? Titania's? Puck's? The lovers'? The audience's? How do you know? Write or discuss your answer.

It can be a challenge keeping track of all the love-crazed, fairy-altered folks in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here's a handy guide to the key characters.

Upper Crust (Royals and Lovers)

THESEUS Duke of Athens, getting ready to marry Hippolyta

HIPPOLYTA Queen of the Amazons; Theseus's fiancée

EGEUS Member of the duke's court; Hermia's dad, who wants her to marry Demetrius

HERMIA Egeus's daughter, who's in love with Lysander, not Demetrius

LYSANDER Young man Hermia wishes to marry

DEMETRIUS Young man Egeus wants Hermia to marry; romanced Helena before falling for Hermia

HELENA Hermia's best friend who's in love with Demetrius

Craftsmen (Mechanicals)

PETER QUINCE Carpenter; director of play to be performed at Theseus's wedding

NICK BOTTOM Weaver; lands the lead role in the wedding play

FRANCIS FLUTE Bellows mender; cast as the girl character in the wedding play

TOM SNOUT Tinker who repairs pots and pans

SNUG Furniture builder

STARVELING Tailor

Fairies

OBERON King of the fairies; miffed at Titania, his wife, whom he thinks is giving more attention to the child than to him

TITANIA Queen of the fairies, married to Oberon; looking after a boy left in her care

PUCK Oberon's jokester sidekick; an impish, rowdy sprite

CHILD A changeling boy being taken care of by Titania (In English folklore, a "changeling" is a child secretly swapped for another by fairies in the night.)

THINK ABOUT THIS

What's in a name? The monikers that writers choose for their characters often add extra meaning, and can even foreshadow plot elements. Take *The Hunger Games*' bow-wielding Katniss Everdeen, for example; katniss is a plant in the genus *Sagittaria*, which in Latin means "the archer." From *Star Wars*, Darth is a variant of "dark," and Vader is Dutch for "father"; we all know how that worked out, don't we?

TRY THIS

Choose a few characters from the play and research the origin of their name. Did Shakespeare borrow the name from history, mythology, or another source? Did he invent the name to suit the character? What do you think Shakespeare might have been trying to convey to the audience by choosing that character's name? Share your thoughts in an essay or presentation.

Shakespeare and His *Midsummer* Sources

Like many great creatives—writers, painters, musicians, filmmakers—Shakespeare was fond of borrowing bits and pieces from others' works to help build out his own. He didn't do this in a shifty way, like blatantly plagiarizing somebody else's stuff; rather, he used parts of preexisting stories, fiction and nonfiction, as inspiration, homage, and a means to better reach his audience. Skillfully blending and mixing his sources to create something both comfortably familiar and uniquely brand new, Shakespeare was a true master of the literary mashup.

Experts believe that for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare borrowed from a variety of sources created in various time periods, including his own. He drew from the work of Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser, whose masterful epic poem *The Faerie Queene* is loaded with magical beings and locations, and whose *Epithalamion*, a wedding-day ode to the poet's bride, is a celebration of marriage. Both works were published in the 1590s, when Shakespeare was acting and writing in London.

Linen tapestry showing two scenes from Der Busant, a Medieval poem

Reaching back to the 1400s for more source material, Shakespeare looked to the German poem *Der Busant,* about eloping lovers getting lost in a forest. Moving further back in time, to the 1300s, the playwright pulled from the chivalric romance "The Knight's Tale," part of Geoffrey Chaucer's medieval epic *The Canterbury Tales*. That story features two men fighting over a woman, which forces Theseus—in Greek mythology, the hero-king of Athens; in "The Knight's Tale," the Duke of Athens—to intervene (Hippolyta appears in "The Knight's Tale" as well).

Anything sounding familiar?

Finally, you know that play-within-the play the Craftsmen put together in *Midsummer*? Shakespeare lifted that story from Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—likely written around 8 CE! In that tale, Pyramus and Thisbe are two Babylonian lovers forbidden by their feuding parents to get married; they whisper their love to each other through a crack in the wall adjoining their homes. They arrange to secretly meet, but when Thisbe arrives, she's scared off by a lioness, the animal's mouth bloody from a recent kill. When Pyramus shows up, he finds remnants of Thisbe's veil, which fell from her head as she fled and which the lioness shredded, leaving the bloodstained bits. Thinking his true love dead, Pyramus falls on his sword; Thisbe returns, finds the lifeless Pyramus, and stabs herself with the same sword.

If you're thinking you might have heard that story somewhere before, you're right. Shakespeare borrowed it for another of his well-known plays, *Romeo and Juliet*, which he wrote just before *Midsummer*. He definitely knew how to recycle!

THINK ABOUT THIS

Why would a writer, artist, musician, or filmmaker borrow from other creative works? How would it benefit the creator of the new work? That work's audience?

TRY THIS

Beyond Shakespeare, can you think of a creative work—like a book, song, TV show, or film—that borrows from, updates, or reinterprets another creative work? Make a chart, PowerPoint, collage, or other visual representation to share with your class that compares and contrasts the new work and the source it draws from. What's similar? What's different? Which work do you prefer—the original or the update? Why?

William Shakespeare by John Taylor. National Portrait Gallery.

Though he's considered possibly the greatest and most influential writer of all time, William Shakespeare remains largely a man of mystery. The scant details of his life come from his works, court and church records, and accounts from his peers. Scholars and historians have filled in the blanks with their best educated guesses.

Take Shakespeare's birth date. There is no definitive record of his birth, only his baptism, which occurred on April 26, 1564, in the English town of Stratford-upon-Avon, one hundred miles outside of London. Since the tradition of that time was to baptize a newborn three days after birth, it's assumed that Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564.

We do know that William was the third child of John and Mary Arden Shakespeare. He had seven brothers and sisters; only four survived to adulthood. William's father was a glove maker and businessman, and his mother came from an affluent farming family.

It's not known for certain if William attended the King's New School, which educated the boys of Stratford. Since his father was prominent in the community, it's assumed that he did. There, he would have received an education rooted in the classics: up to ten hours a day studying grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music—most of it in Latin!

Records reveal that in 1582, when William was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway. Together, they had three children, Susanna and twins Judith and Hamnet. Hamnet, William's only son, died in 1596 when he was just eleven. There is no conclusive documentation of William's whereabouts between 1585 and 1592, a period commonly called Shakespeare's "lost years."

Scholars estimate that Shakespeare arrived in London around 1588 and began working as an actor and playwright. By 1594 he was acting and writing for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a performance troupe. The company was later known as the King's Men, after King James I took the throne upon Queen Elizabeth I's death in 1603. Until 1642, when the religious Puritans closed the theaters, the King's Men troupe was a favorite with both royalty and the public.

Shakespeare's acting company performed at the Globe Theatre, built by the troupe around 1599. Evidence suggests that the venue was a polygonal, three-story, open-air amphitheater that could accommodate an audience of three thousand. From 1609 the King's Men performed at the Globe during the summer months and at Blackfriars, a second indoor theater owned by the troupe, in the winter.

William's plays were in such demand that they were published and sold in "penny-copies" to his more literate fans. This was a major accomplishment; no playwright before him had become so popular that his plays were sold as literature. William retired from the King's Men in 1611 at age forty-seven and returned to Stratford. He died on April 23, 1616.

In his lifetime, it's estimated that William Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven plays, 154 sonnets, two narrative poems, and added more than two thousand words to the English language. Today, Shakespeare's works are read, studied, performed, and enjoyed all over the world. As playwright and poet Ben Jonson, one of Shakespeare's contemporaries, once wrote, "He was not of an age, but for all time."

Those new to Shakespeare may wonder what all the hoopla is about. Sure, he's one of the world's most popular playwrights and poets, but what makes him so special?

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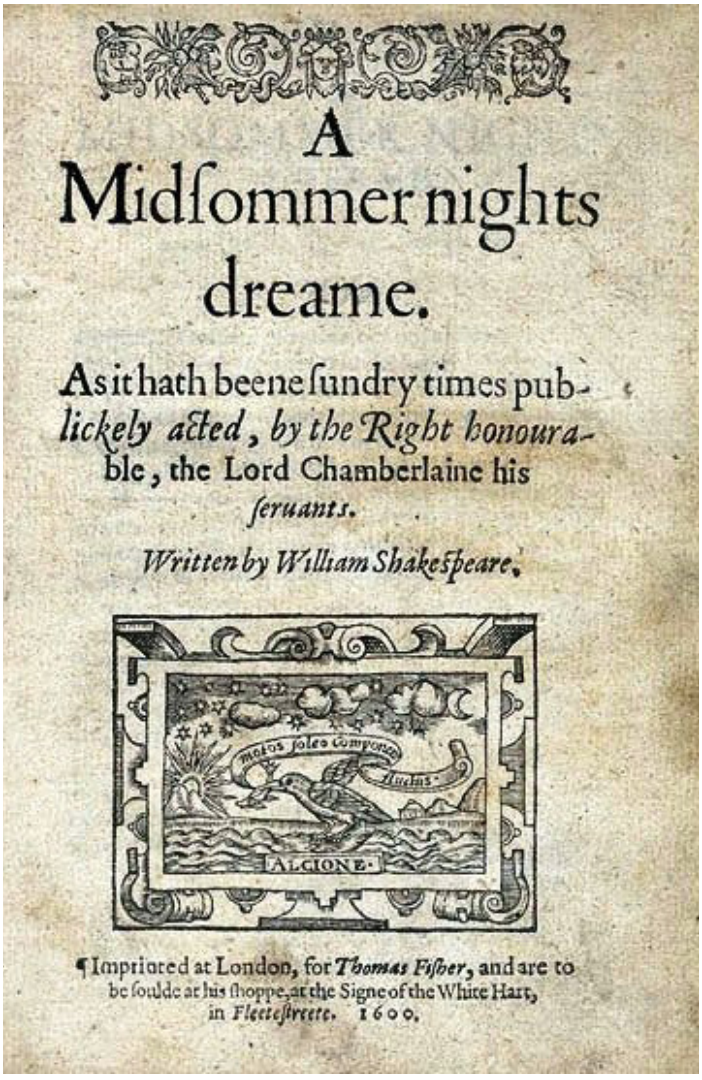
Perhaps the most important reason Shakespeare is revered is the way he makes us think about life's big-picture issues, things most everyone grapples with sooner or later. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, the playwright asks us to ponder the nature of romantic love and how it might transform us. Do the "true" lovers, Hermia and Lysander, have any real say in their future together without the intervention of fairy magic? Does love cloud our judgment and make us do crazy things, such as fall for a literal "ass," like Titania did, or act vengefully, as Oberon did? As Lysander says to Hermia, "The course of true love never did run smooth," and Shakespeare aims to prove this point in *Midsummer*.

Other reasons Shakespeare remains timeless include his remarkable storytelling—his works still inspire modern authors, playwrights, filmmakers, even dancers and artists—his complex and dimensional characters, who are fun to read and challenging for actors to play, and his ability to turn an elegant or colorful phrase. Many of the best-known phrases in the English language, words we hear every day, came from the mind of Shakespeare: *for goodness' sake*, *neither here nor there*, *the short and long of it*, *dead as a doornail*, *in a pickle*, *love is blind*, *heart of gold*, and from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *fancy-free* and the words *bedroom* and *swagger*.


A
Midſommer nights
dreame.
As it hath beene ſundry times pub-
lickely acted, by the Right honoura-
ble, the Lord Chamberlaine his
ſeruants.
Written by William Shakeſpeare.
ALCIONE
¶ Imprinted at London, for Thomas Fiſher, and are to
be ſoulde at his ſhoppe, at the Signe of the White Hart,
in Fleetſtreete. 1600.

Title-page of A Midsummer Night's Dream, from the Quarto edition of 1600.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Midsummer Night's Dream is full of transformations. Some are obvious, even amusing: Bottom goes through some pretty "ass-inine" changes, and similar fairy magic does a number on other characters too. Some changes are more subtle, though, leading to a bit of personal enlightenment. What does lovesick Helena learn about how it feels to be the object of obsessive love? How about idealistic Lysander and Hermia in search of "happily ever after"? What about the law-spouting Theseus?

TRY THIS

Transformation is one of *Midsummer's* most important themes. How are the major characters transformed over the course of the play? What causes the transformation? Is the (emotional/physical/situational) place they wind up at *Midsummer's* end better, worse, or the same for them? Why? Create an outline, chart, or other graphic organizer to show each character's transformation and your thoughts about the change.

THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

Shakespeare lived most of his life during one of the most remarkable periods in English history, the Elizabethan Age. Queen Elizabeth I ascended to England's throne in 1558, six years before Shakespeare was born. Her reign until 1603 was a time of extraordinary achievement for the country, marked by relatively stable politics, a flourishing of the arts, and England's emergence as the military and commercial leader of the Western world.

Queen Elizabeth I, the "Armada Portrait".

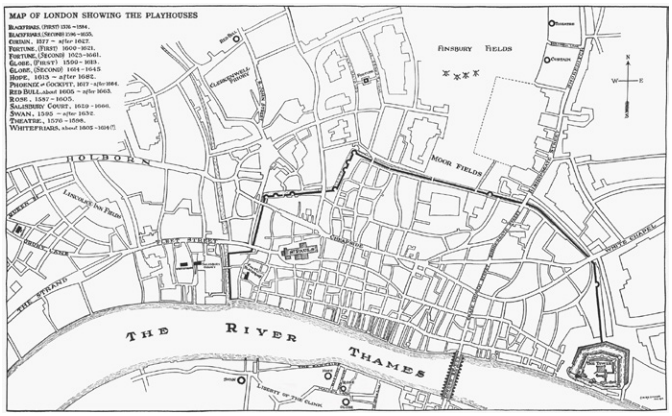
When Elizabeth became queen, she upheld many of the Protestant edicts of her late father, King Henry VIII, whose relationship with the Catholic church had ruptured. She shrewdly managed to avoid a rebellion by making concessions to Catholic sympathizers. She was a firm and canny leader whose navy defeated the attacking Spanish Armada in 1588, establishing England as a world superpower. She supported Sir Francis Drake, first to circumnavigate the globe, and funded Sir Walter Raleigh, whose exploration of the "New World", with its vast resources of tobacco and gold, brought tremendous riches to England.

Under Elizabeth, the arts in England blossomed. The queen was fond of the theater, and many of the country's most important playwrights worked during her reign, including, along with Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Christopher Marlowe. Elizabeth permitted construction of professional theaters for the first time in the country's history. In London, a city with a population of nearly two hundred thousand, each week fifteen thousand people attended the theater.

London became a center of both commerce and culture, hosting an explosion of learning and creativity, including masterpieces of literature like Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene, and Sir Philip Sidney's Defence of Poesie. It was in this hothouse environment that Shakespeare lived and wrote, adding the Shakespearean sonnet to the great literary forms of the day, including the Spenserian stanza and Marlowe's blank verse.

Elizabeth's successor upon her death in 1603 was King James I, who also had a great love for the literary arts, especially drama. It was at his invitation that Shakespeare's acting company, Lord Chamberlain's Men, was rechristened the King's Men. An accomplished writer himself, King James commissioned an English translation of the Bible so that more people could read it, since only the educated classes knew Latin. The King James Version of the Bible, completed in 1611, is believed to be the world's bestselling book.

King James's big-spending lifestyle and untrustworthy colleagues ultimately landed him in hot water with the Parliament, though, then controlled by the strictly religious Puritans. Relations between the monarchy and Parliament worsened when Charles I, son of King James, ascended to the throne upon his father's death in 1628. A brutal civil war followed, which King Charles I lost to the Puritans; Charles was executed in 1649.



1917 map showing theatres of 16th and 17th century London.

Among the many reforms enacted by the Puritans at the height of the civil war was the closing of all theaters. In 1660 Charles I's son was restored to the throne of England. King Charles II allowed theaters to reopen, but by then the curtain had fallen on the heyday of English drama.

SHAKESPEARE'S DAY AND TODAY

In Shakespeare's day, attending a play was an exciting community event, like a festive party. While waiting for the play to begin—and even during the show—spectators drank wine or ale and snacked on a variety of foods. Modern-day excavations at the sites of Shakespearean playhouses have unearthed bottles, spoons, remnants of fruits and nuts, small animal bones like those of chicken, and loads and loads of oyster shells, the shellfish a favorite of Elizabethan theatergoers.

In the 1500s and 1600s, performances were held in the middle of the afternoon, either outdoors under the afternoon sun or indoors by candlelight. The actors could see the audience, the audience could see the actors, and the members of the audience could see each other.

In Elizabethan times, there wasn't such a pronounced division between the actors and the audience as there is today. The theaters were small, and audience members sat close to the stage. Sometimes, in theaters like the Globe, they stood around the stage in the "pit"; since this was at ground level, these playgoers were called "groundlings." At other theaters, audience members could sit on the stage itself. They often changed seats, mingled, and walked in and out of the venue, much like at a modern sporting event. But they always knew what was going on in the play and didn't want to miss the best part— the swordfight, the kiss, the bawdy joke, or that new word Shakespeare had invented!

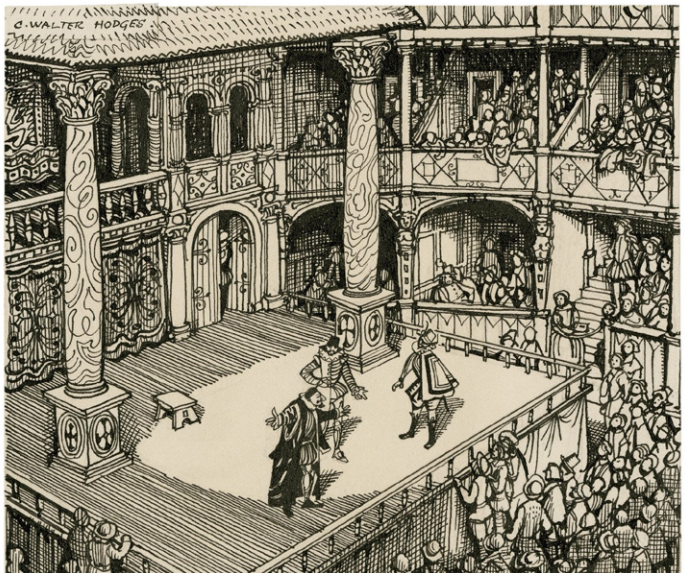
Wherever you sit at the performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, let the action of the play draw you in. Do be considerate, however, of others who are also trying to see. No electronic devices or cameras should be used during the performance. Remember, this is a live event, so don't be a distraction. Part of your role as an audience member is to make sure that attending the play is enjoyable for everyone.

In Shakespeare's age, plays were meant to be seen and heard rather than read. Compared to today, Elizabethans spent more time speaking and listening to language than reading and writing it. Figures of speech, for example, were more than a dramatic writing tool; they were meant to be spoken.

During the performance of *Midsummer*, you'll see the actors creating the story through speaking words and embodying actions. Attending a play is different than reading a play; experience the play through listening, seeing, feeling, thinking, and imagining.

In the Elizabethan era, audiences were asked to use their imagination. Certainly, there were theatrical events that used elaborate and expensive technical elements, but Shakespeare's plays kept scenery, props, costumes, lighting, and special effects to a minimum. Instead of a cast of thousands, Shakespeare's actors played multiple roles—including young men playing all the female parts. You, too, will need to use your imagination. Shakespeare's words are as powerful today as they were four hundred years ago. They tell stories that engage and challenge all of the senses.

Finally, in Shakespeare's day, people loved talking about where they'd been, what they'd seen, whom they saw, and what they thought about the plays—they voiced their likes and dislikes about the story and the actors. Be sure to share your observations and opinions of your Shakespearean theater experience with your classmates, teachers, friends, and family.



C. Walter Hodges' imagined reconstruction of Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, act 1, scene 3, being performed in an Elizabethan theatre. Drawn for The Globe Restored, published by Ernest Benn, 1953. Folger Shakespeare Library ART Box H688 no.3.1

SOURCES: Adapted from American Shakespeare Center, **www.americanshakespearecenter.com**, with information from "Shakespeare's Theater," Folger Shakespeare Library, **https://www.folger.edu/shakespeares-theater**, and "Globe Theatre Food," The Globe Theatre, **http://www.bardstage.org/globe-theatre-food.htm**.

Does reading *A Midsummers Night's Dream* feel like reading one super-long poem? That's because Shakespeare—nicknamed the Bard, another word for poet—included loads of verse in his plays. Verse is language with a set rhythm, also known as poetry. Why would Shakespeare do that? Two main reasons: tradition and memorization. Since the beginning of theatre, plays had been written in verse, and verse is easier to memorize than prose—kind of like how a song or rap lyric can get stuck in your mind. Shakespeare generally used verse, a formal way of speaking, for the dialogue of nobility and other important people.

R. Dadd Pinxt., W. M. Lizars Sculpt, William Shakespeare: "The Works of Shakspere, with notes by Charles Knight" (1873).

Shakespeare used a verse form called blank verse. While blank verse doesn't rhyme, each line does have an internal rhythm, like a heartbeat. That rhythm of blank verse is called **iambic pentameter.** Sounds fancy, but it's pretty easy to understand. Let's break that name down. An **iamb** is one short, unstressed syllable followed by one long, stressed syllable. It's that heartbeat rhythm: da DUM, da DUM, da DUM (or i AM, i AM, i AM, for an easy way to remember). **Penta** means five, like the number of sides on a pentagon. And **meter** means a rhythmic pattern. So iambic pentameter is a rhythmic pattern made up of five iambs—or heartbeats, or da DUMs (or i AMs)—per line.

Here one of Puck's lines from act 3, scene 2:

my **MIS**- | tress **WITH** | a **MON**- | ster **IS** | in **LOVE**

Hear the five heartbeats, the five da DUMs (i AMs)? That's iambic pentameter.

THINK ABOUT THIS

In Shakespeare, lines of verse begin with capital letters, while prose appears in paragraph form. Why do you suppose that is?

But ol' Shakespeare liked to mix it up; he was one of the first playwrights to use both verse and prose—language without a set rhythm or structure—when it suited him. Prose is the form typically used by the servants and common citizens in Shakespeare's works; it's closer to informal, everyday language, speech that Shakespeare's audiences would easily identify with. So in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bottom and his fellow Craftsmen speak most of the prose.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Does your language change depending on whom you're speaking to or what you're speaking about? Why?

And speaking of mixing it up, in *Midsummer* Shakespeare throws in with his iambs another type of two-syllable verse pattern, the trochee (pronounced TRO-key). Like an iamb, a trochee is a type of poetic foot, or basic unit of a poem's meter. Its pattern of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable is the exact opposite of an iamb: DA dum (or TRO key). Compared to an iamb, this felt surprisingly unnatural to English-language speakers in Shakespeare's day, so the Bard often used trochees for his supernatural characters, like fairies and witches and ghosts.

In *Midsummer*, several of Puck's speeches are in trochaic tetrameter—a line of poetry containing four (tetra in Greek) trochaic feet. For example, from the epilogue, act 5:

IF we | **SHA** dows | **HAVE** of- | **FEN** ded
THINK but | **THIS** and | **ALL** is | **MEN** ded

But wait—Shakespeare had yet another trick up his sleeve. Sometimes he'd hang an extra unstressed syllable at the end of a line. That's called a feminine ending, and it throws off the rhythm of the verse just a bit. Shakespeare used it to suggest a character feeling thrown off or unsettled, like Hermia in act 3, scene 2, after Lysander left her alone in the woods:

since **NIGHT** | you **LOVED** | me **YET** | since **NIGHT** | you **LEFT** | me

Wow, that Shakespeare sure used every poetic tool he could to get his meanings across, right?

Midsummer night's dream, Puck with the sleeping Hermia, by Louis Rhead.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Most of Shakespeare's plays are written in blank verse, but he still liked to rhyme—especially to call the audience's attention to something. For *Midsummer*, he busted out the rhymes in a big way, with almost half the play written in rhyming verse! Why do you think he made that choice? How might rhyming verse affect an audience? Does it contribute to a sense of magic? If so, how?

TRY THIS

Got skills? Try your hand at writing in Shakespearean verse. Pen a few lines in iambic pentameter, then mix it up by tossing in a few trochees, rhymes, and maybe even a feminine ending. How do the trochees, rhymes, and feminine ending change the meaning, mood, or effect of what you've written?

SOURCE: Adapted from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Student Study Guide, Classic Stage Company, https://www.classicstage.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/StudyGuideForAMidsummerNightsDream.pdf

Absolute Shakespeare
www.absoluteshakespeare.com
Extensive online resource for Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, poems, quotes, biography, and Globe Theatre information.

Complete Works of William Shakespeare
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www.shakespearenj.org/Education/LIVE/documents/MND2014%20Study%20Guide.pdf

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING

English: 6.1–7, 9; 7.1–7, 9; 8.1–7, 9; 9.1, 3–6, 8; 10.1, 3–6, 8; 11.1, 3, 5, 6, 8; 12.1, 3–6, 8

History and Social Science: WG.1, 7; WH.1, 5, 14; WHII.1, 3, 4, 5

Theatre Arts: 6.5, 15; 7.6, 17, 19; 8.5, 16, 20, 21; TI.8, 9, 10, 12, 16; TII.9, 11, 16, 17; TIII.7, 8

We need your feedback to make our Education Programs even better! Please take a moment to complete this form and either return it to the Virginia Arts Festival office at 440 Bank Street, Norfolk, VA 23510, fax it to (757) 605-3080, or e-mail your answers to education@vafest.org.

WorldClass® Event:_____

How did your students respond to the performance?

How did you prepare your students for this performance? Did you use the Education Guide? If so, how? Did students enjoy the materials?

How did this performance contribute to experiential learning in your classroom?

What role do the arts play in your school? In your classroom?

If you could change one thing about this experience, what would it be?

Please include quotes and comments from your students as well!

(Optional)

Name: _____

School: _____ City: _____

Would you like to be part of our database? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2019-2020 WORLDCLASS® EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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vafest.org

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Virginia Arts Festival
440 Bank Street
Norfolk, VA 23510

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A Midsummer Night's Dream
November 2019

Charlotte Blake Alston
February 2020

ALICE (in wonderland)
April 2020

Collage Dance Collective
April 2020

Virginia International Tattoo
April 2020

The Kingdom Choir
May 2020