A Midsummer Night’s Dream
by William Shakespeare

Know-the-Show Audience Guide

researched and written by the Education Department of The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

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William Shakespeare, widely recognized as the greatest English dramatist, was born on April 23, 1564. He was the third of eight children born to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, England. Shakespeare’s father was a prominent local merchant, and Shakespeare’s childhood, though little is known about it for certain, appears to have been quite normal. In fact, it seems that the young Shakespeare was allowed considerable leisure time because his writing contains extensive knowledge of hunting and hawking.

In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a farmer. She was eight years his senior, and the match was considered unconventional.

It is believed that Shakespeare left Stratford-upon-Avon and went to London around 1588. By 1592, he was a successful actor and playwright. He wrote approximately 38 plays, two epic poems, and over 150 sonnets. His work was immensely popular, appealing to members of all social spheres including Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. While the plays were well-liked, Shakespeare’s work was not considered by his educated contemporaries to be exceptional. By 1608, Shakespeare’s involvement with theatre began to dwindle, and he spent more time at his country home in Stratford. He died in 1616.

Most of Shakespeare’s plays found their first major publication in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare’s death, when two of his fellow actors put the plays together in the First Folio. Other early printings of Shakespeare’s plays were called quartos, a printer’s term referring to the format in which the publication was laid out. These quartos and the First Folio texts are the sources of all modern printings of Shakespeare’s plays.
A Midsummer Night’s Dream
An Introduction

Considered Shakespeare’s most successful and popular comedy, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* has something for everyone. From the regal elegance of the Athenian court to the lowbrow antics of the “rude mechanicals,” from the passion-filled plights of the lovers to the mischievous magic of the fairies, *Midsummer* is sure to please almost any audience. It is the most frequently produced of all Shakespeare’s plays. Some say, it is in performance somewhere in the world every day of the year.

In creating this hilarious, silly, and sometimes deeply moving play, Shakespeare pulled situations and ideas from many diverse sources — merging Greek myth, European folklore and his own firsthand knowledge of English country life into a tightly-woven rollercoaster ride of a play.

At the heart of the play, as in most Elizabethan comedies, are issues of love and marriage. “Midsummer madness” was a colloquial phrase to refer to someone sick with love, and the play can be seen as a celebration of love’s magic (and madness) in many stages: adolescent love, as exemplified by the two pairs of young Athenians; adult love, as seen with Theseus and his captive bride-to-be, the Amazon queen Hippolyta; and from the perspective of a long-married couple struggling with their less-than-perfect relationship, Oberon and Titania.

Like in many of Shakespeare’s plays, there is a movement from chaos, conflict and danger to a restoration of harmony in the human and natural worlds. At the opening of the play, Hermia is given a choice between marrying a man she does not love, being put to death, or living a life of chastity in a convent. Helena is desperately in love with a man who now refuses her. On a more cosmic scale, the feud between Titania and Oberon over the custody of a human child has turned the weather topsy-turvy. When the fairies begin to intervene in the dilemmas of the humans, this already-troubled world falls further into chaos and disarray. The delusions of love are compounded by the illusions of magic.

But just as the chaos reaches its peak, Shakespeare magically resolves the dilemmas of humans and fairies alike, and returns the world to a state of blissful, primordial harmony. As Puck puts it:

*Jack shall have Jill;*
*Nought shall go ill;*
*The man shall have his mare again,*
*and all shall be well.*

**MIDSUMMER’S EVE**

Midsummer Eve, the Vigil of St. John the Baptist, June 23, was traditionally a time of magic, when spirits supposedly walked abroad and played their tricks upon mortals. It was a time for certain traditional rites, such as the burning of bonfires, which go back to the fertility celebrations of pre-Christian Britain. By using certain magical charms, it was believed maidens on Midsummer Eve might have dreams of who their true loves were to be. In general, the season was associated with love and marriage, and it is appropriate that Shakespeare would choose such a title for a marriage play.
Please note: Below is a full summary of the play. If you prefer not to spoil the plot, consider skipping this section.

The story of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* may be best explained by dividing it into its three basic units: the Royals and Lovers, the Mechanicals, and the Fairies.

**THE ROYALS AND THE LOVERS:**
As Theseus, the Duke of Athens, and Hippolyta prepare for their wedding, Egeus, a nobleman of the town, comes before them to seek assistance with his disobedient daughter, Hermia. Egeus wants her to marry Demetrius, but she wants to marry Lysander. According to the law of Athens, she must marry the man her father chooses or die. Theseus acknowledges that Egeus has the law on his side, but offers Hermia the alternate choice of becoming a nun. Lysander and Hermia decide to run away and to marry far from Athens. Before they leave, they see Helena, Hermia’s best friend, and tell her of their plans. Helena is in love with Demetrius and, in hopes of proving her loyalty to him, tells him of Hermia’s escape. As Lysander and Hermia travel through the woods the following night, Demetrius attempts to track them down with the love-sick Helena close in tow. While in the woods, fairies play tricks on the young lovers. Through magic, Demetrius and Lysander both suddenly fall madly in love with Helena. This confusion leads to a quarrel, which Oberon, King of the Fairies, stops. Oberon then has his henchman restore the relationships to their rightful state: Demetrius is in love with Helena, and Lysander is in love with Hermia. When they wake the next morning, the Duke overrides the law, and decides to allow Lysander and Hermia to marry. Demetrius, transformed by the evening in the woods, proclaims his renewed love for Helena. They joyously return to Athens and are married alongside Theseus and Hippolyta.

**THE MECHANICALS:**
Several of the workers of Athens have decided to perform a play for the Duke on his wedding day. Peter Quince, a local carpenter, gathers the five craftsmen thought best skilled to perform the play; Nick Bottom,
Francis Flute, Robin Starveling, Tom Snout, and Snug. Bottom, a weaver with great aspirations to be an actor, is cast as Pyramus, a noble young man. Flute, a young man with a high voice, is cast as Thisbe, the girl that Pyramus loves. The group decides to rehearse in the woods outside town so that they won’t be disturbed. When they meet to rehearse, they too are subjected to fairy pranks. Puck, a very mischievous spirit, replaces Bottom’s head with that of a donkey. This sight frightens the other craftsmen so badly that they run home to Athens, leaving Bottom alone in the forest. Titania, who has been sleeping nearby, awakes and, through a spell cast by Oberon, falls madly in love with the donkey-headed Bottom. Later, when Titania and Bottom are released from the fairy spells, Bottom believes that he has simply had a wonderful dream and rushes off to find his friends. Reunited once again, the Mechanicals hurry off to the palace and perform their play, Pyramus and Thisbe, for the Duke and Duchess.

THE FAIRIES:
When the play begins, Titania and Oberon, Queen and King of the Fairies, are feuding because Titania refuses to give Oberon a human child (a changeling boy) left in her care. Oberon, furious that Titania will not give him the boy, uses a magical flower to place a spell on her. The spell will make the Fairy Queen fall in love with the first creature that she sees when she wakes, no matter how hideous it might be. When she awakes, the first creature she sees is Nick Bottom, a mortal on whom Puck has placed a donkey’s head. She falls madly in love with the transformed man and orders her fairies to wait on her new love, feeding and entertaining him. Before releasing her from his spell, Oberon takes custody of the changeling boy. No longer fighting, Titania and Oberon then go with the rest of the fairies to celebrate Duke Theseus’ and Hippolyta’s wedding.

CRITIC’S CORNER

“Shakespeare uniquely took pains to work out a fairly elaborate and outrageous plot for A Midssummer Night’s Dream. Inventing plot was not a Shakespearean gift; it was the one dramatic talent that nature had denied him. I think he prided himself on creating and intertwining the four different worlds of character in the Dream.”

Harold Bloom
Who’s Who in the Play

THE ATHENIANS

THESEUS— Duke of Athens, and betrothed to Hippolyta.

HIPPOLYTA— Queen of the Amazons, defeated by Theseus, and now betrothed to be his bride.

PHILOSTRATE— The principal servant to Theseus and the court.

EGEUS— A noble Athenian and father to Hermia.

HERMIA— A young woman of Athens who falls in love with Lysander against her father’s wishes.

LYSANDER— A young man of Athens who is in love with Hermia; he plots their escape from Athens.

DEMETRIUS— A young man of Athens who has been chosen by Egeus to marry his daughter, Hermia. Previously, he had a relationship with Helena.

HELENA— A young woman of Athens and closest friend to Hermia. She is in love with Demetrius.

THE MECHANICALS

PETER QUINCE— A carpenter of Athens, and the self-appointed director of the Mechanicals’ play.

NICK BOTTOM— A weaver with great aspirations of being an actor. He is cast as Pyramus in the Mechanicals’ play.

FRANCIS FLUTE— A bellows-mender, who is cast as the fair Thisbe in the play despite his protest.

TOM SNOUT— A tinker, or mender of household items made of tin.

SNUG— A joiner, or a builder of furniture.

ROBIN STARVELING— A tailor.

THE FAIRY KINGDOM

OBERON— The king of the fairies and husband to Titania.

TITANIA— The queen of the fairies and wife to Oberon.

PUCK— Also known as Robin Goodfellow, he is the prankster henchman of Oberon.

THE FAIRIES— Creatures serving Titania.

THE CHANGELING CHILD— A child born to one of Titania’s priestesses, who is taken up and cared for by the fairy queen, to the great consternation of her king.
Sources & History

Scholars estimate that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written between 1595 and 1598, since it is mentioned by Francis Meres in his book *Palladis Tamia*, published at that time. Other evidence that helps to establish the date when the play was written is found in the play itself: the character of the lion in the play-within-a-play and the wedding celebration provide the clues.

The Mechanicals’ concern over depicting a lion on stage was probably inspired by a pamphlet published in 1594, which described a Scottish feast where plans to bring in a live lion as part of the evening’s entertainment were canceled when the organizers realized that the ladies would be frightened by the beast.

The elaborateness with which the play is framed around the royal wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta suggests that it was composed for a real-life wedding of great significance, probably at court. Many historians believe that Midsummer was first performed at the 1598 wedding of Elizabeth Gray, Queen Elizabeth’s goddaughter, although no record of this has been found.

The sources of *Midsummer* are scattered and diverse, derived from both literature and popular folklore. The love story of Theseus and Hippolyta was told in the Knight’s Tale of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, and more facts about Theseus seem to be drawn from Sir Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives*, which was used as source material for other Shakespeare plays. The tale of Pyramus and Thisbe is one of the stories in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.

The fairy world is both literary and traditional in its sources. Tales of goblins and sprites were common in Elizabethan England, and indeed, Shakespeare had probably heard stories of Robin Goodfellow while he was a child in Stratford. Oberon, the King of the Fairies, was a widespread figure in folklore who had already appeared in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and in other stage and literary works. Titania and the other fairies seem to have been invented by Shakespeare from bits and pieces of the beliefs about fairies that were common in his time. The Mechanicals were probably drawn from life—mocking depictions of the “hard-handed” men who made up blue-collar London at the time.

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* first appeared in print in a quarto edition in 1600, probably printed from Shakespeare’s own manuscript. In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare died, it was reprinted in the First Folio, with some editorial changes that seem to have their source in a theatrical manuscript of the play— one that had been used in production.

While it is not known exactly how often this play was performed in Shakespeare’s lifetime, the title page of the 1600 quarto boasts that it had been “sundry times publicly acted.” When Parliament reversed the Puritan ban on theatre, *Midsummer* was one of the first plays to be revived, as a lavish musical spectacle. Samuel Pepys, who attended this 1662 production, was less than impressed, calling it “the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.” Other audiences and directors continued to return to the play however, and it enjoyed a long and varied production history. The opportunity to depict a magical forest often led early directors and designers to pull out all the stops—a production in 19th-century London featured “real rabbits.” Ballets, operas, and artwork based on the play have abounded in England and beyond.

In the 20th century, *Midsummer* began to be adapted to motion pictures. The 1935 Max Reinhardt movie, featured spectacular costumes, flocks of extras, and James Cagney and Olivia DeHavilland as Bottom and Titania. More recently, in 1999, director Michael Hoffmann brought together another all-star cast, with Kevin Kline as Bottom and Michelle Pfeiffer as Titania.
Aspects of Midsummer

TRANSFORMATIONS:
*Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind.*
*Midsummer*, I.i

“Love transforms ordinary people into rare and perfect beings. When we fall in love, we suspend reason and overlook the flaws of our beloved.”
Laurie Rozakis, *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Shakespeare*

Transformations, whether induced by magic or inspired by love, abound in *Midsummer*. There are the obvious transformations, such as Puck’s prank on Bottom and the effects of the love charms cast on Lysander, Demetrius, and Titania, but there are also subtler and more profound changes that the characters experience during their night in the forest.

Helena enters the woods lonely, dejected, and self-pitying, then finds herself suddenly the object of two men’s affection. Through this experience, she becomes aware of how unattractive such an excessive (and obsessive) affection can be—one of the factors that has made her undesirable to Demetrius. In confronting Demetrius, Lysander, and Hermia, she seems to find a personal strength and inner beauty that she seemed unaware of before entering the woods.

Lysander and Hermia flee Athens in hopes of finding a “happy-ever-after” life somewhere else. Their bright-eyed naiveté makes them ill-prepared for the challenges they must face as they begin their life together, even a challenge as seemingly simple as a walk in the woods. Their experience in the forest gives them a taste of worldly pain and tests the strength of their love. In the end, they awake as a more mature couple, one ready to face the real world together as adults.

Several other characters experience similar transformations. Demetrius, a selfish, “disdainful youth” at the beginning of the play, awakes from the “dream” with a voice of quiet maturity and responsibility. Theseus, who in Athens has insisted on the letter of the law, has a change of heart in the woods and allows love to take its course. Even the self-absorbed actor, Bottom, seems quieter and more awe-struck when he awakes, more aware of the world around him.

Shakespeare’s use of transformations in *Midsummer* guides the audience not only through a series of playful hijinks, but also down a road of personal enlightenment for the characters and, through them, for us.

BEWARE THE MIDSUMMER MADNESS

Saying that someone is suffering from “midsummer madness” was a proverbial way of saying that they are sick with love.

Isaac Asimov notes that “there is a folk belief that extreme heat is a cause of madness (hence the phrase ‘midsummer madness’) and this is not entirely a fable. The higher the sun and the longer it beats down, the more likely one is to get sunstroke, and mild attacks of sunstroke could be conducive to all sorts of hallucinatory experiences. Midsummer then is the time when people are most apt to imagine fantastic experiences.”
FAIRY EVOLUTION 101:
The Elizabethans had a very different image of fairies than we do today. When modern audiences picture fairies in their minds (under the influence of the Victorians and especially J.M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan*), they are most often tiny winged creatures, glowing with magic, but frail, beautiful, and kind to humans. This was far from the Elizabethan idea of the Fairy Kingdom, although Shakespeare’s play itself played a significant role in creating a more romantic and benevolent image of fairies.

For centuries, fairies were a source of fear and anxiety for many communities. These beings were believed to be forces of nature, fiendish creatures that were sometimes seen as little different than the demons of hell. Fairies were blamed for all kinds of mishaps, from a great storm that destroyed the crops to a “spooked” horse that threw its rider. At best, their behavior towards humans was prankish, at its worst, malicious and frightening, such as the belief that fairies would steal human babies away by night and replace them with grotesque “changelings.”

The Elizabethan fairies evolved from several traditions: Celtic tales of nature spirits and “little people,” Germanic legends of kobolds, gnomes and dwarves, and the Greco-Roman myths about satyrs, fauns, and nymphs. These remnants of pre-Christian mythologies survived particularly in folktales and oral traditions, but the belief in them, especially in the countryside (such as Shakespeare’s native Stratford) was often real and intense.

Elizabethans had a number of methods for warding off the wrath of fairies: farmers would leave a small amount of fruit or grain unpicked in their fields; others would leave a saucer of cream or a slice of bread out at night. These food offerings were supposed to help placate hungry fairies. Various plants, metals, and symbols were also supposed to provide protection from fairy magic.

We have William Shakespeare to thank, in part, for the “cute” depiction of fairies today. For *Midsummer*, he invented a completely new type of fairy. Titania’s attendants are depicted as tiny, almost insect-like sprites associated with flowers, music, and dancing. The *Midsummer* fairies may be mischievous, but they intend no real harm to the humans they encounter. Indeed, the intervention of the fairies ultimately restores peace, love, and harmony in the human world of the play.
A LONG ROAD TO TRAVEL
Lysander states that his aunt's home is “remote seven leagues” from Athens, and he and Hermia plan to walk there. A league is a unit of measurement approximately equivalent to three miles. Assuming that an average adult walks roughly 3-5 miles per hour, it would have taken them up to seven hours to travel the 21 miles on foot. And that’s without considering the fact that they’re traveling at night in the woods...and the fact that Lysander gets them lost.

ARTISTIC LICENSE
Theseus is thought to have been an actual historical ruler of Athens around 1230 BCE. Most of the information about him comes only from legend, which presents him as a great warrior and conqueror, as well as a recreational seducer of women. One of the stories about him tells of his conquest of the Amazons, a tribe of fierce women warriors, and his capture of their queen, Antiope.

Eventually, Theseus persuaded his captive to marry him, and she bore him a son, Hippolytus. For this reason, Antiope is also referred to as Hippolyta (the feminine form of her son’s name). The marriage did not have the happy ending that Shakespeare implies. The Amazons mounted an attack on Athens, and Antiope/Hippolyta died in the battle, fighting at her husband’s side against her own people.

“You HARD-HEARTED ADAMANT!”
“Adamant” originally referred to a mythical substance which the ancient Greeks believed was so hard and strong that it could not be cut or broken. It comes from a Greek word meaning “not tamed,” and came to refer to diamonds, because they are so difficult to cut. In the Middle Ages, the word was mistaken for the Latin adamate, “to attract,” and adamant was used to refer to magnets. When Helena calls Demetrius a “hard-hearted adamant,” she plays on both senses of the word— his heart is as hard as a diamond, but he exerts a magnetic attraction on her.

YOU ARE YOUR WORK
The names of the Mechanicals mostly reflect their occupations.

- BOTTOM, the weaver, is named for a skein of yarn or thread, called a “bottom.”
- The name of QUINCE, the carpenter, suggests “quines,” or blocks of wood used by carpenters in building.
- FLUTE is a bellows mender-- the bellows has a fluted shape, and was used to compress air to stoke a fire or to produce sound (as in a church organ).
- SNOUT, the tinker, would have been a mender of pots, pans, and kettles — the spout of a kettle was often called a “snout” in Shakespeare's time.
- SNUG, is a joiner, one who manufactures cabinets and other jointed furniture made of snuggling pieces of wood.
- Finally, in Shakespeare's time, tailors were usually depicted as abjectly poor and thus, rail-thin from hunger— in other words, “STARVELINGS.”

James Cagney as Nick Bottom in the 1935 epic film adaptation by Max Reinhardt.
Commentary & Criticism

“Modern audiences tend to resist the idea of magic, but many Elizabethans still believed in fairies, only their creatures were much darker and more sinister than the bland images manufactured by Walt Disney. Their traditional habitat, the dark forest where confused travelers lost their way, belongs more to the strange tales of the Brothers Grimm. Shakespeare’s moon-drenched fairy world is a symbolic dreamscape where traditional distinctions blur and disappear.”

Norrie Epstein, *The Friendly Shakespeare*

“Every single person goes into the woods at night and encounters fairies. The question depends upon what you think of a fairy. What sinks most productions of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is the notion of a fairy as a nineteenth-century silly thing. Anytime you walk in the woods alone, they’re there. Or when you dream. If a voice comes to you and says something you don’t understand... that’s what Shakespeare means by fairy.”

Peter Sellars, director

“Nothing by Shakespeare before *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is its equal, and in some respects nothing by him afterward surpasses it. It is his first undoubted masterwork, without flaw, and one of his dozen or so plays of overwhelming originality and power.”

Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*

“Love and marriage is the central theme: love aspiring to and consummated in marriage, or to a harmonious partnership within it. Three phases of this love are depicted: its renewal, after a breach, in the long-standing marriage of Oberon and Titania; adult love between mature people in Theseus and Hippolyta; and youthful love with its conflicts and their resolutions, so that stability is reached, in the group of two young men and two girls.”

Harold F. Brooks, editor

*The Arden Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

“Shakespearean comedy raises the same issues as Shakespearean tragedy, only in a different key and, of course, with a different conclusion. The tragic tale of *Romeo & Juliet* becomes comedy in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*... On one level, you can uncritically accept the comedies, simply enjoying them for their silliness; on another, you can look further and see how Shakespeare uses comic absurdities to suggest profound human values and concerns.”

Norrie Epstein, *The Friendly Shakespeare*

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**NIGHT TIME IN SHAKESPEARE’S DAY**

The Elizabethans believed that night was the time of spirits and demons. Though many contemporary thinkers would scoff at such a notion, one must consider what nighttime was like for the Elizabethans. In pre-modern times, the night lacked the artificial glow that chases away complete darkness today. Only the moon, stars, and scattered lanterns and candles illuminated the Elizabethan night.

In the dim flicker of these limited light sources, it is easy to imagine supernatural encounters. A dead tree jostled in a breeze can be transformed into a hideous monster, a darting bird can become a fleeing spirit. Because these sights were never seen in the bright daytime, Elizabethans believed that ghosts held domain over the night, and the first signs of the dawn (such as the crowing rooster) chased evil spirits away.
SEEING A PLAY - VS - HEARING A PLAY
Modern audiences go to the theatre to see a play; but Shakespeare’s audiences would go to the theatre to hear a play. His audience was much more attuned to the language of the play, the inflections of the actors’ voices, and the rhythms of the poetry. This is not to say that Shakespeare’s plays lacked visual interest; just that the visual elements were not nearly as important as the language.

This is in some ways still true today, at least in the words we use to describe attending the theatre. People who attend the theatre are most often referred to as an “audience” sharing the root of audio or sound in the name. Conversely, people who attend movies are often referred to as “movie-goers”; sports enthusiasts are often referred to as “spectators.”

WHAT DO I WEAR?
People often ask if shows at The Shakespeare Theatre will be performed in “traditional dress” or “like real Shakespeare.” This comes up even more often with the history plays.

It is interesting to note that, though often sumptuous and expensive, the costumes used in Shakespeare’s plays were rarely correct to the period of the play. Most often, actors were dressed in their finest attire (or clothes donated by wealthy patrons), and then these clothes were adorned with capes or crowns or other items denoting the character’s status. The shows in Shakespeare’s day were simply put up too quickly to create elaborate period-accurate costumes for the full company. Therefore, despite popular assumption, a more accurate “traditional dress” approach to Shakespeare plays would be to dress actors in their finest contemporary clothing adorned with capes and crowns to denote status.

There were also very strict laws in Shakespeare’s day detailing what clothes, styles, and colors citizens were allowed to wear. This was a deliberate maneuver to reinforce the class structure of the era. Penalties for violating these Sumptuary Laws could be quite severe — loss of property, imprisonment, fines, and even loss of title. These Sumptuary Laws meant that fashionable clothes could only be worn by the wealthy and were often only seen at a distance.
In this Production

LEFT & BELOW: Costume renderings for Oberon, Puck, and fairies.

RIGHT: Scenic elements from the show

BELOW RIGHT: Costume renderings for Nick Bottom and Francis Flute.

All designs by director and designer, Bonnie J. Monte ©2017.
Explore Online

Examine some things you might not have known about this popular play in this Telegraph article.

Visit the Folger Shakespeare Library’s webpage
A Midsummer Night’s Dream
http://www.folger.edu/midsummer-nights-dream

Watch the Beatles perform “Pyramus and Thisbe” to the adoration (and high pitched screams) of their fans.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxXkdYr5jYg
Sources & Further Reading

THE ANNOTATED SHAKESPEARE, Introductions, Notes, and Bibliography by A.L. Rowe

THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM edited by Harold Brooks

ASIMOV’S GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE by Isaac Asimov

CAMBRIDGE STUDENT GUIDE: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM by Linda Buckle

THE COMPLETE IDIOT’S GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE, by Laurie Rozakis

THE ESSENTIAL SHAKESPEARE HANDBOOK, by Leslie Dunton-Downer and Alan Riding

FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine

FREEING SHAKESPEARE’S VOICE by Kristin Linklater

THE FRIENDLY SHAKESPEARE by Norrie Epstein

A READER’S GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE by Muriel B. Ingham

SHAKESPEARE A TO Z by Charles Boyce

SHAKESPEARE AFTER ALL by Marjorie Garber

SHAKESPEARE FOR BEGINNERS by Brandon Toropov

SHAKESPEARE FOR DUMMIES by Doyle, Lischner, and Dench

SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE, Consultant Editors Keith Parsons and Pamela Mason

SHAKESPEARE: THE INVENTION OF THE HUMAN by Harold Bloom

SHAKESPEARE OUR CONTEMPORARY by Jan Kott

SHAKESPEARE’S CRIMINALS: CRIMONOLOGY, FICTION, AND DRAMA by Victoria M. Time

THEATRE: A WAY OF SEEING, Third Edition by Milly S. Barranger

SHAKESPEARE SET FREE, edited by Peggy O’Brien

SHAKING HANDS WITH SHAKESPEARE, by Alison Wedell Schumacher
Additional Opportunities for Kids and Adults

THE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE ACADEMY
The Shakespeare Theatre now offers youth and adult classes in a wide range of disciplines connected with the classics and the art of theatre. Each series of classes meets once a week in one of the Theatre’s beautiful facilities, and gives participants the opportunity to work under the instruction of The Shakespeare Theatre’s artistic and educational staff as well as guest teaching artists. Spring and Fall Classes Available.

SHAKESPEARE LIVE! TOURS AND WORKSHOPS
This acclaimed touring program brings dynamic and visually engaging one-hour productions of Shakespeare’s classics directly into the schools. Each performance includes a comprehensive study guide and a post-performance discussion with the actors. Fun and interactive workshops give students a chance to explore the actor’s approach to bringing Shakespeare’s language to life. In 2018 we will be offering productions of The Comedy of Errors and Macbeth!

PAGES TO PLAYERS: IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES
Residencies provide an opportunity for classroom English teachers in grades 4–8 to partner with the Theatre’s skilled teaching artists to explore Shakespeare’s text in-depth, in an exciting, performance-based technique that promotes collaboration, self-confidence, and creativity, while always strengthening Language Arts skills.

SHAKESPERIENCE: NJ STUDENT SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
This annual spring festival, developed in partnership with the Folger Shakespeare Library and Rider University, gives middle and high school students the opportunity to spend a day at the Theatre experiencing Shakespeare as both actors and audience members. The Shakesperience:NJ Festival celebrates the power of performance as a teaching tool on a statewide scale.

THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR SHAKESPEARE CORPS
Young actors are given the opportunity to participate in the excitement of the Theatre’s summer season through this program, which offers classes, a final presentation, as well as behind-the-scenes and front-of-house experience. Geared for students ages 10 to 18, admission to this program is through an audition and/or an interview.

www.ShakespeareNJ.org/Education