

Olney Theatre Center presents the Synetic Theater production of

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE

A changeling boy is born in the forest. His mother dies in childbirth, and the boy is taken in by Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of the fairies.

ACT ONE

In the court of the Duke Theseus of Athens, on the wedding day of the Duke and the conquered Hippolyta of the Amazons, Lysander challenges the betrothal of his love, Hermia, to the young Demetrius. The Duke Theseus judges that Hermia must marry Demetrius, choose a nun's habit, or die. Hermia's friend Helena, who loves Demetrius to no avail, tries to comfort Hermia, but Hermia and Lysander decide to run away into the woods to marry elsewhere.

Meanwhile, a troupe of players made up of citizens of the city prepare to put on a play for the wedding festivities of the Duke. Peter Quince, the director, brings in a local star, Bottom the weaver, to play a crucial role. After some difficulty handing out parts, they decide to rehearse in the woods that night.

In the forest that night we meet the grown changeling boy, Puck, who pulls pranks on a pair of fairies belonging to Titania. The fairy queen forgives him his mischief, but when Oberon arrives and vies for Titania's attention, Puck incites a battle between the two monarchs, which Titania underhandedly wins. Angered, Oberon tells Puck to fetch a magic

flower, the juice of which Oberon will put in Titania's eyes. It will make her fall in love with the first thing she sees. Demetrius enters in pursuit of Hermia and Lysander, followed by Helena. He rejects Helena's advances. After they exit, Oberon commands Puck to also enchant Demetrius so that he falls in love with Helena.

ACT TWO

Titania enters her grove and falls asleep with her fairies. Oberon enchants her with the flower and steals away.

Lysander and Hermia are exhausted in the wood and fall asleep, but not before Hermia has to remind the enthusiastic Lysander that she will not sleep with him until they marry. Demetrius then enters nearby and falls asleep himself. Puck finds the sleeping humans and enchants Lysander's eyes, mistaking him for Demetrius. Then, seeing Demetrius, enchants him as well, just to be sure. Helena arrives and wakes Lysander, who immediately falls in love with her and follows her into the woods. Hermia wakes from a nightmare and runs off to find Lysander.

The players enter the woods for their rehearsal. Puck decides that he is going to cause some mischief and transforms Bottom into a donkey. Titania wakes, sees Bottom and takes him away as her new love, having her fairies serve them.

ACT THREE

Helena enters, pursued by Lysander, and awakens Demetrius, who immediately falls in love with her. The men begin to fight over her. Hermia enters and sees Lysander. After Lysander rejects Hermia, a four-way fight ensues in which Helena thinks they are all tricking her, Demetrius and Lysander fight over Helena, and Hermia believes Helena stole Lysander. Oberon, furious, commands Puck to sort things out. Puck separates the lovers so that they all fall asleep apart, then disenchant the eyes of Lysander.

ACT FOUR

Titania and Bottom are fast asleep in the clearing. Oberon enters and cures Titania of the enchantment. They resolve their quarrel and fly away before dawn takes them.

Theseus and Hippolyta enter and find the lovers asleep on the ground. They awaken the lovers. Upon seeing Lysander's love for Hermia and Demetrius' love for Helena, Theseus determines that there will be three weddings that day.

Bottom wakes up, believing that he has had a terrific, amazing dream. He leaves, and returns to his companions, who are overjoyed to see him.

Theseus and the lovers return from their marriages and elect to watch the players' production. Bottom and the players put on an unintentionally farcical production of "Pyramus and Thisbe," to the delight of the court.

After the court goes to bed, the fairies enter and bless the house, and Puck bids the audience goodnight.

