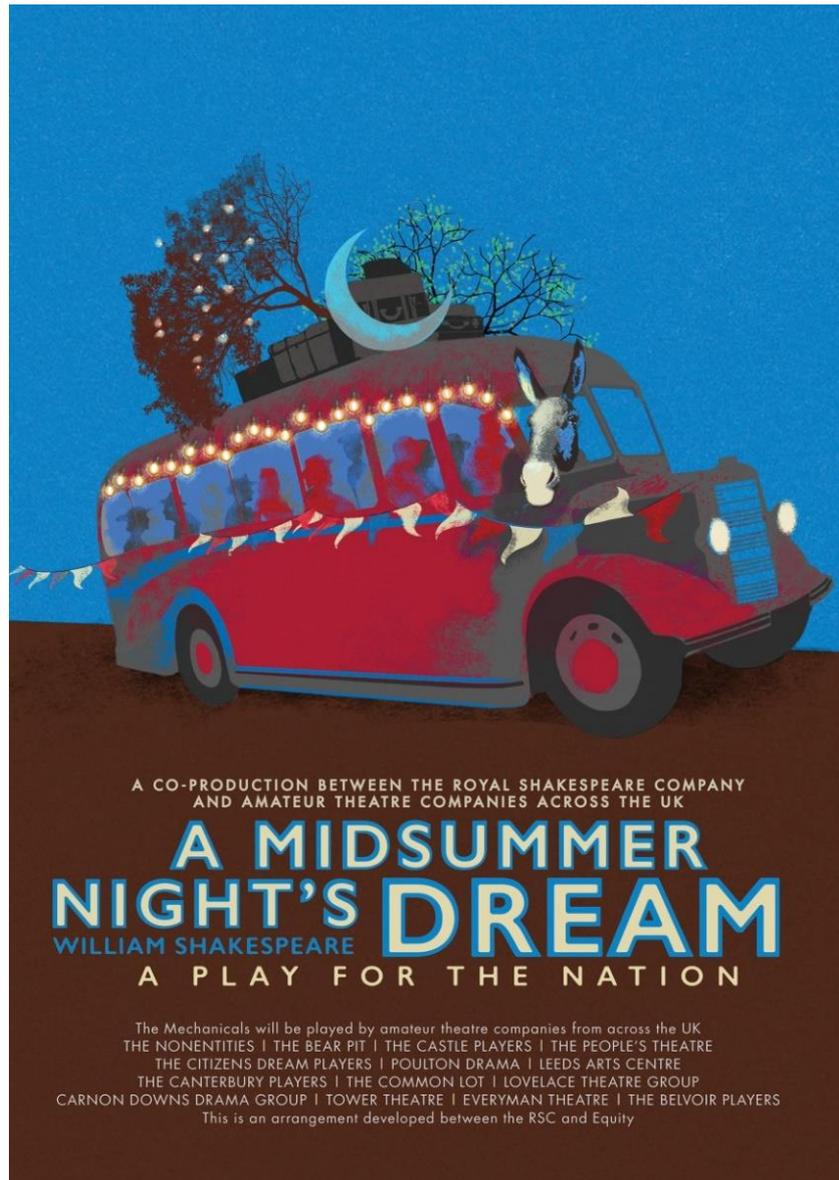


**Visual Story for the Relaxed Performance**  
**Thursday 14 July 1:15pm**



This visual story is designed for visitors to the Relaxed Performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It contains information and images to help prepare you for your visit.

Registered charity no. 212481

## ***The Royal Shakespeare Theatre***

- The play is being performed at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Here are two photos of the outside of the theatre so you know what it looks like



- When you come into the theatre there is a shop, a café and a box office (where you can pick up your tickets). It will be busy as there will be lots of other people coming to see the play.

It will look like this picture →



- This is the auditorium where the play is performed. The audience (that's you) sit down to watch the play. It will be full of people and quite noisy.

This is a picture of the auditorium. →

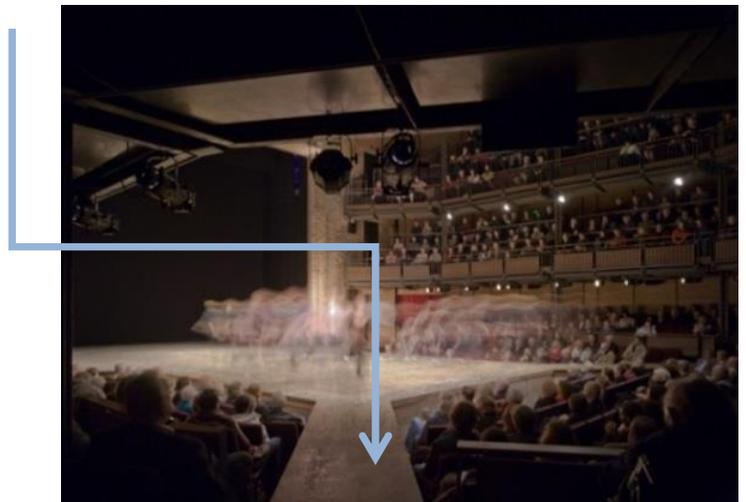


- The stage is where the actors perform the play.

Here is a picture of an actor on the stage. →

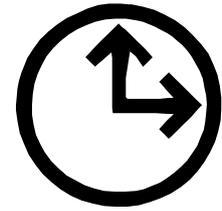


- On this stage there are two walkways which come through the audience. They are used all the time by the actors so it is very important that you don't walk on them or put any of your belongings on them.



## How long is the play?

The play is shown in two halves with a 20 minute break in the middle. The first half is 1 hour 35 minutes and the second half is about 50 minutes long.



## Chill-Out Areas

If you want to have a break during the play you can go to a chill-out area. You can ask an usher to show you where they are.

Here is a picture of a chill out area. →



## Ushers

Ushers are people who check your tickets for the theatre. If you need help or have a question you can ask them.

Here is a picture of four ushers. →



## Pre Show Session

At the start of the show the actors will come on stage for 5 minutes to talk about what will happen in the show. They will be wearing their costumes.

## What is the play about?

**A short description of the play:** the play starts in the court of a Duke called Theseus. He is about to marry a woman called Hippolyta.

Egeus takes his daughter Hermia to Theseus to ask for the Duke's help. He wants to stop Hermia marrying the boy she is in love with, Lysander, and make her marry Demetrius instead. The Duke agrees with Egeus so Hermia and Lysander run away into the forest. They are followed by Demetrius, who wants Hermia to stay and marry him, and Hermia's best friend Helena who is in love with Demetrius herself.

A small group of workers in Athens really want to perform a play at the Duke's wedding. The workers, who are sometimes called the 'mechanicals' because they have practical jobs like a weaver and a joiner, also go into the forest to rehearse. The play they are practising is called Pyramus and Thisbe and one of the actors – Bottom – wants to play all the parts.

The forest is ruled by Titania and Oberon, who are King and Queen of the fairies. They are fighting and Oberon enlists the help of his servant Puck to help him put a spell on Titania and make her fall in love with something ugly. Puck does what Oberon asks and uses a flower to put a spell on Titania while she's sleeping. Puck then uses magic to turn Bottom's head into the head of a donkey making all the other mechanicals run away from him and when Titania wakes up and sees Bottom she falls in love with him, even though he looks like a donkey.

Puck also puts a spell on the young lovers but it makes both the boys – Lysander and Demetrius – fall in love with Helena instead. Eventually Oberon sets it right, breaking the spell on Titania and the lovers. At the end of the play the mechanicals who had been rehearsing perform their play at Duke Theseus' Wedding and Hermia marries Lysander and Helena marries Demetrius.

## The characters in the play

Below are pictures of all the different actors and the names of the characters they play. Some actors play more than one character and, so that they look different, they change the way they move and talk and they change their costume (a costume is the name for the clothes actors wear onstage).



**DUKE THESEUS**



**HIPPOLYTA**



**HELENA**



**HERMIA**



**DEMETRIUS**



**LYSANDER**



**EGEUS**



**TITANIA**



**OBERON**



**PUCK**



**BOTTOM**



**QUINCE**



**FLUTE**



**SNOUT**



**STARVELING**



**SNUG**



### THE FAIRY TRAIN

(There are some adult fairies and some child fairies. They all look after Titania, their Queen)



### THE MUSICIANS

(Sometimes music is played on the stage. Here the musicians are dressed as part of Theseus' court)

## What else might you need to know?

***Spoiler Alert!*** The notes below are provided for those who would benefit from being prepared for some of the more dramatic or scary elements of the performance.

- During the performance some characters will come in on the walkways, or come in through the audience.
- There will be music during the show. This is live so it may be loud at some points. You can see the musicians in the balconies above the stage and on the stage. Sometimes they will come on to the stage from behind the audience. If you think this may be too loud please let us know when you book or tell a member of staff when you arrive.



- In some of the forest scenes there is a ladder. Some characters stand on this and use it as a prop but they do not walk to the top and fall off.
- In this play the fairies are invisible to the other characters who are not fairies, so even though we can see the fairies, like Puck and Oberon, the other characters in the forest cannot see them.
- In this production the character of Puck is played by a woman dressed in men's clothes.
- The character of Puck is a cheeky fairy who causes a lot of trouble and lots of the things Puck says during the play will be aimed at the audience. You don't need to reply or do anything.
- During the play one of the jokes that Puck plays is to turn Bottom's head into a donkey's head using magic. He does this so that when Titania wakes up she will fall in love with him even though he looks strange.
- The group of actors who rehearse in the forest, sometimes called 'the mechanicals', perform a play at Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding. In this play Bottom kills himself with a wooden sword while he is acting. This isn't real and is part of his performance.



- The four lovers argue while they are in the forest and they fight during the play. This is not real and no one will get hurt.
- At the end of the play, when Theseus and Hippolyta get married and so do the young lovers, there will be strings of fairy lights on stage.



- This is a picture of Theseus' Court



- Here is a picture of the fairies in the Forest with Oberon and Titania



- This is a picture of Titania in her fairy bower when she meets Bottom



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## A message from us

Thank you for visiting the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. We hope you enjoy this Relaxed Performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream.



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