

BALLET DES MOINES PRESENTS

Know Before You Go

*a midsummer
night's dream*

ballet
DES MOINES

Introduction

About A Midsummer Night's Dream

A Midsummer Night's Dream is based on the Shakespeare comedy and features the choreography of Peter Anastos and the music of Felix Mendelssohn.

Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream is one of his happiest and most loved comedies. It is called a "Dream" because of the unrealistic events the characters experience in the play — real, yet unreal, such as crossed lovers, meaningless quarrels, forest chases leading to more confusion, and magic spells woven by the infamous Puck. Mendelssohn's iconic overture and incidental music for A Midsummer Night's Dream was composed over a period of 15 years with the overture (Opus 21) first in 1826, and the other sections later in Opus 61).

Midsummer night has long been associated with love and magic. In European folklore it is the one night of the year when supernatural beings such as fairies are about and can interact with the real world. It is also a date that falls near the summer solstice, which was traditionally a time for fertility rites and festivals devoted to love. Shakespeare's 1595 play has been the source for films, an opera by Benjamin Britten (1960), and a one-act ballet by Frederick Ashton, called The Dream (1964).

Who's Who & What's What

The Fairy World

Oberon, King of the Fairies

- Married to Titania
- Aided by the fairy, Puck.
- He is proud and jealous
- Oberon meddles with fairies and humans – particularly in the matters of love and jealousy, and uniting the four humans to fall in love with each other

Titania, Queen of the Fairies

- Married to Oberon
- Cares for all fairies and children
- She is elegant, strong willed, spritely
- Titania is tricked by Puck into falling in love with Bottom

Puck

- Puck is a fairy and servant to Oberon
- He is mischievous and enjoys pestering and pranking humans
- Puck turns Bottom's head into the head of a donkey, makes Titania to fall in love with Bottom, and unites the four humans to fall in love with each other

Who's Who & What's What

The Human World

Bottom is an actor

- He is foolish and childish
- Bottom is a victim of Puck's mischief when his head is turned into that of a donkey. He then becomes the object of Titania's affection after she is also tricked by Puck.

Hippolyta is Queen of the Amazon

- She is strong, regal, and formal
- Hippolyta is engaged to marry Theseus, Duke of Athens

Theseus is Duke of Athens

- He is strong, responsible, and (typically) fair
- Theseus is engaged to marry Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. He is also Hermia's father and has given her the ultimatum of marrying Demetrius or living her life in chastity as a nun.

Lysander is a poet

- He is romantic, clever, and playful
- Lysander is in love with Hermia, and they plan to marry in secret. He falls in love with Helena after Puck sprinkles the magic potion in his eyes.

Demetrius is a fickle nobleman

- He is arrogant, stubborn, and (at times) cruel
- He is betrothed to Hermia. He doesn't love Helena until Puck sprinkles the magic potion in his eyes, and then falls desperately in love with her – Now both Lysander *and* Demetrius think they are in love with Helena.

Hermia is a strong noblewoman

- She is independent, passionate, and smart
- Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her father has promised that she marry Demetrius
- She is heartbroken and confused after both Lysander and Demetrius are tricked into falling in love with Helena

Helena is a frustrated noblewoman

- She is suspicious, untrustworthy, but witty
- Helena is in love with Demetrius, but is confused when he (and Lysander) claim to love her



A mischievous fairy, takes a flower pierced by Cupid's arrow to create a love potion



falls in love when under a spell

engaged



Duke of Athens



an actor performing a play at their wedding

turns him into a donkey
loves when under a spell

school matinee
THURSDAY, APRIL 25
SATURDAY, APRIL 27

a midsummer night's dream

a midsummer night's dream

CAST ANNOUNCEMENT

THURSDAY, APRIL 25 | SATURDAY, APRIL 27

school matinee

oberon

titania

puck

EDDIE KIDD MEGAN BOYETTE AMELIA GRUBB HILLMAN

lysander

hermia

RUNE HOUCHIN

SAVANNAH COX

helena

demetrius

bottom

CHIYO NISHIDA LOGAN HILLMAN NOAH KLARCK

theseus

hippolyta

CAMERON MILLER

KATE ANDERSON

THOMAS MONTGOMERY

director

OLIVIA BROWN
JORDAN POWERS

MORGAN MONTOUR

ANDREA STEPHANIE MISH

MARISSA DOKE

MELISSA DAHMS

CORA MILLER

*titania
fairies*



DES MOINES

Fun Facts

⁰¹ Felix Mendolsson, Composer

- On two occasions, Felix Mendelssohn composed music for William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. First in 1826, when he was just 17 years of age.
 - Later, in 1842, five years before his death, he wrote incidental music for a production of the play, which includes the famous "Wedding March."
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⁰² Peter Anastos, Choreographer

- Peter Anastos was one of the founding directors of Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, all-male drag ballet troupe that parodies the conventions of romantic and classical ballet.
 - Anastos studied piano as a child and at one point contemplated a musical career. "The joy of music is huge; it means more to me than just about anything," he says. "Music is everything in a ballet."
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⁰³ Professional and Community Dancers

- Ballet Des Moines is home to ten professional dancers, two apprentices and seven trainees. The dancers live and work in Des Moines, starting their ballet season in the fall and wrapping it up after the spring ballet. The past three years, Ballet Des Moines has also had a summer season, consisting of free ballet performances and family activities across the state.
- There are over three dozen dancers from the community, ages eight through eighteen, that auditioned to perform in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They have been rehearsing weekly since March.

About Ballet Des Moines

OUR MISSION is to enrich lives through inspiring dance performances, inclusive education and outreach programs, and innovative community partnerships.



2023-2024 SEASON
THE STORIES THAT SHAPE US

JEKYLL & HYDE
OCTOBER 2023

THE NUTCRACKER
DECEMBER 2024




LOVE LETTERS
MARCH 2024

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
APRIL 2024

Ballet Des Moines embraces inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. We recognize that in order to fulfill our mission, we have a responsibility to ensure our programming and planning approach employs this lens, engaging and amplifying voices from underrepresented communities. We believe in equitable access and opportunity for all communities, and that the inclusion of diverse perspectives enriches what we do and who we are, strengthens our organization, and makes ballet a more powerful cultural experience.

Contact

Let's talk! We'd love to talk about education and outreach opportunities, on the stage or in your school or classroom.

-  655 Walnut Street, Suite 120
-  info@balletdesmoines.org
-  balletdesmoines.org/midsummer

