

La Boite Theatre Company presents

A Midsummer Night's Dream

BY William Shakespeare

DIRECTED AND ADAPTED BY Benjamin Schostakowski

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
EDUCATION NOTES

Prepared by Zoe Cobon



La Boite Theatre Company is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland



La Boite Theatre Company is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body

Production Partner



PHILIP BACON GALLERIES

CONTENTS

SEASON INFORMATION	1
Show Warnings.....	2
Ticket Prices.....	2
LA BOITE THEATRE COMPANY	3
A Midsummer Night’s Dream	3
Synopsis.....	3
The Characters.....	3
CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS (DRAMA)	4
DIRECTOR’S NOTES	5
THE DESIGN	6
DESIGN TASK	7
LIGHTING DESIGN	8
LX Plan.....	8
Notes from Jason Glenwright - Lighting Designer.....	9
MARKETING	10
Show poster.....	10
Show Trailer.....	10
Rehearsal Images.....	11
Production Images.....	11
AN INTERVIEW WITH...	12
Benjamin Schostakowski – Director.....	12
Dann Barber – Designer.....	14
Emily Burton – Actor (Helena/Starveling).....	16
Kieran Law – Actor (Lysander/Bottom).....	17
FAQs	18

SEASON INFORMATION

Director and Adaptor **Benjamin Schostakowski**

Designer **Dann Barber**

Lighting Designer **Jason Glenwright**

Sound Designer **Wil Hughes**

Stage Manager **Philippa (Pip) Loth**

Assistant Stage Manager **Heather O’Keffee**

Wardrobe Assistant **Leigh Buchanan**

Wardrobe Consultant **Nathalie Ryner**

Fight Choreographer **Justin Palazo-Orr**

Dance Choreographer **Neridah Waters**

Production Manager **Don Mackenzie**

Head Electrician **Keith Clark**

Set Construction **Andrew Mills & Aaron Moore**

Lighting Operator **Tim Gawne**

Photography **Dylan Evans**

with **Emily Burton, Brian Lipson, Kathryn Marquet, Christen O’Leary, Pacharo Mzembe and Kieran Law**

7 FEBRUARY – 7 MARCH

	MON	TUE	TUE	WED	THU	THU	FRI	SAT	SAT
	6:30pm	11am	6:30pm	6:30pm	11am	7:30pm	7:30pm	2pm	7:30pm
Feb	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	07
Feb	09	10	10	11 (7:30pm)	-	12	13	14	14
Feb	-	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21
Feb	-	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	28
Mar	-	03	03	04	05	05	06	07	07



Preview



Opening Night

Limited VIP Tickets available



Meet the Artists



Director's Chair

Please Note there are no performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on any Sunday

Matinees every Tuesday and Thursday at 11am (excluding Thursday 12th February)

Tuesday and Wednesday evenings 6:30pm

Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings 7:30pm Ticket Prices

DURATION

2 hours and 40 minutes including interval

Act one: 95 mins

Interval: 20 mins

Act two: 45 mins

Doors open 20 minutes prior to performance. Please collect your tickets from the Box Office.

The performance takes place in The Roundhouse Theatre.

SHOW WARNINGS

Suitable for students in years 8-12

- Partial nudity
- Mild sexual references
- Smoke Effects
- Strobe lights
- Naked flame -TBC
- Cigarette use -TBC

PLEASE NOTE:

If your students would like to take notes during the performance please sit in the back rows as note taking can disrupt the performers.

TICKET PRICES

STUDENT PRICES:

\$25 for previews and 11am matinees

\$30 Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings

\$35 Friday and Saturday evenings

TEACHER PRICES:

One complimentary teacher ticket with every 10 students

\$35 per additional teacher

* \$12 booking fee per show booked.



LA BOITE THEATRE COMPANY

La Boite's mission is to produce and present exhilarating theatre that is alive to the present, extends and inspires artists and invigorates the hearts and minds of audiences.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

SYNOPSIS

Four awkward teens find themselves entangled in a god-awful love quadrangle. A sextet of amateur drama enthusiasts earnestly rehearse a play for a wedding. The Godfather and Godmother of the fairies are locked in a bitter argument over an adopted child, which they seek to resolve through the careless application of dodgy witchcraft.

THE CHARACTERS



**Kieran
Law**

Lysander /Bottom

Lysander is in love with Hermia but cannot marry her as Hermia's father wishes her to wed Demetrius. However, later in the play he becomes the victim of misapplied magic and wakes up in love with Helena.



**Kathryn
Marquet**

Hermia/Mechanical

Hermia is in love with Lysander and is a childhood friend of Helena.



**Pacharo
Mzembe**

Demetrius

Demetrius is initially in love with Helena, however falls in love with her friend Hermia after they meet for the first time.



**Emily
Burton**

Helena/Mechanical

Helena is in love with Demetrius and was once betrothed to him. However he fell in love with Hermia and abandoned her.



**Brian
Lipson**

Theseus/Oberon

Theseus is the Duke of Athens, who is engaged to Hippolyta. Theseus represents power and order throughout the play. Oberon is the king of the fairies.



**Christen
O'Leary**

Hippolyta/Titania

Titania is engaged to Theseus. Like Theseus, she symbolises order. Titania is the beautiful queen of the fairies.

Puck

Also known as Robin Goodfellow, Puck is Oberon's jester, a mischievous fairy who delights in playing pranks on mortals.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS (DRAMA)

CORE SUBJECT MATTER

PURPOSE

To entertain

Themes

- Magic
- Dreams
- Love
- Australian Identity

CONTEXT

- Dramatic
- Historical
- Geographical

DRAMATIC FORMS AND STYLES

- Elizabethan Theatre
- Magical Realism
- Comedy (farce)

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

- Character
- Language
- Place
- Situation
- Time
- Relationship
- Symbol

SKILLS OF DRAMA

- Devising
- Applying Stagecraft
- Directing
- Acting
- Working an Ensemble
- Critiquing



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

There is a rumour that Shakespeare penned *A Midsummer Night's Dream* around the same time as *Romeo and Juliet*. The belief is also that the play was first written as a gift to be performed at noble wedding. Immediately one can see the perfect context for Shakespeare to burlesque the tragedy and seriousness of love.

When I first spoke with Chris Kohn about wanting to stage the play, we spoke at length about what a new version might be. Rather than tear up and rearrange the play, my first thought was to find a new home for the story, one far-distant from the papier-mâché forest one might usually expect. A suburban household seemed like the perfect playground. To add to the challenge, the play would work with a family-sized cast of six actors (the original play has around 20 speaking parts). Just as Shakespeare appropriated fragments of stories from myths and legends, we too found fresh influences in the aesthetics of B-grade horror films, the Avant-garde theatre troupes of the 1970's and suburban kitsch.

Very soon in our rehearsal room, Shakespeare's sophistications started to surface. Three district worlds collide with careful precision – four young lovers, the King and Queen of the Fairies and a bunch of amateur dramatists smash together in a hot, sweaty fever-dream. We see love in many forms. We see love become hysterical whether under a spell or not, we see how love creates feuds and jealousies and, we see artists attempting to recreate love for an audience. Very quickly we learned what a peculiar and thrilling play it is to bring to life.

A very fine group of actors and creatives helped make this new show what it is. I would like to sincerely thank them for their complete seriousness in approaching this comedy - it has been hilarious and inspiring to watch.

Here's to the magical strangeness of love.

Benjamin Schostakowski

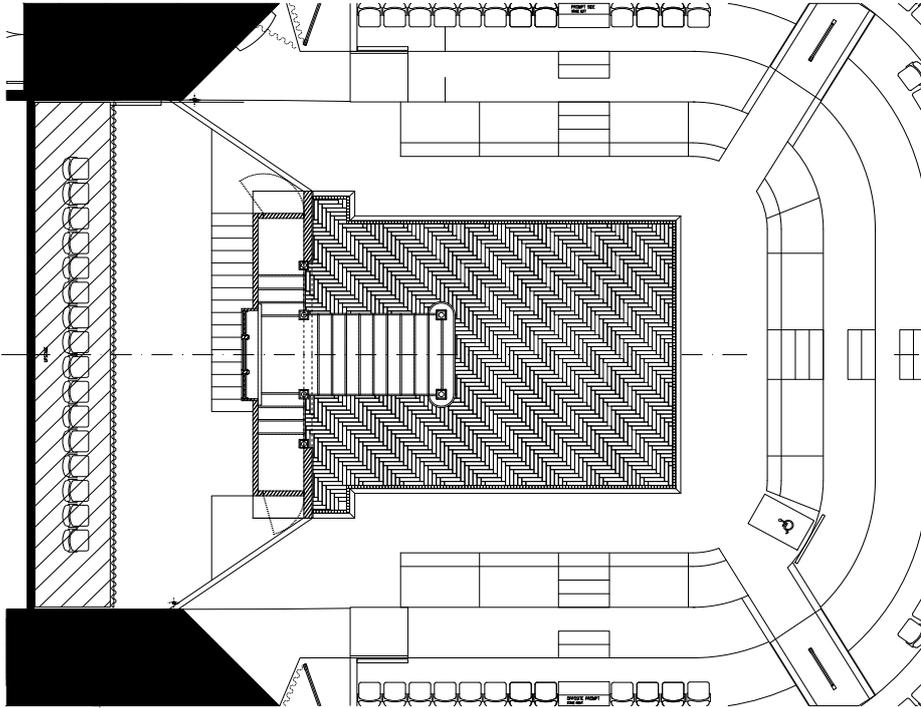
Director



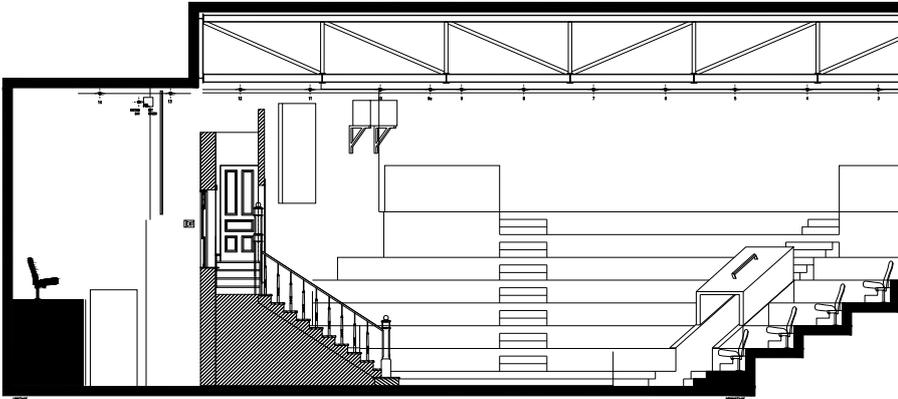
DESIGN - DANN BARBER

THE SET DRAWINGS

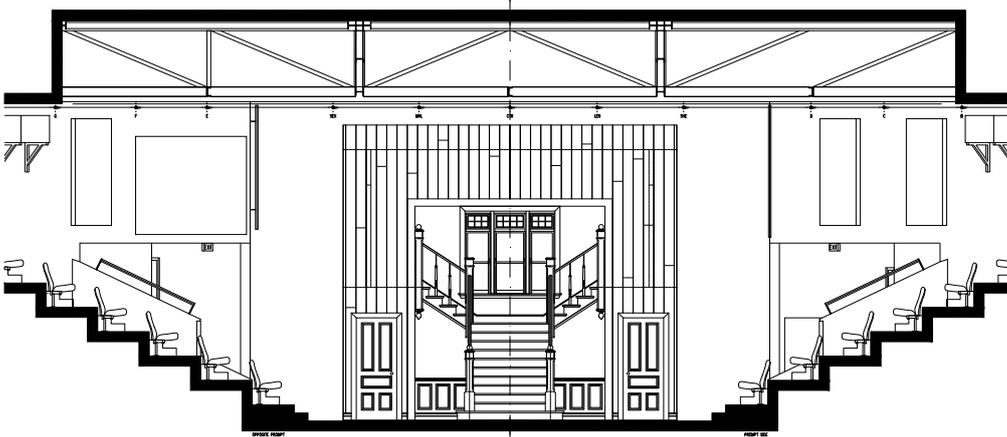
BIRD'S EYE VIEW



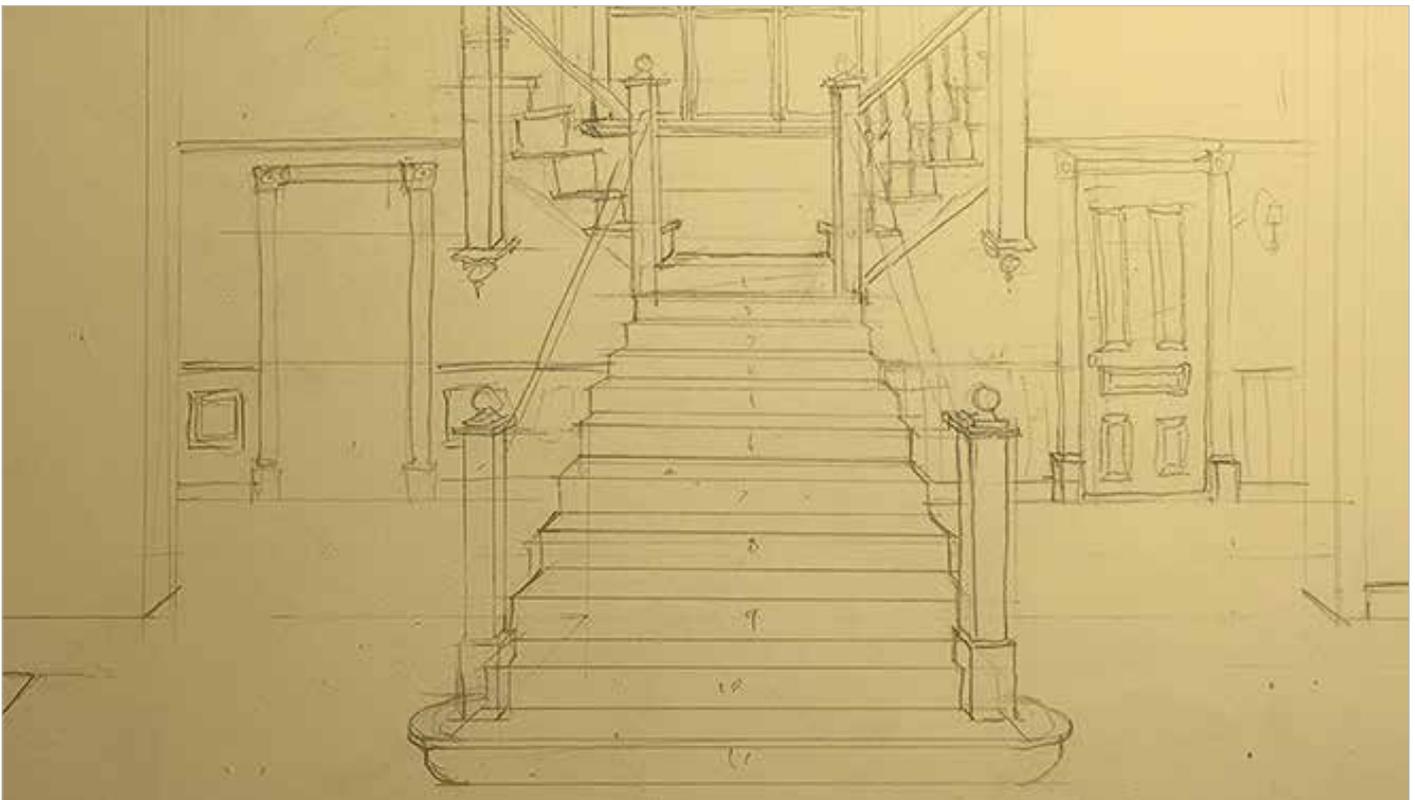
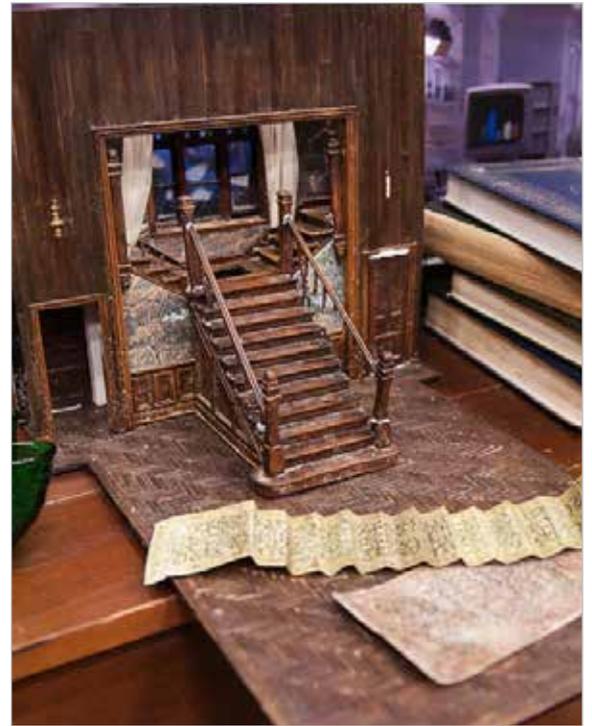
PROFILE VIEW



FRONT ON VIEW



THE MODEL



SET DESIGN TASK:

A *Midsummer Night's Dream* is traditionally set in a forest. How does Dann Barber's design in this new adaption incorporate features or elements of a forest? Pay particular attention to colour, texture and the materials used.

Design Sketches by Dann Barber

THE COSTUMES



LYSANDER



TITANIA



DEMETRIUS



HELENA



OBERON



HIPPOLYTA

DESIGN TASK

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

VIII

One of the editors once discussed with a friend how, if given their will, they would have *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* presented. They agreed at length on this:

The set scene should represent a large Elizabethan hall, panelled, having a lofty oak-timbered roof and an enormous staircase. The cavity under the staircase, occupying in breadth two-thirds of the stage, should be fronted with folding or sliding doors, which, being opened, should reveal the wood, recessed, moonlit, with its trees upon a flat arras or tapestry. On this secondary remoter stage

the lovers should wander through their adventures, the fairies now conspiring in the quiet hall under the lantern, anon withdrawing into the woodland to befool the mortals straying there. Then, for the last scene and the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the hall should be filled with lights and company. That over, the bridal couples go up the great staircase. Last of all - and after a long

pause, when the house is quiet, the lantern all but extinguished, the hall looking vast and eerie, lit only by a last flicker from the hearth-the fairies, announced by Puck, should come tripping back, swarming forth from cupboards and down curtains, somersaulting downstairs, sliding down the baluster rails; all hushed as they fall to work with their brooms-hushed, save for one little voice and a thin, small chorus scarcely more audible than the last dropping embers:

Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire,
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from briar...
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing and bless this place...

Trip away:

Make no stay:

Meet me all by break of day

-and this is, we conceive, not far from picturing the play as it was actually presented in 1598¹.

TASK:

Read through the above description of a design for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and create a design concept that resembles it. Include pictures or sketches that inspired you and discuss your specific 'vision' and the purpose of your choices.

¹ An excerpt from The Cambridge University Press (1969) edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* edited for the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson.

NOTES FROM JASON GLENWRIGHT - LIGHTING DESIGNER

After initial discussions with Ben, my starting point for the *A Midsummer Night's Dream* lighting design was through the work of photographer Gregory Crewdson. Many of his carefully detailed photos depict typical suburban life, with his lighting giving a somewhat heightened naturalistic feel. A lot of his images were also set at night, so that also gave me inspiration for the construction of night time lighting images. The night scenes within the play had to be bright enough for an audience still to engage with the characters onstage from all three seating banks, but still include a sense of magic, connecting back to the root of the play.

Ben was also keen to have this show set over the course of one night. This allowed us to make a decision early on not to have noticeable lighting transitions between scenes, but to follow the play's linear time format and create a time journey starting the play at around 4.30pm in the afternoon following a transition of time through to midnight when Bottom gets turned into an ass, to sunrise where this quirky night and this play ends. The only time we break from this heightened naturalism to create a hyper theatrical look is for the play within the play.

Another tool which allows us some extra fun are the table lamps spread out across the room. These not only provide warmth but to provide Puck with various pathways to move and interact with the characters. Three of these table lamps are also battery operated and have wireless receivers still allowing us to control them via the lighting console. To achieve the looks in this show, I have employed a lighting rig including over 160 theatrical fixtures plus more than 20 practical table, wall, floor and LED lamps. Out of the 160 theatrical fixtures, 142 of them are 'gelled' or coloured in varying shades of blue.

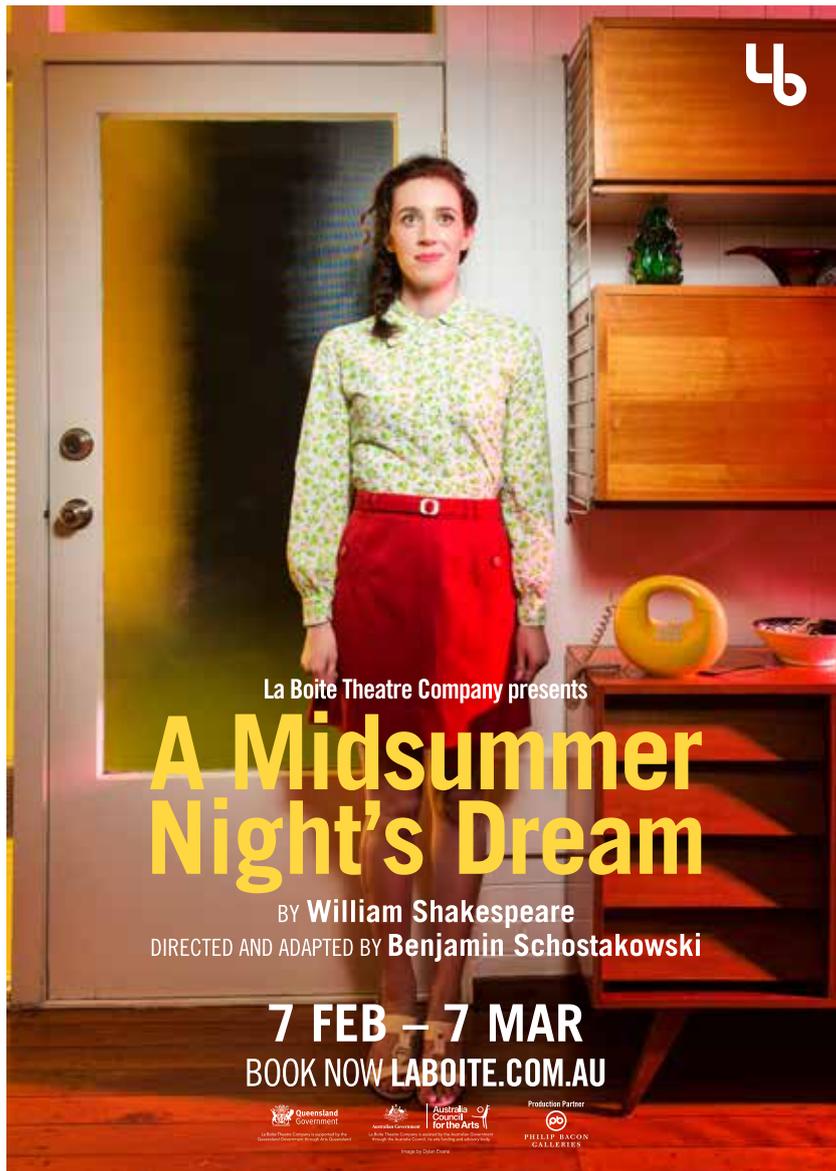
Jason Glenwright Lighting Designer



Photography by Gregory Crewdson

MARKETING

SHOW POSTER



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM TRAILER



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKUb_meMaGY

REHEARSAL IMAGES



PRODUCTION IMAGES





AN INTERVIEW WITH...

BENJAMIN SCHOSTAKOWSKI - DIRECTOR

Your adaption of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is set in a suburban Australian house hold, what inspired you to do this and why?

When I first spoke with former Artistic Director Chris Kohn about wanting to stage the play, we both agreed that we wanted to find a something unique in a new version. I was very keen to take the magical fever-dream away from a forest where the play usually unravels. I think it's important the productions of classics are adventurous in some way. I have had a fascination with the strange things people do in suburbia for some time, and seeing an outrageous dream of love, magic and rebellion explode as household seemed like the perfect playground. The Australian aspect is there but we don't push it necessarily. It's there because we can recognise small things about how we live in our houses. In some ways this household is both Australian and also exists within its own world. There are some little treats here and there to look for.

What are the major challenges of this particular version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? How have you overcome these?

Any realisation of a full Shakespearean play is a challenge. The language and its delivery come first. Luckily for this production, many of the cast have performed in another version of the play – sometime three separate times over their careers and so they know it well. Emily Burton who plays Helena will be playing that role for the third time. Aside from that, the major challenge was working through the new adaptation and it's life within the new setting. We were able to hold a creative development week in 2014 to test some of the ideas that was incredibly useful. We found quite quickly that the play is strong enough to sit within our new setting without much brutal rearranging.

How do you like to organise your rehearsal room? Is there any particular routine?

I am a fairly organised person. I like to enter each rehearsal and with a plan in mind (of course this can be discarded if something better arises). But preparation is the key for me. I did a lot of research on the play before we started working, to make sure we knew the play well before we started to mould our new version. I like to have a whiteboard in the room at all times so every can see the plan for each day and keep focussed towards the goal each day. We created a detailed time line with the cast about what time the play starts in our version and what time of the night each scene occurs – this helps everyone work towards the one imaginary world and all be one the one page. A very useful technique. I also like to rehearse with as much of the set and costumes as possible from day one.

As the director, what are your main responsibilities and how do you manage these?

As the Director my job is to provide a vision for the realisation of the play and then organise all of its constituents working towards realising that idea. My job began last year working with La Boite to realise the adaption and how it works. Soon after that, the design process began where Dann Barber (Designer) and I worked through what seems like hundreds of design ideas to find the best solution. I then work with the rest of the creative team (Sound Designer and Lighting Designer) to start filling out how the show can work. The next stage is spending four weeks with the cast in rehearsals going through the show meticulously and staging it piece by piece. To follow is bumping into the theatre with the set, lighting and

costumes where we do technical and dress rehearsals before we get the first audiences in to test it out before Opening Night. The Director's job is exhausting considering how many departments within the company you need to be in communication with. But really, when you see it all happen on Opening Night – there's nothing quite like it.

What makes you unique as a director? What is your directing style?

Difficult question. I guess it would be best answered by the people I work with. I guess my style is heavily focussed on delivering memorable shows, or a least memorable moments. Design is very very important to me as a Director, before I trained at NIDA I often Directed and Designed my own independent shows. I think that the two should go hand in hand to help each to deliver the show. Sometimes you see shows where the set is rather meaningless and doesn't speak to the show or even vice-versa, with great design and a detached show. My aim is to make them entirely interdependent. I also have strong predilection for shameless theatrics.

What is your favourite aspect of the play? Should we expect any surprises?

The play is full of surprises. Surprisingly they're often my favourite aspect – so I can't tell you them yet otherwise it wouldn't be a surprise!





DANN BARBER - DESIGNER

Tell us about your process for designing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Where did you start?

Well we started with our inspirations (which are spoken later) and the practicalities of the space. From this point we collaborated to come up with multiple designs and solutions to solve the problems that arose from putting AMSND in a suburban house.

When the audience first walks into the theatre, what is the feeling you want to invoke? How does your design achieve this?

From the moment the audience walks into the space I want them to have the impulse to abandon their seat and explore the set with all its detail and layers. The elements within the set are designed to make the living space feel lived in and as the play progresses they see a transformation of how household trinkets become something out of the ordinary.

What was your inspiration for the design of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

We took our inspiration mainly from Gregory Crewson, Wes Anderson and Steven Spielberg who have the ability to effortlessly weave the ordinary suburban layer with the magical fanciful layers found in *A Midsummer night Dream*.

What elements of design do you have to consider when creating 'the look' of a play?

Fundamentally the set is a suburban household that is designed to transform into a forest. This is aided by the use of colour, texture and materials. As you will see the structure of the house is made out of timber, for example the staircase, flooring and panelling. The wall paper and the upholstery evoke the colours and textures that represent the foliage within a forest. It also has a second layer which is to transform into a suburban theatre. In this adaption by Benjamin the meta-theatrical qualities within the original text have been emphasised. In an attempt to visually explore this I have included an arch into the main structure of the set hinting towards a proscenium arch.

What challenges did you face when designing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? How did you overcome these?

It was important for Benjamin and myself to encapture all the house hold details associated with suburbia. What we discovered was that some of the detail found in suburban homes is often located within and on the walls. This doesn't just include picture frames and ordments but the architecture of a suburban home, for example doors with architraves and sash windows. The problem with walls is that they get in the way. Therefore the main challenge was designing a space that worked with the sight lines of the Roadhouse theatre and its traverse nature. This forced our only wall within the design to be upstage and away from the action. This was a problem because all the detail was a distance from the audience, The staircase was the perfect device to bring the set to the middle of the playing space.

What are your favourite elements of design?

My favourite part of the design is how Puck is portrayed through the technology found throughout the space. It is a designers dream to spend the time finding knickknacks and assembling props that come together to make a character. The Sound and Lighting Designers are also a key compont ti bringing the character of Puck alive.



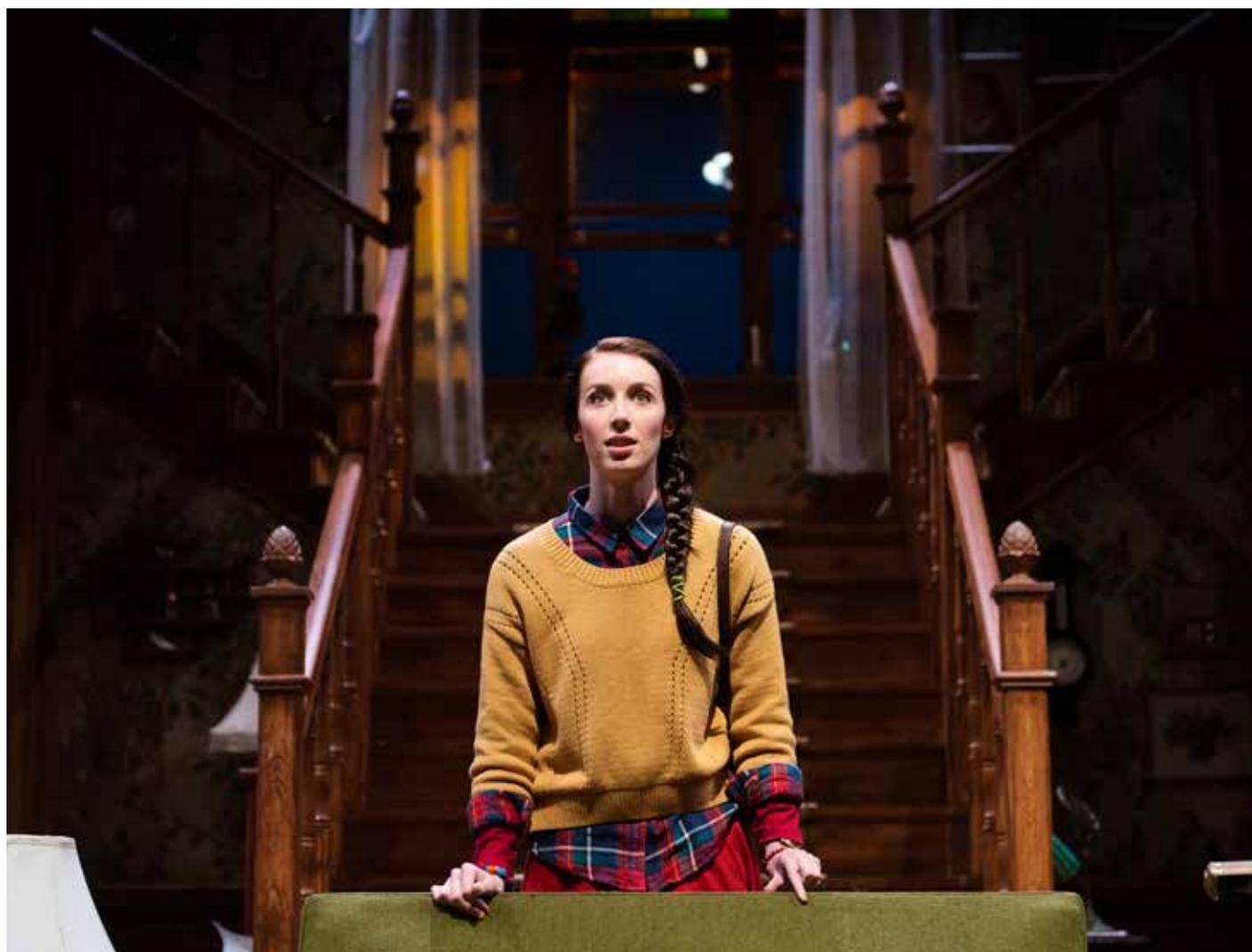
EMILY BURTON - ACTOR

As an actor, how do you prepare for a stage performance? Do you have any special warm up exercises for example?

I always do a physical and vocal warm up before each show. Vocally, I make sure to stretch out all of the throat, neck and mouth muscles to release any tension that could block sound. Lip trills are great because they incorporate all of the elements of voice - muscles, vocal chords and breath. My physical warm up always involves some yoga and then after I've done some yoga I do any other exercises that are specific to the show that I'm in and tailored to whatever I need to be prepared for. I love bringing in my yoga mat to the theatre to warm up on stage before a show.

What technique/s do you use to memorise your lines?

When it comes to learning lines I've found that I learn far better when I'm up moving and walking around the room, rather than sitting down to learn them. If you change direction or an action on each line it helps to get the shape of the scene into your body and you can sometimes remember what line comes next by where your body moves. Almost like learning a dance. But you have to be careful that it doesn't become too ingrained so that you can let all of that go once you reach the rehearsal room.



What is your favourite character building exercise?

I don't think I have a specific exercise that I particularly enjoy, but I do find that having props can be very helpful to finding certain character traits or mannerisms - playing with how a character uses a certain prop and how they interact with their environment is really fun and I find very helpful as I'm a very kinaesthetic person.

What have the rehearsals been like for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

Rehearsals have been a lot of fun! A lot of laughs. It's been an absolute honour to be in a show with the greats - Brian Lipson and Christen O'Leary. I've been just soaking up all of their knowledge and experience. I'm a firm believer that as actors, the best way to learn and grow better in your craft is from experienced colleagues and mentorship. So as a very young actor, it's been so valuable to watch and learn from such skilled and talented actors.

Have there been any challenges as an actor in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? How have you overcome these?

Every show has its challenges (or I like to think of them as opportunities). I play Helena in the show and she is a very funny character but spends a lot of her time being incredibly sad, so to find the balance between those in a meaningful and engaging way for an audience was a priority for me. Working with Ben, the director, and playing with different ideas in rehearsal with other cast members has really helped to solidify certain elements of her character.

What is your favourite scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and why?

My favourite scene is constantly changing. At the moment, it is when Bottom enters as the donkey. I've never seen that moment of the play be done the way we are doing it, which makes it very exciting!

Before you walk on stage what runs through your mind?

Firstly, I try to focus on my breath. I get incredibly nervous so I try to maintain a steady even breath to keep me calm. Secondly, I just try to think of my very first thought/line, nothing else. And I just have to trust that everything will flow from that very first moment as rehearsed. Ironically, the less you think about, the focused you are and the better you'll be on stage. If you think too much, you clutter your focus and that's when things start going wrong!

What makes this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* special?

I think this production is special because I believe it is a version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that no one will have seen before. Ben has very masterfully taken a play that is incredibly well-known and made it new and fresh and put an interesting spin on the characters and relationships. Also, I think the ensemble nature of this show is quite special too. We all rely on each other entirely so we have to be very in sync with one another, so hopefully the audience will reap the benefits of the hard work that goes into creating a strong ensemble.

KIERAN LAW - ACTOR

As an actor, how do you prepare for a stage performance? Do you have any special warm up exercises for example?

After I am warmed up vocally and physically I like to mark through everything I do in the play visualizing the moments and thinking about any notes from the last run.

What technique/s do you use to memorise your lines?

Straight repetition. Then repetition and add in making sense of them. Then repetition while thinking about something else. If you can remember lines without thinking about them you've learnt them.

What is your favourite character building exercise?

Figuring out the body shape of the character and what they have been through or do that has given them that shape.

What have the rehearsals been like for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

Very fun. There has been scope for taking big risks because in a dream anything is possible.

Have there been any challenges as an actor in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? How have you overcome these?

Yes there is the fear that what you are doing is ridiculous. But you have to just trust the process and keep faith.

What is your favourite scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and why?

I think the Bottom and Titania scene is great. It feels quite different from the rest and I hope will show an unusual yet heartfelt type of love.

Before you walk on stage what runs through your mind?

Don't mess up!

What makes this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* special?

The different clashes of worlds and the psychological manoeuvring.



FAQS

Will the tickets be sent to me in the post?

No, you will be able to collect your tickets from our Box Office which opens 1 hour prior to the scheduled start of the show.

Where can I park?

The best parking for La Boite is on the street around the University and Urban Village. We advise that you arrive earlier and to check the signs as most parking in Kelvin Grove is paid.

Can students bring their bags to the theatre?

We advise that all large bags and backpacks are left either on the bus or at school. La Boite does not have a designated cloak room to safely secure personal belongings.

Will there be a Meet the Artist talk post show?

The post show Meet the Artist (MTA) talk for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is Wednesday the 18th of February at 6:30pm. Other MTAs will be held after each of the 11am matinees.

Where can my students receive additional information about the show?

The Education Notes, Show Program and the website.

When will I receive my Education Pack and what will be included?

The Education Packs are posted to the school prior to your attendance at the theatre. Generally the Education Packs contain a copy of the Education Notes, *Nitty Gritty*, Show Program, Show Poster and Show Flyers however are subject to availability.

Where can I get more information about school workshops and theatre tours?

The best place to get more information is our website. <http://laboite.com.au/cms/page.asp?ID=56>



LA BOITE AT THE ROUNDHOUSE THEATRE

The Works, Level 5, 6-8 Musk Ave, Kelvin Grove Village

Postal PO Box 212, Kelvin Grove QLD 4059

E info@laboite.com.au

Tel (07) 3007 8600

Fax (07) 3007 8699

Box Office 9am - 5pm Mon - Fri and one hour prior to performances

laboite.com.au

 [LaBoiteTheatreCompany](https://www.facebook.com/LaBoiteTheatreCompany)

 [@laboitetheatreco](https://www.instagram.com/laboitetheatreco)

 [@LaBoiteTheatre](https://twitter.com/LaBoiteTheatre)