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### **THANKS TO THE ABOVE FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT**

Patronage entitles you to attend social events plus the annual patrons' evening at which you are entitled to vote in the selection of one of the plays for the following season.

At a minimum of £1.50 p/m (£18 p/a), patronage is for up to two people, so those of you signing up individually are welcome to bring a guest to social events and to the patrons' evening.

If you would like to become a patron, please get in touch with Martin Smith on 01902 651828 or [studio61martin@gmail.com](mailto:studio61martin@gmail.com)

### **PATRONS' EVENING: THURSDAY 17TH AUGUST 2023**

Alongside refreshments and the unveiling of two pre-selected plays for 2024, patrons will have the pleasure of enjoying a selection of rehearsed play reading excerpts. Furthermore, you will be given the opportunity to cast your vote for your preferred play as the Patrons' Choice production.



# **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**

**BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**



**27TH - 29TH JUNE 2023  
NEWHAMPTON ARTS CENTRE**

**STUDIO61.ORG.UK  
NEWHAMPTONARTS.CO.UK**

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

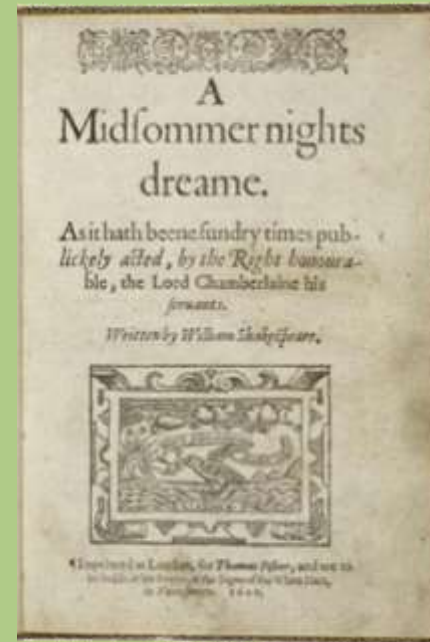
*"September 29th 1662 ...and then to the King's Theatre, where we saw Midsummer Night's Dream, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life. I saw I confess some good dancing and some handsome women, which was all my pleasure."*

Despite Samuel Pepys' disparaging review, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is probably the most popular and most performed of Shakespeare's plays. Written circa 1594/5, the play brings together elements from classical sources, romantic narratives, and English folk stories, along with details of ordinary Elizabethan life to interweave four different imaginative realms: the classical based court of Theseus, Duke of Athens, the supernatural world of Oberon and Titania, the 'rude mechanicals' and their attempts at playmaking and finally the four young lovers. Each of these elements has its own distinctive social conventions and language, from the poetic iambic pentameter of the fairy world to the earthy prose of the mechanicals.

The timeless nature of the play has allowed constant reinterpretation and reimagining from 19th century productions with lavish pageants of classical figures and mythical creatures to Peter Brook's seminal 1970 production in a white box with the characters on trapezes. It's a play that's also been adapted for every medium: Mendelssohn's music, the Britten opera, Balanchine's ballet and several film



*Peter Brook's 1970's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Source: <https://www.rsc.org.uk/> Photo: Reg Wilson



*Midsummer Night's Dream Quarto title page 1600*  
Source: <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/>

the comedy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We can't promise you 'good dancing' but we do have some 'handsome' performances and ridiculousness aplenty.

It's interesting to note that *Midsummer Night's Dream* is on at The Globe this summer as well as Stafford Castle and Ludlow Festival. Maybe we all need a bit of escapism.

**JANE ALSOP**

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Studio 61 is pleased to welcome six actors who are joining us for the first time in this production of "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*."

We are excited to have Adam Davies, John Frost, Leah Griffiths, George Holt, Caitlin Sayce and Immy Wood as part of our talented ensemble. We are delighted to have them join the Studio 61 family and look forward to seeing them on the stage this evening.

versions, including one in 1935 with Mickey Rooney as Puck.

Dichotomies of dark/light, mortal/supernatural, order/chaos, high born/low born juxtapose throughout the play and there are certainly darker themes. For example, Hermia's enforced choice between celibacy, death or a loveless marriage, the conflict between Oberon and Titania and the resulting environmental chaos, Hippolyta's status as one of the spoils of war.

But for this production, I have chosen to emphasise the light rather than the dark. When real life is a bit dismal, we need to laugh, and over 400 years later we can still laugh at



# THE LOVERS



# THE FAIRIES



# THE ACTORS



## ANDY ALSOP as EGEUS

Too old now to play the romantic lead, Andy started with Codsall Dramatic Society in 1978, and joined Studio 61 in 1999.

A seasoned Shakespearean, he's played sizeable roles in eight Shakespeare plays, both as amateur and professional actor. His favourite was the title role in "Richard III" in 2010.

## JANE ALSOP is the DIRECTOR

Jane trained as an actor back in the mists of time and worked professionally for 10 years before getting a proper job.

For Studio 61, Jane has directed productions including "Rope" by Patrick Hamilton and "Pack of Lies" by Hugh Whitmore. Jane played Pandora in Mike Fosbrook's "Some People Think I'm Odd" which premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe.



## MATTHEW BARNES as DEMETRIUS

Matthew is thrilled to be playing Demetrius in this play. He has performed in "Gormenghast" with Studio 61 since joining in 2022, and amateur dramatics has become a big part of his life since returning to the UK after a long absence. His favourite role to date was Raleigh in a production of "Journey's End".

## SARAH CARTER as HELENA

After two decades of amateur theatre, Sarah is thrilled to be performing her very first Shakespeare. Taking inspiration from her previous roles, she hopes to combine the wide-eyed romanticism of Cecily in "The Importance of Being Earnest", the underlying sorrow of Catherine in "Proof" and the stubborn determination of Vittoria in "The White Devil" to bring the character of Helena to life this evening.





### **EMILY CHELL as QUINCE**

Emily is the Curriculum Leader for Performing Arts at Sandwell College. Her first production with Studio 61 was "The Hollow Crown" in 2021 and she recently played Joan in "Nigel Slater's Toast".

She directs a lot of plays at her college but, is (hopefully) better suited to the job than Peta Quince.



### **JOHN FROST as THESEUS**

A regular member of Tettenhall Players, this is John's first acting credit with Studio 61, and a welcome return to Shakespeare, having last played Lord Capulet in "Romeo and Juliet" over 10 years ago! Some of the high points of John's stage appearances include Daniel in "Trap for a Lonely Man", Rupert Cadell in "Rope" and Salieri in "Amadeus" amongst others.

### **RICHARD CORSER as SNOUT**

Richard prefers the doubtful pleasure of directing nowadays, recently directing "Nigel Slater's Toast" for Studio 61.

He has acted in many different plays over the years from Shakespeare via Arthur Miller to Bertholt Brecht and Tennessee Williams.

Characters he enjoyed playing relatively recently were Ronald Reagan, Dennis Thatcher, Rupert Murdoch, Neil Kinnock and Arthur Scargill in Studio 61's production of "Handbagged".



### **LEAH GRIFFITHS as HIPPOLYTA**

Leah is extremely excited to be joining Studio 61. After finding her love for acting at the age of ten in a production of "Oliver Twist", Leah studied acting and theatre studies at Dudley college in A-level, BTEC and HND. This also allowed her to; be in "National Theatre Connections" plays, perform regularly at the Black Country Living Museum, work with local charities and to also take part in local media short films. Previous Shakespeare roles include; Adriana in "Comedy Of Errors" and Beatrice in "Much Ado About Nothing".



### **ADAM DAVIES as LYSANDER**

Adam's journey in amateur dramatics started in 2018 with Central Youth Theatre in "Everyone Sang" - a centenary commemoration of the end of World War I. He then spent a few years with Codsall Dramatic Society in which he particularly enjoyed playing Frank Pickle in "The Vicar of Dibley". Adam feels lucky to fulfil his desire to perform some Shakespeare after joining Studio 61 earlier this year.



### **IAN HARTLEY as OBERON**

Ian acts regularly with Studio 61 and Pattingham Drama Group. He has played Theseus and Starveling in previous productions of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and is looking forward to his third instalment as the King of the Fairies himself.

His most recent roles with Studio 61 were as Frank in "Educating Rita" and Salieri in "Amadeus".

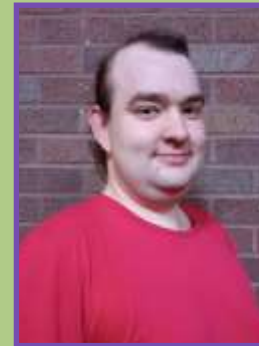
### **JANE FOSBROOK as COBWEB**

Jane has acted and directed with Studio 61 and other local groups for \*\* years. Her favourite recent role was Her Maj in the society's "Handbagged" and her most successful was her award winning Cissie in Stafford Players' "Quartet". Plays directed include "Art" and "Arcadia". She last waved a wand many midsummer nights ago (and at a much more appropriate age!) in Perton Players' "Cinderella" as Fairy Nuff...



### **GEORGE HOLT as STARVELING**

George Holt is no stranger to amateur drama or indeed this play. Their performance as Bottom in the Pattingham Youth production was extempore, although they had some trouble keeping their head...



# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



## CAST

<b>THESIUS</b> John Frost	<b>STARVELING</b> George Holt
<b>HIPPOLYTA</b> Leah Griffiths	<b>SNOUT</b> Richard Corser
<b>EGEUS</b> Andy Alsop	<b>SNUG</b> Stephen Read
<b>HERMIA</b> Caitlin Sayce	<b>COBWEB</b> Jane Fosbrook
<b>LYSANDER</b> Adam Davies	<b>PEASEBLOSSOM</b> Maggie Smith
<b>DEMETRIUS</b> Matthew Barnes	<b>MUSTARDSEED</b> Chris Porter
<b>HELENA</b> Sarah Carter	<b>PUCK</b> Immy Wood
<b>QUINCE</b> Emily Chell	<b>OBERON</b> Ian Hartley
<b>BOTTOM</b> Kevin Porter	<b>TITANIA</b> Suzanne Smith
<b>FLUTE</b> Benjamin Martin Savage	

## PLACE

Duke Theseus' court in Athens and a wood outside Athens

## TIME

Midsummer

The total running time will be approximately 130 minutes.

This will include an interval of 20 minutes.

Please ensure that all mobile phones are turned off during the performance.

In the event of an emergency the front of house staff will guide you to the emergency exit.

## CREW

<b>DIRECTOR</b> Jane Alsop
<b>STAGE MANAGER AND PROPERTIES</b> Anna Wright
<b>ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS</b> Maz Taylor Maggie Smith
<b>SOUND AND LIGHTING</b> Martin Smith
<b>PROMPT</b> Ann Bickley
<b>SET CONSTRUCTION</b> Andy Alsop
<b>SCENIC ARTIST</b> Stuart Goodier
<b>ORIGINAL MUSIC</b> Stephen Read
<b>COSTUME</b> Chris Porter Jane Fosbrook Members of the society
<b>FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGER</b> Patrick Bentley
<b>FRONT OF HOUSE</b> Members of the society

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Church At Perton  
Management and staff at Bradmore Arms  
Alex Chilton and the staff at Newhampton Arts Centre  
David Bickley



### **CHRIS PORTER as MUSTARDSEED**

Despite teenage aspirations, Chris never actually took to the stage until she was in her mid-forties. She finally agreed to tread the boards after helping out at her daughters' drama groups. Since then, she has played many roles including Ruth in "Calendar Girls" with Stourbridge Theatre Company, Mari in "Flamingoland" with Studio 61 and Mrs Drudge in "The Real Inspector Hound" with Enville Street Dramatic Society.



### **CAITLIN SAYCE as HERMIA**

Introducing Caitlin, a drama teacher and a University of Wolverhampton alumni, making her first appearance with Studio 61 as Hermia.

She has previously performed in theatre productions such as; "Road", "Hamlet", "The Cherry Orchard" and "A Handbag". Join us as she shares her passion for the stage.

### **KEVIN PORTER as BOTTOM**

Kevin joined Studio 61 in 2013. He has directed "The Weir", "Medea", "Handbagged" and "Proof" and will be the director for our next production "Picnic at Hanging Rock". Kevin's favourite roles have been the hitman, Gus, in Harold Pinter's "The Dumb Waiter" and the informant, Helmut Rode, in Pattingham Drama Group's production of "Taking Sides". His dream role is to play Vladimir in "Waiting for Godot".



### **MAGGIE SMITH as PEASEBLOSSOM**

Maggie has been a member of Studio 61 since 1983. She has directed many productions including "Pygmalion", "Macbeth" and "Blue Remembered Hills." With over 50 plays under her belt, she cherishes roles such as Susan in "Bed Among the Lentils" and Miss Cooper in "Separate Tables". Maggie also enjoys stage management and is Chairman of Studio 61. This isn't her first encounter with "Dream", as she previously portrayed First Fairy in a 1987 production, while her son Jonathan was one of the younger fairies.



### **STEPHEN READ as SNUG**

Stephen has been teaching instrumental music for over 50 years. He is an accompanist, church organist and horn player as well as composing and arranging music. He is a relative latecomer to amateur dramatics when, at the age of 67, he was asked to play Mr Ames in "A Chorus of Disapproval" with Albrighton Players. He has appeared in 6 productions with them over the last few years. This is his first acting role with Studio 61. Stephen has also written and arranged music for a number of productions by various groups.



### **SUZANNE SMITH as TITANIA**

Suzanne has been acting for amateur dramatic societies in Wolverhampton since the 90's. With a passion for Shakespeare, she has performed "Dream" before as Hermia no less than four times. She has directed outdoor productions of "Much Ado About Nothing" and "The Tempest" in West Park as well as a tour of "King Lear". Modern credits include "Amadeus", "The White Devil" and plays by Harold Pinter.

### **BENJAMIN MARTIN SAVAGE as FLUTE**

In 2008, Benjamin volunteered for a close shave during a "Sweeney Todd" charity event. Since then he has taken on many diverse roles from Mortimer in "Mary Stuart Queen of Scots" to Vindici in "The Revenger's Tragedy". Highlights include his directorial debut of "Macbeth", where he portrayed multiple characters. With an extensive repertoire that encompasses plays such as "Happy Families", "Neville's Island", and "Gormenghast", Benjamin now visits the enchanting world of "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Enjoy!



### **IMMY WOOD as PUCK**

This is Immy's Studio 61 debut. Immy has performed in the West Midlands at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre in Bilston Operatic's "Kinky Boots" as Lauren and in Aunty Jen Production's "The Tempest". Immy also turns her hand to backstage, working at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre as crew.





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Wolverhampton has been a Fairtrade city since 2004.

## BECOME A SPONSOR OF STUDIO 61

Are you interested in becoming a sponsor of Studio 61 and having an advertisement in our programmes? For more information, please contact Anna Wright at [annakwright10@outlook.com](mailto:annakwright10@outlook.com).

## JOIN STUDIO 61: UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY ON AND OFF THE STAGE!

Discover the world of theatre and find your place at Studio 61. Whether you're interested in acting or working backstage, our inclusive community welcomes individuals of all levels of experience and backgrounds. Join us in exploring the exciting realms of artistic expression and teamwork.

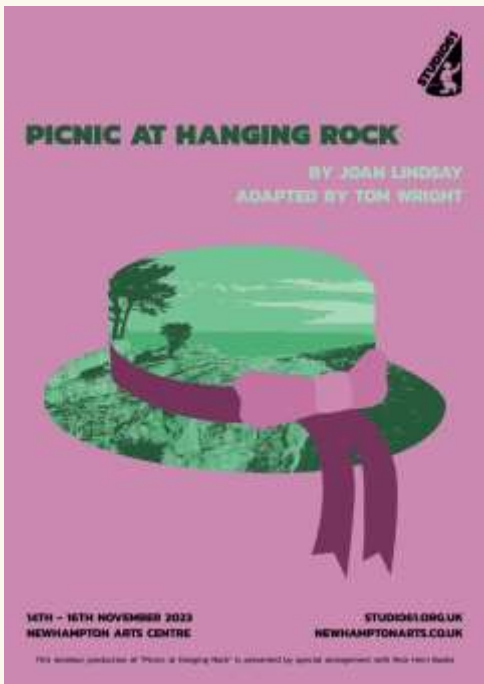
At Studio 61, we hold rehearsals twice a week on Monday and Wednesday evenings at the Bradmore Arms pub on Trysull Rd, Wolverhampton. Our supportive and engaging environment offers a space to develop acting skills and immerse yourself in storytelling. If you prefer working behind the scenes, we have opportunities in stage management, set design, costume creation, lighting, sound, and more.

Membership at Studio 61 starts at just £3 per month, ensuring accessibility for all. We encourage anyone interested to attend our rehearsals without obligation, getting to know the company and finding out if we're the right fit for you. We produce three productions each year at Newhampton Arts Centre, entertaining audiences in the Spring, Summer, and Winter.

In addition to our performances, Studio 61 hosts various social events, including the Patrons' Evening. Connect with us on our website at [www.studio61.org.uk](http://www.studio61.org.uk) or through our social media handles: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok (@studio61drama) for updates, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and more.

Join Studio 61 today and become part of a vibrant community where passion meets creativity. We look forward to welcoming you!





## PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

by John Lindsay  
adapted by Tom Wright

14th - 16th November 2023

On St. Valentine's Day in 1900, a party of students and tutors from Mrs Appleyard's girls college set out on a picnic to Hanging Rock. Three of the Australian schoolgirls and their tutor go missing, last seen heading towards the beckoning Rock... In Tom Wright's chilling adaptation of Joan Lindsay's classic novel, five performers explore the story in order to find a solution to the puzzling mystery.

## STUDIO 61'S AFFILIATES

Discover a wealth of outstanding amateur theatre in our local area. Treat yourself to a show presented by one of our affiliated groups.

Dudley Little Theatre

**One Man Two Guvnors**

by Richard Bean

14th - 17th September 2023

Box Office: 07954 424555

[www.dudleylittletheatre.org](http://www.dudleylittletheatre.org)



Wombourne Players

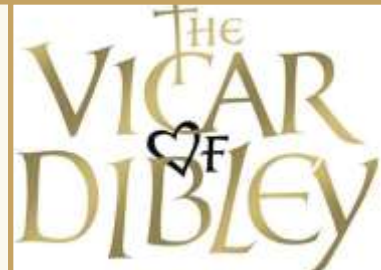
**The Vicar of Dibley**

by Richard Curtis and Paul Mayhew-Archer

18th - 21st October 2023

Box Office: 01902 881184

[www.wombourneplayers.org.uk](http://www.wombourneplayers.org.uk)



Stafford Players

**Frankenstein**

by Tim Kelly

31st October - 4th November 2023

Box Office: 01785 619080

[www.gatehousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.gatehousetheatre.co.uk)



Pattingham Drama Group

**The Ghost Train**

by Arnold Ridley

15th - 18th November 2023

Box Office: 01902 700748

[www.pattinghamdramagroup.co.uk](http://www.pattinghamdramagroup.co.uk)



## OPEN PLAY READINGS

Join us for open play readings of our upcoming winter production, "Picnic at Hanging Rock", on Monday 3rd July, and Wednesday 5th July at 7:30pm. The venue for these readings will be Bradmore Arms. Please note that auditions will be scheduled for a later date. We extend a warm invitation to everyone interested – all are welcome!

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Studio 61 has scheduled its 2024 productions at Newhampton Arts Centre on the following dates:

*Spring: 22nd - 24th March 2024*

*Summer: 28th - 30th June 2024*

*Winter: 12th - 14th November 2024*

We will announce the plays on our social media pages later this year.

## BECOME AN AFFILIATE OF STUDIO 61

Are you interested in affiliating your local drama group with Studio 61? For further details, please contact Sarah Carter at [sarah@sarahcarter.me.uk](mailto:sarah@sarahcarter.me.uk)