Director's Notebook

A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM By milliam Snokespeare

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- · Thesens, the Duke of Athens, it colebrating no marriage to toppolyta, Queen of the Amazons.
- · Hermia, a young Athenian girl, woman, wants to Marry Lysander, but her father wants her to marry Denetrius, who telena is in love with. The four escape to the forest with hopes of eloping or convincing the object of their desires to feel the same way.
- · A group of amateur actors, the mechanicals, meet in the forest to produce a stage play which To to be performed for the Drike and the Inches.
- · Oberon, The King of the fairies, and his concen, Titania, have not in the forest. Oberon wants Titanias changeling (a farry that has secretly replaced a human child) to become his knight. She reprises and Oberon Lends his yester, prick, to punish Titania with a trick that will shame her thito surrendering the child to him. (Hanton, 1937) (www. Linki peara. on)

Director's notebook Student C (SL and HL)

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM By William Shakespeare

It is largely agreed that Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (one of his 37 plays) during the 1590s in England. Shakespeare, who is widely considered to be the greatest writer in the English language, took inspiration from a wide variety of sources in writing the play. It is a comedy which follows the interlocking events and adventures of a midsummer night.

- Theseus, the Duke of Athens, is celebrating his marriage to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons
- Hermia, a young Athenian woman, wants to marry Lysander, but her father wants her to marry Demetrius, who Helena is in love with. The four escape to the forest with hopes of eloping or convincing the object of their desires to feel the same way.
- A group of amateur actors, the mechanicals, meet in the forest to produce a stage play which is to be performed for the Duke and Duchess.
- Oberon, the King of the Fairies, and his Queen, Titania, have met in the forest. Oberon wants Titania's changeling (a fairy that has secretly replaced a human child) to become his knight. She refuses and Oberon sends his jester, Puck, to punish Titania with a trick that will shame her into surrendering the child to him.

(Sources:

- Harrison, GB: "A Midsummer Night's Dream: Notes", 1937. P 29
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Midsummer_Night's_Dream)

What follows is a series of mischievous and magical tricks through which love is transformed, misplaced, deceived, revealed and, finally, restored.

Puck ends the play by suggesting to the audience that what they have just experienced might be nothing but a DREAM (p.91).

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a widely popular Shakespeare play and one that has been performed and adapted many times. The Royal Shakespeare Company, for example, has staged well over 15 versions of the play in Stratfordupon-Avon since 1920 (Rebecca Brown, RSC, 2008).

Each one of these productions was notably different – most famously the production staged by Peter Brook in 1970. "This production was immensely influential and approached with deliberate radicalism – a brilliantly lit white box set replaced the traditional pretty forest and the actor's bright skills... spinning plates and flights on the trapeze were inspired by the acrobats of the Chinese circus" (Brown, RSC, 2008).

I really like the idea of transforming a play like this into something new, drawing out the key ideas of the play and presenting these ideas in a new way. As I explore the play further I will identify those ideas that I feel will most engage the audience.

The main ideas of the play are:

LOVE and MARRIAGE: Theseus and Hippolyta marry. The lovers are concerned with who loves who and who will marry who. Oberon and Titania quarrel over the changeling boy. Titania expresses her love for Bottom, who is transformed into a Donkey

What follows 13 a series of Mischovous and Magical tricks two ugh which love to transformed, misplaced, decen red, revealed and, finally respond. PhUL ends the play by suggesting to the audience The What they have just experienced hight he nothing but a DREAM. (p.91) A midsummer manti bream is a videly popular shaves peak play and one that was been per formed and adapted many times. The Royal manespeane company, for example, has studed well over 15 versions of the play in Stratford-upon-Aron since 1920. (Rebecca Brown, RSC, 2008). Each one of these productions was notably different-most famously the production staged by Peter Brok in 1970. "Twis anduction, was immensely? influential and approached with 3 I really like the ideo of heliperate maichism. a britisantly transforming a play like lif white box fet replaced the this into Something rew. traditional pretty forest all the drawing out the Key Ideas actors bright skills... spmring plates? of the plays and presenting these and strights on the trapeze were peatheas in a new way. inspired by the acrobats of the Chinese wires " (Brown , 2008 or As I explore the play further ! niu mentity enose ideas that WWW. PSC. OF MC) I fed will most engage the andrence. The Main Ideas of the play are LOVE and MARRIAGE - Resens and trippingth many The lovers are concepted in the was lover who and who who many who obeyon and Titanja quarrel over the changoling boy A midsummer nights dream Titania expresses her love for Bottom, Teacher resolute pace Who Btranspormed into a Dankey 9508

order and disorder

The ordered world of the Atherians and the abordered world of the Magical word.

APPEARANCE and REALITY he play repeatedly communicates the notion to at the ings are often not as they feem.

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Over the next few pages 1 with further explore the playstext and how 1 would astronge to continue the world of play as a director and co-ordinate performance and Roduction elements to develop martinal directorial intentions.

ORDER and DISORDER: The ordered world of the Athenians and the disordered world of the magical world.

MAGIC and the SUPERNATURAL: Magic is a thread that runs through the play, along with the supernatural elements of the mythic and fairy world. "There's the magic of love, the magic of the morning dew, and even the magic of poetry and art" (Schmoop.com, 2008).

These themes are all ideas that I am interested in exploring through the direction of the play. Magic and the supernatural are ideas that I find particularly exciting, drawing out the 'dream' of the play, contrasting the ordered world of the Athenians and the vibrant and unruly world of the magical woodland environment – a perfect setting for the confusions of love and the unfolding comedy of the mechanicals' rehearsal.

Over the next few pages I will explore the play text and how I would attempt to construct the world of the play as a director and co-ordinate performance and production elements to develop my final directorial intentions.

INFLUENCES FROM LIVE THEATRE While researching this play I have found it uteful to reflect on other line performances I have witnessed as a spectator, and a couple of where have been particularly helpful in Stimulating my artists response. The production that has been nost influential Is a professional production of CS Lewis' "The Lion, The witch and The Wordrobe' staged at the West Yorkshine Playmonse by The Birmingham Repertory Theatre. This production, dramatized by Adrian Mifaneu, Very clevery and creatively contracted the austere and bleak environment of wartorn England with the magical and enchanting world of Narnia, which the lead character of the play, Lucy, discovers as a result of winding in a wardrobe. This fautustic contrast of worlds links very well to A midsummer migro's Dream, where the Lovers (Hermia, Demetrius, Helena and Lysander) leave the Structured and ordered world of Athens couldes with the magic world of fairies and sprites. In my production I would want this Inetaposition of a contrasting worlds to be very Striking.

The creation of the environment of the play is extremely important to my intentions for this production. For my andrence to feel that base they have truly intressed a dream', I want them to be plunged into magical word and world in the same was that the Athenians are. Sight and sound are vital to this.

The war-torn England that was depicted in the production of Lion, witch and the wardrobe used sparse, simple, almost

Influences from live theatre

While researching this play I have found it useful to reflect on other live performance I have witnessed as a spectator, and a couple of these have been particularly helpful in stimulating my artistic response. The production that has been most influential is a professional production of CS Lewis' "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" staged at the West Yorkshire Playhouse by the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. This production, dramatized by Adrian Mitchell, very cleverly and creatively contrasted the austere and bleak environment of war-torn England with the magical and enchanting world of Narnia, which the lead character of the play Lucy, discovers as a result of hiding in a wardrobe. This fantastic contrast of worlds links very well to A Midsummer Night's Dream, where the lovers (Hermia, Demetrius, Helena and Lysander) leave the structured and ordered world of Athens collides with the magic world of fairies and sprites. In my production I would want this juxtaposition of 2 contrasting worlds to be very striking.

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The war-torn England that was depicted in the production of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" used sparse, simple, almost

sterile stage sets to show the poverty and uninspiring life that faces the family of children. When Lucy stepped into the wardrobe at the crucial moment, the lights faded and closed around Lucy as she pushed fur coats aside - at the transition moment the wardrobe slowly revolved and in the surrounding darkness, enormous fur coats, the height of the stage were flown into position. As Lucy slowly emerged on the stage, the lights slowly brightened to reveal the jawdropping scale of the set. Snow began to fall, and for the first time a vivid blue cyclorama was lit to complete the scene. This leap from 'reality' into the surreal is something I am particularly excited about with this play.

The enormous coats were coloured white at the top, gradually becoming darker near the bottom. The surreal effect of these coats making a forest was incredible.

Another highly influential aspect of this production would certainly be the creation of an ensemble of actors performing the roles of the animals, particularly those in the company of the White Witch (played by Moyo Akande). The witch's secret police is a team of blood-hungry wolves, captained by Maugrin (Owen Young). The ensemble of wolves were portrayed as stealthy, alert, fearless, cunning killers, and used their bodies to communicate these traits at all times. Every muscle in their bodies appeared committed to their performance, keeping their bodies low to the group, their legs powerfully propelling them when alarmed, their arms and hands

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appeared committed to Their performance, keeping their bordies low to the group, Their leas powerfully propelling them when alarmed, their arms and hand dexterousing guiding them and goobbing, culwing and lunging at Their prey. The Costmas for these characters were suportingly Scotte, suggesting a words cout by using a body stocking with printed patterns or, and blending this with effective makeup to appuish store where the body stocking Starts and ends Their characterisation and most of the work for them, however, and their enes were darmingly inde, alert and interse. The page of motives had very little scripted dialogne (other than Maugin and his wentenant), but their presence and commitment to their roles do minored the stage and gave the white with far more power and presence than is sho was alone on the stage This cence of an intimidating muchful) and ever alert ensemble of performers certainly conjures up a sense of magiz and misories in my mind, and I would certainly book to employ a small encemble of dynamic and flexible young actors to form my fairy ensemble in A widsummer majut's Dream.

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Very Strong facial expression

(www birmingham - rep. co. ux / event / the-lion-the-witch-and-the

dexterously guiding them and grabbing, clawing and lunging at their prey. The costumes for these characters were surprisingly subtle, suggesting a wolf's coat by using a body stocking with printed patterns on, and blending this with effective make-up to disguise where the body stocking starts and ends. Their characterization did most of the work for them, however, and their eyes were alarmingly wide, alert and intense. The pack of wolves had very little scripted dialogue. (other than Maugrin and his lieutenant), but their presence and commitment to their roles dominated the stage and gave the white witch far more power and presence than if she was alone on the stage. This sense of an intimidating, watchful and even alert ensemble of performers certainly conjures a sense of magic and mischief in my mind, and I would certainly look to employ a small ensemble of dynamic and flexible young actors to form my fairy ensemble in A Midsummer Night's Dream.

An ensemble of agile and almost acrobatic sprites, ever watchful of the unfolding drama, moving in and out of the audience space and leaping above the stage would certainly add to my magical woodland environment, particularly if these actors were directed to move beyond the stereotypical view of fairies (wings and leggings) and begin to explore the more sinister, dark and supernatural presence of these beings. (Sources: http://www.Birmingham-reop.co.ok/event/the-lion-the-witch-and-the-wardrobe)

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(www.1920-30.com) (www.bbc.co.uk/sonoric/gcsebitesize)

Another production that has contributed to my developing ideas for staging this play is 'The Importance of Being Earnest' by Oscar Wilde, which was staged at my school. This play, written in 1895, is a farcical comedy which explores the social obligations of people in the Victorian era.

What I liked about this performance was the representation of wealthy, upper middle class people who are restricted by the expectations of the society they belong to. The way this is communicated in the play, through precise and controlled movements, immaculate elocution, gestures and costume all appealed to me as a potential contrast to the dark, unruly woodland, where anything can happen, and where the transformation of the lovers take place. To set the Athenians in an uptight and ordered society such as this would then illustrate the contrast between these two worlds even more effectively for a modern audience.

I certainly wouldn't want my production to rely on the very traditional and formal style of Shakespearean productions, with traditional costumes and elaborate set pieces (which became particularly popular during the 1800s).

(Source: "doublet and nose",

http://www.shakeyourspeare.blogspot.com)

It is the clash of two very different worlds that has captured my imagination with this play, and the further apart I can credibly make the world of the real and the world of the "magic" the better! For my 'real' world (the Athenians) I want to place them in the very recognisable world of the 1920s, a little later than 'The Importance of Being Earnest' is set, but a time that is more easily communicated by the style of costume and set, especially with the Art Deco movement that is so striking and formulaic, but also when the world was almost rediscovering itself after world war I and finding itself a little lost... (Sources: http://www.1920-30.com,

www.bbc.com/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/usa/1920revision)

CREATING THE TWO WORLDS The Real world (1920's) The Magical woodland world (supernatural) oberon Most Theseus uffer Titahia Powerdul class Hippolyta Robin Good fellow/ PNOK madle Philostrate Egens pense blossom class Herma Magical Herena Cobwelo Lysander Powers Moth Denetrins mustard seed The Farries Peter anince working NTU BOHOM Class Francis Finte This group in U certainly Robin Starreing feature on the core of my Tom Snout intentions for the andrence, creating unis supernestmas word Snug - Mixed with - ordered nature - many sexual - black and white The real world B Stripped of - potions, spells - Strong, formal order, formality - mother nature - Clear hierarchy and good rules - The upper and lower behaviour - Mischievous chasses never mix When it mixes - raw, informal, Society with the unruly Magical woodland - clear, routined - All work together world! - well behaved - Seasons aretate

Creating the two worlds

The Real world (1920's)

Upper class: Theseus

Hippolyta

Upper middle class:

Philostrate Egeus Hermia Helena Lysander Demetrius

Working class:

Peter Quince Nick Bottom Francis Flute Robin Starveling Tom Snout Snug The Magical woodland world (supernatural)

Most powerful: Oberon Titania

Magical Powers:

Robin Goodfellows/

Puck Peaceh

Peaseblossom Cobweb

Moth

Mustard Seed The Fairies

This group will certainly feature as the core of my intentions for the audience, creating this supernatural world

- Ordered
- · Black and white
- Strong, formal
- Clear hierarchy
- The upper and lower classes never mix socially
- Clean, routined
- Well behaved

The real world is stripped of order, formality and good behavior when it mixes with the magical woodland world!

- Mixed with nature
- Highly sexual
- Potions, spells
- Mother nature rules
- Mischievous
- Raw, informal, unruly
- All work together
- Seasons dictate

Artistic Response MY CONICEPT and Developing My Theas



The Athenians

Thesieus, Kippolyta, Phothosth Philostrafe, Egens, Hermia, Helena, Lysander, Denrtim

I would choose to set The Atherians in the golden age of the 1920s, when the West was facing economic boom following the end of world war I. The grand and noble world of the Atherians (which includes the lovers) would be communicated by semi-formal, modernist fashion—simple lines and minimal adorament, created with expensive fabrics.

The 1920s saw a boom in popular culture, and a widespread appreciation of film, musiz, literature, art and the atre, and I think my concept would justify the use of the Mechaniculs to provide entertainment at the Duke's wedding.

Monnered Society to which the Athenians belong, but also allows room for the Slapstica and melodramatic business between the lovers to take shape.

I don't think that removing the action from recognizable Athens in Greece vill have a notable detrimental effect on My production.

My concept and developing my ideas

The Athenians

Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, Egeus, Hermia, Helena, Lysander, Demetrius.

I would choose to set the Athenians in the golden age of the 1920s, when the west was facing economic boom following the end of world war I. The grand and noble world of the Athenians (which includes the lovers) would be communicated by semi-formal, modernist, fashion - simple lines and minimal adornment, created with expensive fabrics.

The 1920s saw a boom in popular culture, and a widespread appreciation of film, music, literature, art and theatre, and I think my concept would justify the use of the mechanicals to provide entertainment at the Duke's wedding.

This era lends itself well to the structured and well-mannered society to which the Athenians belong, but also allows room for the slapstick and melodramatic business between the lovers to take shape.

I don't think that removing the action from recognisable Athens in Greece will have a notable detrimental effect on my production.

The Fairies

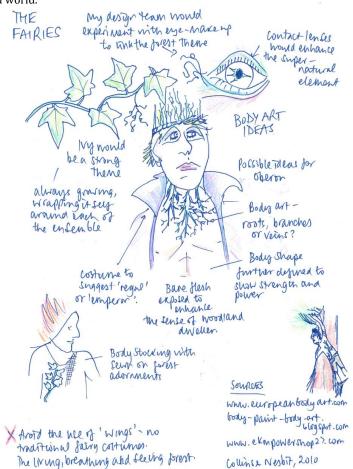
For the woodland scenes, I want the fairies to communicate the living and breathing world of the forest; agile, alert, intense and wild. By increasing the eerie, supernatural elements of the fairies, I believe the woodland becomes a more sinister, unsettling and dangerous place, and makes a very intense contrast to the flat, black and white world of the Athenians.

I want the fairies to spill out into the audience, for the fairy world to be ever-present, watching, listening and whispering. The fairies would be a very tight ensemble of performers, highly physical, moving around the stage space with the quick, light and dynamic movement of acrobats or dancers. They would appear to be a living and breathing forest themselves, only scraps of material clothing being worn, with their bare flesh marked with bark, dirt, leaves or strange mysterious designs. The styling of their hair, costume and make-up would fall very specifically between extremely stylized and completely feral - this group has clearly inhabited the forest world for millennia, completely isolated from human contact. They have an unnerving alertness about them at all times, twitching and staring almost like wild birds. Oberon and Titania are marked by their development above the ensemble, less wild in their behaviour, but more powerful, commanding and bewitching. They are intensely provocative and have an electricity between them which sends pulses through the woodland world.

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The Fairies

- My design team would experiment with eye make-up to link the forest
- · Contact lenses would enhance the supernatural element.
- · Ivy would be a strong theme always growing, wrapping itself around each of the ensemble.
- Body stocking with sewn on forest adornments.
- Avoid the use of 'wings' no traditional fairy costumes. The living, breathing and seeing forest.

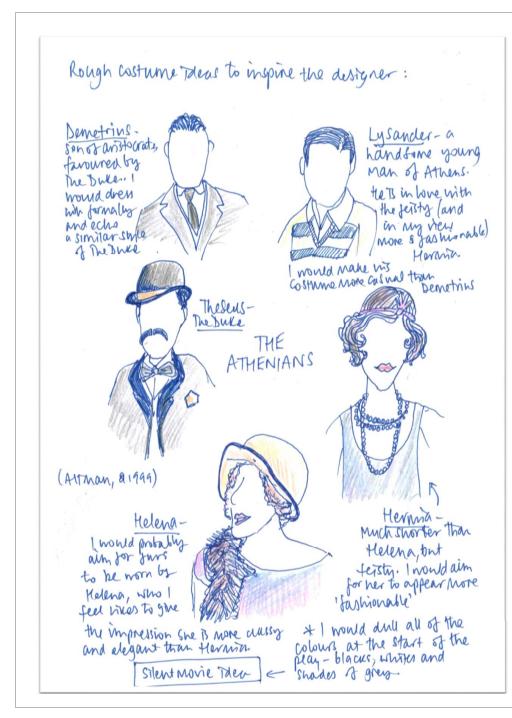
Body Art Ideas

Possible ideas for Oberon:

- Body art roots, branches or veins?
- Body shape further defined to show strength and power
- Bare flesh exposed to enhance the sense of woodland dweller
- · Costume to suggest 'regal' or 'emperor'.

Sources

- http://www.europeanbodyart.com/ body-painting/
- http://body-paint-bodyart.blogspot.com
- http://www.ekmpowershop27.com
- Collins & Nisbet, 2010. P 78.



Rough costume ideas to inspire the designer

The Athenians

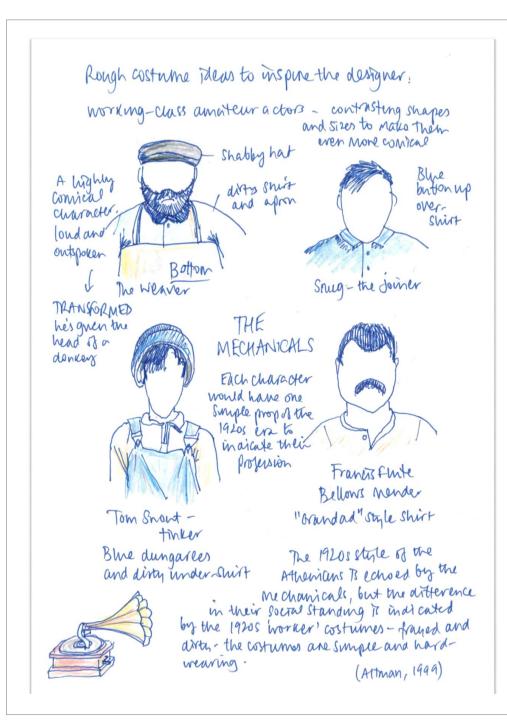
- <u>Demetrius</u> Son of aristocrats, favoured by the Duke. I would dress him formally and echo a similar style of the Duke.
- <u>Lysander</u> a handsome young man of Athens. He is in love with the feisty (and in my view more fashionable) Hermia. I would make his costume more casual than Demetrius.
- Theseus The Duke
- <u>Helena</u> I would probably aim for furs to be worn by Helena, who I feel likes to give the impression she is more classy and elegant than Hermia.
- <u>Hermia</u> Much shorter than Helena, but feisty. I would aim for her to appear more 'fashionable'.

I would dull all of the colours at the start of the play – blacks, whites and shades of grey \rightarrow Silent movie idea.

Sources

• Altman, B & Co: "1920's fashion", 1999.

10



Rough costume ideas to inspire the designer

Working-class amateur actors

Contrasting shapes and sizes to make them even more comical.

- Bottom the weaver : Shabby hat. Dirty shirt and apron. A highly comical character, loud and outspoken. →
 Transformed: he's given the head of a donkey.
- Snug the joiner: Blue button-up over-shirt.

The Mechanicals

Each character would have one sample prop of the 1920s era to indicate their profession.

- Tom Snout tinker: Blue dungarees and dirty under-shirt.
- Francis Flute Bellows mender: "Granddad" style shirt.

The 1920s style of the Athenians is echoed by the mechanicals, but the difference in their social standing is indicated by the 1920s 'worker' costumes –frayed and dirty- the costumes are simple and hard-wearing

Sources:

• Altman, B & Co: "1920's fashion", 1999.

Fleshing out my ideas

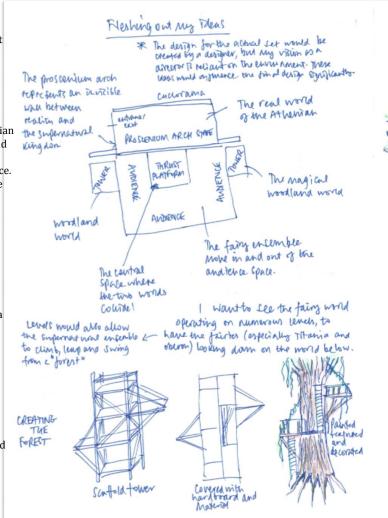
- The design for the actual set would be created by a designer, but my vision as a director is reliant on the environment. These ideas would influence the final design significantly.
- The real world of the Athenian
- The magical woodland world
- The fairy ensemble move in and out of the audience space.
- The central space where the two worlds collide!
- Woodland world
- The proscenium arch represents an invisible wall between reality and the supernatural kingdom.

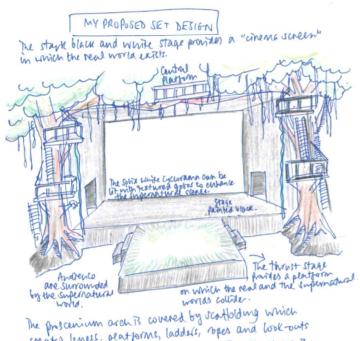
I want to see the fairy world operating on numerous levels, to have the fairies (especially Titania and Oberon) looking down on the world below

Levels would also allow the supernatural ensemble to climb, leap and swing from the "forest"

Creating the forest

- Scaffold tower
- Covered with hardboard and material
- Painted, textured and decorated.





The fins cenium arch is covered by stationary world look outs created leners, peatforms, ladders, ropes and look outs for the inhabitants of the fairy world. This structure is then covered with a textured layer on which the forestapainted, Sculpted and created. Swather of material, retting and gauze are used to create a regulstic canopy of leaves and tendents, through which the ever-canopy of leaves and tendents, through which the ever-fresent fairs entemble peer down at the comings and growings of the real world. The Scatfold platforms create opings of the real world. The Scatfold platforms create a playgrown for the Midcheri ows fairies to Swing, climb, chall and leap. Twinkling tairy viguts are hidden in climb, chall and leap. The trees and are tit as the analysis enters.

My proposed set design

The stark black and white stage provides a "cinema screen" in which the real world exists.

- Central platform
- The solid white cyclorama can be lit with textured gobos to enhance the supernatural scenes
- Stage painted black.
- The thrust stage provides a platform on which the real and the supernatural worlds collide.
- · Audience are surrounded by the supernatural world.

The proscenium arch is covered by scaffolding which creates levels, platforms, ladders, ropes and look-outs for the inhabitants of the fairy world. This structure is then covered with a textured layer on which the forest is painted, sculpted and created. Swathes of material, netting and gauze are used to create a realistic canopy of leaves and tendrils, through which the ever-present fairy ensemble peer down at the comings and goings of the 'real' world. The scaffold platforms create a playground for the mischievous fairies to swing, climb, chase and leap. Twinkling fairy lights are hidden in the trees and are lit as the audience enters.

The Stark white of the cyclorouna would provide a "movie screen", symbolising the world of the Athenians. The black and white world of the Athenians, as glamorous as the 1920: Movie stars, are at first 2 demensional, far removed from the raw, wild and unrestrained supernatural woodland world of the Parries.

As the lover leave the glamour and structure of their 1920s movie world, rentaring in to the dark and mysterious woodland, they find their worlds coulding, and the chaos that follows gradually peels array the glamour and formality of their native land and induces raw, wild and unrestrained be harriour. I would also communicate this process through costume, action, use of roices and characterisation. This would take place on the railed thrust plat form amound which the andience are seated, unmersed and, at timps, implicated in the unfolding madnes!

The Mc Chamicals would be presented as morning cluss trades men who have got together to prepare and rehearse for their production of the most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of fyramms and Thicke. The conic element of these characters To something else I would want to bring out with these scenes (which the sirght already does quite brilliantly).

I would hope to cust some actors with a good ability for clowning and physical comedy. The group would be an assortment of shapes and sizes and this odd mixture of unlikely actors would add to the same as greatly!

The costumes for each group would certainly help in communicating the characters and into evoking the cra and environments I have Identified for my intentions—

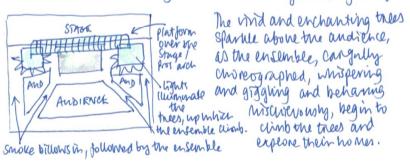
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The mechanicals would be presented as working class tradesmen who have got together to prepare and rehearse for their production of 'the most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe'. The comic element of these characters is something else I would want to bring out with these scenes (which the script already does quite brilliantly). I would hope to cast some actors with a good ability for clowning and physical comedy. The group would be an assortment of shapes and sizes, and this odd mixture of unlikely actors would add to the comedy greatly! The costumes for each group would certainly help in communicating the characters and into evoking the era and environments I have identified for my intentions...

MOW I would direct the play to create an impact [MOMENT ONE - THE OPENING]

Attrough not specifically referenced in the script, I would choose to open my production with a short prologne to establish the supernatural world, ever-present tuningular the entire plays and (in my production at least) ever which he get "real" world. I would want the fairs enlemble to amine mongh the anaitorium and invade the anaitence's space.

As the house light dim, I would want lights, concealed in the branches of the trees (constructed around and over the top of the prosenium arch) to begin twinking brightly, as a three for dry le nature its way from the rearest the anaitorium to the staye, a deep, sustained and booming rumble begins to shake the ways of the Theatne. Diminous, my species and early melodic music begins to build as the ensemble of fairies moves through the willes, thirtching, eyes fixed on members of the anatonce, they are alert and dynamic in their highly physical and animal-ino movements. They The trees eitherside of the prosenium arch become brighter, Lit from was event with vibrant green, while and yellow lightings



How I would direct the play to create an impact

Moment one - the opening

Although not specifically referenced in the script, I would choose to open my production with a short prologue to establish the supernatural world, ever-present throughout the entire play, and (in my production at least) ever watchful of the "real" world. I would want the fairy ensemble to arrive through the auditorium and invade the audience's space.

As the house-lights dim, I would want lights, concealed in the branches of trees (constructed around and over the top of the proscenium arch) to begin twinkling brightly, as a thick fog of dry ice makes its way from the rear of the auditorium to the stage, a deep, sustained and booming rumble begins to shake the walls of the theatre. Ominous, mysterious and eerily melodic music begins to build as the ensemble of fairies moves through the aisles, twitching, eyes fixed on the members of the audience, they are alert and dynamic in their highly physical and animal-like movements. The "trees" either side of the proscenium arch become brighter, lit from underneath with vibrant green, white and yellow lighting.

Stage

- Platform over the stage / proscenium arch
- Lights illuminate the trees, up which the ensemble climb.
- Smoke billows in, followed by the ensemble.

The vivid and enchanting trees sparkle above the audience, as the ensemble, carefully choreographed, whispering and giggling and behaving mischievously, begin to climb the trees and explore their homes.

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Puck, the most nimble and spritely of the ensemble, climbs to the top of the trees, and onto a platform, which travels across the top of the proscenium arch, through the branches and canopy, to settle in the centre, looking down the empty stage below. The rest of the ensemble make themselves confortable on branches, ledges and ropes, and lean out, transfixed on the empty stage, where the first scene of the play is about to begin. The music slowly fades, as the lighting on trees dims, leaving only the twinkling lights like stars in the canopy above.

This atmosphere and enchanting opening to the play should hopefully set the mood for all that follows, providing the audience with a constant feeling of unease, with faces looking out of the branches and engage them all in what happens. I believe this would have an impact.

Moment two - Act three, Scene one As Titania sleeps on a bed of flowers, the craftsmen meet in a nearby grove to begin rehearsing for their play. As they begin their rehearsal (following some difficulties in casting the roles) Puck sneaks up on them. He is delighted to have so many fools to entertain him. He decides to watch and participate in the fun. It's clear that the mechanicals' play is going to be a disaster, and when Bottom steps out of the scene. Puck transforms Bottom's head into that of an ass.

Puck, the most nimble and spritchy of the entemble. cumbs to the loop of the trees, and onto a platform which rands across the top of the proscenium arch, through the branches and campys to settle in the course, bodying down at the empty stage blok. The rest of the ensemble make themselves comfortable on branches, ledges and ropes, and lean out, transfixed on the empty stage, where the first scene of the play is about to begin. he must Storly fades, as the lighting on the trees duins, leaving only the Ninking lights like stars in the conspy above.

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MOMENT TWO - ACT THREE, SURNE ME

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They run for their lives, and delighting in the mischies, Puck makes after them. Bottom, perplexed, remains

In directing this scene, I would want the anarchie to enjoy the corredy of the nechaniculs' and to withers the visoriet of Puck and his encemble and they wither the magical transformation of Bottom into a half-dondery This short sequence is probably the most well remembered Part of the play and one in which timing and comic reaction are essential

As auince, Snow and Bottom discuss the complications of creating moonshipe and a wall in their production, I would have the actors stood on the railed turnst duecting stage on his short, wooder duecting stool (which he carried on with him). Starreling. The starreling. platform. As the 'denuter' of the pyranius and Twister play, liter Olivine would be Sat up stage on Wis Short, wooden

downstrace right, with his leas danging over the STXL of the Stages as he sews a symple item of costume for the

performance. Flute, the bellows mender, would be sat on the floor up-stage centre, next to Peter Quince. Phote would he directed to carry mostrof an accordion, which he plays every time the mechanicals vander through the firest to set up their rehearsal. Snout would be sort stage left, at the top of the set of steps leading down into the anationce String would be directed to stand up-stage left, where he chews on some unknown substance with his mouth then as he does for many of ins scenes. Bottom, of course, would be centre stage, gesturing entruspostically to each of his fellow craylaven in turn.

When the ass-headed Bottom re-enters the scene, and cransment are northwest

Quince: O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. Pray masters, fly masters, help! (Shakespeare, W: "A Midsummer Night's Dream", p. 49)

They run for their lives, and delighting in the mischief, Puck chases after them. Bottom, perplexed, remains behind.

In directing this scene I would want the audience to enjoy the comedy of the mechanicals and to witness the mischief of Puck and his ensemble and they witness the magical transformation of Bottom into a half-donkey. This short sequence is probably the most well remembered part of the play and one in which timing and comic reaction are essential.

As Quince, Snout and Bottom discuss the complications of creating moonshine and a wall in their production, I would have the actors stood on the raised thrust platform. As the 'director' of the Pyramus and Thisbe play, Peter Quince would be sat up stage on his short, wooden directing stool (which he carries on with him). Starveling, the tailor, would be sat downstage right, with his legs dangling over the side of the stage, as he sews a simple item of costume for the performance. Flute, the bellows

mender, would be sat on the floor up-stage centre, next to Peter Quince. Flute would be directed to carry an accordion, which he plays every time the mechanicals wander through the forest to set up their rehearsal. Snout would be sat stage-left, at the top of the set of steps leading down into the audience. Snug would be directed to stand up-stage left, where he chews on some unknown substance with his mouth open as he does for many of his scenes. Bottom, of course, would be centre stage, gesturing enthusiastically to each of his fellow craftsmen in turn.

SNOUT: Doth the moon shine that night we play our play? (p4?)

As Snowt delivers this line, the fairy encemble, who have

from up in their branches, begin to come to like a little, and

lean forward with interest and amusement.

As a wince settles the actors sown ready to begin the rehearsh, The Stage left trees and branches lightup a little as price appleas at the lower platform in the tree.

Pincil: What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here.... It belighted to See the consider group, pinck springs igntly dam the tree stricture, eagerly persued by members of the jainy ensemble, equally as enthrolled and amosted As Bottom delivers his line (as Pyramus),

Bottom: But hark, a voice: Stry thon but here a Unite, And by and by I will to thee appear... Exit (P4"

the few steps into the andrence, to Exit (P49) sit rum sey at the base of the stage left thee structure. As counce and Flute (as thisby) carry on their assension about the correct nee of language, Puck, having giggled his line "A stranger fyramus, than e'er played here", skips around the sented Bottom. At Proces is maded, the fairy ensemble, whispering amongst themselves, would pull a swatter of material (suggesting a leasy vine or curtain of firege. Puck wimspers and gestures towards the immobilitied Bottom while behind the foliage very the fairy ensemble would sindly dress bottom in this donley-transformation costume.

Snout: Doth the moon shine that night we play our play? (p.47)

As Snout delivers this line, the fairy ensemble, who have been silently watching the rehearsal from up in their branches, begin to come to life a little, and lean forward with interest and amusement.

As Quince settles the actors down ready to begin the rehearsal, the stage left tree and branches light up a little as Puck appears at the lower platform in the tree.

Puck: What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here...

Delighted to see the comical group, Puck springs lightly down the tree structure, eagerly pursued by members of the fairy ensemble, equally as enthralled and amused.

Bottom: But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here a while, And by and by I will to thee appear (Shakespeare, "A Midsummer Night's Dream", p.49)

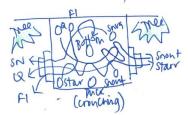
As Bottom delivers his line (As Pyramus), he crosses stage left and trots down the few steps into the audience, to sit himself at the base of the stage left tree of the structure.

As Quince and Flute (as Thisby) carry on their discussion about the correct use of language, Puck, having giggled his line: "A stranger Pyramus, than e'er played here", skips around the seated Bottom. At Puck's command, the fairy ensemble, whispering amongst themselves, would pull a swathe of material (suggesting a leafy vine or curtain of foliage). Puck whispers and gestures towards the immobilised Bottom, while behind the foliage veil, the fairy ensemble would swiftly dress Bottom in his donkey-transformation costume...

Bottom would be dressed in a hat with are ears atta aned and wis hand's shipped into adapted gloves to represent donley hooms.

The enfemble would singly reveal bottom from hehind the maderial and full the dazed and confused (and bits fully unaware) bottom to his feet and pash him to wards fuck, who would lead the actor back or its line:

BOTTOM (as PYRAMUS): Complete the to If I were fair, Thisby, I were only tuine.



Bottam's Transformation

Bottam's Transformation

Transformation

Over
Sized

ears

attached to

hat

Also

Over
Sized

ears

outh cheek

outh cheek

particular to

hower

to nee comic performance

Skills (exaggerested physical

and vocal elements) to

complete the transformation

As Quince cries out his "o monstrons" line, the other actors react with norm, running around the stage, confinsed, territed and bumping into each other. They collect their bles nguigo and dive off the stage scuttered in all directions.

As Pucu derivers his "1" I'll follow you lines", aching with laughter and deright, he leaps after them coursing further choos and fear as he chales them. I believe the impact of this transformation would engage the analysic through comedy and sullessfulls reinforce the sense of the magical world in which the entire cust find Themselves.

Bottom would be dressed in a hat with ass ears attached and his hands slipped into adapted gloves to represent donkey hooves.

The ensemble would swiftly reveal Bottom from the behind the material and pull the dazed and confused (and blissfully unaware) Bottom to his feet and push him towards Puck, who would lead the actor back onto stage in time for his line:

Bottom (As Pryamus): If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

Costume ideas

- Bottom's transformation into an ass
- Oversized ears attached to hat
- Gloves with hooves
- I would direct Bottom to use comic performance skills (exaggerated physical and vocal elements) to complete the transformation.

As Quince cries out his "O monstrous!" line, the other actors react with horror, running around the stage, confused, terrified and bumping into each other. They collect their belongings and dive off the stage scattered in all directions.

As Puck delivers his "I'll follow you" lines, aching with laughter and delight, he leaps after them causing further chaos and fear as he chases them. I believe the impact of this transformation would engage the audience through comedy and successfully reinforce the sense of the magical world in which the entire cast find themselves.

My directorial intentions and intended impact for an audience

I would aim to crease a virid and magical production of a Midsummer Night's Drewn, chausing andience preconceptions and hoping to conjune a memorable and engaging (aream! In transforming my production for the stage, design elements underpin all of the action, and contribute to unmersing the anaience in the envisament, in the sume way that the Athenians find thenselves in plunged into a surreal and supernatural world. Set, costume, byut my and sound would be executial in my production, supporting my intention of engaging and moving the andience, playing on their reactions to comedy, excitement and wonder, nawing them feel unsettled through the we of smilled and committed performers By establishing the 'real' world of the Athenians as a structured, ordered and controlled 1920s world the auditence will feel even more unnerved and uncettled as the cost of fairy world characters, working together as a watchful, apport alers and mis chevaous encemble, leaping through the Mish and workerous thee Structures and canopy; As the andience witness the developing story and comic and confusing

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events I want them to feel wer more immersed in the stom

My directorial intentions and intended impact for an audience

I would aim to create a vivid and magical production of A Midsummer Night's Dream, challenging audience preconceptions and hoping to conjure a memorable and engaging 'dream'.

In transforming my production for the stage, design elements underpin all of the action, and contribute to immersing the audience in the environment, in the same way that the Athenians find themselves plunged into a surreal and supernatural world. Set, costume, lighting and sound would be essential in my production, supporting my intention of engaging and moving the audience, playing on their reactions to comedy, excitement and wonder, making them feel unsettled through the use of skilled and committed performers.

By establishing the 'real' world of the Athenians as a structured, ordered and controlled 1920s world, the audience will feel even more unnerved and unsettled as the cast of fairy world characters, working together as a watchful, alert and mischievous ensemble, leaping through the lush and wonderous tree structures and canopy.

As the audience witness the developing story and comic and confusing events I want them to feel even more immersed in the story and more engaged and responsive.

I believe that my ideas for the staging of this production, the creation of an immersive dream, my direction of a committed and skillful cast of actors and my blending of production elements would contribute to the effective staging of this charming and timeless play text.

and more engaged and responsive.