RESERVE SEATS AT TICKETS@BENNINGTON.EDU STARTING APRIL 29TH MAY 6TH 7TH & 8TH 2016

LESTER MARTIN THEATER 8PM

Drama Faculty & Staff Spring 2016

Rebecca Brooks
Michael Giannitti
Linda Hurley
Kirk Jackson
Dina Janis
Sherry Kramer
Brian Lambert
Richard MacPike
Michael Rancourt
Jean Randich
Sue Rees
Jenny Rohn
Charles Schoonmaker
Curt Wells
Janis Young

COSTUME FIRST HANDS
Sierra Reid
Hannah Brookman
Patsie Earle-Richardson
Emma Castle
Isabel Wing
Raewyn Fairless
Lecil James
Taelen Robertson

ELECTRICS LAB WORKERS
Leo Cohen
Carson Davis
Rohan Edwards
Julius Fuentes
Antonia Grisanti
Nathaniel Guevin
Joshua Reinsein

ELECTRICS CREW
Shana Crawford
Nathaniel Guevin
Lecil James
Sam Mistry
Kaitlyn Plukas
Carina Steffcek
Lazar Vujanice

SCENE SHOP LAB
Ron Anahaw
Shelby Brisbane
Matthias Campbell
Ronan Canty
Sean Castro
Olivia Keane
Lily Killar
Ignjat Milenkovic
Charles Pisano
Ann Stone

SCENE SHOP CARPENTERS
Dado Cobo
Gabriel Ferreras
Lecil James
Bailey Kushinsky
Hadil Marzouq
Marshall McGraw
Zadie Ross
Madeline Shepardson
Rebecca Warzer
Viva Wittman

Special Thanks to The Highlander Bicycle, Mark Wunderlich, Chandler Williams, Janis Young, Dana Reitz, Viggo Dennerline, Amie McClellan, Thorsten Dennerline, Oceana Wilson, Ted, Regina and Randiches far and near, and The Coventry Squire.
Midsummer--referred to as St. John Day--was from ancient times a festival of the summer solstice. The celebration predates Christianity and was presumably related to fertility practices and ceremonies performed to ensure a fruitful harvest. It was believed that nature awakened its magical healing powers on this day. During this celebration bonfires were lit to ward off evil spirits that were thought to roam freely the earth, seemingly the sole occasion when the earth is 1595-1596 and Shakespeare is writing two plays, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Both feature young lovers blocked by tyrannical fathers who threaten death rather than allow their children to defy their will. But in *Midsummer*, somehow, Jack shall have Jill and naught will go ill, despite the madness and confusion wrought by the fairies in the woods. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the same dissension ends violently with the teenage lovers dead at their own hands, a tragedy invoked and skewered by the mechanicals’ unwitting performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe* at the Duke’s wedding reception.

Shakespeare weaves the worlds of his imagination together deftly, and we are drawn in as if to the scene of an accident: Look here, he says, what do you think about this harsh patriarchal Athenian law? Look at these hard-handed clowns – See how much they love theater even though they have never been to any school? “Take pains, be perfect,” Bottom instructs his fellow hempen homespuns, because Bottom, like Shakespeare, knows that is the only way to rise to the world of the play. Consider these young male lovers who fall in and out of love at the drop of an eyelid. And these young women who hunt and woo, despite Helena’s proclaiming: “We cannot fight for love, as men may do: We should be wooed and were not made to woo.” Nay, good women, you can and shall fight and woo you do. Had any playwright before Shakespeare imagined such forceful, determined, and resilient women? They talk for dear life and never give up, no matter how many insults are hurled upon their heads.

While this might have been enough of a play for anyone else, Shakespeare now conjures the English folklore and country myths of his childhood. Enter Robin Goodfellow, the Puck, and the King and Queen of the Fairies, Oberon and Titania, and they, too, are at war. Oberon is jealous of a Changeling Boy Titania dotes on, and is determined to wrest that boy from her. What conversation and threats cannot effect, Oberon achieves through magic. He alone knows where Cupid’s arrow struck the earth, seemingly the sole occasion when Cupid missed --apparently when aiming at the most famous Elizabethan vestal virgin, Queen Elizabeth. It struck a frost-hardy pansy:

> “And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
> Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once:
> The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
> Will make or man or woman madly dote
> Upon the next live creature that it sees.”
>
> And will this leap of genius, Shakespeare fuses three images in one: the erotic power of Cupid’s arrow, the opening of a flower, and the closing of a human eye. Imagination is fed through perception, but perception is subject to deception. When we sleep, we dream. Our subconscious is busy churning up images that suggest stories, stories we may fear, desire, or not even understand. Are we all poets when we sleep?

Thus Shakespeare makes a woods rippling with the beauty and danger of our unknown hearts and minds. To fall in love is to stumble into a dark woods in which you can not find your way. You have to listen, to try to see. Is anyone is looking back? Are you seen as you see? Perhaps the sagest advice comes from Bottom, who remains remarkably unchanged even though he’s been translated into a donkey and is now beloved of the Fairy Queen: “To say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays…”

I am delighted and honored to share this extraordinary collaboration with you -- Shakespeare, actors, music, set, lights, costumes, and projections. “The best in this kind are but shadows, and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.”

--Jean Randich
Imagination is the elemental speech in all senses, the first and the last, of primitive man and of the poets. Allow yourself, in acting Shakespeare, to give over, to feel understood by Him. As if the roles had been waiting there in order to reveal some unknown corners of yourself. And one's spirit flies out into the story. His characters talk for dear life. They create through their talk an alternate place to inhabit at least until they are silenced by force. Poetry's ultimate function: to defend man against his own brutality.

Poetry is the spark that leaps across when something within is brought close to something without, or something without to something within. Poetry is the spark!

-Chandler Williams, Actor and Bennington Alum
ACT 2.1 Fairy:
Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.

ACT 1.1 Hermia-
“O hell! To choose love by another’s eyes.”

ACT 3.2 Robin- “Cupid is a knavish lad, thus to make poor females mad.”

ACT 2.1 Demetrius-
“I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.”

ACT 2.1 Titania;
“And through this distemper we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems’ thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set....
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension:
We are their parents and original.”

ACT 2.1 Helena- “You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant!”

ACT 3.2 Robin- “Lord, what fools these mortals be!”

ACT 5.1 Theseus-
“The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;
That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen’s beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.”
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
A Midsummer Night's Dream
DIRECTED BY JEAN RANDICH

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