

A MIDSUMMER
Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare



Introduction

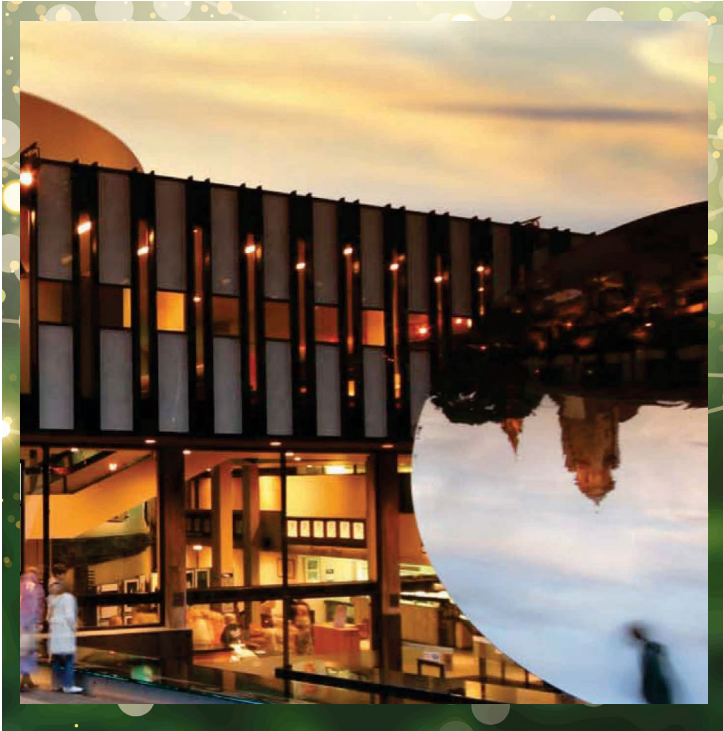


Photo: Drew Baumohl

We create theatre that's bold, thrilling and proudly made in Nottingham.

Awarded Regional Theatre of the Year 2019 by The Stage, Nottingham Playhouse is one of the country's leading producing theatres and creates a range of productions throughout the year, from timeless classics to innovative family shows and adventurous new commissions.

We want our theatre to be a space where everyone feels they belong, and we use our stage to tell diverse stories that reflect our city. Our wide-reaching participation programmes create life-changing experiences for our community and we also support the next generation of theatre-makers in the East Midlands through our extensive Amplify programme.

Nottingham Playhouse is also a registered charity (no. 1109342). All of the funds we raise help to ensure we're reaching as many people as possible to give them new opportunities and create lasting memories.

Contents

A Midsummer Night's Dream.....	3
Cast and Creatives.....	3
Lakeside Arts.....	4
Synopsis.....	5
Character Breakdown.....	6
Interview with Director, Martin Berry.....	7
William Shakespeare.....	8
Antithesis In A Midsummer Night's Dream.....	9
Activities.....	10
Rehearsal Techniques.....	12
Theatre Practitioners.....	14
Job Roles in Theatre.....	19
A Glimpse into Theatre Careers.....	20



A MIDSUMMER *Night's Dream*

by William Shakespeare

A Midsummer Night's Dream was written by William Shakespeare around the years 1595-1596. Set in the Greek capital of Athens, as well as multiple locations within a mystical forest, this world-famous comedy is centred around the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. However, in the build-up to the grand event, a series of hilarious mishaps unfold involving a group of lovers, a hoard of amateur actors (the mechanicals), and the fairies who inhabit the magical forest. The scheming fairy-king Oberon unleashes chaos amongst the lovers, using a potent love potion on different characters throughout the play, resulting in hilarious consequences.

Many scholars have theorised about the sources Shakespeare used when writing this hugely successful play. Probably written after Romeo and Juliet, it is believed that he might have been inspired by Geoffrey Chaucer's 'The Knight's Tale' and Ovid's 'Metamorphoses', as well as Greek tragedy and German poetry.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is one of Shakespeare's most adapted works. In the 17th Century, Henry Purcell wrote an opera based on the play called 'The Fairy-Queen'. Throughout the 19th century, acclaimed composer Felix Mendelssohn wrote various pieces either inspired by the play or designed to be used within the production itself. The most famous of these pieces is 'Wedding March' which is very often used as a recessional at weddings, particularly in Western Europe.

Cast and Creatives

Cast

Helena, Peter Quince, Egeus, and as cast
Charlotte East

Hermia, Titania, and as cast
Freya O'Flynn

Lysander, Oberon, and as cast
Jacob Seelochan

Demetrius, Bottom, and as cast
Peter Watts

Creatives

Director
Martin Berry

Designer
Erin Fleming

Sound Designer/Composer
Inês Sampaio Figueiredo

Wardrobe Supervisor
Louise Smith

Assistant Director
Natalia Bruce

Sound Programmer
Sam Osborne

Stage Manager
Kate Bosomworth

Lakeside Arts

Lakeside Arts is the University of Nottingham's public arts provision which aims to enrich lives through creativity and culture. Lakeside's year round programme includes visual arts, special collections' and museum exhibitions theatre, dance, music, comedy and literature performances, as well as a comprehensive talks and workshops programme.

Lakeside has a strong commitment to provide transformative experiences for children and families exemplified by premiering new work by innovative companies like Makers of Imaginary Worlds alongside a regular programme of high-quality visiting children's theatre and dance. Being based in one of the city's most beautiful parks, Lakeside is also delivering a programme of outdoor activities to help re-engage with creative activities in a covid-secure space. We look forward to working with the internationally renowned composer Graham Fitkin to create a celebratory performance in partnership with Nottingham Music Hub.

Lakeside is also the driving force behind the Office for Students funded programme Creative

Pathways which offers seven University of Nottingham graduates a paid internship with one of Nottingham's cultural partners including Nottingham Playhouse.

Venues include the Djanogly Recital Hall which stages concerts by internationally renowned soloists and chamber ensembles; the Djanogly Gallery currently housing the first solo exhibition in his home city by YBA Mat Collishaw; the University of Nottingham Museum which has a permanent collection of archaeology covering a period of some 250,000 years; and the Djanogly Theatre presenting UK and international touring work as well as producing and co-producing new theatre and dance.

Since Covid, Lakeside has adapted to deliver engaging and high-quality online performances and talks, helping to connect artists with audiences during these difficult times. Over 2,250 households have engaged with online events since late last year and everyone at Lakeside look forward to welcoming many more as it continues to reopen.



Synopsis

Warning: Spoiler Alert! Only read this section if you want to know everything that happens.

Act 1 begins in Athens, with The Duke Theseus set to marry the Amazon Queen Hippolyta. There is also a heated discussion between many of the key characters regarding whom Hermia is to marry. She wants to be with Lysander despite her father Egeus' wishes for her to marry Demetrius. Helena loathes at how Demetrius no longer loves her and wants Hermia instead. Defying their superiors and potentially facing grave consequences in doing so, the two lovers Hermia and Lysander arrange to meet in a magical forest outside the control of Athens.

Meanwhile, a troupe of amateur actors are discussing a play they plan to perform at the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. They decide on their parts and meet in the forest to rehearse. Also found in the forest are the fairies, and their King and Queen - Oberon and Titania. They are arguing over who is to have possession of an Indian boy, whom Oberon plans to take as his squire. When Titania refuses to hand him over to Oberon, he formulates a plan to steal him from her. Using a magical ointment from a flower, he instructs his fairy assistant Puck to cast a spell on Titania so that she may fall in love with a creature from the forest. He would then offer to reverse the spell in return for the Indian boy. He also tells Puck to use the magic on Demetrius, so that he may fall in love with Helena. However, mistaking him for Demetrius, Puck instead casts the spell in Lysander, who then falls in love with Helena,

leaving Hermia very confused and irritated.

Elsewhere in the forest, Puck spots one of the actors, Bottom. Mistaking his name for some form of the word 'jackass', Puck transforms his head to that of an ass. As Titania awakens from her sleep, she falls in love with the first creature she sees, which just so happens to be Bottom. Oberon seizes his opportunity and takes the boy for himself.

Hermia is enraged by Demetrius, whom she believes has killed Lysander so he can take her for himself. Irritated by Puck's mistake,

Oberon sends him to retrieve

Helena whilst he charms

Demetrius. Both Athenian

men are now in love with

Helena, who believes

they are playing some cruel trick on her.

Having achieved his main aim of retrieving the Indian boy, Oberon arranges for all the spells to be reversed, ordering Puck to charm all the lovers whilst he deals with Titania. Theseus, Hippolyta and Egeus

arrive in the forest, finding the sleeping lovers. Unable to recall exactly what happened,

the lovers decide the events that have taken place must have been a dream. Theseus rules that the two couples, Hermia and Lysander, and Helena and Demetrius, are to be married.

Bottom awakens and re-joins the rest of the actors, who perform their play 'Pyramus and Thisbe' at the Athenian wedding. The actors are so terrible that those watching think that it is a comedy. After the three couples are married, the fairies bless them with good fortune before the main characters retire.



Character breakdown

Athenians:

Theseus – Duke of Athens, set to wed Hippolyta

Hippolyta – Queen of the Amazons, set to wed Theseus

Egeus – father of Hermia

Philostrate – Master of the Revels/Festivities

Lovers:

Hermia – daughter of Egeus, in love with Lysander

Lysander – in love with Hermia

Demetrius – proposed to Hermia

Helena – in love with Demetrius

Actors/Mechanicals:

Peter Quince – a carpenter and writer of plays

Nick Bottom – a weaver

Francis Flute – a bellows-mender

Tom Snout – a tinker

Snug – a joiner

Robin Starveling – a tailor

Fairies:

Oberon – King of the Fairies

Titania – Queen of the Fairies

Robin "Puck" Goodfellow – a mischievous fairy who often carries out the wishes of Oberon

Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustardseed – fairy servants to Titania

Indian changeling – a ward of Titania, desired by Oberon



Interview with Director, Martin Berry

What made you want to direct A Midsummer Night's Dream?

Gosh – many reasons. First and foremost it is enormous fun. I directed a production a few years ago and really enjoyed the experience.

It's also a great play for invention, magic and mischief – all of which I love to bring to the stage. Live theatre and that shared experience are so vital, and Midsummer Night's Dream has very many possibilities to thrill, involve and engage the audience.

It's also such a great play to introduce people to theatre I think, and to Shakespeare. We know our audience will be made up of many young people for whom this may be their first experience of theatre and/or Shakespeare and it is a genuine honour to take on that challenge.

What are the challenges of directing such a well-known play?

You have a choice to make – to steep yourself in the many versions that have gone before – watch the films, dig out archive recordings of famous productions, read all the books. Or you can dodge them all and approach the play as if it had never been done before. I've tried both in the past, and this time around I have gone for option B – treat this production with as fresh a set of eyes as possible. (Although having done it before I do already have a fair amount of insight into the play of course). The 'fresh eyes' approach feels right for a production with just



Martin Berry

4 performers and for children, where we will be deliberately breaking many of the 'rules' of theatre. Multi-roling, audience interaction, outdoor setting – in a sense we can come at this with a rather thrilling sense of (respectful) abandon. It is also reassuring to work on a play that has stood the test of time – we are unlikely to break it – though we must ensure we trust the text and treat the story, characters and language with respect. What that means in practice is working to unearth and understand the play Shakespeare wrote, and then enjoying playing with how we will tell our particular version of that story.

What are you most excited about in this production?

Going outdoors with a play set in a forest creates really exciting possibilities I think. I am also really looking forward to exploring what our chosen setting of a music festival might unlock in the characters, relationships and Shakespeare's poetry – it's a fab idea from the mind of our designer Erin Fleming, and allows us to approach the play in a real-world context that still allows for magic, love and chaos. Or perhaps that's just my experience of music festivals!

How has the context of modern day affected your retelling of this Shakespearean classic?

We certainly plan to avoid references to Covid, politics or world affairs – I think we have all had enough of that! Bringing Shakespeare to a modern, predominantly young audience is a balance I think – balancing respect for the text, rhythms and traditions with finding ways to ensure access, modern relevance and humour that lands with a modern audience. It's the last point that's key I think. Some humour is universal across all time – eg slapstick and pratfalls. Other humour evolves over time and if we can make a modern audience laugh then there is a good chance we are making the play accessible to them more broadly.

William Shakespeare

Although he is celebrated as perhaps the greatest playwright and poet in the English language, surprisingly few facts are known about the life of William Shakespeare. He was born in Stratford upon Avon in 1564, the son of John Shakespeare – a glove-maker and alderman – and Mary Arden. He was baptised in the local church on 26 April 1564 and although his exact birthday is unknown, it is traditionally observed on 23 April (St. George's Day). In 1582, at the age of 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway who was eight years his senior. They had three children together: Susanna, born in 1583, and twins Hamnet and Judith, born two years later.

Not much is known about Shakespeare's life between 1585 and 1592 – often referred to by scholars as his 'lost years' – but by 1592 Shakespeare was well established on the London theatre scene as both a playwright and actor, enjoying considerable success as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later renamed The King's Men under James I).

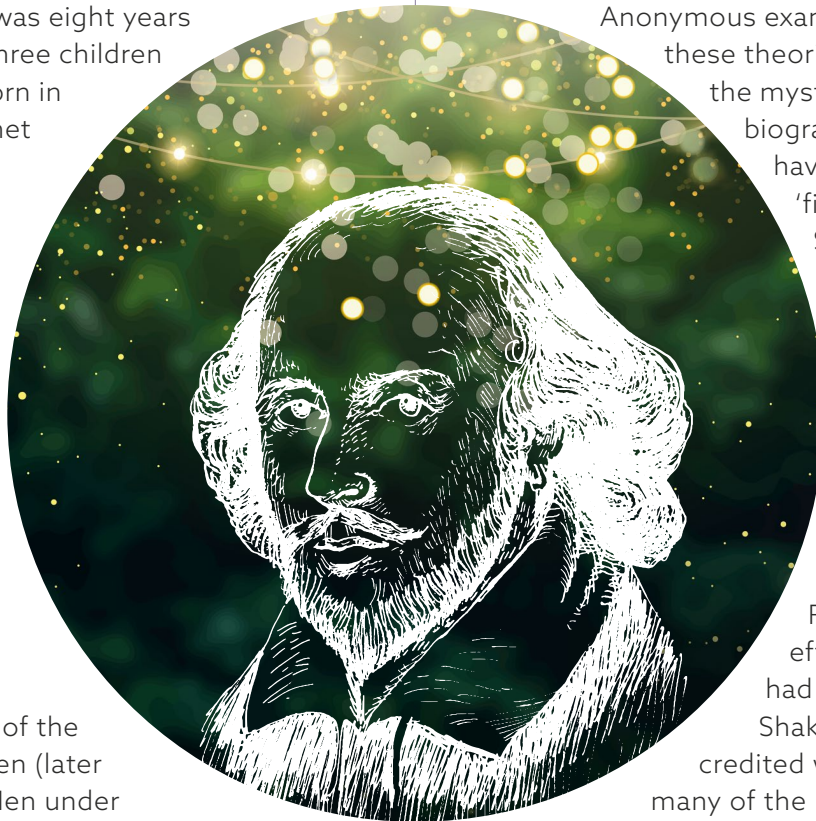
In total, Shakespeare's surviving works (including some collaborations) consist of more than 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and several other shorter poems. His plays are known the world over, and have been translated into more languages

and performed more than any other dramatist.

Because of the considerable volume of his work and the perception of Shakespeare as 'uneducated' by Elizabethan standards, some people speculate about the authorship of many of the works attributed to him. Amongst others, it has been suggested that the philosopher and scientist Francis Bacon, the playwright Ben Jonson or even Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, might have been the real author of his work. The 2011 feature film

Anonymous examines the last of these theories. Equally, due to the mystery surrounding his biography, many scholars have attempted to 'fill in the gaps' in Shakespeare's life. The most famous – and fictional – of these is the feature film *Shakespeare in Love* which imagines what might have been happening to Shakespeare at the time he was writing *Romeo & Juliet* and the effect this might have had on the play.

Shakespeare is also credited with having coined many of the phrases we commonly use today. Phrases such as 'in a pickle' (*The Tempest*) or 'in stitches' (*Twelfth Night*) can be found in his work, along with many other modern constructions still in use, further highlighting the considerable contribution he has made to the English language.



Antithesis In A Midsummer Night's Dream

Antithesis is the term for **"direct or striking opposition of character or functions"** (Oxford English Dictionary). It's essentially a fancy word for opposites.

There is a strong presence of antithesis in the themes throughout A Midsummer Night's Dream. Examples of this include freedom and oppression, appearance and reality, order and disorder. Can you think of any more?

Freedom and Oppression:

Freedom and oppression are signified in a variety of places in A Midsummer Night's Dream. This is something you can see through character dynamics at the start of the play, for example Hermia is controlled and oppressed by her father and Hippolyta wants her freedom over a marriage to Theseus. This is also symbolised in the two settings – the forest and the city of Athens. In the forest, the lovers have the freedom to love as they please, while in Athens they are oppressed by ruling figures.

Appearance and Reality: Shakespeare plays with appearance and reality throughout the play, as a theme, a plot device, and more. This is largely played upon through the elements of magic which allow Shakespeare to distort reality, for example in giving

Bottom the head of a donkey. It also strongly drives the plot, with the mistaken appearances of each character creating issues for the characters to solve, for example Puck causing confusion between the lovers' and who they love in reality.

Order and Disorder:

Once again this is a theme symbolised in many different elements of A Midsummer Night's Dream. It is again explored through setting, where the world of the forest and the fairies is chaotic and unruly, as opposed to the strict and structured world of Athens. This also affects the characters' actions in each of these settings, for example the use of magic in the forest leads to less rationality. Shakespeare also uses the hyperbolised disorder in the middle of the play to further the restored sense of order and wellness at the end.



Activities

Activity 1: William the Wordsmith

As we've mentioned in this pack, Shakespeare often played around with words and created new words and phrases.

Top Tip:

The origin of a word is called its etymology.

• **Read/Listen:** While watching or reading the play, look out for any common words or phrases that you think Shakespeare might have made up. Write them down and when you're done, research their origins. Did you get any right?

• **Write:** Now it's time to make up your own words and phrases. Have go at creating some of your own and write definitions to go with each of them. If you want a challenge use words from historical languages like Latin, Old English or Celtic as building blocks to create your new words. This will allow you to explain the etymology of each of them.

The course of true love never did run smooth

Though she be but little, she is fierce

Love looks not with the eyes

Activity 2: Shakespearean Rhythm and Meter

Shakespeare is renowned for his use of rhythm and meter. His characters often speak in verse rather than prose. This means that they use poetic features such as rhythm, meter, structure and other literary techniques. His most commonly noted use of rhythm is iambic pentameter. 'Iambic' refers to the stressed syllables in the line – an iamb is an unstressed syllable before a stressed syllable. The opposite of this would be a trochee, a stressed syllable before an unstressed syllable. Trochees and iambs are examples of feet, which are the units that make up a line in verse. 'Pentameter' means that there are five feet in the line.

• **Read/Listen:** While watching or reading the play, pick out a section of verse and see if you can understand what the rhythm and meter is. When trying to understand where the stressed and unstressed syllables are, it helps to hear the words aloud so if you're reading, try reading the verse aloud. Consider whether the feet are iambs or trochees (there are other types of feet that you can research, but these are the most commonly used). How many feet are in each line?

• **Perform:** Any section of writing can be manipulated into verse, using rhythm and meter. Find a short piece of writing (for example a verse in a song or even a paragraph in this Insight Pack!) and use meter to turn it into verse. First try making it into iambic pentameter, by alternating the stress on each syllable starting with an unstressed syllable and separating your lines into five iambs (ten syllables). Once you've got the hang of this you can try it with other types of meters – there are lots to choose from!

Activity 3: Antithesis in A Midsummer Night's Dream

• **Read/Listen:** We've discussed Shakespeare's use of antithetical themes in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Identify uses of antithesis in this play (eg. Order and disorder, freedom and oppression, etc.). Note down the moments in which these are explored throughout the play.

• **Write:** Pick one of the dichotomies (opposites) that you've identified in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Write an essay on its use as a theme in the play and what effects this may have. An example question would be: Explore how the dichotomy of appearance and reality is used in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream.

• **Research:** Many scholars have written theories on the use of antithesis in literature. For example Hegel and Nietzsche have both explored the theory of tragedy using the Apollonian and Dionysian, which are symbols for order and chaos. Find and research a theory from a scholar who has used antithesis in their theorising.



Top Tip:

There are lots of academic papers and journals online on sites such as JSTOR or Google Scholar; you can also find academic essays in anthology books that may be in your local or school library.

Rehearsal Techniques

Warm Up Games

• **Animals:** This is a Stanislavskian activity and focuses on character physicality, tone of voice and speed of speech. Imagine a character is a particular animal and perform a short scene (either text-based, or improvised scenario) as that animal. Ask your teacher or workshop practitioner to shout out numbers on a scale from 1 – 10, where 10 is the most exaggerated version of that animal whilst the performance style of 1 is very subtle.

Top Tip:

Remember to think about speed of speech and movement as well as allowing your whole body to become that animal. Then discuss your thoughts afterwards and try the exercise again with different characters and animals.



Text Work

• **Facts and Assumptions:** Starting with your script, and working in groups if preferable, find out all the facts about a specific character. Once you've done that, assumptions can also be made based on these facts, building a set of Given Circumstances for each character in the play. This can then be shared with the group so that the Given Circumstances for the whole play can be set.

• **Bite Size Storytelling:** In groups, take a short scene from the play. The group have to tell the story of the scene in whatever way they feel fit. They can take key lines that highlight the main events, or they can create a series of freeze frames depending on the ability of the group. The scenes need to be kept short and the stories within the scene isolated. You can then stick the whole show (or chunks of it) together so that you create the whole thing in their own way.

Rehearsal Techniques

Devising

• **Improvisation With Object:** Each group is given an object. They have to create a short scene with the object as the central focus. You can do this in a couple of ways. First – they have to use the object as it actually is (a brush must be used as a brush), or the object cannot be used literally (the brush becomes a microphone or a spade).



Character/Plot Development

• **Acting The Objectives:** Each actor plays a scene that they have rehearsed, but instead of speaking the dialogue, they state what they WANT to do to the other people in the scene, for example 'I want to make you jealous'. This is useful if you have been able to action the text first, and it also helps with the reactions of the other actors in the scene.

Polish/Final Stages

• **Line, Scene, Go:** The director shouts a random line to the company. They are instantly expected to get themselves into position and pick up the play at the point of the line. Run a couple of moments – then shout another line which they all then run to. Great for keeping things fun and fresh – and for highlighting points of confusion or those who are less sure of their lines.

• **Peer Note Taking:** Whilst the director is focusing on the overall vision of the piece, peer note taking can be a really useful tool for each actor. Pair people up with others who aren't in the scene. The actor can tell their note taker if there is any specific thing that they'd like their note taker to focus on (such as diction or intonation), or specifics can be stated by the director. Positive notes and room for improvement can be highlighted. You will generally find that they are really positive about each other's performance and it is a great way of developing self-reflection too.



Theatre Practitioners

Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1953)

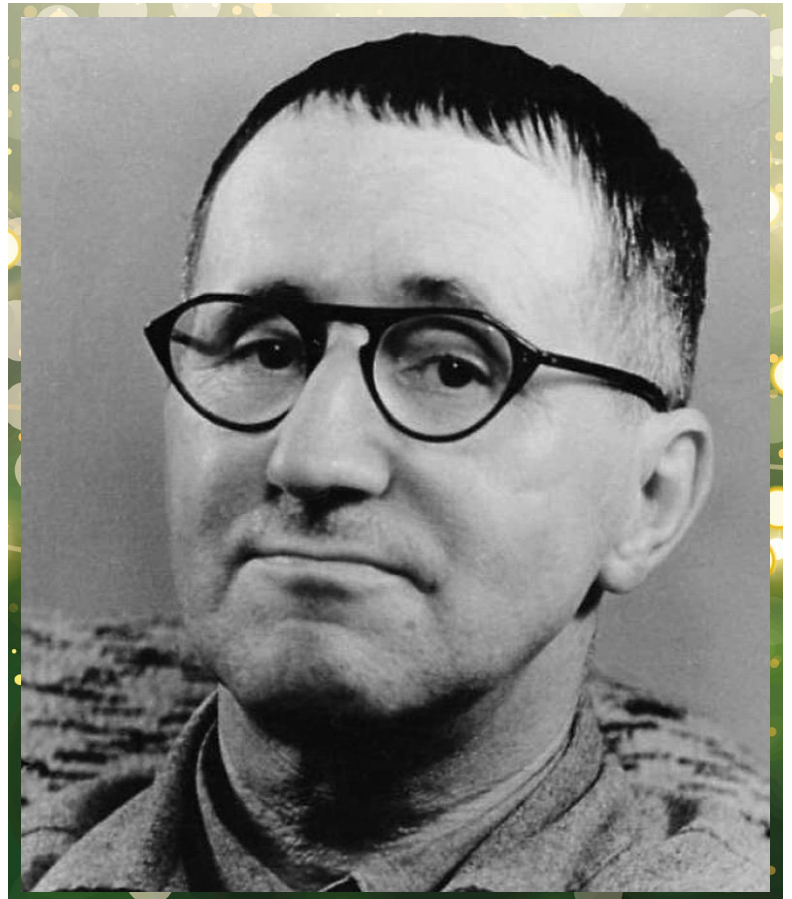
Born in 1898 in Augsburg Germany and sickened by the impact of the First World War, Bertolt Brecht began studying theatre in 1917, and wrote his first plays *Baal* and *Drums in the Night* in 1918. By 1921 he had arrived in Berlin where he soon became involved with a large number of Berlin's leading actors and directors.

When discussing Brechtian theatre, we are fundamentally examining **theatre of Politics**. Brecht was reacting directly against the Fascist regime and, following the teachings of Karl Marx, Brecht's writings were focused on a **Marxist ideology**.

Brecht was a Playwright, Director and Poet who created what we now know as Epic Theatre. Epic Theatre was a reaction against Naturalism, and aimed to provoke the audience into action. This was a theatre of change. He believed that theatre should not only reflect the world, but change it. After watching one of his plays, Brecht hoped that the audience would leave the theatre determined to take action against the unfair society they were living in. He did this through the development of the *Verfremdungseffekt* – or **Making Strange**.

The V effect is also known as the A effect, or **Alienation effect**, and is essentially a range of devices that Brecht used to prevent the audience becoming emotionally attached to the characters within the plays. He wanted them to maintain a '**distanced objectivity**' so that they could see things as they really were. An example of these techniques were: **Audience interaction (breaking the fourth wall)**, **Narration**, **Montage**, **Gestus (Gesture with attitude)**, **Spazz**, **Song**, **Mime** and **Third Person Dialogue**.

Brecht's impact was so pertinent that he had to flee from the Nazi regime in 1933, only to return to Germany in 1948 after the end of the Second World War. In 1949 Brecht created the **Berliner Ensemble** where he continued to develop his work until his death in 1956.



Notable Works

- **The Threepenny Opera**
- **Life of Galileo**
- **Mother Courage and Her Children**
- **The Good Person of Szechwan**
- **The Caucasian Chalk Circle**
- **Mr Puntilla and his Man Matti**
- **The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui**

Highlighted Information

- Fundamentally examining theatre of Politics
- Writings focused on a Marxist ideology
- Created what we now know as Epic Theatre
- A reaction against Naturalism
- Aimed to provoke the audience into action
- Not only reflect the world, but change it

Theatre Practitioners

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863 – 1937)

Konstantin Stanislavski, born to one of the richest families in Russia in 1863, is widely credited with the development of the first form of formal actor training in the modern world, most commonly referred to as his System. Set out across three major books, *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character* and *Creating a Role*, Stanislavski was the first to document a process which trainee actors could follow in order to create the image of **truth on stage**.

Stanislavski's privilege and wealth enabled him to create an alternative theatre to the melodramatic and declamatory style which was prevalent in Russia at the time. He dedicated his life to changing outmoded practice with a desire for perfection that led to international success. With barely any training, he embarked on a quest for truth in art and devoted his whole life to this journey. In 1897, he and **Nemirochov-Danchenko** created **The Moscow Art Theatre** to develop and shape his ideals.

The System that he developed aimed to be a systematic approach to lay down ground rules for approaching character, and for how an actor could use their voice and body effectively to **fully embody a character** on stage. Working closely with playwright **Anton Chekhov**, Stanislavski was able to experiment with text and actors in order to hone and develop his teachings.

Exercises that are included in The System and that are still widely used in actor training today include: **Emotion Memory**, **The Magic 'If'**, **Circles of Concentration**, **The Method of Physical Actions**, **Imagination**, **Relaxation** and **Action with a Purpose**.

These exercises still form the basis of most actor training in the western world which is a testament to how truly influential Stanislavski has been in the development of actor training.



Notable Works

- **Founder of the MAT Stanislavski's 'system'**
- **An Actor's Work**
- **An Actor's Work on a Role**
- **My Life in Art**

Highlighted Information

- The first form of formal actor training
- Create the image of truth on stage
- An alternative to the melodramatic and declamatory style
- Fully embody a character on stage
- A systematic approach

Theatre Practitioners

Steven Berkoff (1937 – present)

Steven Berkoff is a British Actor, Director and Playwright who was born in London in 1937. Berkoff trained as a mime artist at the **Lecoq School** in Paris before he began developing his own work. Alongside the many plays that he has written, Berkoff has also had a successful career in film; often playing the sinister 'bad guy' character.

Berkoff's approach to theatre is incredibly **physical and non-naturalistic**, often focusing on **movement rather than voice**. According to him, the only purpose of a script is to help **'minimalise and physicalise'** the story; stripping it down to its most basic components.

The theory of **Total Theatre** is key to Berkoff and stemmed from Artaud's theatre style. Total Theatre maintains that every aspect of theatre must have purpose: every movement, that is choreographed; to each line, that is learned perfectly; to each lighting effect, that is used to convey a mood or message; to each sound effect, that enhances the audience's experience; to each prop that has a use.

The aim of Total Theatre is to create extreme moods to give the audience an overwhelming experience and to shock, amuse, scare, or amaze them. Berkoff particularly embraced this in his **Kafka adaptations** such as *Metamorphosis*, *The Trial* and *In the Penal Colony*. Total Theatre performances are often stripped back and minimalist with bare stages and little language, so that the focus remains on the physical movement. This serves to detach the audience from the play and make them think about what was being said.

Berkoff likes to use **stereotype and cliché** in order to examine human behaviour. These stereotypes require the actor to demonstrate the character in a heightened manner, through **exaggerated physical movement** and often base, foul language.



Notable Works

- Sink the Belgrano!
- Shakespeare's Villains
- A Clockwork Orange
- Beverly Hills Cop
- War and Remembrance

Highlighted Information

- Physical and non-naturalistic
- Minimalise and physicalise the story
- Every aspect of Total Theatre must have purpose
- Create extreme moods
- To detach the audience from the play

Theatre Practitioners

Augusto Boal (1931-2009)

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1931, Boal is most renowned for creating the **Theatre of the Oppressed**, a form of interactive theatre intended to transform lives. Boal's theatre invited **spectators to become performers**, acting out solutions to their own social problems. Boal (like Brecht) believed that theatre should be a **vehicle for social change**, and his Theatre of the Oppressed aimed to show the people what was possible and give them a voice for action.

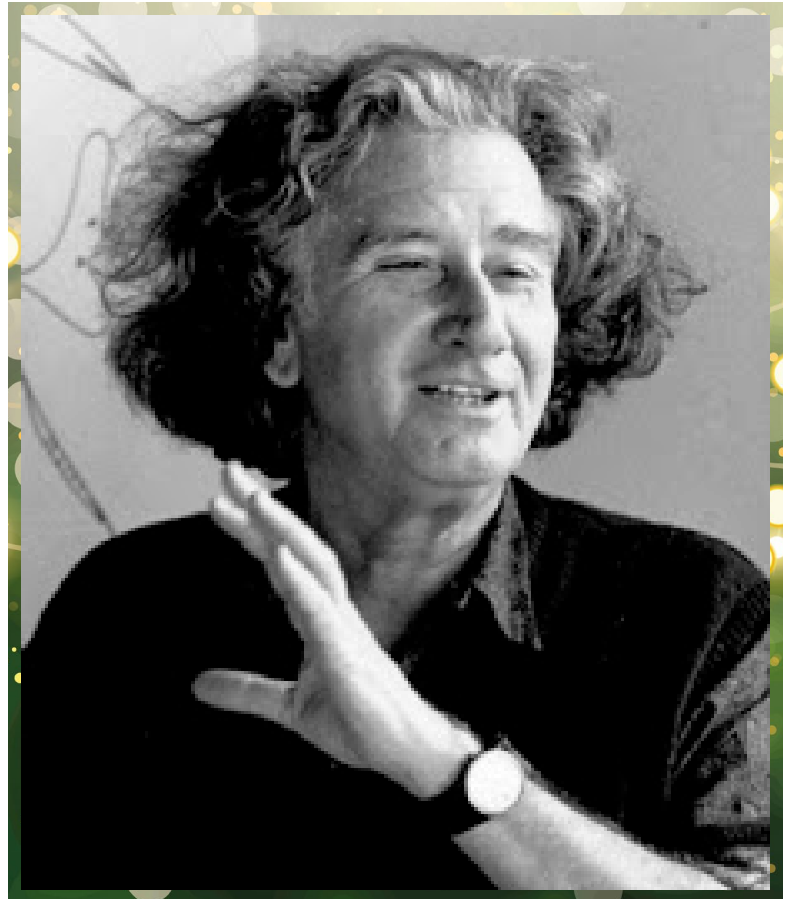
Theatre of the Oppressed begins with the idea that everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives; everybody is at once an actor and a spectator. Boal called his audience '**Spect-actors**'.

Theatre of the Oppressed encompasses three key forms:

Image Theatre invites spect-actors to form a tableau of frozen poses to capture a moment in time dramatising an oppressive situation. They are then asked to reflect critically on this situation before being asked to depict an ideal outcome, or to reshape an image to show different **perspectives**.

Forum Theatre is a short play that dramatises a situation, with an oppressive ending that spect-actors cannot be satisfied with. After an initial performance, it is shown again, however this time the spectators become spect-actors and can at any point yell 'freeze' and step on stage to replace the protagonist(s) and take the situation in different directions.

Invisible Theatre is public theatre that involves the public as participants in the action without their knowing about it. The objective is to unsettle passive social relations and spark critical dialogue among the spect-actors. Several actors rehearse a scene which they then play in an appropriate public space in order to provoke a reaction from the public who think they are watching a spontaneous event.



Notable Works

- **Torquemada**
- **Theatre of the Oppressed**
- **Games For Actors and Non-Actors**
- **The Rainbow of Desire**

Highlighted Information

- Interactive theatre intended to transform lives
- Acting out solutions to their own social problems
- Everyone has the capacity to act in the 'theatre' of their own lives
- Give people a voice for action

Theatre Practitioners

Frantic Assembly

Frantic Assembly are a **physical theatre company** who were formed in 1994 by Scott Graham, Steven Hoggett, and Vicki Middleton, who had all met whilst studying at Swansea University. They aimed to create physical theatre, using **dynamic and engaging movement** with storytelling at the heart of the work.

Scott Graham is still the Artistic Director of the company, who have developed and created a wide range of work. Notable productions include, *Pool (No Water)* by Mark Ravenhill, *Beautiful Burnout* by Bryony Lavery, *Things I Know To Be True* by Andrew Bovell and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Simon Stephens.

Frantic Assembly devise most of their work in **collaboration with a playwright**. Taking the movement as the basis for action, they use a series of exercises to develop physical theatre. Speech and dialogue is then added in order to **create a narrative structure**. The movement and the dialogue go hand in hand to create

visually dynamic and engaging theatre. It is essentially **directing through movement**.

Scott Graham describes their way of working as '**The Frantic Method**'. He says: 'The Frantic Method is approaching devising as a series of tasks, each broken down into building blocks. This is designed to establish progress from the **simplest discoveries**.

Performers are encouraged to **take a moment back to its simplest truth and build from there**. This places dancers, actors, students, teachers and all participants on the same starting point. Using these building blocks they are empowered to find and create complex work through a process that is safe, fun and constantly illuminating.'

Performers who work with Frantic Assembly have to have extremely high levels of physical fitness, as their work is very demanding. They do lots of outreach work with schools and colleges to share their methods and encourage participation in physical theatre.



Highlighted Information

- Dynamic and engaging movement with storytelling at the heart of the work.
- Devise most of their work in collaboration with a playwright
- Movement as the basis for action
- Visually dynamic and engaging theatre
- Progress from the simplest discoveries

Job Roles in Making Theatre

You may have heard the phrase 'get a proper job' in relation to working in theatre. But this is very out of date. There are many job roles with good salaries in theatre and culture. Nottingham Playhouse has over 100 permanent staff! Here are just a few...

Actor

Actors bring characters to life on stage with their performances, using speech, movement and expression to act a script or improvise their roles.

Administration

Administrators deal with customers, run offices, and take care of the day-to-day running of the business.

Agent

Agents are often the first point of contact for anyone looking to hire actors. Few actors work without the support of an agent. Agents can also supply artists for corporate and private events. Their clients may include actors, singers, dancers or supporting artists.

Artistic Director

The artistic director makes sure their theatre is putting on the kind of shows that fit with the artistic aims of the organisation.

Arts Journalist

Every show hopes for good reviews. Journalists get the word out about the show to the public. They make sure people know what shows are on offer and what is happening in the world of theatre.

Backstage Crew

Building sets, helping create props and operating equipment, the backstage crew support the designers and performers with the running of the show.

Box Office Staff

Box office staff work in cinemas, theatres and concert halls. They are responsible for taking bookings and payments for tickets. Box office staff also arrange for group visits and discounts. They may also advise on seating for people with disabilities or special needs.

Carpenter

Carpenters and joiners in the theatre and dance sector and crafts sector work with wood. They work in theatres or in workshops. In the theatre and dance sector, they specifically make, fit or repair scenery and props that are part of a play or show.

Choreographer

Choreographers create routines and movement sequences for singers and musicians to perform.

Costume Designer

The costume designer is responsible for designing all the costumes to be worn in a production. This can involve a mix of designing from scratch, and sourcing existing items of clothing.

Dance Teacher

Dance teachers educate and instruct on different forms of dance. They work with individuals and groups of all ages and abilities to help them learn dance practices.

Dancer

Dance is a term for describing ways of using the body to tell stories, interpret music and express emotion. Some dance forms require an intense training starting from an early age; others can be learned later.

Dialect Coach

Dialect coaches or voice coaches work with actors to develop and improve their vocal technique, and help them adopt convincing character accents.

Director

Theatre directors take responsibility for the overall creative production of plays.

Dramaturg

A dramaturg is a theatre practitioner who focuses on how to convey the particular message the director wants to highlight.

Events Staff

Events staff work with centre and gallery and theatre managers to deliver an event. They manage, organise and oversee the running of a venue or function. They are responsible for coordinating all the arrangements such as room bookings, catering and special effects or promotional items.

Finance Staff

Finance staff officers in the performing and visual arts sectors provide administrative support to organisations.

Front-of-House Staff

The 'front-of-house' of a theatre refers to all areas accessed by the public, including the auditorium. Front-of-house staff look after the public to make sure their visit is safe and enjoyable.

Hair, Makeup and Wigs

People that work in hair, makeup and wigs for the theatre and dance sector help to style performers. The style of makeup needed depends on the type of production. The hair, makeup and wigs may be contemporary and straightforward or require more creative approaches. Performers may need to appear as from a different nationality or from a different historical period. The makeup artist will also need to dress wigs and attach them correctly to the actor or performer.

Lighting Designer

Lighting designers work to ensure effective lighting for a commercial property. They aim to enhance a building's environment through lighting.

Lighting Technicians

Lighting technicians are vital to theatre. Their work may involve design, operating lighting rigs, and looking after equipment.

Marketing Officer

Marketing is about understanding what a customer wants and promoting this product, event or service. It is also making sure the public is talking about a brand, which for the arts sector could be a theatre, museum, art gallery or community arts project.

Participation and Education Staff

Arts education staff in the creative industries support teachers and development workers in cultural venues. They work in art centres, galleries, theatres and other venues to provide an educational experience. They may work with individual children or visitors, small groups or a whole class.

Playwright

The playwright or dramatist is the author of a production, the writer or adapter of the original play. Often they work alone, but sometimes they also collaborate with a director and the cast.

Producer (Live Events)

Producers of live events are responsible for running successful live spectacles. The producer works on live shows and events in the music industry such as concerts and music festivals. They must coordinate technical staff and performers to ensure everything runs smoothly. They have to have high-quality acts and performers for a successful event. Live events may be one-offs or regular annual events. They can be held in indoor and outdoor music venues of all sizes.

Props Manager

A props manager supervises the building, making and buying of the props needed for a production.

Puppeteer

Puppeteers animate and manipulate puppets as part of a theatre, television or film production. Puppetry is a performing art used to entertain adults or children.

Sound Designer

Sound design can involve making sure the mix of sounds is correct at a live event, designing the sound effects on a mobile phone, and many other things.

Sound Engineer

Sound engineers work in the theatre and dance sector to handle all aspects of a production's sound. They ensure that speech, music and sound effects can be heard to the best effect in a theatre production.

Sound Technician

Sound technicians ensure that the best sound possible is available in a variety of venues for performances. They prepare, operate and maintain technical equipment to amplify, enhance, mix or reproduce sound. They work in recording studios, films, radio and television programmes (on set or location) and live performances, including theatre, music and dance.

Special Effects

Special effects and pyrotechnics staff are responsible for special effects and pyrotechnics required as part of a production. In some shows, for example using magic, special effects may be an integral part of an act.

Stage Designer

Stage designers are responsible for designing stage settings for productions. This can range from single-scene dramas to complex scenery and scene changes required by major productions.

Stage Manager

Stage managers coordinate all aspects of a theatre production or event, including actors, technical staff, props, scenery and costumes. They make sure technicians and performers alike are in the right place at the right time and ready to meet their cues.

Stagehand

Stagehands in performing arts are the behind-scenes support staff for a production. They carry out a wide variety of jobs backstage to ensure a production is successful.

Technical Manager

A technical manager in the theatre and dance sector coordinates a production's technical staff. This could include the set-making staff, lighting staff and props-making staff.

Wardrobe Assistant

Wardrobe assistants work to provide support with costumes and accessories. Performances like plays and musicals rely on a strong wardrobe team to make the production look credible.

A Glimpse Into Theatre Careers

A chat with Beth Shaw

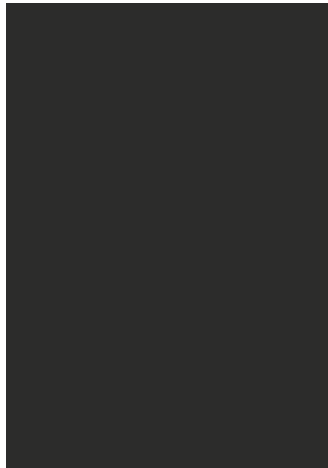
LIGHTING, SOUND AND VIDEO TECHNICIAN

Tell us about your role as Lighting, Sound and Video Technician.

As a lighting, sound, and video technician, it's my job to make sure that all the lights are pointing the right way, everyone on stage can be heard, and that pieces of video blend seamlessly into a production. It's very varied, as we work on all manner of shows, from big shows that we produce in-house, to touring dance shows, and events with some of the best comics in the country. No two days look the same; one day you're sat at a desk plotting lights for a theatre show, the next you're hanging out of the ceiling in a harness to make sure that the lighting designer gets "that shot". It's physically taxing and stressful at times, but the first time the audience clap on opening night? That somehow makes it worth it.

What does a day in the life of a Lighting, Sound and Video Technician look like?

It depends on what we're working on! If a show is up and running, or it's a simple one man and a mic event, I might not start work until 5pm, in which case, I'll spend my daytime catching up on everything people usually use their evening for- food shopping, hobbies, and batch cooking food so that I have healthy things to eat for tech weeks. In that case:



Beth Shaw

- 5pm: arrive at work. Read events checklist/show checklist. Switch on LX and sound equipment and do a rig check.
- 5:30pm: cast/talent arrives. If it's a one night show, we work together to create some lighting states, run through how the show works, and do a sound check.
- 6:30pm: cast/talent warm up on stage. Usually I use this time to check my show file and tidy things up a bit.
- 6:55pm: the half an hour call for a 7:30pm show! We do a blackout check, show the iron to the duty manager, and then open the house.
- 7:30pm-10pm: Showtime!
- 10-10:30pm: shut down equipment, tidy up, and go home!

Tech week is a bit different.

Typically our week looks like so:

- Sunday (10am-10pm): Fit up LX, sound, video, and set.
- Monday (10am-10pm): Finish up fitting up, install cue lights and working light, and focus lighting. Quiet time for sound, and prep actors' mics.
- Tuesday-Thursday (10am-10pm): Tech time! We go through the show slowly, and plot in lighting and sound cues, as well as running through actors' movements on the stage.
- Friday-Tuesday (1pm-10pm): shows! Friday, Saturday, and Monday's shows are all previews, which means that we come in early before the next show to work on the show, so we can iron out any issues before Tuesday, which is press night!

How does your work interact with the shows being put on at Nottingham Playhouse?

During production week (as outlined above), my job is key to putting a show on. My job on each production varies, but it's vital that I am there, otherwise, none of the actors can be seen or heard! It's great to be so involved with our productions, I feel really connected to each show that we create! Everyone takes pride in their work, and I think that is reflected in the quality of the shows that we produce!

What do you enjoy most about working in theatre?

There's so many things! I love the people- not just those that I can name-drop in conversations (thanks, Sir Ian McKellen!), but also the people I work with on a day to day basis (the Playhouse has the best staff, and I'm biased, but also it's true). I love the combination of practical skills and creativity and artistry that my job calls for, which is something that I didn't think I'd ever find in a career. But, the thing I love most of all? The fact that sometimes, the way that a bit of light hitting a piece of set, or just the right angle of an actor's face, can make you feel something. It makes you teary eyed, or happy, and it's literally just a light pointed in the right direction, possibly with a bit of colour to it. We make magic, good old-fashioned theatre magic.