

# ALLEY THEATRE

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## **A Midsummer Night's Dream Celebrates Alley Theatre's 70<sup>th</sup> Season and Shakespeare's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

*This fun, fast, contemporary take on the Bard's most joyous comedy features the Alley Resident Acting Company and live music in the Hubbard Theatre, October 7 – November 5*

HOUSTON- Gregory Boyd, Artistic Director of the Alley Theatre, announces the cast and creative team of the Hubbard Theatre season opener, William Shakespeare's **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. The Alley's 22<sup>nd</sup> Shakespearean production celebrates the new stage enhancements with an expansive set, live music and 43 detailed costumes outfitting a full 19-member cast. The production features members of the Resident Acting Company and begins October 7 and runs through November 5. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at [alleytheatre.org](http://alleytheatre.org) or by calling the Box Office at 713.220.5700.

"**A Midsummer Night's Dream** was one of the first plays I saw in performance – and I have loved it since I was young. Working on this production was filled with the exhilaration of rediscovery for me, and rehearsing it with this company of actors a particular pleasure," said Boyd.

In **A Midsummer Night's Dream** the Bard's most popular and enchanting comedy - the woods outside Athens are a busy place. The impending marriage in the Court of Theseus and Hippolyta sets the context for the story that sends four wrangling lovers off into the forest, the domain of the King and Queen of the Fairies. Elsewhere in the forest, a troupe of actors, the Rude Mechanicals, meet to rehearse their own play, which they hope to perform for the court. The characters enter into a dream-state in the forest, under the influence of spells that can encourage unbridled passion. Lovers, Fairies, Actors, Court – whose dream is it?

Directed by Gregory Boyd, the 19-member cast of **A Midsummer Night's Dream** features Alley Resident Company members John Feltch as Theseus/Oberon, Josie de Guzman as Hippolyta/Titania, Jeffrey Bean as Egeus, Jay Sullivan as Puck, Elizabeth Bunch as Hermia, Melissa Pritchett as Helena and Chris Hutchison as Lysander. The Rude Mechanicals traveling theatrical troupe includes Alley Company Members Jeffrey Bean as Quince, Todd Waite as Starveling, James Black as Bottom, John Tyson as Flute, Paul Hope as Snout, and David Rainey as Snug.

Returning to the Alley is Michael Brusasco as Demetrius and McKenna Marmolejo and Trace Pool playing Fairies. Luke Hamilton and Joy Yvonne Jones also join the cast as Fairies. This production features live music by Ryan Chavez and Mike Whitebread, two musicians that were featured in *One Man Two Guvvorns*, playing percussion, keyboard and strings.

**A Midsummer Night's Dream** features scenic design by Vincent Mountain with costume design by Judith Dolan and lighting design by Jaymi Lee Smith. Original music composition and music direction by Gregg Coffin and sound design by Barry G. Funderburg. Choreography is by Peter Pucci and Assistant Director is Brandon Weinbrenner.

This production of **A Midsummer Night's Dream** will be the first Shakespearean play that utilizes the stage improvements from the theatre renovation. The set design spans the entirety of the Hubbard Theatre stage with the cast filling out the 65-by-60 foot space. The renovation added a fly loft system to allow smoother transitions between the city of Athens and the forest outside. The production showcases design elements created at the Alley's Center for Theatre Production, including a 20-ft wide full moon.

In conjunction with **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, the theatre hosts Shakespeare@400, a variety of educational and patron-engaging events, including Shakespeare Saturdays, "Start Up Shakespeare," a pre-show workshop on Bard basics, DREAM-HOUSTON, a celebration of verse, freestyle and vocabulary through unique classroom experiences and community events, an online interactive study guide, Alley Re-Sourced and video series #LendYourVoice. More information on Shakespeare@400 activities can be found at [alleytheatre.org/shakespeareat400](http://alleytheatre.org/shakespeareat400)

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**, by William Shakespeare, directed by Gregory Boyd, begins performances Friday, October 7, opens officially Wednesday, October 12, and runs through Saturday, November 5, 2016 in the Hubbard Theatre. **A Midsummer Night's Dream** is suitable for general audiences ages 12 and up.

## TICKETS

Tickets to **A Midsummer Night's Dream** are on sale now and start at \$26. Discounted tickets for designated performances are available or any student, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for \$16 in designated sections. Tickets can be ordered online ([alleytheatre.org](http://alleytheatre.org)) or by phone (713.220.5700). Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.

## SHAKESPEARE@400 Activities

### Shakespeare Saturdays

October 15, 22, 29, and November 5

For these select performances, a special \$10 youth ticket (Ages 12-17) will be offered for the Alley's production of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. Pre-curtain "Start Up Shakespeare" workshops will give a brief history on Shakespeare and tips on enjoying his work on stage. Following the performance participants are invited to meet cast members from the production.

[alleytheatre.org/family](http://alleytheatre.org/family)

## SHAKESPEARE VOICES

Watch the video series with Alley Theatre actors performing iconic speeches from Shakespeare's most famous works ranging from *King Lear* to *Romeo & Juliet*. Participate in our #LendYourVoice contest as a part of our video series.

[alleytheatre.org/shakespearevoices](http://alleytheatre.org/shakespearevoices)

## SHAKESPEARE AT THE ALLEY

The Alley has a rich history of producing Shakespeare's work over the last 70 years from Vanessa Redgrave's dual performances in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar* to Robert Wilson's *Hamlet*. To learn more visit the Alley's Albert and Ethel Herzstein Sculptural Level to view a special *Shakespeare at the Alley* exhibit, detailing the Alley's Shakespearean history, and showcasing costumes, artifacts and props from the theatre's past productions. While visiting the lobby, check out our NEW Snapchat account @alleytheatre and look for the Alley's **A Midsummer Night's Dream** filter.

## SHAKESPEARE STUDENT PERFORMANCES

Student pricing is available for every performance starting at \$16 with a valid student ID. For student tickets call the box office at 713.220.5700.

[alleytheatre.org/shakespearestudents](http://alleytheatre.org/shakespearestudents)

## DREAM-HOUSTON

DREAM-HOUSTON includes multi-visit classroom activities that provide students with the tools to understand Shakespeare's text. DREAM-HOUSTON concludes in April 2017 with *Breaking Shakespeare: The Bard's Slam*, where students will perform both Shakespeare's text and slam poetry in a celebration featuring Alley partner schools.

[alleytheatre.org/dream-houston](http://alleytheatre.org/dream-houston)

## SHAKESPEARE INTERACTIVE GUIDE

Step into the realm of **A Midsummer Night's Dream** and recreate Shakespeare's world with the Alley's interactive study guide, Alley Re-Sourced.

[alleyresourced.com/dreamhouston](http://alleyresourced.com/dreamhouston)

## TALKBACKS

The Alley Theatre will present Designer Talks one hour before the October 9 (1:30 p.m.) performance of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. The discussions will feature artistic staff and the creative team of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, giving audiences a behind-the-scenes look at the design process.

The Alley Theatre will present Artist TalkBacks following the October 15 (2:30 p.m.) and October 18 (7:30 p.m.) performances of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. These discussions will feature cast and artistic staff.

The Alley Theatre will also present an Alley In Context discussion following the October 23 (2:30 p.m.) and October 30 (2:30 p.m.) performances of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. These discussions will feature civic leaders, local academics, and community members discussing the themes of the play and how they are reflected in our lives today. Artist Talk-Backs and Alley In Context are free and open to the public.

To learn more about Shakespeare@400 and access our collection of Shakespeare content, visit [alleytheatre.org/shakespeareat400](http://alleytheatre.org/shakespeareat400) and follow us on [facebook.com/alleytheatre](https://www.facebook.com/alleytheatre) using #ShakespeareSaturdays

## ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE

The Alley Theatre, one of America's leading not-for-profit theatres, is a nationally recognized performing arts company lead by Artistic Director Gregory Boyd and Managing Director Dean R. Gladden. The Alley produces up to 14 plays each year in its newly renovated theatre, ranging from the best current work, to re-invigorated classic plays, to new plays by contemporary writers. The Alley is home to a Resident Company of actors. In addition, the Alley engages theatre artists of every discipline – actors, designers, composers, playwrights – who work on individual productions throughout each season as Visiting Artists.

The renovation of the Hubbard Theatre at the Alley was completed in October 2015 – and created a new 774 seat state-of-the-art performance venue. Matched with the 310-seat Neuhaus Theatre, the Alley offers nearly 450 performances each season. The Company reaches over 200,000 people each year through its performance and education programs. Its audience enrichment programs include pre-show and post-performance talks, events, and workshops for audience members of all ages.

The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2016-2017 season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre.

#MidsummerHOU