

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM



**FORT
WAYNE
BALLET**



*A Romantic Comedy Based on William Shakespeare's
"A Midsummer Night's Dream"*

*Fort Wayne Ballet presents a study-guide
to the in-theater performance of*

A Midsummer Night's Dream



*Arts United Center
April 24, 2026*

Characters - Who's Who and What's What

Titania.....the queen of the fairies.

Oberon.....the king of the fairies and all the woodland creatures.

Puck.....a mischievous sprite who is also known as Robin Goodfellow; he is Oberon's attendant.

Hippolyta.....the queen of the Amazons, betrothed to

Theseus. Theseus.....the Duke of Athens, betrothed to

Hippolyta.

Hermia.....the beautiful daughter of the Athenian called Egeus. She is in love with Lysander but betrothed to Demetrius.

Helena.....daughter of the Athenian, Nedar. She is a friend of Hermia and is in love with Demetrius.

Demetrius....an Athenian who had courted Helena but now professes his love for Hermia.

Lysander....a handsome Athenian who is in love with Hermia.

Fairies in the service of Titania:

Peaseblossom

Mustardseed

Moth

Cobweb

Workmen from Athens:

Nick Bottom... a weaver

Francis Flute... a bellows-mender

Tom Snout... a tinker

Snug... a joiner

Child...a child who is secretly substituted for another one by fairies.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

History

In 1595, the great playwright (a playwright is a person who creates and writes plays), William Shakespeare, created the play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was not until 1600 that Shakespeare's play was actually preserved for generations to come. This great work of literature existed only as a play until 1962 when George Balanchine created the two act ballet, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with music by Felix Mendelssohn for the New York City Ballet. Today, the Fort Wayne Ballet will present *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with choreography by Fort Wayne Ballet's Artistic Director, Karen Gibbons-Brown, music by Felix Mendelssohn (Balanchine & Mason, 1975; Chujoy & Manchester, 1967; Durband, 1985; Gibbons-Brown, 2009).

Story

Our story begins with the beautiful Hermia making plans with Lysander, her beloved, to leave her home in Athens and marry. Hermia has upset her father, Egeus, who had planned for her to marry Demetrius, a man who was previously engaged to her best friend Helena. Egeus, frustrated with his daughter's mindset had sought the help of Theseus, the Duke of Athens. Theseus had reminded Hermia that a daughter of Athens should obey her father's wishes and marry the man he chooses for her or be sent to a nunnery or worse.

Lysander decides that he and Hermia should leave Athens and go where Athenian law cannot be enforced, which happens to be through the woods and to his aunt's house, twenty-seven miles away.

The woods outside Athens is a favorite haunt of a band of fairies headed by Oberon and Titania. They have of late fought over a changeling boy who is in the care of Titania. Oberon demands that Titania give the boy to his page. Titania refuses and Oberon decides to teach her a lesson. He sends Puck, his attendant, to fetch the flower, called love-in-idleness, which has a magical quality. If the juice of the flower is squeezed over the eyes of a person, it makes the person fall in love with the object he/she first sees on waking up. He decides to cast this spell over Titania.

As Puck returns with the flower, Helena and Demetrius enter the scene. All Helena's pleas are ignored by Demetrius, who is in pursuit of Hermia.

Oberon feels sorry for Helena and decides to help her. Puck tells him to go in search of an Athenian youth with a lady and anoint his eyes with the juice of the flower. Oberon himself goes to Titania with the flower.

Puck mistakes Lysander and Hermia for Demetrius and Helena and squeezes the juice on Lysander's eyes. Meanwhile, Helena comes that way. Seeing Lysander, she calls out to him. Lysander wakes up, sees Helena, and falls in love with her. Helena thinks that he is teasing her and runs away from him, but Lysander pursues her.

In another part of the woods, the workmen from Athens have gathered to rehearse a play that they plan to present in honor of their Duke to celebrate his wedding. Puck sees them and decides to play a trick on them. He places a donkey's head on Nick Bottom's shoulders. When his friends see Bottom "transformed," they are scared and run away. The noise wakes up Titania, who is under the spell of love-in-idleness. She sees Nick Bottom and falls in love with him.

Oberon notices Demetrius still professing love to Hermia and realizes that Puck has made a mistake. Hermia spurns Demetrius and goes in search of Lysander. Demetrius, exhausted, falls asleep. Oberon orders Puck to bring Helena there and squeezes the juice of the flower on the eyes of Demetrius. Puck brings Helena to the scene, followed by Lysander. Demetrius wakes up and falls for Helena. Thus, both men are in love with the same girl, and Helena believes that they are both playing a cruel joke on her. Hermia arrives on the scene too. She is shocked to see the change in Lysander.

Demetrius and Lysander decide to settle the matter by fighting a duel and move into the woods.

Oberon chides Puck for the mix-up and instructs him to cause a fog and lead the lovers into each other's path. When they fall asleep, Oberon tells Puck to squeeze an antidote on Lysander's eyes.

Puck manages to separate Lysander and Demetrius as they are preparing for the duel. Through the fog he leads them to the same spot. When they fall asleep, he removes the spell from Lysander.

Upon awakening, Demetrius gives up his claim on Hermia and professes his love for Helena. Lysander is restored to Hermia. Theseus is quite happy with this turn of events and announces that all the weddings will be solemnized on the same day.

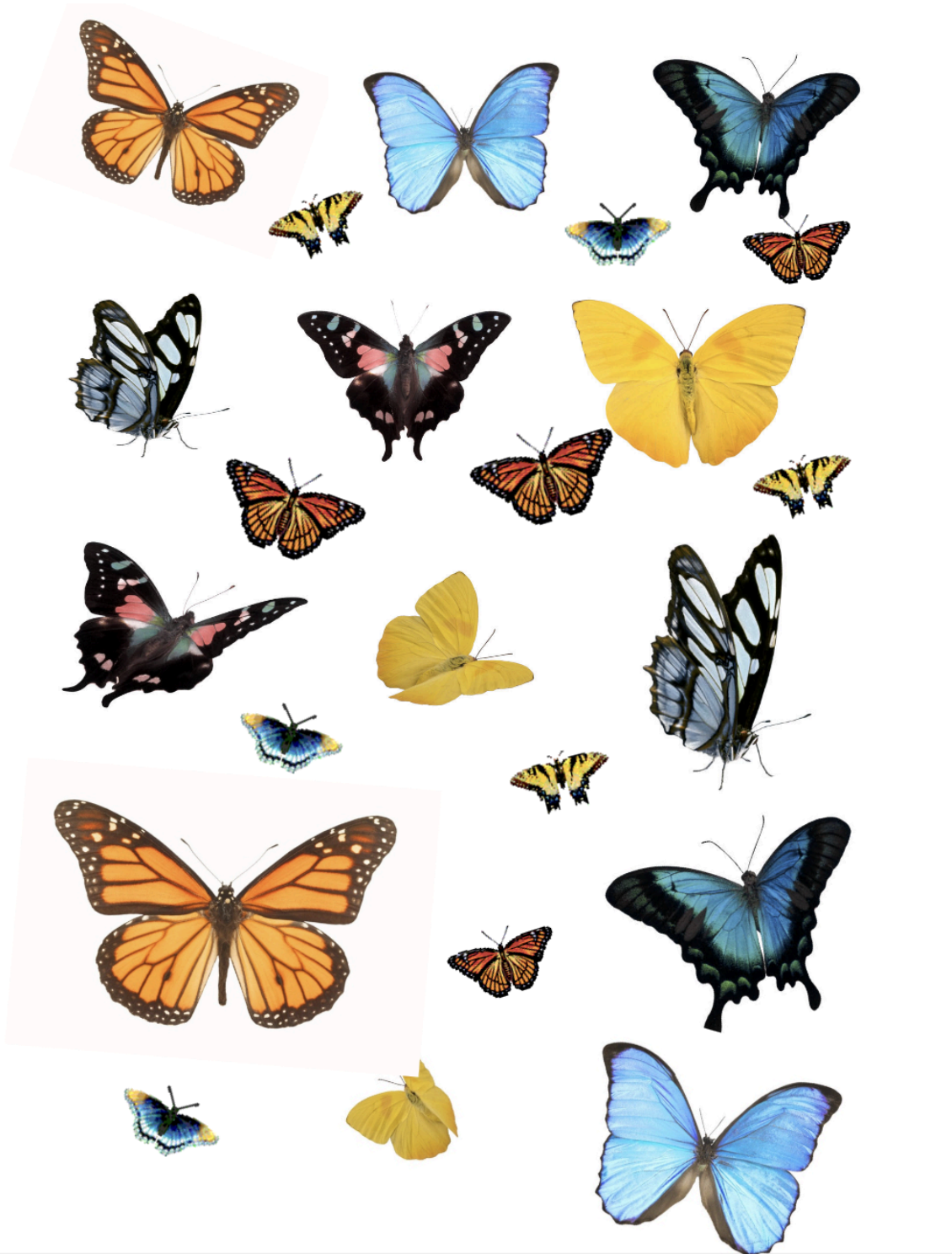
Titania has removed the donkey's head from Bottom, and he returns to his friends. Following the wedding festivities, Theseus and others retire for the night, and the scene is taken over again by the fairies with their songs and dance. (Gibbons Brown, 2009, pp. 34-35)

A Midsummer Night's Dream Word Search

B H D K M Q M J T T G D C B P
C M T B E W B O C H K B U M U
G Q P M N T W V T C E T E Z C
M G R D D O C K I H T S A O K
D N O B E R O N Q E G S E O C
T R G U L F A I R I E S U U M
I E A A S C S F S N H W Z A S
T Z T G S I L E N X A Y R N R
A Z Y M O Y S U I R T E M E D
N S L D H N H Y B L D J A L Q
I Y O N N C F O E N F I M E L
A A P W U Z T L A K M E I H H
T Q P Y G T U S I R N B R E C
X B I K O Z Y Q E E V O N I P
C W H M Q L Y H G X S Z D O F

BUTTERFLY FAIRIES MENDELSSOHN BOTTOM FIREFLIES MOTH
COBWEB HELENA OBERON DEMETRIUS HERMIA PUCK
DONKEY HIPPOLYTA THESEUS DRAGONFLIES LYSANDER
TITANIA

How many butterflies do you see?



Fun Facts...



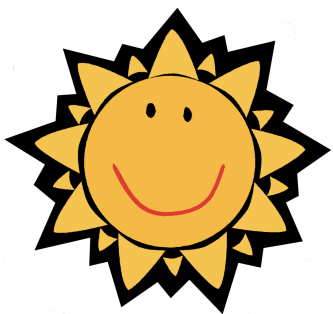
Did you know that in 1598, William Shakespeare and his fellow actors in The Lord Chamberlain's Men acting company built their own theater in Southwark, England? This theater was circular in shape which broke away from the traditional rectangular theaters. The circular shape inspired the theater's name, the Globe Theater.

The Globe Theater was considered small by today's standards. It measured only thirty meters across, but it could accommodate an audience between two and three thousand people.

The Lord Chamberlain's Men were an acting company in 1598 made up entirely of men. During this time, women were not allowed to act on stage by law.

Did you know that during Shakespeare's lifetime, audiences had to use their imaginations to establish time of day and place since there wasn't any stage scenery?

William Shakespeare wrote approximately 37 plays during his lifetime. It is said that none of these plays were published exactly as he wrote it (Durband, 1985).



In France in 1653, King Louis XIV was known as "the Sun King" after his portrayal of the Sun in *Le Ballet de la Nuit*. He liked dancing so much that he created the Academie Royale de Danse and the Academie Royale de Musique that eventually became the Paris Opera.

In 1670 King Louis XIV of France retired from dancing in ballets. Since he still loved this type of entertainment, the need for professional dancers arose. It wasn't until 1681, that a female dancer made her first professional debut at the Paris Opera; her name was Mademoiselle de La Fontaine (Anderson, 1986; Cass, 1993).



More Fun Facts...



Shakespeare's plays have served as inspiration for many ballets. Some of his plays that have been made into ballets include *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest* (Chujoy & Manchester, 1967).

Henry Purcell, the music composer, created the music for an operatic masque in three acts based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, called *The Fairy Queen* in 1692. This masque consisted of singing, musical instruments, spoken scenes and dances. You could say that this was one of the first adaptations of the play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Charles, 2000).



A masque was entertainment for royalty and wealth during the 17th century. Masques included poetic speeches, songs, dances, and comedic passages. At the end of a masque, the audience would be invited to dance with the performers which merged the performance with the party the masque at which the masque was presented (Anderson, 1986).

In 1966, George Balanchine and the New York City Ballet filmed the motion picture *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was shown to an audience as part of a fundraising event for the New York City Ballet Scholarship Fund in April 1967 (Chujoy & Manchester, 1967).



As part of the quadricentennial celebration (the 400th anniversary) of William Shakespeare's birth, Sir Frederick Ashton, a ballet choreographer, created *The Dream* in 1964 for England's Royal Ballet. This was a one act ballet of Shakespeare's

A Midsummer Night's Dream. The music for this ballet was Felix Mendelssohn's *Overture and incidental music for A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Mezzanotte, 1981).

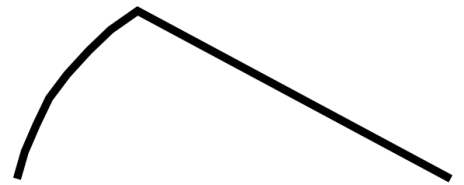
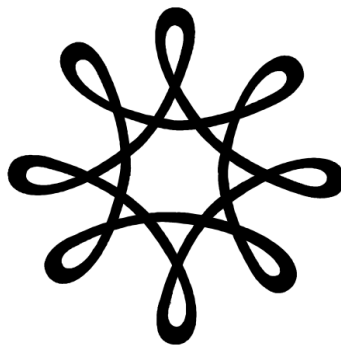
In 1999, the Pacific Northwest Ballet presented George Balanchine's two act ballet, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, England. This performance was filmed live and won the award for "Best Television Realization of a Stage Production" at the IMZ Dance Screen (Amazon.co.uk, n.d.).



Creating Pathways

The ballet *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is full of wonderful patterns danced by the performers. Using the space below, create your own pathway. Travel around the room using this pathway and move as light as a sprite, as nimble as a donkey, as strong as a carpenter, and so on...

Here are some pathway examples.



Fun things to try...

Research and create. William Shakespeare, the playwright (a person who writes plays), created the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1595. What was England like during this time era? What did the music sound like during the late 1500's- the early 1600's (a time era considered to be the English Renaissance)? Who were the music composers during the English Renaissance? Can you find examples of the music? What type of food did people eat in England during this time? Create your own Renaissance English village with your classmates; with the research you have done, bring in food from this era, music (or create your own music with recorders), and so on.

Create your own music. After you have researched music during Shakespeare's lifetime, create your own music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Plan simple orchestrations to accompany readings from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* using available instruments or electronic sound sources. What did you like about your recording? Discuss.

Listen to Felix Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Felix Mendelssohn, a composer of music, created the wonderful, lighthearted music that is used today in the ballet *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Using a section of the music (*Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream* opus 21, or *Incidental Music to A Midsummer Night's Dream*), identify the mood. Now explore how you can create this mood in movement. How does this music and movement make you feel?

Listen and identify. Listen to Mendelssohn's *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream* opus 21, or *Incidental Music to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and identify the musical instruments used and their families.

Emotions and movement. In the ballet, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of the characters, Helena, portrays several emotions throughout Act I, sadness, disbelief, anger, and hopelessness, which are all conveyed through gestures and dance. Pretend you have been given this same task of portraying four different emotions. For each emotion, how would you move? Would your movements be light and free-flowing with happiness, short and jerky with fear or slow and smooth with sadness? Next, transition from one emotion to the next. Then, show your series of movements to your classmates and discuss the emotions you presented.

More fun things to try....

Change the ending of the story. William Shakespeare, the great playwright, created the wonderful play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; using your own imagination, change the ending of his play. What would happen if Puck could not find the magical flower, Love-in-idleness (the flower that made everybody fall in love), and uses a different flower with another magical power?

Write a sequel. A sequel to a story is a continuation of that story. Create a continuing story of "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*" that explains what happened after the weddings of Demetrius and Helena, Lysander and Hermia, Hippolyta and Theseus? Did they live happily ever-after? Did the effects of the flower, Love-in-idleness, wear off? Did they wander back into the woods?

Understanding relationships between art forms. After viewing Fort Wayne Ballet's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, compare the dancers to the music and the story. Did the dancers convey the story through their movements? Did the music tell the story (you may want to listen to Felix Mendelssohn's *Incidental Music to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, opus 61, as you continue on)? How did the dancing and the music help tell the story?

Compare and Contrast. After viewing Fort Wayne Ballet's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a ballet from the twentieth century, compare it to Fort Wayne Ballet's December production of *The Nutcracker* (or view the production of *The Nutcracker* by New York City Ballet), a ballet originally choreographed in 1892 during the Classical Era of ballet. What makes the two ballets different? What makes them similar? How is the music alike or different in these two ballets? Explain using appropriate terminology.

Athletes. Dancers are very athletic, strong and flexible. What athletes would benefit from ballet training? Who else would benefit? Name other benefits from dance training.

Draw your favorite moment in the ballet *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In the space below, draw, color, or glue pictures from magazines showing your favorite part of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Will it be the Opening scene of the ballet with all the tiny fairies or Titania dancing with Nick Bottom or the lavish wedding of Hippolyta and Theseus?

Create another story

Create a story using the following pictures. Use each picture as a clue. Start at "START" and draw a line to one of the pictures. Begin creating your story using the picture clue. Draw another line connecting the first picture to another picture and continue your story. Repeat until you have used all the pictures.



Teacher's Answer Key

A Midsummer Night's Dream Word Search Solution

+ + + + M + M + T + + + + B P
+ + + B E W B O C H + + U + U
+ + + + N + + + T + E T + + C
+ + + + D + + + + H T S + + K
D + O B E R O N + E + + E + +
T R + + L F A I R I E S + U +
I + A + S + S F + + + + + A S
T + T G S + L E + + + + R N +
A + Y + O Y S U I R T E M E D
N + L + H N + Y B L D + A L +
I + O + N + F O E N F I + E +
A + P + + + T L A K M E + H +
+ + P + + T + S I R N + R + +
+ + I + O + Y + E E + O + I +
+ + H M + L + H + + S + D + F

(Over, Down, Direction)

BOTTOM (9, 10, SW)
BUTTERFLY (14, 1, SW)
COBWEB (9, 2, W)
DEMETRIUS (15, 9, W)
DONKEY (13, 15, NW)
DRAGONFLIES (1, 5, SE)
FAIRIES (6, 6, E)
FIREFLIES (15, 15, NW)
HELENA (14, 12, N)
HERMIA (8, 15, NE)
HIPPOLYTA (3, 15, N)
LYSANDER (6, 15, NE)
MENDELSSOHN (5, 1, S)
MOTH (7, 1, SE)
OBERON (3, 5, E)
PUCK (15, 1, S)
THESEUS (9, 1, SE)
TITANIA (1, 6, S)

Word Search solution generated by [Puzzlemaker](#) at DiscoveryEducation.com (2011b)

How many butterflies do you see?

23 butterflies

Is there a dancer in you?

Picture no. 1 to the hockey players, picture no.2 to the karate person, picture no. 3 to the yoga person, picture no.4 to the football players.

Fine Arts Curriculum Alignment

Docent content: This docent curriculum was designed to explore *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as presented by the Fort Wayne Ballet and the question and answer session after the In-theater performance. It aligns with Indiana's Academic Standards for Dance, English/Language Arts and Music at the grade three level.

Indiana's Academic Standards for Dance 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

Indiana's Academic Standards for Music 4, 6, 7, 8, 9

Indiana's Academic Standards for English/Language Arts: Reading
Standard for Informational Text – 3.RI.5, Writing
Standards – 3.W.1 a-d

Worksheets: These worksheets are designed as activities for students that relate to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and align with Indiana's Academic Standards for Dance, English/Language Arts and Music.

Creating Pathways. An activity sheet for students that aligns with Indiana's Academic Standards for Dance: Standard 1 – 3.1.2, 3.1.3, Standard 2 - 3.2.3

Fun things to try. An activities list for students aligns with Indiana's Academic Standards for Dance: Standard 2 – 3.2.1, Standard 3 – 3.3.1, 3.3.2

Indiana Academic Standards for Music: Standard 4 – 3.4.5, Standard 6 – 3.6.4, Standard 8 – 3.8.2, 3.8.3, Standard 9 – 3.9.1

Indiana Academic Standards for English/Language Arts: Reading
Standard for Informational Text – 3.RI.5

More fun things to try. An activities list for student aligns with Indiana Academic Standards for Dance: Standard 3 – 3.3.2, Standard 4 – 3.4.2, Standard 5 – 3.5.1

Indiana Academic Standards for Music: Standard 7 – 3.7.2, Standard 8 - 3.8.4

Draw your favorite moment.

Indiana's Academic Standards for Dance: Standard 4 – 3.4.2

Please write the dancers.

Indiana's Academic Standards for Dance: Standard 4 – 3.4.2

Indiana Academic Standards for English/Language Arts: Writing
Standards – 3.W.1 a-d

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If You Would Like to Learn More about Ballet...

Here are some books to help get you started.

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