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"Midsummer Night's Dream" new take on a Shakespeare classic Hollywood Fringe

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Press and performance photos for "Midsummer Night's Dream" cast Merely Players Shakespeare Co., Hollywood Fringe

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Merely Players [Shakespeare](#) Co. presented this year at the Hollywood Fringe their adaptation of a "Midsummer Night's Dream with a bare stage, perfectly appropriate costumes, and language that would make any modern American audience comprehend the plots of the three different stories held within this play. Directed by Michael Thomas-Visgar and Robbie Allen, took this piece that has been done hundreds of time, and truly gave a fresh take on an old tale.

Midsummer's plot possess a complexity and the language overflows with old English colloquialism, yet this version eliminates those obstacles for the audience. The play contains three different stories. First there are the star crossed lovers. An Athenian father Egeus (Jack Stroud) wants his daughter Hermia (Arielle Fodor) to marry Demetrius(Sean Benedict), however she loves Lysander(Mathew San

Jose). Hermia's friend Helena (Haley Rade) loves Demetrius, but he wants nothing to do with her. Egeus presents his case to the Duke of Athens Theseus (Robbie Allen) and the Queen of the Amazons Hippolyta (Michelle Wicklas). This presentation of this well known tale adds some twists as the relationship of Theseus and Hippolyta seems to mirror parts played by the same actors later in another plot line. Theseus pretty much tells Hermia to get thee to a nunnery and the story begins.

Next is the famous device Shakespeare loved, the play within a play. A group of Athenian actors gather to prepare a play for the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. The players Peter Quince (Katheleen Leary), Nick Bottom (Michael Thomas-Visgar), Francis Flute (Kevin F. Story), Robin Starling (Desiree Gillespie), Tom Snout (Kevin Connelly) and Snug (Milton David) present a colorful band, each with a distinctive character and adding to the amusement of the performance. Making Robin Starling female added a bit of romantic humor between Starling and Bottom not apparent or present in the original play.

Of course the third story that of the fairies and Bottom dressed as a Donkey presents the meat and drive of the play. This production manages to recreate all three plots on stage using only 6 crates craftily designed to be flipped and placed as columns for a wall, or a place for actors to stand, or climb through. Costumes are used to elaborate the Queen of the Fairies Titania (Michelle Wicklas), and her rueful King Oberon (Robbie Allen). The fairies are reduced to two, Mustarseed (Hudson Sanders) and Peaseblossom (Natalie Rade). There is also Dan Sugi who plays both **Puck** in a punk rock shirt and Philostrate (Athenian official) in a suit and tie. Sugi's performance aides so much to the humor and the brilliant staging of Puck's final most famous monologue adds interesting meaning to the double casting.

Overall this modern day take on the Traditional story of "Midsummer" presents a refreshing take of a classic sure to be enjoyed and understood by all.

For more information about the Hollywood Fringe shows [see their site](#). For more information about the Merely Players Shakespeare Co. see their [Face Book page](#).

SUGGESTED LINKS

- **All female 'Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged) at the Hollywood Fringe**
- **Gangster "Hamlet" at the Hollywood Fringe**
- **"Titus Adronicus Jr" violent and hilarity at the Hollywood Fringe**
- **'Taming of the Show' musical prehistoric Shakespeare at the Hollywood Fringe**
- **Shakespeare's 'MacDeth' political commentary as farce at Hollywood Fringe**



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