

BELL
SHAKESPEARE

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTOR PETER EVANS





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THE IMPOSSIBLE
POSSIBLE

Peter Evans, Artistic Director



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FEATURING

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BEN ELTON
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ZAHRA NEWMAN
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AND MORE**



WE ARE BELL SHAKESPEARE

We ensure Shakespeare's work lives and breathes in theatres, schools and communities throughout Australia, where his words can be truly appreciated. We value the beauty of Shakespeare's ideas, language and imagery. His work helps us find modern perspectives on timeless truths.

We believe Shakespeare and other great works are not stuck in the past. They are the lens through which we can explore and question the present and imagine the future.

These plays are not static. They're constantly helping us make sense of who we are, where we've been, and where we're going. And we're not static either.

We've been travelling the country for more than 30 years, bringing classic theatre to Australia, looking for new ways to inspire, imagine and ignite.

Shakespeare and the other classic plays we present challenge our beliefs and urge us to see ourselves in a new light. Their ability to discover the things that make us human inspires us to make work that challenges preconceptions and encourages new interpretations and contemporary parallels — work that speaks to every age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Bell Shakespeare acknowledges the First Peoples of the land on which we rehearse, work and perform across Australia. First Nations Peoples have expressed their culture through music, dance and storytelling on this land for over 60,000 years, and it is a privilege to continue that tradition of storytelling and performance. We acknowledge custodians and elders, past and present, and pay respect to the cultural authority and traditions of this land.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I am delighted to welcome you to our first national tour in almost two years, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Peter Evans. And what a joyous return to Australian stages it is. I have fond memories of Peter's original staging of this production for school audiences in 2013.

We quickly realised its wide appeal - it is fast paced, physical and funny - and presented it for audiences in Canberra and Melbourne the following year to wide acclaim. We have always wanted to share it with audiences right around the country and after what we have all experienced in 2020 (and continue to experience in many places) it is wonderful to be returning to stages with such a warm-hearted and spirited celebration of theatre and playmaking.

We will visit 26 venues on our national tour this year. Under normal circumstances touring a major production of this scale is ambitious; in the current environment, where uncertainty is a constant and there is always a possibility of swift and sudden change, it is a big risk. But live performance is our core business and I can think of no more important risk to take. We thank our national venue partners, the NSW and Commonwealth governments including the Playing Australia Fund, Wesfarmers Arts and our many partners and donors for their incredible support. And of course you - our audience - who make each performance unique. We look forward to sharing this production with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Gill Perkins'.

Gill Perkins
Executive Director

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



This production is a response to last year's difficulties. It is full of joy, love, madness and make-believe. Three storylines weave together flawlessly. We pursue the lovers into the forest as they experience the pain of love. We follow the fairies and their squabbles as they employ magic and mischief on unsuspecting humans. And we join the mechanicals in rehearsals as they discover a new theatrical language before our eyes.

In a way all the characters are adolescents; naïve, vindictive, selfish, idealistic, and joyous. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is about the imagination and playmaking, and as theatre-makers is there anything better?

It has been a dream come true to return to the rehearsal room to work with this group of actors, creatives and crew to bring one of my favourite works to life. And now we return to where we are meant to be – the theatre – to share it with you.

Are you sure that we are awake?
It seems to me that yet we sleep,
we dream.

2020 was a year of weirdness. A year of cancellations and a year of staying at home. At Bell Shakespeare we found new ways to connect with our audience, and we enjoyed our various explorations of the digital realm. We focused on education and the wider community. But we missed seeing you in the theatre to experience Shakespeare's works in person. We have been dreaming of this moment.

When planning this year's national tour, I could think of no more restorative work than *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is a play that is sometimes undervalued or underappreciated as perhaps it can feel so familiar, but for me it is one of the great works of art. The more one looks into it the more bottomless it becomes.

Peter Evans
Artistic Director

SYNOPSIS

Hermia and Lysander are in love, but Hermia's father insists she marry Demetrius. The lovers plan to elope instead, revealing their plot to Hermia's best friend, Helena.

Helena is Demetrius' former paramour and still in love with him. Hoping to win back his affection, Helena tells Demetrius of the plan. That night, Hermia and Lysander steal away to the forest, with Demetrius and Helena close behind.

In the forest Oberon and Titania, the rulers of the fairy kingdom, are quarrelling over Titania's refusal to give her foster child to Oberon. Plotting his revenge, Oberon orders his fairy servant Puck to seek out the magic flower whose juice, dropped on the eyes of anyone who sleeps, causes them to fall in love with the first creature they see on waking. Oberon sneakily drops the flower potion in the eye of sleeping Titania.

Taking pity on Helena's lovelorn plight, Oberon instructs Puck to use the flower's nectar on Demetrius so he'll fall in love with her. But Puck, mistaking the two young Athenian men in the forest, uses it on Lysander instead. Lysander promptly falls in love with Helena and rejects Hermia. Puck creates more mayhem by also giving a dose of the love juice to Demetrius, who falls in love with Helena as well.

Meanwhile, Bottom the Weaver and a group of mechanicals are planning to perform a play in celebration of Duke Theseus' wedding. They rehearse in the forest to keep their performance a surprise.

Puck sees Bottom and the others rehearsing and decides to have some fun. She casts a spell, changing Bottom's head into that of an ass. When the other mechanicals see Bottom transformed, they run away, leaving her alone in the forest. At that moment Titania wakes up, sees Bottom, and falls rapturously in love with her.

Eventually, the enchantments are lifted, the human lovers are happily paired, Titania and Oberon are reconciled, and Bottom is returned to normal. The three couples are married and Bottom's acting troupe performs the play at the wedding celebration.



COMPANY LIST

CAST

Bottom/Egeus	Jane Montgomery Griffiths
Demetrius/Snout/Fairy	Michael C. Howlett
Hermia/Snug/Fairy	Abbie-lee Lewis
Oberon/Theseus/Flute	Kyle Morrison
Puck	Ella Prince
Titania/Hippolyta/Quince	Imogen Sage
Helena/Starveling/Fairy	Gabrielle Scawthorn
Lysander/Mechanical/Fairy	Jacob Warner

CREATIVES

Director	Peter Evans
Assistant Director	Janine Watson
Designer	Teresa Negroponte
Associate Designer	Aleisa Jelbart
Lighting Designer	Benjamin Cisterne
Composer & Sound Designer	Max Lyandvert
Movement & Fight Director	Nigel Poulton
Voice & Text Coach	Jess Chambers
Dramaturg	James Evans

CREW

Touring Company Manager	Sara Holt
Deputy Stage Manager	Maree Delvecchio
Assistant Stage Manager	Julia Orlando
Head Electrician	Christopher Payne
Head Mechanist	Hayley Stafford
Head of Audio	Jonathan Gardner
Head of Costume	Sara Kolijn
Costume Assistant	Sally Andrews
Stage Management Secondment	Rebecca Thorman
Set built by	Thomas Creative
Lighting supplied by	Chameleon Touring Systems
Freight provided by	ATS Logistics
Campaign photography	Pierre Toussaint
Rehearsal photography	Brett Boardman



OUR NATIONAL TOUR



Orange NSW • Wagga Wagga NSW • Griffith NSW • Dubbo NSW • Melbourne VIC • Albany WA •
Bunbury WA • Perth WA • Hobart TAS • Warrnambool VIC • Bendigo VIC • Mildura VIC • Warragul VIC •
Shepparton VIC • Wangaratta VIC • Darwin NT • Alice Springs NT • Mackay QLD • Cairns QLD •
Rockhampton QLD • Gladstone QLD • Cleveland QLD • Lismore NSW • Port Macquarie NSW •
Nowra NSW • Sydney NSW

A VERY TRAGICAL MIRTH

Popular consensus has it that William Shakespeare lived in a golden age. A gilded epoch of enlightenment and discovery. The Renaissance was having a renaissance; Britannia ruled the waves; then James of Scotland became King of England and took it upon himself to promote the arts. Poets and writers across the British Isles could fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world.

Of course, popular consensus is a donkey's bottom. (Or Bottom's ass, if you will.)

Because Shakespeare's era was one of plagues. It was a time of bad harvests, food riots, poverty and malnutrition. It was a time of religious persecution, war and of chronic unemployment. Successful playwrights were not necessarily wealthy (Ben Jonson died in squalor). Child mortality was perilously high (Shakespeare's only son, Hamnet, perished at the age of 11) and the average life expectancy was only mid-forties. England was a paranoid police state where all sorts of imaginative forms of torture and execution were dished out. And thespians were most definitely exposed to violence (playwright Christopher Marlowe was both a perpetrator and a victim who wound up murdered at just 29 years old).

Shakespeare lived in one of the most precarious periods in English history and to think otherwise is madness. Midsummer madness.

Similarly, it is often assumed that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a light and fluffy comedy, sprinkled liberally with gags and fairy dust. A whimsical romantic romp where lovers bicker, make up and then marry. (Or hate, expiate, and then fornicate.) It's a world where:

Jack shall have Jill;

Nought shall go ill;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well...

if Puck is to be believed.

Which all appears pretty golden until you rub the love juice from your eyes and take a closer look. In fact, for two-thirds of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* most of the lead characters are unhappy. There's paternal wrath, bitter jealousy, unrequited love, and betrayal. (And that's just in the first five minutes.)

True, there's no shortage of laughs amid the sorrow, but these laughs are cleverly placed to heighten the dramatic impact. Shakespeare toys with the dichotomies of light and dark to allow the light to illuminate the dark, and the shadows to give depth to the light. And the overall effect gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "painfully funny". Make no mistake, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is more a black comedy than a golden idyll.

Peter Evans' 2021 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* teases out this darkness in subtle ways. He's kept the cast down to eight players and switched the opening scenes. To begin with, we are softened up with the hilarious capers of Bottom and the Mechanicals, then the actors switch personas before our very eyes and plunge us into the intense scene in Theseus's court. The contrast could not be starker.

Suddenly we're presented with Egeus, who wants his daughter Hermia to marry Demetrius against her wishes. So determined is he to impose his will that he's prepared to have Hermia executed if she disobeys. We hear desperate pleas from a powerless Hermia (who is given a choice of submission, death or life in a convent) before hostilities escalate with Demetrius and Lysander at each other's throats. Yet within the space of two lines, the tension is pierced by Lysander's witty rejoinder:

You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's – do you marry him.

In order to deliver up the laughs in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare's characters endure a torrid time and poor Helena suffers more than most. She repeatedly describes her unrequited love for Demetrius as a kind of sickness. And it is. She's afflicted with a love from which she can extract no joy, only pain. It's adversely affecting her lifelong friendship with Hermia, who she envies:

Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!

O, teach me how you look, and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

By midway through the play Helena's self esteem has sunk so low that she refuses to believe it when Demetrius and Lysander (thanks to fairy magic) declare their love for her. She's livid with the boys (assuming it's all a wind up) and lashes out at Hermia, accusing her of masterminding the ruse. It's funny for us to watch, but it's a brutal situation for poor, wretched Helena. Before we know it, and in a scene of pure slapstick, Helena is coming to blows with Hermia, then making a groveling apology of sorts and regretting she ever came.

Mind you, she has plenty to be sorry for. Earlier in the play, Helena betrays Hermia's trust and tells Demetrius of her friend's plan to elope. That's a pretty lousy thing to do, considering Hermia is under threat of death because of her love for Lysander. This begins the sequence of events that eventually leads to Hermia finding herself alone in the forest at night and rejected by a spellbound Lysander.

Here, it's worth pausing to remember that Shakespeare's audience would have experienced nighttime in a completely different way to me and you in 2021. Once the sun went down in Elizabethan England the outside world was very black indeed. Without electric street lamps, darkness was something that could truly cover a multitude of sins. So when the lovers decide to escape and cross 20 miles of forest at night, Puck is right to think:

Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Simultaneously, Shakespeare uses the darkness as a device to exacerbate the suffering of the lovers; and to poke fun at them too. When Lysander admits to Hermia that they are lost in the forest, it's a funny moment because she's getting pretty fed up trudging about in the dark. Conversely, the more our characters express their discomfort, the funnier it becomes for us.

Nobody escapes this treatment. Even the heroic Lysander shows his dark side when fairy magic prompts him to fall for Helena, before deserting and rejecting Hermia in the cruelest fashion:

Why seek'st thou me? Could not this make thee know

The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

By now, the audience is in stitches at this turn of events. Unlike the lovers, and in a deft use of dramatic irony, we're in on the joke. The four-hander scene from which that quote comes is arguably one of the finest comic set-ups in theatrical history. And it succeeds precisely because of the dark depths to which Shakespeare allows his characters to sink.

Perhaps the darkest of all the lovers is Demetrius, who is prepared to coerce Hermia into marrying him. Such is his sense of entitlement, that he's willing for her to be executed if she refuses. During the courtroom scene, we also learn that he previously seduced Helena, before casting her aside to set his sights on Hermia. Then he treats Helena in the most appalling manner ("I am sick when I do look on thee," he says, before hinting that he may rape her or leave her "to the mercy of wild beasts" in the wood).

Yet even the cruelty of Demetrius provides comic moments. Infuriatingly for him, the more despicably he behaves, the more desperately Helena dotes on him.



Demetrius:

Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?

Or rather do I not in plainest truth

Tell you I do not, nor I cannot love you?

Helena:

And even for that do I love you the more.

I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,

The more you beat me I will fawn on you.

Use me but as your spaniel: spurn me,
strike me,

Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,

Unworthy as I am, to follow you.

In fact, the only redeeming behaviour we ever really see from Demetrius is when the fairies intervene towards the end and he finally falls in love with Helena.

Speaking of the fairies, all is far from golden for the fairy folk, too. Titania and Oberon make their entrance bickering over the custody of a child (the latter appears to want the boy for no other reason than to score points against the fairy queen). Such is the scale and bitterness of their dispute that it's affecting the weather around them.

Oberon's solution to this dispute is to play a cruel prank on Titania, making her fall randomly in love (and lust) with whichever "vile thing" she next encounters in the forest. Enter the hapless Bottom, who Puck has transformed into half-man/half-donkey. The poor fellow is alone in the forest, having been deserted by his terrified friends, and now becomes a helpless pawn in the power play between the fairies.

It's all hilarious of course. But there's something about the games that the fairies play and the fun they have which points to the potential for danger. One suspects that Puck would do far worse (and certainly not bother to put things right) were he not bound by the will of Oberon. Yet it's precisely because of this danger that we laugh so much.

And laugh we do. Because despite its dark depths – or more accurately, because of them – *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will leave you LOL'ing in the aisles. In this, his most famous comedy, Shakespeare proves yet again that he is incapable of writing a play that doesn't illuminate. And at the same time, his spot lit stage is nothing without a darkened audience to enjoy it. So sit back and enjoy. It's black (it's often blue), but it's comedy gold.

Andy McLean is a freelance writer and podcaster who grew up in Stratford-upon-Avon, before following the Bard to London. Unlike the Bard, he now lives in Sydney.

andymclean.net

IN REHEARSAL





CREATIVE TEAM

PETER EVANS DIRECTOR



Peter Evans is **Bell Shakespeare's** Artistic Director. For **Bell Shakespeare** he has directed *Hamlet*, *The Miser*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Richard 3*, *Othello*, *Romeo And Juliet*,

As You Like it, *The Dream*, *Tartuffe*, *Phèdre*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen Of Verona*, and *Intimate Letters* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. His other **theatre** credits as Associate Director at Melbourne Theatre Company from 2007-2010, include directing *Clybourne Park*, *A Behanding in Spokane*, *Life Without Me*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *The Ugly One*, *The Grenade*, *God Of Carnage*, *Savage River*, *Realism*, *The Hypocrite*, *Blackbird*, *Don Juan In Soho*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The History Boys*, *Don's Party*, *The Give And Take*, *Dumbshow* and *The Daylight Atheist*. In addition, credits include *Pygmalion*, *The Great*, *Fat Pig* and *The Give And Take* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead*, *King Lear*, *Copenhagen*, *Proof*, *Muldoon* and *The Christian Brothers* for New Zealand's Court Theatre; *The Daylight Atheist* for Queensland Theatre Company; *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *A Poor Student* for the Store Room at Malthouse Theatre; *Jesus Hopped The A Train* for Red Stitch Actors Theatre; *Kiss Of The Spiderwoman* for Theatre Adami at the SBW Stables; and *The Dumb Waiter* for the Studio Company at Belvoir St Theatre.

JANINE WATSON ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



Janine Watson is an actor and director. She is a graduate of the National Theatre Drama School in Melbourne, and has trained with the SITI Company in New York and Zen Zen Zo Physical

Theatre. For **Bell Shakespeare** her directing credits include the learning production of *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Players*, and her acting credits include *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Dream*. Her other **theatre** credits include directing *Unqualified* and assistant directing *Relatively Speaking* and *Tribes* for Ensemble Theatre. In 2021 she will direct *Nearer the Gods* for Ensemble Theatre. Her acting credits include *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Dracula* and *The Happy Prince* for Little Ones Theatre; *American Beauty Shop* for KXT bAKEHOUSE, JATO and *Triangle* for MKA Melbourne; *A View from the Bridge* and *Dolores* for Red Line Productions; and *Antigone*, *Measure for Measure* and *Three Sisters* for Sport for Jove. In 2020 Janine won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Female Performer in an Independent Production for *The Happy Prince*. She won a GLUG Award for Best Supporting Actress for *A View from the Bridge* and was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award for the same show. She was nominated for a Green Room Award for her work in *Triangle*.

TERESA NEGROPONTE DESIGNER



Teresa Negroponte received a Bachelor of Dramatic Art in Design from NIDA in 2009. For **Bell Shakespeare** she has previously designed *The Dream*. Her other **theatre**

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credits as costume and/or set designer include *Carmen* and *Tosca* for Opera Australia; *Jumpy* for Melbourne Theatre Company/Sydney Theatre Company; *Flying Dutchman* for Victorian Opera; *Boundary Street* for Brisbane Festival/Black Swan State Theatre Company; *Dreams In White* for Griffin Theatre Company. Her **musical theatre** credits include *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* for James Anthony Productions; *Dr. Zhivago* for the Gordon Frost Organisation. Her **film** and **television** credits in Costume Department include *Top End Wedding* (Universal Pictures); *Les Norton* (Roadshow Rough Diamond); *Peter Rabbit 2* (Sony Pictures); *Shang-Chi* (Marvel Studios). Tess has worked as Wardrobe Stylist for the ABC, SBS, TVCs and events. She was nominated for Best Costume Design at the Sydney Theatre Awards for *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (2013); and Best Costume Design for a TV production/Web Series for *Sheilas* (2018) at the APDG Awards.

ALEISA JELBART ASSOCIATE DESIGNER



Aleisa Jelbart is an award winning Sydney based Production Designer. This is her first production with **Bell Shakespeare**. In **opera, theatre and dance** Aleisa's credits include works with Sydney Dance

Company, Opera Australia, Australian Theatre for Young People, Hayes Theatre Co, Singapore Dance Theatre, the Komische Oper Berlin, 1927 and Legs on the Wall. Since 2014 Aleisa has worked closely with Sydney Dance Company. She has designed costumes for mainstage works including *Rafael Bonachela's Impermanence* (in collaboration with the Australian String Quartet and music composed by The National's Bryce Dessner), *Lux Tenebris*, *Anima*, Melanie Lane's *Woof* and props for Antony Hamilton's *Forever & Ever*. Aleisa has also designed costumes for over 15 works in the company's annual *New Breed*

program, working with choreographers such as Prue Lang, Katina Olsen, Lee Serle, Raqhav Handa and Daniel Riley. Aleisa was the recipient of the 2014/15 Hephzibah Tintner Fellowship for Production Design and the 2016 Berlin New Music Opera Award (the Opera Foundation for Young Australians).

BENJAMIN CISTERNE LIGHTING DESIGNER



Benjamin Cisterne's reputation is for finesse, excellence and a gutsy approach to design, based in light. Benjamin has previously worked with **Bell Shakespeare** for *Hamlet*, *Antony and*

Cleopatra, *Richard 3* and *Romeo And Juliet*. Other **theatre** lighting credits include *Dance Better at Parties* and *Perplex* for Sydney Theatre Company; *MRock* for STC/Australian Theatre for Young People; *Medea*, *Human Interest Story*, *Hamlet*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Mother Courage* for Belvoir. His **performing arts** credits include *2 one Another*, *Emergence*, *Louder than Words*, *Project Ramaeu* and *Les Illuminations* for Sydney Dance Company; *Keep Everything*, *Connected*, *Mix Tape* and *It Sounds Silly for Chunky Move*; *Nativity*, *Fiction*, *Origami*, *Brindabella*, *Aviary* and *Miracle* for Balletlab; *Halcyon*, *Sweeedeedee* and *There's Definitely A Prince Involved* for Australian Ballet. **Museum/exhibition** credits include work for The Australian War Memorial, State Library NSW, Supreme Court of Queensland, Queensland Museum, The Reserve Bank of Australia, Australian Infantry Museum, Bass Strait Maritime Centre, Singapore Museum and the World Heritage Centre (Blue Mountains). Benjamin has been awarded by both The Green Room and Sydney Theatre Awards. He also received an Award of Commendation from the Illuminating Engineers Society for his work on 'Australia in the Great War' for Australian War Memorial.

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MAX LYANDVERT COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER



Max Lyandvert is a multi-award-winning composer, sound designer and theatre maker. Max has previously worked with **Bell Shakespeare** for *Hamlet*, *Titus*

Andronicus, *The Miser*,

Antony and Cleopatra, *The Merchant Of Venice* and *Othello*. Other **theatre** credits include *Mary Stuart*, *Saint Joan*, *Top Girls*, *All My Sons*, *The Testament Of Mary*, *The Golden Age*, *Endgame*, *Children Of The Sun*, *Macbeth*, *Dinner*, *Waiting For Godot*, *Lost Echo* and *War of the Roses*, and many others for Sydney Theatre Company; *Book Of Exodus Part 1 & 2* for Fraught Outfit; *The Winter's Tale* for Queensland Theatre Company; *Dead City*, *The Wizard Of Oz*, *Oedipus Rex*, *The Business*, *The Ham Funeral*, *UBU* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Belvoir; *Gulls*, *Macbeth*, *The Idiot*, *Kafka Dances*, *Courtyard Of Miracles*, *Closer*, *The Rose Tattoo* and *Twelfth Night* for State Theatre Company of South Australia; and *Art And Soul* and *Design For Living* for Melbourne Theatre Company. Max won an AACTA award for best music in television for *The Kettering Incident*, and composed the music for *The Devil's Playground*. Most recently Max composed the music for the upcoming mini-series *Eden*. His **documentary** film credits include *Gayby Baby* and *After The Wave*. Max has won the Helpmann Award for Best Sound Design twice, as well as receiving numerous other nominations. Max composed the music for the Australian Pavilion for the Venice Biennale 2019, and most recently won the Sydney Theatre Award for best Sound Design for *Titus Andronicus*.

NIGEL POULTON MOVEMENT & FIGHT DIRECTOR



Nigel Poulton is an award-winning movement and fight director, an intimacy director and coordinator, SAG-AFTRA stunt performer and actor. For **Bell Shakespeare** his credits

include *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Miser*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Richard 3*, *Othello*, four productions of *Hamlet*, three productions of *Romeo And Juliet*, three productions of *The Dream/A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, two productions of *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Wars of the Roses*. In **opera**, **theatre** and **dance**, Nigel's credits include works with The Metropolitan Opera, The Australian Ballet, New York City Ballet, Washington Opera, Opera Australia, Circus Oz, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre, Belvoir, La Boite Theatre, Playbox Theatre and Kooemba Jdarra. His **film** credits include *Thor: Love & Thunder*, *Escape from Spiderhead*, *Occupation: Rainfall*, *Pirates of the Caribbean V*, *The Water Diviner*, *Winter's Tale* and *The Bourne Legacy*. His **television** credits include *Deadline Gallipoli*, *The Good Wife*, *Person of Interest*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *The Sopranos*, *30 Rock* and *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*. Nigel is a practitioner of Vsevolod Meyerhold's Theatrical Biomechanics system and member and past president of the Society of Australian Fight Directors Inc, a Certified Fight Director and Teacher with the Society of American Fight Directors, an Honorary Fight Director with Fight Directors Canada, and a certified Intimacy Director and Coordinator with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators (IDC), formerly Intimacy Directors International. Nigel has been awarded a Green Room Award for outstanding contribution to the stage.

CREATIVE TEAM

JESS CHAMBERS VOICE & TEXT COACH



Jess Chambers works internationally as a voice, dialect and text coach. She is a graduate of the Central School of Speech and Drama. For **Bell Shakespeare** she was the voice coach for *Hamlet*,

Much Ado About Nothing, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Miser*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Misanthrope*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Merchant Of Venice*, *Richard 3*, *Othello*, *Romeo And Juliet*, *Henry V* and *The Players*. Her other **theatre** credits include *The Real Thing*, *Mosquitoes*, *How To Rule The World*, *Power Plays*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Battle Of Waterloo* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Matilda The Musical* in Australia for The Royal Shakespeare Company and Louise Withers and in London for The Royal Shakespeare Company; and *Alice In Wonderland*, *Sweet Charity*, *You Never Can Tell* and *Pygmalion* for The Shaw Festival Theatre (Canada); as dialect coach: *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* for Global Creatives; *School of Rock* for GWB Entertainment and The Really Useful Group; *Jersey Boys* for Rodney Rigby, TEG Dainty and The Dodgers; *Les Misérables* for Cameron Mackintosh and Michael Cassel; and *The Sound Of Music* for John Frost and The Really Useful Group; and as assistant voice coach: *Noises Off*, *Romeo And Juliet* and *Storm Boy* for Sydney Theatre Company. Her **television** credits include *Frayed Seasons 1 & 2* (ABC/Sky TV) and *The Unlisted* (ABC). Her film credits include dialect assistance on *Hacksaw Ridge*.

JAMES EVANS DRAMATURG



James Evans is Associate Director at Bell Shakespeare. He is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (Acting) and holds a Master of Arts (English) from the University of

Sydney. For **Bell Shakespeare** James has directed two national touring productions, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Julius Caesar*, also directing *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for young audiences. As dramaturg he has worked on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*. He has appeared in *Hamlet*, *Richard 3*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Henry IV* and *Actors At Work*. His other **theatre** credits include *Mercy* for Festival of Dangerous Ideas/Bell Shakespeare; *Paul and Homebody/Kabul* for Belvoir; and *Private Lives* for Queensland Theatre. His **television** credits include *Me and My Monsters*, *Underbelly: The Golden Mile* and *East West 101*. James co-wrote and presented the acclaimed iPad App *Starting Shakespeare* (named Best New App by Apple in 17 countries) and co-directed the ABC online series *Shakespeare Unbound*. He has been a visiting artist at the University of San Diego, as well as presenting a series of Shakespeare seminars in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, Mumbai and Singapore. James's work with Bell Shakespeare in juvenile detention centres is the subject of the award-winning feature documentary *Kings of Baxter*. He is the host of Bell Shakespeare's podcast *Speak The Speech*.

CAST

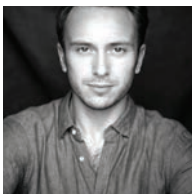
JANE MONTGOMERY GRIFFITHS



Jane Montgomery Griffiths has extensive theatre experience in the UK, including with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Theatr Clywd, Cambridge Theatre Company and Chichester Festival

Theatre. For **Bell Shakespeare** she has performed in *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear*. Her other **theatre** credits include *Macbeth* for Melbourne Theatre Company; *Sappho in... 9 fragments*, *Wild Surmise*, *Frankenstein* and *Antigone* for Malthouse Theatre; *Wizard of Oz* for Belvoir; *Wit* for Artisan Collective; and *Good People* for Red Stitch. Her **television** credits include *Miss Fisher*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Five Bedrooms*, *The Bill*, *Red Dwarf*, *One Against the Wind* and *A Murder of Quality*. Jane's writing credits include *Sappho... in 9 fragments*, *Razing Hypatia*, *Wild Surmise*, *Antigone* and *Eurydike and Orpheus*. Jane's awards include White Rose Best Actress (*Gaslight*), Manchester Evening News Best Actress (*Electra*), Greenroom Award Outstanding Performer (*Wit*), Helpmann Best Supporting Actress Nomination (*Macbeth*) and Victorian and NSW Premiers' Literary Nominations for *Sappho... in 9 Fragments*.

MICHAEL C. HOWLETT



Michael C. Howlett is a graduate of Actors Centre Australia. Soon after graduating, he moved to London to further his training at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama where he

obtained a Masters degree in classical acting. This is his first production with **Bell Shakespeare**.

His other **theatre** credits include *London Calling* for Playhouse Theatre, West End; *Salome* for Lazarus Theatre Company; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Quantum Theatre (UK); and *The Winter's Tale* for Helikon Theatre Company. His **short film** credits include *Love in the 21st Century*, *Slider*, *Bagged*, *The Industry* and *Lessons in Exchange*.

ABBIE-LEE LEWIS



Abbie-lee Lewis is a Kalkadoon woman who is a graduate of the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts. For **Bell Shakespeare** she was Assistant Director of *Hamlet* and has performed

in the learning production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Macbeth* and was a member of The Players. Other **theatre** credits include *Our Town* for Black Swan State Theatre Company; *Fallen* for She Said/Sport for Jove; *Talk It Up* for Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, and *Bushfire* for Sydney Fringe Festival. Abbie-lee's **television** credits include *Black Comedy* and *Dr Max*. Her **short film** credits include *Sal and Tash*.

KYLE MORRISON



Kyle Morrison is a Noongar of the southwest of Western Australia with Budimya and Watjari heritage. His most recent engagement with **Bell Shakespeare** was as creative instigator and

actor for *Hecate*, a retelling of *Macbeth* completely in the Noongar language for Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company and Bell Shakespeare which premiered at Perth Festival 2020.

CAST

Kyle was Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company from 2009-2019. His directing credits include *Muttacar Sorry Business*, *In The Nyitting Time*, *Good Lovin*, *Honey Spot*, *Mother's Tongue*, *Kaarla Kaatijin*, *The Cake Man* (co-production with Belvior), *King Hit* (awarded WA's Best Production of 2015) *The Fever and The Fret*, *So Long Suckers* (co-created and written by Kyle), *Sista Girl* (co-production with the State Theatre Company of South Australia) and *Ice Land: A Hip-h'Opera* with Downsyste.

ELLA PRINCE



Ella Prince is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London (BA/Hons). This is her first production with **Bell Shakespeare**. Her other **theatre** credits include *A Room of One's Own* for

Belvoir St Theatre; *Family Values* for Griffin Theatre Company; *Chorus*, *4.48 Psychosis* and *The Shadow Box* for Old Fitz Theatre; *You've Got Mail* for Griffin / Batch, *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing* and *Rotterdam* for KXT; *Safe* for Old 505 Theatre; *Arachnid* for Bondi Feast; and *In a Year with 13 Moons* for Sotto. Ella's **film** credits include *Last Night* (Prototype), *Interface* (VCA), *Wall Space* (Flickerfest) and *Stardust* (AFTRS).

IMOGEN SAGE



Imogen Sage is a graduate of the BA Acting course at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London and has performed both in Australia and the UK. This is her first production with **Bell Shakespeare**. Her other **theatre** credits include

Claudel for TinderBox Productions/Sydney Opera House; *Woyzeck + Marie* co-written with HYSTERIA; *The Astral Plane* for Belvoir 25A; and *Hay Fever* for Melbourne Theatre Company. Her UK theatre credits include *Rebecca* for Kneehigh Theatre; *Measure for Measure* for Wanamaker Festival/Shakespeare's Globe; *The School for Scheming* for Orange Tree Theatre; and *Three Sisters* for Pleasance Theatre. Imogen's **screen** credits include *The Man Who Knew Infinity*, *Doctors*, and the lead in the upcoming feature film, *Dark Noise*. Her **short film**, *The Understudy*, which she acted in and co-wrote had a successful run on the international festival circuit.

GABRIELLE SCAWTHORN



Gabrielle Scawthorn is a NIDA graduate who has since studied with Atlantic Theatre Company and UCB (US). This is her first production with **Bell Shakespeare**. Her other **theatre** credits include *The*

Apologists for Unlikely Productions; *Stop Kiss* for Australian Theatre for Young People; *The Village Bike* for Old Fitz; *Ironbound* for KXT; *The Underpants* and *Ear To The Edge of Time* for Seymour Centre; *E-Baby* and *Bloodbank* for Ensemble, *Hurt* for Old 505/Belvoir Downstairs; and *Fourplay* and *Sound of Waiting* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company. Her **television** credits include *The Killing Fields*, *Doctor Blake Mysteries*, *Freshblood*, *Deadly Women*, *Fresh Meat*. Gabrielle created and hosts the podcast *Back From Reality*. She has been nominated for three Sydney Theatre Awards and three Broadway World Awards.

Shakespeare. Her other **theatre** credits include

CAST

JACOB WARNER



Jacob Warner (he/him) is a graduate of the Actors' Centre Australia. For **Bell Shakespeare** he has appeared in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet*. His other **theatre** credits include *Shepherd*

for 25a Belvoir and Aya Productions; *Luna Gale* for Ensemble Theatre; *On the Shore of the Wide World* for Griffin Theatre Company/Pantsguys; *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* for CDP Productions/Monkey Baa; *Orfeo et Euridice* for Spectrum Festival; *Daylight Saving* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company; *The Block Universe* for Old 505; and *Puss in Boots* for the City Recital Hall. He recently made his **musical theatre** debut as Perry Heslop in the Australian tour of *Muriel's Wedding the Musical* for Global Creatures. His **film** credits include the feature films *Ride Like a Girl* and Mel Gibson's *Hacksaw Ridge*. His **television** credits include *Dr Feelgood* and *Sisters*, and the web series *Sexy Nails*. In 2016 he received a Best Actor nomination at the Sydney Theatre Awards. Jacob is a proud member of MEAA.







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The Tempest, Act 4, Scene 1

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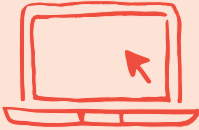
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165,285

people engaged with a Bell Shakespeare program or performance in total, either online or in person.

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Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2

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