

Chicago Shakespeare Theater welcomes nearly 20,000 students from Chicagoland and beyond to weekday matinees of

Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream

A 75-minute adaptation of the magical romantic comedy



Chicago—February 13, 2025—In an expanded five-week run of weekday matinees, [Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#) is welcoming nearly 20,000 students in grades 4-12 from across the region to [Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream](#), deepening CST's commitment to education programming. This 75-minute abridgement of the magical romantic comedy is adapted and directed by CST Artistic Director **Edward Hall**, who brings together his signature clarity in storytelling and playful staging for an unforgettable theatrical experience in the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater, **February 4-March 8**. After each performance, the actors remain on stage for a question-and-answer session about the production.

Reaching more students and teachers than any theater in the city, CST's education initiatives support the development of young people's crucial skills, including social-emotional competencies, critical literacy, creative problem solving, and meaningful collaboration. 73% of students reported greater interest in Shakespeare after attending a CST student matinee performance. Student tickets are offered at a deeply subsidized rate, and—new this year—bus reimbursement scholarships help overcome a barrier to entry, benefiting more than 1,500 students from 22 qualifying schools.

"It's a joy to be creating this Short Shakespeare production as part of CST's ongoing commitment to providing the best theater for young people," says Edward Hall. "I have had some of my most exciting experiences in the theater making work in this forum and look forward to sharing this comedy that warms the heart and delights the soul, inspiring young audiences and artists of the future."

CST's Director of Education and Lifelong Learning **Nora Carroll** shared, "For the next 5 weeks, the Courtyard will buzz with the energy of young people who are engaging with the characters on stage, the choices they make, and the world they exist in. We've seen firsthand how transformative it is for young people to experience live theater for the first time and bring their full selves to a space that truly belongs to them. This production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* removes the fourth wall, inviting our audiences to talk back to the characters and contribute to the performance."

What FOOLS these mortals be! Join Puck and his feisty fairy band at the Athens summer music festival in this 75-minute production of Shakespeare's dreamiest romantic comedy. Hermia is engaged to Demetrius, but actually loves Lysander. Lysander loves her back, until a spell casts his gaze upon her best friend Helena, who—would you believe it?—loves Demetrius. This quartet of love-sick young people are joined by a motley crew of theatricals, a fairy King and Queen in an epic showdown, and a talking donkey to boot. Delight in the exhilaration and hilarity of young love as the chaos of magic and enchantment turns the world upside down.

A Midsummer Night's Dream features an ensemble cast that includes **Scott Aiello, Jordan Arredondo, Elizabeth Laidlaw, Jaylon Muchison, Olivia Pryor, Issy van Randwyck, Brenann Stacker**, and **Grace Steckler**. Understudies include **John Drea, Lenin Izquierdo, Jennifer Mohr**, and **Sara Mountjoy-Pepka**.

Creating the world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are set designer **Alyssa Mohn**, costume designer **Janelle Smith**, and sound designer and composer **Forrest Gregor**, with music arrangements and an original song by **The Q Brothers (GQ & JQ)**. The creative team also includes art director **Michael Pavelka**, associate director **Christopher Llewyn Ramirez**, fight and intimacy choreographer **Elizabeth Laidlaw**, production stage manager **Rita Vreeland**, and assistant stage manager **Cassidy Wray**.

In addition to student matinees, performances are open to the public on **Saturdays at 11:00 a.m.**, with tickets starting at just **\$26 for students ages 18 and under**.

CST's *Short Shakespeare!* series is just one component of CST's award-winning lifelong learning programs. Recognized as a national leader in the field, the Theater's arts-in-literacy programs support the work in classrooms across the region for tens of thousands of students each year by bringing complex texts to life onstage and through a variety of professional learning opportunities for teachers. Every fall, Chicago Shakespeare brings high school students from across Chicago and the wider metropolitan area together to celebrate the power of play, community, language, and imagination in the [Chicago Shakespeare Slam](#). This year, Chicago Shakespeare also welcomed a new cohort to the [Bard Core](#) program: a year-long professional learning seminar that introduces Chicago Public School teachers to drama-based strategies for engaging students—including struggling and reluctant readers, and English language learners—with Shakespeare and other challenging texts. In the past year, 473 educators have taken advantage of professional development opportunities, free workshops, and digital classroom resources. Learners of all ages deepen their engagement with CST productions through [Pre•Amble](#) talks and post-show discussions, and the [\\$30 Under 30](#) discounted ticket program for young professionals and students reduces barriers to participation for thousands of first-time attendees.

More information at www.chicagoshakes.com or on social media at [@chicagoshakes](https://twitter.com/chicagoshakes).

Short Shakespeare! ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***

By William Shakespeare

Adapted and directed by Edward Hall

February 4–March 8, 2025

Jentes Family Courtyard Theater

Public performances at 11:00 a.m. on Saturdays

Chicago Shakespeare strives to make its facility and performances accessible to all patrons. Accessible seating, assistive listening devices, large-print and Braille programs, and sensory tools are available at every performance. Enhanced performances include:

- **Open captioned performance – Saturday, March 8 at 11:00 a.m.**
A text display of the words and sounds heard during a play, synced live with the action onstage
- **ASL interpreted performance – Saturday, March 8 at 11:00 a.m.**
All dialogue and lyrics are translated into American Sign Language by two certified interpreters

CREATIVE TEAM

Edward Hall - Adaptor & Director

Alyssa Mohn - Set Designer

Janelle Smith - Costume Designer

Forrest Gregor - Sound Designer & Composer

Michael Pavelka - Art Director

Christopher Llewyn Ramirez - Associate Director

The Q Brothers (GQ & JQ) - Music Arrangements & Original Song

Elizabeth Laidlaw - Fight & Intimacy Choreographer

Rita Vreeland - Production Stage Manager

Cassidy Wray - Assistant Stage Manager

CAST

Scott Aiello - Oberon / Quince / Egeus / Ensemble

Jordan Arredondo - Lysander / Ensemble

Elizabeth Laidlaw - Titania / Starveling / Ensemble

Jaylon Muchison - Demetrius / Flute / Ensemble

Olivia Pryor - Hermia / Snout / Ensemble

Issy van Randwyck - Bottom / Theseus / Ensemble

Brenann Stacker - Puck / Ensemble

Grace Steckler - Helena / Snug / Ensemble

John Drea - Understudy

Lenin Izquierdo - Understudy

Jennifer Mohr - Understudy

Sara Mountjoy-Pepka - Understudy

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER (CST)

A Regional Tony Award recipient, Chicago Shakespeare Theater produces a bold and innovative year-round season that includes Shakespeare, original plays, musicals, family programming, and international theatrical events. CST is committed to serving as a cultural center across its three stages—the 700+ seat Yard, 500 seat Jentes Family Courtyard Theater, and the 200 seat Carl and Marilyn Thoma Theater Upstairs as well as in classrooms, neighborhoods, and venues around the world. CST has a deep commitment to education and lifelong learning with robust programming for students, teachers, and lifelong learners, and engagement with communities across the city. Onstage, in classrooms and neighborhoods across the city, and in venues around the world, Chicago Shakespeare is a multifaceted theater—inviting audiences, artists, and community members to share powerful stories that illuminate the complexities, ambiguities, and wonders of our world.

www.chicagoshakes.com

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