

# arts & entertainment

## Midsummer makes magic

by Tara Gibson

"The lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact." Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This Dalhousie Theatre Production is a celebration, and indeed, Dal Theatre has much to celebrate. It is quite unlike anything I have ever seen in theatre, and definitely something everyone should see.

**THEATRE REVIEW**  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Sir James Dunn Theatre  
March 29 - April 2

Not only is *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a celebration of love, it is also a celebration of the art of theatre. The subject of theatre is magic. The audience is encouraged to believe things that aren't actually happening; this is the bargain between actor and audience. This year, Dalhousie

Theatre has proven itself by producing high-quality, well-directed, brilliantly acted plays.

Christine Menzies, the director, approached the play with the intention of creating magic in the theatre, posing the challenge of "how to achieve a sense of otherness, without using high technology, such as lasers or holograms". She created a "shamanistic sense of magic", combining cultures and rhythms through various mediums, principally that of music.

No one would disagree that music has the magical power of transporting the listener to a different place. This production is laced with high-calibre ethereal tone, combining percussive rhythm with both lucid melody and intricate harmony. For Christine, the process of developing the music was a magical experience in itself. The Dalhousie percussion group Butuque helped the actors and musicians with rhythms, and much of the vocal melodies were devel-

oped by the actors during rehearsal.

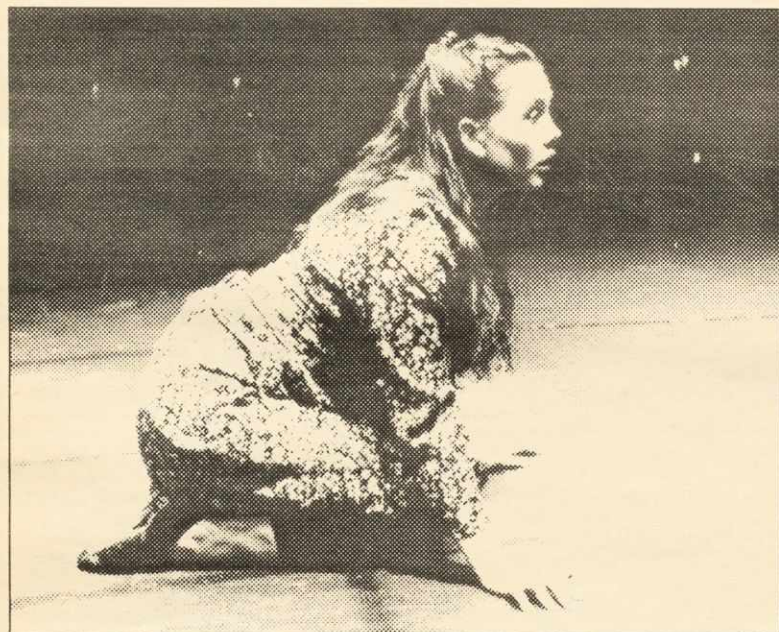
Although the actors and musicians enjoy the play immensely, it's physically draining for all those involved. The percussion, as well as the fights, leaps, and dances, are bold, extreme, and physically demanding.

Over the course of the evening, the James Dunn Theatre is transformed from an empty, dimly-lit space, to an energetic, vibrant carnival. Christine's ideal location for this production would be an abandoned warehouse. She was not searching for magic through elaborate decoration. The minimal set is composed of hand-me-downs from various previous productions, as well as some extras such as big green recycling bins and a piano sound board — "create magic out of garbage".

Though the approach to visual effect and movement is contemporized, the dialogue is word-for-word Shakespeare's original script. The language is packed with imagery of sexual innuendo. Sexuality is explored and portrayed through juxtaposition of the 'pristine' morality of the upper class court people with the faerie world, in which there is no sense of morality whatsoever.

There are two different objectives in the faerie world. Titania (Lisa Griffin) and Oberon (Jason Charters), the queen and king of the faeries, are embodiments of the female and male facets of the earth. They strive towards harmony and balance, yet can't even seem to achieve this between the two of them.

The leader of the male faeries, Puck (James Fowler), on the other hand, revels in mischief and creates chaos in the mortal world, mainly of a sexual nature. Being a changeling, Peaseblossom (Patricia Zentilli), Puck's counterpart, is the faerie's 'liaison' with the mortal world. One of the mortals drawn into this 'other



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reality' is Nick Bottom (Ryan Rogerson), who adds a great deal of humour to the situation.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is on until Saturday (no show Good Friday). Get out and see this play. It is

astoundingly entertaining, and I made sure I saw it twice. Hopefully they'll release the soundtrack; I'd buy it. Reserve your tickets ASAP, as the theatre isn't huge and the show is sure to be a sellout.

## ATTENTION STUDENTS

MT&T will be on campus  
April 18 - 22 in SUB Room 218,  
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
so that students may:

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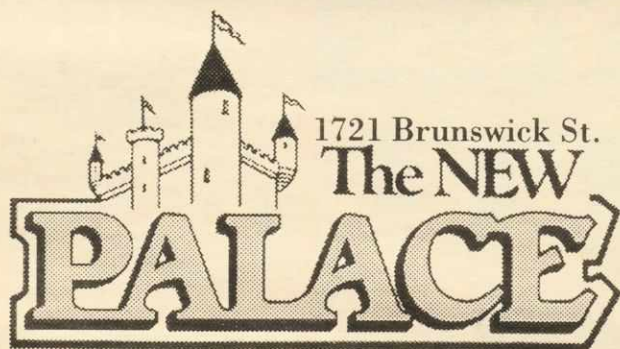
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