



SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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Shakespeare Festival St. Louis Announces Cast for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

2016 Shakespeare Festival St. Louis Mainstage Production Set for June 3-26

ST. LOUIS (Feb. 16, 2016) – Renowned New York actress and Olivier nominee Nancy Anderson will play the role of Titania in Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, June 3-26, at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park. This marks the company's 16th season of free, outdoor, professional theatre in the park. Preview performances are scheduled June 1-2. Performances run nightly, except Tuesdays, and begin at 8 p.m.

Artistic and Executive Director Rick Dildine will direct, and is planning a unique collaboration of original and existing music for the production. New York actor-musician Peter Mark Kendall will write original songs for *Midsummer*. Kendall, who has created music for many theaters, and worked extensively in TV, film and on stage, is also known for his recurring role as a grad school classmate of Lena Dunham's character Hannah Horvath on the HBO series "Girls." St. Louis-based group the Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra will compose the majority of the score. This is their second collaboration with the Festival, having composed the music for the 2013 production of *Twelfth Night*, also directed by Dildine. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was last produced by the Festival in 2002.

"Between the transcendent backdrop of Forest Park and the dreamlike quality of the set, part of which will extend into the seating area, this year's audiences can expect a very visual and magical experience at every performance," Dildine said. "Revisiting this production provides us with a great opportunity to address the multiple worlds of these beloved characters, places we still find ourselves today: middle and upper class, young and old, those in love and those still searching for it, the mischievous and the practical. While our society constantly likes to point out our differences, *Midsummer* reminds us that we are all very similar at our core: we all want to love and be loved."

Joining Anderson will be Broadway performer Timothy Carter in the role of Oberon. Carter played Scar in the national tour of *The Lion King* for four years, as well as lead roles in the

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national tours of *The Three Musketeers* and *Macbeth*. In addition to theater, Carter has appeared on TV in “Orange is the New Black” and “The Blacklist.”

Festival veterans include Whit Reichert (Egeus) and Jerry Vogel (Starveling/Moonshine), both of whom appeared in the 2002 *Midsummer* production; Justin Blanchard (Lysander); Alan Knoll (Snug/Lion), Reginald Pierre (Snout/Wall); Jacqueline Thompson (Hippolyta), who directed the Shakespeare in the Streets production in Old North this past September; and Peter Winfrey (Demetrius). Additional performers include Patrick Blindauer (musician), Paul Cereghino (Theseus), Rachel Christopher (Helena), Michael Propster (Peter Quince), Stephen Pilkington (Bottom) and Ben Watts (Philostrate/Moth).

The role of Puck will be played by twins Ryan Alexander Jacobs and Austin Glen Jacobs, both recent graduates of Webster University’s Conservatory. Ryan performed in last season’s *Antony and Cleopatra*. Raina Houston, also in last year’s production, will play the role of Mustardseed. Other Webster students making their Festival debut include: Myke Andrews (Cobweb); Gabriela Diaz (Peaseblossom); Jay Stalder (Flute/Thisby) and Cassia Thompson (Hermia).

The creative team includes Festival veterans Scott Neale (Set Design), Dottie Marshall Englis (Costume Design), John Wylie (Lighting Designer), Rusty Wandall (Sound Designer) and Suzanne Mills (Voice & Text Coach).

Nancy Anderson is a multi-talented actress who has made her mark on Broadway, Off-Broadway, in London’s West End, and on musical and concert/cabaret stages throughout the country. She made her Broadway debut as Mona in *A Class Act*, and nabbed a Laurence Olivier Award nomination for her work as Lois/Bianca in the 2001 London revival of *Kiss Me, Kate*. She received two Drama Desk nominations for *Fanny Hill* and *Jolson & Co*. The gifted singer has also appeared in such onscreen hits as “American Beauty,” “Starsky & Hutch,” “Dreamgirls,” and “From Justin to Kelly.” She has performed at the infamous Birdland Jazz Club NYC and solo recorded “Ten Cents a Dance,” which celebrates the songs of the ‘20s and ‘30s. Locally, Anderson has performed at The Muny (*Crazy for You*) and The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis (*Skinflint*). She will return to The Muny in *The Music Man* later this summer.

In addition to “Girls,” composer Peter Mark Kendall has appeared on HBO’s “The Leftovers” and is featured in “Time Out of Mind,” alongside Richard Gere and Kyra Sedgwick, among others. Kendall got his start in summer outdoor productions of the Baltimore Shakespeare Festival and received his MFA from Brown/Trinity Rep’s acting program.

The Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra is known for composing and recording soundtrack music for silent films. Co-founders Brien Seyle and Matt Pace have written and performed scores for more than 15 silent films and provided music for the Missouri History Museum’s 250 in 250 and Louisiana Purchase exhibits in 2014 and 2015. Seyle, violinist and composer for the group, appeared as an extra in the Festival’s 2013 production of *Twelfth Night*, playing violin as part of the incidental music ensemble. Seyle studied music at St. Louis Community College at Forest Park and Maryville University, and is a veteran of St. Louis’ vibrant independent music scene. Pace is an adjunct instructor of music theory and musicianship at several St. Louis colleges and universities, including Washington University where he received his PhD in 2011.

Add two

Butler's Pantry is the official VIP caterer for the Festival; the Saint Louis Zoo will provide food and beverage concessions nightly. In addition, The St. Louis Brewery, makers of Schlafly, have created 1616, a one-of-a-kind unfiltered lager crafted in honor of the 400th anniversary of the Bard's death. The beer will be offered exclusively at select Festival events throughout the 2016 season. Schlafly is the official beer of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis.

As in previous years, the Festival will include a nightly pre-performance Green Show at 6:30 p.m., following by the mainstage production. Admission is free; ticketed, reserved seating is also available online and in the park.

In the past 16 years, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has attracted more than 670,000 people to its annual free performances In the Park. The organization has reached 290,000 students In the Schools through its educational programming and, in 2010, launched SHAKE 38, a marathon participatory presentation of Shakespeare's entire 38-play canon community wide. In 2012, the Festival shut down its first street, Cherokee, to present a community-based play In the Streets. Shakespeare Festival St. Louis receives generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Missouri Arts Council, the Regional Arts Commission, and the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis. For more information, please visit www.sfstl.com or call 314-531-9800.

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