The Course of True Love

By
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DEDICATION

For Jon

STORY OF THE PLAY

This show spotlights some of Shakespeare's greatest couples: Romeo & Juliet, Kate & Petruchio, Beatrice & Benedick, and more. Twists and turns abound in this story of love and whimsy, consisting entirely of Shakespeare's actual text. The Fairies establish the world of the play. One Fairy has decided that love is foolish and "merely a madness," but the other Fairies are determined to convince their friend otherwise. The characters display all facets of love; desperation, bliss, fear, passion and pure joy, in a collection of scenes that takes the audience on a unique journey. When all of the characters congregate in the final scene, the doubting Fairy understands that "the course of true love never did run smooth," but it's more than worth the risk.

This easy-to-produce play is a perfect introduction to Shakespeare for all ages and a delightful evening for those familiar and unfamiliar with the Bard.

Approximate running time: 45 minutes.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

This play was originally produced under the original title "The Very Ecstasy of Love" at the Bakersfield Museum of Art, Bakersfield, California on April 27, 2017.

Original cast included: KING/QUEEN: Andrae Gonzalez; FAIRY A*:* Kat Clowes; FAIRY B*:* Jordan Fulmer; FAIRY C*:* Mai Giffard; FAIRY D*:* Nina Ha; FAIRY "CHORUS"*:* Amanda Castro, Daniella Vargas; CHILD FAIRIES: Community members; HELENA: Charlotte Smith; DEMETRIUS*:* Matt Mizell; JULIET*:* Amelia Mendiola; ROMEO*:* Ryan Lee; NURSE*:* Cody Ganger; VOICE*:* Donald Kruszka; KATHARINA*:* Abby Bowles-Votaw; PETRUCHIO*:* Jack Slider; MACBETH*:* Justin Lawson Brooks; LADY MACBETH*:* Jenna Odlin; TOUCHSTONE*:* Donald Kruszka; AUDREY*:* Guinevere Dethlefson; BENEDICK*:* Jon Sampson; BEATRICE: Cody Ganger.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(Large flexible cast of about 25)

(In order of appearance)

TROUBADOR *(various)* Optional; pre-show musician
KING or QUEEN *(various)* A member of the community
FAIRY A *(various)* Leader of the fairies; strong and capable
FAIRY B *(various)* Youngest; naïve, impulsive, searching
FAIRY C *(various)* Flirtatious, silly, sweet and fun
FAIRY D *(various)* Second in command; wise, supportive
FAIRY "CHORUS" *(various, as needed)* Child wranglers
CHILD FAIRIES *(various)* Help create the world of the play
HELENA *(A Midsummer Night's Dream)* Desperate but girlish.
DEMETRIUS *(A Midsummer Night's Dream)* Arrogant, immoveable.
JULIET *(Romeo & Juliet)* Younger than she thinks she is, smart and sweet.
ROMEO *(Romeo & Juliet)* All bravado and romance, athletic in his quest.
NURSE, offstage *(Romeo & Juliet)* Menopausal, exhausted.
VOICE, offstage *(Taming of the Shrew)* Can have an accent, furious.
KATHARINA *(Taming of the Shrew)* Powerful, passionate, fierce.
PETRUCHIO *(Taming of the Shrew)* Masculine, arrogant, handsome.
MACBETH *(Macbeth)* Conflicted, weakened.
LADY MACBETH *(Macbeth)* Powerhouse, cunning, manipulative.
TOUCHSTONE *(As You Like It)* Witty, proud, silly, bawdy.
AUDREY *(As You Like It)* Simple, naive, sweet.
BENEDICK *(Much Ado About Nothing)* Likeable in his arrogance, charming.
BEATRICE *(Much Ado About Nothing)* Likeable in her arrogance, charming.

PRODUCTION NOTES

There are significantly more roles for females than for males, however the cast is flexible in all ways. The play requires little in terms of set, props, costumes and technical aspects.

SETTING

A magical forest with fairies and lovers. The aesthetic is earthy, romantic and warm.

TIME

The present, or the past, or what you will.

COSTUMES

In the original production, each couple was costumed in a different era. Costumes were chosen based on the personality of the characters and actors. Helena and Demetrius wore 1940's traveling clothes. Romeo and Juliet wore modern clothing – Romeo wore high-end fashion, while Juliet wore oversized pajamas. Katharina wore modern horse riding apparel, with a riding crop. Petruchio wore a business suit, with tie loosened, as if he just had a scotch in hand. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth wore Elizabethan costumes. Touchstone wore the traditional Elizabethan pastoral clown costume (with large codpiece), and Audrey wore a traditional shepherdess costume with staff. Benedick and Beatrice wore modern wedding party clothes, as if they had just come from acting as maid of honor and best man in an elegant wedding. The Fairies wore costumes that reflected various periods in history. Each flattered the actor and hinted at high concept - Alexander McQueen meets the natural world. Enjoy the freedom to create the setting as you choose.

The Course of True Love

(AT RISE: TROUBADOUR plays MUSIC during the pre-show. S/he passes by the KING/QUEEN and exits. The KING/QUEEN is a cameo by someone in the audience wearing modern clothes. His/Her crown should look homemade and earthy, as if made by children, which introduces the aesthetic of the play. KING/QUEEN places the crown on his/her head and enters the playing space.)

KING/QUEEN: Come, come! We will have a play!

(All FAIRIES enter running through the audience to MUSIC. FAIRIES A, B, C, & D remain onstage throughout the show, but hide in various ways from the other characters, always reacting and engaged in the scenes.)

KING/QUEEN: *(To FAIRIES.)* You are welcome, all! I am glad to see thee well! Welcome good friends! *(To FAIRY A.)* We'll have a play tonight straight!
FAIRY B: *(Leaping to center stage.)* To be! Or not to be!

(FAIRY A pulls FAIRY B to the side, disapprovingly.)

KING/QUEEN: Not a play that struts and frets, but something with mirth and laughter!
FAIRY A: Present mirth hath present laughter, what's to come is still unsure. Something of love?
KING/QUEEN: Come, give us a taste of your quality!

(KING/QUEEN sits and returns to being an audience member. FAIRY A cues all FAIRIES to begin the show. CHILD & CHORUS FAIRIES run through the audience and woods, and exit.)

FAIRY A: All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
FAIRY B: They have their exits and their entrances,

FAIRY A: And one man in his time plays many parts.

(HELENA and DEMETRIUS enter. FAIRY A cues FAIRY C to form a clear love triangle pose in-between Helena and Demetrius, with FAIRY C acting as "HERMIA" before disappearing in the forest as Demetrius chases her.)

HELENA: *(To audience.)*
How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so.
He will not know what all but he do know.
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind.
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste—
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste.
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured everywhere.
For ere Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne,
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine.
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.

(DEMETRIUS runs through as if looking for FAIRY C/"Hermia." HELENA lunges at him.)

DEMETRIUS: I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
And here am I, and wode within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

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