

CHARLTON KINGS COMMUNITY PLAYERS
ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT

— *A* —
*Midsummer
Night's
Dream*

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

20TH, 21ST,
22ND AND 23RD
FEBRUARY 2008

7.30PM

AT SACRED HEARTS HALL,
MOOREND ROAD

Souvenir Programme

A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare

This is a first for 'The Players'; a production of a Shakespeare play. The cast have been absolutely magnificent in learning their lines and speaking them in a way which will enable you, the audience, to understand and appreciate the beauty of the Bard's words. We have assembled an excellent cast for you: some old favourites: Geoff Ramshaw (Fagin and Jesus) as Oberon; John Palmer (Inspector, Mr Brownlow and many others) as Theseus; Helen Roberts (a number of parts over the years) as Titania; Jo Kinane (Bill Sykes, Knight) as Egeus, some new faces: Claire Tucker as Puck and Peter Asphar as Peter Quince, both real finds for the 'Players'; a good complement of youngsters and what is very pleasing two from our chorus from 'Oliver!' have taken on major parts, Andrew Laver as Bottom and Chantal Dent as Hippolyta and have responded superbly to the challenge. Of the four young lovers three have acted with us before in smaller parts: Helen Jones – Hermia, Gianluca Di Pasqua – Lysander, Dominic Bell – Demetrius and Rachel Reilly has joined us to play Helena. You will take pleasure in their mix-ups, arguments, safe in the knowledge that "Jack shall have Jill; Naught shall go ill. And all shall be well." The six mechanicals are marvellous:

Peter Asphar – Quince, Andrew Laver – Bottom, Rowan Middleton – Starveling, Debbie Dundas – Snout, Becky Peach – Flute; and we have enticed Peter Grainger away from directing and I know you will enjoy his performance as the lion and as Snug. We have laughed out loud at all their antics in rehearsal and I am confident you will too.

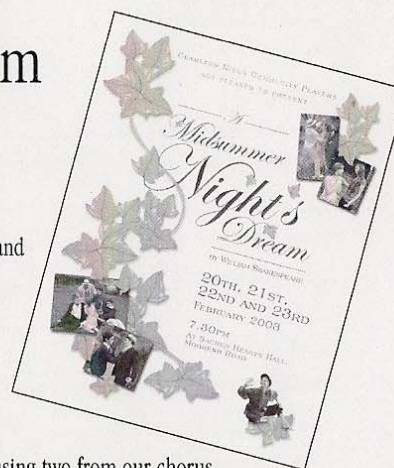
Helen Robert's portrayal as Titania is wonderful and her teasing, all-knowing performance opposite the supposedly stronger and all-conquering Oberon (masterfully played by Geoff Ramshaw) leaves you wondering exactly who 'won'. There is real chemistry between these two. Having set the play in a country estate during the 1930's we have dressed Titania's entourage as 'gypsy' type woodland folk of the forest. Oberon and Puck each have their own pair of henchmen, learning the trade. They certainly add to the fun and magic of the occasion. Two 'older' woodland folk (Carol Davies and Alison Talbot) join the younger ones for singing two songs "You spotted Snakes" and Oberon and Titania's song at the end of the play. You will recognise the tune of the last one but not the words?

And then we have our six excellent walk on parts as Lords, Ladies, and Attendants and no 'show' is ever successful unless the 'walk-ons are really good; these are ably assisted by Madeline Edden as Philostrate, the Duke's Master of Revels.

A real feature of the production will be Will Talbot's music, some of it specially written for the play. His arrangement of "You spotted Snakes" is very atmospheric.

My thanks to all the cast, the back stage team, and in particular my right hand supports, Val Flippance and the Production Manager, Tony Jeans without whom this production would not have got off the ground. Claire Tucker has choreographed the dances of Titania and Oberon and Gwilym Davies arranged and taught the Morris dance performed by the mechanicals'

I do hope you enjoy this performance as much as I have in directing it.



Martyn Fry
Director



Song/Dance Settings for a Midsummer Night's Dream

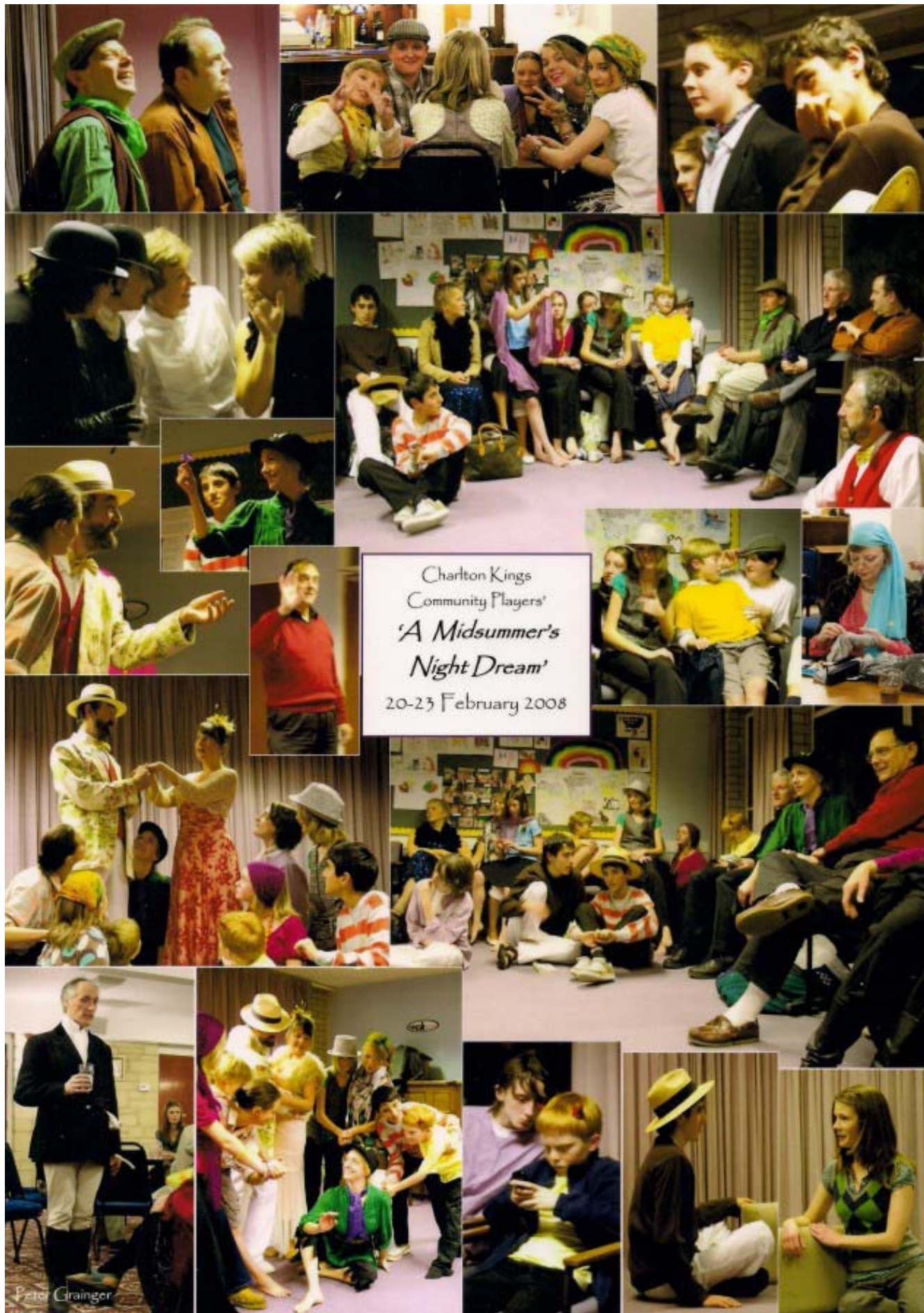
Will Talbot

Reconciliation Tango - Dance sequence (tango) for Oberon and Titania.

You spotted snakes - Duet for Gypsies (Titania's fairies)

Henry Mancini (composer), Martyn Fry (compilation of lyrics)

Moon River - Dance sequence (waltz) for Oberon and Titania





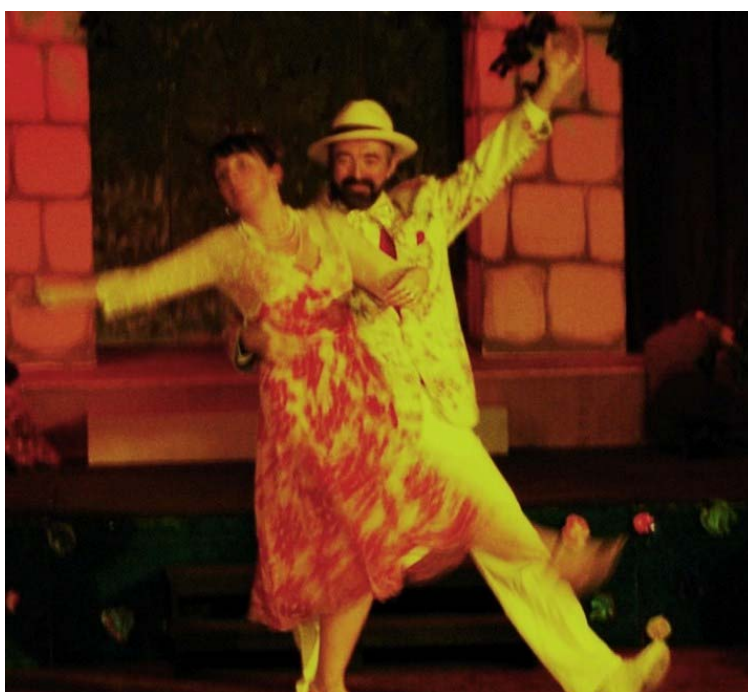












© Peter Grainger

Leading actors pose for publicity pictures at Glenfall House, Charlton Kings





© Barry Curl

Rehearsals and publicity



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Staging “*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*”

We are working from the Penguin edition which has an extensive introduction by Helen Hackett, Reader in English Literature at University College London. This describes all kinds of staging and productions including some really bizarre ones.

We have decided to go for a straightforward production which emphasises that the play is a Comedy (i.e. with a “happy” ending) but makes it clear that that things could have gone horribly wrong. We aim to bring out some interactions which are also worked through by Shakespeare in different ways in other plays.

In particular, we are interested in conflicts between generations (e.g. ‘Romeo and Juliet’, ‘Othello’, ‘The Merry Wives of Windsor’), in the misunderstandings between men and women (e.g. ‘The Taming of the Shrew’, ‘Loves Labour’s Lost’, ‘Much Ado About Nothing’) and interactions between different groups – the upper classes and their “court”, the working class men (“the Mechanicals”) and the mysterious “others” with magical or superhuman powers, described as fairies but to be played in our production as gypsies, “woodland folk” or “bohemians”. (cf. ‘Macbeth’, ‘Othello’, ‘The Tempest’).

We are planning a very simple and intimate production with a target audience of around 130 (for 4 nights) and grouped around three sides of the acting area. There will be no deep stage and proscenium arch and minimal scenery and stage props. Over the last few years, we have experienced very powerful productions “in the round” by a professional Bristol company ‘Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory’. This has encouraged us to provide close encounter between players and audience so the audience is almost drawn into the action – as members of the court or woodland folk.

We have chosen the setting of an English country estate in the 1930s. This fits well with the images and attitudes expressed in the play despite its nominal links to the Greek Classics. The 1930s gives us a balance of difference and familiarity and interesting opportunities for costume and incidental music.

This is an exciting challenge for the Players and we look forward to providing you with a great evening at the theatre in February 2008.

Tony Jeans, Production Manager
July 2007 Charlton Kings Community Players newsletter

Post script to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

Our dilemma..... whether we should or shouldn't have a go at Shakespeare. For a long while it was the latter until a certain persuasive fellow who shall remain nameless talked us both into taking part, albeit in non-speaking supporting roles – we know our place! How we admired all of those who had to master page upon page of lines. Our main worry was whether we'd have as much fun as the whole cast did during the rehearsals and performances of '*Oliver*' – how could that show be beaten? But we did, especially the post performance wind-downs at a local hostelry!

Sacred Hearts Hall was completely transformed by the fabulous floral arrangements and artful set. From then on we felt it was going to be a great success-and it was. The hard work of so many people, on stage, back stage, et al was rewarded.

From our perspective as slightly older members of the players, it was lovely to see so many of the youngsters grow in confidence from the early days of being quite self-conscious (particularly the four young lovers), to the whole cast performing with great aplomb especially on the last night. So, if there's anyone out there who has ever been to watch the Players and thought, "*I'd like to have a go at that,*" bite the bullet, come along next time and give it a go, you'll make new friends and who knows, today Charlton Kings, tomorrow the West End!"

Debbie Masling & Sara Kinane

March 2008 Charlton Kings Community Players newsletter



Kathy Price Sara Kinane Joyce Parsons



Debbie Masling Sylvia Fry Jane Kane

Here are our six excellent ladies whose walk on acting did so much to enhance the play. As a final postscript to the play may I as director thank all those who took part in the play, all the stage, lighting and sound crew, front of house team, car parking and production team for all their efforts in what I think was a really good production. I have had many lovely comments from people who came to see it. Thank you.

Martyn Fry

March 2008 Charlton Kings Community Players newsletter