



BROWN

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PRESS RELEASE

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Brown University Theatre Brings Steampunk to the Bard

*“Are you sure
That we are awake?
It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream.”*

(Demetrius, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act IV, Scene I)

Brown University Theatre presents *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by William Shakespeare, directed by Kira Hawkrige (Artistic Director, OUT LOUD Theatre). Local director Hawkrige brings Edwardian steampunk style to Shakespeare’s famous comedy of dreamers, lovers, and fairy-inspired chaos. Playing at Stuart Theatre on the main campus at Brown University, March 3-13.

Providence, RI – Brown University Theatre is bringing an immersive, steampunk interpretation of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* to the Stuart Theatre stage on the main campus at Brown University this March. On a timeless midsummer’s night, mechanical steampunk actors rehearse in the forest while Edwardian-inspired royalty fall in love, fall asleep, and fall under the spell of punk fairies.

For this production, director Kira Hawkrige and set designer Sara Ossana have re-imagined Stuart Theatre. The audience seating is moved up onto the stage, to make

audiences feel that they too are sharing the forest night with Titania, Oberon and their court of fairies and sprites. A canopy of light and silk hangs overhead and aerial hammocks line the walls. The production creates an environment in which the audience experiences the action not from the outside looking in, but as a part of the fairy world.

The play's central plot features four lovers, confused and lost in the forest. In full Edwardian dress, these young royals bring a hint H. P. Lovecraft's style to the mystery of the night. Punked-out fairies move around and between the audience, inhabiting an aerial world that encompasses the entire theatre. They are guided by their King and Queen, Titania and Oberon, whose feuding causes chaos for all those caught in the forest night. Meanwhile and unaware of the events unfolding around them, a troupe of industrial steampunk actors, decked out in clockwork engineered costume, rehearse their play for the wedding of Duke Theseus.

Director Kira Hawkrigde, who holds a BFA from University of Rhode Island, is the founding Artistic Director of Providence-based theatre company OUT LOUD Theatre. She joins an all-women roster of directors for Brown University's 2015-16 mainstage performance season. Hawkrigde recently directed the highly praised feminist play, *Fefu & Her Friends* with an all-women artistic team. Hawkrigde's theatre career includes directing plays such as *Rhinoceros* and *Jane Eyre*. Broadway World Rhode Island Critics' Picks awarded Hawkrigde "Best Director" for her 2014 sold-out run of Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*."

Describing this production, Hawkrigde says:

It's such an exciting opportunity to be a part of Brown University Theatre. I love working in ensemble and the Brown University students are proving to be perfect for this approach. We are focusing on articulating the language, emotion, magic, and dream-like energies of this much-loved story through the body. We are discovering how to bring what is happening internally to the surface and how we can articulate the inner life through the physical. Each group of characters within the play has become their own unit, discovering their own dynamics. The rehearsal process is an exploration of the physical expression of these groups as their varying dynamics overlap, intersect, and collide.

A series of educational and community-based workshops, talks, and events will take place around this production. These events are an opportunity to learn more about the production and explore the role of Shakespeare in education. Contact Nancy Safian (Academic Events Coordinator, Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies) at nancy_safian@brown.edu for more information.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is produced by the Brown University Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies and by Sock & Buskin, the student-faculty-staff board that selects and runs the mainstage theatre season at Brown University. The show runs March 3-13. Performances are at 8pm, Thursday to Saturday. Sunday

matinees at 2pm. Tickets: \$15 (\$12 seniors, \$7 students). Brown University first year and transfer students go free on Thursdays.

For ticket sales and more information: call (401) 863-2838, or visit the Box Office in the Leeds Theatre Lobby (83 Waterman St, Providence), Tuesday-Friday from 12pm-4pm, or email boxoffice@brown.edu. To book online, visit: brown.edu/tickets. More information on the Brown Theatre performance season available at: brown.edu/theatre.

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