

---

Fresno Ballet Theatre, Valley Performing Arts Council, and State Street Ballet present

State St  
BALLET  
SANTA BARBARA

# A Midsummer Night's Dream



Music by Felix Mendelssohn  
Choreography by Rodney Gustafson  
Based on the play by William Shakespeare

---

# Table of Contents

Summary.....	3
About the Composer: Felix Mendelssohn.....	5
About the Choreographer: Rodney Gustafson.....	6
About the Playwright: William Shakespeare.....	7
About the Company: State Street Ballet.....	8
Activity #1 24   California Arts Standards for Dance California Department of Education Creating—Anchor Standard 1: Generate and Conceptualize Artistic Ideas and Work...9	
Activity #3 30   California Arts Standards for Dance California Department of Education Performing—Anchor Standard 4: Select, Analyze, and Interpret Artistic Work for Presentation.....	10
Activity #2 38   California Arts Standards for Dance California Department of Education Performing—Anchor Standard 6: Convey Meaning Through the Presentation of Artistic Work.....	11
A Midsummer Night’s Dream Word Search.....	13
A Midsummer Night’s Dream Language Worksheet.....	14
A Midsummer Night’s Dream Coloring Sheet.....	15

---

# A Midsummer Night's Dream Summary

## SOURCE

### Act I

As Duke Theseus prepares for his marriage to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, he is interrupted by a courtier, Egeus. Egeus asks for the Duke to intervene in a dispute. His daughter, Hermia, will not agree to marry Demetrius (whom Egeus has chosen for her) because she loves a gentleman named Lysander. The Duke asks Hermia to be obedient to her father. He offers her one of two options: she must either die or accept a celibate life as a nun in Diana's temple.

Naturally upset with the offer, Lysander and Hermia plan to elope and share their secret with Helena, Hermia's friend. Helena is desperately in love with Demetrius, who seems to have abandoned her in favour of Hermia. At night, Lysander and Hermia escape from Athens; but they soon lose their way in the woods. After Helena tells him of their intention to defy the law, Demetrius decides to follow the lovers into the woods. In turn, Helena follows Demetrius in the hope that he will give up on Hermia and choose her instead. Meanwhile, a group of working men are preparing a play of the tragic love-story of Pyramus and Thisbe to present before the Duke Theseus on his wedding day. Nick Bottom, the weaver, is to play the lover Pyramus, while Flute, the bellows-mender, begrudgingly agrees to play Thisbe.



Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind; and therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.

— A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 1 Scene 1

State Street Ballet dancers Nerea Barrondo and Ryan Lenkey.

Photo by Montecito Photo Design

---

## Act II

Nearby, Oberon - King of the Fairies—has recently quarrelled with his queen, Titania. She acquired a magical child from one of her waiting women, and now refuses to hand him over to Oberon to use as a page. Oberon begins to plot a way to get revenge on Titania for her disobedience. He sends his fairy servant, Puck, to fetch a purple flower with juice that makes people fall in love with the next creature they see.

Afterwards, Oberon overhears Helena and Demetrius arguing in the forest. Oberon hears Demetrius mistreat Helena and tells Puck to anoint 'the Athenian', so Demetrius will fall in love with the first person that he sees. Puck mistakes the Athenian and puts the flower juice on the eyes of the sleeping Lysander. When he is woken by Helena, he immediately falls in love with her and rejects Hermia. When Demetrius rests, Oberon puts magic juice on his eyes, which makes him fall in love with Helena as well.

State Street Ballet dancers  
Deise Mendonça and Hernan  
Montenegro. Photo by  
Montecito Photo Design.



## Act III

The workers' rehearsals in the wood are overheard by Puck, who plays a trick on them by giving Bottom an ass's head. After frightening the others away, Bottom is lured towards the sleeping Titania whom Oberon has anointed with Puck's magic flower juice. On waking, the fairy queen falls in love with the ass and entertains him with her fairies.

The course of true love never did run smooth.

— A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 1 Scene 1

Meanwhile, Demetrius and Lysander, still under the spell of the flower juice, pursue Helena. Hermia is jealous and confused about the lack of attention paid to her. Oberon and Puck watch the chaos, and Oberon commands Puck to put it right again. The lovers' arguments have tired them all out as they have chased one another through the woods. Puck eventually distracts the two men from their pursuit of Helena by impersonating their voices, and they get lost in the woods. The four lovers fall asleep, exhausted. Puck places restorative juice on Lysander's eyes.

---

## Act IV

After an afternoon of being pampered by Titania's fairies, Bottom falls asleep beside her. Oberon restores Titania's sight and wakes her (thank goodness). After expressing her dismay at the sight of Bottom, she reconciles with Oberon, and she ends up giving him the little Indian prince for his page. Bottom's ass head is removed, and he returns to the city to rejoin his friends as they prepare to perform their play. The lovers are woken by Theseus and Hippolyta's hunting party. Lysander sees Hermia and falls in love with her once again.

## Act V

Happily reunited (Lysander with Hermia and Demetrius with Helena), they agree to share the Duke's wedding day. The play of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' is presented before the wedding guests. As the three couples retire to bed, Puck and the fairies return to bless the palace and its people.

State Street Ballet dancer Kaito Yamamoto. Photo by Montecito Photo Design.



## About the Composer: Felix Mendelssohn

Felix Mendelssohn's score for William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is probably the most famous incidental music ever written (with Beethoven's music for Goethe's *Egmont* a close second). Mendelssohn composed the miraculous overture as a 17-year-old, and the incidental music dates from 1843, near the end of his life, which was cut short by a pair of strokes four years later.

Mendelssohn had grown up in the most intellectually stimulating circumstances imaginable. He was the grandson of one of the brightest stars in the firmament of German Enlightenment thinkers, Moses Mendelssohn, and the son of one of Berlin's most successful bankers. The Mendelssohn household at Leipziger Strasse No. 3 was a hub of intellectual and cultural activity, often visited by figures like Alexander von Humboldt and G.W.F. Hegel.



---

Felix and his sister Fanny were inordinately gifted musicians, and their sister Rebecca was an adept linguist who could read Homer in the original Greek. The children were tutored in English, French, and German, and when they weren't playing or making music, they read voraciously. Shakespeare was a favorite, and Felix and his sisters would read the plays aloud, acting out the different parts.

A favorite was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with its fairies, elves, and magic spells easily capturing the children's imaginations. When a translation of the play by August Wilhelm Schlegel (whose brother married Felix's aunt), made with the help of Ludwig Tieck, became part of the Mendelssohns' library in 1826, Felix began to appreciate the play's musical potential, and he started composing what would become the overture. The translations were unlike any made before, painstakingly executed, with the translators usually going through a dozen or more versions of each line before deciding on the German equivalent that best captured the spirit of the English text. They were full of rich poetic imagery, just the stuff to stoke the fires of Felix's imagination.

## About the Choreographer: Rodney Gustafson

**Rodney Gustafson, Executive and Artistic Director**, founded State Street Ballet in 1994 after a successful performing career with American Ballet Theatre. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Business Administration and Organizational Management, and combining these skills with the experiences of a performing career has allowed him to build a successful ballet company respected for its versatility, artistic excellence, and intelligently-designed productions. His innovative approach, mastery of the classics, and business savvy have empowered State Street Ballet to become an internationally acclaimed dance company that tours throughout the world.

As a dancer with American Ballet Theatre, Mr. Gustafson worked with many of the greatest dancers and choreographers of the time, including Mikhail Baryshnikov, Alvin Ailey, George Balanchine, Rudolph Nureyev, Jerome Robbins and Antony Tudor. He appeared in the films *The Turning Point* and Baryshnikov's *Nutcracker*, and performed in several *Live from Lincoln Center* specials airing on PBS. During his tenure as Artistic Director of State Street Ballet, Mr. Gustafson has created many original full-length ballets for the company, including *The Nutcracker*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Jungle Book*.



---

## About the Playwright: William Shakespeare

**William Shakespeare** (26 April 1564 (baptised) – 23 April 1616) was an English poet, playwright, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon". His extant works, including some collaborations, consist of around 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, of which the authorship of some is uncertain. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright. Shakespeare was born and brought up in Stratford-upon-Avon. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judith. Between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men. He appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613 at age 49, where he died three years later. Few records of Shakespeare's private life survive, and there has been considerable speculation about such matters as his physical appearance, sexuality, religious beliefs, and whether the works attributed to him were written by others.

Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories and these works remain regarded as some of the best work produced in these genres. He then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, considered some of the finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights.

Many of his plays were published in editions of varying quality and accuracy during his lifetime. In 1623, John Heminges and Henry Condell, two friends and fellow actors of Shakespeare, published the First Folio, a collected edition of his dramatic works that included all but two of the plays now recognised as Shakespeare's. It was prefaced with a poem by Ben Jonson, in which Shakespeare is hailed, presciently, as "not of an age, but for all time". In the 20th and 21st centuries, his work has been repeatedly adopted and rediscovered by new movements in scholarship and performance. His plays remain highly popular today and are constantly studied, performed, and reinterpreted in diverse cultural and political contexts throughout the world.



---

## About the Company: State Street Ballet



**State Street Ballet, founded in 1994, is an internationally acclaimed dance company based in Santa Barbara, CA** under the bi-coastal artistic direction of Rodney Gustafson and William Soleau. It is a pioneering collaborative that employs dancers from around the world, consistently striving for new and innovative artistic opportunities that serve a broad audience. Each season is dedicated to bringing the highest standards of artistry and originality to tried and true classical favorites, plus new works that reflect the contemporary nature and talent of the ensemble. The company is comprised of 20 dancers representing five countries.

**State Street Ballet values artistic collaborations and arts outreach opportunities**, and is committed to enriching every community we perform in, large or small. Inspiring future generations and reaching a broader, more diverse audience is consistently a priority. Successful collaborations with the Santa Barbara Symphony, Opera Santa Barbara, Music Academy of the West, and the Santa Barbara Choral Society have become very popular and much-anticipated Santa Barbara traditions.

**State Street Ballet tours both nationally and internationally**, boasting a 90% rebooking rate, rave reviews, and standing ovations from coast to coast. In 2015, the company embarked on a nine-week tour throughout China, performing *Beauty and the Beast* in 25 different cities, and the summer of 2017 brought the company an invitation to perform at the International Ballet Gala in Santiago, Chile, showcasing the versatility of our repertoire and dancers

Activity #1



## PROCESS COMPONENT

Explore

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

Choreographers use a variety of sources as inspiration and transform concepts and ideas into movement for artistic expression.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Where do choreographers get ideas for dances?

Choreographers can get ideas for dancers from many places: a dream, an image, a personal or shared experience, a relationship, a character, and often a story or a play. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the choreographer gains inspiration from Shakespeare's classic comedy of the same name. Instead of words, the choreographer uses movement, music, costumes, and stage design to bring the characters and the story to life for the audience to see, hear, and enjoy.

Stop and Think:

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* there are four distinct groups of characters: the lovers (Hernia, Helena, Demetrius, and Lysander), the fairies (Titania, Oberon, Puck, etc.), the royalty (Duke Theseus and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons), and the dopey rude mechanicals, one of whom winds up with the head of a donkey!

How might these different characters inspire you to move? Would the royal couple move differently than the Bottom, the rude mechanical with the donkey head? How would the fairies move through the woods? How would the lovers move through the woods?

Activity: In small groups, create a series of movements for each group of characters. Then share your series of movements with the other groups and see if they can guess which characters inspired you!

---

## Activity #2

38 | California Arts Standards for Dance California Department of Education

Performing—Anchor Standard 6: Convey Meaning Through the Presentation of Artistic Work

### PROCESS COMPONENT

Present

### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

Dance performance is an interaction between performer, production elements, and audience that heightens and amplifies artistic expression.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does a dancer heighten artistry in a public performance?

Dancers rehearse their choreography for many hours in the studio before getting to perform on stage for a live audience. Likewise, the set designer, costume designer, lighting designer, and sound designer or orchestra spend a lot of time preparing the stage set, costumes, lighting, and music for a performance.

### Watch and Learn:

Review the two video links listed below. One link will show a rehearsal video from the studio, while one link shows a live performance in a theater. Which one do you find more impactful and why? Does the dancer seem more expressive in the performance or the rehearsal?

Rehearsal video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FC-KPHXUaXM>

Performance video link: <https://youtu.be/7Fwwec9s3ak>

### Stop and Think:

Have you ever performed in a dance or a play?

Did you find that you were more engaged in performing when there was an audience? Have you ever dressed up for Halloween?

Did putting on the costume make you feel more like the character you were dressing up as?

How might the audience, music, costumes, and other stage elements help the dancer give a more powerful performance?

---

### Activity #3

30 | California Arts Standards for Dance California Department of Education  
Performing—Anchor Standard 4: Select, Analyze, and Interpret Artistic Work for  
Presentation

#### PROCESS COMPONENT

Express

#### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

Space, time, and energy are basic elements of dance.

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do dancers work with space, time, and energy to communicate artistic expression?

Space, time, and energy are the basic elements of dance. When watching dance, creating choreography, or dancing yourself, it is important to be aware of these three elements.

Space can determine whether dancers are close together or far from each other. A dancers use of space can determine if they will make a small shape or a large shape, a symmetrical or asymmetrical shape, a high, medium, or low shape, or if they will travel far across the earth or stay in place.

Time dictates how quickly or slowly a dancer will move. Often dancers use music or rhythm to count and measure time so that their movements can be synchronized. When dancers move on the same timing it is called dancing in unison.

Energy determines the way that a dancer moves. Is the dancer moving limply across the floor, or are they moving as if they just ate lots of sugar? Energy can also help dancers express emotion. For example, to express happiness a dancer might move quickly with a lot of energy and intention, or to express sadness, a dancer might move in a more heavy or haphazard way.

#### Activity:

Space: With a small group make the following shapes: a small shape that takes little space, a large shape that takes a lot of space, a shape that is the same on both sides (symmetrical), a shape that is not the same on both sides (asymmetrical), a high shape, a medium shape, and a low shape. Which shape was your favorite and why?

Time: Experiment with different rhythms and tempos. Have half of the class set the tempo by clapping rhythmically in a slow way while the other half of the class chooses a pose on each clap. Then have the group that is clapping speed up, encouraging the other group to still try to pose on each beat. Switch groups, then discuss which tempo was easier or more enjoyable to move with.

Energy: Choose some adjectives such as tired, excited, sad, happy, and then move in ways that match each adjective (for even more fun, add music that fits

---

each adjective). Then choose words that describe the natural world such as free, flowing, powerful, percussive, warm, hot, cold, freezing, and create movements to match each word. How does it feel to change the energy of your movements? Can you have more than one type of energetic movement in a dance?

# A Mid Summer Night's Dream Lovers' Story Word Search

D T L R L A W F E G A S G P U I  
L R Y L P Y N O S Y I P F X D D  
O R E Y E J S E O W M A A N E B  
C I G A M P Y A L D R N I C G V  
J X X P M E S A N E E I R I E U  
D E M E T R I U S D H E Y T K K  
C U P I D F L E E W E L J Q U A  
I R E W O L F H F Q S R Q Z D H

CUPID

DECREE

DEMETRIUS

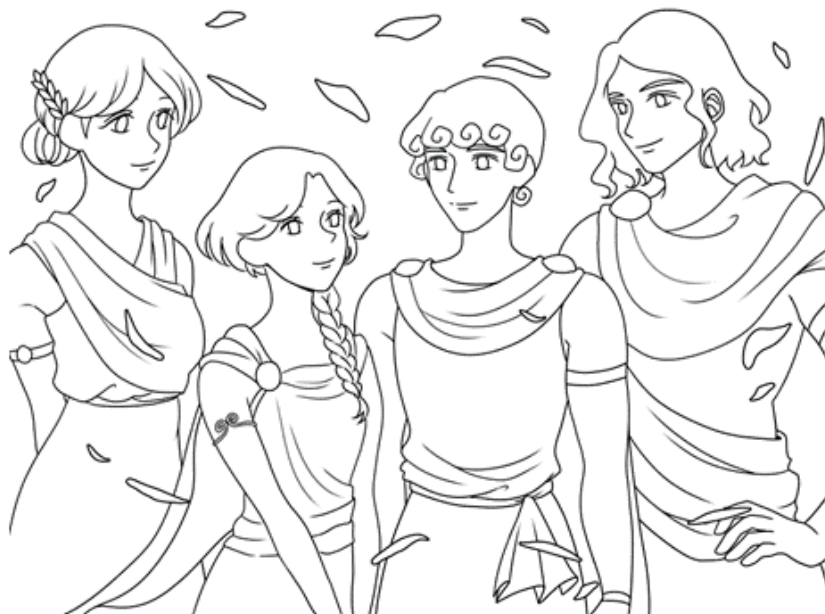
DREAM

DUKE

EYES

FAIRY

FLEE



FLOWER

HELENA

HERMIA

LYSANDER

MAGIC

SPANIEL

SPELL

WOODS



# A Midsummer Night's Dream



by William Shakespeare

## Shakespeare-Speak

Write in modern language what Shakespeare meant when he wrote each phrase.

1. "Our nuptial hour draws on apace. Four happy days bring in another moon."

---

---

2. "O spite! Too old to be engaged to young."

---

---

3. "Call you me "fair"? That "fair" again unsay. Demetrius loves your fair."

---

---

4. "How happy some o'er other some can be!"

---

---

5. "Oh, why rebuke you him that loves you so? Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe."

---

---



## QUIZ

Draw a line from the characters' names to their description.

1. A jester; a mischievous fairy who takes joy in playing pranks on humans.

Lysander

2. King of the fairies. Married to Titania. He sends Puck to get the love-potion that creates havoc.

Helena

3. Queen of the fairies. Briefly (because of a love potion) falls for Nick Bottom, who temporarily has the head of a donkey.

Hermia

4. Young man from Athens, who is in love with Hermia, but cannot marry her because her father wants her to marry Demetrius.

Puck

5. Young man, first in love with Hermia at the play's start, then in love with Helena. Persues Helena obsessively.

Demetrius

6. Young woman in love with Lysander. Egeus's daughter.

Oberon

7. Young woman desperately in love with Demetrius. Believes that she is not beautiful.

Titania

Shakespeare-Speak Answers: 1. Our wedding day is coming soon. We'll be married in four days, on the night of the new moon. 2. How awful! Being too old to marry someone young. 3. Did you just say I was "pretty"? Take it back. You're the pretty one. Demetrius loves your beauty. 4. It's astonishing how much happier some people are than others! 5. Why be rude to a man who loves you so much? Use that kind of mean language for your worst enemy. Quiz Answers: 1. Puck 2. Oberon 3. Titania 4. Lysander 5. Demetrius 6. Hermia 7. Helena

# A Midsummer Night's Dream Coloring Sheet

