

A Magical Night: Enchanting Performance of a Midsummer Night's Dream at the Deutsches Theater Göttingen

If you are open to watch an enchanting tale full of magic, love and several heart breaks, Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is definitely one to dive into. The latest production at the "Deutsche's Theater Göttingen" is directed by Paul Stebbings, the Artistic Director of TNT theater Britain and the American Drama Group Europe. It premiered on February 27th 2025 and has since then captured the dreamlike nature of the play while thoroughly entertaining the audience from the moment the curtain rose.

The play is set in two completely different settings. For one, we got to experience Athens, representing law and order, while we also get to dive into the fantastical forest of the fairies. The light change made the magical difference. Whenever the stage represented the fairy forest, the lights turned into a mysterious green, when the scenes changed, the lights turned blue.

"Midsummer Night's Dream" follows the unpredictable fate of four young lovers: Helena, Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius, who, after the mischievous pixie called Puck, the right hand to the fairy king Oberon, plays tricks on them, are confronted with unexpected love followed to by confusing heartbreaks. Apart from playing tricks on the teenagers, Puck also meddles within the fairy world and with the fairy queen Titania, ultimately leading to the fairy world colliding with human affairs, which results in hilarious conversations and rather unexpected romances. All of this is triggered by a love potion that Puck is ordered to use by Oberon, which, when dropped on someone's eye while sleeping, makes you fall desperately in love with the first person you see when waking up.

When talking about the actual performance each actor brings to the table, you'd have to mention the authenticity. Considering the fact that it was only six actors but 15 roles, meaning one actor has to not only play one character but two or three, throughout a duration of 90 minutes, they manage to convey emotions and enforce their different roles quite well. At times, the acting felt exaggerated, which may detract from the overall experience for some viewers, though one could argue that theater is supposed to be bigger than life and it is Shakesperian comedy after all. The standout performance of this premiere was the actress that plays Helena, who brought not only boundless energy upon the stage, but also naturally enjoyed all the attention given to her, making her character likeable, even if her actions at some points were rather questionable. Her beautiful singing voice also contributed to the atmosphere, as her melodic skills shocked almost the entire audience. Overall, the actors did a phenomenal job, neither of their performances felt staged, but natural, especially when interacting with each other. I was in fact thoroughly impressed by their ability to convey complex emotions through their performance.

While the production was visually appealing and not at all boring, it did rely on a limited amount of props, which sometimes made the staging feel repetitive. The props used were mostly the same two boxes, leafs or swords. However, this form of minimalism might have been an intentional choice, as the focus seemed to be more on making spoken-Shakespearean English accessible to a German-speaking audience. Not by changing Shakespeare words, but by bringing them to live, through expressive mimicry and gestures.

Thanks to the physical storytelling, the part of the audience that was kept in the dark concerning the plot due to the complex language were easily drawn into the storyline and additionally dragged into the world of not only Athens, but also the magical fairy forest. This production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was an absolute delight. I walked in without knowing the entire story and walked out with a very clear understanding of it, no questions were left unanswered- despite the Shakespearean English.

This production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was an absolute delight. I walked in without knowing the entire story and walked out with a very clear understanding of it, no questions were left unanswered- despite the Shakespearean English. As a German native speaker that is really interested in Shakespeare's work, I was really impressed by the fact that they had not altered the text at all. I would highly recommend this production to other students because it makes Shakespeare's language accessible and brings the story to life captivantly.

Now, to anyone considering to go and watch Paul Stebbings' take on "A Midsummer Night's Dream": Dress up nicely and enjoy an evening full of love and laughter!