



Actors Ensemble of Berkeley

Summer 2024 Staged Reading Series at LaVal's Subterranean

## *Greenwood*

Written and Directed by Stuart Bousel

### AUTHOR/DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The trouble with wanting to tell any story that's been told and retold a million times, is figuring out your angle; not just what it is, but why it is.

The idea to combine *Robin Hood* with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was one I stumbled upon when I was talking to a local Shakespeare company about how *Midsummer* is a timeless and true classic, but also perhaps the most overdone play in the entire western canon. Somewhere in there a light bulb went off and it hit me that maybe by combining two such tried and tired classics, I could trip my way into something that, if not exactly new, would at least be novel. When I started working on the piece, I originally thought it would be a pretty straightforward adaptation, more a directorial concept than an actual new script, but with each draft I found that more and more of my poetry was lacing its way into the piece, with Shakespeare's words often inspiring my own, and then being replaced by ones more appropriate to my characters. Now I jokingly tell people I am collaborating with Shakespeare because sometimes that's how it feels. There have even been times when I've found myself speaking out loud to him.

But to what end, you may ask? For the sheer joy of it. We love *Midsummer* and *Robin Hood* for, I think, similar reasons: they are both outlandish and often hilarious stories about freedom, about people who run to nature for solace or protection and in the depths of the woods discover who they are, who they can be. They are both jubilant, joyful, celebratory tales about being human, idealistic, driven by romance and passion and profound senses of Right and Wrong, and they are also both dark and uncanny at times. They are stories about seeking to make whole again, a community which has been split by those petty and greedy parts of ourselves that aren't admirable but are certainly human.

**Stuart Bousel** (director/writer) is a San Francisco based playwright and director. He most recently adapted *A Room With A View* for **Actors Ensemble's** summer 2023 production and directed *Cymbeline* at Berkeley Shakes. He is currently on the staff for The EXIT Theatre, and freelance writes for the Petaluma Argus-Courier. [www.stuartbousel.com](http://www.stuartbousel.com).

Incidentally, **Greenwood** originally began as a project for the SF Olympians Festival and was supposed to premiere in November of 2020. Set aside like so many projects from that time, I am beyond excited to find it surfacing again, at a time when stories about being part of something, doing right, and forgiving your foes, feel most needed.

### CAST

FRIAR TUCK - Carl Lucania  
ROBIN HOOD - Isaac Kumpula  
SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM - Francis Serpa  
SIR GUY OF GISBOURNE - Stanley Spenger  
JENNY WREN - Sophie Ruf  
MUCH THE MILLER'S SON - Erika Bakse  
WILL SCARLET - Tyler Null  
PRINCESS ISABEL OF FRANCE - Alejandra Wahl  
PRINCESS HADWISA OF GLOSTER - Lisa Wang  
PRINCE JOHN PLANTAGENET - Abe Karplus  
LITTLE JOHN - Dillon Siedentopf  
LADY MARIAN - Elana Swartz

**Actors Ensemble** is the longest-running theatre organization in Berkeley, founded in 1957. We aim to produce quality theatre emphasizing the ensemble, with a community flavor.

Our fall 2024 production at LaVal's Subterrean Theater:

Arthur Miller's **Death of a Salesman**, directed by Michael R. Cohen, Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>–Dec 1<sup>st</sup>

We are a 501(3)c organization!: **Donate:** [www.aeofberkeley.org/donate](http://www.aeofberkeley.org/donate)

**Greenwood** is performed on Friday, Sep. 13<sup>th</sup> 2024 (rescheduled from August 30<sup>th</sup>) thanks to the good graces of Theatre Lunatico. Check out their upcoming production of **The Moors** by Jen Silverman, directed by Tara Blau Smollen and performed at LaVal's Subterranean Theatre Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>.