

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley presents

William Shakespeare's

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

August 22nd - September 7th
Saturdays & Sundays
plus Labor Day
4pm



Directed by
MICHAEL R. COHEN

aeofberkeley.org
FREE OF CHARGE

at John Hinkel Park Amphitheater



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by William Shakespeare

Adapted and Directed

by Michael R. Cohen with Ben Prusiner

Cast

(in alphabetical order)

<i>Egeus</i>	<i>Carolyn Ford Compton</i>
<i>Hermia</i>	<i>AnneJelika Ong Cortez</i>
<i>Francis Flute</i>	<i>Breezy/Desilva</i>
<i>Oberon/Theseus</i>	<i>Arcady Eugene</i>
<i>Puck</i>	<i>linda maria girón</i>
<i>Tom Snout</i>	<i>Keith Jefferds</i>
<i>Bottom</i>	<i>Bruce Kaplan</i>
<i>Titania/Hippolyta</i>	<i>Cynthia Lagodzinski</i>
<i>Snug</i>	<i>Avery May</i>
<i>Robin Starveling</i>	<i>Sarah Mooney</i>
<i>Lysander</i>	<i>Nic Moore</i>
<i>Fairy Mustard Seed/Understudy</i>	<i>Eshani More</i>
<i>Fairy Peaseblossom/Understudy</i>	<i>Mars Ohayon</i>
<i>Demetrius</i>	<i>Parker Soughers</i>
<i>Peter Quince</i>	<i>Kim Saunders</i>
<i>Helena</i>	<i>Tina Traboulsi</i>
<i>Fairy Cobweb/Understudy</i>	<i>Comet Ziemer</i>

Staff

<i>Director</i>	<i>Michael R. Cohen</i>
<i>Assistant Director & Dramaturgy</i>	<i>Ben Prusiner</i>
<i>Stage Manager</i>	<i>Mary Tran</i>
<i>Costume Design</i>	<i>Lyre Alston</i>
<i>Set Designer</i>	<i>Kirsten Yamaguchi</i>
<i>Properties Designer</i>	<i>Susan Dunn</i>
<i>Music Director and Ukelele</i>	<i>linda maria girón</i>
<i>Fight Choreography</i>	<i>Nic Moore</i>
<i>Keyboards</i>	<i>Keith Jefferds</i>
<i>Kazoo</i>	<i>Mars Ohayon</i>
<i>Graphic Design</i>	<i>Sophie Ruf</i>
<i>Photography</i>	<i>Jane Shamaeva</i>
<i>Concessions Coordinator</i>	<i>Greg Gutting</i>
<i>Website</i>	<i>Jonathon Gordon</i>
<i>Producer & Many Other Things</i>	<i>Jerome Solberg</i>

A Note from the Director

Directing Shakespeare's plays presents a glorious challenge of contrasting elements. They demand creativity and free the imagination to be creative. There is little or no stage direction in the script, yet the text contains an abundance of information that sparks the imagination.

A Midsummer Night's Dream combines the sometimes silly almost farcical chaos of the lovers, the inept yet earnest comedy of the mechanicals, the fairy world's mischief and some of the most beautiful poetry ever written.

Our aim is to make the play fun, above all, and accessible to a modern audience while honoring Shakespeare's glorious language and the rich complexities of ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***.

Michael R. Cohen, August 2026

Thanks to Berkeley Parks and Recreation for their cooperation with our use of John Hinkel Park Amphitheater, Temple Beth Hillel in Richmond, for rehearsal space, YES theater for the use of the benches, and POCKET OPERA of S.F., Nicholas Garcia and Daniel Yellen for the use of various props.

Next up for Actors Ensemble

The IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

by Oscar Wilde, directed by Jay Manley w/Jane Goodwin.

Live Oak Theater,

October 2nd - October 18th

One of the most treasured comedies in English-speaking theater, Oscar Wilde's ***THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*** never fails to delight and amuse audiences - and it provides nine of the most delicious roles in the canon. A madcap farce about mistaken identities, secret romantic engagements, and acute social class satire, ***EARNEST*** also contains one of the theater's wittiest and most sophisticated texts.

Check our website www.aeofberkeley.org and/or follow us on social media for upcoming auditions, productions, and staged readings.

Remember, we depend on your generous donations for our continued survival!

Cast and Staff Biographies

In Alphabetical Order

Lyre Alston (*Costume Designer*) (he/him/she/her) is a freelance contractor working within the bay area, specializing in costume construction and design, wig/hair construction, styling, and design, and makeup artistry and design. Lyre prefers to hop from place to place, always on the lookout for opportunities to further said skills as an artisan, to seek out new inspiration and education, and to work with all kinds of artists in both performative and design worlds. To Lyre, art is the most important thing second only to education, and it is with great joy that we can invite you to enjoy **A Midsummer Night's Dream** here today to watch, support the arts, and maybe learn something new. Previous credits include *CATS: The Musical* at Berkeley Playhouse, *Antony and Cleopatra* with SF Shakespeare: Free Shakes in the Park, and *Alice in Wonderland* with **Actors Ensemble of Berkeley**.

Michael R Cohen (*Director*) has directed *Death of a Salesman*, *Fortinbras* (2022), *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Twelfth Night*, *Panhandle*, *The Talking Cure*, and *Fortinbras* (2013) for **Actors Ensemble of Berkeley** and currently serves as board president. As a former member at large of the Ross Valley Players board where, as chair of the New Works formally Ross Alternative Works - RAW) committee, he produced, directed and designed the sets for numerous works including the critically acclaimed productions of *Reservations* and *The Packrat Gene*. For 25 years he served as Director of Performing Arts at Rosemead High School, a public high school east of Los Angeles. An AEA member, he was assistant stage manager for the Barn Theater in Augusta, Michigan, and stage manager for the Ensemble Studio Theater and the Bilingual Foundation of the Arts in Los Angeles.

Carolyn Ford Compton (*Egeus*) is a first-timer here in Berkeley, and is happy to be included in this talented troupe! From the Peninsula, appearing in *On Golden Pond*, *Laramie Project*, *Lion in Winter*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Tin Woman*, *Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, she is grateful to be on the stage again in one of her favorite Shakespeare plays. Carolyn continues studying with Z/A Studio in SF because you are never too old to keep on perfecting your craft! Much appreciation for the chance to be here, love to Family, especially Darlin' Darryl.

Born and raised Bay Area native, **AnneJelika "AJ" Ong Cortez** (*Hermia*) is delighted to be working with **AE**. Credits include *Pet Lingerie* (Ross Valley Players) as Susan Night, and lead role of **AE's** previous new work, *Faeries of the Moonlight* as Sunny. Currently, AJ is training in voice acting, motion capture, and the art of Yelling at People.

Breezy/Desilva (*Francis Flute*) is thrilled to perform a second time with **AE** after *Alice in Wonderland* earlier this summer, embracing this unique opportunity to express their creativity through both acting and music. Originally from Los Angeles, they joined **AE** for two major reasons: first, to connect with fellow Bay Area creatives, and second, because they firmly believe that sharing the arts is vital community work. For Breezy, live theater is not merely a form of entertainment, nor the preserving of tradition, it is showcasing the real, unmatched value of human expression in an era of artificial intelligence.

Susan Dunn (*Props*) is over-joyed to work with **AE** on a production of the great magic-inspired play of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, having just recently worked on AE's equally magical *Alice In Wonderland*. A treat of a story for all ages and perfectly suited for the park. She has worked production on many shows for **AE** at the park, LaVal's Subterranean, and other local venues and loves being part of a creative team approach to theater. Everyone chips in their time and plays many roles. Thank you for attending and supporting live theater in our East Bay World.

Arcady Eugene (*Oberon/Theseus*) is delighted to join **Actors Ensemble** in this magical play and return as Oberon, having previously played the Fairy King in a production with Ninjaz of Drama. Other favorite roles include Moll Cutpurse in *The Roaring Girl* (Theatre of Others) and Princess Torva in *Spell Eternity* (Quantum Dragon Theatre). When not onstage, Arcady enjoys running D&D games for friends, and spoiling their sassy cats.

linda maria girón (*Puck*) (they/they) is a queer Guatemalan-American actor, playwright, musician, and visual artist creating art to inspire joy, empathy, and collective liberation. Recent theatrical credits include: Crowded Fire Theater's *Limp Wrist On The Lever* (Zo), Marin Theater's *Do You Feel Anger?* (Eva), and Shotgun Players' *Collective Rage: A Play In Five Betties* (Betty 3). They last pranced around John Hinkel Park as Feste in **AE's Twelfth Night: An (Acoustic) Rock Musical**. They are honored to reunite with their dear friend, mentor, and high school drama teacher, 'Mr.' Michael Cohen. This one's for you, Michael, and from the bottom of my heart. Thank you. (lindamgiron.com / @lindamariagiron)

Keith Jefferts (*Tom Snout*) is thrilled to back for his fourth **AE** production! Favorite roles through the years: Shelley Levene (Glengarry Glen Ross), King Henry (*Lion in Winter*), Tartuffe (*Tartuffe*), Elwood P. Dowd (Harvey), and Boss Mangan (**AE's Heartbreak House**). Keith is about to start pitching the musical he has written and scored based on his earlier RVP-staged play *Agoraphilia*—and just this month he released his novel [Runtime: Iggy's Final Cut](#) (Amazon) set in Golden Age Hollywood.

Bruce Kaplan (*Bottom*) is excited to be performing at John Hinkel Park once again. Last summer he appeared here as Gremio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and previously as Argan in *The Imaginary Invalid*. Recent favorite roles include Willy Loman in **AE's Death of a Salesman**, Mushnik in *Little Shop of Horrors* (Pinole Players), Gloucester in *King Lear* (Berkeley Shakes), Doolittle in *Pygmalion* (Orinda SVP), and the Wizard in *Wizard of Oz* (Tri-Valley Theater). Thanks for supporting community theater!

Cynthia Lagodzinski (*Hippolyta/Titania*) works as an actor, director, designer, and lecturer in the SF Bay Area. Her work has been seen at SPARC, Central Works, Hillbarn, Douglas Morrisson, Eugene O'Neill Festival, and Silicon Valley Shakespeare. Internationally, she has performed at the Prague Shakespeare Company and the International Eugene O'Neill Festival in Ireland. She holds a BA in Acting and Playwriting and a Post-Baccalaureate in Directing from UCSC, as well as a Master's Degree in Directing from SFSU.

Avery May (*Snug*) is a nonbinary little guy who loves participating in theater and is very excited to perform in their second show with **AE** after *Alice in Wonderland* earlier this summer. They love theater so much that they are here instead of playing Deltarune. They are a proud father of 1 cat and 2 chinchillas, and stepfather of 4 other cats. They would like to shout out every member of the

cast and crew who made this show what it is. And thank you to the audience for coming so we aren't performing to an empty amphitheater, as that would be slightly awkward.

Sarah Mooney (*Robin Starveling*) (she/her), originally from NH but now living in Oakland, is excited and grateful to return to **Actors Ensemble**. Previous shows with AE were *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Death of a Salesman*. She has also performed in *Doctor Voynich* and *Her Children*, *Clybourne Park* and *Calendar Girls* with Masquers, *King Lear* with Foodbank Players and *Henry IV* with Bard Theatre.

Nic Moore (*Lysander/Fight Choreographer*) {he/him} is an actor and fight choreographer. He has worked with Word for Word, SPARC, African American Shakespeare Company, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Ross Valley Players, Theatre Rhinoceros, and We Players. He studied at The Meisner Technique Studio in SF.

Pursuing a major in film and a passion for the creative arts, **Eshani More** (*Fairy Mustard Seed/Understudy*) is dedicated to bringing a grounded and nuanced performance with each role she plays. Her recent work includes her role as Connie in a coming-of-age play, *Dance Nation*, as well as her work earlier this summer in AE's *Alice in Wonderland*. Gaining a scholarship for the New York Conservatory for the dramatic arts gave her the push to pursue her passion as an actor and writer. Besides her acting credits, More is a newly published author of the poetry book, Blue Flame, screenwriter and aspiring director. She holds an inherent flame towards the exploration of the human experience which fuels her immense desire to create and be a part of stories. She hopes to continue sinking her teeth into the livelihood of storytelling throughout her career.

Mars Ohayon (*Fairy Peaseblossom/Understudy*) **A Midsummer Night's Dream** is Mars Ohayon's first theatrical role since middle school, and they are so excited to return to this passion! Currently a philosophy and politics major, they bring commitment and amity to any project they're on. Ohayon has loved working with their scene partners to add comedy and energy in every scene! They hope you enjoy the show!!!!

Ben Prusiner (he/him) (*Dramaturg & Assistant Director*) – Ben is excited to be back in the Bay Area and to be working with Actors Ensemble. Previous dramaturgy includes Red Bull Theater in NY (*Volpone*, *The Changeling*) and Marin Shakespeare (*Seeds of Time*). He has presented at an academic conference at Shakespeare's Globe in London and is on the Advisory Council of The Rose Playhouse, the archaeological site of one of Shakespeare's theaters. MA Applied Theatre (CUNY), MA Drama Directing (Bristol Old Vic Theatre School).

Parker Soughers (*Demetrius*) is excited to join **Actors Ensemble of Berkeley** for their production of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. He recently portrayed the role of Mark in Winters Theatre Company production of *A Chorus Line* and Mortimer in Benicia Theatre Group's production of *The Fantasticks*. He currently studies acting and allied health at Diablo Valley College. Parker would like to thank his friends and family for their endless support.

Kim Saunders (*Peter Quince*) is happy to be returning to **AE** after performing in *The Imaginary Invalid* as Toinette. She has performed at The Nat Home Theatre, Neighborhood Playhouse, ABT at Lincoln Center, The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, African American Shakespeare, and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. Favorite roles include Kate-*Taming of the Shrew*, Beatrice-*Much Ado* and

Rhonda-*Big Scary Animals*.. She is also a professional director/choreographer and works as a teaching artist in high schools supporting teachers and the amazing students, she has the privilege of working with. www.kimsaunders.net

Jerome Solberg (*Producer*) has been in and around AE since 2005. Thanks to Hitomi especially and everyone who has helped with this production and all the other ones over the years, and to the audience for contributing to and being a part of the community of live theater.

Tina Traboulsi (*Helena*) is thrilled to make her **AE** debut and work with Michael Cohen in John Hinkel Park! She recently earned critical acclaim as Susan in *Wait Until Dark* (Ross Valley Players) and a nomination for Daphne in *Present Laughter* (Novato Theater Company). Favorite credits include Juliet in *Romeo & Juliet* (6th Street Playhouse), Cynthia Weil in *Beautiful* (Spreckels), Louise in *The Hello Girls* (Sonoma Arts Live), Emily in *Our Town*, and Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* (RVP). Tina enjoys long walks - her longest to date is walking across California from SF to Yosemite. Love and gratitude to her fiancé, family, friends, and mentors. B.A.: Santa Clara University (cum laude). Website: tinatraboulsi.com

Mary Tran (*Stage Manager*) is a retired epidemiologist and long-time resident of the East Bay. She has served as stage manager for several plays with **AE** and Masquers and feels privileged to be part of the team for this production of ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***.

Kirsten Yamaguchi (*Set Design*) This is the seventh **AE** production Kirsten has designed after *Alice in Wonderland*, *Cymbeline*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, and *Death of a Salesman*. In addition to set design, Kirsten Yamaguchi has designed many theater programs and posters, taught theater design and animation, and works as an animator. As a youth in Los Angeles, Kirsten performed on stage in many musicals. <https://www.yamaguchianimation.com>.

Comet Ziemer (*Fairy Cobweb/Understudy*) is thrilled to finally perform in a Shakespeare production for the first time. Comet has been performing since they were 6 years old, where they started at Benicia Ballet Theatre. After 9 years of ballet, they went to Benicia Highschool where they were with the Drama Program all 4 years of highschool and were on the advanced BITE Improv team for 2 years. They are currently at Solano Community College, working to get their AA in Theatre Arts with hopes to transfer to a University to get their Masters. Comet would like to thank their loving parents and their wonderful friends. Credits: Cat In The Hat - *Seussical The Musical*, Tap Chorus - *42nd Street*, Karl III - *The Visit*. Instagram: @flowercomet.

Actors Ensemble dedicates ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** to the memory of **Robert (Bob) Gudmundsson**, longtime contributor to Actors Ensemble in so many aspects – set and light design, construction, technical direction, and as a great friend and source of wisdom to all. Bob was instrumental in our return to John Hinkel Park in 2013 and for many years memorably manned the grill at intermission in the character of “Heisenberg” from *Breaking Bad*.

Actors Ensemble: 69 years & counting, since 1957

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*Our website accepts **Paypal** – We are a 501(c)3 organization.*

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Performance Schedule:

Performance Schedule: 4 p.m. Saturdays/Sundays/Holidays

August 22nd through September 7th 2026

John Hinkel Park Amphitheater

The Performance is around 2 hours including an intermission

Board of Directors: Michael R. Cohen[^], Victoria F. Siegel[^], Jeff Trescott[^], Jerome Solberg[^], Ron Anderson, AnneJelika Ong Cortez, Jane Goodwin, Paulette Herring, Jay Manley, Gabriel Ross, Mary Tran
[^]=officer

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