

# ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS    MANAGING DIRECTOR LINDA DIGABRIELE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 8, 2014**

**Asolo Repertory Theatre Presents  
the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training  
2014 New Stages Tour: *A Midsummer Night's Dream***

(SARASOTA, September 8, 2014) — From September through November 2014, Asolo Repertory Theatre presents the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training New Stages Tour production of William Shakespeare's ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***. This whimsical farce will be directed and adapted by New York City-based theatre/opera director Jen Wineman. There will be a special opening night performance on **Thursday, October 2 at 7pm in Asolo Rep's Cook Theatre.**

In Shakespeare's most beloved romantic comedy, four young lovers just can't seem to get it together. To escape from prying parents, Hermia and her beloved Lysander run away together. Demetrius, who also loves Hermia, and Helena, who loves Demetrius, secretly join the runaways in one spirited night of mischievous fairies and magical mayhem.

This season's New Stages Tour has a modern twist. Instead of Ancient Greece as its backdrop, this adaptation is set in a modern-day high school, a pressure-cooker of cliques, outsiders, jealousy, gossip and first love.

"The city of Athens becomes Athens Academy, a prestigious private school Helena,

## ***Midsummer***

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Hermia, Demetrius, and Lysander all attend. Hippolyta and Theseus rule the school as dean and principal, while the fairies are represented by rebellious teens who would rather hang out in the woods near the academy than go to class," said director Jen Wineman. "While *Midsummer* deals heavily with magic, my hope is that students will be able to connect with the very human experiences the characters are dealing with: unrequited love, parental disapproval, a desire to rebel, and a need for self-expression. As Puck so aptly puts it, 'Lord, what fools these mortals be!'"

This season marks the fifth annual New Stages Tour, which presents innovative 45-minute adaptations of classic theatrical works to schools and community venues throughout the state of Florida, from Tallahassee to Miami. Last season's New Stages Tour production of *Romeo and Juliet* reached more than 14,000 students and community members. New Stages Tour productions are designed to travel, with minimal yet highly imaginative costumes and props. Asolo Rep's award-winning Education and Outreach Department provides multimedia study guides and other interactive classroom tools and programming to supplement the tour's school performances. Insightful post-show talkbacks with the performers follow the majority of performances.

"Teachers always want their students to make meaningful, personal connections when they read and analyze literature. Our artists are modeling that very same relationship with Shakespeare each time they interpret a text and bring it to life." said Kathryn Moroney, Asolo Rep's education and outreach director. "Many educators in the community requested *Midsummer* for the New Stages Tour, and we're thrilled to offer this unique look at a play that is so well known and loved."

This season, there will also be the first-ever New Stages Tour Family Day outdoor performance on October 11 at 2pm, which will be preceded by a warm-up and introduction to the story, and followed-by a picnic. In the spirit of Shakespeare in the Park, the play will be performed free of charge in the outdoor amphitheater on the Out-of-Door Academy's Siesta Key campus. The event is recommended for ages 9 and up; capacity is limited and reservations are required through the Asolo Rep Box Office.

The New Stages Tour company is comprised of third-year FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training students. The FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, hailed as one the top 10 actor training programs in the country by *U.S. News and World Report*, is a comprehensive three-year Master of Fine Arts graduate degree program. Each season, thousands of aspiring actors across the country audition for 12 elite spots.

During the third year of the program, Conservatory students join Asolo Rep's professional company of actors to perform in the theatre's mainstage productions.

“Asolo Rep’s commitment to serving our whole region through inspiring theatre performances extends to our youngest audiences, many of whom experience live theatre for the first time through our New Stages Tour,” said Michael Donald Edwards, producing artistic director of Asolo Rep. “Shakespeare’s timeless stories, our virtuoso ensemble of MFA Conservatory actors, and the education department’s dedicated work with teachers and schools all combine to bring outstanding artistry to the audiences and artists of the future.”

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## **CAST**

(In Alphabetical Order)

Andrea Adnoff	Philostrate/Puck
Matt Andersen	Lysander/Mustardseed/Starveling
Gracie Lee Brown	Helena/Cobweb
Michael Frishman	Egeus/Flute
Allie Henkel	Hermia/Peaseblossom/Snout
Paul Herbig	Oberon/Snug
Jory Murphy	Demetrius/Moth/Quince
Matthew R. Olsen	Oberon/Snug
Brian Owen	Theseus/Bottom
Olivia Williamson	Hippolyta/Titania

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## **SELECTED ARTIST BIO**

**Jen Wineman** (Director) is a director and choreographer living in New York City. Recent credits include the world premiere of Charise Castro Smith’s play *The Hunchback of Seville* (Washington Ensemble Theatre, Seattle, WA); the world premiere of *Bubble Boy* (American Theater Group, Rahway, NJ); the Off Broadway production of *F#%king Up Everything* (Off Broadway Alliance Best New Musical Nomination); the world premiere of *The King’s Whore* (Walkerspace, NYC); Donald Margulies’ *Shipwrecked!* (Triad Stage, Greensboro, NC); and *Roller Disco The Musical!* (OBERON at the A.R.T, Cambridge, MA), which she co-wrote with Sam Forman and Eli Bolin. Jen most recently directed *Fable*, a new musical by H.S. Kaufman and Chris Anselmo (NYMF/Signature Theatre, NYC). Next season, she will direct *The 39 Steps* (Triad Stage, Greensboro, NC) and devise a new play

about white culture's fascination with Hip Hop at PlayMakers Rep with playwright Sarah Gancher. Education/Training: B.A. Vassar College, M.F.A. Yale School of Drama. [www.jenwineman.com](http://www.jenwineman.com)

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## **TICKETS**

Tickets for the **Thursday, October 2** opening night performance of ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** are \$25 and available by calling or visiting the box office (941.351.8000 or 800.361.8388; 5555 N. Tamiami Trail). For more information about Asolo Rep and the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, visit [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org).

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## **SHAKESPEARE IN THE COMMUNITY**

In addition to dozens of school visits, the 2014 New Stages Tour includes several community performances that are open to the public. Please contact each individual venue for ticket information.

**October 11 at 1:30pm**

**Family Day at *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sarasota, FL)**

**Outdoor amphitheater on the Out-of-Door Academy's Lower School campus**

Tickets are free but reservations are required; this special family performance includes a pre-show introduction for young audiences (recommended for age 9 and up), and a chance to meet and mingle afterwards.

941-351-8000; [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org)

**October 17**

**Shadow Interpreted Theatre Performance**

**South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center (Culver Bay, FL)**

Shadow Interpreted Theater utilizes specially trained American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters who perform as "shadows" during a live stage production alongside voiced actors. Shadow Actors are integrated into the performance by mirroring ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** voiced actors, while interpreting the character they are shadowing in ASL. In this way, all audience members can enjoy the full richness of the theater experience rather than having to watch a single interpreter located off stage, and thereby missing much of the action taking place

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on stage. This is a cutting-edge arts offering that makes the arts accessible, genuine and fully enriching for all audiences.

786-573-5300; [www.smdcac.org](http://www.smdcac.org)

## **October 23**

Glenridge Performing Arts Center (Sarasota, FL)

941-552-5325; [theglenridge.com/amenities-services/performing-arts-center/](http://theglenridge.com/amenities-services/performing-arts-center/)

## **November 5**

**Florida Theatre Conference at Santa Fe College (Gainesville, FL)**

727-544-8915; [www.flatheatre.org](http://www.flatheatre.org)

## **November 8**

**Fogartyville Community Media & Arts Center (Sarasota, FL)**

941-894-6469; [wslr.org/station-events](http://wslr.org/station-events)

Current as of 9/8/14; for current listings please

visit: <http://asolorep.org/education/new-stages-tour-2014>

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## **SPONSORS**

**The New Stages Tour is sponsored in part by:**



Asolo Repertory Theatre Guild; Cordelia Lee Beattie Foundation; Linnie E. Dalbeck Memorial Foundation Trust; Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundation; Andrew R. Ferrell Foundation; Harold C. and Jacqueline F. Bladel Foundation; Plantation Community Foundation.

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