

THINGS TO DO

‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’ to play outdoors at Ryerson Woods



•
The Mechanicals played by (from left) Ross Kugman as Snout, Elizabeth Mazur as Snug, Ross Magyar as Nick Bottom and Rocco Renda as Peter Quince.

•
Titania and her four fairies played by (from left) Elizabeth Mazur as Peaseblossom, Victoria Newhuis as Mustardseed, Jeanne Scurek as Titania Queen of the Fairies, Ross Kugman as Moth and Brian Sullivan as Cobweb

Amy Hepburn as Puck



<http://barrington.suntimes.com/2014/07/23/citadel-theatre-company-midsummer-nights-dream-to-play-outdoors-at-ryerson-woods/> and <http://lincolnshire.suntimes.com/2014/07/22/citadel-theatre-company-midsummer-nights-dream-to-play-outdoors-at-ryerson-woods-3/>

Myrna Petlicki

For Sun-Times Media

July 23 10 a.m.

FACTBOX

'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

Citadel Theatre Company

Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods

21850 N. Riverwoods Road, Riverwoods

6:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 1-Sunday, Aug. 3

\$15, \$10 for Brushwood Center members

Advance reservations are strongly encouraged

(847) 968-3321

Magic can happen on a midsummer night in the woods. Citadel Theatre Company will bring a touch of wonder to Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods, Aug. 1-3, with its production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"What we do at Ryerson is play around in this space that's the intersection of art and nature," said Sophie Twichell, Brushwood's executive director. "We do a lot with visual art and we also have done a good bit with film and literature."

She noted that they have wanted to add more performing arts events to the mix. "Theater has been on our list for a long time," Twichell said.

She described "A Midsummer Night's Dream" as "a perfect introduction to outdoor theater. It's very approachable for families. It's a great introduction to Shakespeare for kids and, of course, adults love it."

The plot interweaves tales of the complications of love in the real world and in the fairy kingdom. The humor comes from mistaken identities, the bizarre effects of magical formulas and the bumbling efforts of "rude mechanicals" (laborers) to plan a play that will impress royalty.

Director Frank Farrell has created a 75-minute version of the Shakespeare classic. He is confident that he has maintained the essence of the comedy. "I know the play backward and forward — I've done it so many times," Farrell explained.

The director said that one of his decisions might be a bit controversial. "I eliminated the very first scene," he laughingly reported. That's the one which introduces the romantic partners. "I felt that we would get to know the lovers in the rest of the scenes." In addition, some of the longer monologues were trimmed.

Farrell said that it's a perfect show to perform at Ryerson because the majority of the story is set in the woods. The director noted that while working on this production, he realized for the first time that Shakespeare's work "is riddled with bird imagery." He expects that the Ryerson setting will provide that important element. Farrell joked, "It would be very expensive to have birds flying in an indoor theater."

Theater companies also save money on a set when they perform outdoors. There are some additional challenges for the performers, though. They must primarily face towards the audience or their voices won't be heard, they have to figure out where to do costume changes and there's one thing more.

"We have to really figure out the entrances," Farrell said. "You stand behind the audience waiting. That's like backstage."

All of those obstacles will be overcome at Brushwood because Farrell has a long and distinguished career performing in, directing and producing outdoor theater. You can be sure that his production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in Ryerson Woods will retain every bit of the play's magic.