



A magical, lively interpretation of 'Midsummer'

UD makes Shakespeare's comedy a delight for all
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NEWARK -- It's an English gun-metal gray Jan. 26, 1595, and a seemingly innocent fantasy of folklore and fairies -- William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" -- is premiering before a delighted Queen Elizabeth I.

The play, with its lilt and youthful spirit, its merry medley of romantic poetry, song, and dance, is a welcome contrast to the bitter political conflicts and everyday terrors of the Elizabethan police state.

However, Britain's "Queen Mab" deciphers the comedy's coded barbs and flatteries. She realizes the play plumbs deeper than the vivid surface contrasts between its dainty folk in Titania's train and the "rude mechanicals" in Bottom's yokel company.

Fast-forward almost 416 years. "Midsummer," in the hands of the University of Delaware Resident Ensemble Players' large cast, director Sanford Robbins and his amazing behind-the-scenes army, is bursting with the mystical, the magical, the mysterious, the downright charming.

This early Shakespeare comedy, with its mischievous fairies (played by 11 local children) and mismatched lovers, is a family friendly celebration of the follies of romance, jealousy, friendship and love.

This production is, like the ever-present stage moon, a huge, glowing wonderment.

There's not a false note in the entire action-packed two-plus hours. The actors obviously are well-schooled in Shakespeare's blank verse. And the unique staging, flying actors, special effects, other-worldly sound and music, breathtaking costumes, comic acrobatics -- by the four lovers, no less -- and the silliest death scene that has ever been written make this a must-see for audiences of all ages.