



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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## SHAKESPEARE GETS PUNKED!

Director's remembrances of New York's music and underground culture in the late '70s sets the stage for Phoenix play

2014/2015 Season

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### A Midsummer Night's Dream

November 6 – 22, 2014

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Fran Gebhard  
Set Design: Allan Stichbury  
Costume Design: Dallas Ashby  
Lighting Design: Imogen Wilson & Clare Mathison  
Sound Design: Kieran MacNaughton  
Stage Manger: Claire Friedrich

*Shakespeare's romantic comedy gets an edgy spin and a punk rock attitude in New York in the 1970s.*

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### Lion in the Streets

February 12 – 21, 2015

By Judith Thompson

Directed by Conrad Alexandrowicz  
*A lost Portuguese girl observes the troubled lives of her community and finds forgiveness.*

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### Amadeus

March 12 – 21, 2015

Written Peter Shaffer

Directed by Chari Arespacochaga  
*The acclaimed Tony-winning play and Oscar-winning movie about Mozart, music and jealousy.*

It was a time of rebellion. Change was coming to New York City. The Ramones were rocking CBGB's, a club in Greenwich Village, and the waning flower-power generation was forcefully being relegated to the past by a new punk attitude. Director Fran Gebhard remembers NYC in 1978 . . . the music, the fashion, the underground culture . . . and it was one amazing summer.

These memories are the inspiration for Fran's spin on Shakespeare's romantic comedy in a production of ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** at the University of Victoria's Phoenix Theatre, running November 6-22, 2014.

Shakespeare's centuries-old words continue to vibrate with humour today, especially when recontextualized through the nostalgia of recent history. *"When I first started thinking about Hermia, Shakespeare's feisty and defiant female character who is one of the two young lovers, she seemed like a feminist woman right out of the late '70s,"* says Fran. *"Here in Canada, we had just passed the Charter of Human rights promising gender equity. She seemed right for this time."*

Harnessing her own experiences from a summer in NYC, and some of the '70s most iconic music, Fran is also finding New York is the perfect setting for, as it's affectionately called, the "Dream". The two pairs of lovers – Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius – wander from the safety of Park Avenue to Central Park, and find themselves at the mercy of powerful forces (and their own passions) as clashing gangs manoeuvre for control. As Fran points out, in the late '70s, the 700-acres of Central Park could be dangerous to some, but enticingly exciting to others. *"I thought, here was an environment where Titania and her hippie coven, Oberon and his punk gang, and the lovers fleeing the tyranny of parental law could all believably coexist – and collide through one bewitching evening."*

As well as being a director, Fran Gebhard is an accomplished actor for stage, TV and film, and teaches acting at the Department of Theatre. For the Phoenix, she has directed *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, *The School For Scandal*, *Crackpot* and *Wreckage*. She has been having tons of fun working on this Shakespearean comedy with the 24 theatre students in the cast, her colleague and set designer Allan Stichbury, and the other students on the creative team. Third-year student Kieran MacNaughton has been exploring a diverse array of classic music from the late '70s, from James Taylor, to the Village People and the Sex Pistols. The costumes, designed by fourth-year student Dallas Ashby, are also referencing divergent styles, not only representing hippies and punkers, but also New York's more conservative Uptown preppies and the avant garde high glam fashionistas of Studio 54. Lighting designs by students Imogen Wilson and Clare Mathison will help create the illusion of crossing the city and dreaming through the night. The show is stage-managed by fourth-year student Claire Friedrich.

Those interested in learning more about Fran Gebhard's approach to directing ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** are welcome to attend the free pre-show lecture on **Friday November 7 at 7pm**. Fran will be joined in conversation with student costume designer Dallas Ashby to give a preview of her designs. These lectures are recorded and podcast the following week.

Performances of ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** are estimated to run 2 hours on the following dates:

**Public Previews @8pm:** November 4 & 5

**Evenings @8pm:** November 6 (Opening Night), 7 (preshow lecture), 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22

**Matinee Performance @2pm:** Saturday, November 22

**Single Tickets:** \$16 Student/\$20 Senior/\$24 Adult/\$24 Weekends @ 8pm (Previews \$7.00, available after 5pm)

**Season Subscription:** \$36 for 3 plays. Details & order forms at [www.phoenixtheatres.ca](http://www.phoenixtheatres.ca)

**Phoenix Box Office Opens:** October 28 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.

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