

# A Midsummer Night's Dream come true

 By Eugene Yiga

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After successful seasons at the Artscape Theatre and the National Arts Festival, A Midsummer Night's Dream, one of Shakespeare's most popular and accessible plays, is back at Cape Town's Maynardville. What can you expect from this story of magic and love? Everything that the title says.

Unlike [Cardenio](#), there's no question that A Midsummer Night's Dream is one of Shakespeare's plays. And although he was inspired by English folklore and classical myth, many of the characters are his own creations. (Shakespeare scholar Professor Stanley Wells suggests that Oberon could even be compared to Shakespeare himself.)

Being a comedy, it's clear from the start that this story of mistaken identities, unrequited love, and magic that is the stuff of dreams will end well. But it's still such fun to make the journey there. "[In] his comic scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve," dramatist Ben Jonson once wrote. "His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy instinct."





### Dreams don't get sweeter!

Written between 1590 and 1596, the work lost favour during the restoration period (Samuel Pepys described the 1662 revival as "the most insipid and ridiculous play I ever saw in my life") but gained new interest in the 19th century as a way of showcasing elaborate costumes and sets. Since then, A Midsummer Night's Dream has been adapted for opera, ballet, television, and film.

This production is the play's sixth staging at Maynardville since the open-air theatre began in 1957. But unlike director Fred Abrahamse's 2002 adaptation, which had a psychedelic 60s vibe, the current version is set in a luxury Athenian game lodge (although it might as well be somewhere in Africa, what with the colourful touches like the way everyone pronounces "Quince" with a click).

In addition to some really funny moments, like the staging of the play within the play, A Midsummer Night's Dream has such a fun cast. It includes Marcel Meyer as the commanding Theseus/Oberon, Terence Bridgett as the scene-stealing Bottom/Pyramus, Hannah Borthwick as the hapless Helena, and Sven Ruygrok as the acrobatic Puck. Together with Meyer's beautifully designed costumes as well as the dazzling lasers and lights, the result is so engaging that I barely noticed the drizzle that unsuccessfully tried to dampen the mood. Dreams don't get sweeter!

*A Midsummer Night's Dream is at Cape Town's [Maynardville Open-Air Theatre](#) until 9 March. Tickets are available from [Computicket](#) or by calling +27 (0)21 421 7695. Oh, and whether you come early for a picnic in the park or arrive just in time for the show, make sure you bring a blanket and warm clothes because it gets quite chilly.*

## ABOUT EUGENE YIGA

Eugene graduated from the University of Cape Town with distinctions in financial accounting and classical piano. He then spent over two-and-a-half years working in branding and communications at two of South Africa's top market research companies. Eugene also spent over three-and-a-half years at an eLearning start-up, all while building his business as an award-winning writer. Visit [www.eugeneyiga.com](http://www.eugeneyiga.com), follow [@eugeneyiga](#) on Twitter, or email [hello@eugeneyiga.com](mailto:hello@eugeneyiga.com) to say, um, hello.

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