

# the farmington enterprise & observer

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## Young Actors Accept Magical Challenge Of Shakespeare

Shakespeare at his most fanciful, his most quotable, his most magical will be on stage at North Farmington High School beginning this Friday.

On March 14 and 19-21, students at the school will present "A Midsummer Night's Dream," under the direction of English teacher and drama coach, Michael Rasmussen. Tickets are \$1.50 for students, \$2 for adults. Outrain time is 8 p.m. sharp.

To see "A Midsummer Night's Dream," the audience has to come prepared to pretend, with imagination in full sway. Among the most popular of Shakespeare's works, the play is a challenge to any actor, and particularly to the young actors at NFH.

**WE QUOTE RASMUSSEN:** "Since this play is early Shakespeare, it abounds in gorgeous poetry because early in his career, Shakespeare was more concerned with writing poetry than drama."

"The lines abound with puns, parallelisms and various rhetorical devices which make the speaking of the verse difficult for young actors. The verse must be spoken precisely and with definite accents to point out the important ideas of the play."

"We often feel we are working with dolls which go to sleep when put down and awaken when picked up. The actors have had to dig deeply into the verse of the play in order to find the occasional character trait which will help them conceive living, breathing, eating, sleeping, loving, hating persons within whose skin the actor can be comfortable, and more importantly, characters with whom the audience can be comfortable."

**IN BRINGING** "Midsummer Night's Dream" to life, the young NFH players had the help of Dr. William P. Halstead of the University of Michigan, a friend of Rasmussen's.

Halstead has acted the difficult role of Bottom three times. He sat through a rehearsal on Feb. 22 and in a two-hour critique, pointed out many of the "subtleties" which had been missed. With his help, the play now has the comic lightness which adds so greatly to the general fluff of the plot.

Costumes for the NFH production will be as close to costumes that Shakespeare's actors wore as it is possible to get. Even though the play takes place in B.C. Athens, the spectacle of the play depends heavily on the ornateness of Elizabethan clothing.

To add to the Elizabethan flavor, the NFH set is a modified version of the Globe, Shakespeare's own theatre.

**THE ROMANTIC COMEDY,** "Midsummer Night's Dream," relates the story of the tangled loves of four young persons that become untangled through the magic of fairy spells induced by the juice of a purple flower dropped into the eyes of sleepers.

Oberon, king of the fairies,

bids his page, Puck, help him apply the magic which makes the sleepers fall in love with the first creature seen when awakened. The mischievous Puck not only arranges several mix-ups with his magic potion, but even makes the Fairy Queen, Titania, awake to fall in love with Bottom, a stupid weaver whom Puck has fitted with the head of an ass.

The whole affair takes place within the woods near Athens on Midsummer's Eve, and Oberon straightens things out so that the episode seems like a Midsummer's Dream, and all four lovers are happily married to the right persons, along with the Duke of Athens and his beloved, in joyous ceremony.

**RASMUSSEN** explains his choice of the play for the NFH students:

"As a lover of theatre, I have an incessantly recurring dream. The main character of that dream is William Shakespeare, the bard of Stratford on Avon. From the voice of Will in these dreams came the idea to do his most popular early play, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

"When the elements of the play are combined for the first time before an audience at NFH on March 14, I would like you to share my dream."

"Our enthusiastic cast wants to amuse you with a delightfully entertaining comedy in a magnificent setting which you have graciously provided us. Without you, the most important element of theatre is missing. Join us, won't you?"



**FAIRY CREATURE** — Elizabeth Kaplan makes a pixie Puck as she perches on the back of John MacColl, who plays Oberon in North Farmington High's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."



**ACTION** — North Farmington High student, Joyce Kainz, in the role of Hermia tries to attack Helena, played by Jill Daumler. Dean Smith as Demetrius and John Darville as Lysander step into the action. Lysander is an exchange student from Denmark at NFHS.

Photos By Fran Evert



**CLIMAX** — A rehearsal at North Farmington High of the play within a play which rounds off the fantasy of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

### The Players

**CAST LIST**  
(Names suggested by Jane Wright)

THEMIS	Robert Brown
BOBUS	John Darville
LYSANDER	John Darville
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