



UMass Amherst
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 11, 2006

WHAT: Center Series presents: SITI Company in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

WHEN: Tuesday and Wednesday, October 3 & 4 at 7:30pm

WHERE: Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or
go online to www.fineartscenter.com/tickets
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(Shakespeare Meets Steinbeck in this *Midsummer Night's Dream*)

Renowned director, Anne Bogart, brings her SITI Company to the Fine Arts Center's Bowker Auditorium for two performances of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 3 & 4 at 7:30pm. SITI Company's adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is inspired by the stark, luminous landscape of the Depression era Dust Bowl. Puck acts as the impish ringmaster, helping the Company's eight actors achieve virtuosic shape-shifting as they transform into all 26 roles. The play retains the charming delight of the original, with its star-crossed lovers, mischief-making fairies and lovable buffoons. Although it is a stark place of migration and poverty, it is a beautiful place full of yearning and dreams. The enchantment appears as if by magic via the imagination of people who have nothing to share but their hopes and dreams.

Founded in 1992 by Anne Bogart and Tadashi Suzuki, SITI Company began as an agreement to redefine and revitalize contemporary theater in the United States through an emphasis on international cultural exchange and collaboration. Originally envisioned as a summer institute in Saratoga Springs, New York, SITI expanded to encompass a year-round company based in New York City with a summer season in Saratoga. The Company is known nationally and internationally as a top-level artistic collective that generates groundbreaking theater while training artists from around the world.

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In addition to Artistic Director Anne Bogart, SITI Company is comprised of nine actors, four designers, a playwright, stage manager, associate managing director and managing director. The company represents a change in thinking about the relationships between artists and institutions. SITI Company has formed relationships with theaters and venues around the world who present the Company's work.

The main plot of *Midsummer* is complex in that it involves two sets of couples (Hermia and Lysander, and Helena and Demetrius) whose romantic cross-purposes are complicated still further by their entrance into the play's fairyland woods where the King and Queen of the Fairies (Oberon and Titania) preside and the impish folk character of Puck or Robin Goodfellow plies his trade. Less subplot than a satirical device, another set of characters—Bottom the weaver and his bumptious band of "rude mechanicals"—stumble into the main doings when they go into the same enchanted woods to rehearse a play that is very loosely (and comically) based on the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe, their hilarious home-spun piece taking up Act V of Shakespeare's comedy.

A Midsummer Night's Dream contains some wonderfully lyrical expressions of Shakespeare's lighter themes, most notably those of love, dreams, and the stuff of both, the creative imagination itself. Indeed, close scrutiny of the text by twentieth-century critics has led to a significant upward revision in the play's status, one that overlooks the silliness of its story and concentrates upon its unique lyrical qualities. If *A Midsummer Night's Dream* can be said to convey a message, it is that the creative imagination is in tune with the supernatural world and is best used to confer the blessings of Nature upon mankind and marriage.

Tickets are \$35 and \$15; Youth 17 and under are \$15; and Five College Students are \$15. For tickets and information, call the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS, or tickets may be safely purchased online at www.fineartscenter.com. This performance is sponsored by Florence Savings Bank and WFCR 88.5FM. Support for educational and outreach activities supported in part by the Department of Theater at the University Massachusetts. Funded in part by the Expeditions program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, which receives major support from the National Endowment for the Arts and additional support from the state arts agencies of New England.

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