

**Music is an important feature of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Show where you would include music in your production and what different effects you would try to achieve.**

The earthy, natural feeling of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* gives many inspirations and possibilities for music to be included in the play. It also, contrastingly, gives the opportunity for music *not* to be used (for example during the songs specifically written in the text and the overall lyricism of the play).

Before the performance, during the interval and afterwards I want to show and enhance the nature links within the play. I thought of a time when man and nature were very close, and remembered some tribal music I had. It uses a lot of drums and panpipes, very primitive instruments that show the early nature of the music and the time. It also uses voice, but no words, relying on the noises made by the human voice rather than the pronunciation. An early interpretation of the word "faerie" meant a spiritual being who was very much linked with nature. These beings had good and bad sides, so are not the archetypal "fairies" often portrayed today. The spiritual, tribal music would enhance the idea that the faeries are not that dissimilar to humans, while remaining completely different.

I would like to give the audience a hint of what is to come just before it happens. For example, just before a fairy is about to come onstage, I would have a short piccolo burst to signify it. This could be continued for each of the three "classes" – mortals and Mechanicals too. The higher-class mortals could be symbolised by a short burst on the trumpet. This could be increased to a fanfare for Theseus when he enters, and vary between a short note for the lovers on their own to a full fanfare for the court. Similarly, since the Mechanicals are also mortals, a brass instrument could be their entrance too. This would link them to the members of the court, but by using a different instrument such as a trombone, it would set them apart as well. A trombone would be good because it is associated with slapstick comedy, which is what the Mechanicals are, essentially.

These notes before an actor's entrance would have to be timed very well so that they came before an entrance, but not too far before so as to detract from the last scene.

When Titania and Oberon meet in Act II, Scene I, Titania has a very long speech on how the seasons are being disrupted by their lovers' feud. This speech would be difficult to say while keeping the attention of the audience, and previously I have ideas to cut it. However, looking at the music in this production I have decided on a great piece that would really work. It is called Pachelbel's Frolics. It is derived from Pachelbel's Canon but slowly changes during the piece, almost too slowly to notice. By the end of the music, it has progressed into a full-blown Irish Gig. I think this is wonderfully significant to the piece as it so accurately portrays the changes of which Titania speaks. The fact that it happens so slowly will confuse the audience I think, because they will not notice the change in tune until it has changed thoroughly.

Act II, Scene II has the fairies singing Titania to sleep. It would be tempting to use music here to support the fairies. After thinking this through, I decided that no music would be better, as that way the lyricism in the text can come through in their

voices alone. Harmonies and vocal variations within the song would be nice here, showing how the differences in the worlds come together to make something that is good. The rhythm and harmonies alone should be enough to carry the piece through. We have tried it in production with it as a choral piece, each saying different lines, and it didn't work very well. Treating the song as a song would work better, but this would require getting a musical assistant to produce a tune for the song, and to work on the harmonies. It would also require actors who could sing and manage harmonising. I think that if the piece was done well, it would work much better than if music were put to it.

Act III, Scene I includes Bottom's rowdy song, originally sung to cheer himself up and make him less scared. As it continues, I think he should get rowdier and bawdier; more confident. I don't think I would use music here either. At the beginning he should definitely be alone, and any musical accompaniment would detract from his solitude onstage. For the first half of the song, before Titania wakes up, he should sing quietly, building up to full volume at the line "The wren with little quill." Then, after Titania's line he can start at full volume, loudly, brash, almost in a drunken way. His voice should not be particularly tuneful, but very loud (as if to make up for it!). This would show how unrefined he is, and how totally unsuited to Titania. It would also emphasise the differences in appearance and behaviour, especially if Titania is played very daintily and quiet in the scene.

The final place where music could be used is in Act V, during and just after the Bergomask dance. Again, I would like to use the music here to emphasise the class differences between the three groups. When the Mechanicals dance, the music they dance to should reflect their status. This is why I chose "Irish Party in Third Class." It is an Irish tune, much more heavy and beating than the one I have used previously. It is from the party below decks in Titanic, and has such a great atmosphere to it that it would work with the Mechanicals' base instincts. This would also show the class boundaries, as it is fairly apparent that this music is not "refined" for the other members of the household. The heavy beat of the drum and the deeper notes of bagpipes compared to the fiddle make the piece quite natural and tribal again, while keeping its Irish connotations.

After the performance of the Mechanicals' play, Oberon and Titania appear to bless the house. They also dance, and as Shakespeare's stage directions are very remote, the dance could be of any kind. I thought that to emphasise the link with nature, it would be good to use the music from the interval as a dance for them. It has very heavy drumbeats and so carries a good rhythm for dancing. The tribal links would be carried through the whole play, creating continuity through the performance. The whole essence of the fairies in my production is their darker, less "perfect" side. This dance at the end could be very ritualistic, almost pagan. Through the dance we could see their personalities come through as themselves.