Acting Edition

Ken Ludwig's Midsummer/ Jersey

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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ISBN 978-0-573-70076-7

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KEN LUDWIG'S *MIDSUMMER/JERSEY* premiered on November 17th, 2011 at James W. Robinson Jr. Secondary School. The production was directed by Douglas Rome, with assistant direction by Lizzie Hodgdon, dramaturgy by Sarah Irving*, set design by Emily Rowson*, set decoration by Hannah Sikora*, costumes by Arianna Vessal, sound design by Christine Wagner, lighting design by Paul Mayo*, property design by Mary Turgeon*, hair & makeup design by Kayla Neal, technical direction by Samantha Hennerty, set construction by Matt Lynch, paint by Lindsey Rubin, publicity by Sarah Irving*, program by Emily Rowson*, and film & video by Sean Cooper. It was stage managed by Allison Poms*, and assistant stage managed by Anna Barr*, Kyle Ronyecs and Helai Karim. The production was managed by Michaela Wright*. The cast was as follows:

MIA "COOKIE" DICARLO . . . . . Gabby Rojtman
HELENE . . . . . Emily Rowson*
LYLE "THE UNDERSTATEMENT" FAGIOLI . . . . . Ethan Malamud
DENIS . . . . . Kolya Rabinowitch
ROBIN GOODFELLOW (PUCK) . . . . . Adam Bradley*
OBERON . . . . . Dan Barr*
TITANIA . . . . . .Sarah Irving*
NIKKI BOTTOM . . . . . .Carys Meyer*
PATTI QUINCE . . . . . .Molly Johnson*
CHRIS ATHENS . . . . . TJ Albertson*
HIPPOLYTA GINSBERG . . . . . Aubrey Benham*
PHYLLIS TRAIT . . . . . .Hillary Hollaway
JUSTINE DICARLO . . . . . Hannah Sikora*
RUFUS DICARLO . . . . . .Jackson Viccora*
PRINCIPAL PLATT . . . . . .Addy Gravatte
FRANCI FLUTE . . . . . Sarah Marksteiner
TERRI THUMBS . . . . . .Mary Turgeon*
ROBERT SUDDS . . . . . Jamie Green*
JANET SNUG . . . . . Brandy Skaddan
COBWEB . . . . . Taylor Fountain
MOONBEAM . . . . . Andie Matten
MOTH . . . . . .Maya Davis*
MUSTARDSEED . . . . . Kate Poms
PEASEBLOSSOM . . . . . .Ellie Duhadway
SUNFLOWER . . . . . Darla Reynolds
SUNSHINE . . . . . Kelly Thomas
TURTLE . . . . . Rachel Ingle

JACK . . . . . Josh Meyers*

SHIRLEY . . . . . Hannah Bunting*

KIM . . . . . Meg Connors

MINDY . . . . . Taryn Falkenstein

PENNY . . . . . Jessica Israel

HAROLD . . . . . Jacob Medley

BAKARI . . . . . Ashaya Pokhrel

OBERON'S FAIRIES . . . . Alex Bulova, Ashaya Pokhrel, Ivonte Milligan, Jacob Medley, James Lynch

TITANIA'S FAIRIES . . . . . Taryn Falkenstein, Hannah Bunting

UNDERSTUDIES

Aubrey Benham*, Alex Bulova, Meg Connors, Maya Davis*, Monica Goodwin, Sydney Lykins, Andie Matten, Jacob Medley, Dasha Savina, Sophia Sempeles, Brionna Simmons, Arianna Vessal*

PRODUCTION TEAM

Amani Abdeljabbar, Sean Baird, Dan Bonilla, Hannah Bunting, Jorge Candia, Tristan Cheramie, Renee Colligan, Marissa Considine, Sean Cooper, Nicole Copenhaver, Liam Dillon, Sabina Dua, Casey Early, Emily Filostrat, Victoria Fong, Paige Franklin, Chloe Gilfoil, Monica Goodwin, Jamie Green, Blair Gruendl, Kyle Gaulke, Kelly Guin, Paige Hastie, Hillary Holloway, Molly Johnson, Brennan Laskas, James Lynch, Lucia Maldondo, Andie Matten, Chris Mayhew, Kayse McGough, Ivonte Milligan, Chris Moalli, Dinma Onyekwere, Kate Poms, Anna Ready, Kelsey Rooney, Lindsey Rubin, D'Arcy Sampson, Dasha Savina, Hannah Selz, Elana Shuart, Brandy Skaddan, Andrew Suarez, Isabella Suarez, Elise Truong, Reetu Varadhan, Sophie White, Cassie Wood, Edyan Yusuf

*Denotes Membership in International Thespian Society

KEN LUDWIG'S *MIDSUMMER/ JERSEY* was subsequently presented by Interlochen Center for the Arts (William Church, Director of Theatre and Comparative Arts) on July 27, 2012. The production was directed by J. W. Morrissette, with assistant direction by Linda Osborn, dramaturgy by Scott Harman, set design by Christopher Dills, costumes by Candace Hughes, sound design by Bryan Chess, and lighting design by Jason Banks. It was stage managed by Seth Valentine. The cast was as follows:

PRINCIPAL PLATT/MOTE . . . . . Lily Lipman
GOVERNOR CHRIS ATHENS . . . . . Will Ouweleen
HIPPOLYTA GINSBERG . . . . . Tara Stallion
PHYLLIS TRAIT/COBWEB . . . . . Margaret Murphy
JUSTINE DICARLO . . . . . Natasha Batten
RUFUS DICARLO/JACK/TURTLE . . . . . Clayton To
MIA "COOKIE" DICARLO . . . . . Cate Payne
LYLE "THE UNDERSTATEMENT" FAGIOLI . . . . . Harry Thornton
DENIS . . . . . Abram Blau
HELENE . . . . . Sarah Pidgeon
OBERON . . . . . Andrew Elk
TITANIA . . . . . Chloe Baldwin
ROBIN GOODFELLOW (PUCK) . . . . . Jennifer Klink
PATTI QUINCE . . . . . Shawna James
NIKKI BOTTOM/HAROLD . . . . . Amrita Newton
FRANCI FLUTE/BAKARI . . . . . Ruby Green
JANET SNUG/PENNY . . . . . Maddy Sosnowski
ROBERTA SUDDS/SHIRLEY . . . . . Savannah Kolodziej
TERRI THUMBS/MINDY . . . . . Emma Gutt
PEASBLOSSOM . . . . . Hannah Dalessio
MOONBEAM . . . . . Paige Goetz
SUNFLOWER . . . . . Clare Donaldson
SUNSHINE . . . . . Grace DiChristina
MUSTARDSEED . . . . . Carolyn Rogan
TURTLE . . . . . Clayton To

Understudies

MIA . . . . . Lily Lipman
OBERON . . . . . Will Ouweleen
TITANIA . . . . . Margaret Murphy
HELENE . . . . . Natasha Batten
LYLE . . . . . Clayton To
PUCK . . . . . Ruby Green

FOREWORD

A Midsummer Night's Dream is one of the two or three greatest stage comedies in the English language. Yet there are parts of the play – as there are parts of all of Shakespeare's plays – that can be confusing to a modern audience. Not surprisingly, the vocabulary and syntax of the Elizabethan era were somewhat different than they are today, and Shakespeare as written, especially without some form of assistance, can sometimes feel like a foreign language. With this in mind, I wrote *Midsummer/Jersey*, at least in part, to make *A Midsummer Night's Dream* more accessible to modern audiences.

My strategy has been a simple one: I've tried to retell the story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a contemporary setting using characters who are not only modern in type (in this case the denizens of New Jersey beach society), but of a kind who shed fresh light on their Shakespearean models. When we get past the difficulties of Elizabethan language, Hermia, Helena, Lysander and Demetrius are the zippiest of teenagers, full of heart and hope, mischief and hormonal longing. Their counterparts in *Midsummer/Jersey* – Mia, Helene, Lyle and Denis – are meant to remind us that Shakespeare's characters are virtually identical to the teenagers we meet today.

As for the play as a whole, I've tracked the original act-by-act, scene-by-scene and often speech-by-speech, in the hope that enjoyment of the modern play will take readers back to the original armed with a kind of structural road map. It is easy for students to look on Shakespeare as an uphill battle, and there are plenty of adults who share the view of the great comic playwright George S. Kaufman that Shakespeare is about a lot of kings who never get to sit down. The truth, of course, is vastly different; and

it is one of the goals of *Midsummer/Jersey* to send as many people as possible back to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with tools for understanding its miraculous architecture. The structure of the play is simply breathtaking: In five acts it juggles four separate comic plots, and there isn't a minute of confusion or boredom from start to finish. If the play were a building, it would be Buckingham Palace and the Taj Mahal rolled into one.

Part of my love for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is Shakespeare's remarkable idea of pitting the fairy world against the down-to-earth world of the lovers and the tradesmen. The idea is so simple and ingenious that the notion of updating the setting to almost any society with well-defined social classes – including the New Jersey beach culture – became increasingly obvious the more I worked on the play. But updating implies currency, and it is important to the success of *Midsummer/Jersey* that the cultural references in the play continue to feel modern to every new audience. For this reason, I hope that future directors of *Midsummer/Jersey* will make an effort to keep the play's cultural references as up-to-date as possible. The musical choices, for example, should (with copyright permission) be taken from the playlists of the hottest radio stations in town, and the references to clothing, hair styles, slang and gadgets should come straight out of the latest issues of *Seventeen*, *Vanity Fair*, *People* and *Cosmopolitan*. During the initial production of the play, for example, I was reminded by one of the actors that my hair salon needed a tanning bed. It was an actor's idea to have Roberta played by a stylish male hairdresser named Robert. And the ending of the first act felt a little flat until someone suggested a 20-second tag where the entire cast danced to a chorus of *The Party Rock Anthem ("Every day I'm shufflin'…")*.

When all is said and done, my hopes for *Midsummer/ Jersey* are simple but profound: that this play can be added to the hundreds of other tributes in our culture to what many people consider the greatest comedy ever written.

Ken Ludwig
February 2012

CHARACTERS

PRINCIPAL PLATT
GOVERNOR CHRIS ATHENS
HIPPOLYTA - his fiancé
PHYLLIS TRAIT - his secretary
JUSTINE DICARLO - his chief of staff
RUFUS DICARLO - her husband
MIA "COOKIE" DICARLO
LYLE "THE UNDERSTATEMENT" FAGIOLI
DENIS - in love with Mia
HELENE - in love with Denis
PATTI QUINCE
NIKKI BOTTOM
FRANCI FLUTE
TERRI THUMBS
ROBERTA SUDDS or **ROBERT SUDDS**
JANET SNUG
OBERON
TITANIA
ROBIN GOODFELLOW (Puck)
OBERON'S FAIRIES (optional)
Titania's Fairies:

- **MOONBEAM**
- **SUNFLOWER**
- **SUNSHINE**
- **TURTLE**
- **PEASEBLOSSOM**
- **MUSTARDSEED**
- **COBWEB**
- **MOTE**

CAST SIZE

Without doubling, 27 actors, 22 women and 5 men. In the original production, the director added a train of male fairies for Oberon, and this added 8 additional male actors to the cast. But all the fairies can be of either gender, and the cast size and composition is extremely flexible. Doubling can reduce the cast to 14.

In memory of
Peter Herzberg,
finest friend
and
New Jersey native.

This volume is also dedicated
to the kids at
Robinson High School
who premiered the play.

ACT ONE

Prologue

(A high school auditorium in Wildwood, New Jersey. There is a podium in the middle of the stage and **PATRICIA PLATT**, *the principal of the school is standing behind it. She is an intelligent middle-aged woman with a nice sense of irony.)*

PRINCIPAL PLATT. Good afternoon, boys and girls.

(Kids are stationed in various parts of the auditorium and they answer "Good morning, Miss Platt!")

As Principal of Wildwood High School here in Wildwood, New Jersey, I want to welcome all of you to the last assembly of our school year.

(clap, clap)

Thank you for your enthusiasm. Now as you know, it is our tradition here at Wildwood to allow you to vote for your guest speakers for the final assembly, and I will confess that I was personally hoping you would invite the newly-appointed Director of the New Jersey Transport Commission, the exciting Doctor Irving Comglot. But no, no, it was your decision to invite two other alumni of this school who have made their names by appearing on a reality television series entitled *(checking her notes, bemused)* "Smokin' Hot in Jersey: The Loose and the Luscious." Now I'm sorry to report that while these two individuals did in fact graduate from here six short years ago, they did so with the two lowest grade-point averages in the history of the school. They were also suspended a total of thirteen times – so I'm afraid that

our board of directors determined at their last meeting that these two individuals should *not* be invited to speak to you at our gathering today.

(groan)

However…on this occasion, I decided to *overrule* the board, because I know that you all worked very hard this year, and frankly, you deserve a break,

(The kids sit up straight and start listening)

and so, though I may end up regretting this decision, please welcome Mia DiCarlo and Lyle Fagioli, known throughout the country as Cookie and the Understatement.

(Very hip music starts blaring from the speakers and there is a roar from the audience. The kids go wild as **COOKIE** *(aka* **MIA)** *and* **THE UNDERSTATEMENT** *(aka* **LYLE)** *enter from the back of the theater and down the aisle. To judge by appearances, they are the* ne plus ultra*, the height of coolness, the bomb itself.)*

LYLE. Heya guys.

MIA. Yo, high school.

LYLE. Hey keep it cool, will ya? I'm goin' deaf up here.

(The crowd laughs and quiets down.)

MIA. So, anyway, like it's cool to be back, you know. Next to my Guido here.

LYLE. Yeah, that's me.

MIA. I mean, we don't have a lot to say up here, but then I never even got to assembly when I was a kid, I was in the Principal's office most of the day.

LYLE. Me too, though I am in fact quite a good pubic speaker.

MIA. That's *public* speaker, you idiot.

LYLE. Sorry.

Hey, don't criticize!

MIA. So the thing is, we've got like two announcements to make. Number one is, our television show, "Smokin'

Hot in Jersey: the Loose and the Luscious" has just been renewed for Season Six, startin' this Sunday at nine on the Mormon Channel.

(Kids: "Yeeahhhh!")

LYLE. And the other thing is, we've decided to come out in the open about somethin', which is … that Mia and I have been… well, we've been married since we left high school. About six years now.

*(Hubbub: "No way!" "I don't believe it!" "They're married?" "Go, Cookie!" – and now some of the kids (***JACK, LILI, CHELSEA, BAKARI, KIM,** *and* **OLIVIA***) stand up and start asking questions:)*

JACK. But Lyle, you're the Understatement! How could you do it?!

LYLE. You know how it is, man. Young and stupid.

*(***MIA** *gives him a dope slap.)*

Hey, I'm jokin', I'm jokin'!

LILI. Was it like a bun in the oven?

MIA. Are you kiddin' me?!

LYLE. Hey, come on, I respect this girl. She was my girlfriend!

CHELSEA. So how did it happen?

BAKARI. How'dja get married?

KIM. Who asked who?

MIA. Shall we tell 'em?

LYLE. They won't believe it.

MIA. Let's tell 'em anyway. We've got like a half hour left and I don't have nothin' else to say.

LYLE. You wanna start?

MIA. You go ahead.

LYLE. Okay. So. Everybody, I want you to close your eyes and imagine yourselves, six years ago – we were just outa high school – and we are at a rally for the Governor of New Jersey.

OLIVIA. The Governor Governor?

JACK. You mean Governor Athens?

MIA. Yeah, that's him. My mom works for him. She's his Chief of Staff. We were at this really cool election rally with posters and little flags and stuff, and it was about this time that the Governor was planning to get married himself.

(The set starts changing.)

LYLE. So I want you to think of us lookin' six years younger, and imagine yourselves at this rally. He's standin' there with his fiancé, Hippolyta Ginsberg.

MIA. And she's standin' over here, lookin' up at him hopin' he'll get reelected. And he turns to her and he says

LYLE. Now fair Hippolyta, our wedding hour
Draws on apace.

MIA. The Governor talks like that. He's an intellectual.

LYLE. Four happy days bring in
Another moon; but O, methinks how slow
This old moon wanes. She lingers my desires
Like to a step dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue.