

## “I HAVE HAD A MOST RARE VISION”

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**  
**by Barbara Priestman Academy**  
**at Northern Stage, Newcastle, 07/11/2017**  
**appraised by Nadia Nadif**

I would like to offer sincere thanks and congratulations to Barbara Priestman Academy for your wonderful production of A Midsummer Night's Dream as part of the 2017 Shakespeare Schools Festival. Students and teachers alike have put hard work, imagination, determination and passion into this production, and were a credit to the school. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight just a few fantastic moments that you should be especially proud of.

- ❖ The narrator told the story expressively and with clarity, as well as playing some magical music. At one point he made an excellent recovery, and the boy who stepped in for him did a great job at sight reading, meaning the show could go on.
- ❖ There was excellent, detailed characterisation from everyone, fully committing to the high emotions in the play – for example, the pain of Helena as she was teased, the anger of Hermia when she thought Helena had stolen her love, Egeus' love for his family's reputation and Bottom's love for his own acting.
- ❖ The comic rivalry in the play was fun to watch – the workmen's annoyance with Bottom, the rivalry between Lysander and Demetrius, the fighting between Helena and Hermia, when Titania refuses Oberon's request, and Quince's realistic portrayal of a worn down director – I believed them all!
- ❖ The use of magic in the play was very effective. I particularly liked the fairies flapping their wings, Puck leading the lovers like puppets on a string, and Titania's graceful, trance like movements while under the spell.
- ❖ The whole cast had excellent projection and clearly loved performing.

This was magical, mirthful Midsummer Night's Dream from an energised and professional cast.

**Congratulations to everyone involved in this superb production. I hope to see Barbara Priestman Academy in the Festival again next year.**

**Nadia Nadif**

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