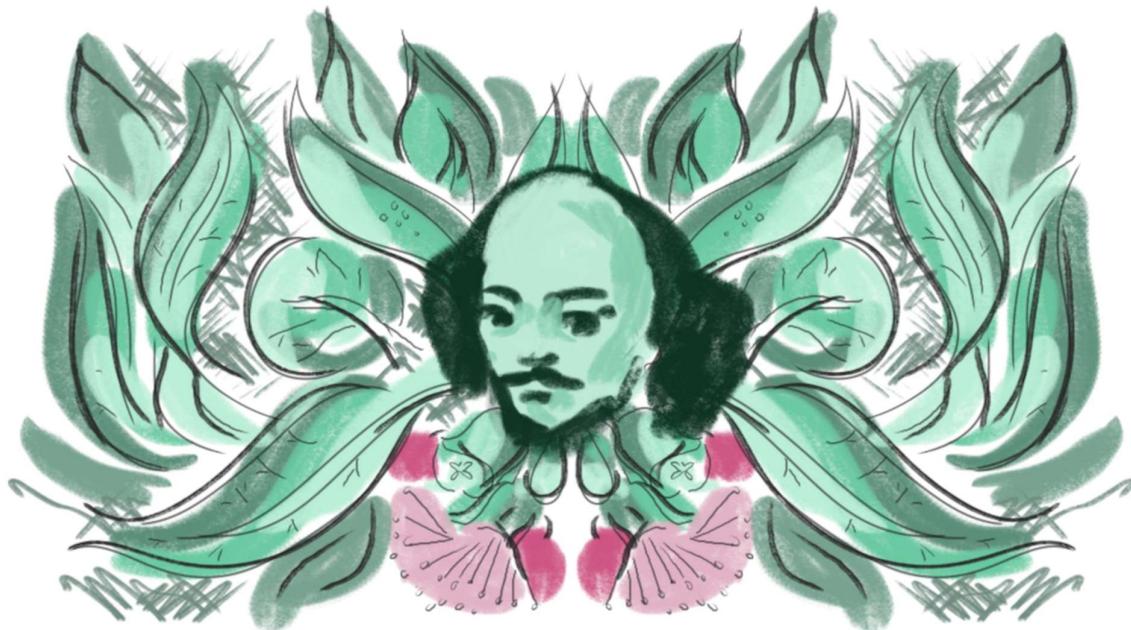


# *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



**Blue Mountains  
Shakespearience 2023**



#### **CJ de Mooi (Theseus/Oberon)**

CJ de Mooi is an English actor with an extensive and varied list of credits. He has performed musicals and plays in London's west end and has toured the one man drama Banana Crabtree Simon in Europe, Australia and even Hollywood.

He took the lead role in the feature *The Renata Road* which won multiple prizes at international festivals including Best Actor. The film is currently on release in the US with further markets to follow next year.

CJ is delighted to be returning to Shakespearience to face the challenge of some of the Bard's most well loved roles.

#### **Joanne Booth (Hippolyta/Titania)**

Joanne Booth has trained at LAMDA in London (Shakespeare), with renowned acting coach Larry Moss in NYC and Sydney, at Karl Bury Studio in NYC, Howard Fine Acting Studio and Lisa Robertson Studio. She is also a graduate of 16th Street Actors Studio's full time program. Joanne was an Ensemble member with Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble in 2023.

Theatre roles include Banquo/Lady Macduff/Caithness for *Macbeth* (QSE), Aufidius/Virgilia for *Coriolanus* (*Heartstring*), Devina Savage for *The Savages of Wirramai* (*Crying Chair Theatre*), Morgan for *STILL* (*Heartstring*), Pippa Moynihan for *Hotel Sorrento* (*Hit Productions*), Ensemble for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*Australian Shakespeare Co*) and Desdemona/Emilia/Bianca for *Othello Vs Titus* (*Shakespearience*). Jo was Assistant Director of *Coriolanus* (*Heartstring*), *You Got Older* (*Red Stitch*) and *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (*Kin Collective*). Her TV credits include *House Husbands*, *Neighbours* & many TVCs. Film work includes *Burnt* (Feature), *Welcome To the End of the World* (Winner of Audience Choice & 2nd place overall at 48Hr Film Fest), *Lone Wolf*, *Silence*, *The Schatten Schelm*, *Red Circle* (*Finer Films*), *The Seed and Mud*. She is also a member of the MEAA.

Joanne has always wanted to play Titania, Queen of the Fairies and is excited to be a part of bringing Shakespeare to regional NSW.





### **Alison Albany (Philostrate/Puck)**

Alison has been acting and performing on stage for over 30 years.

She has a diploma in acting from the Ensemble Studios Acting School and has undergone the Acting Intensive internship (Film and TV) with The Warehouse Workshop on The Gold Coast.

As well as continuing to work professionally on both stage and screen, she has successfully produced 3 full length stage productions and is an award winning director in the Sydney independent theatre scene.

Her stage credits include roles in: The Tempest, Macbeth, Taming Of The Shrew, The Vagina Monologues, Mary Rose, and Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, as well as multiple roles for The New Theatre and Factory Space Theatre company (she met Director Timothy Weston while performing "Shakespeare's J Ceasar") In 2010 she played a horse in 2 completely different plays to great accolades.

On screen Alison's credits include: "Australia's Most Wanted", "Wildside", "Home and Away", "Changi", "Deadly Women", and "A Place To Call Home".

Off stage Alison is a Security guard, assistant kids gymnastics coach, facilitator for corporate team building events, serious waterslide offienado, amateur mermaid and professional crazy cat lady.

She is most looking forward to being a possum ("those things are scary!")

### **Bendeguz Daniel Devyeni-Botos (Egeus/Robin Starveling the Tailor)**

Bendeguz graduated with an Advanced Diploma in Stage and Screen Performance at the Sydney Theatre School in 2012.

Among his more recent stage work includes working in the multi-season run of Murder Mystery at Elizabeth Bay House with Applause Entertainment, A Midsummer Night Dream with Shakespeariance Australia, and critically acclaimed 2023 Fringe Festival run of Death in the Pantheon. In the past he has worked in acclaimed productions such as the experimental Dinner and a Show, Quack with UTS Backstage, Artology Remix Les Demoiselles d'Avignon with the Art Gallery of NSW, Footsteps on Water with ANF, as well as number of other past productions with organisations including the Genesian Theatre Company and the Australian Theatre for Young People.

His camera credits include short films including Double Take, In Memorium Gerard Buchanon, Jordan, The Adventures of Dead Girl, and was Nominated for 'The Best Use of Character' for his performance in Redzone for the 48 Hour Film festival. He also starred in the Web series The Reaper and The Drive





#### **Jared Gerschwitz (Demetrius)**

Jared Gerschwitz is an actor, producer, event host, and entertainer originally from South Australia. His work has taken him on tours across Australia and the UK, performing in interactive outdoor shows, musical theatre and cabaret. After completing a diploma in musical theatre in London, he returned to Adelaide and began producing his own cabarets including Country Chic and Tales Mama Told Me before moving to Sydney last year to further pursue his passions in the entertainment and performance industries. Jared is thrilled to return this year to Shakespearience Australia, reprising the role of Demetrius in Midsummer Night's Dream and taking on the role of Orlando in As You Like It. Other credits include Dark Lake, Tarot, Sideshow, Chambers\_, Rising Dark, Chicago, & The Hello Girls

#### **Jessica Williams (Helena)**

Jessica is an actor and musician based in the Upper North Shore/Hornsby region of Sydney. She is currently singing as lead and backing vocalist with One Night Only the Bee Gees Show around NSW and in the process of recording and releasing her first EP.

As an actor Jessica has recently appeared in several outdoor Shakespeare productions including Much Ado About Nothing (Hero) Othello (Desdemona u/s) and A Midsummer Nights Dream (Helena). She also recently played the lead role in Bus Stop Films short film 'Connections' and worked for Artists In Motion as a lead actor in a visual piece for the Londoner Hotel in Macau.





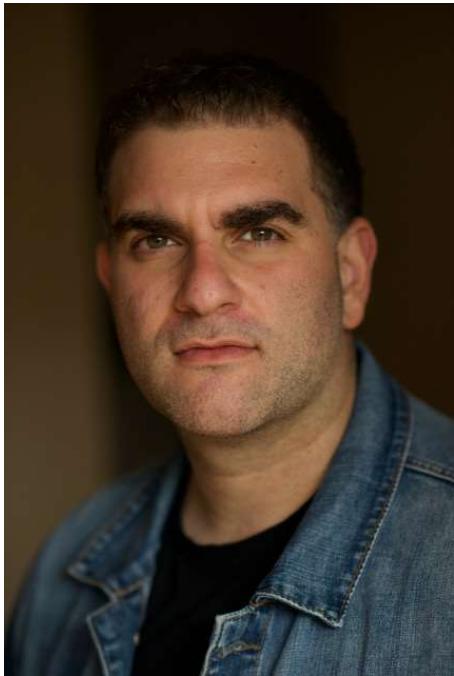
### **Samuel Chapman (Lysander)**

Samuel Chapman is a graduate of the University of Wollongong, where he studied a Bachelor of Performance. He has also completed an advanced short course in Screen Acting at Screenwise and is currently studying film acting with the Sydney Actor's Association. He has enjoyed teaching drama for the past 4 years, where he inspires and is inspired by his pupils. Samuel has performed in a wide number of theatre shows over the years. Some of his most notable roles include Gomez in 'The Addams Family' (2021), Shrek in 'Shrek' (2017) and Moonface Martin in 'Anything Goes' (2018), all with ACTIV Elite Performers as well as Rudi Petrovyan in 'Chase Me Comrade' (2022) and Puck in Summer Dreaming (2022) When he isn't acting, Samuel has a podcast called 'HAGO: Have A Good One' which has reached every continent in the world. Samuel has loved working with the cast of Shakespearience and is very excited to be a part of such an excellent cast and show!

### **Sarah Ballantyne (Celia; Hermia)**

Sarah Ballantyne (she/her) is a WAAPA trained actor based in Sydney. She has been involved in a wonderful variety of stage and screen productions before and after her graduation. During her time at WAAPA she performed for Perth audiences, her highlights include playing Richard III in King Richard III and Mother in The Mother. She most recently was Hattie/Ensemble in Cloudstreet marking her return to the Sydney stage. Sarah is ecstatic to join Shakespearience Australia for A Midsummer Night's Dream and As You Like It!





#### **Steve Maresca (Nick Bottom the Weaver)**

Steve has been working steadily in all facets of the entertainment industry since graduating drama school in 2009.

As writer, producer and actor Steve has appeared in many eclectic projects which include award winning Film, Short Film and Television projects including Doctor Doctor, Skinford Steve has been working steadily in all facets of the entertainment industry since graduating drama school in 2009.

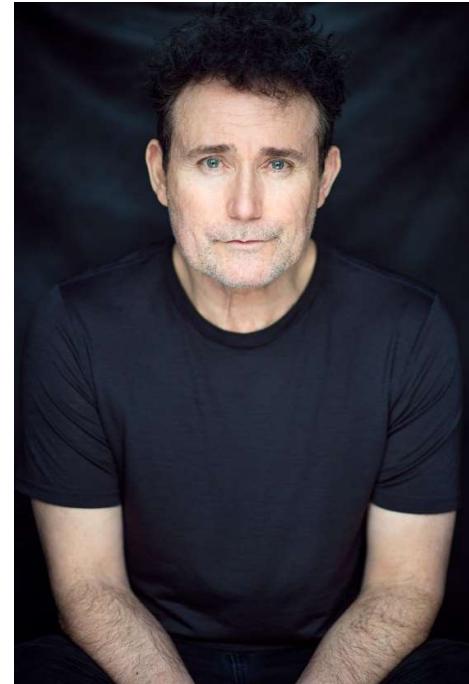
As writer, producer and actor Steve has appeared in many eclectic projects which include award winning Film, Short Film and Television projects including Doctor Doctor, Skinford chronicles, Dealing with Destiny, Ten Pound Poms, A Bad Influence and many more.

The first love is always the hardest and for Steve that was the magical world of Theatre. Since leaving Sydney theatre School, Steve has appeared in over 30 Theatrical productions some of which include Deadhouse: Tales of Sydney Morgue, The Local, Jerry and Tom, The Island of Doctor Moron, over 15 Shakespeare shows and much more.

Steve will be playing Bottom in A Midsummers which is a dream role for him..... get it? Dream? Hello? Hello?

#### **Dwayne Lawler (Tom Snout the Tinker)**

Dwayne's acting credits include Macbeth ('Macbeth', New National Theatre, Tokyo), the monodrama 'Tokyo Vampire' (Riant Theatre, New York) and the feature film 'The Vancouver Asahi'. He was the artistic director of Japan-based Rising Sun Theatre (2003-15) and a narrator for NHK World TV's 'J Flicks' and Great Gear' programs. His most recent role was Sir Hugh Evans in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' (New Theatre, Sydney).





#### **Benjamin Webb (Francis Flute the Bellows Mender)**

Benjamin Webb is a multifaceted Sydney-based performing artist, best known for his infectious smile, riveting energy and ability to connect with people by bringing stories to life in an exciting and innovative way. Benjamin pushes the boundaries of entertainment and performance, giving audiences a uniquely memorable experience. Performing as "Flute" has definitely given him many opportunities in this space. This is Benjamin's second season with Shakespeareience and he hopes you enjoy the show!

#### **Olivia Castree-Croad (Snug the Joiner)**

Shakespearean performance has formed the basis of Olivia's acting experience from the age of nine, when she began attending classes with Brightsparks School of Performing Arts, eventually numbering among the first students to form the dedicated "Shakespeare for Teens" class. Through Brightsparks, Olivia has competed in numerous group and solo eisteddfods, placing second in the Sydney Eisteddfod Shakespeare Monologues (17-19 years) in 2021 as Lady Macbeth, and first in 2022 as Hamlet. In 2022, Olivia received an onSTAGE nomination for her portrayal of Lady Macbeth in her HSC Drama final performance. This year, Olivia has performed as Sebastian (The Tempest) and Prince Escalus (Romeo and Juliet) with Point Break Drama, as Beatrice (Much Ado About Nothing) with UNSW's NUTS, and is thrilled to return to Shakespeareience as Snug the Joiner (A Midsummer Night's Dream). Currently, Olivia is undertaking a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Sydney, majoring in English and Theatre/Performance, where she gets to talk about Shakespeare all day long.





### **Timothy Weston (Director; Peter Quince)**

Timothy Weston has over ten years experience of outdoor Shakespeare, having appeared in over thirty Shakespearian productions including with the world renowned Cambridge Shakespeare Festival, and Sydney's legendary Shakespeare by the Sea. He has played everyone from King Richard to Caliban, Horatio to Mark Antony.

He studied at the University of Sydney and Sydney Theatre School, making his directorial debut in the successful tour of Chekhov's *Guns* in 2011 and culminating in founding Shakespearience Australia in 2022. His recent credits include Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Pistol in *Henry V*, Aeneas in *Dido; Queen of Carthage*, and David Copperfield (the Dickens one, not the Vegas one) in *Copperfield! The Musical* at the Gatehouse Theatre in London.

Returning to the role of Director, and the Role of director, for the second year (which, despite his protestations, does not entitle him to twice the director pay).

### **Isabella McGregor (Art Director and Costume Designer)**

Isabella McGregor used to create outfits for her paper dolls and barbies as a child. This was not impeded in any way by growing up in a house with an ample wood and metal workshop (thanks dad) and art workshop (thanks mum).

She finished of high school with a dressmaking qualification and assisting at the Yarralumla Gallery. Followed by taking courses in fashion, 3D Animation, graphic design and into the her first year at the Sydney College of the Arts.

She has always nurtured her art and textile hobbies with regular drawing, life classes and the occasional exhibition. Not to mention, regularly being the best dressed at fancy dress parties.

Back for her second year, she's a big believer in the Shakespearience and is excited to see what this year has in store!





#### **Martin Estridge (Fight Choreographer)**

Martin initially studied acting at the University of Houston School of Theatre. While there, he studied Stage Combat under Fight Master Brian Byrnes and gained his certification as an Actor Combatant. After returning to Australia, he continued his Combat training at The Action Acting Academy under Fight Master Kyle Rowling and Fight Directors Patricia Rowling and Blake Wells. Under their tutelage, he gained his Advanced Actor Combatant certification.

Martin has served as Fight Choreographer and/or Fight Captain for several companies in Houston and Sydney including Houston Fringe (Lights Out), Houston Grand Opera (Don Carlo), Express Theatre (Romeo and Juliet), Stage Left Productions (Treasure Island), and Bard on the Beach Sydney (Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, Richard the Third).

Martin will also be familiar to Shakespearience audiences as an actor, having appeared as Bottom in last season's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Previously, Martin was a member of Bard on the Beach Theatre Company for seven seasons, where his roles included Mark Antony (Julius Caesar), Sir John Falstaff (Merry Wives of Windsor), Macbeth (The Tragedy of Macbeth), The Player (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead), and Lord Capulet (Romeo and Juliet). For other companies, Martin has appeared as Jimmy (The Weir), Teddy Brewster (Arsenic and Old Lace), Lennie Small (Of Mice and Men), Palomo (Anna in the Tropics), and Long John Silver (Treasure Island). Martin is a member of the Australian Stage Combat Association

#### **Patrick Coyte (Musical Director)**

Patrick was once in a band that was played on Triple J, he suspects by accident. He is delighted to return as Musical Director for this year's Shakespearience, and hopes to restore honour to the profession (lost when the score to "Shakespeare in Love" was defeated by that of "A Bug's Life" at the 1998 Grammy Awards).



Patrick Coyte (Artist's Impression)

**Appearing as Fairies:**  
**Mel Long: Peaseblossom**  
**Anne Miller: Cobweb**  
**Samara Basili-Klopfer: Mustardseed**

Special Thanks to

Dan Lyons

Susan Weston

Dr Peter Weston

Sharon Webb

Nick Weston

Dr Caitlin Weston

Liz Charlton

Jared Quinn

Dr Giugiu Barsuola