

Theatre review – Shakedown: A Midsummer Night's Dream, King's Theatre



Shakedown brings together five of Edinburgh's High Schools in a collaborative approach to one of **Shakespeare's** most Faerie-frissoned, fun-time plays, A *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Featuring talent from secondary schools: Firrhill, Forrester, Tynecastle, Queensferry and The Royal High – it has to be admitted that things are getting better all the time.

These febrile crucibles of aspiring thespian endeavour are all secondary schools within the City of Edinburgh which have mixed catchments covering a range of social and economic strata.

5 schools, 5 Acts, one single purpose, one Dream – it is a Teenage kick-ass kinda magic come true. Adapted and Directed by Pab Roberts, Produced by Festival City Theatres and Broad, a prodigious amount of time and talent has brought this enchanting show to fruition.

As if the topsy-turvy parallel worlds of the Ducal palace, Oberon's Faerie demi-monde and not least the Rude Mechanicals were not enough – we have the gloriously love-struck Athenian air-heads to contend with. Then add multi-role swopping character shifts in the blink of an eye.

To mention individuals would not only diminish the ensemble ethos but incite guaranteed internecine playground/social media carnage.

Nevertheless, several scenes are not only worthy of, but demand, special mention. What of Helena and Hermia's foot-

stamping, cat fight tantrums with relishing side-ordure insults?

The pithily, near perfectly pitched Pyramus & Thisbe tableau where Wall looks on with disdain as though Moonshine's dog has just widdled on her plimsoles. Or perhaps the silver deely-bopper faeries and Titania's dreamy bower lullaby?

These stage-hungry proto-thesps have already sniffed the smell of the crowd, the phwar of the grease-paint.

Dreamily, delicious, magnificently magical, these young actors out on loan to Fate's capricious whim, will never forget this experience.

One can only hope they become, like Bottom, transported. Shakedown are mustard keen, no fusty cobwebs here. They put a girdle round the Earth in eighty minutes.

Watch them spin it off in to spaces where no man, woman or small, furry creatures have ever been before.

All hail the Dude Mechanicals and divers knavish sprites. Foresooth – theirs is no idle fancy.