

A Midsummer Night's Dream Blossoming Experience

I have always been fascinated by how a show could express so many concepts and tell so many different stories when the audience is asked to look at it from a different perspective. As I read *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I looked for a compelling, unique way to tell the story. I felt there a very spiritual link with the forest so I decided to base my concept on a Native American theme since I admire how the native culture is so connected to the Earth. I wanted my gerund to tie the design work altogether and allow me to involve nature and being organic. The word “blossoming” came to mind. Then I then realized, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is about blossoming into your true self and gaining your ultimate desires. Through the characters' experiences in the forest, they begin to understand the difference of how people view them, and accept that they are allowed to blossom into who they truly want to be. This concept would be illustrated by having flowers placed throughout the costumes and set. The lights and sound would give the stage a feeling of opening up and a sense of space with open frames. The sound scape would only feature sounds found in nature. My hope was the combined effect would give the audience the feeling that they were outside and no longer in a theater.

I focused my research on a Native American tribe that lived near rock settlements, but close enough to a forest so the audience could experience a contrast in the characters, civilizations and the surrounding forest. I found the Anasazi tribe, who lived in Mesa Verde, Colorado. They had an entire city carved and molded into side of a plateau made of sandstone. This civilization was thriving from 100 B.C. to around 13th century A.D. My research discovered a lot of artifacts and ecofacts archaeologists found on Anasazi sites and paintings depicting what archaeologists believed the Anasazi looked like and which reflected their lifestyle.

As I begin to design the set, I see a puzzle made up of several critical pieces that when

placed together in just the right way help bring the show to life. These pieces include: script analysis, detailed research, ground plans, rendering, and lastly the build. I decided I wanted this project to designed for a proscenium style stage to allow the show to blossom up into the audience with a feeling of openness where the sounds push to the back of the house or the sets angle towards the sides of the theater building. I knew I wanted levels in my set because I love to be able to create dynamic pictures on the stage. I also felt levels would be able to symbolize where the characters were in their arc of the show. At times the characters may be on top of the world, and at other times they could feel their life was crashing down.

For my costume designs, I wanted to convey who each character was and express their personality and culture. While the Anasazi characters wore muted browns, yellows, and oranges, the Fairies wore bright colors because they represented nature and all of its beauty and majesticness. I wanted the Fairies to be apart of nature because they control the entire plot, so I believed they would also have total control of their environment. In addition, I also made sure every flower I used in my costumes were blossoming and were native to the region where the Anasazi lived.

Throughout the show, the characters would experience organic, natural sounds found in nature as well as wind chimes representing the magic of the Fairies. The lights would be vibrant blues and purples since I set most of the scenes at night believing the Anasazi characters would feel safer expressing their true feelings in cover of night. In contracts, the Fairies would have colors follow them around the stage to represent their power in the forest and how they are able to glow with their magic.

With my version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I hoped to tell the story from a different perspective, while finding a way to express human emotions regardless of era or location since we all share common feelings and common flaws and are capable of blossoming through growth and time into who we truly wish to be.