

A midsummer nights dream and the wizard of oz



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

L. Frank Baum is the author of one of the most magical fairy tales ever brought to our screens.

A series of books were written and in 1939 created into a film. It was a masterpiece that was to be one of the biggest films ever made, enjoyed by children and adults all over the world. There are many reasons why this film has the element of magic, one of the reasons I found when researching was that this film did not only have one director, but several, Victor Fleming was the main director but for personal reasons other directors were bought in, Richard Thorpe and King Vidor. With the three imaginations of these geniuses a classic was born.

The story of 'The Wizard Of Oz' is a story of a young girl whose imagination creates a world 'Somewhere over the Rainbow.' Choosing to take L. Franks Baum's ideas and do the Wizard of Oz for our Children's theater was an easy choice as all of us had grown up watching the film and singing the songs. We wanted to create a magic that the kids would become enchanted by, for this magic we turned to 'A Midsummer Nights Dream'.

A Midsummer Nights Dream was written in 1595 by William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare's legendary status as a man of the theatre has crossed time and place. Respected as an artist of considerable merit in his own time, his reputation has expanded in the more than four hundred years since his birth to classify him as one of the greatest writers who has ever lived. So it should be no surprise that although it isn't a story read by children, (because of the Shakespearean language used.) we turned to Mr.

Shakespeare for some help. His ability to take write a story and have audiences read it years later, and still have them pondering, ' What's going to happen next? ', ' What mischief has Puck done now' is amazing. As I said the book isn't a book read by younger children, but when like The Wizard Of Oz it was brought to the big screen, a world of magic and fairies was open for children to jump in and dream. In the play, the worlds of the mythological Greece, Elizabethan England, and the fairy kingdom are united. In another writer's hands, the transition from Theseus' Greek empire to the fairy forest would seem jarring, but time and again audiences have willingly suspended their disbelief to follow Hermia and Lysander, Oberon and Puck, Titania and Bottom on a journey through the pitfalls of love, the power of magic, and the miracle of dreams. Although there are no fairies in The Wizard Of Oz, we desperately wanted an air of magic throughout, we decided to do this through the use of music, this is done in both films, (The Wizard of Oz and A Midsummer night's dream)In The Wizard of Oz it is done through the characters singing, in A Midsummer Night's dream its done through mystical music, we had each character singing, as a way of introducing ourselves to the children; after all not EVERYONE has seen the play before, this was a hard assumption to live by, as everyone seems to know the theme of The Wizard of Oz, a little girl dreams up a fantasy world, where dreams really do come true; never the less, it was an assumption that had to be made.

I played the part of the Cowardly Lion in our production of the Wizard of Oz, I found that there wasn't just one character from A Midsummer Night's Dream that I felt related to the Lion in some way, but rather several, the Lion seemed to display part of each character. The character that I would

compare him to mostly however would be Puck. Puck is Oberon's fairy and although he plays tricks on people and sometimes seems quite heroic, he is scared of his Master, and does whatever he is told. I wanted to show that even though the Cowardly Lion was just that, a coward, like Puck he was heroic too, I did this near to the end of the play, when the 4 friends find that The Wizard, isn't the greatest Wizard that ever lived, as the Wizard was talking to Dorothy and The tin man, on lines such as, ' Oh no my dear, I'm a good man, I'm just a very bad Wizard. I was dancing about the stage with my paws extended trying to reach out and hit the Wizard, this showed the Lion heroic side, but as I was stood behind Dorothy the whole time I was doing this, it also showed that he is still a big coward! As I said early, something we found was that fairies on their own do not create magic and that music can create the magic atmosphere just as well, so we had live music, with Piano accompaniment for each song.

As in the film, we wanted to keep each main character singing, so we had about 5 songs during the production. For the set design we again went back to A Midsummer Nights dream, we saw the similarities and differences between it and The Wizard of Oz, although one used bright colourful settings to create a dreamt world, and the other uses a dull and boring land, contrasted with a fairy filled magical forest. With glitter dust and wings. As we couldn't change much of the setting half way through, we wanted our costumes to be as magical as they could. This is why I wore a full body suit and head mask, people still say I looked like a bear rather than a lion, but the kid's reaction to the costume was fantastic, they loved the cuddly appearance of the Lion and felt sorry for the Coward. I used this reaction and

only lines such as, ' Tell me when It's over' I put my paws over my eyes and shook, the kids didn't know whether to laugh or feel sorry for the Lion, two emotions that the film its self conjures up.

There is a main theme that connects a play that was written during a time of war and killing and a play that was written over 400 hundred years ago, dreams. Things have changed, year after year, since The Wizard Of Oz was made into a movie things have dramatically changed but one thing that remains, is that we all dream, no matter how old, young, childish or mature we are. Our imaginations are let lose as we are sleeping, this is why everyone can identify in someway between a midsummer nights dream and The wizard of oz. Another common theme comes at the end of both plays, was it a dream or was it a reality? A question that is never answered in either plays, this gives children a chance to make up there own minds, leaving the stories with them for years.