



Guy Roberts
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**ASF's
2004-05 Season
of *Forbidden Love***

*Shakespeare
Under the Stars:*
**A MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S DREAM**
October 14 – 30, 2004

Rotating Repertory:
OTHELLO
by William Shakespeare
and
**THE DOG IN THE
MANGER**
by Lope de Vega
Feb 24 - March 20, 2005

“The course of true love never did run smooth...”

--*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, October 04, 2004

Austin, TX – The Austin Shakespeare Festival will kick off its 21st anniversary Season of **Forbidden Love** with the free Shakespeare-Under-the-Stars production of the beloved comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Sheffield Hillside Theater in Zilker Park. In this outdoor production, to be directed by Austin Critic's Table and B. Iden Payne award-winning ASF Artistic Director **Guy Roberts** with **Ian Manners**, spellbound lovers find themselves double-crossed by mischievous fairies who prove that no one, even Bottom and his rude mechanicals, is safe from the madness of love. One of Shakespeare's most well-known plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* story of tradesmen moonlighting as actors, disgruntled queens, rebellious suitors and unruly fairies has become an archetypal romantic comedy that will delight lovers—and families—of all ages. Zilker Park provides an enchanting setting to watch the young lovers frantically pursue each other through the Athenian forest while Puck and the fairies magically bewitch everyone from the lowliest mechanical to the powerful Titania.

For the first time ever, ASF's annual free Shakespeare in Zilker Park will seat audiences on the stage as part of the action. **Free onstage seating is available only with special ticket vouchers** available at Book People until 6pm on the day of the show, at the Zilker Hillside Theatre after 6pm on the day of the show or through special advance booking on the ASF website (www.austinshakespeare.org) and **will be limited to 300 persons a performance**. ASF will open general admission seating on the stage at 7pm before each performance to all patrons who have a free onstage ticket voucher.

After an unprecedented first two seasons as ASF's Artistic Director, in which his productions captured **47 Austin Critic's Table and B. Iden Payne Award Nominations for theatre excellence**, Robert's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* promises to be the beginning of ASF's most exciting and romantic season yet. Roberts, who also appears in the role of Puck, feels that the unique nature of the production invites audiences to “truly share with our artists the sheer delight and passion that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has come to represent over the ages. While *Dream* is usually thought of as a lighthearted comedy, we have chosen the play to kick off our romantic season of Forbidden Love because though it captures the innocence of unrequited love, it also strongly portrays the chaos, the danger, and the possibilities of unbridled passion. **By seating the audience on the stage we are creating an intimate experience in a beautiful outdoor setting that gives both actors and audiences permission to explore anew this familiar text and make fresh and unexpected discoveries.**” As Ian Manners remarks, “the excitement of the play lies in its rich possibilities: while it encompasses love and love's blindness, the currents of jealousy, darkness and disorder run powerfully through the story. Above all, the world of magic and illusion blurs the boundaries between the realms of the fairies, the mechanicals, and the lovers, so that, as audiences, it becomes possible to accept for a moment the possibility that we too are dreaming.”

Leading the cast of *Dream* are ASF favorites **Jill Blackwood** as Helena, **Corey Gagne** as Bottom, **Kelsey Kling** as Hermia, **Bernadette Nason** as Quince, **Patricia Percy** as Titania, **Guy Roberts** as Puck, **Rick Roemer** as Oberon, **David Stokey** as Flute and **Ben Wolfe** as Lysander among others. The production features costume designs by Buffy Manners, sound designs by Philip Montoya, scenic designs by Don Day, lighting designs by John Ore, wig designs by Melissa Livingston and property designs by Marco Noyola. Ron Watson is the production stage manager.

October 14 - 30, 2004, Thursday – Sunday @ 8pm
Preview: Thursday, October 14 – Opening: Friday, October 15
All performances at Sheffield Hillside Theater at Zilker Park
Seating Limited to 300 a performance. All performances are free to the public

****FREE ticket vouchers may be picked up in advance at BOOKPEOPLE, 6th and Congress, until 6 pm on day of show; after 6 pm, tickets available at the Hillside Theater or via the ASF website: www.austinshakespeare.org**

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