

Frolic in the Forest at Dana Hills High School's "A Midsummer Night's Dream"  
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"A Midsummer Night's Dream" at Dana Hills skillfully retells this four-hundred-year-old Shakespearian tale with a fantastical twist. Set in a magical Athens, forest nymphs meddle with two pairs of lovers which result in an adventure of shenanigans, laughter, and love.

Hopeless romantic Helena (Annabelle Adversario) wanders on stage wide-eyed with an effervescent smile. At the beginning of the tale, Adversario clings onto her lover with fierce determination- locking him in a nearly inescapable hug. This is expertly contrasted by the dejection she displays through a furrowed brow and quivering voice as she expresses her feelings of betrayal to her friends.

Throughout the play, a vivacious Puck (Jessica Beutler) bounces across the stage with agile wit and mischievous laughter. Beutler pops up out of a platform, immediately donning a playful grin and later physically cowering when she is scolded by Oberon; shrinking her posture, hands shielding her face. Her clown-like personality is only exemplified by the costume team's (Teya Linde and Jessica Beutler) decision to dress her in puffy striped jester pants. Her garb consists of various shades of green as a reference to Puck's connection to nature and is adorned with gold accents; a sparkly costume for such a shimmery character.

A standout among "The Mechanicals", a band of actors, is Flute (Jack Wentzel). He grovels as he is forced to accept the role of a young maiden in the "play within a play". When performing for the court, he comedically embraces his role: speaking in a fluttery and raised pitch and standing with his hands gently resting on his hips. After their "performance", he leans against the wall, the back of his hand resting on his forehead as it slowly shakes in hilarious regret.

The lighting team (William Doppenberg and Mars O'Kane) communicates the passage of time by illuminating a moon on the set that they creatively invented through the use of shadows. Together, they also execute an astonishing one-hundred and thirty light cues throughout the performance. Colors are even utilized to symbolize mood and emotion- as pink light floods the set representing the love the characters find in each other near the end of the tale.

Through jocose performances and imaginative tech, Dana Hills' dreamy production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" reminds that love and laughter can be found in any situation.