

2025 STARLIGHT SHAKES

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

A Midsummer Night's Dream

SEPT. 25 - 28 & OCT. 2 - 4
PAY WHAT YOU
THINK ITS WORTH

ON THE STARLIGHT GROUNDS
ON THE RAY CASTLE STAGE

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2025 Starlight Shakes

About the Ray Castle Stage

A Midsummer's Night Dream is being performed on our **Ray Castle Stage**. Ray came to theatre late in life, after retiring from his job at the Chicago Tribune. Once he got his feet wet he was hooked, doing at least one show, and often more, each year.

He was a gentle, warm, and patient actor with a great sense of humor. Many of us who formed Starlight Shakes treasure our experiences working with Ray and decided to honor his memory by dedicating our stage to a guy who proved that it is never too late in life to start a new adventure. Here's to you, Ray Castle.



Producer	Christopher D. Brady
Director	Ethan McBee
Stage Manager	Shannon Kopp
Costume Designer	Helaina Nimmo
Lighting Designer	Bryan Rivera
Choreographer	Mychall Miller-Cornejo
Intimacy Director	Jennifer Thompson
Starlight Shakes Troupe	Christopher D. Brady, Christine Garner, Ashton Gutierrez, Rachel McBee, Kevin Poole, Jennifer Thompson, Ginny Wise, and Jacob Wise

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Cast of Characters

The Athenian Court

Theseus	Matthew Chagoya
Hippolyta	Hanna Raczek
Egeus	Karin Blaski
Philostrate	Carol Kaufman
Hermia	Rachel McBee
Helena	Elle Laesch
Lysander	Sterling Ford
Demetrius	Isaac Sturdivant
Courtiers	Matthew Martin, Zander Eisele, Olive Fletcher

The Mechanicals

Bottom (Pyramus)	Eduardo Galaviz
Quince	Hannah Sleger
Flute (Thisby)	Jacob Thiede
Snout (Wall)	Mary Huff
Snug (Lion)	Chris Wilson
Starveling (Moonshine)	Marilyn Ramirez-Mendoza

Oberon & His Goblins

Oberon	David Mortenson
Puck	Hailey Sickler
Goblins	Rowan Clark, Matthew Martin, Nina McClung

Titania & Her Fairies

Titania	Sabine Shen
Peasblossom	Phoenix Martinez
Cobweb	Imogen Brady
Moth	Chloe Nicolette
Mustardseed	Aerianna Grajciar
Fairies	Zander Eisele, Olive Fletcher, Jaxon Hamer, Ila Sides

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Karin Blaski (Egeus) [She/Her] rejoiceth in her maiden venture with Shakes. Many a moon hath pass'd since last she did don the garb in A *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hermia) and *The Merchant of Venice* (Portia). She doth thank her kin, her companions, and her sweet love, who hath borne the rigours of "the schedule" with patient hearts.



Imogen Brady (Cobweb) [She/Her] is in her fourth Starlight Shakes, and she couldn't be happier to be here! This is one of her favorite Shakespeare plays, so she is extra excited! She is a sophomore at Harlem High School and has been watching Shakespeare at RVC her whole life!



Matthew Chagoya (Theseus) [He/Him] is a recent BA graduate from NIU. His Starlight debut was in *Guys & Dolls* (Crapshooter). He last tread the Ray Castle boards in *Twelfth Night* and last year was seen as Señor Tobey at Powerhouse Theatre. He plans to keep leaving a positive impact in the shows he is in.



Rowan Clark (Ensemble) [They/Them] is very excited to be part of their first Starlight production as a cast member instead of crew. They've been in plays in high school, appearing in *Puffs*, and as Dr. Chasuble/Merriman for *The Importance of Being Earnest*. They can't wait to see what's next.



Zander Eisele (Ensemble) [They/Them] is super excited to be in their third Starlight Shakes, last seen in *Love's Labours Lost* (Mote) and *Julius Caesar* (Octavius)! This summer, Z served as an ASM for Starbright: *Mary Poppins*, and was recently seen as Lane for Auburn's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



Olive Fletcher (Ensemble) [She/Her] is thrilled to be in her third year at Starlight Theatre! She was most recently seen as Jane in *Mary Poppins*. She is excited to try something new and learn more about theatre. Olive thanks her family and the amazing friends who have become such a wonderful part of her life.



Sterling Ford (Lysander) [He/Him] is making his Starlight Shakes debut, and he loves being in this snafu of a dream! Last seen this summer in Starlight's *The Wedding Singer* (Billy Idol Impersonator, Ens.) and BCT's *The Little Mermaid* (Prince Eric). He thanks Ethan, his parents, the Mahans, and his friends!



Eduardo Galaviz (Bottom) [He/Him] is an actor and aspiring writer located here in the Rockford area. This is his fourth Starlight Shakes and he has also performed on the Starlight stage and with The West Side Show Room. He would like to thank his family and friends who support him.



Aeri Grajciar (Mustardseed) [They/Them] is a junior at Auburn High School and is THRILLED to debut their first-ever Shakespeare with Starlight Shakes! They've been doing theater for roughly nine years, and is honored to have the opportunity to share the stage with many new faces.



Jaxon Hammer (Ensemble) [He/They/She] is in their first Starlight show as a cast member! He is grateful to his supportive family for always being there, and his friends for making him laugh, smile, and enjoy doing theater. He is a member of Kantorei, a senior at Boylan, and an apprentice counselor at Camp Winnebago.

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Mary Huff (Snout) [She/Her] is in her first show at RVC! She holds an MFA in Acting from Regent University. One of her favorite past roles has been playing Queen Elizabeth at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire (PRF). She also directed *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Titus Andronicus* at PRF.



Carol Kaufman (Philostrate) [She/Her] is the current Director of Library Services at Rock Valley College with several years of experience in community theater and voice work in Madison, WI.



Elle Laesch (Helena) [She/Her] is thrilled to be in her second Starlight Shakes' show (and her favorite Shakespearean play)! She was last seen in the troupe's 2023 production of *Love's Labour's Lost* as Princess of France. She hopes you enjoy this show full of laughter, chaos, and whimsy.



Shannon Kopp (Stage Manager) [She/Her] rejoins the Starlight Shakes Troupe after a brief hiatus. The Starlight Shakes Troupe is ecstatic to have her back.



Matthew Martin (Ensemble) [He/Him] is in his second Shakes. He is super excited to return to Midsummer, where he last appeared in it in high school. He was in the mainstage season in *The SpongeBob Musical* cast and as an ASM for *The Wedding Singer*. Matt thanks his friends and family for the constant support, and his cat, Bear, for the missed playtime.



Phoenix Martinez (Peasblossom) [They/He] is excited to be part of this show! Some of his previous credits include Florizel in *The Winter's Tale* and Bobby in *A Chorus Line* (Chicago Academy for the Arts). They would like to thank their mother and their sister for all the support, as well as the entire cast and crew for being so delightful to work with.



Ethan McBee (Director) [He/Him] is thrilled to be making his Starlight Shakes debut. A Rockford transplant, Ethan has spent the last ten years teaching English at Rockford Lutheran, where he and his wife, Rachel, also lead the theatre department. Ethan fell in love with both theatre and Rachel at Concordia Chicago. He has spent the last four summers in Vermont learning from world-class theatre practitioners as part of The Bread Loaf School of English. He would like to thank this amazing cast and crew for lending their time and talents to this production, and his family for their support, patience, and encouragement.



Rachel McBee (Hermia) [She/Her] is thrilled to return to Starlight Shakes as the fiercest acorn around, Hermia. A member of the Shakes Troupe and active on the Shakes stage since 2018 some of her favorite credits include Bianca in *Shrew*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, and Calpurnia in *Julius Caesar*. She would like to thank her students for seeing the show and not making it weird, her husband for directing the show, and not making it weird, and Shakespeare, for writing the show...and making it weird.

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Nina McClung

(Ensemble) [She/Her] is so excited to be making her Starlight debut! She hopes you find the show as funny as she does!

Take pains; be perfect: adieu!



Mychall Miller-Cornejo (Choreographer)

[He/Him] is overjoyed to dance among fairies, lovers, and a bit of mischief in this magical

midsummer forest. He loves to conjure up movement that blends storytelling and enchantment. Previous Starlight credits: *The SpongeBob Musical*, *Newsies*, and *In the Heights*. He sends love to his husband, Mark.



David Mortenson

(Oberon) [He/Him] is a veteran of both RVC theatre and the Navy. Recently he finished his dual major BA at NIU in

Theatre Studies and History. Over the summer, he studied acting in Vassar's Powerhouse Theatre program. This year, he has played Zyclo in *Anon(ymous)*, Egeon/Balthasar in *Comedy of Errors*, and Agamemnon in *Oresteia*. Right now, he's looking for work. Anyone hiring?



Chloe Nicolette (Moth)

[She/Her] attends RVC. *Julius Caesar* was her destiny. Chloe would like to thank her friends and family, especially her

mother, for their support. She also wants to thank the cast, stage manager, and director.



Helaina Nimmo

(Costume Designer) [She/Her] has designed *Mary Poppins* and *Julius Caesar* at Starlight. She's worked in the costume

shop for four years, and is a recent Costume Design graduate of Rockford University.



Hanna Raczek (Hippolyta)

[She/Her] was introduced to Shakespeare through Starlight Shakes, and she is looking forward to introducing (or

reintroducing!) you, too! She was most recently seen as Portia in *Julius Caesar* last year, as well as Evelyn in this year's mainstage production of *Ragtime*. Enjoy the Dream!



Marilyn Ramirez-Mendoza

(Starveling) [She/Her] is excited to be back doing a Starlight Shakes after six years! She would like to thank Ethan for this

opportunity, her husband for his continued support as a "Starlight widow" during show seasons, and her 3-year-old son for just being a cutie.



Bryan Rivera (Lighting Designer)

[He/Him] is thrilled to be part of Shakes! A dedicated freelance lighting designer, Bryan has

recently worked on productions such as *Ragtime*, *Legally Blonde* and *Guys & Dolls*. He extends his heartfelt gratitude to his friends and family for their unwavering support.



Sabine Shen (Titania)

[She/Her] is overjoyed to be doing Shakespeare again, especially with such an absurdly talented cast and crew. Previous

onstage credits: *Blackwater* (Robin & Olivia), *Love's Labour's Lost* (Rosalind), *The Comedy of Errors* (Luciana), and *Macbeth*. She has also worked offstage as an Assistant Stage Manager for RVC Starlight: *The Wedding Singer*, *The SpongeBob Musical*, and *Legally Blonde*, and *RENT* at the Woodstock Opera House. She would like to thank her cat Baba Yaga, her very own beloved changeling; her incredible friends; and her caring boyfriend/impish scene partner David, who will no doubt cause her to break every single night.

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Hailey Sickler (Puck)
[She/Her] is a Rockford Lutheran graduate and RVC transfer student from Luther College. She has been a part of her

school theatre productions since middle school, with *Midsummer* being her first Starlight Shakes! She recently played Hermia for New Minowa Players in April, and is excited to be the perpetrator instead of the victim this time around. She has had a blast working on the show and hopes you enjoy the mischief and mayhem, intentional or accidental.



Ila Sides (ensemble)
[She/Her] just wrapped up her first season at Starlight where she appeared as Winifred Banks in *Mary Poppins*.

She thanks her family and friends for their love and support.



Hanna Slegler (Quince)
[She/Her] is elated to return to Shakes after a brief hiatus. She was last seen in *Macbeth* (Lady Macduff). Other Shakes

credits: Troupe member (2018-22), *Taming of the Shrew* (director), and *Twelfth Night* (Maria). Hannah has also been involved with Starlight Theatre since 90's as a performer, director, choreographer, assistant director, and the scenic charge artist (2016-present). She runs the extra-curricular theatre program at Boylan High School. Hannah wholeheartedly thanks the Starlight Shakes Troupe members for keeping Shakespeare alive; Ethan, Shannon, and her fellow performers; and her family/friends who support her in all of her endeavors.



Isaac Sturtivant (Demetrius) [He/Him] is excited to be doing the Shakespeare show this year. This is his second show with Starlight, the first being *Ragtime* (2025). Isaac is excited to keep pursuing his theater career.



Jacob Thiede (Flute) [He/Him] is excited to be back for Shakespeare here at Starlight! You may have seen him this summer as Eugene in *Grease* or as a member of the Ensemble in *The SpongeBob Musical*. When not doing theatre, Thiede is pursuing a BA in Secondary Education - History at Rockford University. He wants to thank you for supporting live theatre. Insta: @theycallme_thiede



Jennifer Thompson (Intimacy Director) [She/Her] has been directing and performing in the stateline area for more than three decades. She is an adjunct theatre instructor at RVC.



Chris Wilson (Snug) [He/Him] Here we go again. Like his mom's cell phone plan, and an unexpected urge to clean, he's riding that

Starlight performance wave as far as it will take him. And that got him to this role in an amazing Shakespeare show, working with loved ones, new and old. He enjoys nature, road trips, LEGOs, gaming, teaching high school history, and building up lore. He dedicates this show to the cast, crew, God, and you: the audience, for making this all possible!

DECLARATION

A play by Jonathan Dorf.

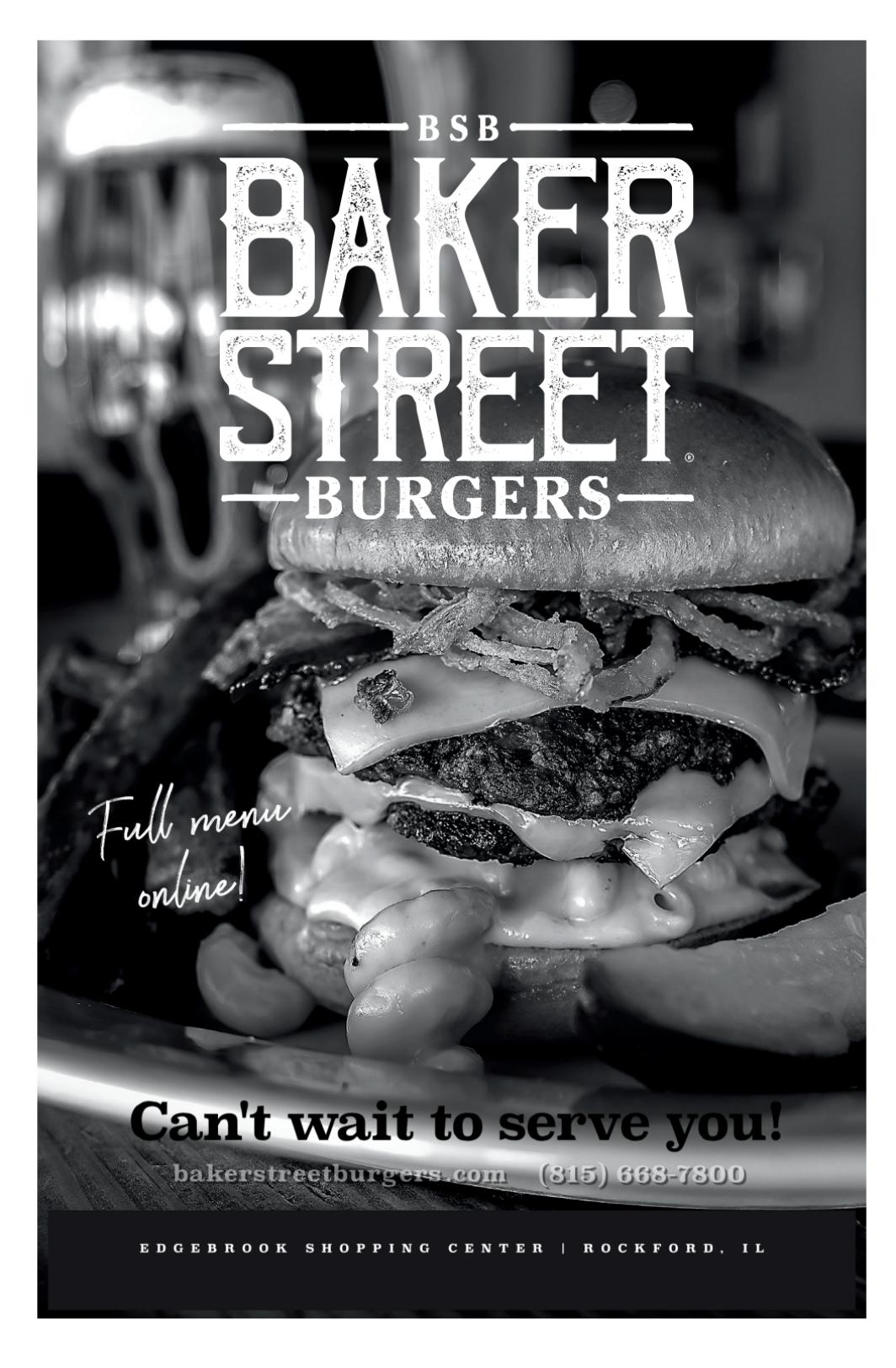
This play contains sensitive content regarding gun violence in schools.



OCT. 23 at 1 PM • OCT. 24 at 7 PM
OCT. 25 at 4 & 7 PM

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ADMISSION IS FREE

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