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HEARTLAND YOUTH BALLET PRESENTS MAGICAL BALLET UNDER THE STARS

Building on an 15 year history of presenting high-quality dance productions at The Rose, Robin Welch and Rachel Vickrey, directors of the newly-formed Heartland Ballet, will bring the outstanding ballet *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to the beautiful new Sumtur Ampitheater.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, choreographed by Robin Welch, is set to Felix Mendelssohn's enduring 1843 score and Welch's highly rated version of the ballet captures in dance, the play that has been called one of the supreme achievements of William Shakespeare.

The production will be presented by Heartland Youth Ballet, a non-profit, pre-professional dance company dedicated entirely to providing highly-motivated ballet students with the training, artistic development and practical experience needed to pursue professional performing careers.

Heartland Youth Ballet members, students at Robin Welch Dance Arts, will dance roles such as fireflies, sprites, fairies and the leads of Puck, Helena, and Primrose. Highly esteemed professional guest artists from throughout the country will also grace the stage for this magical production.

Rachel Vickrey, former company member of Ballet Omaha, North Carolina Dance Theater, Tulsa Ballet Theater and principal with Omaha Theater Ballet, will re-create the role of Titania, Queen of the Fairies. Jacob Rice, a former soloist with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Miami City Ballet and Pittsburgh Ballet Theater will perform the role King Oberon. Adrian Fry, currently with Ballet West will dance the role of the lover Demetrius. Eric Otte, who danced with Ballet Omaha before going to Broadway and performing the lead role of Raoul in Phantom of the Opera, will perform the role of Lysander with his former high school sweetheart, Liz Reiter who will dance the role of Hermia and was principal dancer in Gus Giordano Jazz Dance of Chicago and alexander michael's/Future Movement in Chicago.

"I am so excited to present this fantastic ballet "under the stars" at Sumtur Amphitheater," said choreographer Welch, "and with the trees, plants, bushes and flowers on loan from Canoyer, our fairy forest under the stars will truly be magical." "It's a great production for both adults and children to see," said director/dancer Vickrey, "it's a real ballet with classical dancing - but it's also a crazy, comedic story, with a childlike wonder."

Performance is at The Sumtur Ampitheater on June 25th at 7:30 pm. Tickets range in price from \$11 for grass seating on the hill, to \$13 for permanent seating. Tickets are available online at robinwelchdance.com or heartlandyouthballet.org or call 402-237-8801.



STORY SYNOPSIS: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The story begins in the magical woods that surround a mythical Athens. It is a Midsummer's Eve, a time of great rejoicing and mischief among the fairies of these woods. Oberon, King of the Fairies, and his Queen, Titania, have been arguing over a young child - a "changeling" whom both want to join their bands of followers. To resolve the quarrel, Oberon enlists his faithful servant, the mischievous and clever Puck, to bring him a magical flower that can make anyone fall in love at first sight.

Meanwhile, two pairs of Athenian mortals are battling romantic problems of their own. Hermia is in love with Lysander...but her father, Egeus, is forcing her to marry Demetrius...who is secretly loved by Hermia's best friend Helena. When Lysander persuades Hermia to elope with him, the two set off to hide in the woods - pursued by Demetrius, who in turn is followed by Helena. While the mortals sleep in the forest, Puck tries to straighten out their mismatched romances with her magic flower - but winds up only making things even more confusing.

In another part of the forest, some rustic actors meet to rehearse for a festival. Puck can't resist the chance to make more mischief. She turns Nick Bottom, one of the actors, into a donkey, and the others flee in fright - but Titania, already under the spell of the magic flower, awakens and immediately falls in love with Bottom.

It becomes King Oberon's job to straighten out the lovers' quarrels and restore peace for Fairyland. With Puck, he begins wielding her powers to sweep away the remnants of the night's adventures...

INTERESTING GUEST ARTIST FACTOIDS

- Liz Reiter, who plays the role of Hermia, the young woman in love with Lysander, and Eric Otte, who plays Lysander, were high school sweethearts in Blair, Nebraska!
- Rachel Vickrey and Robin Welch, Heartland Youth Ballet co-directors, have both previously danced the role of the Fairy Queen Titania in several professional ballet companies.
- Rachel Vickrey appeared in her first production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the Indian Child who the Fairy Queen and King fight about when she was only four years old.