



SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA NEWS RELEASE

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Note: Digital images are available for download from our [media photo gallery](#).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Spoleto Festival USA to present the American Premiere of Bristol Old Vic/Handspring Production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**** Bristol Old Vic & Handspring Puppet Company
Create a *Dream* for the Twenty-First Century ****

March 26, 2013 (CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA) —Co-commissioned by Spoleto Festival USA, Bristol Old Vic's new production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* brings an immediacy to the play for a whole new generation of theater-goers. The production, which is directed by Tom Morris in association with South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company in their first collaboration since the award-winning *War Horse*, foregoes period costumes and traditional staging for a simple landscape, rugged contemporary clothing, and more than twenty handcrafted puppets—from tiny hand-held birds to enormous masks and disembodied limbs, and from featureless animated planks of wood to intricately carved and painted figures. *The Guardian* declares the show "magical and mysterious," while *The Times* (London) describes it as "eerily beautiful...irresistibly funny."

Handspring's puppet designers Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones worked closely with Morris and set designer Vicki Mortimer to create a "future primitive" world where objects from an advanced—but long forgotten—technology are sometimes stolen and inhabited by fairies. "I was expecting an inventive, delightful production," said Spoleto Festival USA General Director Nigel Redden, who recently attended the production in Bristol, "but the performance exceeded my expectations. Puppets and actors work seamlessly together to bring life to the puppets and expand the emotional and physical possibilities of the actors. Puck, for example, is a collection of what seem like odds and ends that are manipulated by

three actors so that his shape shifts constantly. Tom, Adrian, Basil, and Vicki have wonderfully captured the humor and emotion of this play.”

Some of Mortimer’s set will be shipped from the UK for the Charleston performances, but many of the set pieces will be built on-site by the Festival’s production team, making it the most complex of the Festival’s many theatrical offerings this season. *Midsummer* will also be the most prominent of the 2013 Festival’s theater programs, running for nineteen performances throughout the entire 17-day season.

A number of special events have been planned around the Festival’s presentation of *Midsummer*, including a conversation with director Tom Morris on Saturday, May 25, at noon in the Main Reading Room of the Charleston Library Society at 164 King Street. The Festival has also partnered with the luxury boutique hotel Zero George Street to offer a “Dream Package” that includes three nights’ accommodations, tickets to the Morris conversation and a *Midsummer* performance, and a sunset sail on a private yacht, as well as dinner at a downtown restaurant and invitations to an exclusive party in honor of the *Midsummer* artists. Reservations for the “Dream Package” can be made by calling the Festival’s Patron Services Manager at 843.720.1114.

A Midsummer Night’s Dream Performance Schedule At-a-Glance

Thursday, May 23, 7:30pm (PREVIEW)

Saturday, May 25, 3:30pm (PREVIEW) and 8:00pm

SUN, MAY 26 3:30PM

MON, MAY 27 3:30PM and 8:00PM

TUES, MAY 28 7:00PM

THURS, MAY 30 7:00PM

FRI, MAY 31 3:30PM and 8:00PM

SAT, JUNE 1 3:30PM

SUN, JUNE 2 3:30PM and 8:00PM

MON, JUNE 3 7:00PM

WED, JUNE 5 7:00PM

THURS, JUNE 6 7:00PM

FRI, JUNE 7 8:00PM

SAT, JUNE 8 3:30PM

SUN, JUNE 9 3:30PM

HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased online at spoletousa.org, by phone at 843.579.3100, or in person at the Festival’s Box office located at the Charleston Visitor Center at 375 Meeting Street from Mar 25 – June 9.

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

May 24 – June 9, 2013

Considered America's premier international performing arts festival, Spoleto Festival USA fills Charleston, SC's historic theaters, churches and outdoor spaces with over 160 performances by world-renowned artists and emerging performers in opera; theater; dance; and chamber, symphonic, choral, bluegrass, and jazz music. For more information on Spoleto Festival USA, visit spoletousa.org or call 843.579.3100.

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