

‘A Reimagined Midsummer Night’s Dream’

by AJ Sheehy, Charlotte Paterson, Henry Wilson, Honor Boekeman, Isabel Grace, Jen Harland, Jess Dening and Trudi Anne Gribble.

Dramaturgs: Dr Suzanne Ingelbrecht and Louise Sheehy.

A NOTE ON THE FILM

By Dr Suzanne Ingelbrecht

3 February 2023

Once the script was produced, the team found that it was logistically impossible to gather everyone for the intensive four-week rehearsal period needed to produce a publicly performed play. Consequently, the live theatre outcome was exchanged for the making of a film inspired by the Reimagined Dream script. This film process took place over the course of a month, during September 2022, in the main theatre space at Victoria Hall, Fremantle.

Dr Ingelbrecht made the creative decisions about the film’s scope based on the strengths of the participants who were all novice actors and taking into account that two of the participants in the script-writing process preferred not to ‘perform’ as characters in the film. During the theatre games process and the script-writing process, the directorial decision-making was around helping participants focus on gesture and movement to highlight character emotions such as anger, sadness and fear, etc. Building on this work, a ‘silent’ black-and-white film format with caption slides for dialogue was felt to be the best creative option, with the reimagined play’s essential storyline ‘narrated’ by the two participants who preferred not to perform. In this way, no-one was left out of the creative process of making the film. The creative team – consisting of Director Suzanne Ingelbrecht, Film-maker Chris Horgan, Make-up Artist Yvette Drager Wetherilt and Costume Designer Danika Bentley – did their utmost to guide and inspire confidence in all the participants, as they were learning and developing new skills and techniques during the shoot.

The creative team bumped in a green screen and pre-production involved filming various backdrops in Fremantle and at Roley Pool that would later be used in post-production. Over the course of six intensive filming sessions lasting 3 hours or more each, the process involved the participants getting dressed up in costume and makeup, briefly rehearsing each shot, then doing a filmed take and retake as necessary. The pre-recorded narration provided the spine against which the actors could perform their character’s actions and show their character’s emotions, as directed.

The green screen device meant that some cleverness had to be engaged in the post-production stage, hence the creative decision to ‘animate’ the human actors, making them more cartoon-like in the final film. The green screen also enabled the team to create special (magic) effects, such as the fairies flying through the forest, and dispensing fairy dust onto the tradies to turn them into Grecian statues. These special

effects could not have been achieved in any theatrical output; and clearly facilitated the best outcome for the project from a professional viewpoint.

The neurodivergent participants/co-creators/actors for the re-writing/re-imagining process consisted of the following individuals: A J Sheehy, Charlotte Paterson, Henry Wilson, Honor Boekeman, Isabel Grace, Jen Harland, Jess Denning and Trudi-Anne Gribble. They were joined by Tom Cartwright and Jordan Azor for the film-making process at Victoria Hall, Fremantle, following an audition process.

The film premiere of 'A Reimagined Midsummer Night's Dream' took place at Fremantle Arts Centre on 5 November 2022 in front of a public audience of approximately 120 people. A live Q&A with participants/actors followed the screening. Later, the creative team completed the full documentary and documentary short that tracked the entire creative process through its three stages.

Project Name: A Reimagined Dream – Towards a Neuro-Diverse Telling of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

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