

# The Bardolator

## No. 4: Lesley and A Midsummer Night's Dream



Hey, that's Puck, our mischievous fairy friend from **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. He greets us as we enter the magnificent Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.

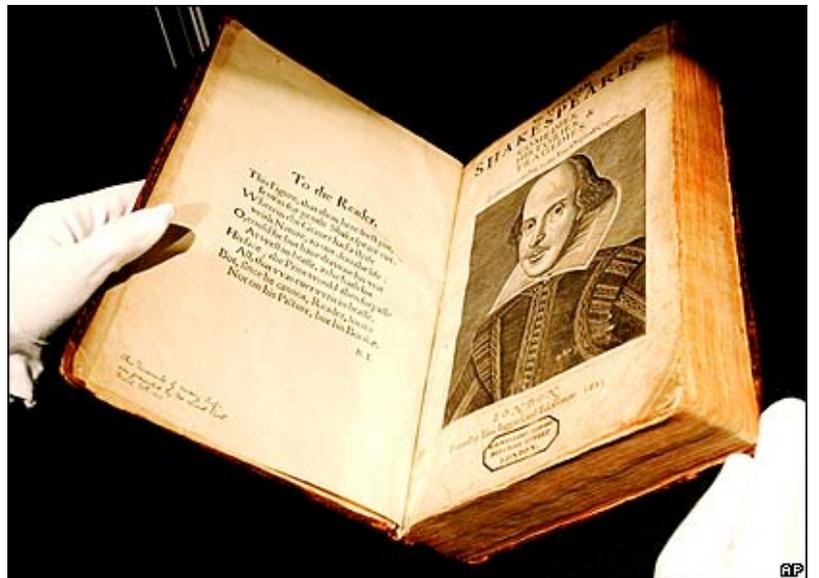


The Folger has the world's largest collection of Shakespeare-related material: 250,000 playbills, 90,000 paintings, many costumes, photographs, props, sculptures and other works of art.

The library holds 82 copies of the First Folio.

One copy of this 1623 publication sold recently for ten million dollars!

Naturally, these 82 volumes are kept in the safest and strictest environment.



They are held in a basement vault, with glass and steel walls a foot thick. Temperature and humidity are stringently controlled. Very, very few people are allowed entrance to this oh so special sanctum. And yet I was allowed to enter and look around!

Yes, I with my Peace March partner, Rhoda Evans. We told the Folger folks that we had just walked across the entire country - 3,700 miles, nine months - across deserts and over mountains, in blistering heat and pouring rain - reading out loud to each other all 37 Shakespeare plays.



That did it. They smiled at our sunburned faces, our weatherworn clothes, and with some awe led us downstairs.

But to another Folger story: The Shakespeare Library also contains a theatre. And one day - waking past the statue of Puck - a young girl entered the theater and fell in... - well let Lesley Currier tell her story.

*My grandmother was an actress and my mother was a drama teacher, so they took me to theatre from a very young age. We lived near Washington, D.C. and my first Shakespeare experience was seeing **A Midsummer Night's Dream** at the Folger Theatre.*



The first Shakespeare for Lesley was Shakespeare's first great masterpiece, **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. A masterpiece of imagination, of play, of art, of love. **Dream** is romantic comedy, slapstick, farce. It is four plays in one, all spun together in a delirious dream. The entire play is a dream. Doesn't Puck tell us so at the very end? "You have but slumbered here, While these visions did appear; And this weak and idle theme, No more yielding but a dream."

*I loved the story, the vibrancy of the action, and that I could understand the rich language.*

*My first time acting Shakespeare was as a sophomore in college when I was cast as Titania in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." I played the role in green bodysuit and fell in love with this powerful, lyrical queen of female energy in the universe.*

*When I first studied Shakespeare in school we read **Romeo and Juliet**. Again, I loved the intricacy of the language, and how exciting it was to "solve" the puzzle of text that at first seems impossible to understand until you pick it apart – and then it reveals gorgeous beauty through the rhythm and poetic devices and imagery.*

*We also watched the Zeffirelli movie, which is full of raging teenage hormones and is still my favorite Shakespeare on film.*



Yes, **Romeo and Juliet**, fine. But, oh, Lesley as Titania in the **Dream!** "Powerful, female energy in the universe." And yet Puck tells us that he has sprinkled the juice of a flower, love-in-idleness, on her eyes.

Love, yes. Lesley found her Oberon - Robert Currier - and married him.

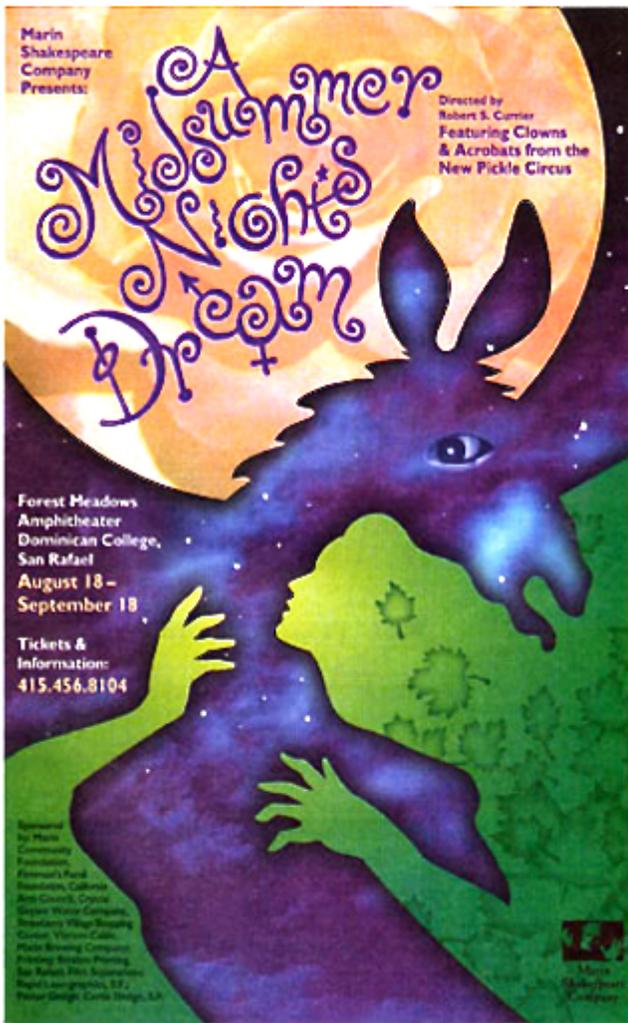
Together they established, in 1989, the Marin Shakespeare Company at Dominican College in San Rafael.

How many Shakespeare plays have they produced and directed since that time?

Of course they did...



June and I lived our first five years in Marin. We attended every one of Bob and Lesley's productions - even went with them on a Shakespeare cruise to Mexico.

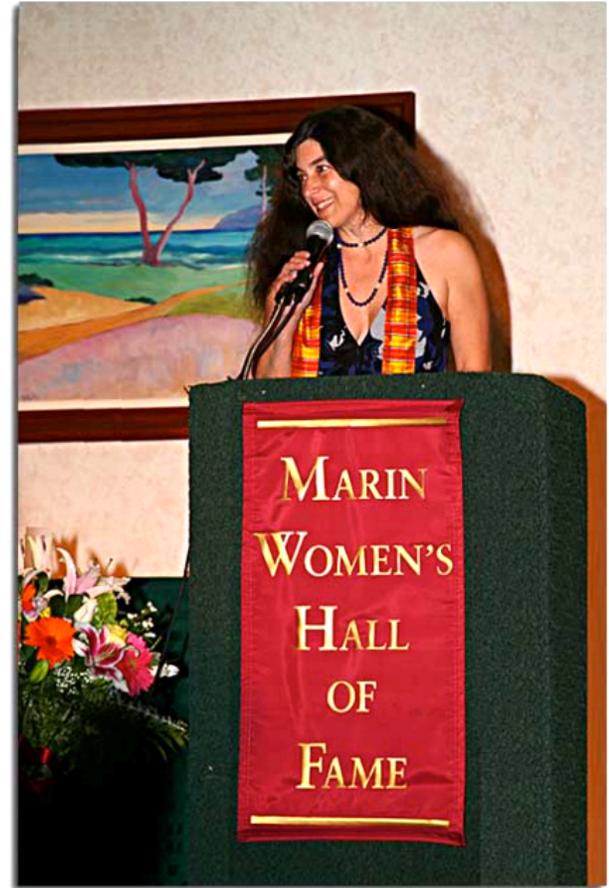


But idleness? Why, Lesley has acted at Ashland's Oregon Shakespeare Festival and for three years with the Ukiah Players as well. Lesley was nominated as "Best Director 2009" for **Twelfth Night**.

Lesley served as President of the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America, has served for six years on Theatre Bay Area's Theatre Service Committee, and three times she sat on the grants panels for the National Endowment for the Arts. Lesley Currier was elected to the Marin Women's Hall of Fame in 2007.

Idleness, did Puck say? Lesley founded, with Robert, Baja Shakespeare in 2001, bringing live theatre to Mexico's Baja Peninsula.

Lesley founded Shakespeare for Social Justice. It brings Shakespeare and rehabilitation to 14 California State Prisons.



Marin Women's Hall of Fame - Lesley Currier

**Yes, Lesley/Titania!**  
**Powerful, lyrical queen of**  
**female energy in the**  
**universe.**  
**Great lover of**  
**Shakespeare.**

*I fall in love with Shakespeare anew every time I get to work on one of the plays. I particularly love working with actors in prisons who have so little poetry, beauty, and power in their daily lives. They always teach me new things about the text.*

And in this video you will see not Lesley's idleness, but her love...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqlgvM9qlgl>