

PRE-SHOW IN-THE-KNOW

TITLE

The Popular Mechanicals by Keith Robinson, William Shakespeare and Tony Taylor
Original direction by Geoffrey Rush
Directed by Sarah Giles

CURRICULUM LINKS

Drama Stages 5 and 6
Clowning
Shakespearean intertextuality
Australian Theatre

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Our tale concerns the so-called 'Rude Mechanicals' from William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Nick Bottom the weaver, Snug the joiner, Robin Starveling the tailor, Tom Snout the tinker, Francis Flute the bellows-mender and Peter Quince the carpenter.

All six set aside their day jobs when they gather to rehearse the most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe. They have been invited to take part in an evening of entertainment for the newly married duke of Athens – the pressure is on.

When self-styled leading man and matinée idol Nick Bottom disappears into the forest thanks to some uninvited fairy magic, the Mechanicals reach breaking point. They manage to find a replacement for Bottom, but that creates more problems than it solves. Will Bottom return in time for the wedding celebrations? Will they know their lines? And what are those rubber chickens for? All will be revealed.

CAST AND CHARACTERS

Lori Bell - Tom Snout
Julie Forsyth - Robin Starveling
Charles Mayer - Nick Bottom/Mowldie
Amber McMahon - Snug
Tim Overton - Francis Flute
Rory Walker - Peter Quince

STYLE

Comedy
Appropriation

RUNNING TIME

1 hour and 35 minutes, no interval

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

The use of physical comedy
How many Shakespeare plays are referenced?
The use of music and choreography