

MEDIA RELEASE

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SHAKESPEARE'S GREATEST THESPIANS COME TO LIFE IN **THE POPULAR MECHANICALS**

by Keith Robinson, William Shakespeare and Tony Taylor from the original direction by Geoffrey Rush
A State Theatre Company of South Australia production presented by Country Arts SA

"Monty Python eat your heart out; what a hoot this show is." Stage Whispers

Six brilliantly skilful, but slightly deranged, actors and one hundred rubber chickens – the stage is set for a memorable night with State Theatre Company of South Australia's revival of the classic play-within-a-play featuring Shakespeare's greatest clowns—the rude mechanicals from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Perhaps the most famous group of amateur thespians of all time, the cast of the play-within-a-play *Pyramus and Thisbe*, bumble their way through rehearsals, misadventures and sheer idiocy in an hysterically funny mix of verse, song and dance.

Using snippets of the existing text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the play exalts in its own roughness, extravagance of expression and frequent obscenity—in the nicest possible way. The actors take centre stage in this wild reimagining of what might have happened off-stage during the Bard's most loved comedy.

Clowning, vaudeville, slapstick, farce, stand-up comedy and bad puppetry come together with both witty badinage and fart jokes to create an anarchic and thrillingly unhinged carnival that revels in its own theatricality.

First directed by Geoffrey Rush in 1987, *The Popular Mechanicals* holds a special place in the Australian comedic canon and is ripe for revival with a cast of our best theatrical clowns and directed by former Sydney Theatre Company Resident Director Sarah Giles and choreography by SA's own Gabrielle Nankivell who recently toured regional SA with Sydney Dance Company's *Frame of Mind*.

Paul Roberts, spokesperson of Country Arts SA's principal corporate partner, SA Power Networks, said: "Shakespeare never goes out of style and one of his funniest plays has inspired this show full of verbal and physical comedy. I guarantee that once you've seen it, you will never think of rubber chickens in the same way again."

Country Arts SA and State Theatre SA have

The Popular Mechanicals

Port Lincoln, Nautilus Theatre – September 12, 7.30pm

Whyalla, Middleback Arts Centre – September 19, 7pm

Tanunda, Barossa Arts and Convention Centre – September 22, 11.15am

Port Pirie, Northern Festival Centre – September 23, 7pm

Renmark, Chaffey Theatre – September 26, 7pm

Mount Gambier, Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre – October 1, 3pm



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