

Dear Class of 224,

I would like to thank you for supporting and funding our trip to the Arden Theater to watch the play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was a great experience to see a Shakespearean play. In this day and age, many of today's youths, and I being one of them, do not often go to see plays, operas, etc. We often just watch videos and movies on our phones and computers. We have forgotten the magic a theater has and how much effort the actors could put into the performance.

It is also not an often occurrence when we do get to experience such a work of art, but it is even rarer to see a work of art executed perfectly. The Producing Artistic Director and the Director of the play have both tried to go back to the roots of Shakespeare, but also try to connect the characters to the audience. The Director, Matt Pfeiffer, trusts the Shakespearean language and does not try to impose a concept or idea onto the play. He expertly has Shakespeare's work speak to us.

I would like to thank you again. Thank you for letting us be able to experience the magic and the effort that Arden Theater has given to us. It is also the magic and effort of the Central community that has allowed its students to see such a play.

Live long and prosper,

Ao Wang
Central Graduating Class of 278

Dear member of 224,

Hello my name is Harsh Jhaveri, a member of 278, and one of the students who attended the Arden Theater to view the rendition of Shakespeare's, "A Midsummer Night's Dream." I wanted to write this letter to thank you for providing funds for my class to attend this amazing play. Because of your generosity, we could attend this play for little cost and to me that is absolutely incredible.

The entire experience, aside from the weather, which was never in our control, was very enjoyable. The actors' performances were very engaging and made two hour long play seem less like a formal gathering and more like watching my favorite television show. They were very likable and kept interacting with the crowd, which heightened the immersion, adding to the experience. This play has really revealed to me the importance of a good casting in a play. I have seen numerous plays before and majority of them were very boring and had me on the verge of sleep, however this one was different. The one thing that all the other places had in common was that the actors never really interacted with the crowd, and it made them seem very distant from the audience. This play was different, from the clothing to the interactions they made with the audience were the factors which kept me and my classmates awake. The costumes were another big part of the immersion because they wore clothes that normal everyday people wear, which familiarizes the setting for us. All this was tied together by the great comedic story of A Midsummer Night's Dream, a book that I have read before and enjoyed thoroughly, making a complete package.

I would just like to say again that I am very thankful for your generosity. Your funding allowed us to attend this play and a result of that was a room full of students who all had a good

time. I learned the importance of good actors and had the opportunity to visit one of the best theaters in Philadelphia. I hope you have a great day, whenever you read this, and again thank you so much!

Sincerely,

Harsh Jhaveri

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harsh Jhaveri". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

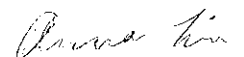
Dear Class of 224,

The trip to Arden Theater to view the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a spectacular experience and I really appreciate your help in funding for this trip and making it possible for us as Central High School's Class of 278 to enjoy such a show. The Arden Theater provided me with a new perspective on how to view Shakespeare's play in general. When the act first began, I was at first quite surprised that the actors were in modern-day outfits instead of a combination of jerkins and trunks. The directors were really able to present the comedy to us in the form that most of Shakespeare's audience would have seen it around 422 years ago by tracing back to the roots of his plays without accidentally imposing certain concepts or stereotypes that wasn't in the original piece. In the play, I was actually able to pick out portions and identify them as literary devices (dramatic irony, ideas related religious, etc.)

All in all, it was a great learning experience. Thank you again for supporting this trip which took education out of a book and presented it to us in an enjoyable, enlightening, and intriguing memory that we will look back upon and smile about later in life.

Sincerely,

Anna Lin



Dear Alumni of 224,

I am very thankful for the opportunity provided by your Alumni to view *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the previous week. It was an honor to have the privilege to be able to spend a morning watching one of Shakespeare's masterpieces. The play was an enlightening experience filled with comedy, expressive dialogue, and engaging acting. I truly enjoyed the mixed love story between Lysander, Hermia, Demetrius, and Helena. The quarrelling of the characters trying to correct their relationships, while covered with humor was amusing to watch. Out of the few plays I have experienced, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* instantly became my most favorite.

Being funded for this play is a great help for us students who especially desire to be exposed to the visual type of learning, like myself. This was my first time viewing this specific play and it became a memorable moment. Therefore I am truly grateful to the Class of 224 for being granted a wonderful time.

Sincerely,

Shawn Philip

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shawn Philip". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the printed name.

April 3, 2017

Dear class of 224,

My name is Kim Pham from class of 278 and I sincerely thank you for funding our class trip to the Arden Theater. I had an amazing experience thanks to you guys. It was an honor for me to be able to go as I have never been to a play before, besides the one that Mr. Hover took us to earlier this school year, but the experience however, was totally different because it was a one person play. As I was watching "A Midsummer Night's Dream", I was totally mesmerized by it. I enjoyed the show very much. At first, I thought that I would not be able to enjoy the show as much because Shakespeare is pretty hard to understand at times, especially because it is in Elizabethan English. However, I was wrong.

As I was watching the play, I loved how us teens were able to connect to it more. The way they dressed was more modern. They incorporated music, and the actors were great in portraying their roles. It was such an amazing experience that I would love to go watch another play. Before I ever went to one, I thought that plays would be boring but after watching "A Midsummer Night's Dream" it totally changed my mind. Thank you once again for funding our class trip, I had a wonderful time. Go class of 224!

Sincerely,

Kim Pham

Dear Central Class of 224,

Thank you for your generous gift in funding our 278 and 279 field trip to go see Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Learning is more than algebraic formulas and SAT vocab words that we memorize in school; it is also outside the classroom experiences that expose us to new ideas, people, and places. Having the opportunity to go to the theatre is so important for young people, especially those who haven't had the chance to go with their families. I especially enjoyed this production of A Midsummer Night's Dream because of the contemporary aspects it included. Instead of old fashioned costumes, the actors wore shirts and pants aligned with the style of today. I especially liked the woman who played Puck. She acted the role as quirky, queer, and full of energy. Again, thank you so much for contributing to a thought-provoking and enriching experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sasha Hochman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sasha Hochman

278

4/1/16

Dear Class of 224,

Thank you so much for sponsoring our trip to the Arden theatre last Tuesday! I have not been back there to see a show recently, so it was a wonderful treat. This version of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' was very original and we are so lucky to have had the experience of seeing it. The performance definitely surpassed my expectations which were already high, because the actors were so talented, and especially when tied into the live music because it was so surprising. The cast managed to transform this play into something that was not only easy to understand, but entertaining for the entire audience, including little kids. The music added an unexpected kick that fit into the story well and set this particular performance of the classic apart from other performances of it.

I believe it may inspire us to seek more performances of Shakespeare, as it relinquished any negative preconceived ideas we may have had. Instead of it being boring, we were fully engaged the entire time and did not want it to end. The cast and crew made Shakespeare seem accessible and fun for everyone, which is not always easy to do. For this, I am thankful to have seen this performance, which was only possible because of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alana Gardner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Alana Gardner, 278

Kesaiya Evans

Mr. Hover

English Honors 2

1 April 2017

Dear Class of 224,

I am very appreciative and thankful for your contributions in the funding of my Arden Theatre trip. The generosity of Central alumni never ceases to amaze me! Your kindness was not in vain, I enjoyed the play and theatre experience very much. I've seen musicals before as a young child, but I've never had the pleasure of seeing a Shakespeare play before. The theatre was absolutely beautiful and the actors did an amazing job! It was a modern rendition with some musical pieces as well. I personally loved their addition of songs because I believe it conveys the theme more and connects the crowd as well. The play was so good now I want to look into reading the actual play! The theme of young, forbidden, and unrequited loves is so prominent, from Shakespeare's age to mine, which is so fascinating. Thanks to you I was able to partake in this event and I'm truly grateful. I cannot wait until I'm in the position to help other Central students broaden their knowledge and experience as you have for me.

Sincerely,

Kesaiya Evans
278

Dear Class of 224,

It was an honor to attend a trip such as the one to the Arden Theater. This is was one of the best plays I have seen. I enjoyed how the actors interacted with the audience, and how they used the little materials they had on the stage to their advantage. Overall, I thought it was an interesting rendition to Shakespeare's 'A Midnigh Summer Dream'. While attending the play, I learned some life changing advice. One for example was, how to properly dress when going to a play. The scene was somewhat upper class and we all knew we had to dress to impress. I had a great time with all of my classmates, going out with them and dressing up made me happy. So, Central's Class of 224, I'd like to thank you. Thank you for sponsoring a moment that I will never forget in my life.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Danni (278)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kimberly Danni', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

To the Class of 224,

Thank you for your generous gift to the English classes of 278 and 279. Despite it being my second time seeing a play, I had an amazing time seeing The Arden Theater's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was a refreshing experience to go out and see a play with my classmates. Honestly, when people talked of Shakespeare's brilliant works, all I saw were long, tedious lines of rhymes. I could not understand why Shakespeare was so admired and what exactly lured people to watch his plays. However, after seeing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, my feelings began to shift. I thought the modern twist of the Arden Theater's version was entertaining and allowed the audience to connect to Shakespeare's words, despite it being an old play and seen by an audience of young teenagers. It made me want to check out some of Shakespeare's other plays. Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to go to The Arden Theater!

Sincerely,

Cindy Chen

John Faller

Mr. Hover

English 2 Honors - Period 7

02 April 2017

Fellow friends of the theatre,

Thank you for inviting our class to share the experience of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

The theatre was great, the actors performed well, and it was a memorable day. I especially enjoyed the learning experience that we participated in outside of the classroom. I was grateful for something that put such a positive spin on such a gloomy and rainy day.

I thought it was very interesting how the costume designer put such a crazy spin on the actor's costumes. So many different fashions were used throughout the play that did not fit the original setting that Shakespeare wrote it in. Titania wore a flowy, yellow dress that resembles fashion made today, while Puck wore a shirt that resembles something a prince would wear to a ball. Additionally, the fact that the actors sang and played instruments was surprising to me, especially how Titania's servant would play the violin whenever something sad happened. I enjoyed how the director made the play slightly more contemporary, however left the lines the exact same. It made the play more dynamic and slightly easier to understand what was happening.

Overall, I thought the play was great and very enticing, especially during some of the more humorous scenes. The Arden theatre did an amazing job at transforming such an old play into a more modern masterpiece.

Sincerely, John F.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

April 3, 2017

Central High School
1700 W Olney Avenue
Philadelphia PA, 19141

Dear Class of 224,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your class for the generous donation you gave to my classmates and I. Contributing to the funding for "A Midsummer Night's Dream" not only allowed each student to experience a phenomenal show, however it also connected us to shakespearean theatre. I personally enjoyed the play as it included comedy which contributed to liveliness in the theatre. Without your generous gift, this trip to see "A Midsummer Night's Dream," would not have been possible.

Sincerely,



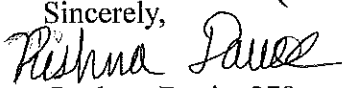
Mahima George, Class of 278

April 3, 2017

Central High School
1700 W Olney Avenue
Philadelphia PA, 19141

Dear class of 224,

I would like to personally thank all of those who sponsored our trip to the Arden Theater to watch *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Normally, students do not get to go to prestigious theatres like the Arden Theater for trips. However, your contribution made it possible. The play was very entertaining and humorous. The director, Matt Pfeiffer, made his version of the play very modern and relatable. The actors were also very interactive with the audience. The play kept everyone interested even though it was such a long play. Once again thank you for the experience!

Sincerely,

Reshma Davis -278

2 April 2017

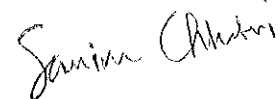
Dear Class of 224,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for sponsoring our trip to the Arden Theatre. I am a sophomore, from class of 278 and this was one of the most unique experiences of my life. Before this year, I had never gone to watch a play; therefore, I didn't know what to truly expect. I thought *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, being a Shakespearean play, would be difficult to understand and connect with. However, I was surprised and very much impressed at the Arden Theatre's version of the play. It was easy to follow through and was even relatable.

The actors, dressed in modern clothing, were extremely talented and the play was quite humorous. The music they incorporated as well as the simple setting went very well together to form an amazing play. The theatre itself was beautiful and comfortable. I had a wonderful time and would love to see more plays in the future. Thank you again for helping us experience this event.

Sincerely,

Samira Chhetri (278)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samira Chhetri".

Dear Alumni of 224,

March-April 2017

Thanks for helping us get the opportunity to see the Arden Theatre's production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was a real pleasure seeing it in person as opposed to in aged words on paper.

It was really nifty being able to see how very human Shakespeare's stories were, as opposed to being dry, purely school-mandated assigned reading. I suppose there must be some reason his works became so famous, and for so many to pour their passion into his writing. It felt like we got to know our friend William a little bit more, as a tangible and passionate storyteller, not altogether too unlike ourselves.

I think it's really easy to fall into the perspective, what with practically forced reading, that many pieces of literature are just hurdles to jump, tomes to flip through, and not breathing, living pieces of human art. It's incredibly easy for students to be caught up in the grades and work to overlook the neat things that human minds can come up with in art and writings. Us youngsters are notorious, after all, for narrow and short viewpoints relating to these few years near the start of our lives. It's nice to be pulled out and into the big picture. Most of us who went are really only ~14-16 years old. Quite a lot of time left. No offense.

— Yours, Martin Chan
of Central High School, Class 278

March 31st, 2017

Dear Class 244,

Thank you so much for your support in arranging the trip for Central's current freshmen and sophomores to go see Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer's Night Dream' at the Arden Theatre. It's always nice to have a day out of the classroom setting and to learn through experience. This enjoyment was doubled by the lively and relatable adaptation of a Shakespeare classic. The play connected with everyone in the audience, from five to fifty. It kept the same plot and script for the most part, only changing it slightly and still managing to modernize it a lot.

This experience meant a lot. With art programs being cut left and right, opportunities to go to the theatre are few and far between. It's nice to know the arts are still valued by some. This also helps open the door for atleta and the theatre to be more integrated into Central. It bring the interest for it back to the students. It also shows people in charge the positions impact arts have in school. This trip was all around great and we couldn't have done it without you.

Thanks again,

Sara Boan, 278

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Boan, 278". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'S' and 'B'.

April 2, 2017

Dear the Central High School Class of 224,

I, along with the rest of my class, am very appreciative for you enabling us to attend the Arden Theater's performance of *A Midnight Summer's Dream*. It was a entertaining show and I really enjoyed watching it. It was fun watching the actors and actresses incorporate music into a Shakespeare play. I have seen a couple other plays but none of them had such good actors who could interact with the audience so seamlessly with the script. This was an amazing experience and not many students get to enjoy plays in High School. These class trips help make Central such a unique place. The support of the Alumni Association and each graduating class helps the next generation of central students grow into people ready to face the world once school is over. It gets students to understand things beyond the classroom which is an excellent way to learn. I am very grateful for your support!

Sincerely,

Thomas Swingley
Central Graduating Class of 278

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Swingley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Dear Class 224,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have a Central day at the Arden Theatre. Their production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a great opportunity for me, as well as my classmates, to experience the arts we have in our own city. When I first walked into the theatre, I really liked the fact that they decided to begin it with a musical performance. I have personally never read anything by Shakespeare except for *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*, both of which I honestly did not enjoy for the sole purpose of not being able to understand a word of Shakespearean English. However, watching *A Midsummer Night's Dream* both confused me yet intrigued me. The humor throughout it kept me laughing the whole time and the fact that the cast actually interacted with the audience made me much more fond of the play. My personal favorite scenes were those with Puck because of the abundance of mischief in that character. Speaking with the cast was also a delight, as they were very perky and sweet people. All in all, I really am grateful for that trip because it has opened my eyes up to something I was not very sure of in the past.

Thank You Again,

Malenie Reyes 278

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malenie Reyes', written in a cursive style.

Dear Class of 224,

I wanted to personally thank you for your support and donations that allow us to take trips such as the one we took to see William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. An experience like that is something that I definitely do not take for granted. I am very aware that many students in other schools are not as fortunate, and do not get to experience the culture and art around them as we do. There is so much great theater right here in Philadelphia, and thanks to you we were able to see it for ourselves. The production itself was wonderful; the sets, the live music, the acting, all of it was spectacular. The set was covered in twinkling lights, old wooden musical instruments, and had a rustic feeling to it that I found really beautiful. We had the chance to speak with the actors after the show, and someone asked about the live music, and whether it was part of the show or if it was just an introductory act for the audience as they walk in and take their seats. One of the actors responded by saying that it was intended to be an introductory act, but this was the type of experience an audience would experience during Shakespeare's time. The live music was relatively authentic in style, and the music created an environment that felt welcoming and connected the audience to the actors right away. This was a point that the actors talked quite a bit about. The director created the show in a way that closed the gap between the people on stage and the people in the seats. He did this by doing a couple different things. One of which was working with the costume designer and creating costumes that were similar to everyday clothes that the actors might wear on a regular basis. By doing this, the audience could interpret the people on stage as somewhat equal to them, and feel more intrigued by what they were saying instead of having a mindset that they were much more advanced or elite. Overall it was a spectacular show, and I am very grateful for the opportunities you provide for us.

Thank you,

Ma'ayan Kaplan, 278

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ma'ayan Kaplan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Dear Central Class of 224,

Thank you for helping arrange the trip to the Arden Theatre to see A Midsummer Night's Dream. It was a phenomenal experience. The Arden is such an amazing theatre, and the artistic and creative direction there is off the wall yet firm in their ideas and construction of said ideas. The show was a beautiful tapestry of past and present all expertly framed in a Shakespearean classic. The set design was gorgeous, matching form with function. The minimalist and striking sets of the Arden are some of the things I've come to love about that theatre. I was also very happy to see it because as an aspiring actor myself it is important for me to be cultured and steeped in the theatrical culture of my area, especially in a city like Philadelphia, where theatre is oozing out of the pores of every community. The talent, of course, was outstanding, which is par for the course at the Arden. I regret not asking more questions about Equity actors at the talkback but then again it would admittedly be kind of weird to get very specific questions that don't directly pertain to the show at hand. I did get to ask them whether they preferred Shakespeare and other antiquated classics over more contemporary pieces, which they answered by saying that it depends on the team you're working with. I think that was a valid answer, albeit a sort of scapegoat, because let's be honest here-that wasn't my question. Mary, the woman who played Puck, said that "anything has the potential to be great", which is absolutely false. The script is the most important piece. If your script sucks, no amount of talent can save the show. Trust me. I was asking if, personally, the preferred performing Shakespeare or more contemporary scripts. Not with the team. If they themselves had more fun learning the lines and performing them to an audience. Oh well. Thank you again for the support!

Sincerely,

Jared Taylor, 278

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jared Taylor', written over a circular scribble.