

A 'lost' 'Midsummer Night's Dream' rediscovered

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The showing is at the Picturehouse cinema in Stratford-upon-Avon, 8pm on 7 October 2012, as part of the [Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's Shakespeare Film Festival](http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/visit-the-houses/whats-on.html/shakespeare-film-festival.html) (<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/visit-the-houses/whats-on.html/shakespeare-film-festival.html>), [Russell Jackson](http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/visit-the-houses/whats-on.html/shakespeare-film-festival.html) ([/staff/profiles/drama/jackson-russell.aspx](http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/visit-the-houses/whats-on.html/shakespeare-film-festival.html)), the university's Allardyce Nicoll Professor of Drama, will introduce a major discovery from the Royal Shakespeare theatre's archive.

It's the showing of a recording, made in 1959 for American TV but never shown - either here or in the USA - of Peter Hall's famous production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. The production was first seen in the 1959 Stratford season, and was revived in 1962 with Judi Dench taking over from Mary Ure as Titania, and in 1968 Hall made a film in a very different style and on location.

But this unique recording, made on the new medium of videotape, was captured on stage with three video cameras (they had to be brought over from Paris). It never made it to the screen because the series for which it was made failed to take on. Charles Laughton appears as Bottom, and he also introduces American viewers to Stratford-upon-Avon in a short prologue, with shots of notable Stratford sights and a glimpse of the backstage activity at the (then) Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and a brief interview with the young director, Peter Hall.