Midsummer Nights Dream set design

Madeline M.

Scene: I designed my set for is Act 2 Scene 1.

Concept: When first reading Midsummer Nights Dream, the first words that came to mind was fun, fanciful, and magical. Along with those words, the play makes me think of my childhood, bringing me back to what I always found was magical; The circus. I wanted to point out certain feelings that the play gave me, by bringing in a circus theme. The circus is magical in a way but also brings us back to reality, in the play this theme would help us find a balance between the fairies and the humans.

Thought process: When approaching ideas of what to design with this circus concept, I thought of two major aspects. One being that the set would need to easily be able to transform from the forest to the palace. And two being, I wanted the set to both have aspects of the circus but look like a forest.

What I had decided to do was design a forest first, just a hilly area with stones and trees that the actors could work with. Then I added the circus concept. I really wanted a circus tent of some sort, because I feel like that has a huge part to do with the whole feel of going to a circus, so then I got the great idea of having the tent be like a drape, where it would hang like a circus tent but then when needing to shift to the palace the drape would move inward to hide the forest. From that idea I thought of the king and queens thrones and what would be fun and simple that they could also be apart of the forest, So I decided to have circus balls look like big boulders with crowns on them for the king and queen, so they both fit into the forest and the palace.

After establishing a decent playground for the actors, I felt like I didn’t have enough of the circus theme that was prominent. I did some research, and thought up some ideas with a circus ring. So I had decided to make a circus ring around the set that would have real flowing water in it, kind of like a river to go along with the forest. But I would want the ring to have a glass covering so actors could step on the “river”. Then coming to the idea that the stage would be raised so the actors could hover over or put their feet in the “river”.

Once I thought I was about done I felt like there were things missing, so I thought back to what my favorite things to do as a child were, and I thought of swings at the playground, so I wanted to add a swing that the actors could work with while also adding to the childlike fun of it all.

And Lastly, I really wanted to incorporate the silks that acrobats work with in the circus, so I had decided that the play would have to have acrobats as the fairies, so they could look like they were flying in the air while on the silks.
One thing that I could not show well in my renderings was a backdrop. I wanted a green very enchanted forest look as my backdrop, a place that could look like a earthy and magical home for the fairies.