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ELEMENTAL THEATRE COLLECTIVE has been upping the dramatic ante for each of their successive productions; their latest, a touring free outdoor musical adaptation of Carlo Gozzi's 1762 masterpiece KING STAG, promises to be their most ambitious and exciting presentation to date.

The idea to do a large-scale free show was one that had been on the minds of several core members of Elemental. "We feel very strongly that one of the priorities of any artistic organization is to make itself available and affordable for the general public," said producer D'Arcy Dersham. Elemental has long wanted to tackle KING STAG, and they started approaching venues about hosting an original adaptation of this 18th century fairy tale. "The folks at WaterFire immediately embraced the idea and offered us the chance to do the show at Waterplace Park," said Dersham. Other venues around Rhode Island also offered to host performances, and a summer tour was born.

As the summer tour was planned, director Peter Sampieri suggested that the Elemental Theatre Collective adapt Gozzi's play to better fit the larger-than-life setting of amphitheaters like Waterplace Park, as well as to give the show a more contemporary feel. Writer Dave Rabinow fashioned a script in rhyming verse that hews very close to the original in plot and structure, but lightens the melodrama of the original and highlights the fractured fairy-tale qualities of the story in a lighthearted and offbeat way. Likewise, composer Paul Scharf created musical numbers for the show that echo a variety of modern musical styles. All the music in the play was composed for the actors to play and perform themselves in the course of the evening, so that everything could happen right in the laps of the audience.

Elemental artists Rabinow, Dersham, Alex Platt, Kelly Nichols, and Jill Blevins joined Brown / Trinity Rep Consortium students Parker Leventer, Paola Grande, Kelby Aikens, and Aaron Rossini under Sampieri's direction to create a nine-person cast capable of creating the magic called for in Gozzi's story, which has men changing souls with deer, the King and his nemesis switching bodies, a bust which can detect lies by laughing when it hears them, and a talking parrot that transforms into a human. "The demands on an ensemble are incredible," says Sampieri. "Actors are switching characters, becoming animals, playing music. It's an immense amount of fun for an audience to watch, because everything is done in this style which is both tremendously broad and instantly recognizable." The performance, with all its mistaken identities, musical numbers, magical mischief, evil deeds, love triangles, all takes place in under ninety minutes. With careful attention towards creating visual, verbal, and aural spectacle, and with a mission to bring free magical, funny, family-friendly free theatre to Providence and beyond, Elemental's KING STAG offers audiences the rare chance to sit back on a summer night and enjoy a fairy tale come to life.

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AT A GLANCE

EVENT: Elemental Theatre Collective Presents
KING STAG

LOCATION: Waterplace Park
Providence RI 02903

EVENT DATE: **Saturday, June 23 at 6:00 pm**
Saturday, July 14 at 6:00 pm
Saturday, July 28 at 6:00 pm
Saturday, August 18 at 6:00 pm

PRESS NIGHT: **Saturday, June 23 at 6:00 pm**

TICKET PRICE: FREE / GENERAL ADMISSION

MORE INFO: www.elementaltheatre.org

Summer tour schedule and booking information available at
www.elementaltheatre.org or by e-mailing info@elementaltheatre.org