

Julie Taymor stages directorial comeback with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Tony award-winning director to open new off-Broadway theatre with 'visceral' version of Shakespeare's play

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Julie Taymor: bringing the Bard to Brooklyn. Photograph: Ann Johansson/AP

Julie Taymor is to direct her first production since abandoning [Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark](#) almost two years ago.

Taymor left the notorious – but still ongoing – mega-musical in March 2011 after producers demanded a major overhaul following a difficult four-month preview period. She has not worked in theatre since and remains [locked in a legal battle over royalties and copyright](#).

However, this autumn she will reunite with her longtime collaborator, the composer Elliot Goldenthal, to mount an off-Broadway production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, entitled simply *Midsummer*, to open a new theatre in New York on 19 October.

The production will be a full-length version of the hour-long staging Taymor and Goldenthal worked on in 1984 for [Theatre for a New Audience](#), which is moving into a new permanent home in Brooklyn this October. Taymor directed her first Shakespeare play, *The Tempest*, for the company in 1986 and has since returned three times. She went on to become the first woman to win the Tony award for best direction of a musical for her production of *The Lion King*. In 2010 she directed a [film version of *The Tempest*, starring Helen Mirren as Prospera](#), a female incarnation of Shakespeare's mage Prospero.

While details of the new production have not yet been announced, it's fair to expect a visual feast given Taymor's reputation for lavish design. [Costumes for *The Lion King*, which she designed herself](#), also won a Tony award. However, *Midsummer's* budget will be a fraction of those of the [musicals](#) for which she is best known.

"There is a visceral nature to the theatre, and I want to have that in the production," [she told the New York Times](#).

Jeffrey Horowitz, founding artistic director of Theatre for a New Audience, described Taymor and Goldenthal as "bold, innovative, adventurous artists", adding that it was "thrilling" to have them return to make the company's inaugural production at the new base.

The new theatre has been designed by architect Hugh Hardy and will contain two spaces: a flexible 299-seater inspired by the Cottesloe [at the National Theatre](#), as well as a 50-seat studio. In a statement, the company said: "It is a uniquely flexible space which combines an Elizabethan courtyard theatre with modern technology. The relationship between the stage and audience can be shaped for each production into different configurations."