



TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB PRESENTS AN AMATEUR PRODUCTION

Much Ado About Nothing

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Gerald Baker

Sun 28 Jun – Sat 4 Jul 2015

£1.50



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For reasons of safety, glassware must NOT be taken into any part of the auditorium.

Latecomers will be admitted at the first convenient moment provided that no interruption or distraction to the performers might be caused.

All gangways, passageways and stairways must be kept free from obstruction. Persons are not permitted to sit or stand in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the making of sound and/or visual recordings in the auditorium are not permitted.

An induction loop system is installed in the Main Auditorium to assist those who use hearing aids with the relevant setting.

Wheelchair positions are available in both Stalls and the Balcony. The Box Office Manager will be happy to discuss your requirements.

TTC Ltd, as managers of the Playhouse, reserves the right to refuse admission and to make alterations to the programme and cast without notice.

About the Play

Much Ado About Nothing came from several different parts of Shakespeare's imagination. The story of Claudio and Hero and the deception practised on them came from Italian stories (as so many of his plots did), in this case, from Ariosto's romantic epic *Orlando Furioso* and Bandello's 1554 *Novelle*. A report from late in the 1600s tells us that he took the humours of his 'Constable' (i.e. Dogberry) from a real-life figure in a village that lay on his route travelling from London to Stratford. And while the idea of Beatrice and Benedick's relationship seems to come from Castigliano's etiquette book *Il Cortegiano* the detail of their exchanges is whole cloth from Shakespeare's own storehouse.

The company that performed *Much Ado About Nothing* was called the Lord Chamberlain's Men (Shakespeare part-owned it as well as acted and wrote for it). They premiered the play in the latter part of 1598. We can be unusually precise in this case because a book published in September 1598 listing his plays doesn't mention *Much Ado*, and we know that Will Kemp, identified in the published script as the original Dogberry, left the company early in 1599.

We can name the playhouse, too. By late 1598, their ground landlord had locked the Chamberlain's Men out of their original home, the Theatre. In a few weeks' time, they would stage a night-raid on the site, dismantle the building, and carry its timber across London and the Thames to build the Globe on Bankside. But in between times, they were performing at another theatre in Shoreditch, called the Curtain: so that is where Beatrice, Benedick, Dogberry and the rest first took shape and movement.

By this point in his writing career, Shakespeare had written almost all of his history plays and a large proportion of his lyrical and witty comedies, as well as experimenting with highly poetic and equally lyrical tragedies. Still to come were the darker comedies, the great sequence of tragic plays and the strange late romantic plays. What he was doing in the late 1590's, however, was to write scripts that used prose to a much greater extent and in more registers than he'd used before, combined with a verse that was more lucid and simple than he achieved either before or after.

A good proportion of his creations at this time proved to be amongst his most popular and enduring: Falstaff, the scandalously witty misbehaved old knight in *Henry IV*, got his own spin-off (*Merry Wives*) and was the most recognizable of Shakespeare's characters for the next century or more. Benedick and Beatrice in our play also proved a draw in themselves, as some of the play's early history demonstrates:

- The Big Event, political and social, of 1613, was the marriage of King James I's daughter to a Protestant German prince. The programme of plays presented around the wedding and through winter and spring included 20 performances by Shakespeare's troop (by now called the King's Men). They gave *Much Ado* twice. It appears once under its usual name in the list, but a second time as *Benedick and Beatrice*.
- In 1640, Leonard Digges reports that putting on *Beatrice and Benedick* was a sure-fire way to fill every part of your playhouse.
- And after a ban of nearly 20 years' on theatrical activity in the Civil War and Interregnum, William Davenant adapted and restaged *Measure For Measure*, taking Beatrice and Benedick and the essential tone of their relationship, their flirty bantering, out of *Much Ado* and simply dropping them into that very different play.

There are also clear signs that Dogberry and his Watch were popular comic figures who could be relied on to make audiences laugh, since several other plays in the 40 years after *Much Ado* appeared include comic constables instructing their watchmen, often with almost the same jokes Shakespeare used. The elements of the play that delighted its first two generations of audiences are the elements that have most delighted audiences ever since.

The play was printed (on its own) for the first time in a quarto-sized booklet in 1600, and then again in the collection of Shakespeare's plays published in folio in 1623. The text there is in the main simply a reprint of the quarto, and the small 1600 playbook is therefore our substantive source for the script.

Kerry Browne

The Bar is open after the show

The foyer bar remains open after the show and is well used by cast, crew and members. We extend a very warm welcome to everyone who has been to see the performance - it is an ideal opportunity to meet the actors you have seen performing, find out more about our theatre and our club or simply relax over a drink.



Please
Turn off Your
Mobile Phones

Please don't spoil the performance

We respectfully request all members of the audience to make sure that mobile phones are switched off during the performance.

Thank you.

Director's Notes

Why direct *Much Ado About Nothing*? And how does one direct a play that is one of its writer's most popular and most revived? The 'why' is simple: Benedick and Beatrice: no director worth his or her salt would pass up the opportunity to make these two walk and breathe on stage. They're the only really grown-up lovers in Shakespeare's comedies and one of the very few believable grown-up couples in all his work (I'd add Antony and Cleopatra and the Macbeths to the list).

The 'how' is less obvious, but here's how my thinking went. I have seen *Much Ado* in a Scottish mansion, South-East England in World War Two, India at the height of the Raj, C19 Sicily: and it has worked in all these different settings. But I've long been interested in how it might work taking into account the political setting at the time of its first staging in 1598.

Do you wonder why a Prince of Aragon in *Spain* billets himself on a household of Messina in *Sicily*, and why this Prince seems to have defeated his brother in battle near there? At the end of the sixteenth century, Sicily was part of the Spanish Empire and would continue to be throughout the next century and more. Don Pedro in the play is by no means King Philip II of Spain (who was very publicly dying in the late summer of 1598) or his successor Philip III. But Don Pedro's supremacy and his conflict with his brother echo the real Spanish hegemony, and recall some earlier Sicilian history, notably King Conradin's defeat of his illegitimate brother Manfred in 1266.

So when Don Pedro and the army come to stay with the Governor of Messina, they effectively put the town under foreign military occupation, however benign they might be. I thought it would be interesting to see how foregrounding that occupation rather more than usual might affect the dynamics of the play.

And as I thought about the ruling Spanish Habsburgs, I remembered how sometimes they made a woman Governor of one of their territories, and wondered about turning Messina's Governor into a woman and giving Hero a mother, rather than a father. Yes, it changes some of the dynamic, particularly around the gulling of Benedick. But there are gains: notably, a sizeable, meaty and varied role for an older woman. These are scarce in classic drama and very rare in Shakespeare, and in the environment of community and club theatre one surely has a duty to increase such opportunities if one can do so with other advantages. And there is definitely one advantage here. We can explore a mother-daughter relationship in the language and situations of Shakespeare, a writer who is not normally very interested in that particular aspect of family or generational relationships.

I haven't forgotten the humour, the language, the sheer stupidity of Dogberry and his fellows, which made me laugh when I first met them in the equivalent of Year 8 at school and still make me laugh several decades later.

The play is about 2,600 lines long, and for comprehensibility and timing I have cut approximately 300 lines. These are mainly short phrases or redundancies within speeches: every scene and major exchange is represented.

Gerald Baker

Crew Biographies

Gerald Baker – Director

Gerald is very happy to be directing for the first time at TTC. His previous work for Richmond Shakespeare Society and Q2 Players has ranged chronologically from medieval moralities to Marber and Marie Jones, and geographically from Irish to Italian playwrights. His chamber-play staging of *Henry V* for a cast of seven women at Q2 won the Cygnet category Swan in 2013. Like many local directors, he still acts sometimes, and most recently appeared as the pedantic schoolmaster in RSS's open air *Love's Labour's Lost* last year. He is also a published independent scholar of early seventeenth century drama and is currently researching and reinterpreting the 17th century allusions to *Othello*.

Jean Goodwin – Set and Lighting Design

Jean's first lighting design was for *Mother Courage* in 1987. Her first set design was the kitchen setting for *Miss Julie* two years later at Hampton Court House. She is a founder member of Hampton Hill Playhouse and was involved throughout the planning period in its design and construction. Jean was artistic director from 2006 to 2010 and has designed sets and lighting for many productions: including most recently the lighting for TTC's acclaimed production of *Equus*. This is the first time Jean has worked with Gerald Baker and is finding the production exhilarating.

Steph Pang – Lighting Operation

Towards the end of 2014 Steph was looking for some hands on lighting experience to complement the diploma in lighting design she was doing, and remembered how much she'd enjoyed lighting school and university stage productions. TTC welcomed her into the fold and she jumped straight in helping with the lighting for *The Snow Queen*, followed by *Equus*. In November, Steph will be lighting *Side by Side by Sondheim* in the Studio.

John Pyle – Sound Design and Operation

John is a member of several groups where he sings, acts and enjoys designing and operating sound for shows. More than 50 years on stage - at 13 with two solo roles at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, he's played most tenor/baritone leads in the G&S repertoire – most recently as Captain Corcoran - *HMS Pinafore*. Other singing roles – Mr Bumble (*Oliver*), Mushnik (*Little Shop of Horrors*), Oliver Warbucks (*Annie*), Mr Beaver (*Lion Witch/Wardrobe*), Dr Neville Craven (*Secret Garden*) and Scrooge (*Christmas Carol*) - all RUT Swan Award-winning shows. He also loves making authentic, realistic and timely sound effects for plays/shows and hopes you all enjoy this production.

Margaret Boulton and Lesley Alexander - Wardrobe

Lesley and Margaret have worked together in TTC Wardrobe for many years, usually specialising in period costumes which have so far extended through six centuries. For this play, Margaret has enjoyed looking at Elizabethan fashions for the ladies and Lesley has extended her hat making skills to doublets for the chaps as well as the armour and helmets. After sewing on so many buttons for *The Country Wife* they were hoping for a rest, but found this period is just as bad for buttons.

Miriam Fairbairn – Stage Manager

Miriam has worked backstage on many productions for TTC including *The Thrill of Love*, *The Country Wife* and *Tons of Money*. Last year she also stage-managed the summer open air Shakespeare production for RSS.

Vicky Horder – Props

Vicky has been with TTC for 10 years now, taking part in various roles backstage. Recently productions she has been involved are *Equus* (props), *Alfie* (SM) and *Dad's Army* (ASM) and will also be stage managing on the two upcoming TTC Studio productions, *Colder Than Here* and *Side by Side by Sondheim*.

Gita Singham-Willis - Movement

Gita has performed in numerous BROS productions since 2005. She has more recently turned to choreography for TTC and BROS, with productions being *Mack and Mabel* in the Minack Theatre in Cornwall, *Privates on Parade* and *La Cage aux Folles* and *Equus* at Hampton Hill Playhouse. She has very much enjoyed helping out on *Much Ado* and hopes the audience enjoy the production.

Francesca Ellis – Dialogue Coach

Francesca Ellis is lucky enough to work with Shakespeare for her day-job. She is a coordinator for Shakespeare Schools Festival, working with young performers to unlock the language and bring the text to life for an audience. She is a newcomer to TTC, having just played Helena in RSS's *All's Well* and about to take on Viola for Barnes Community Players' *Twelfth Night*.

Cast List

LEONATA, Governor of Messina Dionne King

Her household

HERO, her daughter Madeleine Gordon

BEATRICE, her niece Mia Skytte Jensen

MARGARET, waiting woman Asha Gill

URSULA, waiting woman Cath Messum

ANTONIO, Leonata's brother Barry Hill

DON PEDRO, Prince of Aragon Daniel Wain

His officers

BENEDICK Peter Hill

CLAUDIO Tom Shore

BALTHASAR Adam Hope

MESSENGER Ashton Cull

DON JOHN, Don Pedro's brother Neelaksh Sadhoo

BORACHIO, his henchman Matt O'Toole

CONRADE, Don John's lover Trine Taraldsvik

FRIAR FRANCIS, of Messina Barry MacDonald

Messina's law enforcement

DOGBERRY, in charge of the Watch Marcus Ezekiel

VERGES, the Headborough Derek Stringer

THE SEXTON Clive Russell

WATCHMAN 1 Peter Messum

WATCHMAN 2 Andrew Shufflebotham

There will be an interval of 20 minutes

Crew List

DIRECTOR	Gerald Baker
STAGE MANAGER	Miriam Fairbairn
ASM	Jack Tidball
PROMPT	Ali Hannant
SET DESIGN	Jean Goodwin
CONSTRUCTION AND DECORATION	Martin Stonelake
	Jean Goodwin
	Sarah Taylor
	Trine Taraldsvik
LIGHTING DESIGN	Jean Goodwin
LIGHT RIG AND OPERATION	Steph Pang
	Steph Pang
	Malcolm Maclenan
	Jean Goodwin
SOUND DESIGN	John Pyle
COSTUMES	Margaret Boulton
ADDITIONAL WARDROBE HELP	Lesley Alexander
	Mags Wrightson
	Margaret Williams
HAIR AND MAKEUP	Iona Serridge
PROPS SOURCING	Vicky Horder
	Jacqui Withall
MOVEMENT	Gita Singham-Willis
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	Rita Stringer
PHOTOGRAPHER	Rachel Burnham
DIALOGUE COACH	Francesca Ellis

With very special thanks to:-
Katie Barton for reading in and all her help at rehearsals.
Richmond Shakespeare Society for the hire of props.

Cast Biographies



Peter Hill – Benedick

Peter has appeared in a number of TTC productions, most recently *My Boy Jack* in 2014 (Guardsman Bowe). Earlier this year he played Alan in the OHADS production of *God of Carnage*. Over time, he has impersonated Tony Blair and (not necessarily cause and effect) been poisoned, molested, vomited over, stabbed, forced to strip, had trifle emptied over his head and pretended to be a eunuch. He has also appeared in several open air Shakespeares at National Trust property, Polesden Lacey, and played Oskar Rolfe in *Judgment at Nuremberg* at the Tricycle Theatre in London. His wife and daughters continue to be extremely patient.



Mia Skytte Jensen – Beatrice

Mia has previously played The Most Beautiful Woman in Romford in *Market Boy* (CityLit), Alithea in *The Country Wife* (TTC), Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost* (RSS) and Yelena in *Uncle Vanya* (RSS).



Tom Shore – Claudio

This is Tom's second production with TTC. He played Alfie in the Coward Room earlier in the year, and previously played Maladict in the Richmond Shakespeare Society production of Terry Pratchett's *Monstrous Regiment*. He works as an English and Drama teacher at The Heathland School in Hounslow, and reviews for the website A Younger Theatre.



Madeleine Gordon – Hero

This is Madeleine's second role with TTC, having played Doris in *The Thrill of Love* earlier this year. Madeleine trained at Goldsmith's University London in Theatre Arts and has appeared in many productions during her studies, including touring to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Having not performed in a Shakespeare since school days she is very much looking forward to this production, which is one of her favourites of the comedies.



Daniel Wain – Don Pedro

Daniel's last TTC incarnation was as Sparkish in *The Country Wife*. Other TTC roles include Nelson in *Rat in the Skull*, Bernard (Arcadia), Douglas (*Man of the Moment*) and Captain Hook. Since entering the local amdram world five years ago, Daniel has been nominated for a Swan Award six times, winning twice: Best Actor for DS Johnson in *This Story of Yours* and Best Supporting Actor for his debut as Pato Dooley (*The Beauty Queen of Leenane*) – both for RSS. Other RSS roles include Ricky Roma (*Glengarry Glen Ross*), Iago (*Othello*), Ford (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*) and the title roles of *Henry VIII* and, most recently, *Uncle Vanya*.



Neelaksh Sadboo – Don John

Neelaksh recently played Humphrey and The Abortionist in TTC's *Alfie* and Igor in RSS's *Monstrous Regiment*. He returns to Shakespeare after *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Othello* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, noting about *Much Ado*: "There is no measure in the occasion that breeds; therefore my gladness is without limit".



Dionne King – Leonata

Much Ado About Nothing is Dionne's second venture for TTC, after recently appearing as Lily, Siddie and Vye in Asha Gill's production of *Alfie*. She is enjoying the challenges of the re-gendering of Leonato to Leonata and is having great fun working with other members of the cast. She is looking forward to working in the main Auditorium after the intimacies of the Coward Studio. Prior to joining TTC, she was a member of the Rose Players and played Goody Nurse in *The Crucible* and Joan Durbeyfield in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.



Matt O'Toole – Borachio

This will be Matt's fourth theatrical outing in twelve months and his third play with TTC, since debuting in *My Boy Jack* in June last year. To date, he's played a WW1 ex-soldier, an old female cross-dressing army sergeant, a retired taxi driver, an aggressive and sexually-possessive truck driver from Sheffield and now a mischievous schemer (with a drink problem). This will be his first appearance in a Shakespeare play, fulfilling a long held ambition. Matt is a member of a comedy sketch writing group. The ginger goatee on his face was grown especially for this part and is coming off as soon as the last curtain comes down.



Trine Taraldsvik – Conrade

Trine has been an active member of TTC and YAT since 2000, both backstage and on it. With a professional background in film and TV design, she has mainly been busy designing sets, including *Equus*, *Night of Dark Intent* and (very recently) *Proof*. She occasionally makes it on-stage where she has played a variety of nice girls like Spirit of Spring (*The Snow Queen*), Louise (*The Imaginary Invalid*) and Cassandra (*Women of Troy*). Conrade makes for a welcome change.



Barry Hill - Antonio

Barry has been a member of TTC for over 20 years and has been acting and directing for about 50. Amongst the many parts he has undertaken for TTC are Pizzaro (*The Royal Hunt of the Sun*), Nonno (*The Night of the Iguana*) and Solomon (*The Price*). His last Shakespearean appearance was as Gonzalo in TTC's *The Tempest* but he has taken on many other of the Bard's challenges in the past for Theatre West 4 and other groups. Directorial efforts for TTC include *Blue Remembered Hills* (Swan Award), *Trelawny of the 'Wells'* and a couple of Ayckbourns. He also co-edits TTC's magazine *Theatre*.



Adam Hope – Balthasar

Adam Hope is currently enjoying his tenure as Artistic Director at Kingston University music department, leading both the Kingston University Chamber Choir and KU Twist Singers. Adam is also in demand as an MD, accompanist and repetiteur. His recent shows include: *Spring Awakening*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Grease*, *Whistle Down the Wind* and *Into the Woods*.



Ashton Cull - Messenger

This is Ashton's first Shakespeare play in over a decade. Since he last portrayed one of the Bard's characters he has taken on roles both at home and abroad: in Cambridgeshire he played General Francisco Pizarro in Shaffer's *Royal Hunt of the Sun*. In a small independent show in Manchester he played God's best friend, and he also starred as an (admittedly not very intimidating) hoodlum in the 5205 Studios horror movie, *The Harvestman* filmed in Alberta, Canada in 2009.



Barry MacDonald - Friar Francis

Barry has appeared for Teddington Theatre Club in *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Richard III*, *A Doll's House*, *Peggy For You* and *Blue Remembered Hills*. Most recently he played Elliot Fruit-Norton in *Pravda*. For Richmond Shakespeare Society he has appeared in *Othello* and *Henry VIII*, as well as *Love's Fool*, a compilation of scenes from Shakespeare, and *Master Shakeshafte*, a new play about Shakespeare's lost years. Other theatre appearances have been for Westminster Players and Putney Arts Theatre. Barry has also worked for Kent Opera, London City Ballet and Rocket Radio FM.



Asha Gill - Margaret

Asha has been involved with theatre for most of her life, studying it at school through to university, working at Richmond Theatre and being a member of YAT for 12 years. She has recently acted with RSS in *Monstrous Regiment* and directed *Alfie* for TTC earlier this year. In 2007 she appeared in the YAT production of *Much Ado About Nothing* playing Borachio(!). She has thoroughly enjoyed contributing to the 'ado' with this glorious cast.



Cath Messum - Ursula

This is the second time that Cath has been in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the first time being when she was in YAT. However, last time she played Margaret, so is pleased to be playing the other maid this time. A long serving TTC member, she was most recently seen at HHP in *The Snow Queen* in various roles including the old Lapp woman. She particularly enjoys doing period dramas as it usually means getting to wear fabulous frocks.



Marcus Ezekiel - Dogberry

Marcus has been in a number of fringe shows over the last few years in London. Most recently with TTC he has been Pinchwife in *The Country Wife* and Hal in *Dinner*. He is rather too fond of Dogberry.



Derek Stringer – Verges

Derek has been entertaining and performing for something in excess of 50 years now in a variety of genres; cabaret, musicals and operetta as well as straight plays, and in a variety of capacities; backstage, on stage playing straight and comedy roles, stage managing and directing. Among other companies, Derek has been with TTC for approaching 20 years and, more recently, Shepperton Players, appearing in roles as diverse as Fagin (*Oliver*), Cassius (*Julius Caesar*), Inspector Goole (*An Inspector Calls*) and Widow Twankey (*Aladdin*).



Clive Russell – Sexton

Clive's last appearance at the Playhouse was as Arthur in *The Accrington Pals*. Since then, he has been Tai Chi coach for *Calendar Girls* and was Japanese martial arts (Kendo) for *Pravda*. In January this year, he was assistant stage manager for *Equus*. Clive is also a stage fight choreographer and when not found stage or backstage he can be found helping on the bar.



Peter Messum – Watchman 1

A mere few months after singing and dancing in TTC's *The Snow Queen* at Christmas, Pete at long last gets to act in a play he actually knows! Having studied *Much Ado About Nothing* briefly at school and having seen both the Kenneth Branagh and Joss Whedon film adaptations, Pete's prior knowledge of the play has helped in playing what his director calls the Private Pike of the play, complete with his own halberd. Thankfully this play didn't involve any singing or dancing!



Andrew Shufflebotham – Watchman 2

Much Ado About Nothing is Andrew's third show with TTC, having played Harry Clamacraft in the recent studio production of *Alfie*, followed by a stint in the Walmington on Sea Home Guard as Private Walker in *Dad's Army*, on the main stage. Prior to that Andrew appeared as Don John in the Rose Theatre, Kingston production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, at both the Rose Theatre and the Wisley Arts Festival. He has also appeared in the recent productions of *The Absence of War* (Headlong Theatre Company) and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, again at the Rose Theatre.

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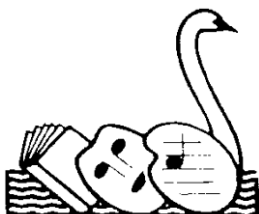
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Teddington Theatre Club is a Club Theatre open to members and their guests. It is easy to join as an audience member, or as a full performing and technical member.

Each month, details of forthcoming productions are mailed to each member together with Theatre, our club magazine and newsletter.

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