

# CARDIFF OPEN AIR THEATRE FESTIVAL: EVERYMAN 19

Sophia Gardens  
Cathedral Road  
Cardiff CF11 9SQ



## AUDITION NOTICE

**William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing**  
**Directed by David Mercatali**

'I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me'  
Don Pedro returns victorious from battle with his soldiers Claudio and Benedick in tow, pitching up on Governor Leonato's estate for a month's celebration. As Leonato's daughter, Hero, rekindles a harmonious courtship with her true love Claudio, his niece, Beatrice, rekindles her 'merry war' with the 'very dull fool' Benedick, a man she would never dream of marrying. Meanwhile, Don Pedro's brother, John, hatches his own plan of revenge, and, as all starts to fall apart, we discover that all is not fair in love and war.

### **The Play**

The war is over and the victorious Don Pedro, with his soldiers Claudio and Benedick, returns to Messina to the estate of Governor Leonato for a month's celebration. Claudio rekindles his love for Leonato's daughter Hero, and their marriage is agreed upon. Beatrice, Leonato's niece, actively despises marriage and Benedick even more, and the two engage in witty banter about this mutual hatred of wedlock and each other.

A masquerade ball is called, and Benedick's friends plot to make him believe Beatrice is secretly in love with him, and Beatrice's friends plot for her to believe the same of Benedick. Both are delighted to believe they are the objects of unrequited love, and vow to mend their faults.

Meanwhile Don John, Pedro's illegitimate brother, constructs a more malicious plot with his follower, Borachio: Claudio is led to believe he has caught Hero in a compromising situation the night before their wedding day – in fact, it is her maid, Margaret, with Borachio.

Claudio denounces Hero in public during the wedding ceremony. She faints, and the Friar, convinced of her innocence, intervenes; he convinces Leonato to announce she is dead to give them time to extract the truth. Beatrice, outraged at what Claudio did to her cousin, demands that Benedick kill his friend.

The plot is finally exposed by the most unlikely source: foolish Constable Dogberry and his partner, Verges, overhear Borachio showing off about the deception, and Don John is exposed. Claudio is remorseful and determined to make amends to Leonato, agrees to marry a cousin of Leonato's in her place. When the bride is unmasked, it is revealed to be Hero! With old rivals Beatrice and Benedick also agreeing to marry, couples are united and wounds are healed.

## The Characters

The Synopsis and Character Breakdown apply to the play as published and do not take into account any creative decisions or cuts to the text that may be made prior to the start of rehearsals

- All roles are available, casting is open and newcomers to the Festival are welcome and encouraged
  - Some roles can be played by male or female
  - Smaller roles will be doubled / trebled and some characters may be combined
  - There may be opportunities for non-speaking ensemble roles
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- **Beatrice** – Leonato’s niece and Hero’s cousin. Beatrice is “a pleasant-spirited lady” with a very sharp tongue. She is generous and loving, but, like Benedick, continually mocks other people with elaborately tooled jokes and puns. She wages a war of wits against Benedick and often wins the battles. At the outset of the play, she appears content never to marry.
  - **Benedick** - A soldier who has recently been fighting under Don Pedro, and a friend of Don Pedro and Claudio. Benedick is very witty, always making jokes and puns. He carries on a “merry war” of wits with Beatrice, but at the beginning of the play he swears he will never fall in love or marry.
  - **Claudio** - A young soldier who has won great acclaim fighting under Don Pedro during the recent wars. Claudio falls in love with Hero upon his return to Messina. His unfortunately suspicious nature makes him quick to believe evil rumors and hasty to despair and take revenge.
  - **Hero** - The beautiful young daughter of Leonato and the cousin of Beatrice. Hero is lovely, gentle, and kind. She falls in love with Claudio when he falls for her, but when Don John slanders her and Claudio rashly takes revenge, she suffers terribly.
  - **Don Pedro** - Don Pedro is a longtime friend of Leonato, Hero’s father, and is also close to the soldiers who have been fighting under him—the younger Benedick and the very young Claudio. Don Pedro is generous, courteous, intelligent, and loving to his friends, but he is also quick to believe evil of others and hasty to take revenge. He is the most politically and socially powerful character in the play.
  - **Leonato** - A respected, well-to-do, elderly noble at whose home, in Messina, Italy, the action is set. Leonato is the father of Hero and the uncle of Beatrice. As governor of Messina, he is second in social power only to Don Pedro.
  - **Don John** - The illegitimate brother of Don Pedro; sometimes called “the Bastard.” Don John is melancholy and sullen by nature, and he creates a dark scheme to ruin the happiness of Hero and Claudio. His actions are motivated by his envy of his brother’s social authority.
  - **Margaret** - Hero’s serving woman, who unwittingly helps Borachio and Don John deceive Claudio into thinking that Hero is unfaithful. Though she is honest, she does have some dealings with the villainous world of Don John: her lover is the mistrustful

and easily bribed Borachio. Margaret loves to break decorum, especially with bawdy jokes and teases.

- **Borachio** - An associate of Don John. Borachio is the lover of Margaret, Hero's serving woman. He conspires with Don John to trick Claudio and Don Pedro into thinking that Hero is unfaithful to Claudio.
- **Conrad** - One of Don John's more intimate associates, entirely devoted to Don John
- **Dogberry** - The constable in charge of the Watch, or chief policeman, of Messina. Dogberry is very sincere and takes his job seriously, but he has a habit of using exactly the wrong word to convey his meaning
- **Verges** - The deputy to Dogberry, chief policeman of Messina
- **Antonio** - Leonato's elderly brother and Hero's uncle. He is Beatrice's father
- **Balthasar** - A waiting man in Leonato's household and a musician. Balthasar flirts with Margaret at the masked party and helps Leonato
- **Ursula** - One of Hero's waiting women.

## The Director

*"The joyful banter between Beatrice and Benedick; the cunning plot of Don John that nearly ruins everything for our young lovers; the comical Dogberry who unwittingly saves the day. Much Ado is packed with so much fun and action, it's no surprise it remains one of Shakespeare's most iconic and funny plays.*

*I want to have a lot of fun working on this. My main request would be that anyone who was interested came with an open and generous approach and was prepared to embrace the energy and humour of the piece, as well as the Shakespearean verse.*

*Please also only put yourself forward if you know you can commit to the vast majority of rehearsals. There will be a lot to do in a short space of time and commitment will be essential.*

*Look forward to meeting you all soon"*  
*David.*

David Mercatali is a freelance director. A graduate of Cardiff University, he started directing in Act One Drama Society between 2000-2003. Moving to London after that, he took up directing professionally and his credits include: *Tremor* (Sherman, 59e59 NYC, Paines Plough Edinburgh), *Insignificance*, *Cargo* (Arcola Theatre), *Blue Heart* (Tobacco Factory, Orange Tree), *Radiant Vermin* (Soho Theatre, 59e59 NYC), *Little Light* (Orange Tree), *Dark Vanilla Jungle* (Soho Theatre, Pleasance Edinburgh, National Tour), *Tonight with Donny Stixx* (Pleasance Edinburgh, Bunker Theatre), *Every you, Every me* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Tender Napalm* (Southwark Playhouse, National Tour), *Johnny Got his Gun*, *Feathers in the Snow*, *Our Ajax* (Southwark Playhouse), *Coolatully*, *Black Jesus* (Finborough Theatre), *Someone to Blame* (Kings Head), *Sochi 2014* (Hope Theatre). He has directed productions for several leading drama schools, including Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, LAMDA and Central School of Speech and Drama. In 2017 he returned to Cardiff to be Associate Director at the Sherman Theatre, and he now lives in Canton with his family.

**Performance dates** – Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July to Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July. (No performances on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> and Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July). Performances start at 8pm and there are matinees at 3pm on 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July. **Please note that all performances take place in the open-air.**

**Rehearsal days and times** – A draft rehearsal schedule will be made available. There are likely to be full day rehearsals at weekends and two weekday evenings.

**Before auditioning, please take a moment to consider the necessary level of commitment.**

Take careful note of the rehearsal period and be honest about your availability within it.

Although the rehearsal process takes place over a number of weeks, consistent and punctual attendance is essential as we will be operating within a very tight schedule.

A high level of unavailability, persistent lateness and/or no-show will regrettably result in your being asked to leave the production.

The Director's Pitch is on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 at Chapter Arts Centre and auditions will be held on these dates (venue will be confirmed at booking):

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February**

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019**

- If you would like to audition but cannot attend on any of these days, please let us know as soon as possible.
- Please arrive **15mins before** your audition slot and bring with you your completed audition form with photograph attached. Spare audition forms will be available on the day.
- When booking an audition slot, please refer to the character breakdown.
- Please prepare a speech from Shakespeare for your audition
- Not being recalled does not necessarily mean you are not being considered for a role.
- Please note that attendance at the Festival Company Meeting (Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019) is expected for all cast.
- To reserve your place at the audition, contact Amanda Smith. Email: [Nearly50@outlook.com](mailto:Nearly50@outlook.com)  
Telephone: **07540434046**

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EVERYMAN 19**

Audition Form for

***MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING***

To book your audition time please contact Amanda Smith: Email: [nearly50@outlook.com](mailto:nearly50@outlook.com) Telephone: [07540434046](tel:07540434046)

**Please write clearly and don't forget to bring this form with photograph to your audition!**

Name.....  
Date of  
audition.....time.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Email address.....

Tel.no

[home].....[work/mobile].....

Height.....

ANY SPECIAL SKILLS – e.g., dancing, singing, juggling, musical instrument playing,  
etc.....

Please state **any and all commitments** [family / work / holidays / other shows etc] that conflict with the rehearsal  
period!

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE [continue overleaf if  
necessary].....

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Are you auditioning for the other Festival shows?    Yes / No    *(if yes, please state which ones)*

.Are you already a member of Everyman Theatre?    Yes / No    *(please note that everyone cast must become an Everyman member)*

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**PLEASE DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE**

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NOTES:

Not cast / recalled / cast as ..... acceptance rec'd:  
**yes/no**